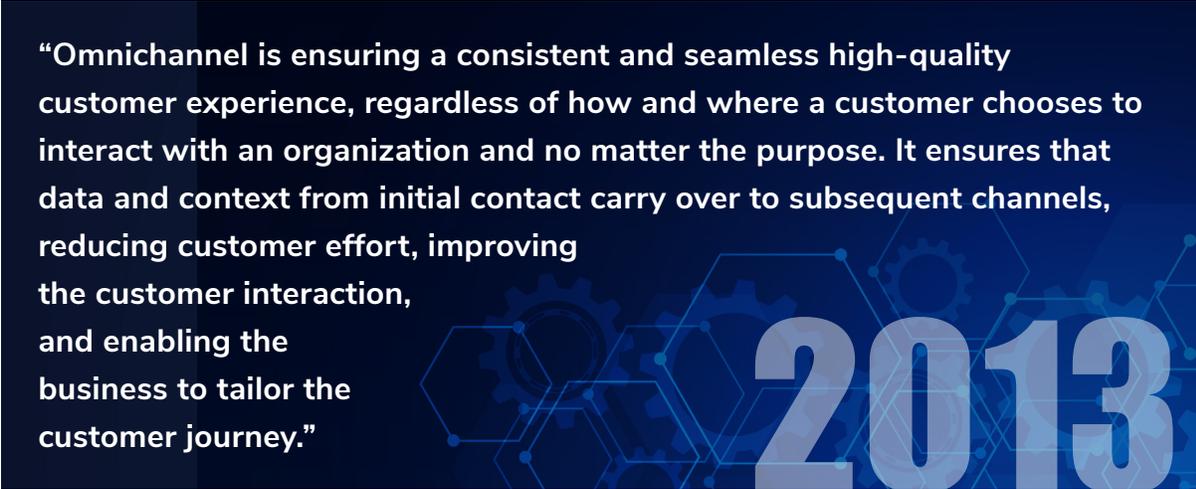




**Context and Data Flow  
are Only Half of the  
Omnichannel Battle**

*Powering clients to a future shaped by growth*

In 2013, when Frost & Sullivan launched the concept of omnichannel into the contact center stratosphere, the intent was to suggest the need for an idealized and seamless customer journey, replacing an often disjointed and piecemeal experience. The concept has since resonated throughout the industry and has become a rallying cry to fix bottlenecks, siloes, and breakpoints through the maturation and proliferation of contact center systems and applications.



**“Omnichannel is ensuring a consistent and seamless high-quality customer experience, regardless of how and where a customer chooses to interact with an organization and no matter the purpose. It ensures that data and context from initial contact carry over to subsequent channels, reducing customer effort, improving the customer interaction, and enabling the business to tailor the customer journey.”**

The more uncovered a concept is the more it can be fine-tuned, and this was the case with omnichannel. In the near-decade since the concept launched, the intent has remained clear, but the components of an omnichannel customer experience (CX) have greatly expanded as we’ve gained more knowledge of what omnichannel entails. For instance, the push for omnichannel customer engagement further evolved to become a multi and cross-channel interaction strategy that organizations use to ensure a consistent and seamless high-quality customer experience. Then the push for omnichannel customer engagement further evolved through the realization that the contact center was no longer driven primarily by customer service, but by CX. Price and feature differentiation fell precipitously in favor of CX and the resulting ways that customers feel about the businesses with which they engage. Solution providers, in turn, grappled with improving that experience by eliminating breakpoints, developing increasingly better analytics capabilities, enriching performance and quality management (QM) packages, and redesigning agent desktops.

But that was just the start. Midway through the decade, it became clearer that the employee experience (EX) and, most importantly, agent experience (AX) are equal in value and interdependent with the customer, launching renewed development efforts geared toward engaging the workforce across the spectrum of their worklife. Mobile apps, process automation, guided assistance, and enhanced knowledge management packages were just a few of the advancements to emerge from this realization.

In essence, the definition of omnichannel expanded, and continues to be fine-tuned to this day. Moving into 2021 you could add, “Omnichannel enhances the bridge between the customer and agent experience, incorporating AI-enhanced tools and knowledge management to further improve the outcomes for both. The resulting data generates deep insights that assist in continuously improving operational efficiencies, agent engagement, and customer satisfaction.”

**“Omnichannel is a multi and cross-channel interaction strategy that organizations use to provide a consistent and seamless high-quality customer experience, regardless of how and where a customer chooses to interact with an organization and no matter the purpose. It ensures that data and context from initial contact carry over to subsequent channels, reducing customer effort, improving the customer interaction, and enabling the business to tailor the customer journey.**

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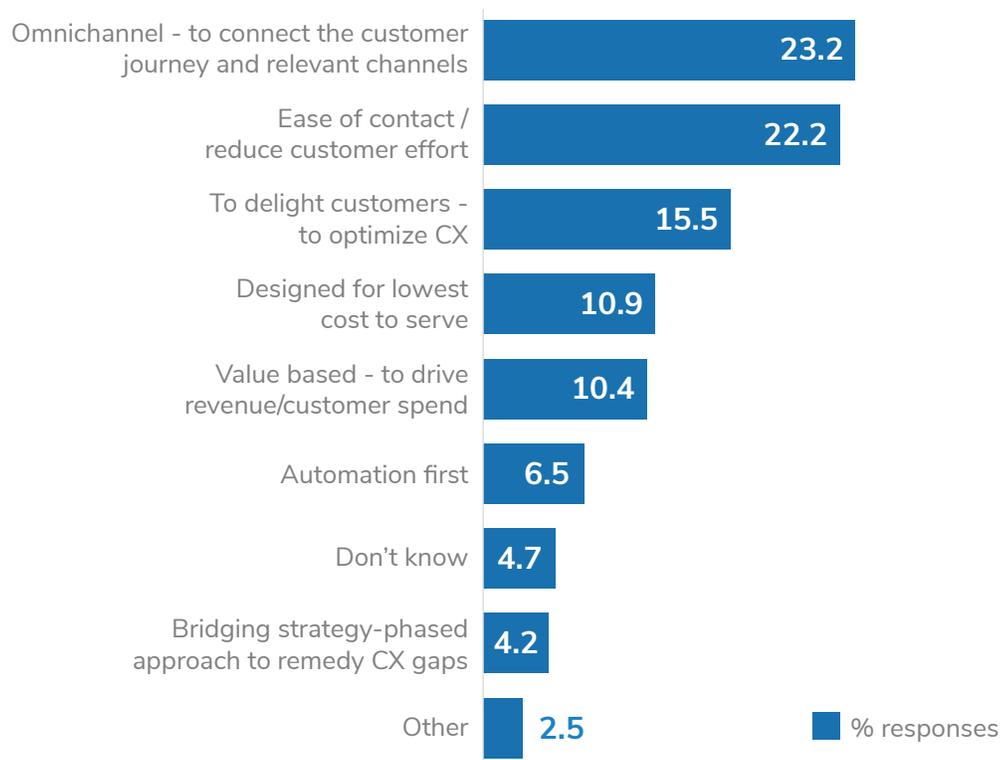
**2021**

In 2013, context and data flow were the primary focuses, but while this helped to smooth the customer journey, it represents only half of the story. What is truly needed to move the needle from omnichannel circa 2013 and supercharged CX and AX for the future is a platform that can meld together everything about the customer journey, from systems of record such as customer relationship management (CRM) and knowledge management databases, to critical information generated in real-time through AI-enhanced analytics capabilities such as speech analytics. Equally critical is being able to surface the right information at the right time for the agent (and supervisor) to serve their customers more quickly, knowledgeably, and confidently. The result? By improving AX, you improve CX.

## Is Omnichannel Customer Engagement a Reality?

Omnichannel is certainly a reality, but surveys show that execution is still lagging. To illustrate that this remains top of mind, the move to omnichannel has been one of the top trends in NTT's Customer Experience Benchmarking reports for several years. The 2020 Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, *The Connected Customer: Delivering an Effortless Experience*, marks the 20th edition of the study, surveying over 1,000 contact center decision-makers on issues pertaining to CX. The study reported, "Most organizations engage via eight contact channels, yet two-thirds (66.4%) have no cross-channel contact management strategy." At the same time, 23.2% of respondents placed omnichannel as the top driver of their customer journey design strategy. This gap between strategy and execution mirrors the similar disconnect the industry generally has between legacy systems and applications and more modern cloud-based technologies.

**Figure 1: Top Drivers of Customer Journey Design Strategy**



2020 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report. © NTT Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

## The Benefits of Seamless Customer Engagement

While execution is lacking, the benefits of omnichannel are clear. The seamless integration that omnichannel fosters has immense, diverse benefits for an organization, including:

- Unified customer engagement across channels no matter where the journey starts, fostering deeper relationships that facilitate brand loyalty and upsell opportunities.
- Agents who are more invested in customer outcomes that lead to greater employee satisfaction and higher retention rates.
- The ability for agents to truly understand what is happening with each customer interaction.
- The ability for agents to better align customer outcomes with business goals.
- More accurate and insightful quality management and compliance processes.
- Lower total cost of ownership (TCO).
- Reduced average handle time (AHT).
- Increased first-call resolution (FCR).
- The ability to more easily add channels as they are needed or invented.
- Increased customer satisfaction (CSAT) and brand loyalty.

However, Frost & Sullivan believes there are myriad inhibitors to omnichannel success. First, the vast installed base of contact centers represents a tremendous mix of old and new channels, systems and applications, some on-premise and some in the cloud, each representing various investment levels. This has too often meant that stakeholders take their “eyes off the prize” of omnichannel in lieu of squeezing out the most from their existing investments. Second is the lack of cross-organizational support for omnichannel strategies. Budgetary issues, the reluctance to move off-premise to the cloud, and a misperception that pursuing omnichannel will result in multi-year projects hamper forward movement. Finally, there is a lack of broad market awareness of existing providers, platforms, and tools that can help businesses attain and maintain omnichannel excellence.

**“ Budgetary issues, the reluctance to move off-premise to the cloud, and a misperception that pursuing omnichannel will result in multi-year projects hamper forward movement.**

## Unification is Key to Omnichannel Excellence

LiveVox, with its cloud contact center platform, is one such provider in the market. LiveVox's next-generation contact center platform provides seamless, omnichannel communications across the organization, integrated with the core applications that drive contact center operations, including CRM, knowledge bases, and workforce optimization (WFO).

For instance, LiveVox's Unified CRM was purpose-built for the platform with a built-in contact manager capability, enabling better control of the conversation and customer journey. With unified customer profiles that automatically centralize all interactions across all channels and account information in a single location, the information flows between channels. Yet the platform can easily use information from other CRM platforms if desired.

Seamless integration extends to the management of the contact center as well, with a complete WFO suite that includes interaction and speech analytics, quality and performance management, and risk mitigation capabilities—all accessed and controlled through a single unified interface.

The ability to seamlessly act upon a customer profile to control the customer journey outcome is what helps turn agents into super agents. To do so requires the implementation of tools that provide the insights and knowledge needed to improve both AX and CX at any touchpoint along that journey.

To learn more about how the LiveVox cloud contact center platform can help you attain omnichannel excellence, visit: [www.livevox.com](http://www.livevox.com).



## NEXT STEPS

- ① **Schedule a meeting with our global team** to experience our thought leadership and to integrate your ideas, opportunities and challenges into the discussion.
- ② Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this white paper? Call us at 877.GoFrost and reference the paper you're interested in. We'll have an analyst get in touch with you.
- ③ Visit our **Digital Transformation** web page.
- ④ Attend one of our **Growth Innovation & Leadership (GIL)** events to unearth hidden growth opportunities.

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