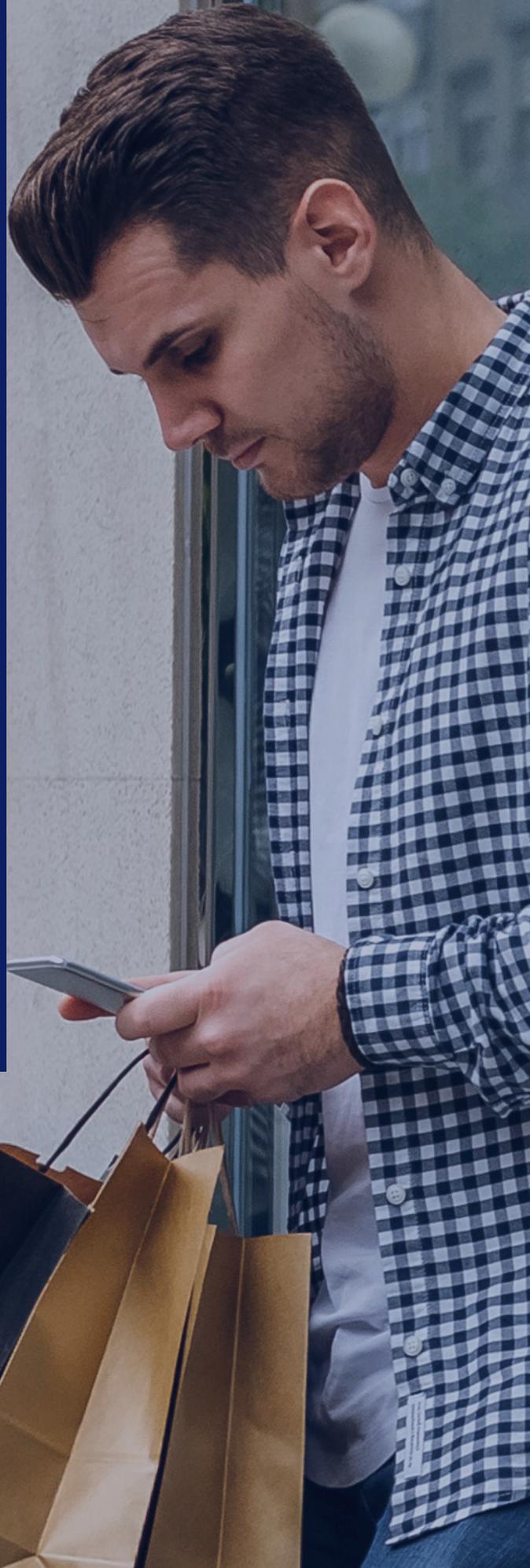


RETAIL: HOW TO ENGAGE WITH OMNI-DIGITAL CUSTOMERS

Challenges and
Possibilities for Retailers
in the CX Space



INTRODUCTION



Throughout our content, the main focus is always on what we can learn from the expertise and advice of leading customer care experts, speakers, and authors who aim to help you improve or create an optimal omni-digital strategy for your retail enterprise.

In this white paper, you will find the top tips and advice about the technology available to you that can improve the retail experience for your customers while helping to innovate your business.

In this guide, we aim to answer the following questions:

- **What challenges** are retailers facing?
- **Which channels** are customers using and how?
- Are there **any other parts of retailers' businesses** that they should consider improving?

Technology is revolutionizing the way companies interact with their customers online. It's not just choosing between online or Main Street retailers anymore. Instead, it is about making sure you provide the best customer care to satisfy your

customers and increase sales. Brick-and-mortar retailers are now shifting towards technology that can bring their physical stores into the 21st century, replicating the ease, convenience, and increased personalization.



EXPERT ADVICE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS KEY

“A company's product (or service-as-a-product) may induce me to buy one. If that product is not well supported by good customer service, I will be unlikely to repeat my purchase. I have walked away from repeat or potential purchases many times because of the lack of good service. Much emphasis is placed on the broader customer experience these days, but without good service to back it up, that experience will suffer.”

ROY ATKINSON
Writer and Analyst

WHICH CHALLENGES ARE RETAILERS FACING?

The challenges that are facing retailers today stem from some shops that haven't been able to embrace digital transformation and the cloud in their place of work. When competitors make innovative moves to be where customers expect them, the differentiation is down to who makes the customer journey easier and hassle-free.

The arrival of e-commerce and discount stores have accelerated the transformation of retail spaces. Now, the trend is to order on tablets in restaurants and click and collect options in stores—all while being able to follow up with customer support on messaging channels at the click of a button if there's an issue.

Customers expect enterprises to be on their channel of choice. Retailers need to react to the changing environment that customer trends are creating. Providing a consistent and unique experience from start to finish is key and ultimately will be what differentiates you from competitors. A Walker study confirms that in 2020, customer experience is becoming the key brand differentiator above price and product.¹

How customers can contact you is important, and providing your agents with the right technology matters. If they use efficient tools needed to manage interactions across multiple channels, then it will contribute to improving the customers' experience. The ability to transfer queries from an agent to another without the customer ever leaving his or her preferred channel reduces friction, offers a positive and resolute experience, and cuts down on waiting times.



EXPERT ADVICE

THE ONLY WAY TO OFFER DIFFERENTIATION

“The only way a customer is created is when they notice some type of differentiation between the products being offered. In other words, if what you're selling and what I'm selling appear to be exactly the same to the customer, the only way they make a decision is to notice some kind of differentiation. If we don't provide some degree of service differentiation, then all the customer has to choose upon is price.

Once we provide something else to differentiate us, now we have added something to the mix in terms of their decision-making process. I believe that customers view much of what we do in business as a vast sea of sameness. They aren't seeing a distinction between different products or different services within specific markets.”

SCOTT MCKAIN

Customer Experience Expert

TAKEAWAYS TO CONSIDER FOR RETAIL:

- Shops have been shutting down because they've been unable to adapt to the changing environment.
- The sector is undergoing a rapid transformation with the arrival of e-commerce and discount stores.
- Customers expect retail organizations to be on their channel of choice.
- Organizations need to find out what kind of communication their agents need and empower them with it.
- Data is available to justify the ROI for those willing to innovate.
- The value proposition for customers is different now. There is an increase in spending on better experiences over material objects.
- Technology is also breaking down the barriers between physical and digital—be prepared for an acceleration in the convergence of these two worlds.



EXPERT ADVICE THREE TRENDS IMPACTING RETAIL

Technology must never diminish the customer experience.

With the continued emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), retailers are at risk if AI is their only focus. Technology must never diminish the customer experience. When AI replaces the emphasis on the human-to-human experience, your company's competitive advantage will disappear. There is an old saying in the carpentry trade, "measure twice, cut once." Before eliminating staff to substitute with AI, think hard about the consequences.

Understand customer interactions.

With AI, shopping will be more highly personalized than ever, potentially quashing any lingering doubts that customer service and experience are very different animals. Always remember the critical importance of the human component. But in order to emphasize

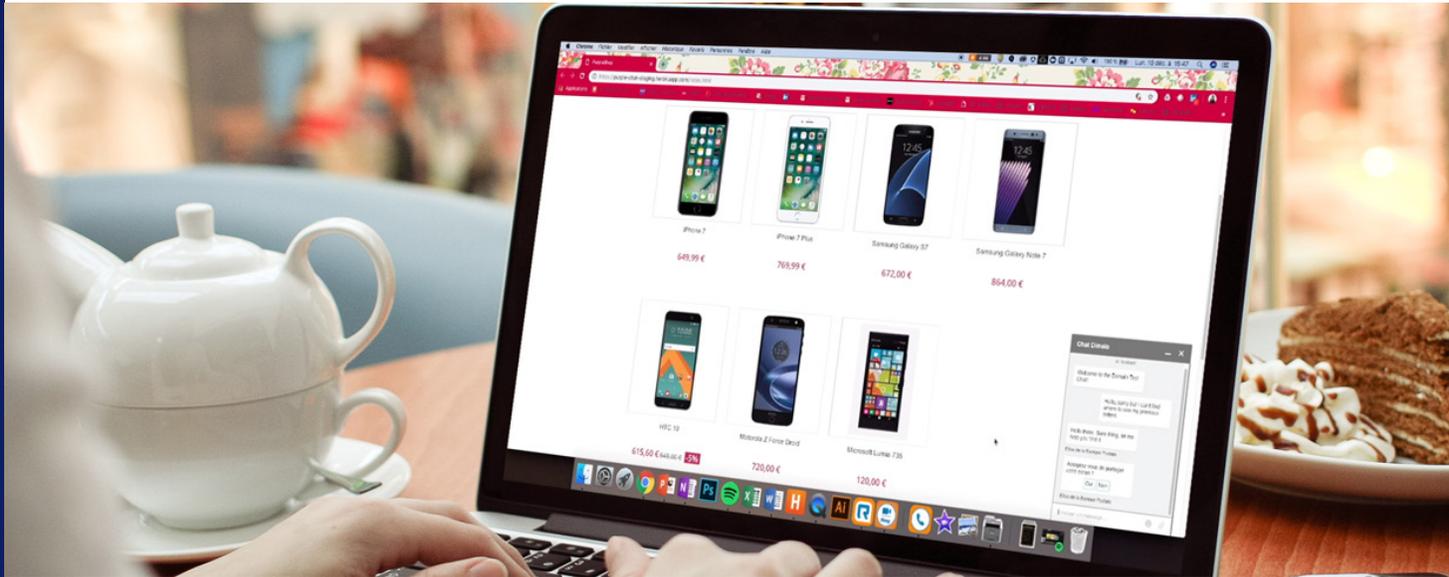
experience, we'll need to better understand the customer and how he or she relates to the brand; knowing what he or she purchased on Monday won't cut it.

Customers want fast and resolute responses.

As Amazon expands its Amazon Go chain of self-service convenience stores, dozens of startups are competing with established firms to master and lead this potentially game-changing retail model. But once again, self-service by its very nature implies limited or no human contact. While customers like to self-serve to avoid long wait times, when there is an issue, they want immediate resolutions. I think the cashless stores are appropriate for convenience items, but not for most other categories of products.

RICHARD SHAPIRO
TCFCR Founder and President

FOUR ESSENTIAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR RETAIL:



LIVE-CHAT: INCREASE YOUR CONVERSIONS BY ASSISTING YOUR CUSTOMERS

Live-chat includes triggers that offer the customer the chance to initiate the conversation. Live-chat can be triggered according to specific criteria such as the amount added to the basket, the consultation of certain pages, or the time spent on a page.

These criteria are indicators that the customer needs more information to make a decision; offering a live-chat conversation is a good way to answer questions proactively and increase conversions.

A study found the following results for customers using live-chat:²

- A **40% higher** conversion rate
- An increase in the average basket **by 10%**
- A **34% improvement** in the satisfaction rate

MESSAGING CHANNELS: TALK TO YOUR CUSTOMERS ON THEIR FAVORITE APPLICATIONS

There is a trend towards asynchronous app-based communications reflected in the increasing number of major players creating business-focused messaging apps. WhatsApp Business Solution, Facebook Messenger for Business, and Apple Business Chat are being quickly deployed by companies eager to offer customers quick and convenient ways to interact.

By being present on messaging channels, sales sites allow their customers to contact them on a channel that they already use daily. Rather than being forced to use channels such as online forms or the phone, customers can simply send a message and be notified when they receive a response.

80% OF ADULTS AND 91% OF TEENS USE MESSAGING APPLICATIONS EVERY DAY.³

IN-APP MESSAGING: MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR APP'S INVESTMENT

In-app messaging allows you to offer your customers an experience similar to Messenger and WhatsApp directly within your application. They can, therefore, simply start a conversation when they use your application, without having to leave it. This provides different advantages:

- **The customer is identified** through his or her account in the application, you access his or her data (customer number, purchase history, conversations, etc.) without having to ask.
- **You have control over experience and data**, unlike third-party applications.
- **The system can be used on iOS and Android**, without additional installation for customers already using your application.

This feature also encourages the application to be maintained over the long term and makes the investment related to the application profitable (development, promotion, updates).

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS: MANAGE CUSTOMER REVIEWS AND POINTS OF SALE

Ninety-five percent of shoppers read online reviews before making a purchase.⁴ When each store has a Google My Business profile, the volume of comments to follow can quickly add up. To monitor comments effectively and respond to them in a relatively short period, it becomes essential to centralize comment management with the same solution as the other channels (email, live-chat, messaging, and social media).



EXPERT ADVICE MANAGE EACH INTERACTION WITH CUSTOMERS

“Like it or not, we're dealing with digital-savvy consumers who have dramatically raised their expectations bar: reading online reviews and support interactions before deciding whether or not to become a customer. Moreover, they put to the test brands in every single interaction. That's why today it's crucial to take care of every single conversation, regardless of the support channel or the customer itinerary (pre-sales, sales, post-sales) in order to consolidate customers' trust.”

PAOLO FABRIZIO

Digital and Social Customer
Service Expert

The solution also allows the company to manage notices at headquarters or automatically allocate them to local outlets and provide the company with pre-written templates that simplify management and harmonize the message.

DID YOU KNOW THAT 89% OF CONSUMERS READ THE REPLIES TO REVIEWS?⁵ THIS MEANS THAT IT'S CRITICAL FOR YOUR BUSINESS TO MONITOR COMMENTS AND ANSWER ALL OF THEM.

LA REDOUTE CASE STUDY: MEETING CUSTOMERS ON THEIR CHANNEL OF CHOICE



Companies and major retailers are increasingly adopting Apple Business Chat to connect with customers through the channel of their choice. There is a realization now that there are no longer any limits on the number of channels that should be managed. Thus, it is paramount that the demand to be available across multiple channels at the customer's convenience is met.

An example of a good channel use is the leading French pure player La Redoute, a major online retailer present in 26 countries. Apple Business Chat helps Le Redoute communicate with its customers to provide a responsive and personalized service.

AN INNOVATIVE CHANNEL IS PART OF THE COMPANY'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

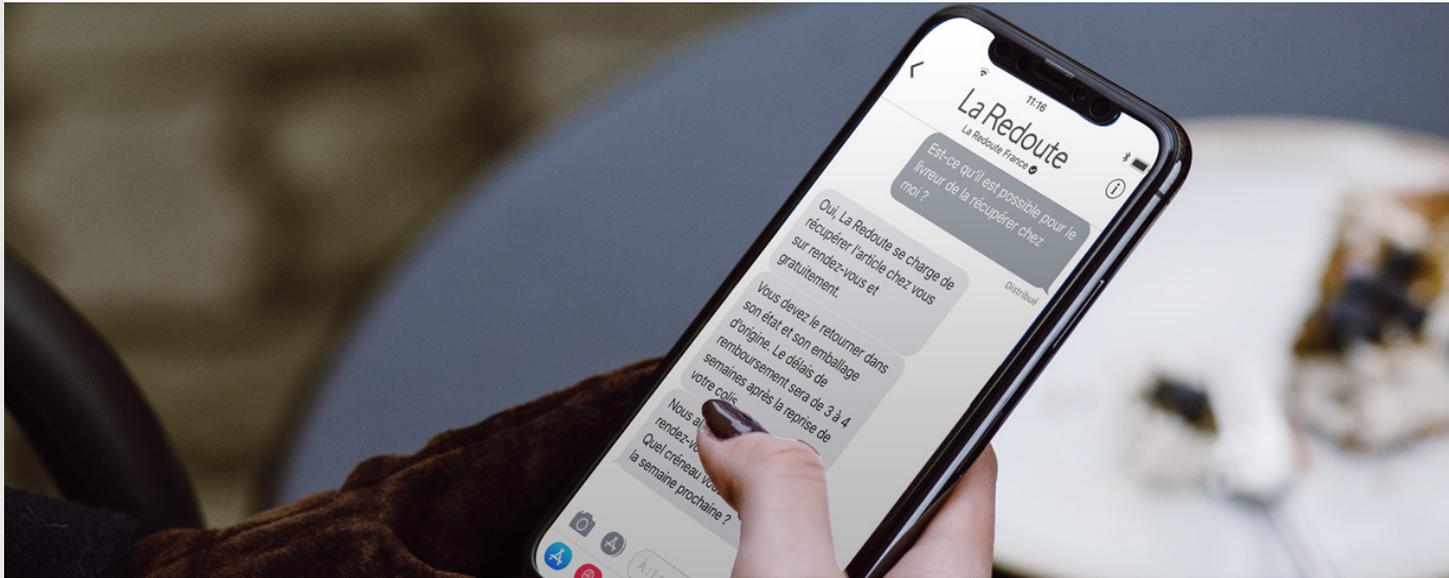
La Redoute initiated its digital transformation plan

several years ago, which was switching from a catalog sales model to an e-commerce site. With this in mind, the company adopted innovations to enhance the customer experience, such as voice and visual recognition to find a product in its application. Along with shops in Paris and major cities, La Redoute facilitated the journey of its customers between physical and digital.

“Messaging is a good alternative to social media. It enables direct exchanges, more human contact, and a closer relationship with our customers.”



MARINE VANNIER
Customer Service
Project Manager
at La Redoute



WHY ADOPT APPLE BUSINESS CHAT?

Just like Messenger and WhatsApp, integrating Business Chat in your customer care strategy is vital if companies want to adapt to their customers' new needs and usages. Moreover, this will empower them to convey an image of innovation, forward thinking, and distinguishing themselves from their competition.

Integrating Apple Business Chat makes adapting to the trend of messaging, which is increasingly used in customer care, better. This channel is easy to use and natively integrated into Apple devices. Customers can send short messages with rich features during micro-moments (in transport, during waiting times, between two appointments, etc.).

With Apple Business Chat, companies can enjoy the benefits of messaging, such as:

- **The cost:** Unlimited messages can be sent for free anywhere in the world, subject to an internet connection or 3G/4G.
- **Ease of use:** Messaging apps make it easy for any smartphone user to use.
- **Accessibility:** Conversations can be continued on multiple devices (computer, tablet, smartphone).
- **Interactivity:** In addition to text messages, it is possible to share multimedia content, emojis, voice messages, etc.
- **Confidentiality:** The private mode of exchange guarantees better confidentiality than social media, and most messaging apps include end-to-end encryption.

CONCLUSION



Customer experience is becoming the main criteria of choice in the retail industry. If prices and products are similar, the customer will make his or her choice depending on the experience and how easy it is to contact a business.

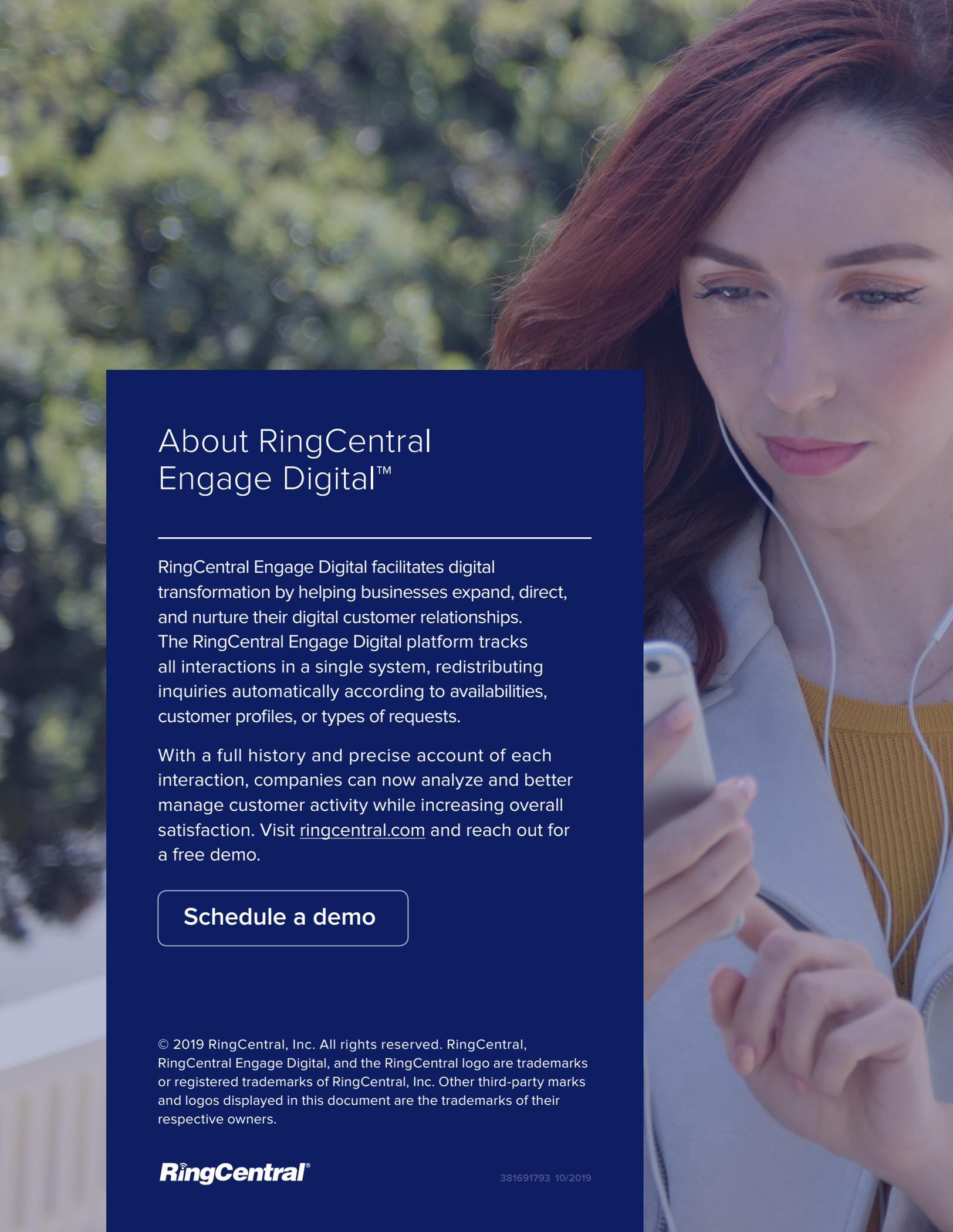
To adapt to this evolution, retailers need to engage with customers through an omni-digital strategy. As Paolo Fabrizio mentions, it is key to answer each interaction in the right way as brands are constantly put to the test by customers for the service brands offer.

With the increase of digital channels such as messaging, in-app messaging, live-chat, and customer review platforms, retail companies need to centralize their management. This allows them to provide faster answers and a consistent experience across all channels.

With this approach, companies can build stronger relationships with customers wherever they are online, ultimately increasing customer satisfaction and generating higher revenue.

Consumer behavior is constantly evolving. Therefore, adapting to the new ways of establishing a relationship with customers is essential.

1. Customers 2020 - Walker - [Customer Experience Consulting](#)
2. ICMI - [The Stats Behind Chat](#)
3. Facebook - [Messages Matter: Exploring the Evolution of Conversation](#)
4. Spiegel - [How Online Reviews Influence Sales](#)
5. Brightlocal - [Local Consumer Review Survey | Online Reviews Statistics & Trends](#)



About RingCentral Engage Digital™

RingCentral Engage Digital facilitates digital transformation by helping businesses expand, direct, and nurture their digital customer relationships. The RingCentral Engage Digital platform tracks all interactions in a single system, redistributing inquiries automatically according to availabilities, customer profiles, or types of requests.

With a full history and precise account of each interaction, companies can now analyze and better manage customer activity while increasing overall satisfaction. Visit ringcentral.com and reach out for a free demo.

[Schedule a demo](#)

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