

SPECIAL REPORT:

# 2019 CONTACT CENTER TRENDS: REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



# INTRODUCTION

For the third year in a row, customer experience (CX) measures have remained flat. As Forrester notes, “...what little movement that did happen was toward the middle of our scale, where 62% of brands bunched up in an undifferentiated clump.” Similarly, a study by Bain and the father of the Net Promoter Score, Fred Reichheld, found that 80% of CEOs believe they offer a great customer experience but only 5% of their customers agree. Houston, we (still) have a problem!

With a vibrant economy and unemployment at an all-time low, there is little reason for businesses to stay status quo. Investment in CX is one part of the overall strategy, but according to multiple reports, [firms will use 70% of repatriated money and recent tax cuts for the buyback of shares](#).

With new cloud CX technology available and customer experience being the key way to differentiate in the digital age per the [Wall Street Journal](#), it's more crucial now for firms to break from the pack and ride the next wave on the CX tsunami.

Additionally, 2018 was the year where data privacy took center stage. From Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg testifying in Washington, D.C. to the enactment of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe, businesses can no longer turn a blind eye to the question, What are you doing with my information? Data privacy will most certainly be a main driver on the CX landscape in 2019 for customers who want personalized service but are wary of sharing too much personal data.

Chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI) were also everywhere in the CX discussion. Without further ado, here is our list of the top trends for 2019.

## #1: THE CHATBOT UPRISING ...sort of

In 2017, [web chat](#) was the fastest growing channel, while [chatbots](#) (a.k.a. virtual customer assistants or VCAs) were used by less than 2% of all businesses, according to Gartner. However, with the explosion of AI spending (spoiler alert: AI is prevalent on this list) and an increased knowledge base, chatbots will eventually become the first stop in the CX journey. A recent survey by [Spiceworks revealed that 40% of large businesses will implement chatbots in 2019](#).

The main driver of this is obvious: chatbots never sleep and are a less expensive option than traditional customer service agents (i.e., humans). In a lot of industries, chatbots can perform routine and/or repetitive tasks with ease. While [75% of consumers say humans provide the most effective customer service](#), 76% of those same consumers still want the option to interact with digital channels.

The deployment of chatbots also depends a lot on the industry. A recent report on chatbots shows that in the e-commerce realm, [34% of consumers would prefer to interact with some sort of AI](#). However, it's important to note that retail chatbots focus on simple, specific tasks where they can be effective, such as order history, tracking, and returns. More complex tasks still need to be handled by humans.



“Specialized use cases for bots with bots trained to address and resolve specific customer problems will become more prevalent versus most bots today, which are often not focused and not highly effective. Brighter bots will emerge based on reviewing specific customer journeys and building bots to address those journeys. These bots will triage basic information and resolve the issue. And in cases where they can’t, then the interaction will be escalated to the right human with all context from bot conversation for a conversation that seamlessly blends bots and humans.”

— Ted Hunting, SVP of Marketing at Bright Pattern

## BRIGHT PATTERN QUICK TIPS FOR BOT & AI SUCCESS

### **#1 No Silos for Bots and New Messengers**

Don't deploy bots or messengers as new silos independent from your existing channels, or CSAT will decrease as friction increases.

### **#2 Humans and Bots Working as One**

Let bots do what they do best and humans do what they do best.

### **#3 Digital Channels of Choice**

To stay relevant, it is key that your company handle not just classic channels but also emerging digital channels like bots, messengers (e.g., Facebook Messenger, LINE, and Telegram) and video.

### **#4 Digital Conversations for a Mobile World**

Companies should take a mobile, personalized approach to their communications. Put the conversation where people are.

### **#5 Cloud Customer Service Is a Key Enabler**

Look to the cloud. A true “born from the cloud” customer service architecture where all channels are native versus bolt-on can give you a nimble platform in which you are the disruptor versus the disrupted.

**Read E-book: How to Win with AI and Bots in Your Customer Service Operation**

## #2: TRUE CLOUD OMNICHANNEL ARRIVES

Omnichannel is one of the most misused and misunderstood phrases in the customer experience industry and most of the confusion has been caused by technology vendors who have claimed to offer it as they jumped on the omnichannel wagon. True omnichannel, simply put, is when the customer can have a seamless, single conversation across channels. For example, when you later come back for a web chat or you text a company, the company would respond with, “Sue, are you back to check on that computer order?” instead of asking for your name, rank, and serial number or what language you speak, every time you reach out from another channel. Omnichannel is a single conversation across channels like voice, chat, email, text, and mobile, for example.

Customers have been demanding a true omnichannel experience for years. They want more choices in digital channels, a better mobile experience, more self-service options, and effortless, personal service across all channels. However, even though the technology is available, according to a Gartner and IQPC surveys, only 5–10% of companies are offering true omnichannel, with most interactions being siloed across channels with high effort and low personalization.

Part of the problem lies in the ability to unify multiple data silos. Companies have invested vast amounts of time and money to on-premises software and may see the move to the cloud as another hurdle to providing true omnichannel. With today’s robust, cloud-based solutions like Bright Pattern, it’s easier than ever to unify these data silos and finally provide the customer with near limitless service options. In 2019, expect the number of firms offering cloud-based omnichannel to rise.



“We believe omnichannel CX is maintaining context across multiple contacts irrespective of channel. Integration of separate products is ill-positioned to achieve omnichannel capability, which has to be whole and organic to be worth anything. At Bright Pattern, the omnichannel vision is a fundamental part of our technology on all levels.”

— Konstantin Kishinsky, CTO and Founder of Bright Pattern

## #3: INCREASED PERSONALIZATION BALANCED WITH DATA PRIVACY

Dimension Data and others predict the next wave of customer experience will involve increased personalization. But that personalization will require companies having access to personal data. The amount of data we produce daily is staggering, to the tune of [2.5 quintillion bytes every 24 hours](#).

Addressing concerns about data privacy, in May of 2018, the EU enacted sweeping data privacy reform with the [GDPR](#). Similar regulations are sure to make their way to the United States in the near future to protect social media accounts, health records (as with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA), and credit card information (as with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, or [PCI DSS](#)). Additionally, in a recent report by SAP, [72% of US consumers expect retailers to protect their interests and 66% want retailers to be transparent in how they use personal data](#).

There is a fine line in retail between personalization and the misuse of data. Shoppers expect to receive special discounts and offers based on their purchasing habits, yet consumers hate providing more information than just an email address or phone number. One thing is clear, the same SAP report shows that 79% of US consumers will leave a brand if their personal data is used without their knowledge.

In 2019, as consumers demand more choices in channels, personalization of data will require the use of detailed opt-ins and consent forms. Also, expect to see companies publish more reports on how data is used. Additionally, companies may incorporate data privacy and transparency as part of their content marketing strategy, boosting SEO by making themselves part of the story. As Small Business Trends notes, “[...give the customers a peek into what’s happening \[behind the scenes\]. Leverage the opportunities you have in this area to forge stronger relationships with your audience.](#)”



“Personalization as part of an omnichannel conversation is now possible with cloud customer experience platforms like Bright Pattern, but the level of personalization that companies provide will be driven by customer preferences to opt-in. Data needs to be in the control of consumers, and consumers will make the choice to opt-in as a way to receive more personalized customer experiences.”

— Michael McCloskey, CEO of Bright Pattern

## GDPR CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Establish an information security policy**
- ✓ **Stock your knowledge base with procedures**
- ✓ **Limit access to customer data**
- ✓ **Use contact center software that can erase customer content**
- ✓ **Be transparent in how, where, and why data is being processed**

## #4: POWERFUL ENTERPRISE CX SOLUTIONS ABOUND FOR MIDSIZE COMPANIES



As legacy software gets replaced by newer, cloud-based software, midsize firms are becoming disruptors and formidable opponents, often beating the large, established players. Cloud-based CX solutions like Bright Pattern are nimble and provide all the same (and often more) features as their behemoth on-premises solutions without the need for an army of costly IT professionals. Such cloud solutions have all of the power of the most powerful on-premises solutions, but with ease of use and cost that is significantly better. Additionally, implementing traditional on-premises software can sometimes take multiple years and [the failure rate is an astounding 75%](#). For midsize firms, implementation can be done in weeks for a fraction of the cost.

Midsize businesses also benefit from enterprise CX solutions through the ability to tweak and make changes as needed. Furthermore, cloud-based software now includes critical CX components, such as omnichannel quality management (QM) and workforce management (WFM), an advanced integration partner network, reliability (e.g., 100% uptime), scalability, security, and compliance—all with just a connection to the Internet.



“Solutions that the largest enterprises have been striving for years to build with old technology now can be implemented by midsize businesses in weeks, with business users able to make changes easily. It’s enterprise power but with ease of use and low cost for midsize businesses or the largest enterprises. The smaller guys can now truly beat the bigger guys when it comes to a brighter customer experience.”

— John O’Brien, Country Manager of Bright Pattern Australia

# BRIGHT PATTERN QUICK TIPS FOR MIDSIZE

## **#1 Get Top Two Channels Working as One**

Get your second most important channel working seamlessly with your voice operations.

## **#2 Provide Agents Full Customer History**

If a customer is calling in, the agent should have access to the customers' prior activities regardless of channel.

## **#3 Use the Preferred Channel**

Customers want to speak with companies the same way they speak with their friends and family. Digital channels are becoming more common.

## **#4 Give Agents Help**

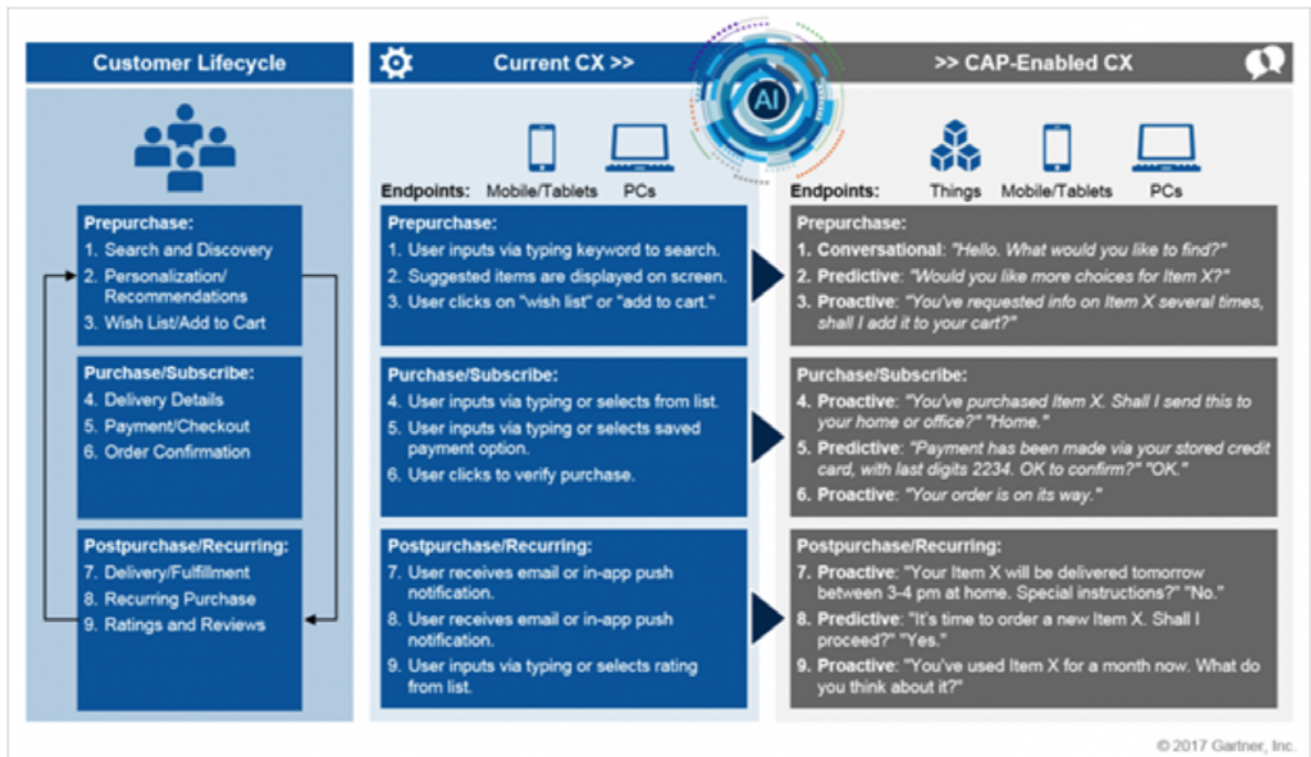
AI is no longer available to large enterprises only. SMBs can partner with cloud contact center vendors with AI capabilities in a cost-effective way that helps agents perform even better!

**Read E-book: Top Tips for Midsize Companies to Win the Customer Experience Game**

## **#5: THE RISE OF CONVERSATIONAL INTERFACES IN CUSTOMER SERVICE: “ALEXA, GET ME CUSTOMER SERVICE!”**

Smart speakers are no longer trending—they are here to stay. A 2018 report by Edison Research and NPR boasts that [43 million Americans own at least one device](#). Additionally, the smart speaker is now a segment of the smart home hub platform, which also includes smart displays. Early applications were limited to rudimentary tasks like asking about the weather or listening to a podcast. However, as the knowledge base continues to grow and third-party developers create more robust applications, expect voice-based user experience (VUX) to be an integral part of CX.

This rise of conversational interfaces in customer service may also solve the problem for 90% of consumers who prefer self-service but loathe the incessant tree of choices presented by a traditional IVR. In an article posted last year, Gartner provided a possible, voice-driven roadmap for this new CX channel, as shown.



“Best-in-breed AI and conversational interfaces can be easily coupled with your cloud customer experience platform to make customer interactions simpler and faster. With Bright Pattern’s conversational IVR, you are not stuck in an old tree of choices. You simply ask for what you want and AI does the rest. You lead the conversation—the IVR doesn’t lead you.”

— Konstantin Kishinsky, CTO and Founder of Bright Pattern

## BRIGHT PATTERN AI

Bright Pattern Contact Center empowers contact centers with a number of exciting cognitive technologies that automate tasks and focus humans on interesting work. Technologies such as voice transcription, Natural Language Understanding, meaning extraction, and bot training are built-in to our contact center solution and integrated from partners.

**Learn More About Bright Pattern’s AI Features and Functionality**



## #6: GROWTH OF MOBILE AND NEW CHANNELS IN CX



It might make you feel old to hear that [mobile apps](#) have been around for over 15 years. Beginning with the simple task of messaging (specifically, email), mobile apps exploded after the launch of the Apple iPhone in 2007. In 2018, it has been forecasted that [consumers will download a total of 205.4 billion apps, and by 2022, that number is expected to rise to 258 billion downloads](#). Not surprisingly, the COPC has reported that mobile care will increase by more than 40% in 2018.

Undoubtedly, businesses have seen this shift to the mobile space and have developed their platforms to cater to the rising needs of younger, tech-savvy consumers. Stores like Express and Victoria's Secret encourage consumers to shop within their app. Fast food outlets like McDonalds, Starbucks, and Wendy's are offering special discounts and order pick-ups. Even financial institutions are offering robust in-app services, like check deposit, bill pay, and detailed account information. However, what if there is a problem during your in-app experience?

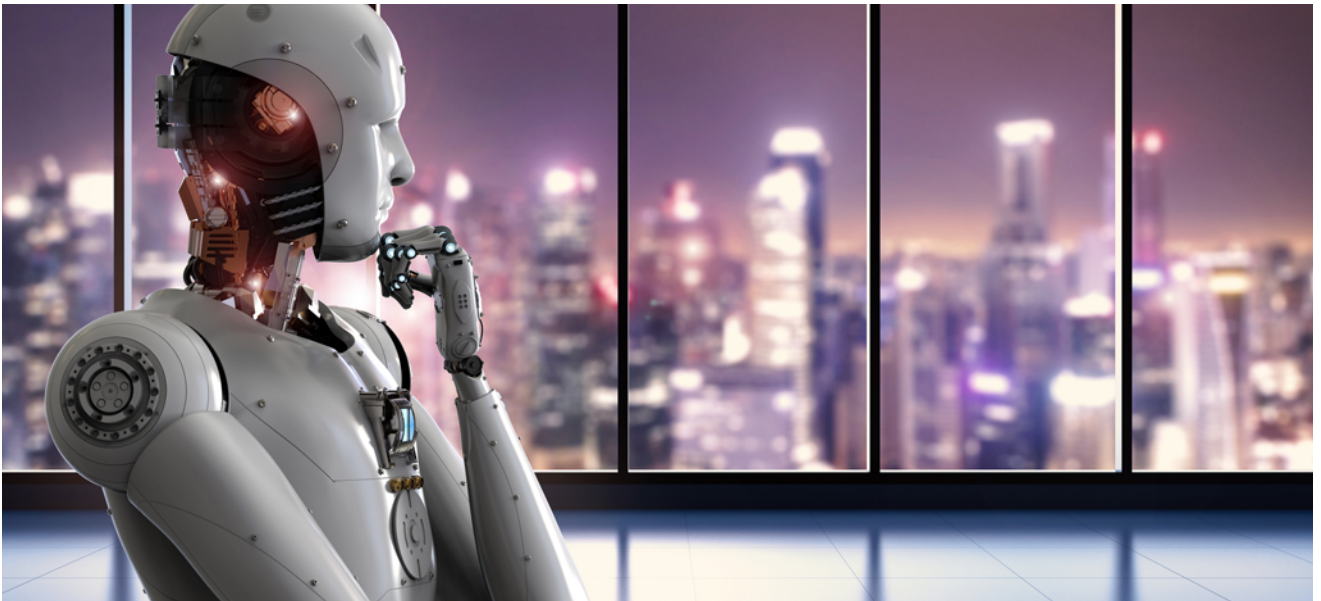
Mobile care within an app is opening new channels in customer experience (CX). You can now have a chat within the app itself or send pictures, videos, or even docs on the go. Perhaps you just purchased a new TV from a big box retailer and are having problems installing it. In-app customer care could allow you to share a picture of the wiring in real-time so support help could troubleshoot the problem and text you a picture of how to connect the cables as you sit behind the TV with your mobile phone.



“Fintech and high-tech companies are reaping the benefits of in-app customer service. In-app self-service options save consumers and agents time, and having the option to call, chat, or video with a live agent from within your company’s app will delight customers, leading to higher customer satisfaction, lower in-app shopping cart abandonment, and more loyal customers. Bright Pattern provides consumers with the ability to text a company while on the go or use mobile channels like Facebook Messenger. And even full in-app mobile experiences, such as text, document sharing, and chatting from within the app itself are now possible with innovative platforms like Bright Pattern.”

— Shelby Bozekowski, Marketing Manager at Bright Pattern

## #7: AI WITH CX IMPACT



As mentioned previously, spending on AI has increased significantly in the last few years. In fact, [60% of C-level executives say they plan to increase AI spending by 50% over last year](#). However, according to a Forrester survey, 55% of firms have not yet achieved any tangible business outcomes from AI, and 43% say it's too soon to tell. Unless it is deployed strategically and with specific customer outcomes as a target, AI may soon become another addition to the technology trash heap for companies who don't know how to implement it effectively.

In trend #1, we discussed the future of chatbots and their benefit to overall CX. However, this is just one part of the bigger AI picture. Simplified tasks aside, AI is a powerful tool that should be leveraged for more practical and specific CX applications. The following two examples represent the future of AI:



**Consumer side:** Imagine a loan application where a customer fills out a partial form. AI identifies the missing items, emails the customer for the missing items, and then automatically gathers and fills in the final information—all without a human.



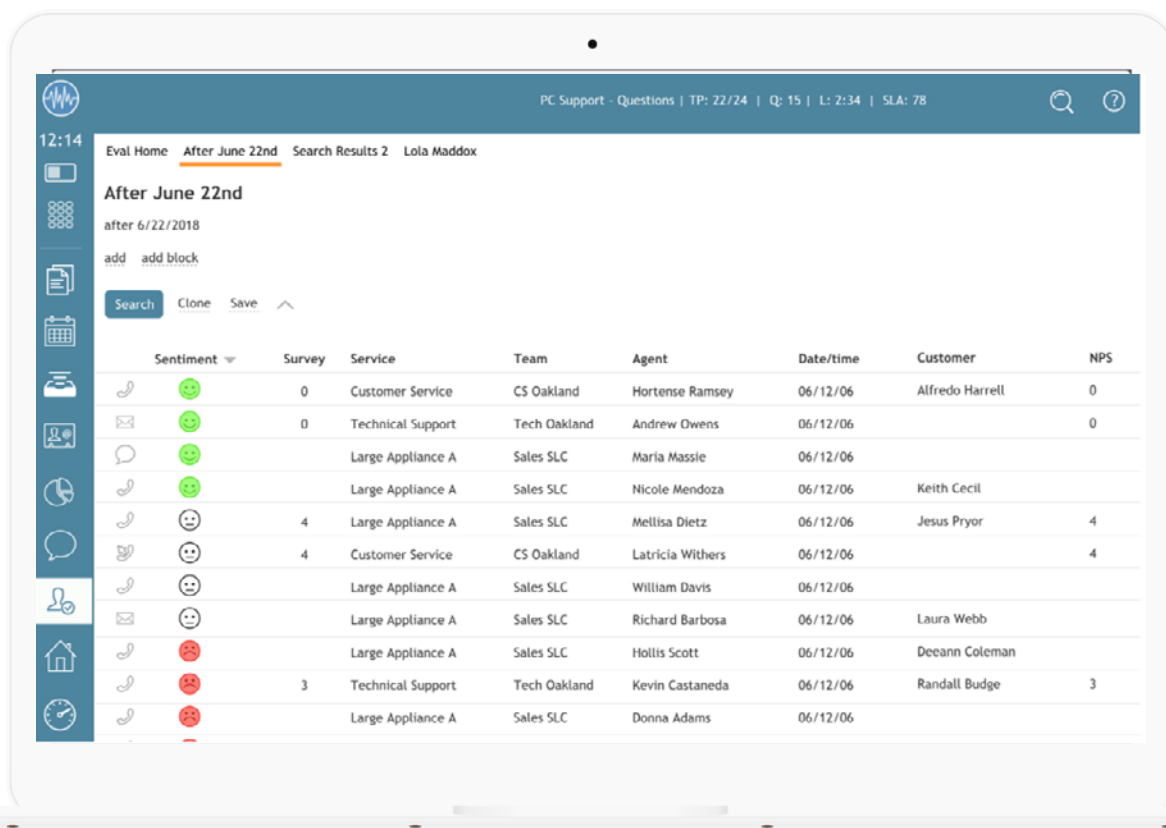
**Agent side:** AI will be helping agents by providing chat or text or voice response to agents to better respond to customers using natural language processing (NLP) or natural language understanding (NLU) technologies. Imagine a chat where the customer mentions “Maui” and the agent is presented with hotel recommendations in Maui automatically via AI and can then reply to the customer via phone, chat, email, or text.

# #8: CONSISTENT EXPERIENCES ACROSS CHANNELS WITH OMNICHANNEL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (QM)

Ten years ago, service levels differed drastically across industries. Think of the different level of service received from Nordstrom versus your cable company or government agency. But in this age of disruption where industries overlap, consistent customer service levels are now the expected norm across industries. This same trend is also coming to channels—customers expect similar customer experiences across a growing number of channels and they don't want to wait two days for an email response when a text or chat is replied to immediately. No matter the channel, consumers expect consistency and speed in CX across all industries and all channels.

So how do you win when the bar raised by customers has been raised and you are faced with an ever-increasing number of channels? Your company's customer experience is judged in seconds and omnichannel quality management is the key for your company to offer consistent service across channels.

Companies that utilize multiple channels will need native quality management (QM) measurements for both traditional and emerging channels. These measurements could include Net Promoter Score (NPS) or customer satisfaction (CSAT) by channel or even sentiment as determined by AI, as shown by the "happy face" for a given channel interaction or journey type.



The screenshot displays a QM dashboard interface. At the top, it shows 'PC Support - Questions | TP: 22/24 | Q: 15 | L: 2:34 | SLA: 78'. Below this, there are navigation tabs: 'Eval Home', 'After June 22nd', 'Search Results 2', and 'Lola Maddox'. The main content area is titled 'After June 22nd' and includes a date filter 'after 6/22/2018' and buttons for 'add', 'add block', 'Search', 'Clone', and 'Save'. A table lists various customer interactions with columns for Sentiment, Survey, Service, Team, Agent, Date/time, Customer, and NPS.

Sentiment	Survey	Service	Team	Agent	Date/time	Customer	NPS
😊	0	Customer Service	CS Oakland	Hortense Ramsey	06/12/06	Alfredo Harrell	0
😊	0	Technical Support	Tech Oakland	Andrew Owens	06/12/06		0
😊		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Maria Massie	06/12/06		
😊		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Nicole Mendoza	06/12/06	Keith Cecil	
😐	4	Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Mellisa Dietz	06/12/06	Jesus Pryor	4
😐	4	Customer Service	CS Oakland	Latricia Withers	06/12/06		4
😐		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	William Davis	06/12/06		
😐		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Richard Barbosa	06/12/06	Laura Webb	
😞		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Hollis Scott	06/12/06	Deeann Coleman	
😞	3	Technical Support	Tech Oakland	Kevin Castaneda	06/12/06	Randall Budge	3
😞		Large Appliance A	Sales SLC	Donna Adams	06/12/06		

These measurements are possible in a platform like Bright Pattern because all channels and the measurement of those channels are native to the platform and not siloed. This lets you see and measure SLAs for all channels without having to go to different systems for each channel, each of which has its own reporting.

## #9: COMPANIES WILL FINALLY REALIZE TRUE OMNICHANNEL AND THEN IT WILL DISAPPEAR

What did you say? How can the more innovative companies finally start to implement omnichannel and then see it disappear? This is a trend that won't happen right away but the seeds for it will be planted in 2019. As companies implement true omnichannel and then continually streamline those journeys across channels, the journey from the customer standpoint will become more effortless and personal. Customers will not focus on each channel, and the friction they are experiencing but will instead focus on the journey itself as the channels fade into the background, and in the best case, disappear.



“As journeys across channels become the norm, they will then be continually improved by companies to make them easier than ever before. At some point, those journeys will be perceived by consumers as one conversation and the channels will not be the focus—the fast, easy journey will be the focus.

It will be a totally customer-focused journey centered around the customer, not the company. The technology for these easy, personal conversations exists today at Bright Pattern and we are excited to see and help create this new world of CX. At some point, it will be the new norm.”

— Ted Hunting, SVP of Marketing at Bright Pattern

### About Bright Pattern

Bright Pattern Contact Center software simplifies omnichannel customer service for customers, agents, and contact center managers. Bright Pattern's cloud contact center solutions are used globally in over 26 countries and 12 languages by companies of all sizes.

