



2020 Customer Expectations Report

# Channel Use and Preferences



**For the past four years the Gladly Customer Expectations Report has served as the voice of consumers—what they expect from the brands they love. This year, our survey data delivered more insights than ever before. So in addition to the full report, we are creating a series of topical reports. Our focus here is on the channels customers prefer and how they expect to use them—with ease, speed and flexibility.**

#### **Consumers expect you to talk with them wherever they are**

Consumers expect to be able to start a conversation with an agent over text, move to the phone, and then follow up with an email. And as they move from one channel to the next they want one seamless conversation—without having to repeat themselves.

#### **Digital technology evolves and consumers follow**

Consumers are still gravitating to phone and email, but Millennials are using Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp more than any other group. Overall, consumers are choosing live chat for a range of needs—from addressing technical questions to getting their issues resolved quickly.

#### **Speed matters now more than ever**

These are anxious times, and consumers want answers fast. When they choose to use live chat or text, they expect agents to respond in under a minute with live chat and within one to three minutes with text message. They are also using self-service and chatbots to get answers to straightforward questions on their own.

Ultimately, customers want to be engaged in one lifelong conversation with the brands they love. At Gladly, we call this being Radically Personal. It allows you to connect with customers and turn your customer service from a cost center to a revenue center. As always, we are here to help you along the journey to becoming a more Radically Personal organization, and hope you enjoy this report.

## TL;DR Consumer Highlights

**86%**

**expect conversations with agents to seamlessly move between channels**

**63%**

**of Gen Z and Millennials like chatbots to quickly get answers on their own**

**53%**

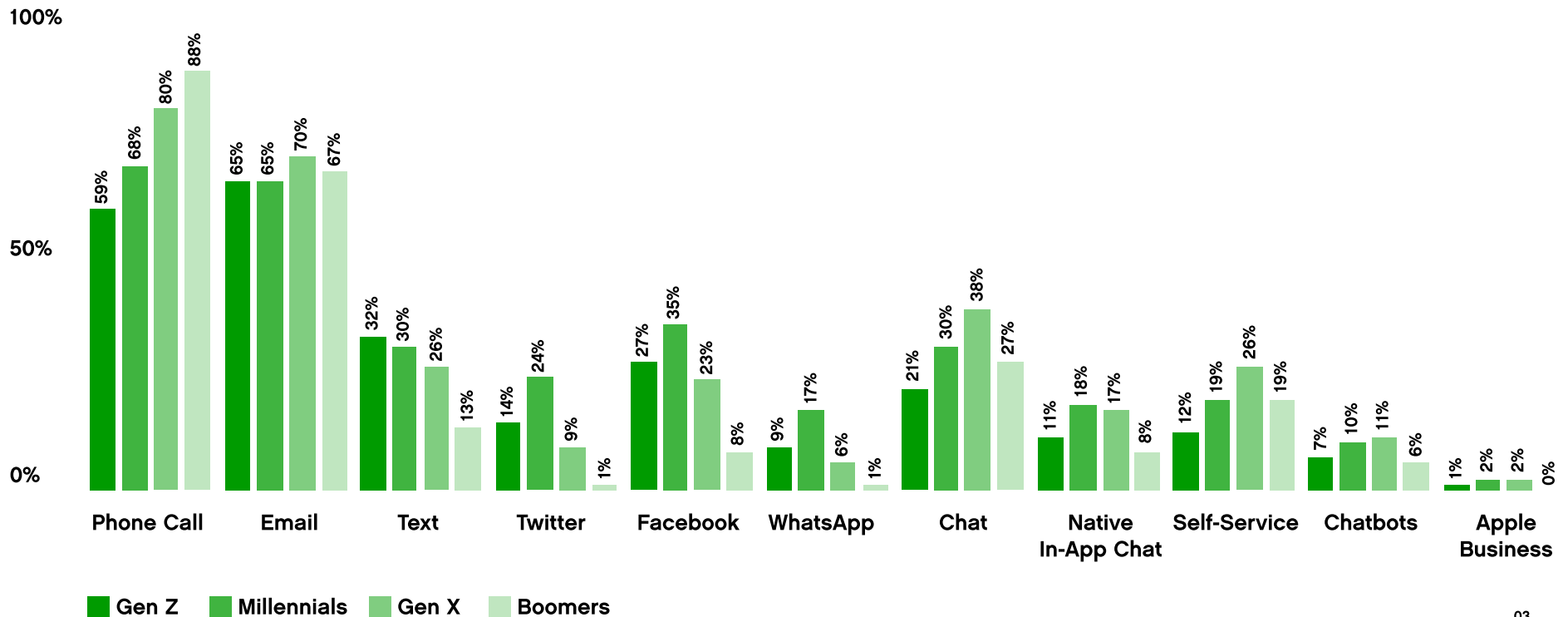
**use self-service as preferred channel for shipping and tracking questions**

## The ones to watch

Traditional channels like phone and email continue to be the most popular, but Millennials are using digital channels like Facebook, native in-app chat, and Whatsapp more than any other group.

# Digital channels on the rise

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS USED BY AGE GROUP





**When JOANN was first founded, we focused on the communication channels that mattered then: mail and phone calls. In the last decade or so, we've seen this shift to digital channels, and it's changed how we communicate and connect with our customers.**

**Drew Chamberlain**

Director of Operations and Customer Experience

**JOANN**

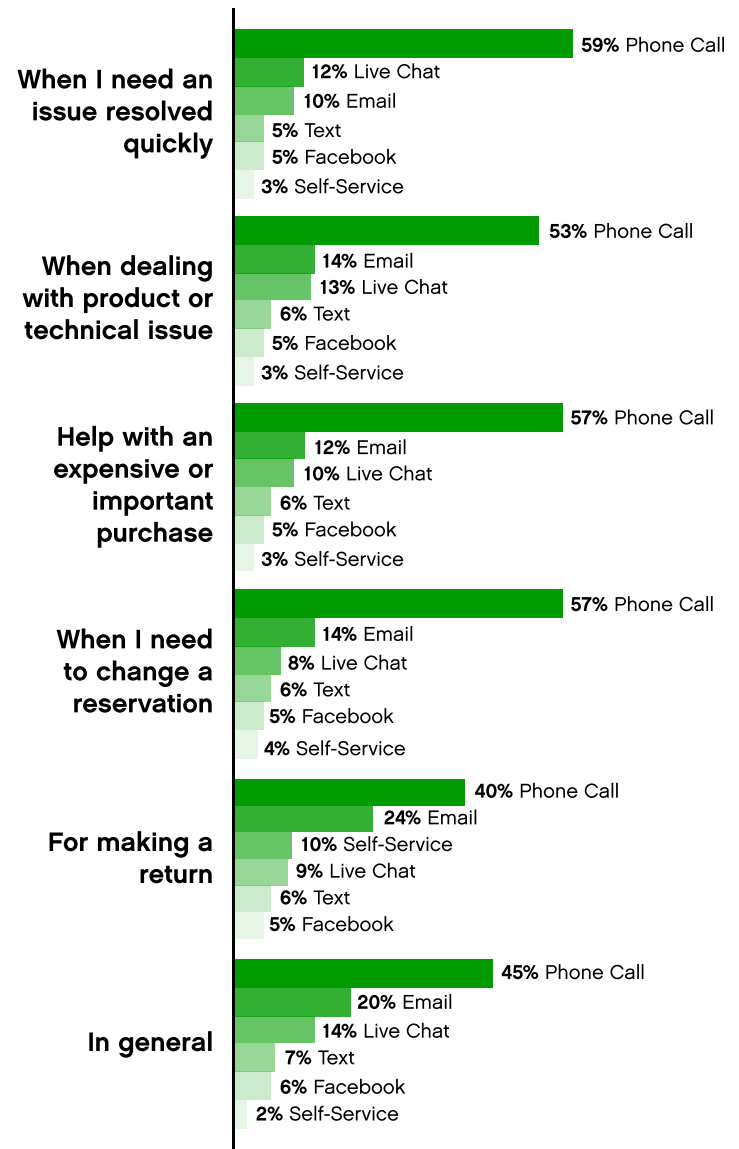


## Live chat grows in popularity

Live chat is gaining on email in terms of popularity—especially for reasons that include resolving an issue quickly, dealing with a technical question, or needing assistance with an expensive purchase. Of note is that self-service is a top channel choice for returns.

# Live chat chosen over email for quick resolution

CHANNELS USED BY REASON

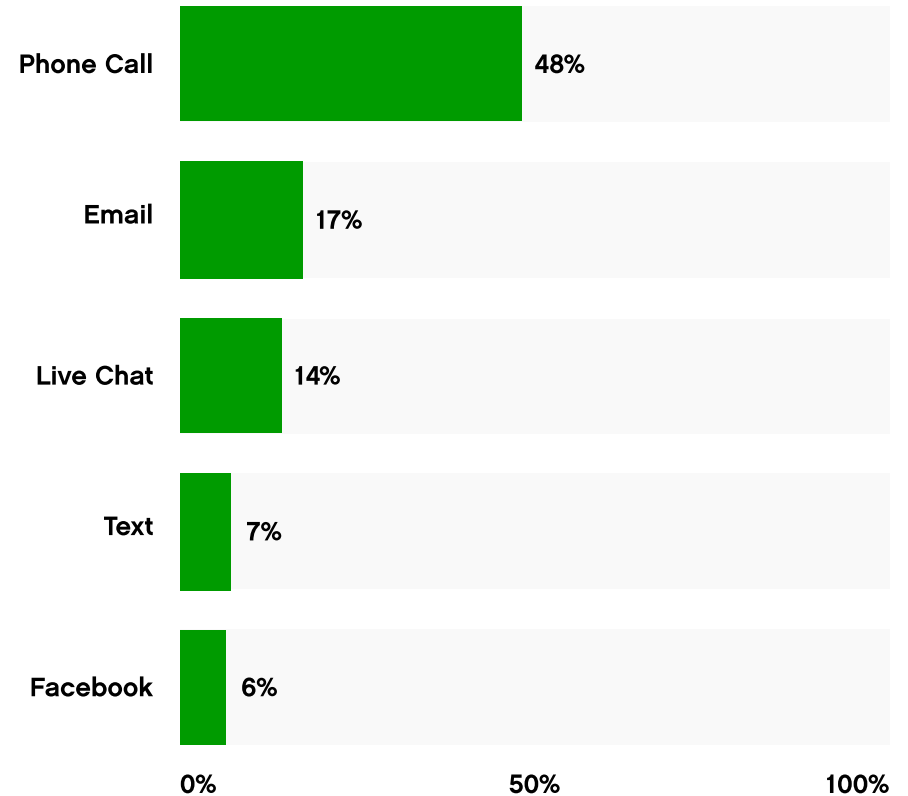


## Playing favorites

If consumers had to choose only one channel to communicate with the brands they love, phone takes the top spot. Live chat and email are nearly tied for second. Text and Facebook round out the top five.

# Live chat gains on email for #2 channel choice

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

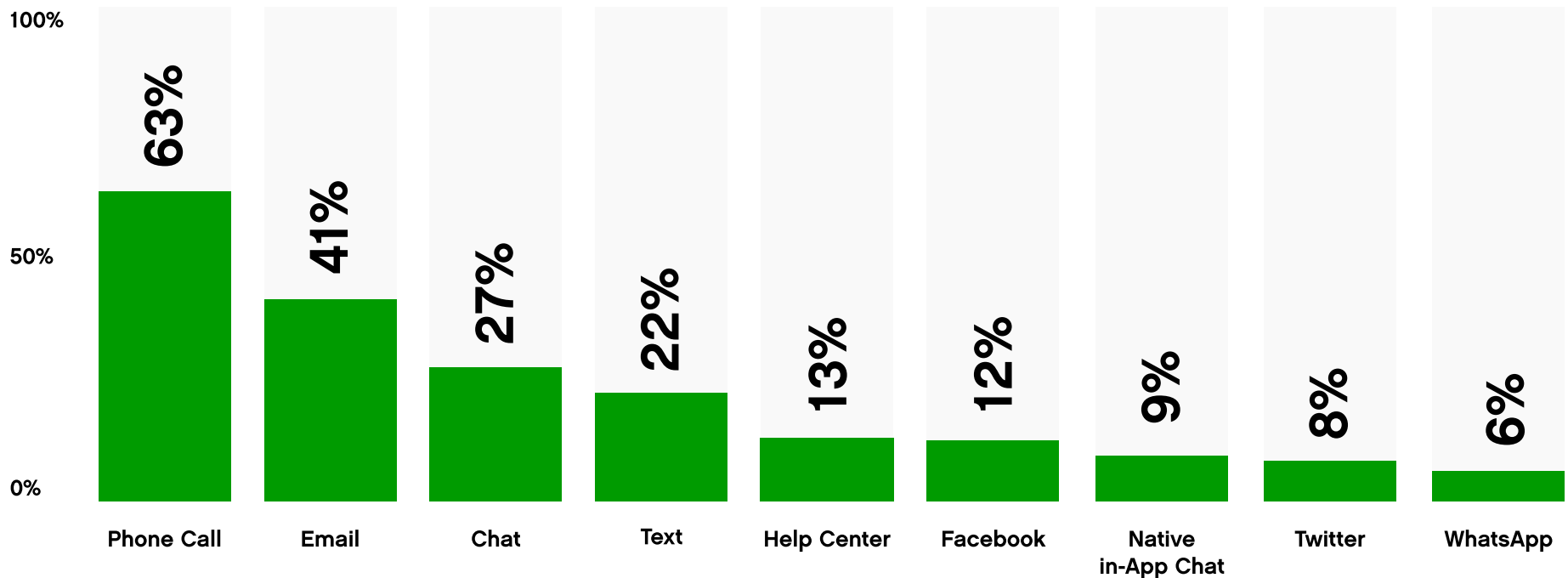


# One lifelong conversation

The top channels consumers want to move between are phone, email, live chat, and SMS. They expect their conversations to continue seamlessly no matter how many times they change channels. And they really don't want to repeat themselves. 73% say one of their biggest frustrations is having to repeat themselves multiple times.

**86%**  
of consumers expect conversations with agents to seamlessly move between channels.

TOP NINE CHANNELS CONSUMERS LOVE TO MOVE BETWEEN





“

Think of how we communicate with our loved ones. You can start a conversation on the phone, move to a text, all of a sudden something's happening on Facebook. At JetBlue we are now able to do that with customers. It's really changing our relationships.

Frankie Littleford

Co-founder

jetBlue

”

## A need for speed

When customers reach out over text or live chat, they don't want to wait long for a response. 11% expect live chat responses in under 20 seconds. 32% expect text responses within one to three minutes. In 2019, just 9% had that same expectation.

# Consumers expect fast response times

TEXT EXPECTED RESPONSE TIME



CHAT EXPECTED RESPONSE TIME



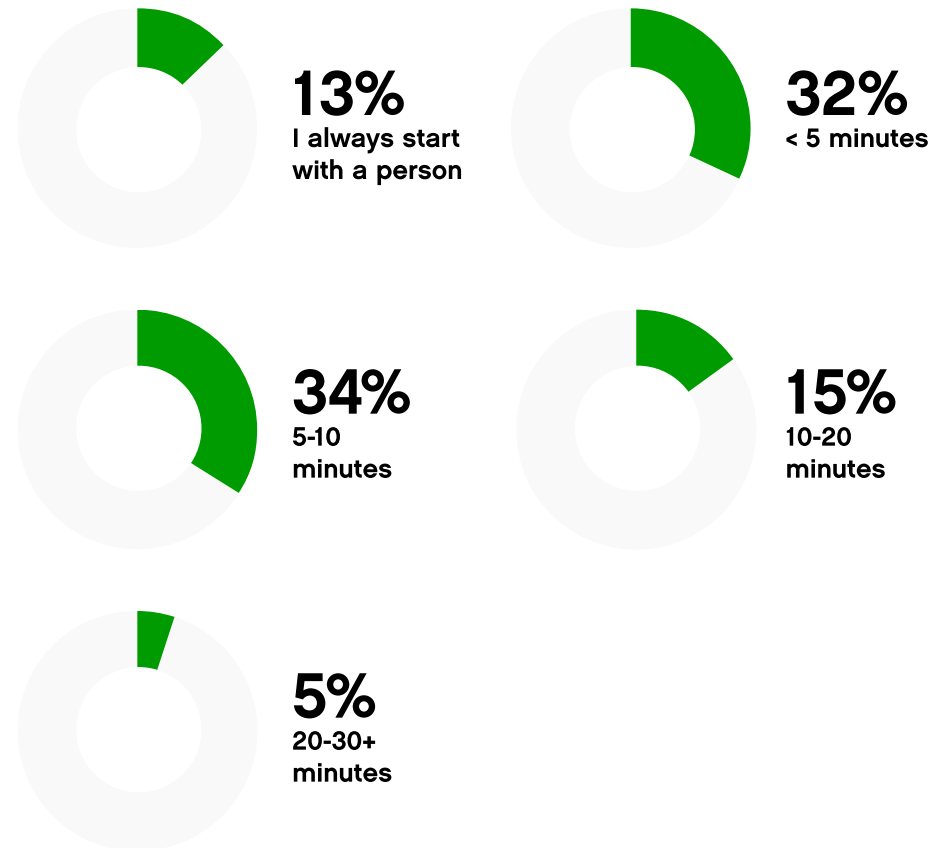
# Give power to the people

Most people spend 5-10 minutes using FAQ and chatbots before reaching out to an agent. And half like using self-service and chatbots to get the answers they need on their own.

TIME SPENT ON FAQ AND CHATBOTS BEFORE CONTACTING AN AGENT

# 63%

## of Gen Z and Millennials like chatbots to get answers



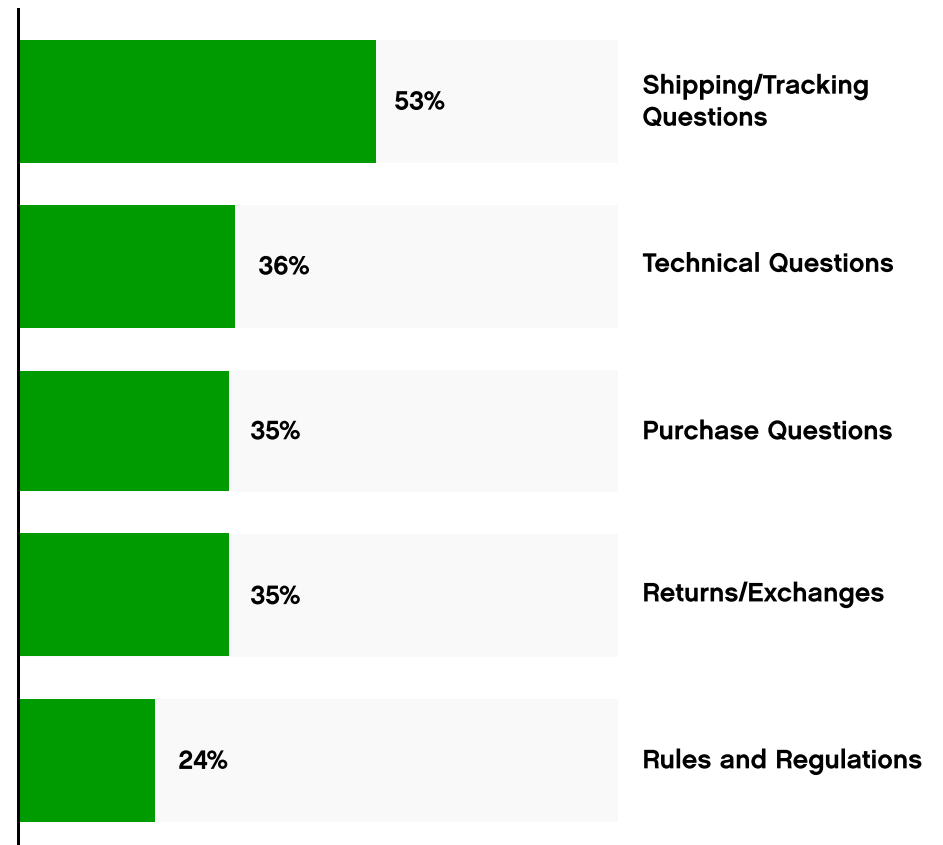
## Self-service and a smile

Consumers like to use self-service for urgent issues—like shipping, tracking questions, returns or exchanges, and technical questions.

# 35%

feel happy and proud when they use self-service to resolve an issue

SELF-SERVICE IS USED FOR



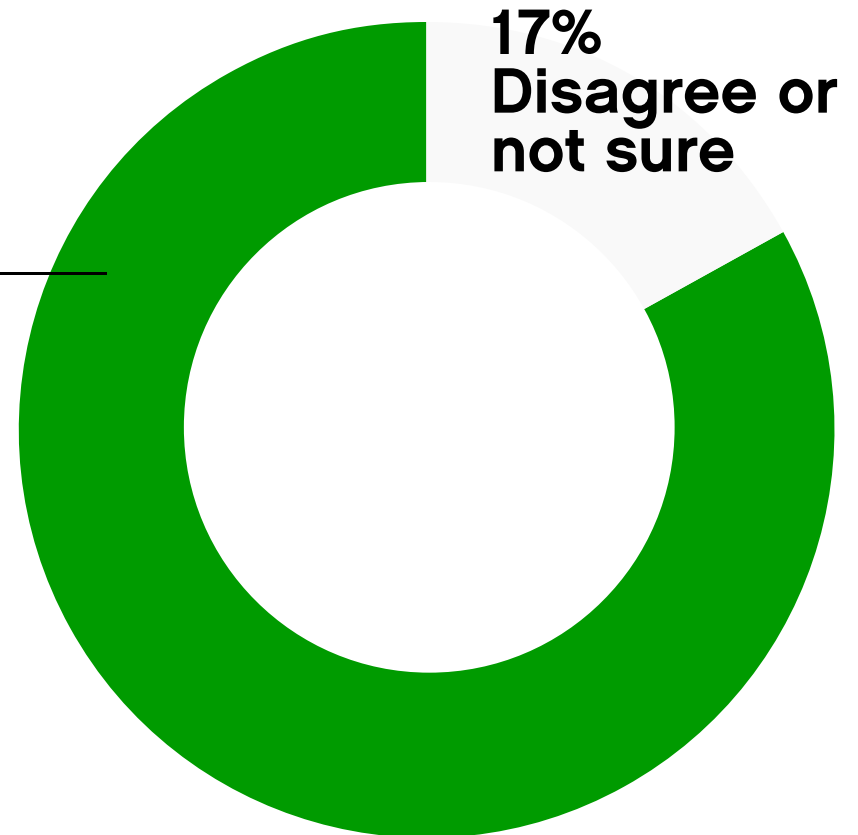
## Seamless self-service channel transitions

Self-service gives consumers the freedom to resolve issues. When consumers start with self-service and then reach out to an agent over phone, text, social or other channels, 83% want the agent to know why they are reaching out without having to repeat themselves.

I WANT TO MOVE FROM SELF-SERVICE TO ANOTHER CHANNEL WITHOUT REPEATING MYSELF

**83%**

**agree and want seamless transitions from self-service**



# Are You Ready For Radically Personal Customer Expectations?

## Put people at the center

79% of consumers say personalized service is more important than personalized marketing—make every customer feel known at hello.

## Build a single lifelong conversation

86% of consumers expect conversations with agents to seamlessly move between channels—build one continuous conversation across all channels.

## Create wildly productive heroes

84% of consumers go out of their way to spend more money with great experiences—turn your agents into revenue generating customer service heroes.

Get Radically Personal at [www.gladly.com](http://www.gladly.com)