



## The Inner Circle Guide to Mobile Customer Service

The rapidly decreasing cost of mobile bandwidth, coupled with the huge improvements in mobile network capabilities means that businesses can be ambitious in what they are attempting within this channel, as they can have a high level of confidence that what they can imagine today will be technically possible within a couple of years, if not a matter of months.

Research from Netbiscuits<sup>1</sup> shows that 91% of customers who have a poor experience with shopping on a mobile site will abandon it: some may intend to return via a PC, but many others will search elsewhere: there are no allowances made for sub-optimal mobile web experiences.

Offering a mobile customer experience tends to mean offering a smartphone app and/or a mobile version of a website; this report looks at what this means for businesses and customers.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted at <http://mobilemarketingmagazine.com/34-per-cent-abandon-poor-mobile-experiences>

## CHANNEL FOCUS: MOBILE

### MOBILE WEBSITES

A mobile website differs from a full website via a mobile browser in that it offers a mobile-optimized alternative which is easier to use. Mobile optimization overcomes some of the constraints around using a smartphone to access the web, such as tiny fonts, excessive scrolling and difficult-to-press buttons.

Mobile websites usually do not try to offer every single item available on the full website, but they focus upon the information and processes that most users will want in order to act or make a decision. Ease of use is vital: text must be fully displayed on screen, buttons must be clickable and businesses have to consider minimizing the use of graphics to achieve quicker load times in areas with poor mobile data services although this is becoming less of an issue as 4G and cheaper data becomes more widespread.

Bearing in mind that a mobile site generally cannot support every type of interaction that a customer may want, businesses may consider that allowing mobile users to access the main website is a good idea. Contact details should be clear, and offering a seamless route from self-service into supported service via email, web chat or telephony is very desirable.

The increasing usage and support of WebRTC is certain to offer new possibilities to live mobile customer contact, and the WebRTC / Video section later in this report gives more detail.

It is beneficial for businesses to understand why customers are using a mobile site rather than waiting until they are in front of a PC: the request may be related to what they are doing at that current time, and so waiting is not appropriate. Generally, customers will be more task-focused on a mobile device than a PC, so the emphasis should be on delivering quick, simple, high-volume interactions. For example, by looking at the current use of their full website, a bank may discover that a high proportion of users want to check their bank balance or view recent transactions rather than set up automatic bill payments or order foreign currency. Consequently, the mobile version of the website may focus only on a small number of high-volume interaction types.

## SMARTPHONE APPS

A good app may provide a superior user experience to a mobile website, due to the greater level of design. However, they tend to be much more expensive to build, and unlike a mobile website, a new one has to be developed for each smartphone platform. Additionally, company apps will tend to be free to download, so there is little opportunity to make money directly from them.

Smartphone platform market shares show that Android and iOS shipments account for over 95% of the market<sup>2</sup>, so businesses could decide to produce only two flavors of app, which would actually support the great majority of the smartphone market.

A native application developed for a mobile device can use some of the device's capabilities to enhance the customer experience. For example, a smartphone app can prompt drivers at the scene of a car accident to provide and capture the correct information, including photos. Such an app could also use GPS to give the exact location of the accident for use by the insurance company.

Industry estimates for building an app vary considerably depending on what they are trying to do, but many sources indicate that a cost of £20,000 / \$30,000 upwards (per platform) is very feasible. The cost of developing a mobile website is less, and only needs to be done once. Whether an app is suitable for a company depends on their budget and their customer base. It may be that the superior branding associated with apps is seen as being well worth the expense, even before factors like increased sales conversion rates are taken into account.

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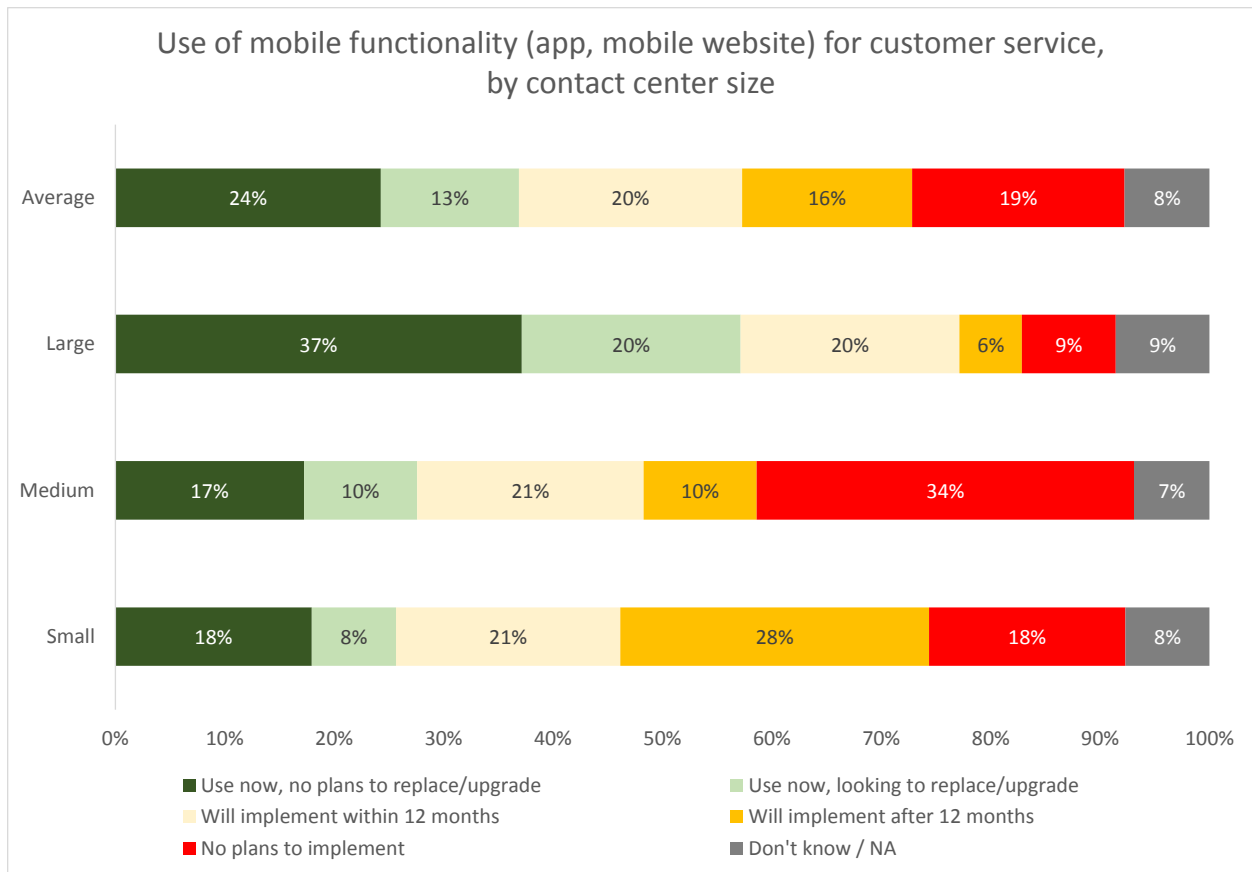
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.idc.com/prodserv/smartphone-os-market-share.jsp>

## USE OF MOBILE SERVICE FUNCTIONALITY

37% of this year’s survey respondents stated that they offer mobile functionality for customer service, with a further 36% having definite plans to doing so.

Larger contact centers are more than twice as likely as those in the small and medium sector to offer an app or mobile website for customer service.

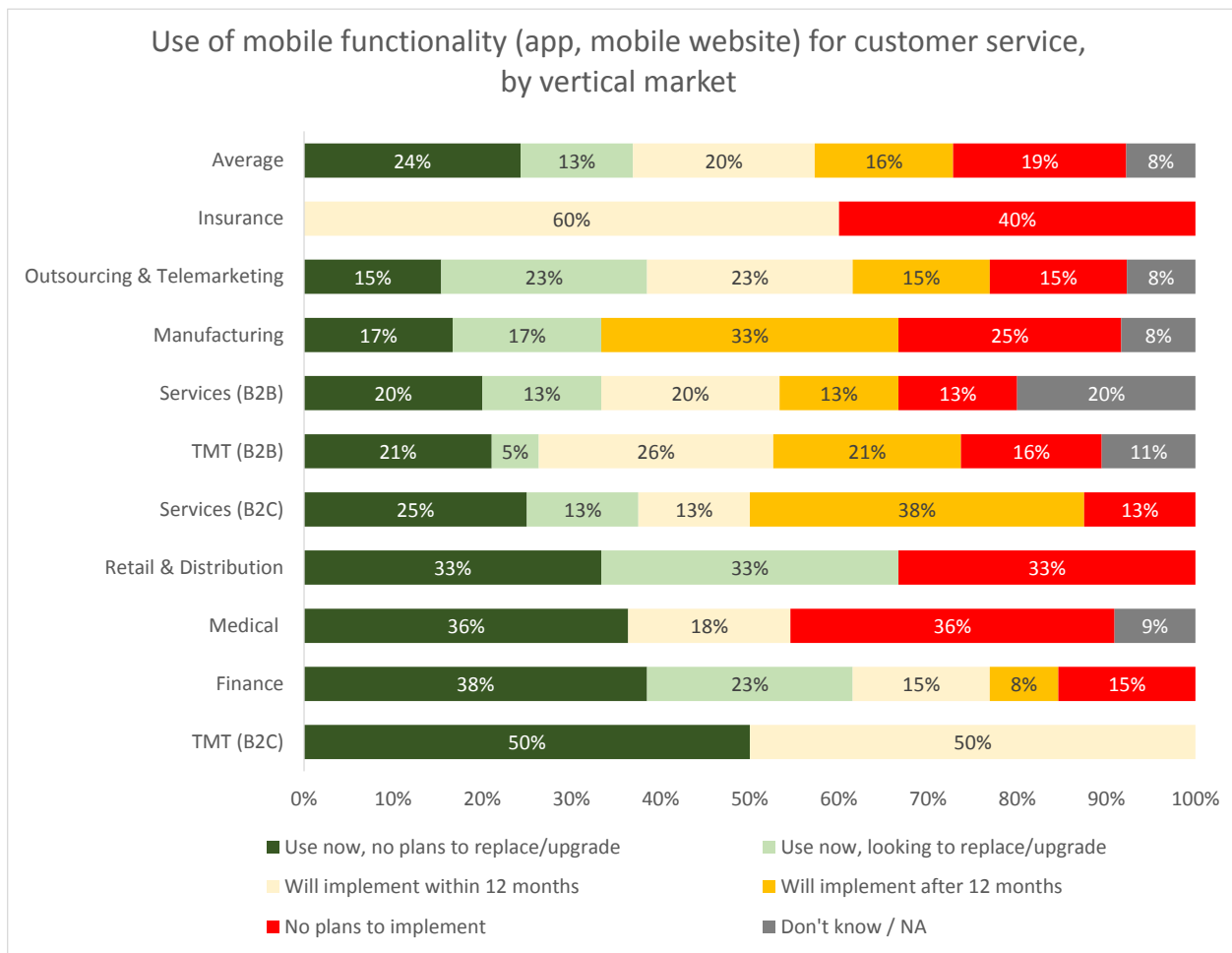
Figure 33: Use of mobile functionality (app, mobile website) for customer service, by contact center size



Although some vertical markets had relatively low response rates which can skew the figures somewhat (e.g. insurance), those in the finance and retail distribution sectors are most likely to be offering customer service via mobile functionality.

Those in the more B2B-oriented sectors (for example, manufacturing, B2B services and B2B TMT) are least likely to be doing so.

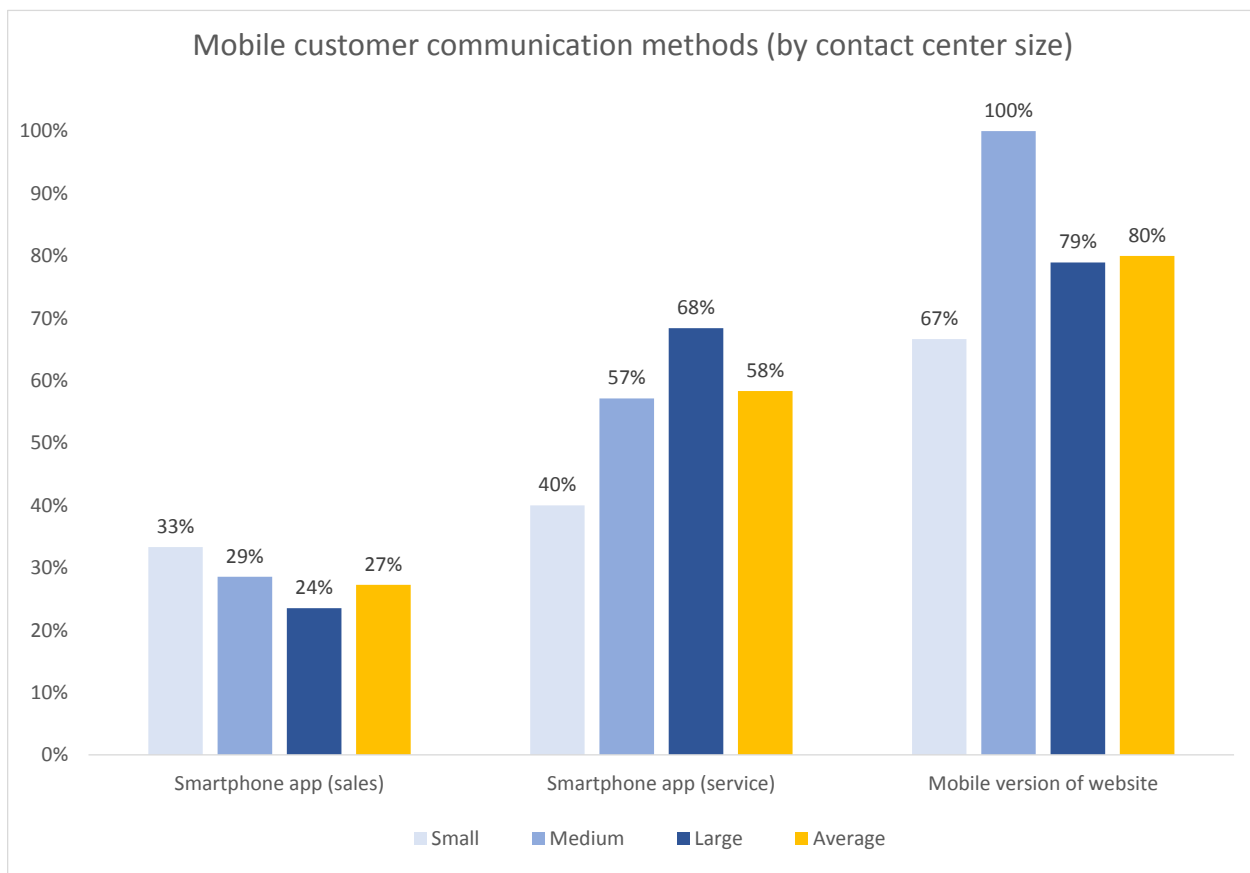
Figure 34: Use of mobile functionality (app, mobile website) for customer service, by vertical market



As the following chart shows, of the respondents which provide mobile customer service, 80% offer a mobile version of their website, for example, by having the most popular elements available, speedy load times, optimized graphics, improved readability and scrolling, etc.

58% of respondents offered a smartphone app service, with larger respondents more likely to be doing so. However, only 27% offer the same mobile support for sales, with smaller operations being more likely to try to win new business through investing in an app. This latter finding may simply be a statistical blip, and future years' surveys will look to see if this is a definite pattern.

Figure 35: Mobile customer communication methods (by contact center size) – only those offering mobile service



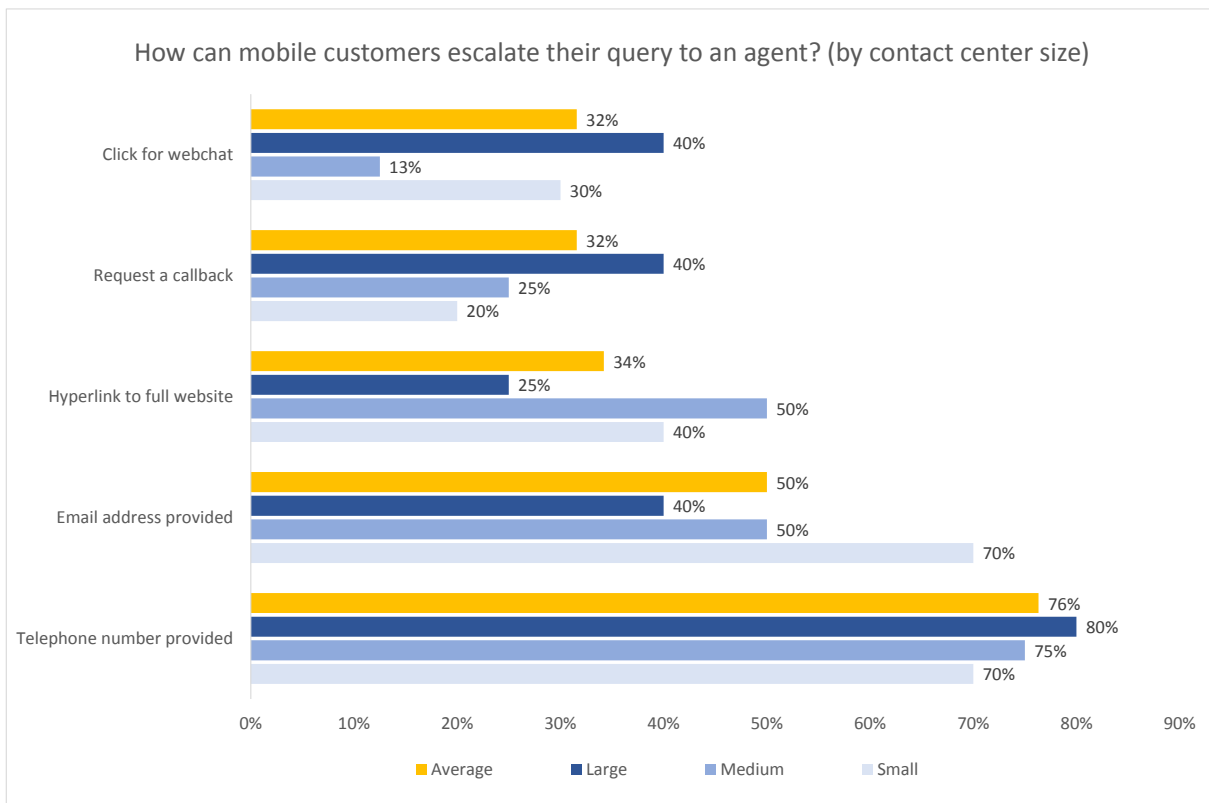
## CROSS-CHANNEL ESCALATION

A considerable amount of service functionality available to the mobile consumer is unsophisticated and often divorced from the rest of the customer experience. Put simply, if the customer tries to use a mobile app or website but cannot successfully do what they want to, in many cases they will be forced to initiate a service request via another channel, such as email or phone, which will be treated by the business as a separate request without any understanding of the history, activity or effort that the customer has already undertaken. No business where this occurs can describe itself as being truly ‘omnichannel’.

Gathering, understanding and using the contextual data that can surround the mobile consumer will be key to pushing the uptake and functionality of this channel forward. The plethora of channels immediately available to the mobile consumer - including voice, web browsing, SMS, social media, and web chat - encourages the customer to act immediately for all their service or information requirements, rather than wait until they are in front of a desktop computer.

In cases where the user needs to pass through security - and also where other reasons mean that the customer cannot complete their interaction solely through mobile browsing or using an app - businesses should consider how they will keep the customer or prospect engaged with the business.

Figure 36: How can mobile customers escalate their query to an agent? (by contact center size)



The easiest way to support cross-channel contact is to offer a telephone number on the mobile website or inside the app, and 76% of respondents do so. However, the user/ customer must often start their request again from the beginning, as many respondents will not credit the security and identification process that the customer has already been through, nor will the browsing history be passed onto the agent. Effectively, the customer may as well not have used the mobile channel at all, which is a negative for them and their attitude towards this channel in the future.

Providing an email address is the second most popular escalation method, which does allow the pre-population of fields in an email form (user details, account details, type of issue etc.) although only a few respondents do this. However, email is a slow medium even when done correctly, and the user will not get an answer in real time. Sales operations prefer to encourage mobile browsers to contact them through a more immediate channel, to reduce the chance of losing a sale.

32% of respondents using the mobile channel state that they offer scheduled call-backs to customers. While this is a positive and proactive response, the user is often left in the same situation as if they had called in the first place, as the agent will often have to take them through security and establish what the problem is.

32% of respondents were offered a web chat option within the mobile site or app, this being the channel most closely resembling the activity the user is already undertaking (i.e. using the mobile device to look for information, and typing rather than speaking). Web chat is more immediate than email and offers a chance to move between self-service and assisted service seamlessly, with the agent being able to push links and video to the user in real-time. The difficulty in typing on a smartphone screen means that this is still not a perfect solution. WebRTC will also offer wider opportunities for live communication on a mobile device.

Similar to last year’s findings, a significant minority of respondents state that upon escalation, an agent is provided with some information about the customer, most often only the customer’s name, rather than anything more closely linked and relevant to what the customer was trying to do, their account details, or where they are currently located. As such, this means an escalation from the mobile channel will rarely provide a quicker customer experience (for example, by jumping a call queue or by having details of the mobile session already undertaken screen-popped onto the agent’s desktop).

Figure 37: What information is passed to an agent after escalation from the mobile channel?

Is this information passed to the agent from the mobile channel?	Proportion of respondents
Customer name	48%
Account information	39%
Customer location	19%
Browsing history	13%



## LIKELY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN MOBILE

Looking to the future, solution providers are keen to offer technology that ties the mobile channel in more tightly with the existing voice and data customer support channels, providing a single integrated user experience regardless of initial channel choice and any cross-channel movement by the customer. One of the key ways to do this is to offer live agent support more easily (for example, through clicking an icon within an app), which provides a context-relevant, geographically-supported and personalized customer experience. The movement between self-service and live service is currently very difficult for many customers - it is certainly not seamless - and actually may involve abandoning the mobile channel entirely as a failure in order to start afresh with another channel. As the customer has chosen originally to use a mobile channel, even a successful outcome with another channel will risk leaving the customer dissatisfied with the company, and less likely to use the mobile channel in the future. There is also the danger that because the organization is unaware that a failed mobile session has been the root cause of a live contact, it will underestimate the reality of cross-channel interaction failures. WebRTC will offer businesses the chance to offer easy click-to-call or click-to-video directly from the website, which could make transition from self-service to assisted service far less painful.

On moving from self-service to assisted service, mobile service applications should gather the browsing history, customer information and the context of the session in order to pass this to a live agent. Smartphones are enabled with GPS tracking, so businesses should look to leverage this capability to deliver better customer experiences where possible. In fact, the inherent capabilities of the mobile device offer businesses huge opportunities to impress their customers, including location-specific information, such as local broadband outages, or the ability to leverage photo-taking functionality on the phone to provide the agent with a clearer picture of the situation (which may be particularly useful for insurance claims, for example).

SMS and outbound calling also offer opportunities for businesses to deliver proactive customer service through the mobile channel, creating a positive attitude. Furthermore, location-specific device information also allows businesses to deliver timely service and relevant marketing messages which can be positives for the customer at that specific place and time.

It is not just the customer interaction points that will become more integrated. Brick-and-mortar stores are also becoming more integrated with their digital component, in order to provide correct inventory levels at store- and company-wide levels, thus matching the capabilities of their dot-com competitors while being able to take advantage of being able to provide in-store services to customers.

Like any technology, application or channel, mobile service has to be seen to pay its way. Quite apart from the importance of fulfilling a customer demand, there are numerous elements to consider when looking at return on investment:

- Call avoidance due to increased use of self-service, although the difference made to the number of IVR sessions should be taken into account: customers may simply be swapping one self-service method for another, rather than avoiding expensive live calls
- Increasing the accuracy of routing by leveraging mobile and customer data means that calls are more likely to go to an agent that can resolve them first-time, impacting positively upon first-contact resolution, call transfer rates, average handle time and customer satisfaction
- Decreased call handling time in cases where mobile browsing information and other contextual data is passed to an agent, enabling them to reduce effort duplication
- Improved customer satisfaction and decreased customer effort is likely to lead to improved loyalty, revenue and customer advocacy
- Contextual information, such as geographical location, enables greater cross-selling and up-selling opportunities based on improved knowledge about the customer and their circumstances.