

RESEARCH BRIEF

Trends in Integrated Customer Experiences

Research on expectations and challenges for a 360-degree customer view



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INTRODUCTION

Businesses Pursue Connections and Integrations

As the [Fourth Industrial Revolution](#) continues to shake up an already competitive landscape, personalized experiences alone aren't enough to win over customers. Seventy percent of customers now say *connected* experiences – such as seamless handoffs and contextualized engagement based on earlier interactions – are very important to winning their business.¹ Businesses are shifting gears to unlock and connect data that provides relevant, valuable perspectives on customer needs and business opportunities.

But progress toward truly connected experiences has been slow, and customers' elevated expectations remain largely unmet. The reality is that most IT departments are caught between pursuing digital transformation, allocating budgets and resources, and aligning their goals with those of the business.

This research brief explores:

- Why connected customer experiences are becoming a focal point for businesses
- How connected applications and data underpin connected experiences
- What technical challenges IT teams face in empowering connected experiences, and what they're doing to overcome them

SEE PAGE 12 FOR
DATA SOURCES AND
METHODOLOGY.



Salesforce Research

Customers Demand Connected Experiences

Customers have high expectations of the businesses they buy from, and their perceptions are driven by a multitude of factors that, together, form their experiences. In fact, **80% of customers say the experience a company provides is as important as its products and services.**¹

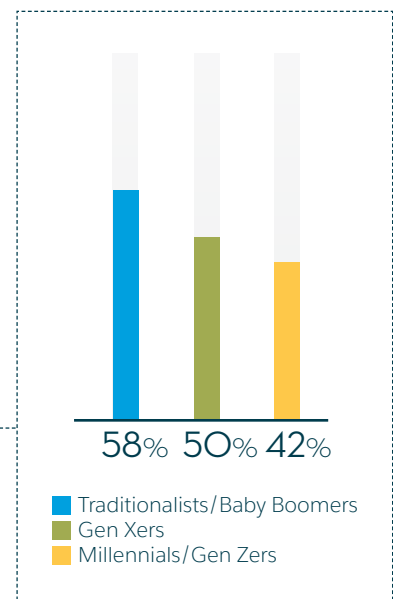
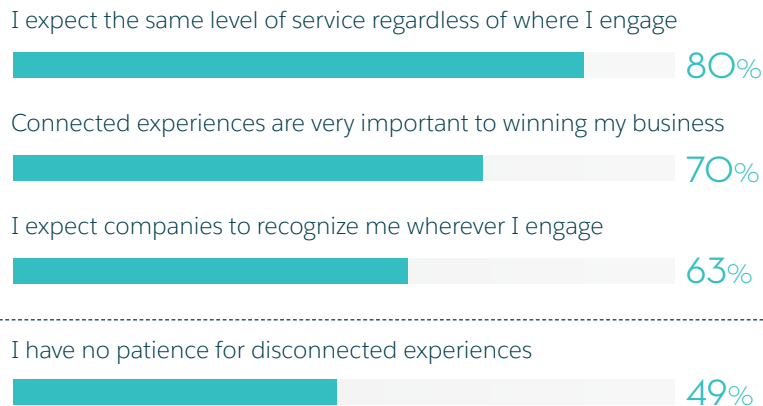
But what do great experiences look like on the ground? In no small part, they're driven by connections. Seventy percent of customers say connected experiences – like seamless handoffs between departments and

contextualized engagement based on earlier interactions – are very important to winning their business. Case in point: Even as they navigate myriad of online and offline touchpoints, 63% expect companies to recognize them wherever they engage. Forty-nine percent of customers – including 58% of the traditionalist/baby boomer generations – go as far as saying they have no patience for disconnected experiences.¹

Put simply, connected experiences are essential to meeting customers' demands for elevated experiences.

Connected Engagement Is Table Stakes Across Touchpoints

Percentage of customers who agree with the following¹



Connected Expectations Span the Customer Journey

Customers don't see individual sales, marketing, and service teams. Instead, they see a single, unified brand, and expect companies to act as one. For example, over 70% of customers say salespeople's awareness of both the marketing campaigns they've seen and the service interactions they've had are very important to winning their business.¹

This customer sentiment is reflected in their expectations for consistent, omni-channel engagement.

The average customer uses 10 different channels to communicate with companies, and 70% say that consistency across those channels is very important to winning their business.¹ What customers may not recognize, however, is the complexity that goes into managing just one interaction across a single channel, let alone many interactions across multiple channels. In fact, the average digital transaction spans an incredible 35 systems.⁷ Regardless, anyone who has called phone support for an online transaction, or turned to social media to secure an in-store discount, knows the frustration of lost context.

Customers Expect Unified Marketing, Sales, and Service Interactions

Percentage of customers who say the following are very important to winning their business¹

Salespeople's awareness of service interactions



Salespeople's awareness of marketing campaigns/offers



Service agents' awareness of sales interactions



Consistency across channels



Tailored engagement based on past interactions



Disconnected Experiences Remain a Sticking Point

If a customer has even one seamless, connected experience, their knowledge of what's possible – and thus their standards – are forever raised. This is true even if such experiences aren't the norm, and the result is a customer base that expects more.

Customers express frustration with lack of connections across their journeys, from the 54% who crave more relevant marketing messages to the 63% who want easier and faster customer service.¹

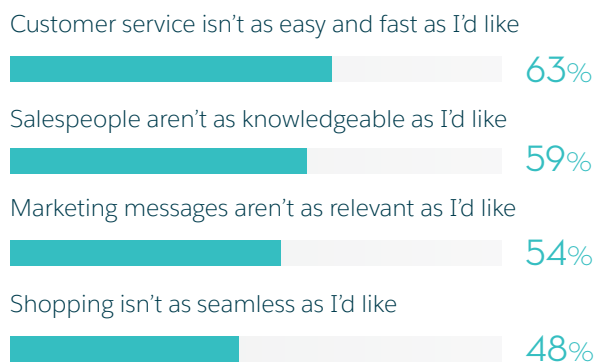
A mere 16% of customers rate companies as excellent at providing consistency across channels, and only 15% say that companies are excellent at tailoring engagement based on past interactions.¹

This isn't a trivial matter for brands; customers respond to subpar experiences by taking their business elsewhere.

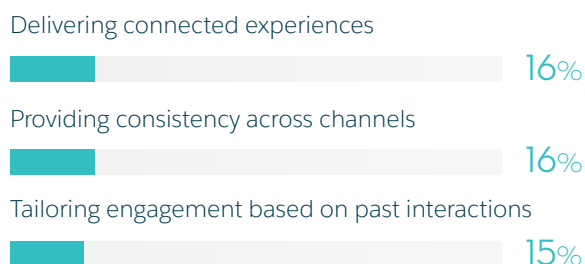


Customer Journeys Remain Disconnected

Percentage of customers who agree with the following¹



Percentage of customers who rate companies as excellent at the following¹



Business Units Struggle to Unlock Siloed Data

Achieving a more complete view of the customer that drives cohesive customer journeys is much easier said than done. In large part, this difficulty is traced to data that is siloed and locked away in multiple, disconnected systems.

For example, a mere 23% of marketing leaders are extremely satisfied with their teams' abilities to leverage data from different sources. In fact, difficulty leveraging data from different sources and creating a single, shared view of the customer only rank below budgetary constraints when it comes to top marketing challenges.²

But marketers aren't the only ones grappling with subpar connections. Less than half of sales teams say they have fully integrated systems – such as the mobile apps they use to connect with customers on the go and with their CRM systems.³ Only 36% of service teams have connected their disparate systems of record and engagement that, when combined, provide a contextualized view of customer needs.⁴

Integrated Systems Remain Elusive



Top 3 Challenges Marketers Face in Creating Connected Customer Experiences:²

1. Budgetary constraints
2. Difficulty leveraging data from different sources
3. Creating a single, shared view of the customer

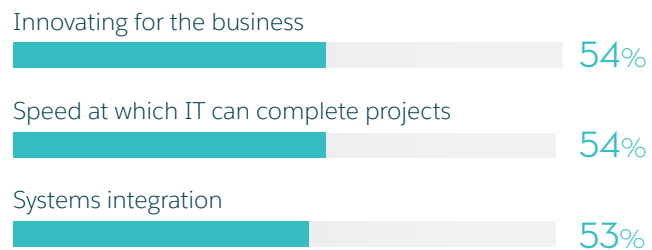
App Proliferation and Legacy Systems Prevent IT from Bridging the Connectivity Gap

As business units layer on more and more software to meet their respective needs, **the average enterprise is weighed down by 1,020 individual applications.**⁶ This complexity, coupled with customer and business demand for connectivity, has propelled systems integration into the top three IT challenges.⁵

IT leaders cite a variety of challenges in their quest to connect data and systems. Their top inhibitors include hard-to-integrate legacy systems, lack of visibility into where data is stored, and of course security and privacy concerns.⁵

An average of only **29% of applications** are currently integrated, and only **39% of IT leaders** say they provide a completely connected user experience across channels.⁶

Top three challenges for meeting IT's strategic objectives⁵



* Includes responses of critical challenge and major challenge.

IT Leaders' Top Inhibitors to Integrating Data Sources⁵



Stopgap Strategies and Skill Deficits Create IT Headaches

Desperate to meet demands, many IT teams have turned to a patchwork of point-to-point connections between individual applications. But this fragmented approach causes headaches of its own. In fact, 89% of IT leaders say integration challenges slow or hinder their digital transformation initiatives, and 22% of the average IT budget is now spent on integration.⁶

While many teams are ramping up API strategies to enable more comprehensive, scalable integrations, a large share of IT organizations lack the critical expertise needed to execute. Nearly half (45%) of IT leaders report a skill gap at their organizations when it comes to APIs and system integration, and an additional 35% expect this skill gap at their organizations within two years.⁵

Haphazard Connectivity Strategies Cause New Pain Points⁶

22% of the average IT budget is spent connecting different technologies.



45% of IT leaders say they have an API or system integration skill gap. **An additional 35%** anticipate this gap within two years.⁵

IT Prioritizes a Unified Customer View

Haphazard approaches to unifying customer data may have hit a breaking point; 92% of IT leaders say creating a connected user experience for employees and customers is a priority. What's more, at least 79% agree that point-to-point integration must die within the next five years if organizations are to reduce costs, deliver on business needs faster, remain competitive, innovate faster, and extract more value from data.⁶

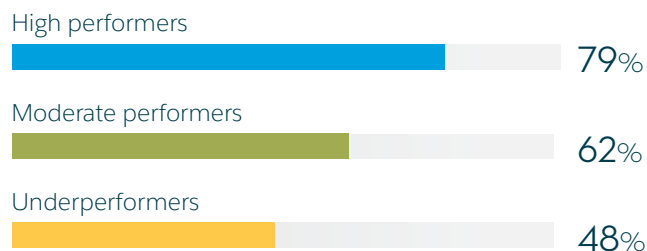
Top-performing IT teams stand apart from their underperforming competition by viewing integration initiatives in a particular light: providing a unified view of data sources for the business users striving to meet unprecedented customer demands; high-performing IT leaders are 1.7x more likely than underperformers to consider this a high priority.⁵

92% of IT leaders say creating a connected user experience for employees and customers is a priority.⁶

IT Leaders' Most Important Initiatives for Achieving Business Goals⁶

- 1 Modernizing legacy systems
- 2 Integrating SaaS apps
- 3 Investing in mobile apps

IT Leaders Who Consider Unified Data Sources for Business Users a High Priority⁵



LAST LOOK

The Path to Connected Experiences

Start with the Customer Journey

First, build a comprehensive roster of customer touchpoints. Then, take stock of their downstream impacts on the customer experience. Consider if and how links between these touchpoints – or visibility of them to business units – can create a more connected experience.

Mind the (Data) Gap

If the use cases identified during customer journey mapping are missing critical context, determine which data connections would be valuable. Then, identify which data is stored in which systems, and how they should interact.

Integrate with Customer Trust at Heart

As concerns around data privacy and misuse grow in tandem with standards for connected experiences, IT and business units alike are increasingly challenged to meet two critically important, but seemingly contradictory, imperatives. Yet, connectivity, security, and privacy are not mutually exclusive, and thoughtful protocols and processes go a long way to both delight and respect customers.



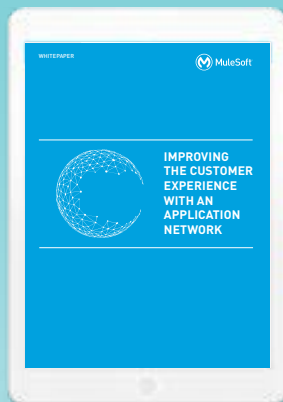
Data Sources and Research Methodology

- All data is based on double-blind surveys of global respondents. All respondents are third-party panelists.
- Detailed respondent demographics, segmentation definitions, and methodology information can be found in the sources listed on the right-hand side of the page.
- Data from the survey may not have been published in the report cited.

Sources:

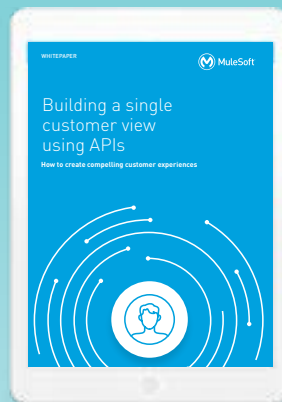
- 1 State of the Connected Customer survey, Salesforce Research, April 2018.
- 2 State of Marketing survey, Salesforce Research, April 2017.
- 3 State of Sales survey, Salesforce Research, March 2018.
- 4 State of Service survey, Salesforce Research, September 2016.
- 5 State of IT survey, Salesforce Research, February 2017.
- 6 MuleSoft Connectivity Benchmark Report, February 2018.
- 7 Dynatrace Global CIO Report: Top Challenges Facing CIOs in a Cloud-Native World, January 2018.

Related Resources



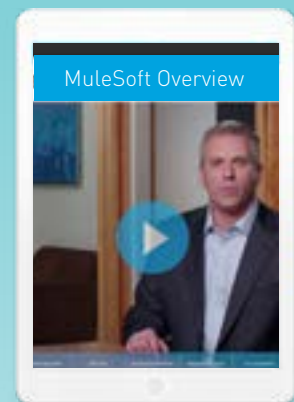
Learn how a new approach to modularizing a customer view to accommodate changes, trends, market shifts, and other factors can deliver the right experience at the right time.

[GET THE WHITE PAPER](#)



Read about how to use APIs to make sure customers have the same experience – no matter which channel they use.

[GET THE WHITE PAPER](#)



See the technology shifts that are creating unprecedented requirements for connectivity, MuleSoft's unique approach to meeting them, and the impact this is creating for customers across the world.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

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