

Consumers Experiment with Digital Amid the Pandemic But Companies Miss the Mark on CX, Annual Broadridge CX Study Finds

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Companies need to create compelling digital experiences for consumers to make the switch to paperless
NEW YORK, March 3, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Over the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer behaviors have continued to shift and so too have ways in which brands interact with customers. While 70% of North American consumers have taken a step toward greater digital interaction with at least one provider, nearly 60% believe companies need to improve their customer experience, with this sentiment most strongly felt by millennials (71%).

In a year when over half (56%) of consumers believe the pandemic has fundamentally changed how they communicate and engage with businesses, 54% have also seen an increase in 'humanity' in the communications they've received from providers. The new customer experience and communications study from global Fintech leader **Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.** (NYSE:BR) surveys the opinions of 3,000 North American consumers, finding that brands have higher standards to live up to in delivering relevant, personalized and data-driven content.

"Companies have been challenged to rapidly adapt to rising customer expectations as a result of the pandemic," said Matt Swain, managing director for communications and customer experience consulting services at Broadridge. "Whether it's the purchase experience or essential communication touchpoints like bills and statements, the bar has been set very high for brands to provide consumers with easy, engaging and personalized digital interactions. Until more digital experiences meet these higher standards, a large portion of consumers will continue to hold onto print."

Building Off of 2020: The Year of Firsts

2020 was a year of digital firsts. For the first time:

- One third (32%) of consumers made an online bill payment and nearly a quarter (22%) created an online account.
- Nearly one in five consumers (18%) went paperless with at least one company.
- 19% of respondents overall – and 27% of Millennials – used the chat feature on a company's website, portal or app.

Despite these initial digital interactions, just over half (54%) of consumers who went paperless for the first time in 2020 rated their experience as "excellent," showing that to outlast first time usage and break long-term print habits around essential communications like bills and statements, companies need to invest in improving seamless and consistent digital experiences.

Digital Experimentation is on the Rise

With more cross-generational digital experimentation over the past year, there was an uptick in consumers using their providers' mobile options. Since the pandemic began, nearly half (49%) of consumers' usage of mobile apps from companies increased, including 32% of Boomers.

Consumers also became more receptive to mobile payments, with the majority (65%) of respondents saying they would use a mobile app to make a bill payment. Six out of 10 (64%) consumers are interested in receiving short informational videos personalized to the services they receive. A majority (58%) would also like companies to deliver bills, statements and other important documents directly into their preferred cloud storage location.

Paper for the Record

Despite these digital firsts, when it comes to favorite channels for receiving communications, half of consumers still prefer physical mail most. Of those, three-quarters (76%) say they will still want to receive print communications in three years.

Regardless of delivery preferences, consumers expect a seamless omni-channel experience. An overwhelming majority (84%) of consumers expect companies to make it easy for them to interact across print, digital and other channels.

"While brands place emphasis on transitioning customers to digital channels, we are seeing a sustained demand for print communications among consumers," said Swain. "Whether serving as a reminder for payment or providing a renewed sense of novelty in a digital world, printed bills and statements will long have a place in brand communications."

Personalize Communications or Lose Business

Relevance is paramount. In fact, a personalized omni-channel experience across digital and print channels is a consumer expectation that can cost providers business when not executed well. Two out of five consumers (43%) have stopped doing business with a company just because it did a poor job of personalizing the experience. Millennials (59%) and Gen X (51%) were most likely to change providers compared to 28% of Boomers.

As consumer needs evolve, it will be imperative for companies to focus on increasing the value of print and digital experiences, embracing digital experimentation, and providing seamless experiences tied to consumer preferences.

"Companies that win customer loyalty in the post-pandemic recovery will be those that continue to invest in their digital communications toolkit while optimizing the print experience for consumers who remain partial to the channel," concluded Swain.

View **Broadridge's third annual customer experience and communications report.**

Methodology

Broadridge Customer Communications commissioned ENGINE to conduct a CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. The 43-question survey was administered between December 3-10, 2020, to 3,000 U.S. and Canadian residents ages 25 and older. The sample was weighted to current U.S. and Canadian Census data for age, gender and region. The figures are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level with a margin of error of ± 2 percentage points.

About Broadridge

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