



The Futr Playbook For

Implementing Customer Service Chatbots

futr.ai





Forward

The past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have been a turbulent period for countless organisations worldwide. Whether due to the ongoing economic downturn or the sudden and massive shift to eCommerce and other online services, businesses across all industries have had to rethink their service delivery models and how they provide value to customers.

One thing, however, hasn't changed; customer service continues to be paramount to the overall customer experience.

In fact, difficult times raise the stakes and make the relationship between customer service and brand loyalty even more important. As a [McKinsey & Company](#) report notes, "...in times of crisis, a customer's interaction with a company can trigger an immediate and lingering effect on his or her sense of trust and loyalty."

Evidence of this can be seen in a study by [Qualtrics and ServiceNow](#), which found that 80% of customers in 2021 said they had switched brands because of poor customer experience. The same percentage of people believed that the pandemic had changed customer service — 47% think it changed for the worse due to issues such as being put on hold for extended periods and transferred to multiple agents.

In other words, the pandemic highlighted the gap between brands capable of meeting customer demands at scale and those that were falling behind.

"Instant" customer experience (CX) features powered by AI-enabled self-serve and automated processes — once exclusive to established brands like Uber, Deliveroo and virtual banks like Monzo — are no longer simply convenient. They became instrumental in allowing organisations to meet increased customer demand for online services and maintain service continuity during the pandemic.

But what could be causing this divide in customer service and experience? We take a closer look at the numbers.

Contents

**Customer service
by the numbers 4**

**Your customer
experience needs to
transform digitally 7**

What are chatbots? 9

**Chatbot numbers
in focus 9**

**5 benefits of using customer
service chatbots and live chat 10**

#1

Providing instant responses to customer queries

#2

Enable self-serve on your digital customer
service channels

#3

Generate more customer insights with
data analytics

#4

Creating more personalised customer experiences

#5

Enable conversational bookings and reservations



1. 78% of customer service professionals saw customers turn to self-service during the pandemic ([State of Service report, Salesforce](#))

Over three in four customer service professionals saw self-service activity rise in 2020, according to the fourth edition of the State of Service report by Salesforce. The study also found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of customers prefer self-service for simple tasks.

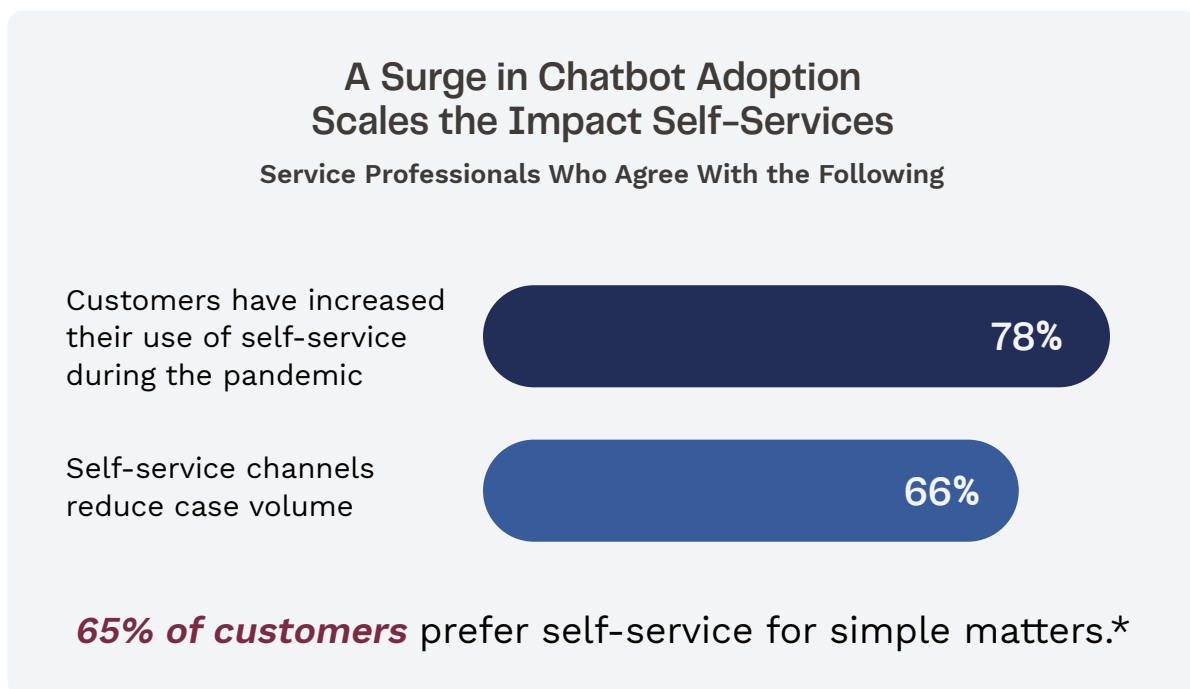


Image from the [State of Service](#) report by Salesforce

Self-service, also known as self-serve, is a user experience (UX) feature that enables customers to complete actions autonomously without human intervention. For example, an eCommerce store's customers can interact with a bot to follow up on their order status instead of speaking to a live agent.

2. 88% of customers expect brands to accelerate their digital initiatives ([State of the Connected Customer report, Salesforce](#))

Salesforce's fourth edition of the State of the Connected Customer report shows that a little over half (54%) of customers think companies should offer new products and services in response to the pandemic.

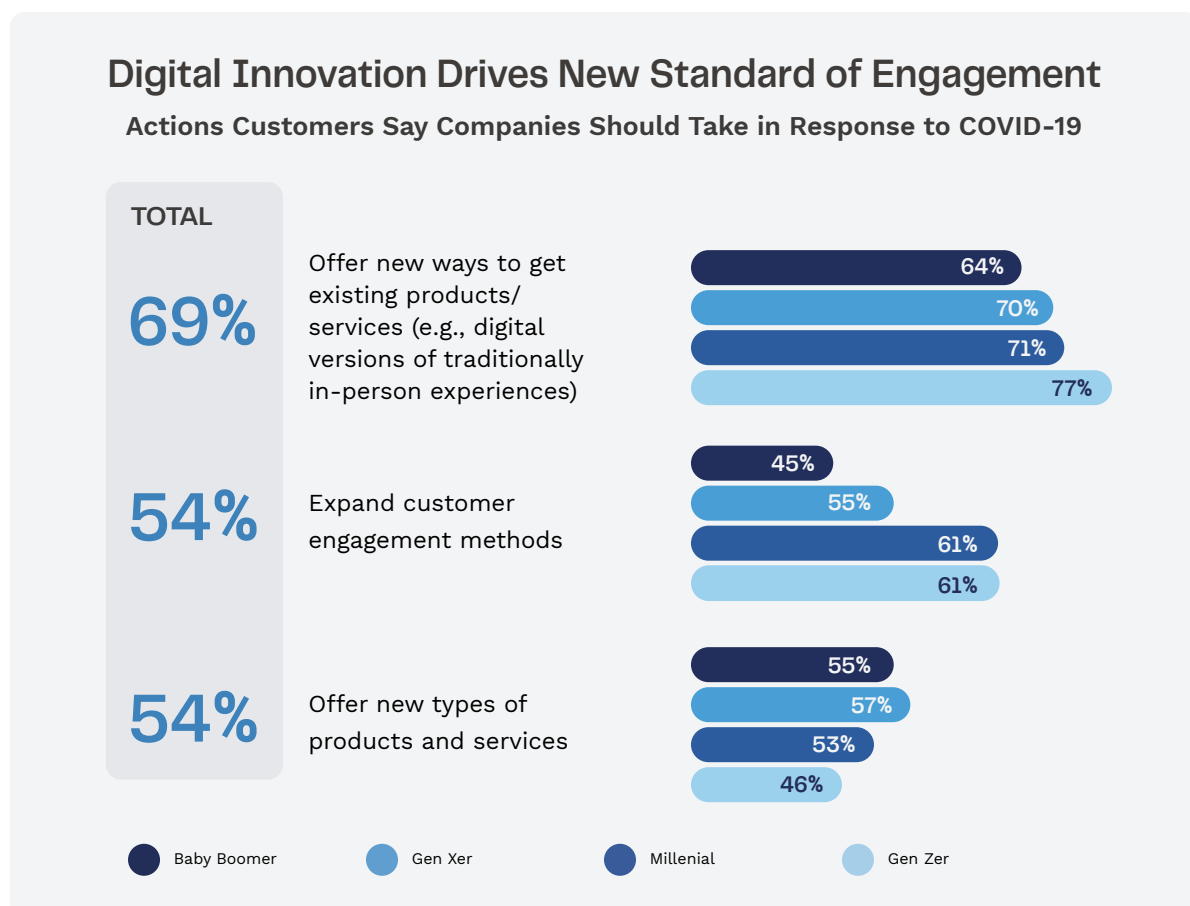


Image from the [State of Service](#) report by Salesforce

However, this is significantly less than the 69% of customers who simply want digital versions of the products and services they enjoy (i.e., digital versions of in-person products/services).

3. Companies with excellent customer service generate up to 8% more revenue ([Bain & Company](#))

[Research by Bain & Company](#) confirms that customer service has a direct link to profitability. On average, businesses with excellent customer service perform 4% – 8% better than competitors in the same industry or niche.

4. 94% of customers will gladly recommend a company with ‘very good’ customer service ([Qualtrics](#))

Excellent customer service goes beyond brand loyalty. It can also turn your customers into brand ambassadors. A 2020 Qualtrics report shows that 94% of customers would recommend brands with “very good” service.

5. 95% of consumers say customer service is critical to brand loyalty ([Microsoft Dynamics 365](#))

An overwhelming 95% of consumers in a survey by Microsoft Dynamics 365 consider customer service important to brand loyalty, with 61% switching brands because of poor customer service experience.



Your customer experience needs to transform digitally

A 2020 [McKinsey Global Survey](#) of C-level executives and senior managers confirms that the pandemic accelerated the global share of organisations' digital customer interactions, growing from 36% in December 2019 to 58% in July 2020.

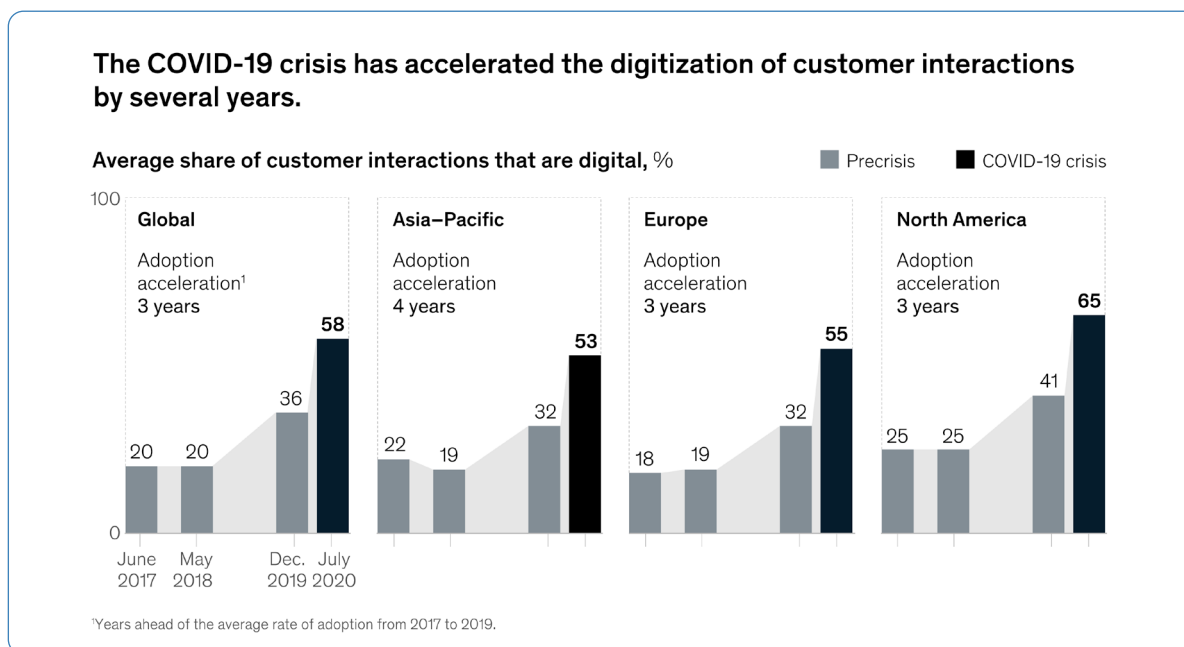


Image from [McKinsey & Company](#)

It's an accelerated growth rate equal to three years of pre-pandemic growth.

As organisations wake up to this new paradigm in customer experience and engagement, they'll also have to deal with increased expectations for digital products or services, or — [as Salesforce found](#) — digital versions of customer experiences. IDC's [Worldwide Digital Transformation Spending Guide](#) forecasts global spending on digital transformation products will reach [\\$2.8 trillion in 2025](#) — a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.4% between 2021-2025.

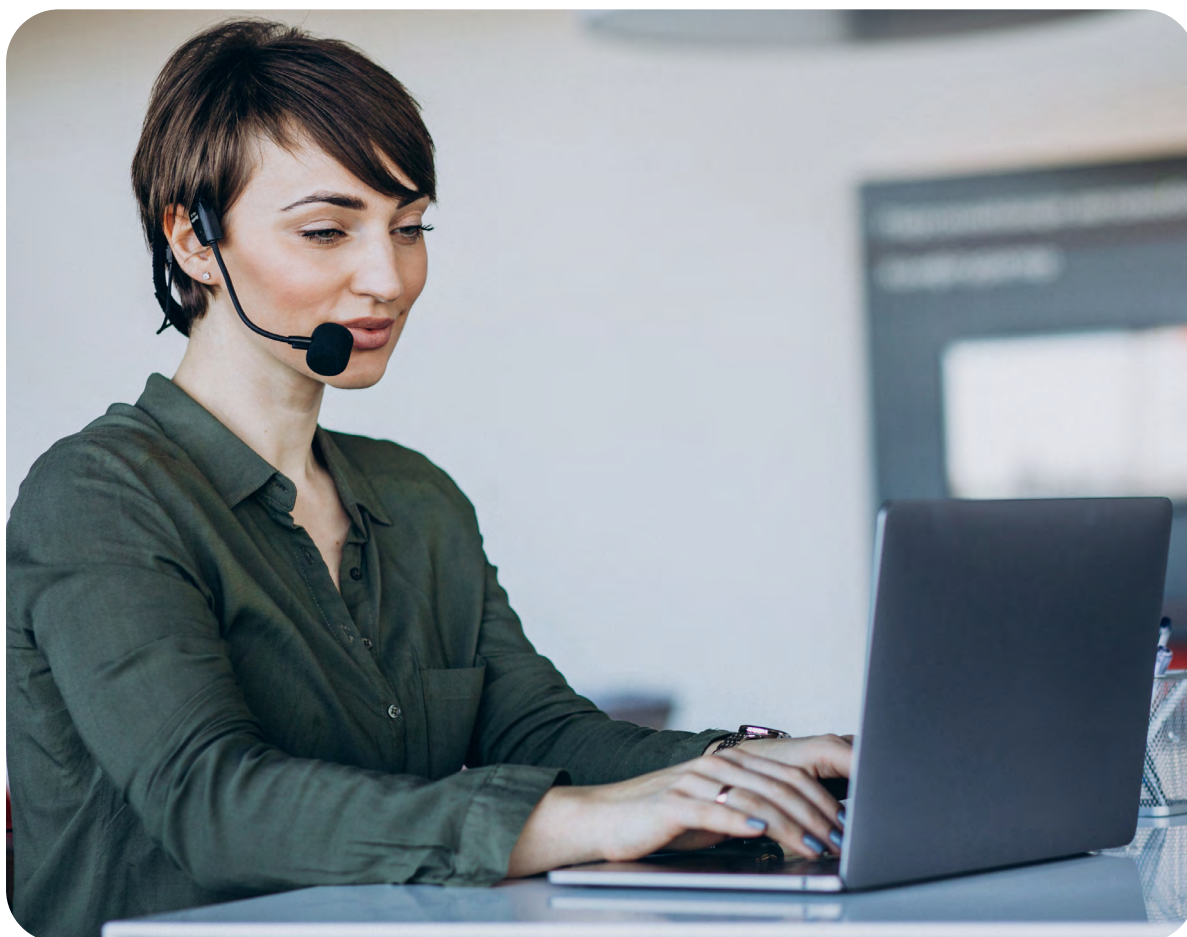
These findings underscore the importance of digital transformation, particularly when it comes to customer experience. Industry 4.0 technologies, such as cloud computing, big data/data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), have long been identified as drivers of operational efficiencies and smarter, more data-driven decision-making.

But organisations have now realised that digital transformation also protects their operations and supply chains from disruption. Take the banking industry, for example, which had to quickly shift to digital service channels in light of lockdowns and social distancing protocols. According to a [2020 KPMG report](#), “Banks, even the most territorial and branch-centric ones, are forced to encourage the use of channels that have never been their strategic priority.”

Digital technologies offer a way to transform customer service processes and core service delivery methods — more importantly, they can do this without incurring high additional costs and at scale. Your digital transformation project can adapt to your organisation’s customer experience needs as you:

- **Expand your product/service line**
- **Grow your customer service team**
- **Expand your customer support services to more platforms and channels**

This is where live chat and chatbots come in. They provide a way to automate routine customer service processes using advanced digital technologies like AI, machine learning and natural language processing.



What are chatbots?

Chatbots, along with live chat and chat as a service (CaaS) solutions, provide an opportunity to introduce AI and automation to your digital communication channels, filling in weaknesses in your customer service ecosystem, such as slow response times, long call queues and no omnichannel presence to name a few.

An AI chatbot is a computer program designed to simulate and process conversations with humans on digital channels, whether it be your website, mobile apps, SMS, messaging platforms (e.g., Slack and WhatsApp) or social media channels like Facebook and Instagram.

Despite the conversation around AI and automation, chatbots do not replace your human customer service agents. They do, however, augment their capabilities, freeing them from tedious and repetitive tasks — allowing them to focus on more complex customer interactions that need a human touch.

Here's a closer look at the value chatbots and live chat bring to the table.

Chatbot numbers in focus

- The global chatbot market is projected to reach \$102.29 billion by 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 34.75% from 2021 to 2026 ([Mordor Intelligence](#)).
- 69% of consumers prefer interacting with chatbots for quick communication ([Salesforce](#)).
- Chatbots are projected to save companies \$8 billion per year in customer service costs ([Juniper Research](#)).
- 40% of shoppers don't care if they're talking to a human or AI, provided they just get answers to their questions ([HubSpot](#)).
- Organisations reduce the volume of call, chat and email inquiries by 70% after implementing virtual customer assistants, which include chatbots ([Gartner](#)).



5 benefits of using customer service chatbots and live chat

1. Providing instant responses to customer queries

Customer service in the digital world is all about speed and efficiency. According to a Forrester study, [73% of customers](#) consider valuing their time as the most important customer service feature businesses can provide. These findings are consistent with [HubSpot's research](#), which shows an overwhelming 90% of consumers rate an “immediate response” on live chat to be important or very important when they have a question concerning customer service.

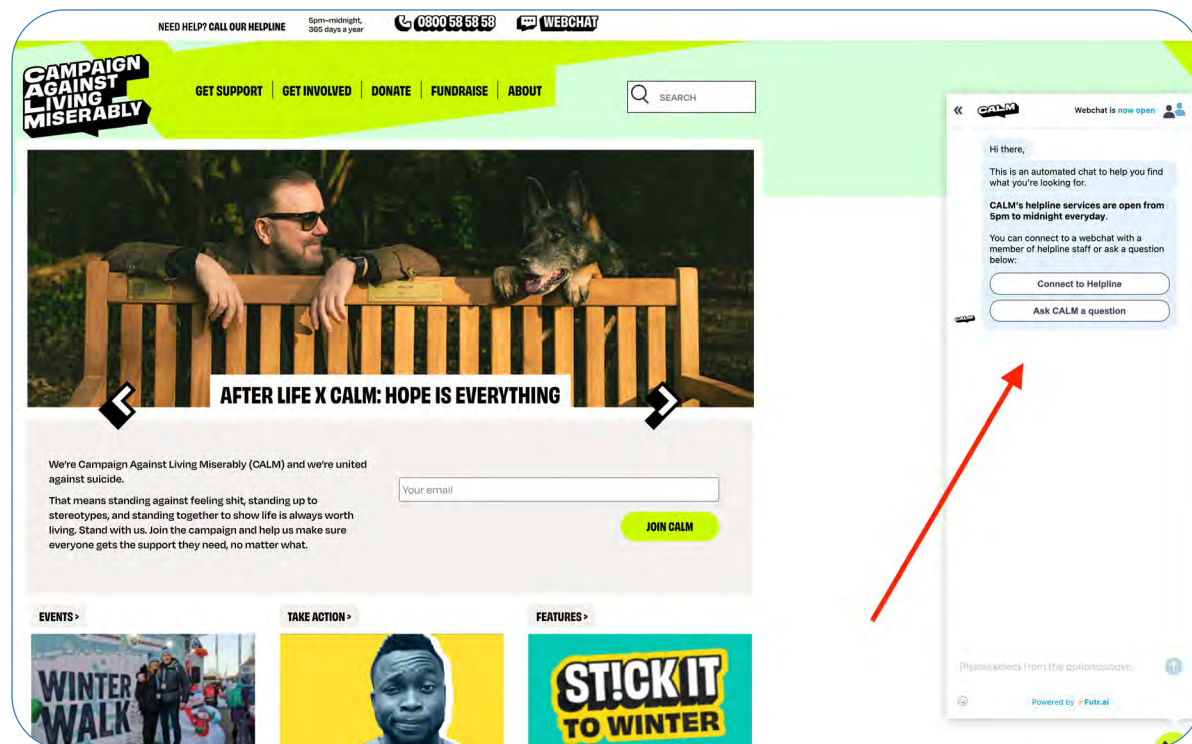
When deployed correctly, chatbots can provide relevant answers to customers' frequently asked questions (FAQs) instantly, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Customers no longer have to sit in call queues and wait several minutes just to speak to a contact centre agent. Chatbot automation ensures that customers get immediate answers to their questions anytime and anywhere.

More importantly, chatbots ensure that any information your customers receive comes from a single source of truth, ensuring consistency in messaging across all your communications channels.



Futr use case

The [Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\)](#), a suicide prevention charity, uses [chatbots designed for charities and nonprofits](#) to support people in need and answer queries at an average of 1.3 seconds.



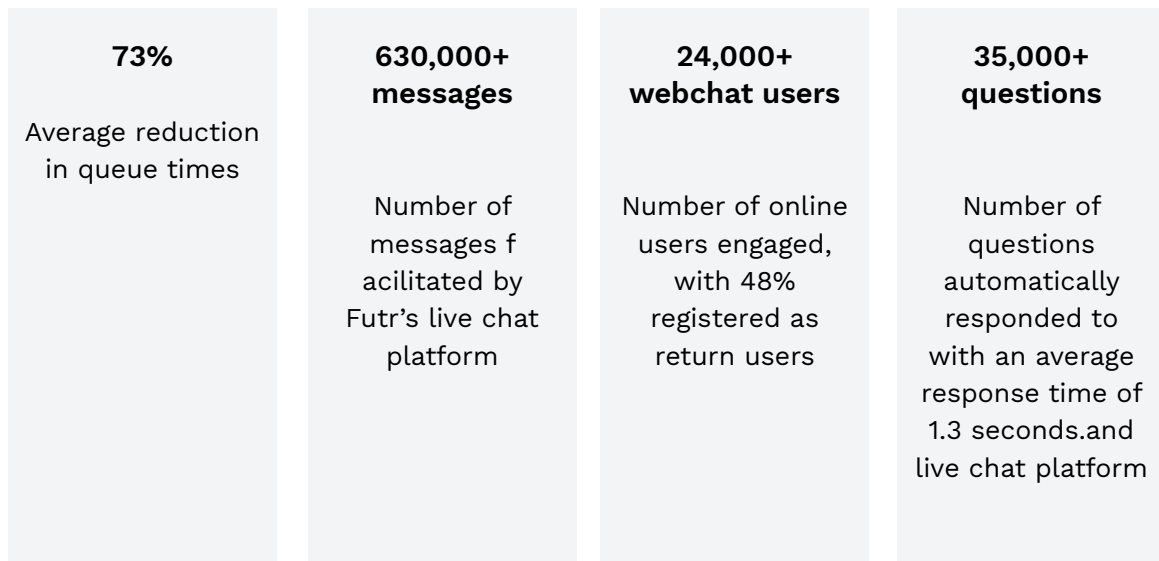
CALM's website and live chat function

“Futr has already helped us with this massive task through the development of a simple bot to assist people in our helpline queue and out of hours. We’re confident our relationship will continue through automated content discovery and AI-driven triage and that together, CALM and Futr will help huge numbers of people.”

Simon Gunning
CEO, Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

Apart from automating instant responses, CALM’s chatbots also allow the charity to triage queries. We designed their bots to identify people with non-critical queries and help them self-serve through the chat. This setup allows the charity’s critical support teams to focus on people who need them most.

CALM — Chatbot and live chat impact by the numbers



Related reading: Dive into our [CALM case study](#)

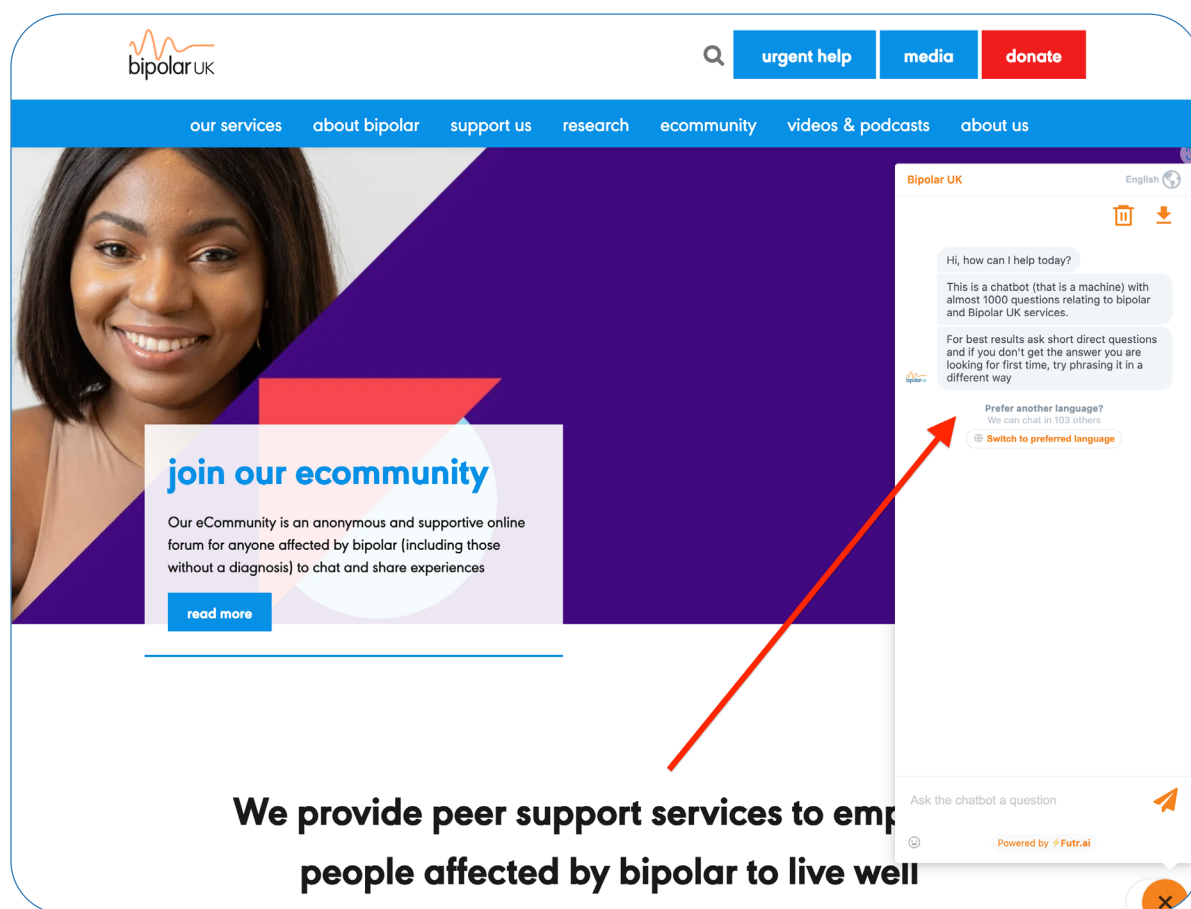
2. Enable self-serve on your digital customer service

Chatbots can enable self-service on your site and digital channels by integrating service delivery into [live chat](#), allowing customers to:

- [Report something](#)
- [Buy something](#)
- [Check something](#)
- [Track something](#)
- [Change something, all without having to leave the conversation](#)

Self-serve tells your customers they no longer need to reach out to you through high-touch and often time-consuming channels, such as call centres. In fact, Salesforce's fourth [State of Service](#) report notes that 66% of customer service professionals agree that self-service channels reduce case volume, giving live agents time and bandwidth to do more strategic work.

Futr use case



Bipolar UK's website and live chat function

[Bipolar UK](#), the national mental health charity that supports individuals with bipolar disorder, uses Futr chatbots to enable self-serve through live chat on their website and other digital communications channels.

The charity engages over 100 support groups and an online community of 20,000 members and also conducts one-to-one peer support with beneficiaries through phone and email — a tall order for a team of 11 employees and 200 volunteers. Enabling self-serve allows users to autonomously resolve simple and repetitive queries, easing the strain on Bipolar's employees and volunteers.

“We receive over 12,000 calls and around 5,000 emails each year — with a huge number of common questions.”

Simon Kitchen
Chief Executive Officer, Bipolar UK

All Bipolar UK had to do was upload their knowledge base of FAQs through their Futr dashboard to “teach” their chatbots how to respond to specific queries. The charity was able to save 193 hours of call time and automatically answer over 24,000 questions over eight months.

Bipolar UK — Chatbot and live chat impact by the numbers

24,082 questions answered	193 hours of call time saved	36 languages supported	£87,000 cost savings
Annualised non-urgent and repeat questions that were previously served by a call handler	Automated live-chat responses enabled contact centre staff to focus on the users who needed the most	Futr’s multilingual chatbots answered service users’ questions in the language they were most comfortable using	Savings generated in the first eight months of deploying Futr’s chatbot and live chat platform

Related reading: Read our [Bipolar UK case study](#)

3. Generate more customer insights with data analytics channels

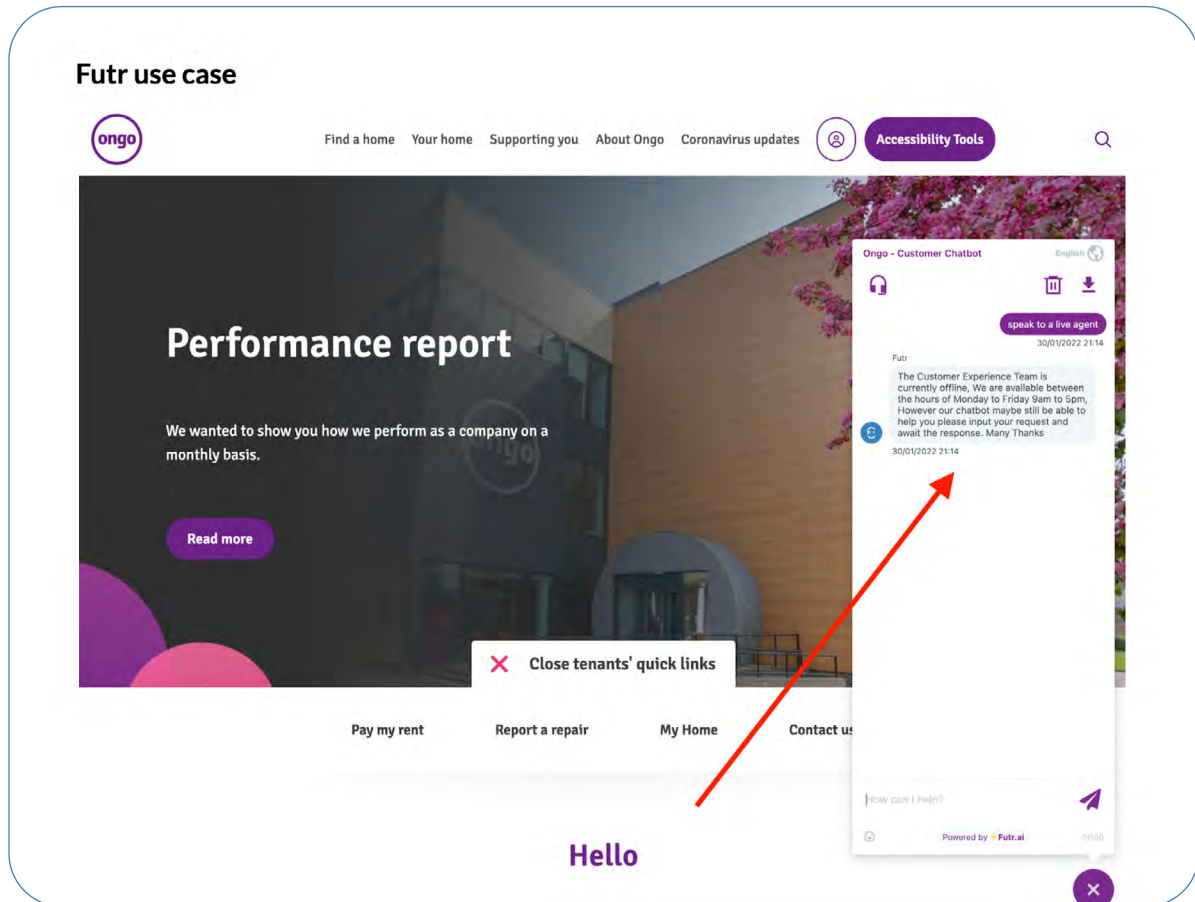
Customer data provides a wealth of knowledge and insights into your customers’ shopping habits, product preferences, challenges and needs. [Research by McKinsey & Company](#) shows that organisations using customer behavioural insights outperform their competitors’ sales growth and gross margins by 85% and 25%, respectively.

The more data you have, the easier it becomes to develop targeted marketing messages, sales promotions and product recommendations that drive customer satisfaction. Live chat channels, in particular, enable you to capture data and analyse your customers’:

- **Report something**
- **Buy something**
- **Check something**
- **Track something**
- **Change something, all without having to leave the conversation**

At Futr, our chatbot analytics also lets you see and measure the pipeline chatbots and live chat generate for your organisation. You can use analytics to set a pound amount for every automated response and quantify your customer service savings.

Futr use case



Ongo's website and live chat function

Ongo, the largest housing provider in North Lincolnshire, came to Futr with the goal of better understanding how their Customer Experience team manages queries. We proposed using [housing chatbots](#) to get insights into their tenants' voices and experiences.

Deploying bots into their live chat channels allowed Ongo to track — in real-time — the questions that mattered most to their residents, guiding further content creation and decision-making.

"Futr's insights into the questions our customers are asking enables us to improve customer experience going forward."

Ryan Heseltine
Solutions Architect, Ongo Homes

Because Futr’s analytics dashboard collects insights around the clock, Ongo learned what their tenants wanted in real-time, 24/7. For instance, the social landlord discovered that a third of tenant queries were asked and answered outside business hours, highlighting the tenants’ need for round-the-clock customer service.

Ongo Housing — chatbot impact by the numbers

**12,438
answered
questions**

Annualised
non-urgent and
repeat questions
that were
previously served
by a call handler

**85.2%
contacts
automated**

Of the 5,118 users, just
756 required a live chat
conversation beyond
the bot’s automatic
response

**£64,438
cost savings**

Based on Gartner’s
UK-wide research
on the average
cost per contact
(call or email) going
through a
traditional
contact centre

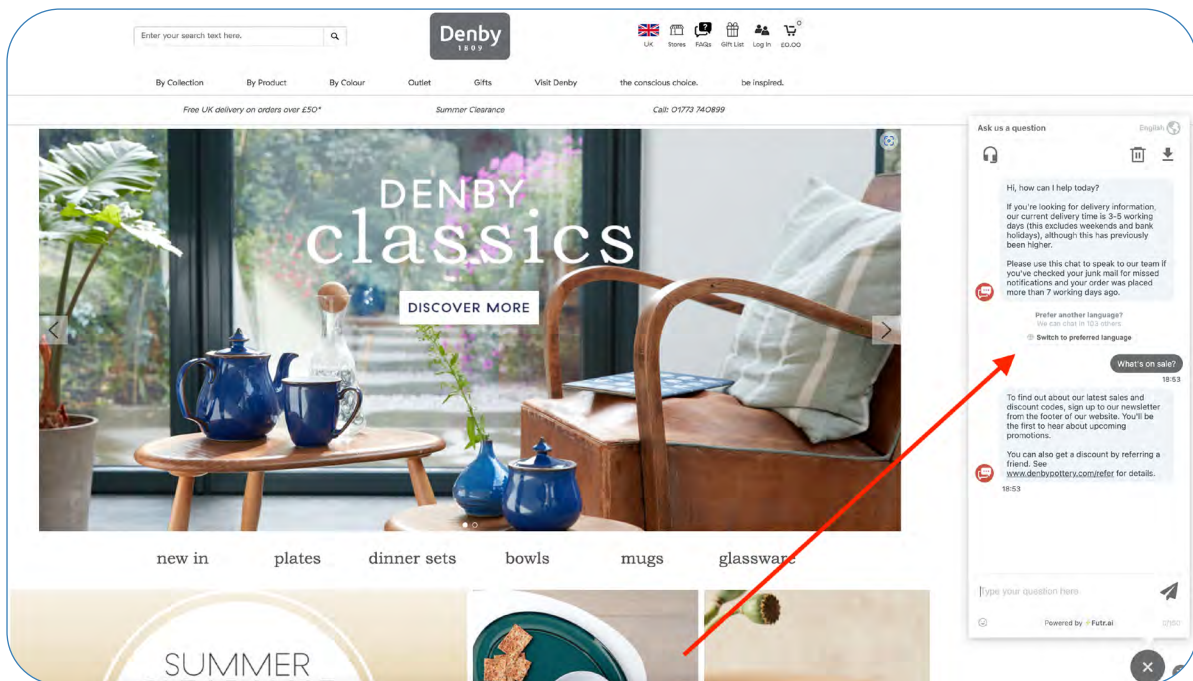
Related reading: Dive into our [Ongo housing case study](#)

4. Creating more personalised customer experiences

Chatbots can create new customer experiences that make the shopping experience or buyer’s journey more engaging. For example, in the retail space, chatbots can act as shopping assistants, cross-selling and upselling products that are new and/or on offer.

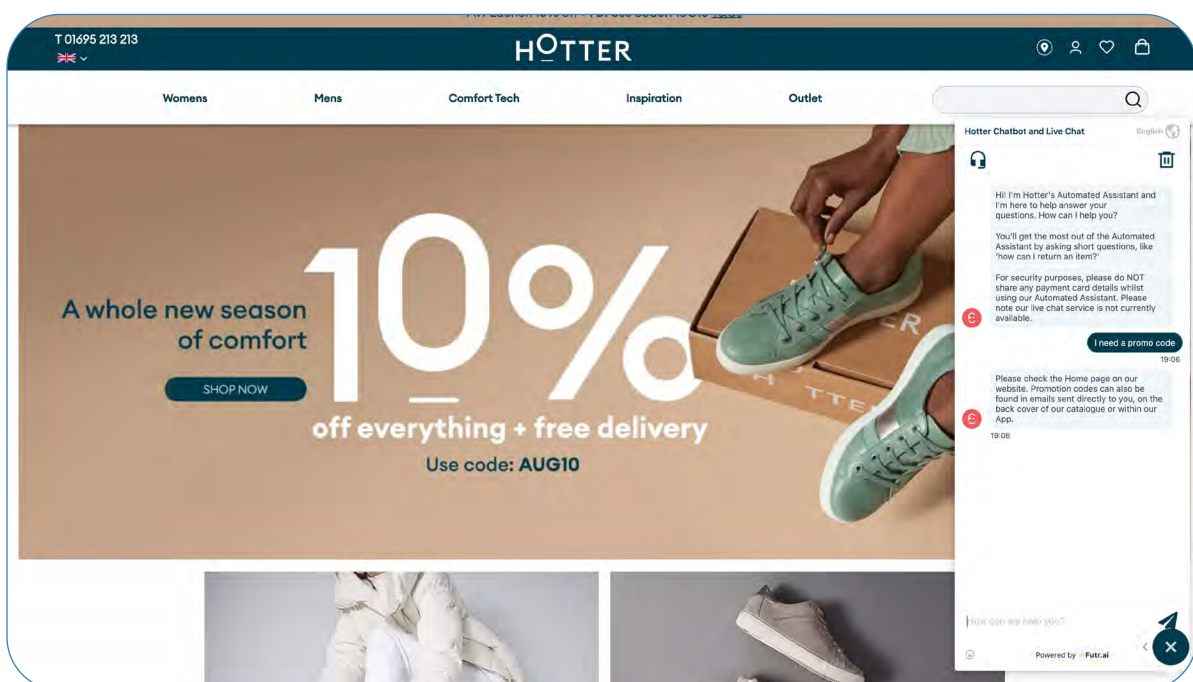
The ability of chatbots to learn from user interactions and rich real-time data is also a key driver in creating personalised customer experiences, leading to more meaningful conversations and interactions that feel more natural.

Futr use case



Chatbot welcoming customers on [Denby Pottery](#)

Retail chatbots offer several opportunities for brands to develop more streamlined and personalised customer experiences. At Futr, we've helped brands like [Hotter](#) and [Denby Pottery](#) make it easier for their shoppers to make informed shopping decisions by answering questions about products on offer, delivery times, product codes and more.



Chatbot functionality on [Hotter](#)

Chatbots can also engage your customers in the language they're most comfortable using. At Futr, our platform comes with multilingual APIs that auto-translate chatbot and live chat messages in 120 languages.

This is a game-changer for social landlords, who have historically depended on third-party translation services like [LanguageLine](#) (used by 62% of landlords we surveyed) to communicate with their non-English speaking tenants. [Multilingual chat](#) enables social landlords, like believe housing, to provide the same quality of service to their diverse community of tenants.

“In the past, we had to use external translation services — not only costly but also time-consuming and not great customer service.”

Carol Crathorne

Service Transformation Manager, believe housing

Multilingual support isn't just about convenience and non-UK languages. For Welsh organisations, it's a [legal necessity](#) to include the use of Welsh, alongside English, in the delivery of public services.

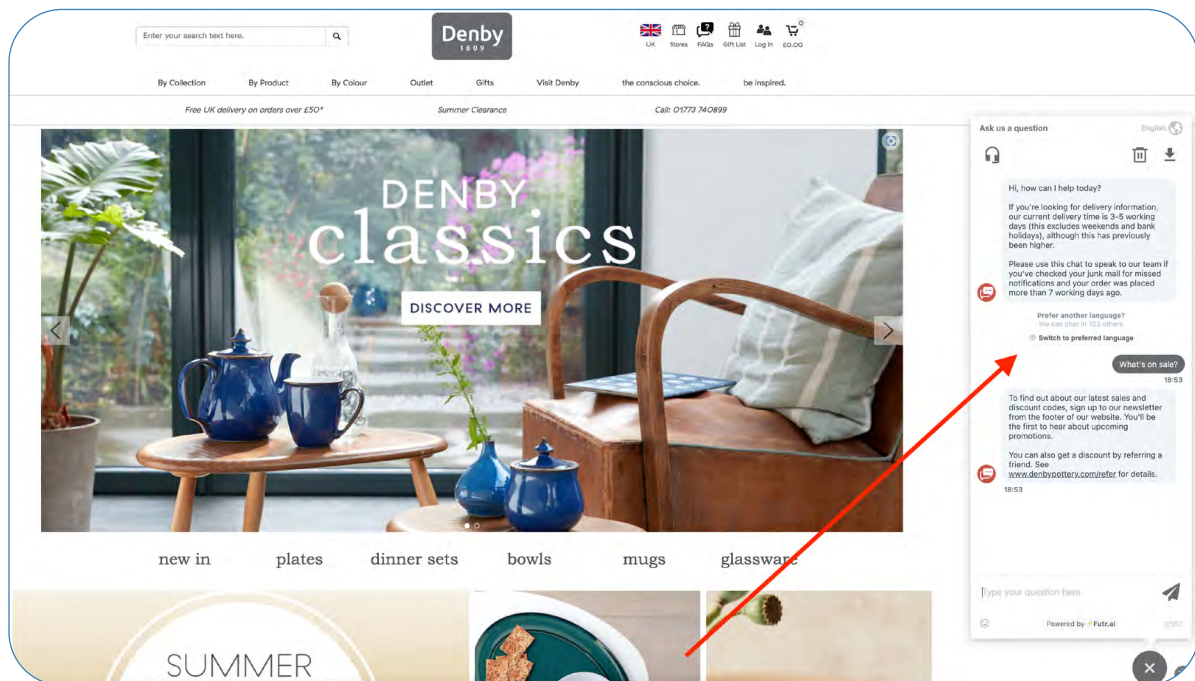
Related reading: Dive into our [believe housing case study](#)

5. Enable conversational bookings and reservations

Chatbots can also be integrated into your online booking and reservations system, allowing organisations in the hospitality industry to expand their [booking and reservation](#) facilities to platforms like Facebook Messenger or Telegram.

With roughly a [third of customers](#) preferring to contact a company's customer service through social media instead of phone, opening booking facilities on your social media profiles enables you to create an omnichannel customer experience.

Futr use case



Live chat functionality at the [Waterfront Hotel, Spa & Golf at Wyboston Lakes Resort's](#) website

At Futr, our slick integrations are perfect for hotels and restaurants looking to add a conversational layer of AI to their online booking infrastructure. We've helped brands like [The Waterfront Hotel, Spa & Golf at Wyboston Lakes Resort](#) use live chat and chatbots to help customers:

- **Make reservations**
- **Book a callback**
- **Schedule appointments out of hours**
- **Change their bookings and reservations**
- **Track their bookings/appointments**
- **Pay for something**



Make 2022 a year of customer experience transformation

Chatbot technology has come a long way over the years. From once being only capable of answering the simplest of questions, today's chatbots now understand complex questions, slang and the context of words and phrases — all while engaging users in natural language. These features now enable chatbots to provide much-needed relief to strained customer service teams.

If you're considering using customer service chatbots, there are a few things to bear in mind. Firstly, you'll need to ensure that your chatbot can understand customer queries and provide accurate responses. Secondly, you should consider how well a chatbot integrates into your existing customer service infrastructure.

Finally, it's important to remember that chatbots are not a replacement for human customer service agents. In complex cases or where a human touch is required, your chatbot should always signpost the customer to a human agent.



Interested in learning more? Get in touch with the **Futr** team today at hello@futr.ai

[Schedule a FREE demo](#) of our chatbot and live chat platform applications

Futr's live chat and chatbot solution helps organisations across all industries drive digital transformation in their organisation. Be there for your customers, clients and other stakeholders 24/7 with self-serve features and automated responses to FAQs. Use chatbots to triage queries and enable your live agents to focus on helping users that need a human touch.