

Research finds that smartphone users want apps, not help desks

A comprehensive study of smartphone users carried out recently by Alcatel-Lucent in Brazil, Japan, the UK and the US has found that consumers prefer to avoid dealing with service provider help desks, and that there is growing evidence of a preference for using app-based self-service tools to resolve many common service issues.



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The market research found that:

- More than a quarter of Japanese, UK and US consumers prefer not to call help desks;
- Almost half of Brazilians are more likely to ignore a problem or allow it to persist to avoid contacting a help desk;
- While customer service help desks remain the primary channel for resolving services issues, it is not the only channel and consumers are showing a growing interest in self-service tools;
- Japanese consumers are most willing to use self-help tools, such as apps, with up to half of UK consumers and as many as 42% of those in the US willing to sort out their own issues. In Brazil, 53 to 59% did report a willingness to use self-service tools, depending on the service;
- The functions consumers most want to see in service providers' apps include billing information, troubleshooting capabilities, usage tracking and security alerts.

The study, conducted with the market research firm Penn Schoen Berland, surveyed 5,500 consumers smartphone users who had strong input/influence when it comes to communication purchases. The research looked at a range of consumer trends in mobile communications, including how smartphone users prefer to interact with large companies, use of Voice over LTE (VoLTE) and Voice over Wi-Fi, wearable devices, future communications including connected vehicles, and customer experience management.

Methodology

The survey interviewed 2,500 consumers in the US, plus 1,000 each in Brazil, Japan and the UK. They were asked to give their thoughts on:

- Satisfaction with their current provider of mobile, high-speed internet and television services;
- Perceptions of overall service performance;
- Views on existing apps for various services;
- What features they would like in apps from their service provider.

Josh Aroner, Vice-President, IP Platforms Marketing of Alcatel-Lucent, said: "Customer experience management is a primary focus for communications service providers worldwide. Keeping customers happy and, at the same time, alleviating strain on call centres, can be complex and challenging. This market research sets forth the critical areas where CSPs can effectively offer a self-help approach to give customers greater control over their service and more efficiently manage help

desk operations."

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