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This research document highlights the importance of mastering customer experience (CX) fluency to delight clients, grow revenue, and ensure operational efficiency. It highlights activities and technologies CX leaders must use to implement the third of four steps for total CX excellence: weave self-service flawlessly into intelligent journey management activities.

Uplift CX Results through Savvy Use of Self-Service

Customer empowerment has drastically changed the dynamics of traditional CX and contact center programs. Not only are today's buyers more educated, but they're also more influential on company reputation and results through the positive and negative content they publish across social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. These empowered customers don't want to be limited to assisted service when engaging brands. They want companies to provide them with relevant information in an easily accessible manner across various devices (e.g., phone, laptop) and channels (e.g., web, voice, messaging, mobile app). That's where CX fluency comes in.

Definition: CX Fluent

Aberdeen surveyed 307 businesses regarding the key trends and best practices influencing their contact center interactions. Four self-reported performance metrics were used to evaluate organizational performance and rank respondents in their CX fluency. **CX Fluency refers to companies using all the processes and tools in harmony to meet and exceed buyer expectations across all channels and departments.** The top 20% of the surveyed respondents were ranked as 'Best-in-Class' – referred to as 'CX-Fluent Firms' within this research. The remaining 80% represent lower performing firms – referred to as 'All Others.' The metrics used to evaluate performance and comparative performance results between CX-Fluent Firms, and All Others are as follows:

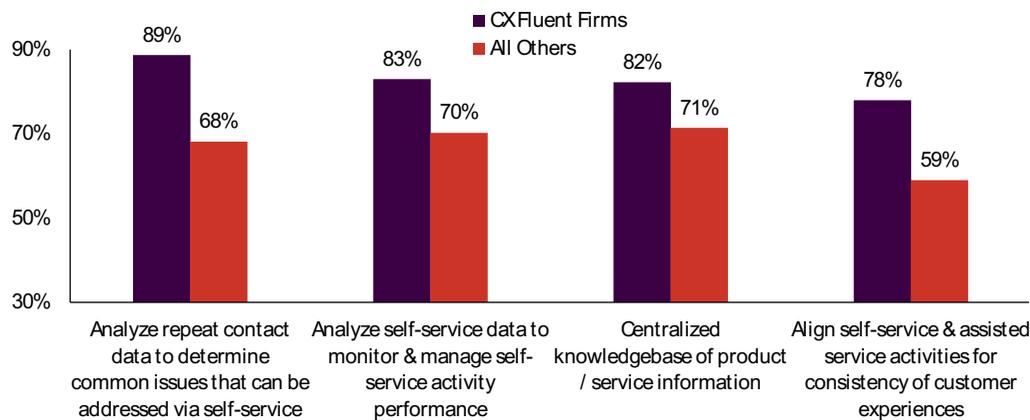
- ▶ **Customer Retention Rate:** CX-Fluent Firms: 81% vs. All Others: 63%
- ▶ **Year-over-year (YoY) change in customer satisfaction:** CX-Fluent Firms: 27.3% vs. All Others: 3.1%
- ▶ **YoY improvement in first contact resolution rates:** CX-Fluent Firms: 23.9% vs. All Others: 0.4%
- ▶ **YoY improvement in agent productivity:** CX-Fluent Firms: 22.2% vs. All Others: 2.1%
- ▶ **YoY improvement (decrease) in average handle time:** CX-Fluent Firms: 12.5% vs. All Others: -1.4%

Aberdeen's *Contact Center Trends* survey shows that self-service channels such as interactive voice response (IVR), intelligent virtual agents (IVAs), smart speakers, etc. are among the top engagement channels companies have for planned adoption as well as increase in traffic. As customers increasingly expect firms to provide them with self-service, it becomes more important than ever before to make sure companies are not just building self-service capabilities but also managing them the right way to make it easier for clients to address their needs. This must be strengthened by ensuring that self-service activities are not managed in a silo and rather that they are an integral part of the broader CX activities across all channels and departments – a capability adopted 32% more widely by CX-Fluent Firms that excel in weaving self-service harmoniously within their overall activities versus All Others that struggle to do so (78% vs. 59%).

One of the most common mistakes business leaders make when building and managing self-service programs is providing clients the ability to use self-service without workflows designed to facilitate customers using self-

service for the right type of issues. Specifically, although self-service is a great way to enable customers to help themselves with issues such as password reset, account balance check, etc., for complex or emotionally-charged issues such as life insurance claims, it should not be the primary channel of resolution. While even in those complex or emotionally-charged issues, firms can use self-service for gathering information about the customer's issue and authenticating the client – the rest of the conversation can then be handled via assisted service. CX-Fluent Firms are 19% more likely to optimize their use of self-service on a regular basis by observing changes in performance metrics in association with self-service use through analytics (83% vs. 70%).

Figure 1: CX-Fluent Firms Manage Self-Service In Harmony with All Digital Activities



Percent of respondents, n=307
Source: Aberdeen, October 2022

For self-service to work best, it must provide customers with the answers they seek with minimal effort. This means having a top-notch knowledge management capability that centralizes product / service knowledge throughout the business within a single repository – a capability adopted 15% more widely by CX-Fluent Firms (82% vs. 71%). Using machine learning and AI, firms continuously analyze the

effect of unique content to update as and when needed. Automating self-service workflows paired with relevant content then allows firms to provide customers with the right content with minimal effort for the client. Figure 1 shows that CX-Fluent Firms are also 31% more likely to use analytics to regularly analyze interaction data to observe the issue types that can be addressed via self-service (89% vs. 68%). Issues where the clients are repeatedly contacting the business but that are not complex are great opportunities for firms to leverage self-service. Customers can then address these needs themselves without having to spend time waiting in a queue to be connected to a human agent to then re-explain an issue. Self-service capabilities provide an opportunity for quick resolutions. Such a customer-centric approach that weaves self-service as a key pillar of broader CX activities is vital for modern business leaders seeking to deliver total CX excellence.

About Aberdeen Strategy & Research

Aberdeen Strategy & Research, a division of Spiceworks Ziff Davis, with over three decades of experience in independent, credible market research, helps **illuminate** market realities and inform business strategies. Our fact-based, unbiased, and outcome-centric research approach provides insights on technology, customer management, and business operations, to **inspire** critical thinking and **ignite** data-driven business actions.

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