

2020 Corporate Insights and Initiatives

A Year Like No Other



Executive Summary

The 2020 Corporate Edition of the Customer Experience Management Benchmark (CXMB) Series marks the ninth year of publication and the 17th volume in the series. The CXMB Series continues to be a joint research effort between Execs In The Know and COPC Inc. The intent of the series is to investigate consumer and corporate experiences and perspectives related to customer care, providing valuable insights to customer experience (CX) leaders.

The year 2020 was one like no other for both consumers and organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic and its associated social and economic restrictions forced organizations to transition contact-center staff to work-from-home (WFH) environments virtually overnight and change how consumers interact with those organizations.

The focus of this year's corporate research has been to understand how businesses have responded to the unexpected challenges posed by the pandemic and how it has affected their operations and customers. We have explored the impact of COVID-19 on strategic initiatives, adoption of WFH strategies, channel management, employee-engagement efforts, and overall impact to CX.

As in previous years, we have also compared certain results from the 2020 Consumer Edition to those of the Corporate Edition to uncover where consumer and corporate perspectives align and where they diverge.

As we explored the responses from 169 organizations, the following key themes emerged:

1. COVID-19 forced the acceleration of many organizations' strategic initiatives.
2. Despite COVID-19, improving CX remains a priority.
3. Self-service technologies (SSTs) witnessed significant growth and adoption.
4. Increased WFH strategies will likely be retained after the pandemic.

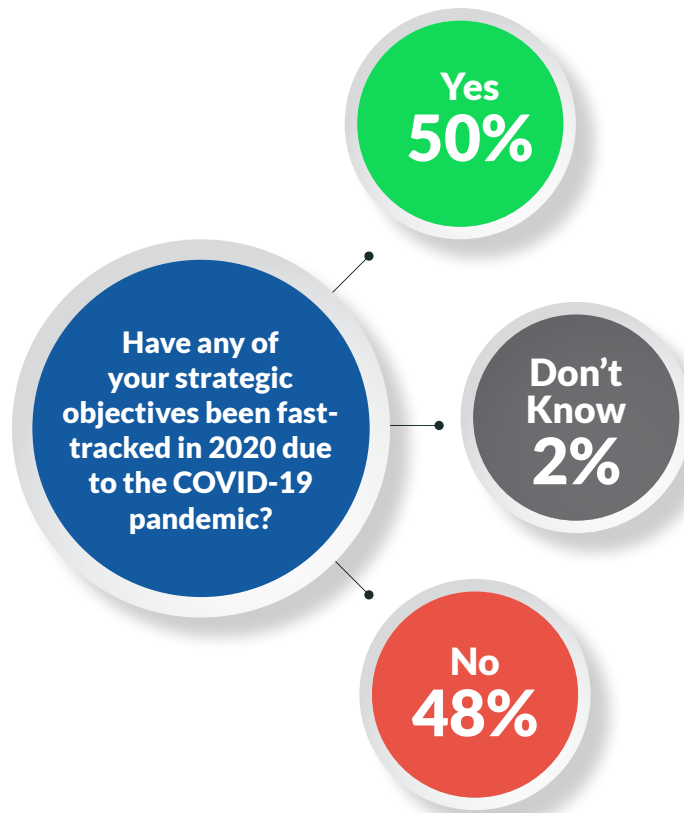
This Executive Summary previews these key findings from our latest research, with the complete 2020 Corporate Edition to be released in February 2021 in conjunction with the Execs In The Know CustomerCONNECT virtual event. We hope the information in the report will once again provide valuable insights for the Execs In The Know community and professionals in the wider customer-contact industry.



The complete CXMB Series 2020 Corporate Edition will be released in conjunction with Execs In The Know's CustomerCONNECT virtual event, taking place **February 23-24, 2021**. Attendees will receive an advance copy of the full report before it is made available to the public.

For more information regarding CustomerCONNECT, visit **ExecsInTheKnow.com**.

COVID-19 FORCED THE ACCELERATION OF MANY ORGANIZATIONS' STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

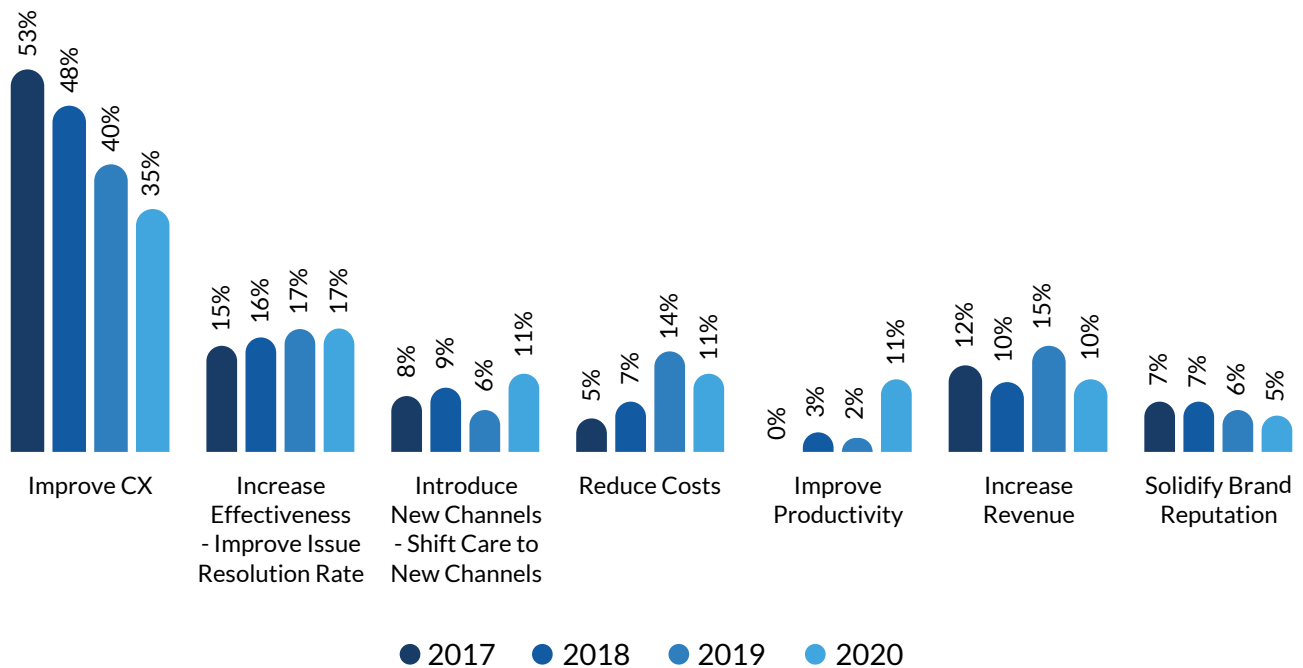


Half of the respondents surveyed stated that strategic objectives were fast-tracked due to COVID-19, including:

- Focus on SSTs
- Increased use of newer technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), analytics, and robotic process automation (RPA)
- Shift in staffing strategies, primarily WFH
- Business continuity planning (BCP)
- Employee engagement efforts

DESPITE COVID-19, IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) REMAINS A PRIORITY

What will be the top priority of your company's leadership regarding CX management in the coming year?



Thirty-five percent of those surveyed stated that improving CX will be their top priority in 2021. Another 17% stated that improving issue resolution is a priority. So although organizations were faced with many challenges, a focus on the customer is still top of mind. Specific improvement initiatives highlighted by our respondents include:

- Improving consistency and creating greater ease of navigation across channels
- Implementing holistic approaches for measuring CX across channels
- Better utilizing customer feedback to improve CX including:
 - > Additional metrics (First Contact Resolution, Customer Value Score)
 - > Feedback programs (call-backs to dissatisfied customers, voice-of-the-customer analysis)
 - > Special teams / groups to ensure the highest standards of service delivery
 - > Customer-review boards and cross-functional CX task forces
- Proactively following up with customers who had negative experiences

SELF-SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES (SSTs) WITNESSED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH AND ADOPTION

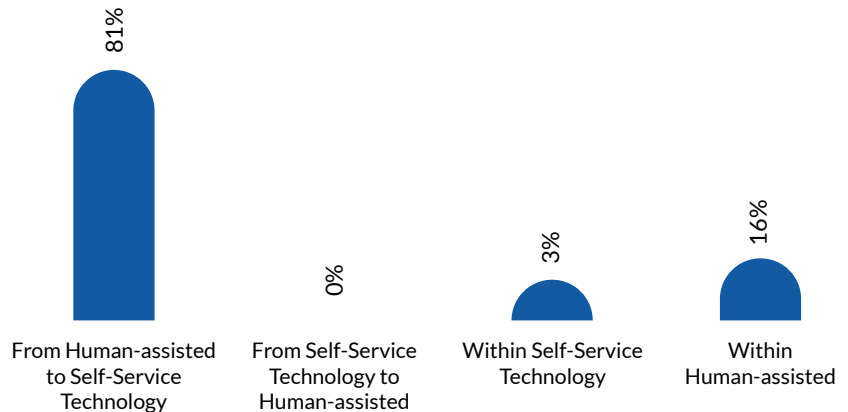
Many organizations experienced significant growth and adoption of SSTs. Key findings include:

- **Growth in SSTs compared to human-assisted channels**

- > 62% of respondents stated that SST channels had volume growth while only 29% stated that their organizations witnessed growth in human-assisted channels.

- **Traffic shift from human-assisted channels to SSTs**

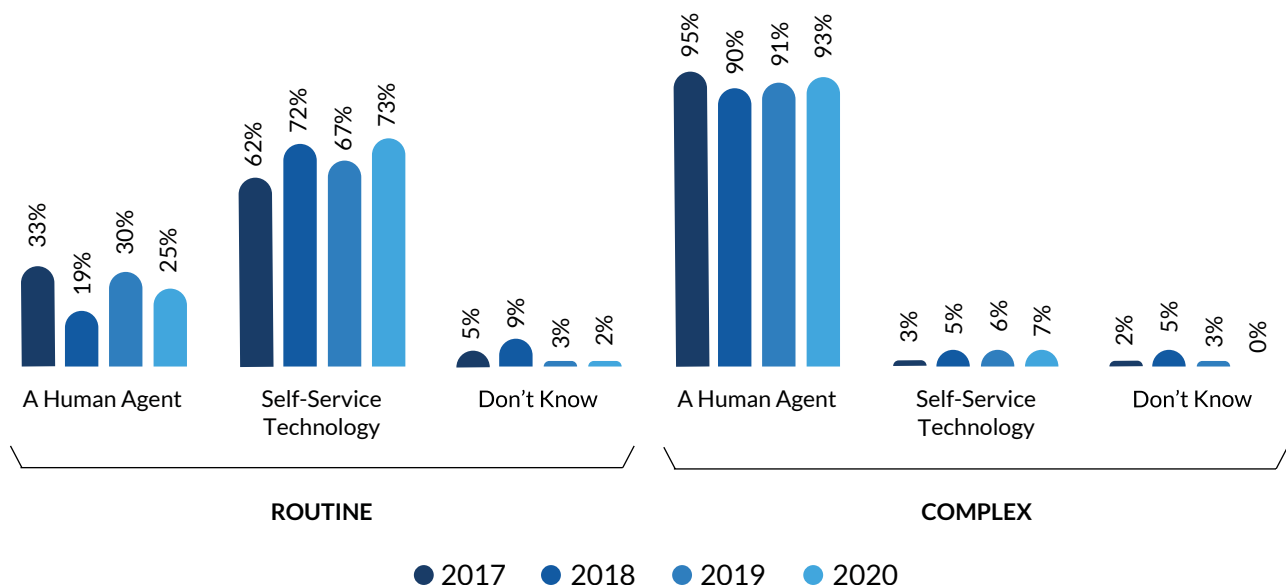
- > 81% of the respondents who were involved in shifting volume from one channel to another stated that they were actively shifting traffic from human-assisted channels to SSTs.



- **Initiatives in place to improve SST resolution rates** - 76% of respondents implemented initiatives to improve SST resolution rates.

- **Respondents believed that consumers are more likely to use SSTs for “routine” customer-care issues** – As illustrated below, 73% of respondents stated that they believe their customers are more likely to access an SST for a simple/routine issue.

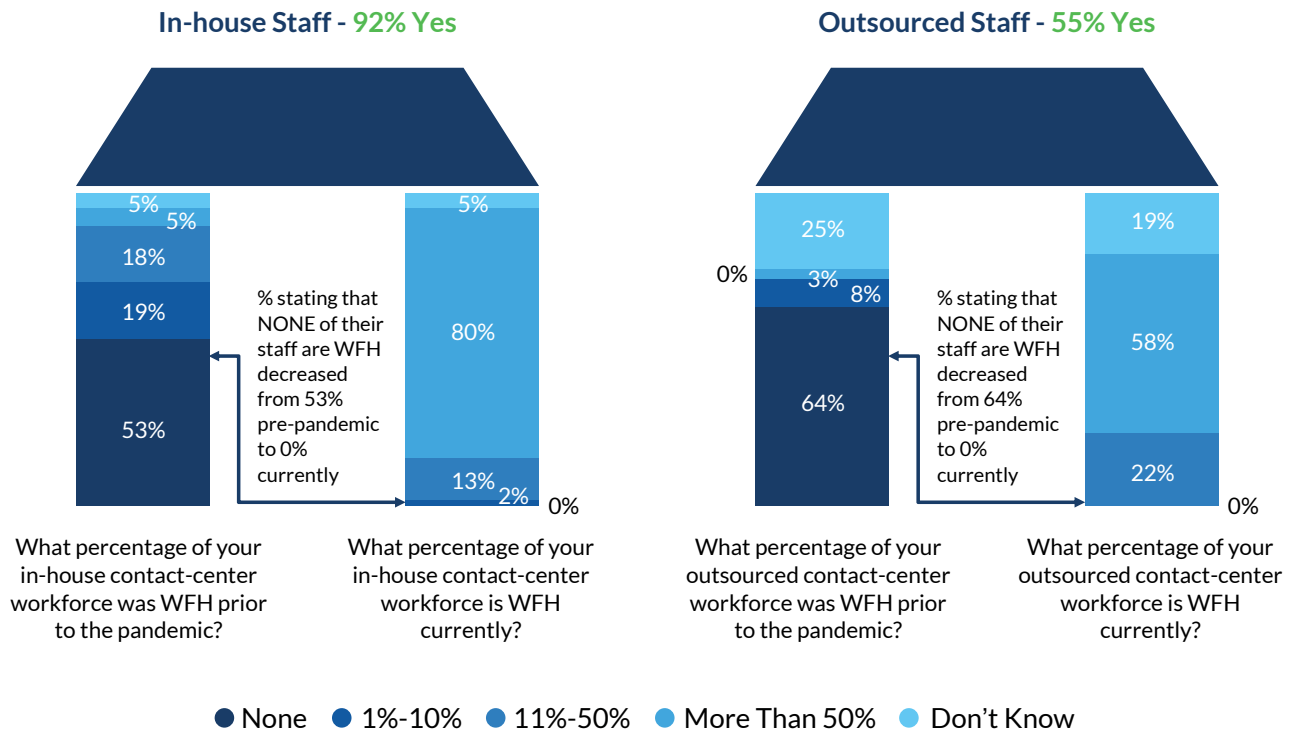
In the event of a routine/complex customer-care issue, which do you think your customers would rather interact with, assuming both are equally capable of solving the issue?



INCREASED WORK-FROM-HOME (WFH) STRATEGIES WILL LIKELY BE RETAINED AFTER THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19 forced organizations to implement WFH strategies virtually overnight. Although many were not necessarily prepared for this level of change, most transitioned their operations quickly and effectively. As illustrated below, most organizations now have in-house staff working from home.

Do you have contact-center employees working from home?



Key WFH findings include:

- **WFH is not going away anytime soon.** Sixty-two percent of the respondents stated that they will not revert to the pre-COVID-19 staffing models even after things get back to “normal.”
- **WFH has impacted the way organizations recruit, hire, train, and coach.**
 - > 63% of the respondents stated that their organizations have adjusted the way they hire.
 - > 80% of the respondents stated that their organizations have adjusted the way they train.
 - » 55% of the respondents feel that the performance of agents trained remotely is comparable to agents trained in-center (while 9% think it is better and 29% think it is worse).
 - > 59% of the respondents stated that their organizations have adjusted the way they coach.
- **There are challenges yet to be addressed.** According to the respondents, connectivity (65%) and employee engagement (39%) are some of the key challenges that organizations will need to address while managing employees who are working from home.