

Putting Knowledge at the Heart of Customer Experience



THE IMPACT OF
**KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT**
ON THE BOTTOM LINE

eptica

An  Enhouse Company

Contents

Introduction	3
Infographic	4
4 Key Research Findings	5
Knowledge Best Practice	9
Case Studies: Knowledge in Action	13
Conclusion	14

Introduction

Knowledge is central to delivering the engaging customer experience that today's consumers demand. For example, 84% of consumers say they'll switch to a rival if they cannot find the answer to their query online, potentially leading to millions in lost revenue.

Successfully answering consumer questions, both directly through agents or through self-service systems and chatbots, increases efficiency and helps overcome issues on the customer journey, contributing to an improved experience and greater sales. Ensuring that you have a single, up to date, centralised source of knowledge that is shared with consumers across every channel and inside your business is therefore vital.

Given its importance, how good are organisations at meeting internal and external demand for knowledge?

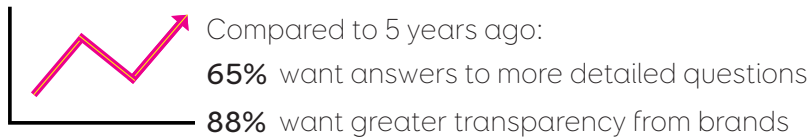
To find out Eptica, an Enghouse Company, conducted consumer research - and the findings show significant issues. On average and across every channel 86% of consumers say they are unhappy with the answers they receive from companies, with 75% stating that agents didn't have the right information to hand to answer their queries.

**86% of consumers say they are unhappy
with the answers they receive**

Where are organisations going wrong and how can they implement a knowledge strategy that meets customer expectations? **This guide aims to provide some answers.** As well as analysis of our consumer research, it also provide best practice recommendations to help organisations transform how they use knowledge across their business.

Infographic

Consumers have rising expectations



Speed and easy access to information are crucial



- 91% become frustrated if they don't find answers online quickly
- 90% want to find information without leaving the page they are on

Companies are not delivering



- 75% of consumers say agents don't have the right information to answer their question
- 70% say they receive inconsistent answers between channels

Knowledge = Loyalty



- 94% say a high quality response makes them more loyal
- 91% say not answering a question makes them less loyal
- 84% will move to a rival if your website doesn't provide the answer to their question

What happens if they don't get an answer on a specific channel?



- 23% ask again on the same channel



- 14% continue with a lower opinion of the brand



- 30% switch channel



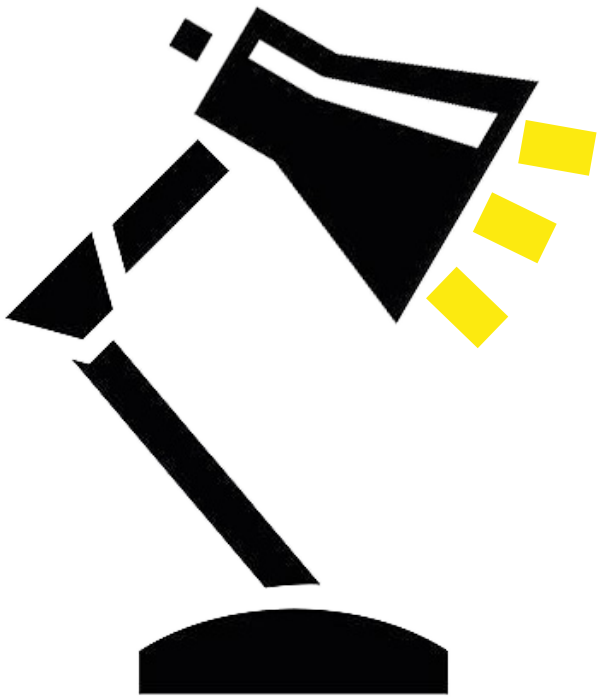
- 16% complain to the company



- 22% switch to a rival



- 6% complain on social media



4 Key Research Findings

- 1 Customer expectations are changing – fast
- 2 Up to date, consistent knowledge drives loyalty
- 3 Brands aren't meeting customer expectations when it comes to knowledge
- 4 Poor knowledge practices impact the corporate bottom line

4 Key Findings

1 - Customer expectations are changing – fast

Consumers have always wanted fast, accurate and consistent responses to their queries. But their expectations are changing – nearly two thirds (65%) say they now want answers to more detailed questions than five years ago. They are less willing to wait or spend lots of time searching, 91% became frustrated if they couldn't find an answer online quickly, with 90% wanting to be able to access the right information without leaving the page they were on. **This growing impatience extends across every channel.**

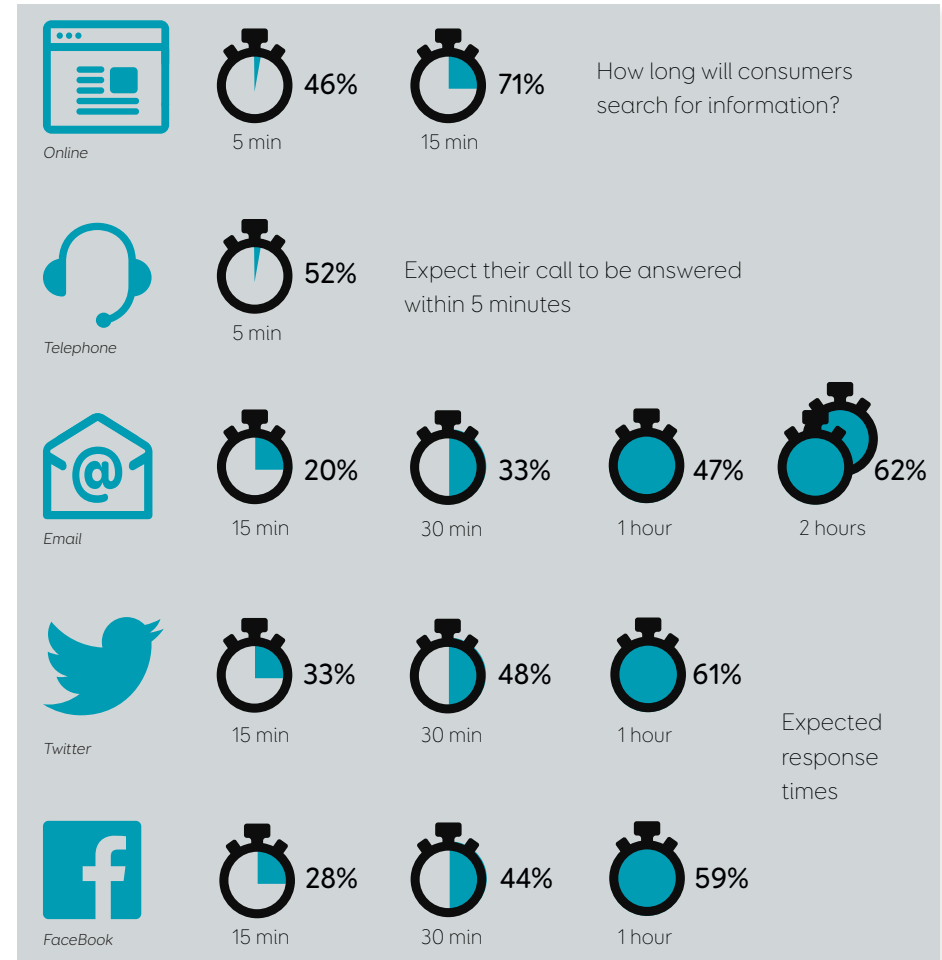
46% of consumers in a previous study¹ said they'd spend just 5 minutes looking for information on a company website before moving elsewhere. 44% wanted a response on Facebook in 30 minutes, and 61% an answer on Twitter within an hour.

Increasingly consumers, particularly millennials², want to deal with companies that are open and keep them informed. 88% said they wanted greater transparency from the brands they dealt with if they were to remain loyal.

1. Source: [Eptica 2017 Multichannel Insurance Study](#)

2. Source: [Edelman "65% of millennials buy on the basis of their beliefs"](#)

Expected response times: growing impatience across every channel



4 Key Findings

2 - Up to date, consistent knowledge drives loyalty

There is a clear connection between knowledge and customer satisfaction. A huge majority of consumers (94%) said a high quality, personalised response to their query would make them more likely to buy from that company again. In increasingly competitive markets, this demonstrates the importance of ensuring that knowledge is kept up to date, is consistent across channels and is provided quickly to consumers, whether through agents or via self-service and chatbots.

At a time when loyalty is falling, these results demonstrate that investment in creating and keeping updated a comprehensive, centralised knowledge base delivers return on investment and provides a key differentiator in the struggle to win and retain consumers.

3 - Brands aren't meeting expectations when it comes to knowledge

Despite the high priority that consumers place on knowledge, and the ROI it delivers, organisations are failing to provide a good enough service. 75% of consumers said agents didn't have the right information to hand to answer their queries, while 70% complained of receiving inconsistent answers between channels. No wonder that just 14% said they were 'generally happy' with the answers they received from brands across all channels. That means that 86% are unhappy in some way across at least some of the responses they get.



% Generally happy with answers received, by channel

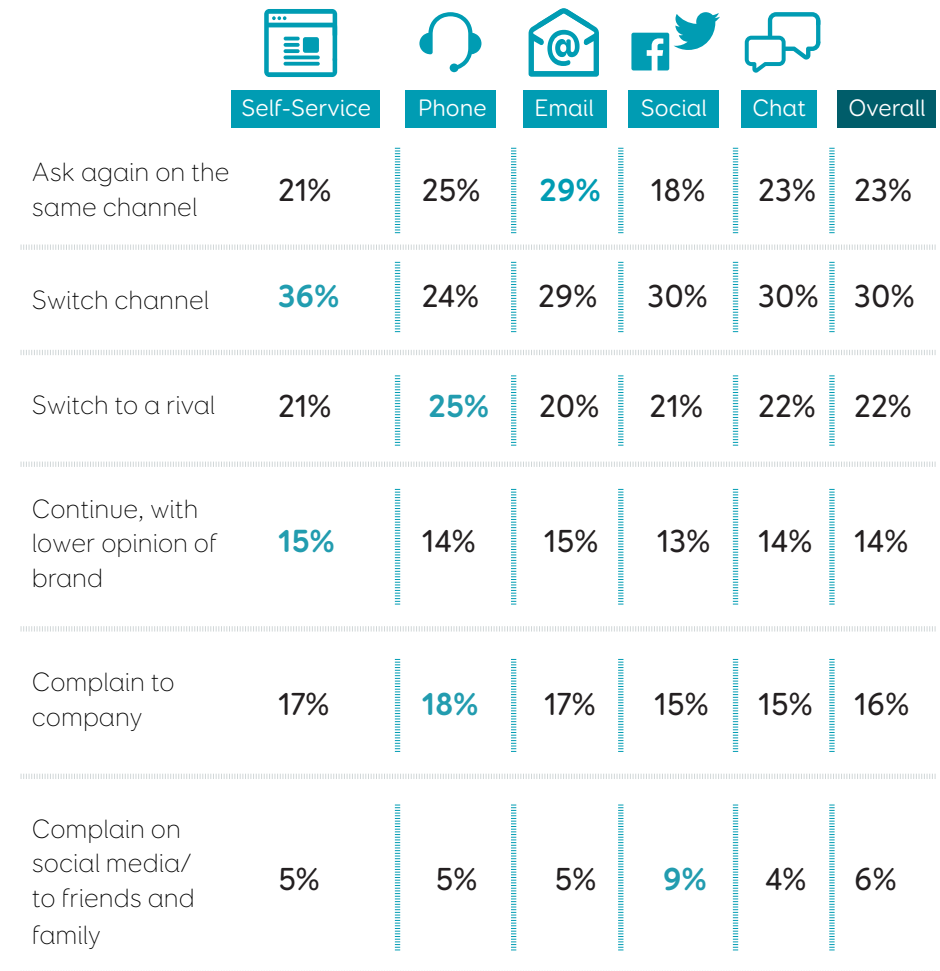
There are multiple reasons for this gap between expectations and reality. Brands have to deal with a growing volume of queries and channels, while questions are more complex, meaning they require greater understanding and knowledge to answer them.

4 Key Findings

4 - Poor knowledge practices impact the corporate bottom line

Failing to put knowledge at the heart of customer experience damages a company in multiple ways:

- Consumers switch to a rival, losing immediate and future revenues. They don't complain, so you have no way of saving the relationship or finding out why they leave.
- Consumers ask the same question again on the same channel, adding to the volume of queries that organisations receive, and therefore increasing costs.
- Consumers switch channel – normally from cheaper ones (such as the web or self-service), to those that involve agents (such as email and the phone), which are more expensive to staff and run.
- Consumers continue on the journey, but their relationship with the company is damaged, hitting overall brand reputation.
- Consumers complain, both directly and to their friends and family on social media, again damaging brand reputation.



Knowledge Best Practice

Given the importance of knowledge and the increasing expectations that consumers have, how can brands ensure that they have the right knowledge strategy in place? Based on our experience, here are five areas you should focus on.

- 1 Make it comprehensive and easy to use
- 2 Ensure it is current
- 3 Make certain it is consistent
- 4 Invest in artificial intelligence
- 5 Analyse knowledge

Knowledge Best Practice

1 - Make it comprehensive & easy to use

Ensure that knowledge is complete and available to everyone that needs to use it, across every channel – whether inside your organisation or to customers. Building a knowledge base, particularly for the first time, can appear daunting. The fastest approach is to start with the areas of greatest need – analyse the questions you are already receiving and make sure that you have covered these key topics first. To ensure that agents and other staff members use it, involve them in its creation and rollout, and make it easy for them to suggest amendments or flag gaps in your knowledge.

Bear in mind that people look for information in different ways – some want to search for answers, while others prefer to browse through knowledge. Understanding this helps you create the structure behind your knowledge base, identifying key themes and how they change across the customer journey.

Finally, look at how you can avoid consumers having to ask questions at all. Analyse the most common questions asked

during the customer journey and display relevant answers at the right point – for example, information on payment options at the checkout stage. You can also use predictive self-service to provide immediate answers to follow-up questions that consumers might have, or offer escalation to other channels, such as chat, ensuring the experience is seamless.

2 - Ensure it is current

Knowledge goes out of date quickly, so you need to focus on how you can ensure it is current and always meets customer needs. Make it easy for both consumers and agents to give feedback that rates the usefulness of answers and then close the loop by using this to update the information that you provide. Use a self-learning, intelligent knowledge base that automatically understands the links between answers to organise information and analyse the questions that are asked or escalated to spot gaps that need filling.

Knowledge Best Practice

3 - Make certain it is consistent

Multiple departments are involved in customer service, with different teams often responsible for different channels, such as email, the website or social media. Silos of information can therefore quickly grow up, leading to inconsistency.

Creating a single, centralised knowledge base that supports all channels is not only more efficient, but also ensures uniformity and reduces administration time. Continually gather in information from different channels, and share it through the knowledge base – otherwise answers will soon be out of step. This damages your brand and in regulated industries (such as finance) can lead to fines if you provide incorrect or inconsistent information to consumers.

Clearly different channels have different needs – you cannot go into the same level of detail in a tweet as on a web page or email. Instead, look at ways around this, such as by including specific links in a social media message to longer documents, deflecting customers to ensure that they end up in the right place.

4 - Invest in artificial intelligence

Knowledge plus artificial intelligence (AI) is transformational for customer experience. Using AI techniques such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and text analytics enables you to go beyond keyword search to gain a deeper understanding of the questions that consumers ask, and automatically match these with relevant answers from within your knowledge base.

This increases efficiency, such as by providing relevant template answers to agents, but more importantly it empowers your staff, freeing up their time to focus on personalising responses and building empathy with customers. This increases employee satisfaction and engagement, improving retention rates.

AI also means you can go beyond simply analysing text to understanding the tone behind a message – is the customer happy or angry? This makes it easier to prioritise incoming queries and to respond accordingly. AI-powered intelligent search is built on self-learning, which means it continually improves the accuracy of answers, ensuring a high quality customer experience.

Knowledge Best Practice

5 - Analyse knowledge

The questions that customer asks, whether online, through the telephone or on digital channels, provide a potential goldmine of information. By analysing which knowledge is requested most, you can see where you need to improve the customer journey, such as by amending processes or website information. As well as identifying gaps, you can see which areas and topics need work – for example, if self-service answers stop deflecting particular consumer questions and you are seeing a rise in incoming queries, you clearly need to take action. Internally, studying the questions that agents ask can uncover areas where they might need more training.

Improving the customer experience is a continual process, but this type of analysis enables you to see where you need to take action to meet customer needs.



Case Studies - Knowledge in Action



Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council (BCC) is responsible for delivering public services to over 1.1 million citizens in the UK's second biggest city. With customer service expectations continually rising, and a need to focus on greater efficiency, it adopted Eptica's AI-powered customer experience platform.

BCC originally rolled out Sheldon, its Eptica-powered knowledge base, to its 300 contact centre agents who answer voice calls, providing them with fast access to an expanding library of 1,300 articles, covering subjects from potholes and Council Tax payments to schools admissions. As Sheldon provides agents with a single source of information, this **ensures that responses are consistent and accurate across different channels.**

Due to Sheldon's success Eptica has been extended to cover BCC's email channel, with incoming emails and web forms from 25 services analysed automatically using Eptica's Natural Language Processing technology, providing agents with relevant template-based answers they can use to respond to the 90,000 emails received every year. Through Eptica, BCC has **reduced average email handling times by 30%** and improved consistency and quality, all while increasing efficiency and productivity.



L'Occitane Group

With a turnover of €1.28bn, L'Occitane Group is a leading global manufacturer and retailer of natural and organic cosmetics and well-being products. To support its aim of delivering consistent customer experience to consumers globally, it is using Eptica to boost efficiency and sales across 17 countries.

L'Occitane relies on Eptica's shared knowledge base, integrated into the phone and all digital channels. Thanks to AI and, in particular, Natural Language Processing, the solution also enables conversations to be sorted automatically according to the content and tone of the messages. Requests can therefore be prioritised.

Self-service has reduced incoming volumes by 50% by enabling automatic responses to customers 24/7. Chat improves customer experience by offering personalised, contextualised and proactive support when, for example, the customer is looking for information, about to make a purchase or having difficulty confirming their order.

Overall, L'Occitane is seeing greater customer satisfaction, consistency and improved customer retention by using Eptica.

Conclusion

In an ever-more complex world knowledge is vital to the customer relationship. Consumer expectations are continually rising and they want to engage with brands that deliver a high quality, transparent and knowledgeable experience, across every channel and throughout the customer journey.

Effective knowledge management supports faster, more accurate and efficient service that drives increased loyalty and revenues. It increases staff motivation and boosts customer engagement by ensuring that the conversations that they have deliver the information, understanding and empathy that consumers demand.

However, many organisations are not yet taking a holistic view of knowledge or using AI to transform how they communicate with consumers. Moving forward, it will be those brands that put knowledge at the heart of their business that will thrive – now is the time to adopt AI and follow best practice to safeguard future competitiveness.

Note on research

1,000 UK consumers were surveyed online in Q1 2018 via Toluna.

Now is the time to adopt AI and follow best practice to safeguard future competitiveness.

About Eptica, an Enghouse Company

Part of Enghouse Interactive, Eptica is a leading European technology company specialising in intelligent platforms for digital customer experience. **Eptica provides conversational and collaborative solutions powered by AI.**

Eptica supports brands to make digital CX the key link in the value chain, ensuring their customer service delivers value to consumers and across their business.

Globally, more than 450 organisations across all industries rely on our solutions on all digital channels, including self-service & knowledge base, email, chat and social media.

We enable millions of individuals to engage in meaningful conversations with brands improving daily lives for everyone. Customers include AXA, L'Occitane Group, New Look, Dixons Carphone, Crédit Agricole, Co-operative Energy, Domestic & General, Ageas Insurance Solutions, Hastings Direct, TUI, Debenhams, Capita, RSPCA and Birmingham City Council.

Specialising in Natural Language Processing (NLP), Eptica makes the best use of AI and cognitive technologies for CX, enabling brands to improve:

- 1 **Customer Satisfaction**
- 2 **Competitiveness:** equipping organisations with bots that automate simple tasks and provide decision support tools to enhance agents, generating greater productivity and allowing agents to focus on more complex conversations and enabling sales
- 3 **Customer Knowledge:** generating insights that guide brands and their operations.

Follow us on Twitter: @eptica

Discover our news and opinions on the market in our [blog](#)

eptica

An  Enhouse Company

Enhouse Interactive
Imperium, Imperial Way
Reading
RG2 0TD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3357 3040

Enhouse Eptica France
63 Bis rue de Sèvres
92100
Boulogne-Billancourt
France

www.eptica.com | www.linkedin.com/company/eptica | [@eptica](https://twitter.com/eptica)