

Customer Focus

VALUE IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE NOW

Sainsbury's CEO Simon Roberts
on what drives retailers in the
post-pandemic world

**'PEOPLE ARE LOOKING
FOR STRONG GUIDANCE
FROM THE BRANDS THEY
DEAL WITH'**

Psychologist Dr Nilu Ahmed on the social issues
that concern consumers in the wake of COVID





TIME TO RECONSIDER

by Jo Causon

With discouraging predictions around inflation, it is clear that the cost of living crisis will be our reality for some time to come.

Within the UK Customer Satisfaction Index, we ask as one of our standard questions whether people are prepared to pay a lot more than they currently do for great customer service. Historically, around 25% of respondents has said 'yes'.

Over the past two years, that proportion has grown and stands now at 34%. In one way, that's a positive. People are beginning to understand that customer service has value, and they are prepared to pay more for it. It's an important point, because service is not free.

But there is also this widening gap between people who can and cannot afford to pay. What does that mean for society and for organisations in terms of how they deliver goods and services to customer groups with widely different expectations and income?

Set against this we seem to have become much less tolerant, much quicker to become intolerant and even aggressive in some cases.

There seem to be two contradictory paths being trodden here. On the one hand, a significant number of us want our goods and services delivered in the 'next day' timeframe that we've

grown used to. For another contingent, the past two years and the ESG agenda have had a strong impact and increasingly we ask ourselves how much more in terms of material goods we really need.

This raises important questions for organisations around how they address a polarised society in income terms. It provides an opportunity for them to really define and communicate their purpose. Who are they trying to serve and how?

As consumers and as organisations, we are going to have to make hard choices.

It really is incumbent on organisations to be clear about what they can provide at a given price and what they cannot. Customers will need to be more discerning and realistic about their wants and needs.

Another key question is whether we are reaching a stage where one set of customers pays more so that a less well-off group can access affordable energy. If we are, we need to have honest conversations about that.

There is a need for continuing dialogue – and resilience. The past two years have shown us how adaptable we can be. But we do need now to revisit questions around the future that we want to create for ourselves and others in our community.

May

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WEATHERING THE STORM

Providing value and promoting food at Sainsbury's.
Simon Roberts talks to Liz Loxton

Few businesses have cemented their position in our lives and in the public consciousness over the past two years in the way supermarkets have. After an exacting two years of getting food to customers in the teeth of the pandemic, with its supply woes and constantly changing regulations, food retailers are wrangling a new set of pressures.



Simon Roberts, CEO of Sainsbury's, has spent his whole career in retail, taking the helm of the UK's second largest grocer in June 2020. As he approaches his second anniversary in the role, the new reality of cash-pressed households in an inflationary market is very much front of mind.

By March this year, inflation had risen to 6.2% – the highest in 30 years – with energy bills soaring and warnings of more to come. What has been so notable, Roberts says, is the swiftness with which our attention has pivoted away from COVID towards rising costs.

“One of the things that has been remarkable is how fast the narratives have moved in the last year. Price and value is the biggest issue for us now. Whilst customer optimism initially stabilised as we came out of all the challenges of the pandemic early in 2022, in recent weeks it has significantly fallen back again and inflation is now the really big concern. Customers are getting much more concerned about their overall finances; they can also see the headwinds coming,” he says.

During lockdown, in-person visits to the supermarket were carefully planned and – for many – anxious affairs. Post-lockdown, supermarket visits are more frequent, with customers looking at prices with almost day-to-day scrutiny.

Inflation is biting hard and for households, the choices are stark and likely to become even more so. Across Sainsbury's' customer surveying and listening – a process that takes place constantly via Nectar data, in stores and across other channels – value for money comes across loud and clear as shoppers' primary concern. When household spending is under pressure, we prioritise our housing costs, utility bills, food, health and children's presents. “These are the things we protect,” says Roberts. “Spending on new gadgets,

homeware and DIY projects becomes discretionary,” he goes on.

So, with customers focused on the essentials, Sainsbury's' priority is to deliver value and stay close to changes in spending habits. “People are going to be looking for more promotions on price. They are going to be looking to buy more products when they are better value. They are going to look to waste less and plan what they need to buy rather than buying on impulse.”

And as much as Sainsbury's stays close to shoppers' changing spending habits, consumers are bringing the conversation back to the retailer. “We are hearing this concern from all of the customer listening we do; over a third of customers are already telling us that they've seen food prices rise.”



It's a vindication of Sainsbury's' broader strategic planning that took place two years ago to refocus around food and value for money. “In many ways, the trends we are seeing are the ones we've been planning for,” he says.

CHANGING HABITS

Post-pandemic, consumers' habits and behaviours have changed markedly – and some of those changes are likely to endure.

The large-scale shift to online shopping of course defines the story of changing consumer behaviours, even among groups of customers, older shoppers primarily, who without a global pandemic may never have entertained shopping in that way. “Over 40% of what we sell in our company is now bought online. Nearly 50% of all the food we sell is now bought online – up from under 8% before the pandemic,” says Roberts.



One of the positive lessons from the pandemic for consumers has been the rediscovery of the value of time at home – a feature of the past two years that has helped drive the continued acceleration of online shopping. Sainsbury's is responding with increased flexibility and more personalised offers via its reward card Nectar. "Twice the volume of food bought from our company is bought online compared to two years ago and that means that the customer can access a new level of convenience. But it also means that as a company, we can think differently about how we serve customers better digitally."

Despite the new popularity of online, Sainsbury's has seen an enthusiastic return to stores. "Shopping in store during the pandemic was a cautious affair and a major expedition for some. Now we're back to three to four visits a week," he says. "But we buy what we need. We've got a real focus on not wasting food and not spending on items we don't need. So, we're shopping little and often again."

The renewed appreciation of the service that supermarkets provide that emerged during lockdowns has not dissipated, Roberts says. Customers pay more attention to the complexity of an operation that brings products from 70-plus countries around the world, and coordinates complex supply chains and offers online deliveries with increasing levels of flexibility. "There's been a reappraisal of the importance of the role that all those brilliant colleagues across our company and others fulfil each day to help put food on our table every day. So, there's a big human factor in all this. I think people have really grown to see and value that much more. The pandemic has changed this forever," he says.

With hybrid working still a confirmed part of the landscape, people are eating and cooking at home more frequently. "We're thinking about the role of food in our lives and about how as individuals and families we buy food and cook food."

Even with real pressure on household finances, Roberts has seen an increased engagement with food and a greater desire for families to enjoy food together. It's something for retailers to tap into, he says. "We are thinking about those mini celebrations, those key moments over the next 12 months, where, after two years of being in a very different context, people will be focused on enjoying time together, enjoying celebrations and looking to do that in a 'good value' way. Helping people plan and spend well, and enjoy the big moments in life over the next year – that's a focus for us."

We are thinking about those mini celebrations, those key moments

And in the increasing conversation around sustainability, consumers are asking more questions around where their food is sourced from, animal welfare and packaging. Sustainability is not as high in the collective consumer consciousness as price, but it is a growing concern, Roberts says.

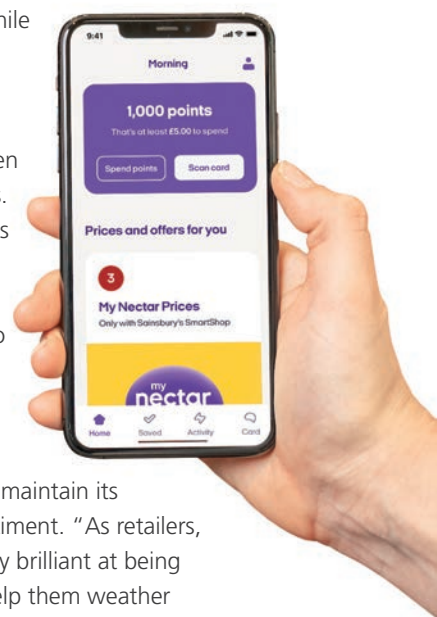
There has been a positive shift in the way that supermarkets and suppliers collaborate on sustainability – necessarily so. The sector is intensely competitive, he says, but has learnt to work co-operatively throughout the pandemic on otherwise intractable supply chain issues and, increasingly, in the interest of pursuing environmental stewardship. “We had to learn to work differently together as businesses and as leaders, to find solutions that you can’t find on your own. The food system, after energy, has the biggest impact on the environment.” The big five food brands in the UK have joined with the World Wildlife Fund with a mission to halve the impact of the shopping basket on the environment. “We’re setting bold targets about how we drive system change together. It’s something our business can’t do on its own, but it is something we can do together over time, which will mean that environmentally friendly food is more accessible and better value.”

Post-pandemic, shoppers are also looking at healthier options for their food shop. That’s the government’s focus too. Much as all businesses are honour-bound to respond to changes in customer behaviour, some of those changes will partly be driven by external factors. The National Food Strategy Report points at the urgent challenges in the nation’s shopping and eating habits. Retailers will no longer be able to take up prime promotional

space with products that are high in fat, salt and sugar. Those items will become far less prominent in the store – indeed that’s a change that retailers including Sainsbury’s are already putting into effect. “The National Food Strategy is driving all food providers to promote healthier food options in a much more visible way. We’ve lots of evidence of the benefits of eating more healthily and we think we’ve got a really key role to play in that.”

Whether shopping online or in-store, Sainsbury’s’ efforts to tap into customer sentiment is driven like never before. And while confidence is returning around public health, there is no reason to let up. “In 30 years of doing this kind of work, it’s always been important to listen to customers. But there has never been a focus on it like today, hour by hour, day by day, almost minute to minute. Every week, we listen to tens of thousands of customers about their experience in Sainsbury’s,” says Roberts.

It’s essential if the business is to maintain its understanding of customer sentiment. “As retailers, we are going to have to be really brilliant at being on the side of customers and help them weather this storm.”



FOOD RETAIL MATTERS

- Nearly 50% of the food products sold by Sainsbury’s today is sold online, compared to 8% prior to March 2020
- The supermarket processes 850,000 online orders a week
- The Nectar app has been downloaded 7.4 million times
- There are over 1,400 Sainsbury’s stores in the UK, 90% of them in England

2022: THE GREAT CATCH-UP

Property firms such as Osborne Property Services face growing customer expectations and steep supply challenges, as Vicky Fordham-Lewis tells Peter Crush

It's frightening to think that unless things dramatically change, by 2050 most of the UK's social housing stock (some four million properties, or a sixth of all homes) will not be fit for purpose. Some were built with what are now regarded as unsafe materials or have antiquated water and gas systems. Others don't meet new environmental standards. Either way, the need to update, maintain and convert these homes into modern housing stock is like the painting of the Forth Bridge – always ongoing.

Helping to play its part in all of this, however, is Osborne Property Services, the property management, maintenance and refurbishment firm that has multi-year, multi-million-pound contracts with the likes of Slough and Dacorum Borough Councils, Arun District Council and Winchester City Council. In total, it looks after more than 38,000 homes, fixing everything from leaking taps and broken fences, to the wholesale replacement of roofs. But while all councils set their own service level agreements (for things like emergency or non-emergency jobs), try telling managing director Vicky Fordham-Lewis that consistency of service doesn't matter.

"When everything we do is in the interests of customers, and it's our people in our vans homeowners see, it becomes clear very quickly that we are a 100% service business," says Fordham-Lewis, who has more than 25 years' experience in the sector. "If I'm being honest, at the start of my career social housing providers didn't see themselves like this, but this has evolved over time to putting tenants at the heart of our business, which has become a fundamental value."

"Such is the direction of travel, I can already foresee the sector moving to a point where service standards will become standardised across all providers," she adds.

Until this unifying moment happens, Osborne Property Services (whose service excellence is ISO 9001-certified) is unashamedly clear that it is a business that is investing money out of its own pocket to become the best in the business. Not only has it partnered with The Institute to completely revise its customer service strategy [under the



pillars of Caring; Design; Obsessing over customers; and Celebrating our achievements], but it is currently testing a new IT system that will eventually leave devices in tenants' houses to enable them to have 'smarter homes' – ones that monitor the performance of homes that are retrofitted, and advise homeowners to book maintenance and upkeep visits well in advance of a problem morphing into something bigger.

"This work is part of one of the most exciting new parts to our business, which is around zero-carbon housing retrofitting," she says. To address the climate emergency, the UK's whole housing stock is required to meet at least EPC Band C (for energy efficiency) by 2030. So far, a whopping 71% of all homes don't make this grade. As part of a pilot with Sutton Housing Partnership (and via The Mayor of London's GLA Retrofitting framework), Osborne Property Services is retrofitting multiple homes to be more carbon neutral. Although it's only a small start, the aim is to produce a retrofitting blueprint that is capable of extrapolating and ultimately transforming housing stock across the UK.

“
To us, putting
tenants at the heart
of our business is
fundamental
”

Bringing customers along on this journey is vital: "Our technology investment for this includes creating a portal where jobs are booked and their status seen in real time; it also acts as a repository for information, so customers can find out about de-carbonising homes, and why this is so important."

TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

Even small details very much have the customer in mind – such as plans to reposition energy pods outside people's homes, so they can be accessed by its staff without the need for tenants to be at home.

She says: "Lockdown gave us the time to completely reassess our technology. Improving on how jobs are reported and updated gives customers better insights, but also enables us to be more strategic in planning our repairs. Our IT system, which already creates automatic certifications, manages workflows and updates customers, will be further developed and will add value to the customer journey."

She adds: "We've also developed a new module to manage the end-to-end retrofitting process, integrating seamlessly with all stakeholders – for our customers it means they can see progress, work programmes, connect with their communities and pick up handy tips."

Ultimately, all of this is service investment the company didn't have to make. It has been done purely out of Osborne's commitment to put customers first and to try to exceed people's expectations. "We recognise that customers and homes that we look after all have different needs", she explains, "from those who will do repairs themselves and never call in, to those who need a lot of visits. But a key part of our 'caring' pillar is taking customers on the journey with us – including giving customers a strong and meaningful residents' voice."

So, does all of this work? Yes: very broadly, these interventions do turn into high satisfaction reality. Some



98% of customers say they recommend Osborne; and satisfaction levels are consistency around 95%.

Recent events have undoubtedly added new pressures that the business has had to respond to. She says: "During Covid we were designated as key workers and continued to deliver services, – we did 100,000 reactive repairs during the first 12 months of lockdown, coming into contact with around a quarter of a million people. Work was prioritised by our clients and many routine works were postponed and now these jobs are stacking up, on top of the usual demand." She adds: "Meanwhile, COVID-19 has meant lots of our staff have also been off as well, causing operational challenges."

Fordham-Lewis says most clients have been supportive of the challenging period the sector has been through, although it's still the case that customers may not always be so forgiving. "Since lockdowns have ended, it is totally understandable that customers want their work completed, but we are still challenged with high rates of infection absence both within Osborne and our wider supply chain," she reflects. "Our priority is to ensure high levels of communication across all stakeholders, to make sure customers understand why there might be delays still."

What's likely to have happened, she reflects, is that some people will have fallen out of the habit of



reporting problems, so this too could prompt a new spike in work. And just for added complication, one of the latest problems is the impact that tight supply chains are also having on service – from both a labour and materials perspective. “Global supply-chain disruptions have caused huge rises in the price of key materials. The cost of insulation has increased by 100% compared to last year,” she says. “So while the immediate challenges of lockdown have eased, expectations haven’t changed, and that’s something we need to work with our clients and customers to manage.”

Under Fordham-Lewis, there is a determination not to let these potential service-disruptions go ignored. “We do whatever we need to do,” she says. “Our success is how we respond to issues like this. And that’s why we’re really excited about the retrofitting of de-carbonising activities. As this work evolves, it will integrate (hopefully) into our other normal services, and this is an area where we think we can have massive customer service impact.”

“Ultimately we need to be ahead of what customers need and be ready to face the challenges as they unfold,” she says. “Right now, there is pressure on all services and budgets, not just local authorities, so focus needs to be the delivery of our service commitments.” First-time fix rates will be one area the business will continue to work on – “these benefit both customers and ourselves,” she says –

but it’s the green agenda that she is clearly hoping to steal a march on. “Four million homes will need upgrading over the next 20 years,” she says. “This is a huge opportunity to give customers a cleaner, healthier and more affordable home to live in, whilst benefiting the environment.”



Four million homes will need upgrading over the next 20 years

As for the more immediate term, the priority is making sure the business does keeps satisfaction high. “I’m reminded of the types of customers we have by looking at my grandmother, and my daughter,” she says. “Their service expectations are so different, and to an extent digitisation has raised the service bar that younger people expect. That’s why I’m so passionate about making sure we at least maintain our service and continue to make small improvements along the way.”

PROPERTY SERVICES MATTER

- Osborne Property Services looks after more than 38,000 homes
- Nine out of ten customers have their expectations exceeded by Osborne Property Services
- Nine out of ten customers positively rate their experience with Osborne Property Services
- 98% of customers said they would recommend Osborne Property Services



THE AGE OF CHANGE

The pandemic saw increases in digital uptake and social awareness, while 2022 has brought new pressures. So what's next for brands and their consumers? Liz Loxton talks to Dr Nilu Ahmed

One of the notable features of the pandemic and its ensuing lockdowns has been its societal impact: in particular, the emergence of a social cohesion around key issues.

As we sheltered in place, there emerged a growing and meaningful level of concern about the environment. A greater emphasis on fairness between social groups began to crystallise, along with support for local businesses and community issues. Consumers forged deeper connections with the companies they dealt with, such as supermarkets, utilities and broadband providers. More of us migrated to online shopping – including older demographics.

Alongside that, employees en masse showed that not only could they be trusted to work productively from home, but they could do so while demonstrating beyond the call of duty levels of commitment to their customers – while also thriving on a completely new work-life balance. Prior assumptions about work and productivity were shattered.

2022, however, has not delivered ever greater consensus. Far from it. We tend to be less vocal about social issues. Consumer complaints are up and, as pandemic restrictions are relaxed, some employers have their employees back to the workplace.

So where do we go from here? How will organisations address the great hybrid working conundrum and what's at the heart of the relationship between consumers and brands now? What do customers and employees want from their brands and employers?

Dr Nilu Ahmed, psychologist and social sciences lecturer at Bristol University, and a speaker at The Institute's recent conference, believes the situation calls for clarity. The organisations that will fare best are the ones that show leadership.

People are looking for really strong guidance and a sense of identity from the organisations they deal with, she says. "That's one of the things we saw during the pandemic when there was so much uncertainty. People are looking for brands, services and organisations that will give them strong leadership and a plan to follow."



Hybrid working is a case in point. There remains a huge appetite for a flexible approach to the working week among employees, she says. Handled effectively, it offers many benefits, both for individuals and the bottom line. "Organisations can introduce cost-effective measures like agile workspaces.

They can recruit from around the country and have access to the best talent," she says.

As a strategy, it does raise concerns from a psychological perspective. Too much time spent away from our colleagues and social networks is undesirable, to say the least. "We do need that connection – we need to be with other people. But actually, hybrid working offers us the best of both worlds, because it gives us autonomy and we flourish when we feel we are in control of our time and our work. If we also have the opportunity and choice to go into work from time to time, we have the kind of connection that starts to spark different kinds of thinking."

“ People are looking for really strong guidance from the organisations they deal with ”

SENSE OF SOLIDARITY

And what about that sense of fairness and broader social cohesion? Consumers still want to associate with ethical brands and companies that do good, and brands want to show their commitment to addressing inequality. They need to tread carefully, however.

In March each year, International Women's Day attracts an outpouring of support from an array of organisations – a lot of it in the form of highly visual posts on social media channels. This year, displaying that support came at a price for some.

A Gender Pay Gap bot, created by campaigners Francesca Lawson and Ali Fensome, trawled twitter, retweeting and reposting messages from organisations while also sharing publicly available information about their pay ratios.

“We live in a world where you cannot get away with making claims that are not really well-resourced, well-referenced and supported,” Ahmed notes. “It’s actually really difficult to be ethical at every level across a business, and this is an area we are seeing consumers looking at more and more,” she says. Companies will need to tread carefully, she points out, because the scrutiny is only likely to increase.

MENTAL HEALTH

With an apparent lack of progress on some social issues along with added economic pressures that are hitting consumers and businesses alike, we might have a sense that people now view the world from a rather fatigued or even jaundiced point of view.

Ahmed says the fatigue is real and that levels of burnout are worryingly high. “It’s really quite scary to witness. We’ve seen the data on mental health – the increases in anxiety and depression both self-reported and diagnosed. And these are people who are still going out and doing their jobs; carrying that into their jobs and growing still more fatigued.”

Again companies and businesses will need to show leadership and act decisively. “Showing empathy, communicating around mental health issues and providing support and resources – these are the signs of good practice,” she says.

“I always advocate having access to counselling and having therapeutic spaces within workplaces. I think it transforms the situation. People don’t necessarily have to make use of them, and this is the interesting finding – if people know they have access to a service, they don’t always need to make use of it. But the reassurance it provides transforms people’s wellbeing.”

That principle of active listening is just as relevant in the field of customer service, of course. However, Ahmed wonders how well organisations are doing when it comes to really hearing complaints or grievances and whether customers and brands are truly communicating.

“So many of us, we speak as if the other person understands us and has the same frame of reference as us, but, of course, they don’t. They have their own frame of reference, their own way of speaking. For communication to be successful, you have to position yourself into the other person’s frame of reference. This is where your empathy comes in. It’s about listening more than talking and listening to what your consumer is saying. What is it they want from you as a business, as a brand?”

“Companies will need to tread carefully, because the scrutiny is only likely to increase”

“Often you have two different conversations taking place. You have the consumer saying: ‘This is what’s been happening; I’m disappointed.’ And you have the brands and organisations saying: ‘This is what we’re doing, these are the changes we’re making.’ And yet actually they are like ships that pass in the night.

“Now, everything the organisations are saying may be absolutely true. Huge amounts of change have been taking place. But it hasn’t always been what the consumer has wanted.”

For a genuine meeting of minds, organisations need to redouble their efforts to listen actively and empathise. “Again, it’s that transparency: ‘You have said x and we have done y.’ That makes it easier for the consumer to see what’s changed. What the consumer psychology takes on board with that ‘you said, we did’ approach, is: ‘This is an organisation that does listen.’





After a period of radical and enforced change and in the social media age, with its unflinching ability to turn the spotlight on any apparent misstep, transparency and empathy will have to be the bywords for companies. The pandemic world saw a wider range of customer groups going digital and more individuals – even those who didn't consider themselves as political – became engaged around issues such as sustainability and the ethical behaviour of companies. Recent months may have eroded some of these trends, but Ahmed believes that consumers have become more changeable and agile about their choices overall. "People have been quite surprised at themselves," says Ahmed.

What this means for brands and employers is a much more fluid picture going forward and a need for increased agility – all the more exacting with the headwinds accumulating on economic and geopolitical fronts, but necessary, nonetheless.

POST-PANDEMIC MATTERS

- The pandemic saw renewed concern for the environment, plus support for local businesses
- Post-pandemic, consumers continue to look to brands with clear values
- Campaigns and statements from companies on social issues are closely scrutinised
- Mental health and wellness continue as pressing concerns, post pandemic



CLOSE CONTACT

At Scottish Water, Fiona Templeton and her customer experience team are, among other things, focused on delivering consumer insight for the business. She talks to Liz Loxton

Fiona Templeton knows Scottish Water's customer service journeys inside out. She joined Scottish Water at its inception in 2002 as customer marketing manager, when the utility was formed from the merger of three water authorities in Scotland.



In 2008, Templeton set up the water company's customer experience team, generating and listening to feedback whilst also gathering up customer responsibilities that were dispersed around the business. Since then – as customer experience manager and winner of the Strategic Leadership award at the Institute's UK Customer Satisfaction Awards in 2016 – she has built a multi-functional team that today responds to customer issues and complaints, conducts research and provides training throughout the business via its own Customer Experience Academy.



The ethos behind the Academy is to embed softer skills across the business – the emotional intelligence and problem solving required when working with customers. Scottish Water's training is accredited by the Institute of Customer Service, and Templeton and her team use an adapted version of the First Impressions course as part of their core training programme.

The distinguishing mark of Scottish Water's approach is that responsibility for customers goes company-wide. "We started small looking at what we could do in that customer insight space," says Templeton, "and we helped to transform it [from a situation] where we were wondering about customer service and trying to set targets, to a position where the

whole business is now accountable to and thinking about customers."

HALO EFFECT

Like many organisations and utilities, the pandemic shone a spotlight on Scottish Water's relationship with customers – both businesses and consumers. Lockdowns led to increased domestic demand and higher dependence on utilities like Scottish Water, with engineers and network service officers readily recognisable when out in local communities repairing pipes or dealing with sewage floods.

"That's when we saw almost a halo effect. The utilities, the NHS and so on; we all saw those really high satisfaction levels."

In common with other organisations, Scottish Water has seen those satisfaction scores level out, as the social cohesion experienced during lockdowns began to dissipate. "We were starting to see things becoming more challenging from a customer interaction point of view," she says. "We have been more aware that we need to support our team members who work with customers because there are conversations happening with maybe a little less tolerance coming through from some of our customers."

This was one, she says, of the reasons that prompted Scottish Water to back The Institute of Customer Service's latest research into Changing Customer Behaviours as a sponsor. "We are trying to understand if our relationship with customers had changed and if so, whether that is being replicated elsewhere. Could we learn anything from other organisations that were experiencing the same [shifts]? It was good to be able to get involved with that discussion and say: these are the kind of questions we'd like to ask, but also we'd like to understand [the experience] of other organisations."

ALL THINGS DIGITAL

Lockdowns also precipitated lasting changes among customers, notably an increased willingness to use digital channels to contact Scottish Water. Customers are increasingly inclined to initiate contact via email or the website, she says. If there are bigger issues, such as interruptions to supply, Templeton and the team at Scottish Water see spikes in website visitor counts and increased activity on social media.



The shift to digital channels has meant that Scottish Water has had to become a more visual communicator. “We’ve had to significantly adjust our approach and make sure that we have visuals that we can put onto our website very quickly so that we can explain situations to customers,” says Templeton.

That approach extends to day-to-day interactions, when customers contact the utility to alert the company about difficulties with their water supply, burst mains or other issues. More and more, Scottish Water is using remote diagnosis, where it will communicate with customers via video technology, encouraging them to photograph or video the location of a burst pipe, for instance. Issues can be assessed more quickly, and engineers arrive on site with advance knowledge and the right equipment. “We have had really positive levels of satisfaction on the back of that approach,” she says. “For us it means that customers’ issues are being resolved more quickly. We can get the right people to the site, so we get first-time resolution on problems and a cost-of-service reduction,” she says.

VOCAL CUSTOMERS

Like other organisations, Scottish Water has seen an uptick in concern from customers around environmental issues. For the water industry, the focus has been flooding or combined sewer overflows – an issue that has seen increased attention in recent months in England as well as in Scotland, with musician turned river water-quality campaigner Feargal Sharkey spearheading the conversation and calling out the UK government on its environmental record.

Templeton says Scottish Water has certainly seen an increased number of conversations on social media about environmental issues. She has also noticed

a trend in Freedom of Information requests, which her team also fields. “We noticed we were starting to get more Freedom of Information requests around the environment; there is a lot of chatter on social media on that as well.”

Scottish Water doesn’t currently carry out sentiment analysis on social media, but the potential to do so and combine it meaningfully with in-house intelligence is firmly on her wish list for the business.



At Scottish Water, all employees can currently access a cloud-based resource to look at in-house research. One of Templeton’s newest projects is around building the capability to take substantive information on customer contacts – why and how often they get in touch – and combine that with internal research on relevant topics. “The third part of my jigsaw for this ‘insight engine’ is around the sentiment: what is it customers say about a subject? How do they feel about it? What we’re trying to figure out is whether with a third party we can bring these sources of information together to create a holistic view of our customers and what matters to them and establish a new capability and resource for everyone in the organisation.



“There is absolutely an appetite within Scottish Water for this,” she goes on, “because we have this business-wide aspiration to make sure that customers are ‘in the room’ for decisions. What we’ve got currently is people in the business coming to me and asking: ‘What are customers saying? Can you carry out research on this?’ But how people feel about things is there already on social media – and currently that’s the piece that’s missing.”

AFFORDABILITY

Like other organisations, Scottish Water faces challenging conversations ahead around affordability in the face of the cost of living crisis.

As a public company, charging levels are agreed by the Scottish government, whilst the economic regulator (the Water Industry Commission for Scotland) had set out guidance on the charging

requirements that is challenging in the context of escalating CPI levels.

Feedback from customers shows that when it comes to price increases, Scottish Water customers would prefer to pay a steady rate rather than see either front-loaded or retrospective ‘catch up’ payments in place. Either way, the discussions on future charging levels in Scotland will be supported by customer research into what matters to customers and what they value. “Our business is already thinking about what we can do to make sure that whatever we have to do next year with regards to charges that to ensure that our customers are right at the heart of the decision.

“Within the business, there’s this energy and pull for everything to be focused on customers.”

WATER MATTERS

- Scottish Water looks after 237 water treatment works, 30,343 miles of water pipes and 33,223 miles of sewer pipes
- Its challenges include aging assets – which will require a doubling of investment over the next 20 years
- It is one of Scotland’s biggest critical infrastructure investors, investing £3.7bn between 2015 and 2021 and £612m in 2020-2021
- The utility also has addressing climate change and achieving net zero in its sights

WHY ENGAGEMENT COUNTS

Switched on and motivated employees deliver great customer service because they feel connected to their organisations. David MacLeod, author of *The Extra Mile*, tells Liz Loxton how it's done



David MacLeod's career is one that has spanned business, academic and government advisory roles. He has held leadership positions in a range of multinational businesses. Early in his career, he was head of marketing for the Dulux brand. He subsequently served as CEO of a business formed by the merger of ICI and Unilever. His career history includes a year and a half in the Cabinet Office, and his current portfolio includes: honorary professor at Nottingham Business School, visiting professor at the BAYES Business School and co-founder of Engage for Success, a movement dedicated to promoting employee engagement.



With over 25 years in leadership roles, MacLeod is well placed to observe the cultural and structural differences between successful organisations and ones that are perhaps more lacklustre.

The distinguishing mark of the success stories, as set out in his 2008 book, *The Extra Mile*, is that their employees demonstrate engagement and commitment. Simply put: "I noticed that employees who were committed seemed to be producing much better results than those who weren't, something that wasn't really being talked about at the time."

MacLeod's well-received book, with that forceful argument, caught the attention of the UK government, resulting in a commission from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to investigate more widely. *Engaging for Success*, co-authored by Nita Clarke and published in 2009, prised open the productivity conundrum, asking three key questions: what is employee engagement; is there evidence that it matters and if so, what are the characteristics of the organisations that do it well?

A government commission opens doors, MacLeod explains, so he and Clarke were able to investigate a wide range of organisations, reaching the conclusion that the shining lights and organisational success stories had four things in common: a strategic narrative or story about the organisation and its direction; people-centric managers committed to coaching and

engaging people; opportunities for individuals to speak up and be heard throughout the organisation; and, finally, organisational integrity, which ensures that the values they espouse are reflected in the day-to-day behaviours of people. "What we were trying to do was shine a light on good practice. Engaged employees tend to own problems," he says.

More than ten years later, Engage for Success has become a movement with a website that attracted a third of a million visitors last year from more than 100 countries. More significantly, MacLeod's work has embedded the phrase 'employee engagement' into management and leadership thinking. In the wake of the pandemic and with lingering disruption from Brexit, this is a topic that is front of mind for many.



Engagement brings benefits for the individual; it correlates strongly with personal wellbeing, MacLeod points out. For organisations, its outcomes cascade all the way to the bottom line. That's just as important in today's Britain as it was in 2009, as we address post-COVID, post-Brexit headwinds and competitive pressures. "The topic has become significantly more important. There is more focus on it, but there is a huge amount still to do," MacLeod argues.

Some organisations – genuinely value-led and people-centric ones – are leagues ahead. Not so others, says MacLeod. "There are a limited number of organisations that have had a transformational benefit from really focusing on this. They might

never talk about employee engagement, but there is an ethos throughout that says: 'We have a massive customer service challenge, or competitive challenge, and so what we need to do is get our employees together to address major challenges'. There is a deep-seated understanding and respect for employees as the route to success. They are the solution, not the problem," he emphasises.

“ Engaged and solutions-oriented people make exceptional customer service professionals ”

START WITH THE END IN MIND

Crucially, engaged employees care about customers, which is why great customer service and employee engagement fundamentally overlap. Engaged and solutions-oriented people make exceptional customer service professionals.

Customer service professionals play a crucial role in sales growth as The Institute of Customer Service statistics make clear. "You want to promote your organisation through your customers," says MacLeod. "64% of those who've had a good experience recommend their suppliers, compared to only 10% who haven't had a good experience, so treating customers well is a source of growth and competitive advantage."

They also present an outward manifestation of the organisation's culture and overall soundness. "How often do we speak to a customer service representative? Perhaps once every couple of days. We know within 20 seconds whether this person is happy in their job. It's genuinely lovely when someone speaks with a little light. We want our customer service

encounters to be pleasant. We want to feel rapport and we want to feel some trust. Great customer service is an illustration of what the organisation's culture and values are."

Organisations that genuinely listen to feedback from their customer service functions thrive in other ways. "Who knows better than customer service what customers are looking for, what their frustrations are, what the opportunities for innovation are? There are opportunities to grow and personalise offerings, to really understand what the customer is looking for."

So how well are organisations doing when it comes to backing and developing their service staff? A staggering 72% of employees, according to an IBM survey, don't understand their organisation's strategy. That speaks to a communications shortfall, which is – regrettably – mirrored by a training and development deficit. "We are not putting enough effort into training and development – or wellbeing and employee experience, the kind that encourages engagement," says MacLeod.

Improving on that situation is becoming an increasingly pressing task. Nearly 400,000 people resigned from their jobs in Q3 2021 in the UK, according to Statista, compared to only 105,000 in Q3 of the previous year. Overlay the impact of Brexit, an aging population and the costs of onboarding new recruits compared to developing internal candidates and the mission becomes urgent. "Organisations really have got to ensure that the values on the wall are lived and

breathed in behaviours," says MacLeod.

The business world also needs to equip employees for a world where customers are increasingly focused on fairness, are communicating with brands digitally and via a wide range of channels and, crucially, have clear insights into what organisations are like to work for and engage with.

Organisational culture is now highly visible to the outside world. People



HAND HOLDING STAR AWARD © TEERAPOLZ4; EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ILLUSTRATION © VECTORMINE BOTH SHUTTERSTOCK



can informally review how brands perform as employers just as easily as they can comment on their products and services.

So what will encourage this kind of shift within a business world still largely fixated on hard measures along with the habitual ‘our people are our greatest asset’ statement embedded in financial reports and accounts. It is time to do better than

this lip service, MacLeod argues. The gap between the organisations that cultivate engagement and those that don’t is widening. “Those organisations stuck in command and control mode, cutting tasks up and giving people targets – in reality, it’s the old Henry Ford model and it’s not the way we’re going to win in internationally competitive markets,” he explains. “The ones doing better are pulling ahead.”

ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS:

- Opportunities for individuals to speak up and be heard throughout the organisation
- A strategic narrative or story about the organisation and its direction
- People-centric managers committed to coaching and engaging people
- Organisational integrity, which ensures that the values they espouse are reflected in day-to-day behaviours

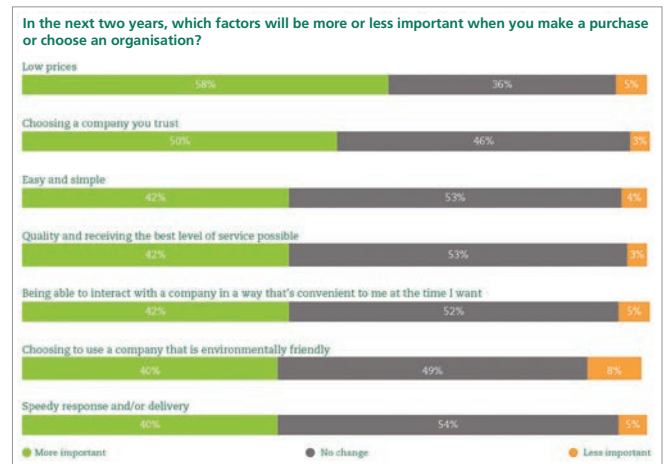
CHANGING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOURS

by **Brian Weston, head of research & insight, The Institute of Customer Service**

The Institute’s latest Breakthrough Research, published in May 2022, examines how customer expectations and behaviours have changed in the past two years, how they are likely to evolve and how organisations should respond to achieve customer satisfaction and business performance objectives. The research is based on evidence from over 5,000 customers and interviews with 20 senior executives from organisations in a range of sectors, and was sponsored by Octopus Energy, Openreach and Scottish Water.

Since 2020, there have been pronounced shifts in customer expectations and preferences. Being able to access UK-based customer service, speed and responsiveness, quality of products and services, online reviews and having a local connection have become some of the most influential factors in many customers’ choice of organisations. Expectations about organisations’ effective use of technology and data, environmental sustainability and positive impact in local communities have also increased. More customers are deliberately seeking out organisations they trust and validating their choices through online reviews, and more than half of customers have chosen an organisation for an ethical reason, with local engagement and environmental sustainability especially prominent. Looking forward to the next two years, quality of service, low prices, trustworthiness, responsiveness and being able to interact with an organisation in a convenient way will become leading factors influencing customers’ choices about organisations, products and services. In a context of growing financial pressures for many customers,

quality of products and services will be the leading priority in choosing an organisation in five sectors that provide essential services – Utilities, Retail (food), Retail (non-food), Insurance and Telecommunications.



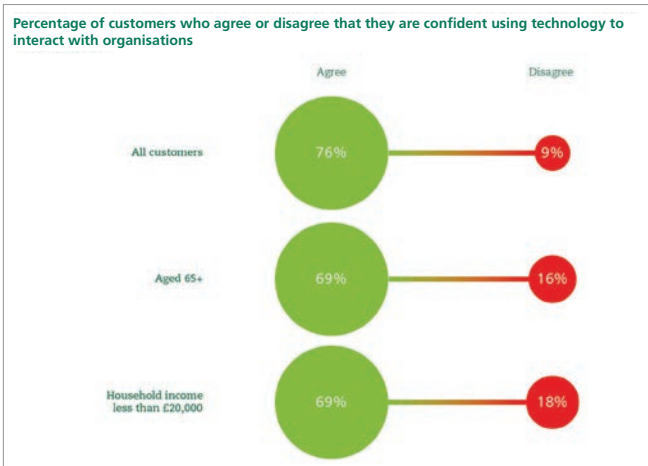
More than one in three customers will place greater emphasis on an organisation’s ethical practice, local relevance and treatment of its employees. Similarly, 71% of people believe that helping customers make sustainable choices about products and services should be integral to customer service standards by 2025.

Buying behaviour and consumption have become more considered and mindful: many customers have deliberately bought things that will last longer, thought more carefully about whether to make a purchase, or reduced their consumption of physical goods. There is also an increased interest in products or services that will improve health and wellbeing. Whilst speed and convenience

are important, a significant number of customers would be willing to wait longer for a product or service in order to reduce harm to the environment.



The number of digital customer experiences has grown, but a third of adults have reduced their use of social media. Many customers – including some of the most digitally confident – still see direct personal contact with organisations as essential, especially for complex issues

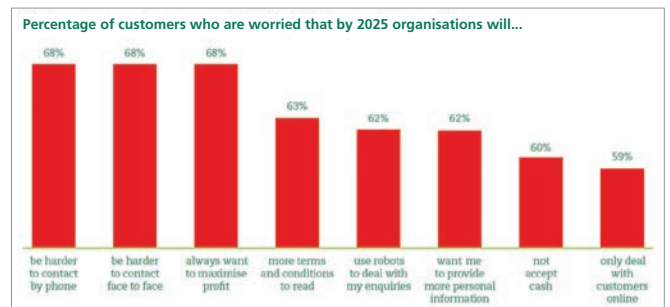


Our research found that 9% of customers lack confidence in using technology to interact with organisations, rising to 16% of people aged over 65 and 18% of those with a household annual income below £20,000.

Customers have become more determined to hold organisations to account: 75% of people say they always contact an organisation if they are unhappy with a product or service they have purchased, and 70% of people only buy products or services

they have researched. But levels of anxiety and frustration have also increased: 15% of customers admitted that in the past 12 months they had got angry or upset with a customer service employee, whilst 47% of employees have experienced an instance of customer hostility in the same period.

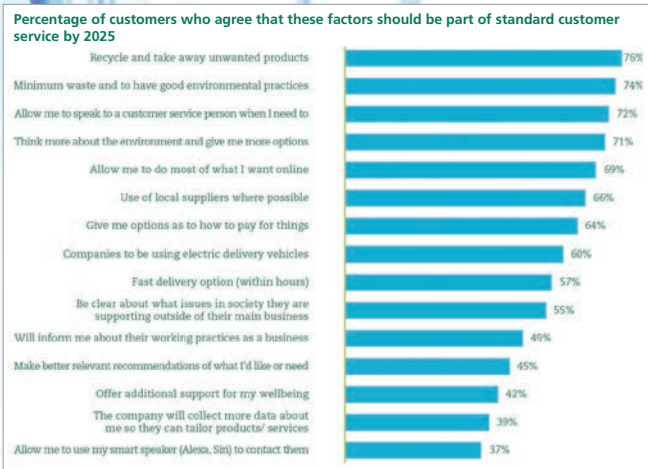
The risks of vulnerability and exclusion have become more acute: at least 30% of customers have experienced a deterioration in either their physical or mental wellbeing in the past two years, and 22% of people have needed to take responsibility for caring for a family member. Whilst 22% of people claim to have seen an increase in their disposable income in the past two years, 32% say their income has fallen.



Customers’ biggest fears are that, in the future, organisations will be harder to contact and they will seek to maximise profit at the expense of customer service.

This evolution of customer expectations, preferences and behaviours has significant implications for the purpose of organisations, operating models, service strategies and approaches to customer segmentation.

The research reaffirms the importance of proactive communication, empathy, accountability for problems and complaints and consistency of experiences across channels. Growing expectations about the quality of digital experiences – but also personal connection – underline the importance of combining digital and human customer experiences, and heightened requirements for skills in customer experience design, problem-solving and the ability to coach and guide customers in using technology applications. Whilst customers’ appetite for digital experiences has grown, organisations should not underestimate the desire for human interaction, nor the consequences of significant numbers of customers feeling excluded.



Customers don't just want organisations to demonstrate appropriate ethical and environmentally sustainable practice: they want organisations to help them live in a more sustainable way and help create a more sustainable society. Organisations will need to align more closely to customers' priorities for environmental and ethical sustainability and local relevance, as customers will increasingly expect and demand transparency about the trade-offs between price, quality of service, ethical and environmental sustainability.

Customer expectations that have grown since 2020

- Organisations show expertise in technology and data
- Quality of online experience coupled with the option to speak to a person
- Responsiveness, speed and simplicity
- Quality of products and services
- Organisations demonstrate environmental sustainability and enable sustainable choices
- Ethical behaviour and governance
- Competitive pricing
- Transparency
- A need for reassurance and trusted advice
- Local connection
- UK-based customer service

Customer behaviours that have increased since 2020

- Increased purchase of products and services that support environmental sustainability and personal and family well-being
- Thinking more carefully about whether to make a purchase
- Seeking experiences that make lasting memories
- Growth in recycling
- Vigilance about value and cost
- In some cases, a willingness to pay more for quality and sustainability
- A range of channel preferences for simple and complex issues
- Increased use of digital channels to interact with organisations but less social media usage
- Determination to hold organisations to account
- Increased levels of anxiety

- A growing divergence in financial, physical and mental well-being
- Increased risks of vulnerability and exclusion

Many of the changes in customer expectations and behaviours reported in this research cut across traditional segmentation criteria such as age group or income level. This suggests the need for a multi-layered segmentation and insight that deepens leaders and employees' understanding of the range and nuances of customer priorities and behaviours. The Institute's research concludes with practical recommendations and actions to help organisations achieve a more effective alignment of evolving customer needs, service strategies and business objectives.

FOOTNOTE: Table numbers have been rounded down for simplicity.

Customer Behaviours is available at www.insituteofcustomerservice.com



A FRESH LOOK AT OUR VALUE PROPOSITIONS AND PRODUCT UPDATES

by Kit Randhawa, head of product & customer experience,
The Institute of Customer Service

Our value propositions are not just a statement of promise: they articulate how we deliver value to our members, stay relevant, demonstrate impact and align our purpose. In a world where customers expect more and employees need more, customer experience has never been more critical to success. Customer expectations are changing and the need to reflect that and evolve with it has never been greater.

This is why we have taken the opportunity to review our member value propositions. We took on board everything you, our members, told us on what you value most from membership, the challenges you are facing as a business, and what the external world is telling us will drive success for the future.

We see what the value membership can bring when utilised effectively – through the support of a critical friend (the Client Relationship Director), and the two-way commitment between us and you as an organisation. We know the number one driver of success is that pivotal and independent perspective we bring, helping you reflect and shine a light on your organisation. We also understand that drawing on our insight, knowledge and network helps you bring in the external world and learn from the best.

We get that more personalisation is needed, as well as better systems and more of what we do best – research, sharing expertise and giving you the tools you need to develop and drive your service strategy.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

- **Employee retention and wellbeing is paramount** – you want us to help you protect

the health and wellbeing of staff and navigate the challenges of hybrid working.

- **People development is the priority** – supporting you in having properly trained staff and investing in the right capabilities and skills.
- **Managing changing and increasing customer expectations** – helping you move with the new customer landscape and service customers through channels and in the way you can, versus what is expected.
- **You want help to make the most of membership and value having everything under ‘one-roof’** – you value the breadth of membership, our independent voice and work with Government, our network and research.
- **Trust & reputation** – you want us to help you measure and develop trust with your customers.
- **Keep doing what you are doing and do it better** – this helped us focus on what’s important and make our products and services even better. You want us to continue our work on our campaigns (such as Service with Respect) and build the membership network with organisations who are working together to drive the service nation. You want us to maintain investment in research and insight, and give you easy access to it all.

Taking all this into account, we relaunched our Trusted Advisory Network and Discovery Roadmap membership offering and will be bringing in a number of new and enhanced products over the coming months.



We have established a roll-out plan and we're excited to share what's new and coming up:

Many extras of our membership are now included within the core membership:

We have built in more value for your membership, with many of the survey extras and changes now included with no additional fees.

Coming soon: A new product to help you measure trust with customers:

Trust and reputation are integral to building loyalty and driving CSAT. That's why we will be launching a brand-new survey product later this year to help you measure trust with your own customers and compare it with others.

More campaigns:

Continuing our Service with Respect campaigning and driving forward with recognising service as a profession in our efforts on Inspire a Service Nation.

New courses:

Professional development to support your organisational development and employee retention.

A brand-new Business Benchmarking portal to help you personalise your survey and track your trends:

Business Benchmarking is a survey of your customers based on the UKCSI questionnaire and customer priorities. It is a trusted tool to help you measure and benchmark your customer satisfaction and identify areas to improve. We've invested in our systems to improve self-serve, the user experience and the efficiency of completing your benchmarking surveys.

More events, thought-leadership and networking opportunities:

A full programme of Head to Head interviews, Trusted Advisory Network and Discovery Roadmap member meetings, as well as our flagship Annual Conference & Awards.

Updated ServCheck question and platform:

A refreshed ServCheck questionnaire to help you measure your internal alignment with your service strategy and give you a framework to develop.

Internal Comms toolkit for membership:

A toolkit to help you share membership with your organisation.

More research:

Looking at technology, customer priorities and updating our ROI of service research.



If you would like to hear more about what we are doing, please contact your Client Relationship Director as a member.

From our CEO Jo Causon: "Personally, I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our members who have played an active and

important role, taking part in feedback sessions and helping us shape our offer to help you take your CX strategy to the next level."

To find out more about membership, visit:
www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/membership

CHANGING CUSTOMER HABITS, A SHIFTING ECONOMY AND THE IMPACT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE



by Oliver Hazell, senior account manager, Cavendish Advocacy

It has been clear for some time that a cost of living crisis was looming. But now we're in the middle of it. Costs for fuel, energy and the weekly shop have spiralled quickly. The government's response included a £150 rebate on some council tax bills, an 'upfront discount' of £200 on energy bills and a sabre-rattling reduction in the basic rate of income tax from April 2024 (at the time of writing, the expected year of the next general election). Meanwhile National Insurance Contributions have gone up, alongside price increases across the board.

The effect of the cost of living crisis on households' bank balances each month has been significant. And the situation has been compounded by a flat economy post-COVID, where people continue to work from home and shop online more frequently. According to data gathered by PwC and the Local Data Company, more shops are shutting than opening. When we do spend our money (and many are doing less spending), we're more careful how and with whom we spend it.

At the same time, the growth of online shopping, next-day and same-day deliveries plus 24/7 helplines means our expectations around speed of delivery remain high. Our purchases arrive at our doors swiftly, even as energy prices rise and staff absences from COVID continue. And yet, as we know, global supply chains are under pressure as a result of the geopolitical shifts of the past few years. Businesses increasingly will be unable to satisfy customer demands.

It is also worth noting the increase in the digitalisation of businesses, with many now directing their customers to a customer portal, website or contact form rather than the, what some may argue is old-fashioned, phone line. Businesses have had to adapt in the current 'living with COVID' era to the changing nature of the world and society, as well as the march of progress in digitalisation.

But it's also clear that the customer is changing too. The cost of living crisis means people are spending less and turning to companies they

trust to respond to them as valued customers, with appropriate communications across the right channels. Customers will also want to understand from customer service staff why they may have to wait longer than usual for their purchases. Similarly, customers will sometimes find that their queries can't be answered by automated services or chatbots – a real person is needed.

All this means the role of the customer service worker is changing as well. There is far less focus on routine tasks, as those can be either outsourced, or provided by chatbots and other automated services. Customer service is becoming, and to a large extent has been for some time now, a much more professional role. Customer service staff need to be equipped with far more skills than they have needed before. They need to understand the nuances of how different customers want to be spoken to, when they want to be spoken to and what information they need.

The government must understand that it has a role to play in this. It wants to see a 'high wage, high skill' economy, and the new breed of specialised customer service roles emerging fit into that category. The government needs to facilitate, encourage and support businesses as they upskill their customer service staff. Ultimately, we want a world where we all see customer service differently; not as a job one has when we're 18 and working behind a checkout, but as a career that can develop and lead to senior roles right up to the boardroom of businesses, roles that can have a real impact on the economy. Customer service staff will also need to have consistent training to ensure they keep pace with new innovations and remain equipped to perform their roles throughout their careers.

Given we're now well and truly in the new financial year, and a new parliamentary session commenced with the Queen's Speech, it is incumbent on government to ensure that its focus on skills, upskilling, reskilling and apprenticeships includes the customer service profession. After all, this is a sector that should be just as important to the UK economy as R&D and the cyber world.



NEW LEGISLATION WILL PROTECT SERVICE PROFESSIONALS FROM CUSTOMER ABUSE

When we launched our Service with Respect campaign in July 2020, we had no idea what it would become. We wanted to do something to combat the growing problem of customers abusing the very people who were serving them. A key aspect of the campaign was our call for Government to introduce tougher sanctions for offenders, to act as a deterrent.

We heard powerful testimony at our All-Party Parliamentary meetings about the impact such abuse – with included physical attacks, racist abuse and death threats – was having on public-facing workers up and down the country. Over 210 organisations and Parliamentarians have supported the cause and with your help we have achieved a major breakthrough.

Following many months of campaigning and meetings with MPs, in November 2021, Baroness Williams of Trafford tabled an amendment to the Sentencing Bill, to make assaults on those providing a public service an aggravating factor in sentencing decisions. The amendment passed through with cross-party support and the Bill gained Royal Assent in April 2022.

This legislation will, we hope, allow customer service workers to do their jobs in the knowledge that they have the full protection of the law, and that customers that cross the line will face much stiffer penalties.

Our campaigning doesn't stop here. We are keen to continue highlighting the importance of this campaign and how we all need to play our part – in supporting our customer service professionals in their jobs every day.

Our latest polling shows that nearly half (46.6%) of customer service staff have experienced hostility in the past year. Half of instances are going unreported as victims feel it won't make a difference.

The new legislation will only be effective if customers and staff are aware of it and incidents are reported. We urge the police and CPS to take action where appropriate and the judiciary to use their new powers. We will continue to speak to Government

about this issue and we encourage employers to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to hostility. This includes ensuring employees are adequately trained to handle difficult situations and supported in reporting any incidents.

We'd like to thank our members, campaign supporters, Parliamentary Champions and the wider APPG for Customer Service contributors for their support on this campaign – we wouldn't have achieved what we have without your support.



RESPECT LOGO © SVATLANA SHEINA; ILLUSTRATION © EAMESBOT, BOTH SHUTTERSTOCK; ALL OTHER IMAGES COURTESY THE INSTITUTE OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

Tickets are now available for our next Annual Conference, taking place on **7th March 2023 at Hilton Park Lane, London**

Our Annual Conference brings together hundreds of business leaders and industry professionals from across all sectors. It is our flagship event, along with our UK Customer Satisfaction Awards evening, which follows it.



The theme for 2023 is Operating in the New Service Nation: Sustainability, Skills & Success. Join us to hear service stories and strategies from organisations including Sainsbury's, United Utilities and Amazon. Entries are also now open for our UK Customer Satisfaction Awards, including the new Customer Professional of the Year category.

SECURE YOUR TICKETS NOW!

For more information visit: <https://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/annual-conference/>

Dates for the diary

8 JUN 2022	13:30-17:00 – Handling Challenging Interactions With Confidence
16 JUN 2022	13:30-17:00 – Introduction to Customer Journey Mapping
23 JUN 2022	09:00-10:30 – Discovery Roadmap Meeting
24 JUN 2022	09:30-13:00 – Introduction to Vulnerable Customers – Workshop for Managers
8 JUL 2022	09:30-13:00 – Customer Experience – Measuring What Matters
12 JUL 2022	15:30-16:00 – Head to Head with Linsey Jones (Centrica)
13 JUL 2022	09:00-13:00 Annual General Meeting and Members' Meeting 2022
08 SEPT 2022	09:00-10:30 – Trusted Advisory Network Meeting
03 OCT-07 OCT 2022	National Customer Service Week
07 MAR 2023	Annual Conference and UK Customer Satisfaction Awards

For details of our events programme, please visit:
www.instituteofcustomerservice.com/events

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