



How VOC Can Empower Digital Self-Service Journeys

NICE

CONTENTS

- 2 The rise of digital omnichannel self-service
- 4 Put a company face on self-service
- 5 Be transparent about AI bots
- 6 Keep your finger on the pulse of your customers
- 7 Make feedback a natural part of self-service experiences
- 8 Turn feedback data into actionable insights
- 9 Use VOC and operational data to improve self-service offerings
- 10 Use VOC to deliver truly personalized CX across all experiences
- 11 Create impactful, self-enabled customer experiences

The **uncomfortable truth** about digital self-service

IT'S SO EASY FOR CUSTOMERS TO SWITCH

Advancements in digital commerce are impacting consumer behavior in ways that make it harder to earn customer loyalty. It's simply easier than ever to switch. It's easier than ever to complete a customer journey without speaking to anyone. It's easier than ever to choose a new brand with a great introductory offer—and then cancel later with a click.

If you haven't made a concerted effort to humanize your company's self-service digital experiences, customers may forget that there are real people behind the screens and start to feel like no one really values them as a customer, which makes them more likely to switch.

With customers' willingness to experiment with new brands at an all-time high¹, delivering memorable, self-enabled digital experiences is more vital than ever. But how do you execute an effective voice of the customer (VOC) program to inform the creation of such experiences... when you're not actually talking with as many customers?

This eBook explores the challenges of VOC in the hands-off world of self-directed digital experiences. It also explains how you can use transformational, modern tools to create impactful, valuable customer experiences—based on holistic insights gleaned from sources beyond traditional VOC.

The rise of digital omnichannel self-service

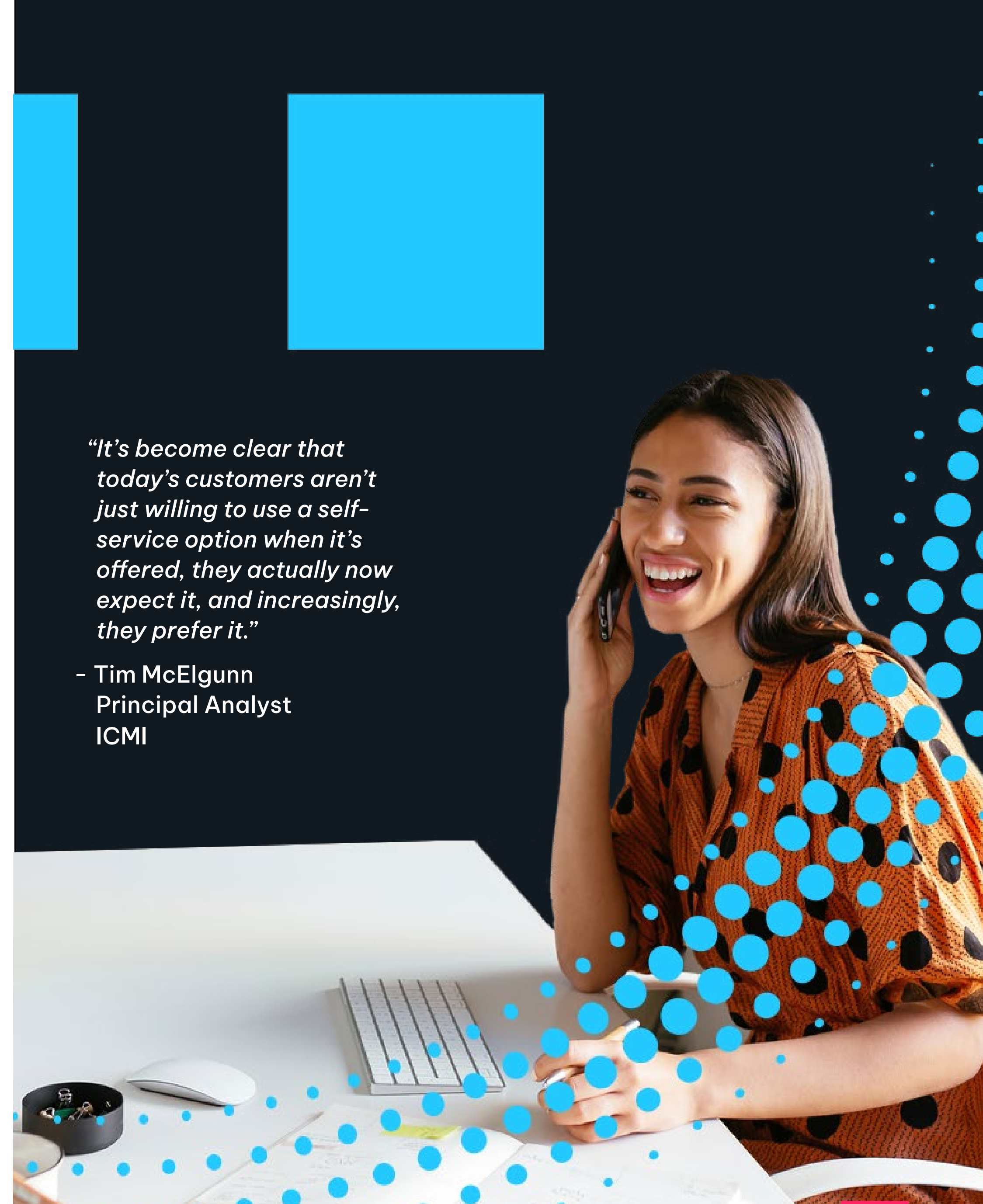
The recent ICMI State of the Contact Center Survey found that a significant majority of contact centers—70%—currently support self-service.²

Why the move to self-service? As ICMI Principal Analyst Tim McElgunn noted in a recent webinar,³ “It’s become clear that today’s customers aren’t just willing to use a self-service option when it’s offered, they actually now expect it, and increasingly, they prefer it.”

This means that if your organization either fails to provide self-service options, or worse, delivers options that fail to meet your customers’ expectations for self-enablement, you’ll likely see a negative impact on CSAT, loyalty, and revenue.

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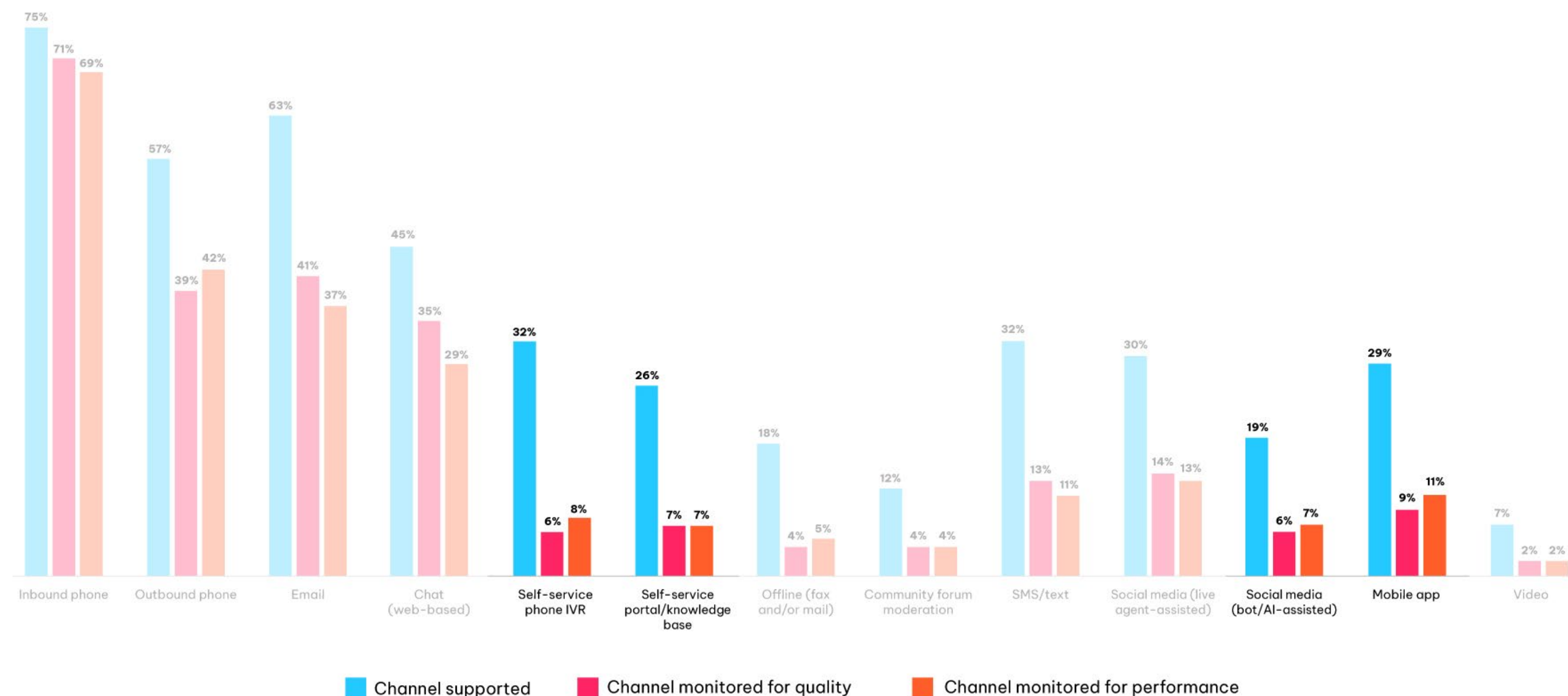
– Tim McElgunn
Principal Analyst
ICMI





A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE CX

But even in this increasingly omnichannel world, when it comes to measuring quality and performance, most CX teams are not monitoring or evaluating those factors in digital channels, as they typically do with phone—especially self-service channels. Alarming, fewer than 10% of the study respondents said that they regularly monitor digital self-service and social channels.⁴



Source: State of the Contact Center in 2022, ICMI, (2022)

That's a *huge* missed opportunity to improve customer experience in the channels that customers increasingly prefer—and a big risk for the 24% of survey respondents who said they are planning to add self-service.

Let's dig into how you can effectively include digital self-service and self-enabled channels when implementing a VOC program, and how to develop self-enabled experiences that encourage customer feedback.



Put a company face on **self-service**

When tempted to change brands, customers reflect on the experiences they've had with your brand and the people who work there—in a store, at check-in, calling to schedule an appointment or reservation, etc. These experiences give a brand a face. A face they've hopefully come to trust.

With self-service, customers don't have that traditional company face or voice that's friendly, personal, and professional creating a wave of positive brand perceptions around their experience. It's just a digital exchange on a screen: web, app, email, or chat.

When creating digital self-service experiences, it's vital that you think through both:

1. The nuts and bolts of self-enabling customers to accomplish a particular task or get desired information
2. How that experience will reflect on your brand and organization, creating a trusted face that breeds loyalty

Use a modern VOC tool to evaluate your success with both aspects.

For example, say you're just trying to create an easy and frictionless experience and you're able to accomplish that—your web analytics show that customers can quickly complete their desired task through your automated system. But, unless you ask, you won't know how customers *perceive* the experience—they may find it clunky or awkward and it may take them longer than they'd prefer to accomplish what they set out to do.

That's where direct customer feedback comes in.

Additionally, understanding when customers contact the company about self-serve channels will help you prioritize your digital transformation efforts, and understand how to troubleshoot when experiences aren't what customers expect.

Be transparent about AI bots

When planning self-serve experiences, keep in mind that if people are interacting with an AI bot and they don't realize that it's a bot, when they do realize it, they get very angry because they feel like they've been fooled.⁵ That broken trust will leave customers with a negative feeling about your brand.

So first, we advise transparency when designing your self-service programs, but also, when asking customers for feedback about an automated experience, such as a chatbot, it's important to learn not only did the bot help them accomplish a desired task, but also, did the experience leave a positive impression about your brand.



Keep your finger on the **pulse of your customers**

If you're only asking for customer feedback in your voice channel, you're missing most of the story!

The shift to digital omnichannel journeys creates an opportunity to gather more customer feedback across more touchpoints and gain deeper, holistic CX insights. Those insights will help you deliver better customer and agent experiences.

You can dramatically increase the number of people who respond by asking for feedback in additional channels that your customers use every day.

An omnichannel approach to capturing more customer feedback will help you:

- Reach more customers and fully understand channel or touchpoint experiences
- Pinpoint root causes of dissatisfaction and churn across channels
- Uncover opportunities to address systemic issues
- Use diverse sets of feedback to identify opportunities for digital transformation improvements, as well as selective agent coaching



Make feedback a natural part of self-service experiences

There's an inherent challenge around capturing VOC when the number of self-service journeys is increasing.

Finding a way to ask for feedback in a way that feels like a natural part of the experience requires that you map out the digital customer journey and structure your feedback program to ask relevant, contextualized questions. Use what you know to ask the next the best question—and then use that information to support the next best action that you take.

A few key points to keep in mind:



1.

Feedback requests shouldn't feel like a bolt-on

The key to gathering feedback on self-service experiences is that it needs to be embedded within the channel whenever possible. Either the questions should be part of the experience, so the customer feels like they're still interacting, or immediately after. Especially when customers choose to do something on their own, they don't want to feel like they're being forced to do something extra just for your company. After all, they've typically chosen self-service as a way to save time.

2.

Feedback requests should be contextual

You've probably experienced feedback opportunities where you were asked a question and thought: Why are they asking this? It makes no sense considering what I was trying to do. Or worse: They *know* that I've had a negative experience, so why are they asking if I'm satisfied?

If the customer isn't already frustrated about an issue, that disconnect can create a negative experience in and of itself. That's why it's important to use *all* of the information that you have about a customer interaction to ensure that you only ask relevant, contextualized questions.

3.

Feedback requests should be purposeful

When it's easy for customers to provide feedback, it's more likely that they'll respond—and feel good about doing it. One caveat is that you don't want to overwhelm customers with feedback requests, which can slow them down and become annoying, e.g., asking “Is that what you meant?” 10 times during a chat exchange. That creates a negative experience. This is another reason why it's important to map out the key journey touchpoints where it makes sense to ask customers how things are going and whether they were able to accomplish what they set out to do.



Turn feedback data into **actionable insights**

An impactful VOC program doesn't just collect relevant feedback seamlessly, it delivers actionable insights that will help your team continually improve CX. To achieve real gains, you need modern VOC technology that can combine and analyze structured and unstructured data using AI, machine learning, and analytics.

Structured information includes CSAT, quantitative reviews and scores, customer effort ratings, and NPS. Unstructured data is the qualitative feedback that you gather from customers throughout their journeys that provides a deeper understanding of why they've provided certain ratings, what they want and need, and what they prefer—it's the "color commentary" that informs the hard numbers; an opportunity to deep dive into responses and provide true VOC.

Structured Data

Quantitative feedback

"The hard numbers"

- CSAT
- Quantitative scores and reviews
- Customer effort ratings
- NPS

Unstructured Data

Qualitative feedback

"The color commentary"

- Customer open responses about:
 - Why they've provided a certain rating
 - What they want and need
 - What they prefer
 - What could be improved



Use **VOC and operational data** to improve self-service offerings

When customers choose self-service, they expect to be able to complete some action on their own. So, to evaluate whether your self-service offerings are effective, operationally, you can look at usage, drop offs, time spent, and what customers do after trying a self-serve channel—are they starting with self-service and end up having to call the contact center?

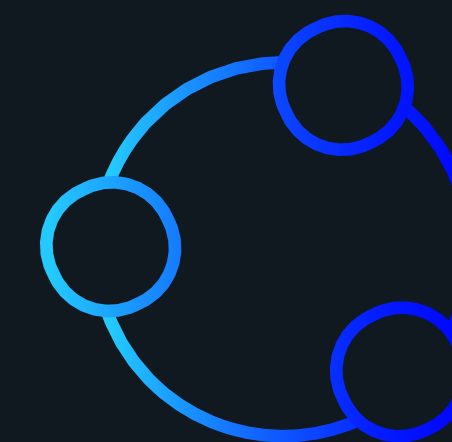
“The voice of the customer goes beyond what they tell you in response to the questions you asked. It’s also revealed in the actions that they take in using your systems, so it’s critical to have that feedback loop where you’re constantly evolving and improving on your digital Interface for those customers.”⁶

- Tim McElgunn, Principal Analyst, ICMI

If your operational and VOC systems aren’t fully integrated (they should be!), it’s important that your contact center agents simply ask customers whether they used another channel prior to calling in, or ask within your VOC survey. That’s important to the broader definition around first contact resolution (FCR).

If a customer started in a self-serve channel and later called the contact center, it likely signals a problem, because they were looking to have a self-enabled experience...which ultimately became an assisted one.

It’s important to explore not just whether there’s resolution, but are customers’ needs being met overall. Your contact center agents should ask customers not only whether their issue, question or problem was resolved, but was it addressed in a way and at a speed that was acceptable to them.



“The voice of the customer goes beyond what they tell you in response to the questions you asked. It’s also revealed in the actions that they take in using your systems, so it’s critical to have that feedback loop where you’re constantly evolving and improving on your digital Interface for those customers.”

- Tim McElgunn
Principal Analyst
ICMI

Use VOC to deliver **truly personalized CX** across all experiences

Another advantage of a unified, complete CX platform is that you can use customer feedback and operational data insights from self-service experiences to deliver highly-personalized assisted experiences. That's important, because most customers want and expect all of their interactions with a company to be personalized.

In a recent Gartner survey, **71% of B2C and 86% of B2B customers said that they expect companies to be well-informed about their personal information** during an interaction.⁷

Here's how an experience looks in action, when using a unified CX platform:

Let's say you're a financial services firm and a customer just went on your website and applied for a home loan, but they were denied due to a low credit score. They're disappointed and provide negative feedback. Then, they call into your contact center to talk about something unrelated, such as a question about a recent transaction.

Imagine if your agents had real-time information about that loan denial, so they'd know not to try to cross-sell them a home loan. Potentially, agents could even refer them to helpful credit score improvement programs and transform the overall customer experience from negative to positive.

Personalization can even put a human face on a system welcome, so that customers can be told: "Thanks for joining us, Lisa" or simply "Welcome back!" to make customers feel valued, which boosts loyalty.



Customer loyalty is important for maintaining a healthy business because loyal customers:

- Make regular repeat purchases
- Buy more with each purchase
- Tell personal stories about experiences with your brand
- Refer friends and family to your brand
- Advocate for your brand to a wider audience
- Often pay more for similar or the same products

Create **impactful, self-enabled** customer experiences

If your organization is moving towards more AI-powered digital self-service, the deeper you go into your data, into customer behavior, operational metrics, and direct customer feedback, the better those systems will meet customers' rising expectations and preference for self-enabled journeys—and the more impactful they'll be.

Modern VOC solutions can help you collect customer feedback as an embedded, seamless part of the customer experience—across all channels and touchpoints, both self-service and assisted—and deliver actionable insights that will help you continually personalize your self-service digital offerings, and improve your CX and business metrics.

¹ Forrester Blog, [Loyalty is a Lifeline During the Inflation Crisis](#). (2022)

² [The State of the Contact Center in 2022](#), ICMI, (2022)

³ Webinar: [Hearing What They Aren't Telling You: Measuring and Optimizing the Self-Service Customer Experience](#). (2022)

⁴ [Key Takeaways from ICMI's 2022 State of the Contact Center Survey](#), ICMI, (2022)

⁵ Scientific American, [People Don't Learn to Trust Bots](#). (2020)

⁶ Webinar: [Hearing What They Aren't Telling You: Measuring and Optimizing the Self-Service Customer Experience](#). (2022)

⁷ Gartner, [How to Straddle Personalization and Privacy](#). (2022)



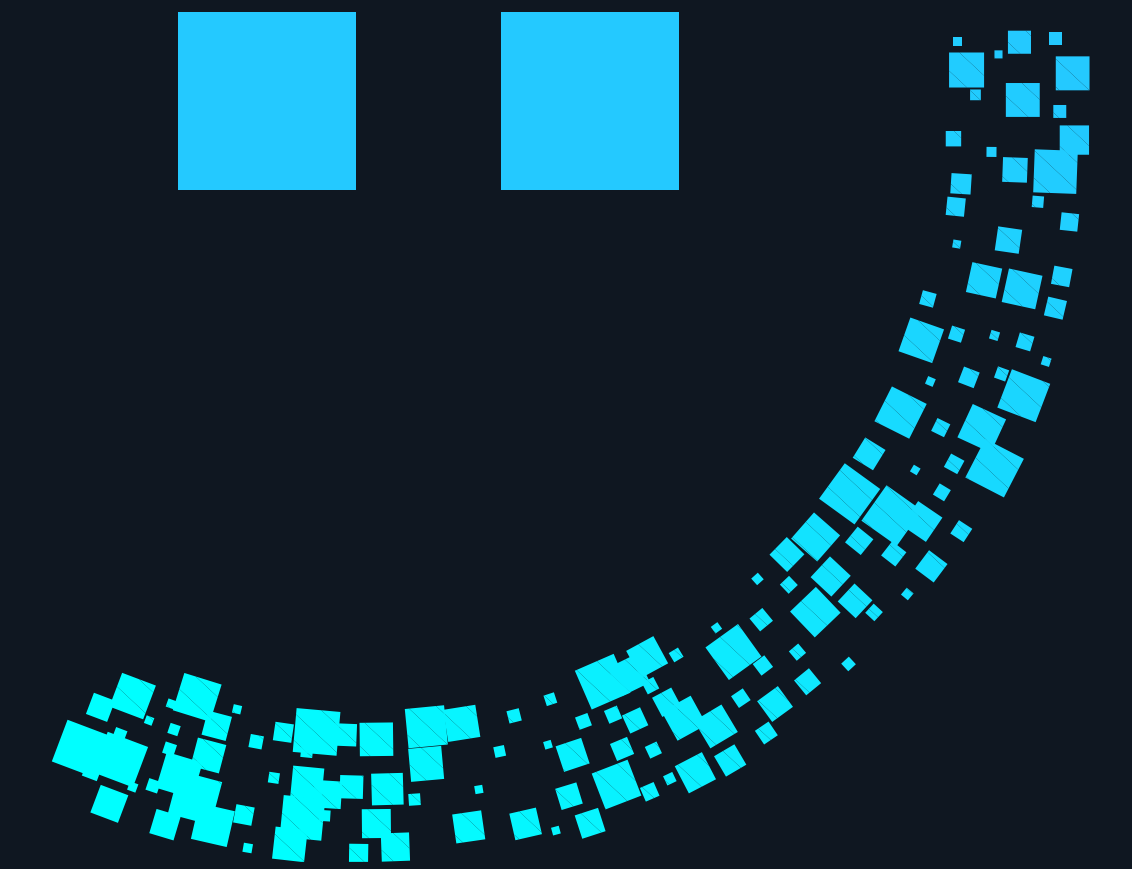
Drive more value from your VOC program

Learn how NICE can help you close the loop, uncover valuable insights, and take meaningful action from customer feedback.

Watch the Demo Video

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About NICE

With NICE, it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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