CCMA Contact Centre Management Association

Beyond Demographics: Customer Contact Personas Shaping UK Service Expectations

May 2026

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A CCMA Research Initiative

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We Are Not All the Same

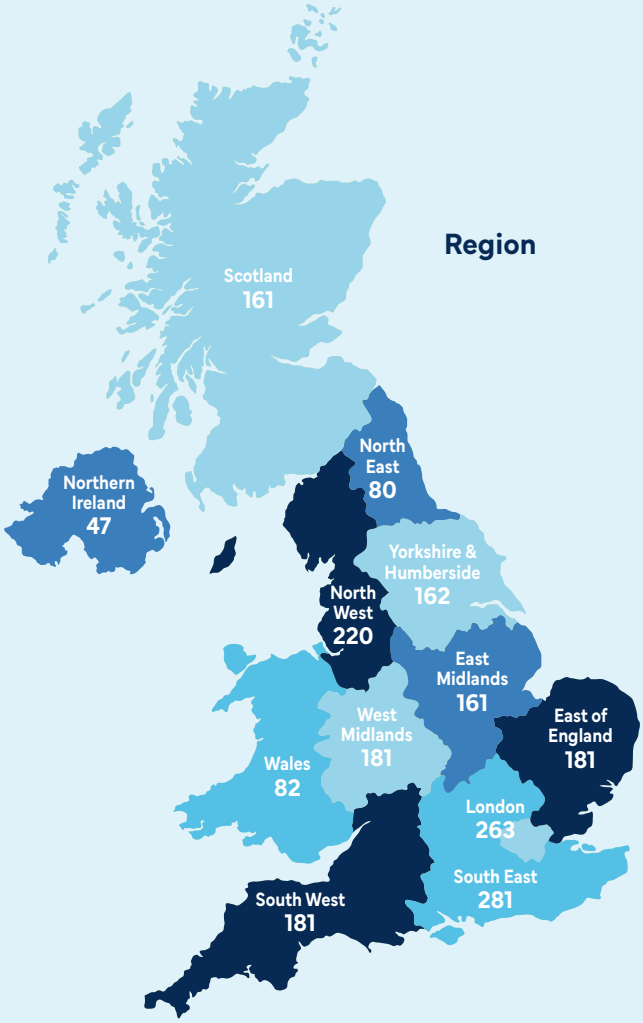
This research reveals the five Customer Contact Personas that make up the UK adult consumer population, each with its own distinctive preferences and perceptions.

It is essential reading not only for contact centre leaders, but marketers, strategists and CX (customer experience) professionals who want to go beyond demographics to understand their customers' contact needs and wants, and how to better serve them.

The implications for brands and organisations are far-reaching, paving the way for advanced targeting and personalisation of contact experiences. Some of the ways in which the insights in this report can be activated include:

- Ensuring the customer can access their channel of choice
- Implementation of automation and AI
- Tailoring call scripts and tone of voice
- Delivering customer-facing knowledge and content to facilitate self-serve

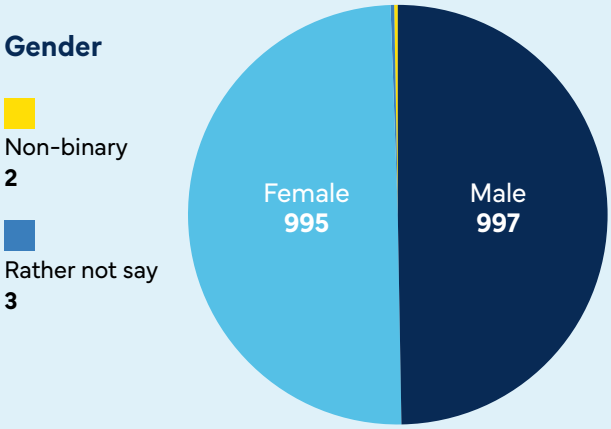
Region



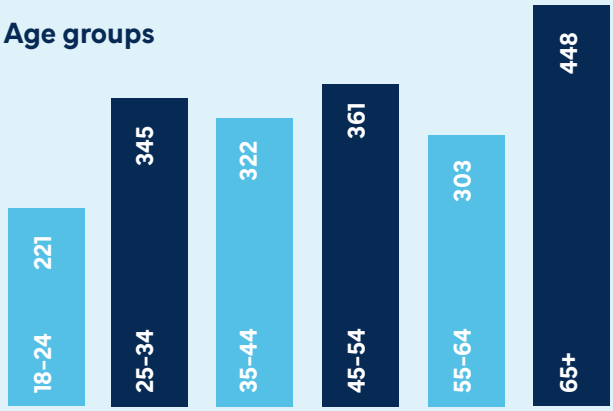
Research methodology

This research comprised a quantitative survey with n=2,000 online interviews conducted with UK adults aged 18+ in February 2026. Quotas were set by age, gender and region to ensure a nationally representative sample. The composition of the sample was as follows:

Gender



Age groups



Creating the Personas

The survey captured 56 separate variables related to consumer attitudes and preferences, which were inputted into a factor analysis. A two-step hierarchical clustering procedure was then used to identify the five distinct personas.

Efficiency Optimisers

Experience Enthusiasts

Knowledge Gatherers

Simplicity Seekers

Tradition Maintainers

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Reframing Customer Contact

"We're all different" is a phrase that's bandied around a lot, almost to the point of cliché. But it's still a relatively new concept in the world of customer contact, where segmentation has been mostly limited to demographics alone.

We've made progress in recognising difference, most notably ramping up support for vulnerable people. The proliferation of digital channels has brought additional choice to our customers. Yet many brands still treat customers as a monolithic group. It's likely that your contact centre offers a 'one size fits all' experience catering to the median. There have been some experiments with tailoring scripts and hold music, but so far personalisation hasn't really taken hold in the world of customer contact in the same way it has in, say, consumer marketing.

Before we can have personalisation, we need to understand how our customers are different. Other than vulnerability, awareness of difference usually fixates on age. It's received wisdom that people towards the upper end of the age spectrum tend to be different to younger people when it comes to contact preferences and behaviours. It's certainly true that age is a good predictor, but it's not the only one.

In this research we uncover the multiple facets that drive customer contact needs and wants. We show how each of us belongs to one of five personas which are markedly different from each other. We provide specific, actionable suggestions on how contact experiences can be tailored for each persona.

Want to know which persona you are? Take the free quiz at www.ccma.org.uk/personas

Leigh Hopwood,
CEO, CCMA

Beyond Demographics

Customer experience has never been more complex or more important. As organisations expand channel choice, introduce automation, and seek to use AI responsibly, the risk is not that we do too little, but that we do the wrong things for the wrong people.

This research reinforces a truth we see every day: customers are not a homogenous group. Their needs, expectations and tolerance for their experiences vary sharply depending on context, confidence and intent. Designing contact journeys around a mythical 'average customer' no longer works, if it ever did.

What is particularly powerful about these insights is the emphasis that one size does not fit all. The findings show that technology and automation are welcomed, but only when they are purposeful, transparent and supportive of human interaction. Equally, they underline the continued importance of voice, especially in urgent or emotionally charged moments, alongside growing appreciation of self service and digital channels too.

At Route 101, we believe great customer experiences are built through orchestration, choice and trust. That means enabling customers to move effortlessly between channels, providing reassurance when it's needed, and ensuring advisors are empowered with the right context to deliver the experience each person values. When deployed thoughtfully, AI has an important role to play with clear benefits for both customers and employees.

These personas provide a practical framework for organisations looking to move beyond demographic assumptions and toward more intentional, human centred service design. For leaders navigating the next phase of customer contact evolution, this research offers both reassurance and challenge and a strong foundation for better decision making.

Russell Attwood,
CEO, Route 101

The Context

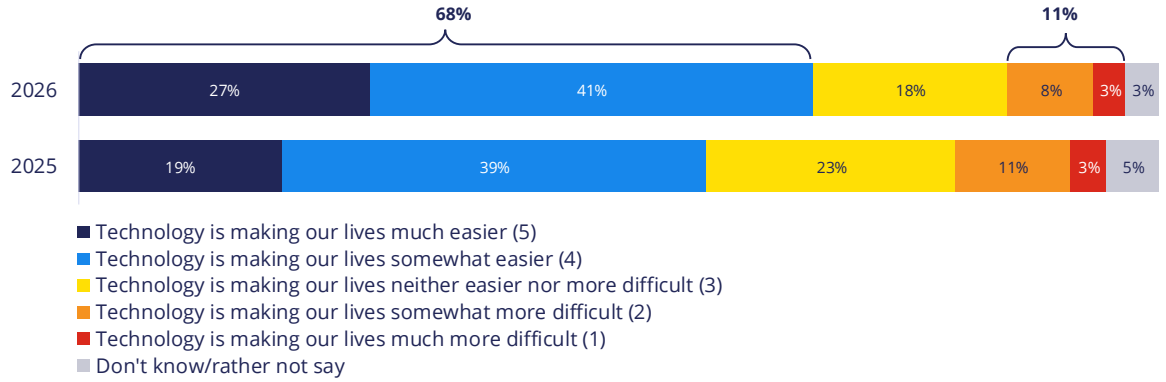
This report begins by describing preferences and perceptions at the overall 'population' level, before drilling down into how they differ across personas. We uncover key dimensions around customers' relationship with technology and organisations, and show how consumers can hold vastly different views across these dimensions.

Is Technology a Positive or Negative Influence in Our Lives?

The UK is a nation of technology optimists. As shown in Figure 1, in 2026 just over two-thirds (68%) of UK adults reported that technology is making their lives 'much easier' or 'somewhat easier', compared with just 11% who said that technology is making their lives 'much more difficult' or 'somewhat more difficult'.

Compared with a CCMA survey conducted 12 months prior in 2025 which asked the same question, the proportion of those who say technology is a positive influence has grown 10 percentage points (68% in 2026 versus 58% in 2025).

Figure 1: Would you say overall that technology is making our lives easier, more difficult, or neither?



Base: 2026 n=2,000, 2025 n=500

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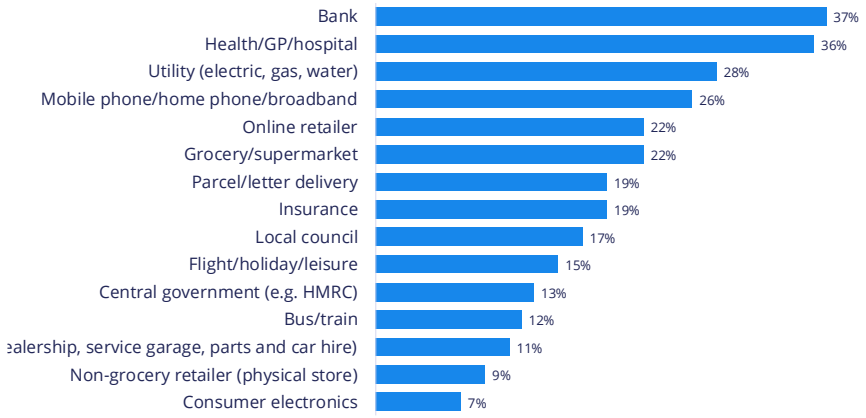
How Does Customer Contact Vary by Sector?

Frequency of contact varies significantly by sector. Figure 2 shows that across sectors, banks and healthcare providers are the most likely to have been contacted in the past six months.

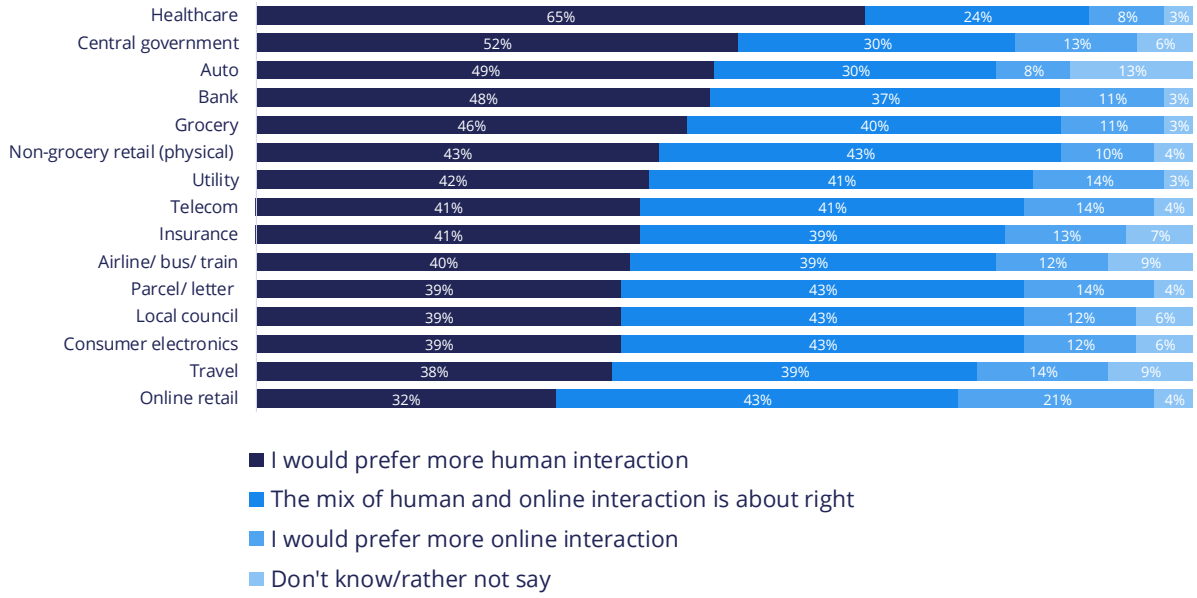
Figure 2: Which of the following types of organisations have you personally contacted in the past six months for customer service? Please select all that apply, but only if you have been in touch for customer service, not routine browsing or shopping.



Base: n=2,000

Acceptance of digital channels also varies by sector. Survey participants were asked if more human interaction or more online interaction would be preferable when contacting organisations and providers. Figure 3 shows that the preference for 'more human interaction' is strongest in healthcare, whereas for online retail and in travel the preference for 'more human interaction' is much smaller.

Figure 3: Thinking about each of the following types of organisation and the mix of online versus human interaction you have with them for customer service, would you say the mix is about right or would you prefer more digital/online interaction or more human interaction?



Base: n=2,000

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Which Channels are Preferred for Customer Contact?

The UK is a nation of email enthusiasts, as long as it's simple. When the need is more complex or when it's urgent, phone becomes the default choice.

Survey participants were asked about channel preference in the context of simple, complex and urgent customer queries, with examples provided for illustration.

Query Definitions

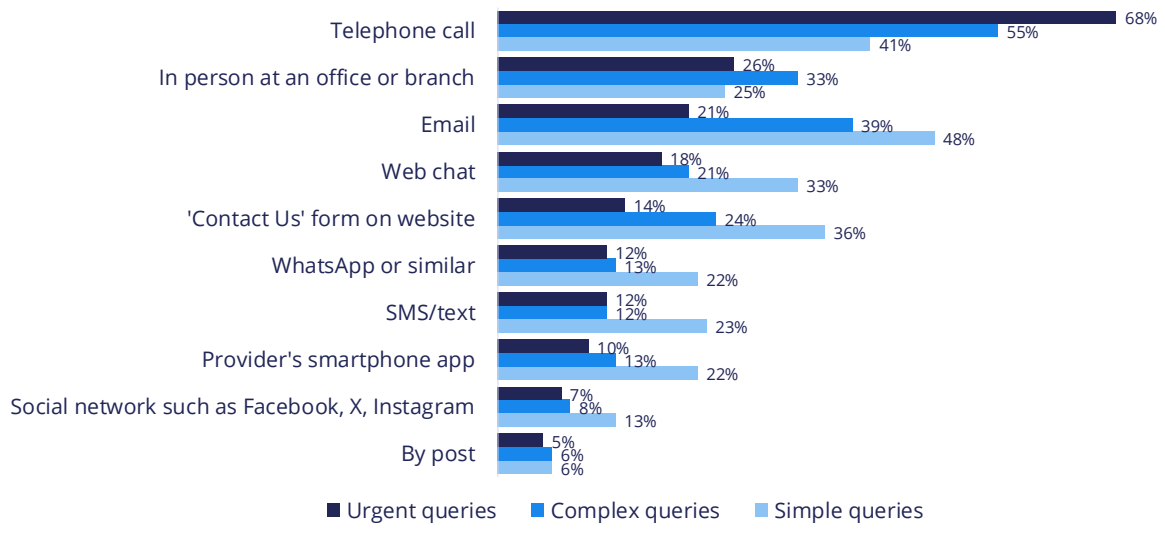
Simple query: changing account password, or a delivery update

Complex query: a warranty claim, or checking terms and conditions

Urgent query: reporting a broken-down boiler, or suspected fraud

Figure 4 reveals the extent to which each channel is preferred for each of the three query types. Overall, email is more popular than phone for simple queries, but phone tops the preference list when the query is complex and even more so when it's urgent.

Figure 4: For a simple/complex/urgent query, which of the following channels would you be happy to use for customer service? Please select all that apply.



Base: n=2,000

For simple queries
email (48%) is the most preferred channel overall, with a higher preference than phone (41%), followed by 'contact us' forms (36%) and webchat (33%).

For complex queries
phone (55%) overtakes email (39%) to become the most preferred channel, with in-person becoming the third most preferred channel (33%). Other channels see a drop in preference for complex queries, compared with simple queries.

For urgent queries
omnichannel preference is lower still and phone (68%) becomes even more dominant. In-person (26%) becomes the second-most favourable channel, while email drops to 21%.

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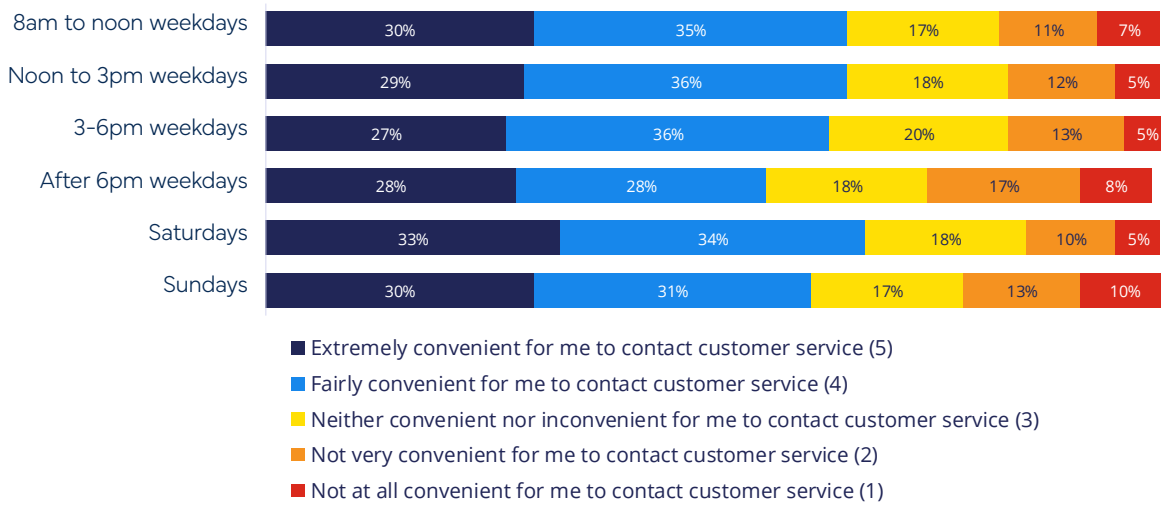
Which Times of The Day and Week are Preferred for Customer Contact?

As Figure 5 illustrates, weekday evenings and Sundays are slightly less convenient and Saturdays are slightly more convenient overall for customer contact.

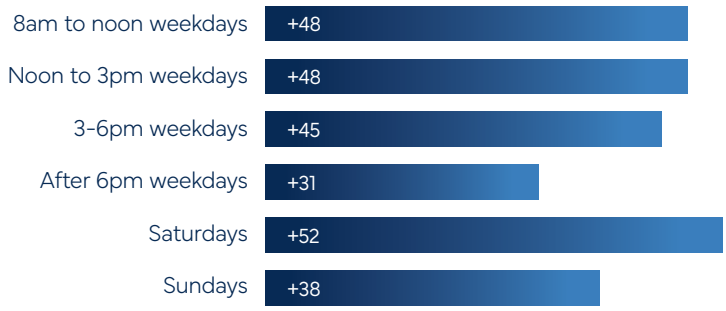
Figure 5: We'd like to know which times of the day and week would be convenient for you to contact a company or organisation for customer service, if you needed to. For each time slot, please select an answer from 1 to 5, where 5 equals 'extremely convenient for me to contact customer service' and 1 equals 'not at all convenient for me to contact customer service'.



Base: n=500

Figure 6 uses the same data as shown in Figure 5 to illustrate the differences via a 'net convenient' score. This is calculated by subtracting the proportions of 'not very convenient' plus 'not at all convenient' from the proportions of 'extremely convenient' plus 'fairly convenient'.

Figure 6: 'Net convenient score'



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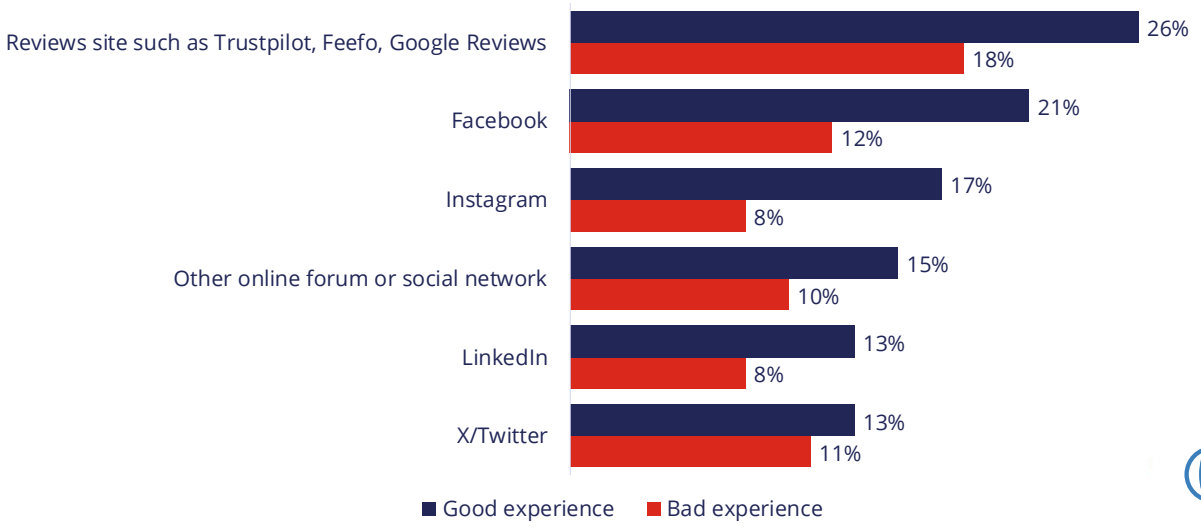
What Proportion of Customers Share Their Experiences Online and with Providers?

Thanks to social media and 'sharing culture', a sizeable proportion of us have taken to posting online about customer experiences, good and bad. Figure 7 reveals that we are more likely to post online about positive customer experiences than about negative ones, and that we're most likely to post on review sites.

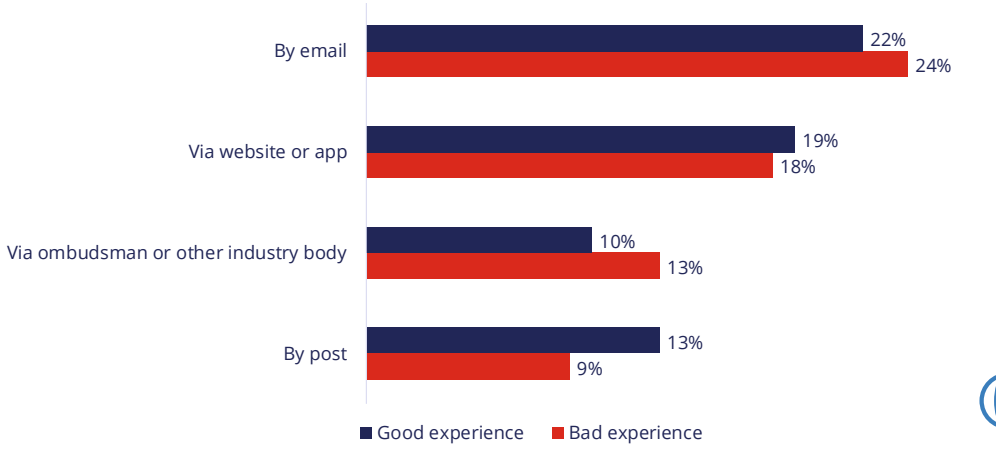
Figure 7: Have you ever posted online publicly about an experience with customer service? Please select all that apply.



Base: n=2,000

Figure 8 shows that email is the channel most commonly used to proactively share feedback directly with providers following a customer experience.

Figure 8: Have you ever proactively contacted an organisation about an experience with customer service? Proactively means you took it upon yourself to make contact (not asked for feedback). Please select all that apply.



Base: n=2,000

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A Connected Nation

This report section has described customer contact expectations, preferences and (claimed) behaviours in five crucial ways:

1 Growing acceptance of tech

As a nation, we've become more optimistic overall about the role of technology in our lives.

2 Normalisation of digital contact varies by sector

Human interaction is considered particularly valuable for sectors such as healthcare and central government, whereas digital contact is the most normalised in online retail and travel.

3 Email for straightforward queries, but phone if it's complex or urgent

For a simple query such as changing a password, email is the most preferred channel and many of us would consider other digital channels as well. However, when the query is complex such as a warranty claim, we gravitate towards telephone. When the query is urgent, such as to report a broken boiler, phone is even more preferred.

4 Saturdays are the most viable day overall for customer contact

Saturdays are convenient for the majority of people to make customer contact, while weekdays after 6 pm are less likely to be convenient: is your contact centre open when people need it?

5 Social media and 'sharing culture' links contact experiences to brand and reputation equity

Sharing contact experiences online, especially via review sites, has become well established for many people. We're even more likely to post about positive experiences than about negative ones. As such, contact experiences (good and bad) can directly influence provider brand perceptions among both existing and prospective customers.

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The Customer Contact Personas

In the Context section above, five dimensions were identified, each with its own spectrum of consumer attitudes and preferences:

1. **Perceptions of tech and AI**
2. **Degree of normalisation of digital contact**
3. **Channel choice for simple, complex and urgent queries**
4. **Day and day-part preference**
5. **Posting online about customer experiences**

These five dimensions were incorporated into a cluster analysis, along with four additional ones as follows:

6. **Propensity to switch contact channel**
7. **Level of certainty that online transaction has been successfully completed**
8. **Stopped buying from a provider after a poor experience**
9. **Preference for a chatty or a concise advisor during a contact event**

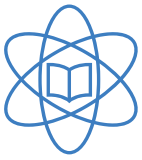
Patterns observed among these nine dimensions reveal that the UK adult population is comprised for five personas: The cluster analysis uncovered five personas which exist within the UK adult population.

Efficiency Optimisers

focused on getting the job done as quickly as possible

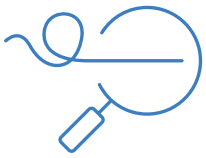
Experience Enthusiasts

want to get the most of every moment, and love to share



Knowledge Gatherers

enjoy challenges, and pride themselves on their expertise



Simplicity Seekers

no-nonsense, always looking for the straightforward path

Tradition Maintainers

prefer established ways, sceptical of change for change's sake

Each persona is further profiled according to demographic characteristics (age, household income, employment status, urban/suburban/rural location).

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Understanding the Personas

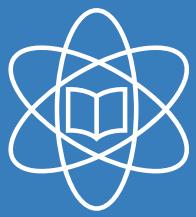
Efficiency Optimisers

Efficiency Optimisers are busy people who get things done. They optimise their lives to be able to achieve the maximum amount in the least possible time. Technology is used where it helps, but Efficiency Optimisers also understand where technology can be unhelpful. They are conscious of both the potential benefits and the potential risks that AI brings, and worry about automation impacting their ability to reach someone on the phone when needed.

Efficiency Optimisers don't relish making contact with organisations and providers, but have developed ways to do so efficiently when needed. They gravitate to email for simpler queries and are also comfortable using webchat and 'contact us' forms if the query is straightforward. For a complex or urgent query, however, Efficiency Optimisers will pick up the phone and when they do, they tend to get straight to the point and to prefer dispensing with the small talk.

Efficiency Optimisers are more likely than average to be aged 45+, to live in a suburban area and to prefer weekends for customer contact. Compared with other personas, weekday mornings and early afternoons are not as ideal for contact.

Knowledge Gatherers



Knowledge Gatherers are natural problem-solvers, extremely confident in their abilities. They embrace customer contact, which aligns with their desire to overcome challenges and acquire expertise. Being heavy email users in other aspects of life they tend to default to email contact, but are well-versed in other contact channels and will readily switch from one to another if needed.

Knowledge Gatherers are the most prolific of all the personas, more likely than others to make contact with organisations and providers. They are more comfortable than other personas in using digital channels even in complex or urgent situations.

More likely than average to be aged 45 or less, to be living in an urban area, to be working full-time and to be high earners, Knowledge Gatherers are ambitious and determined, highly adept at deploying technology to make their lives easier and more productive. They are the most likely of all the personas to appreciate AI's potential benefits, albeit they also are aware of potential drawbacks.

Experience Enthusiasts

Experience Enthusiasts are always searching for a sense of connection and meaningful experiences, and love to share their experiences online. They hold providers to especially high standards, and are the most likely of all the personas to stop doing business with a provider after a disappointing customer experience.

Experience Enthusiasts will tend to phone in an urgent situation, but otherwise don't have a strong channel preference. That doesn't mean they lack understanding or confidence.

On the contrary, they are highly tech-savvy, well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of different channels, and will pick and choose the best channel for each contact event rather than gravitating by default to any channel.

Experience Enthusiasts tend to prefer interacting with a chatty and friendly advisor, even if it means the interaction takes longer.

The youngest on average of all of the personas, Experience Enthusiasts are also the most likely to live in an urban area.

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Simplicity Seekers

Simplicity Seekers take a highly transactional approach to customer contact: it is not something they especially enjoy or spend time thinking about.

Simplicity Seekers tend to be detached from customer and contact experiences: compared to other personas they are less likely to express strong opinions about their needs and wants. Evenings and weekends are precious to them: they tend to prefer avoiding contact during these times.

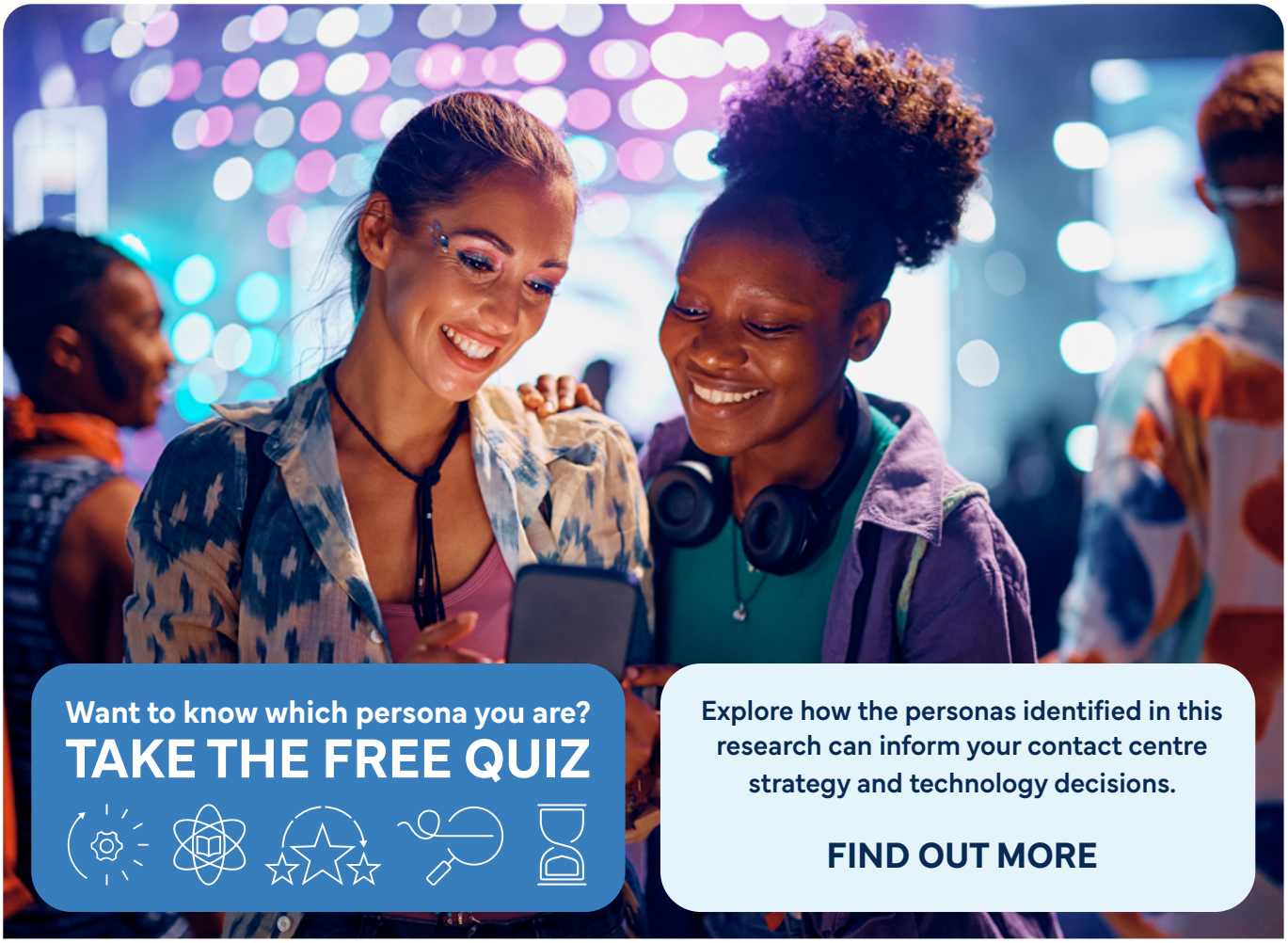
Staying up to date with the latest technology isn't a priority for Simplicity Seekers, either through choice (because technology brings unwanted complexity) or circumstance (lack of affordability). They tend to have a lower than average household income, are less likely to live in an urban area, and are less likely to be working.

Tradition Maintainers

Tradition Maintainers crave human interaction, and are slower than other personas to accept automation. They strongly prefer phone contact even for simple queries and where available, face to face contact. They dislike being forced to switch channels, for example to ring and be deflected to self-serve. They are the more likely of all the personas to want someone to reassure them that a self-serve transaction has been successfully completed.

Tradition Maintainers are especially sceptical of AI and are much more likely to view AI in a negative light than a positive one.

Tradition Maintainers are more likely than other personas to be aged 55 or above. They are the most likely of all the personas to be retired and to live in a rural area.



Want to know which persona you are?

TAKE THE FREE QUIZ

Explore how the personas identified in this research can inform your contact centre strategy and technology decisions.

FIND OUT MORE

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Profiling the Personas

This section of the report presents in detail how the five Personas differ from each other.

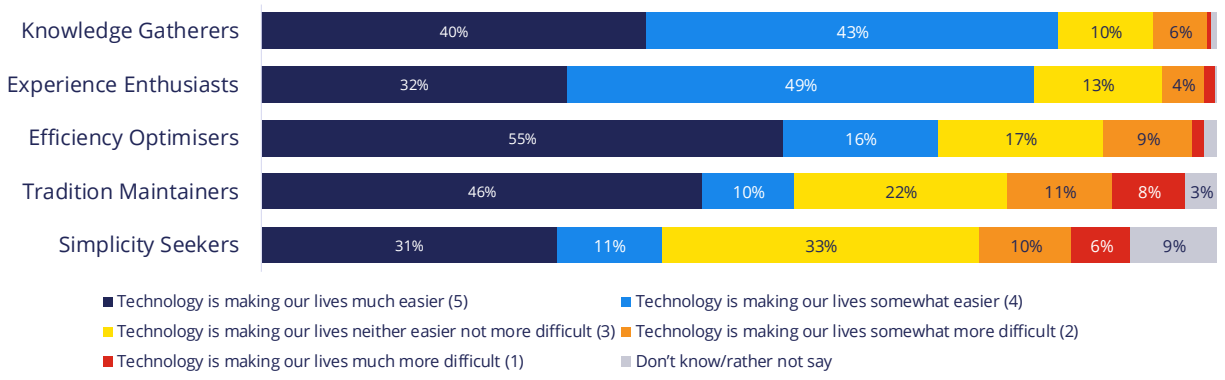
Preferences and Perceptions

Attitudes to Technology

While every persona is much more likely to say technology is a positive influence in their lives than negative, there are crucial differences between personas as shown in Figure 9.

Knowledge Gatherers, Experience Enthusiasts and Efficiency Optimisers are the most positive toward technology. Those who hold negative views form a minority even among Tradition Maintainers and Simplicity Seekers, but they form a larger proportion within these personas. Tradition Maintainers and especially Simplicity Seekers are also more likely to be ambivalent.

Figure 9: Would you say overall that technology is making our lives easier, more difficult, or neither?

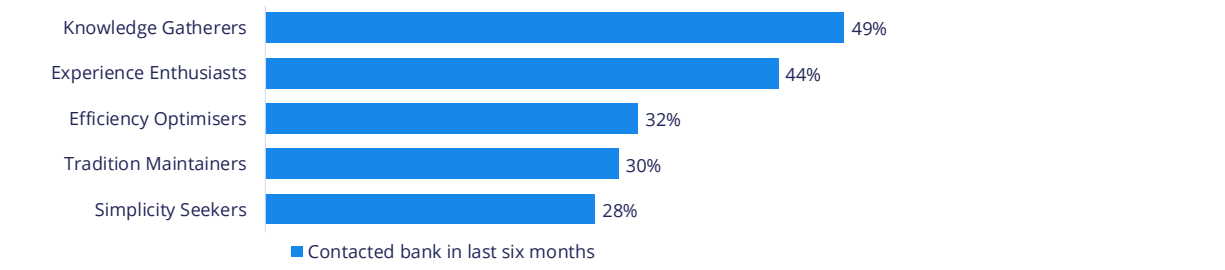


Likelihood of Customer Contact

Knowledge Gatherers and Experience Enthusiasts are the most likely of the five personas to have recently made contact with organisations or providers. Figure 10 shows the findings for banks only (being the most commonly contacted type of provider in the UK as seen in Figure 3 above), but a similar pattern is observed across all sectors.

> 49% of Knowledge Gatherers contacted a bank in the prior six months for customer service, compared with 28% of Simplicity Seekers.

Figure 10: Which of the following types of organisations have you personally contacted in the past six months for customer service? Please select all that apply, but only if you have been in touch for customer service, not routine browsing or shopping. [Bank]



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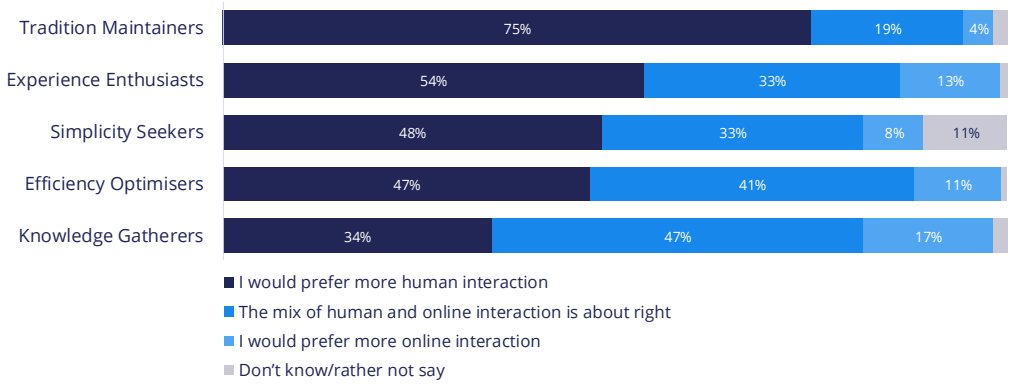
Preference for Human Versus Digital Interaction

Figure 3 above showed how preference for human versus online interaction varies by type of organisation. Across sectors, Tradition Maintainers are more likely than other personas to strongly favour human interaction and Knowledge Gatherers are the most comfortable with online interaction.

Figure 11 shows the differences between personas' preference when interacting with banks (the same pattern is also observed for other sectors).

47% of Knowledge Gatherers say that the mix of human and online interactions with banks is 'about right', compared with just 19% of Tradition Maintainers who say this. Three quarters (75%) of Tradition Maintainers say they would prefer more human interaction with banks.

Figure 11: Thinking about each of the following types of organisation and the mix of online versus human interaction you have with them for customer service, would you say the mix is about right or would you prefer more digital/online interaction or more human interaction? [Bank]



Channel Preferences

Above all else, differences between personas are expressed through their channel preferences when considering whether a query is simple, complex or urgent.

Simple Query

Preferences for a simple query are shown in Figure 12. For simple queries email is the most preferred channel for all persona types, except for Tradition Maintainers who tend to prefer telephone.

Efficiency Optimisers and Knowledge Gatherers are least keen on phoning for simple queries: other than email these personas tend to prefer webchat and 'Contact Us' forms to phoning when it's a simple query. Furthermore, for simple queries Knowledge Gatherers tend to also prefer WhatsApp, SMS and apps over phoning.

Figure 12: For a simple query, which of the following channels would you be happy to use for customer service? Please select all that apply

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Email	53%	59%	38%	46%	36%
Telephone call	47%	35%	30%	39%	59%
'Contact Us' form on website	46%	48%	22%	26%	21%
Web chat	43%	45%	24%	24%	14%
In person at an office or branch	29%	22%	18%	21%	39%
SMS/text	16%	38%	22%	21%	9%
WhatsApp or similar	14%	47%	21%	13%	5%
Provider's smartphone app	24%	40%	14%	13%	3%
Social network eg Facebook, X, Instagram	2%	29%	15%	9%	1%
By post	2%	11%	6%	6%	6%

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Complex Query

Preferences for a complex query are shown in Figure 13. Phoning for complex queries is preferred by all persona types except for Knowledge Gatherers, who still tend to prefer email. Most people's preference for digital channels is markedly lower for complex queries than for simple ones, although the gap is smaller for Knowledge Gatherers who tend to be more likely than other personas to consider digital channels for complex queries.

Efficiency Optimisers exhibit a particularly strong difference in channel choice between simple and complex queries. Compared to a simple query, in a complex situation Efficiency Optimisers are much less likely to opt for digital channels, and are much more likely to opt for the phone or in-person.

Figure 13: For a complex query, which of the following channels would you be happy to use for customer service? Please select all that apply.

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Telephone call	74%	49%	36%	50%	67%
Email	39%	57%	31%	36%	21%
In person at an office or branch	42%	36%	24%	26%	37%
'Contact Us' form on website	27%	44%	12%	17%	7%
Web chat	24%	35%	17%	11%	4%
Provider's smartphone app	7%	32%	9%	5%	0%
WhatsApp or similar	4%	34%	13%	3%	1%
SMS/text	3%	29%	15%	7%	0%
Social network such as Facebook, X, Instagram	0%	23%	10%	3%	0%
By post	2%	11%	7%	6%	5%

Urgent Query

In an urgent situation phone tops the preference list for all personas, without exception as shown in Figure 14.

Efficiency Optimisers are notably phone-centric when it's urgent, whereas Knowledge Gatherers continue to be more open than others to alternative digital channels.

Figure 14: For an urgent query, which of the following channels would you be happy to use for customer service? Please select all that apply.

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Telephone call	86%	62%	50%	59%	79%
In person at an office or branch	32%	27%	18%	20%	29%
Email	11%	35%	24%	18%	9%
Web chat	15%	33%	15%	12%	5%
'Contact Us' form on website	9%	29%	10%	13%	3%
WhatsApp or similar	4%	34%	12%	3%	1%
SMS/text	3%	29%	13%	6%	1%
Provider's smartphone app	4%	27%	8%	3%	0%
Social network such as Facebook, X, Instagram	1%	17%	10%	2%	0%
By post	0%	10%	7%	4%	1%

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Preferred Times for Customer Contact

Figure 15 shows that Simplicity Seekers stand out from the pack when it comes to preferred times of day and days of week to engage in customer contact.

Illustrated via the 'net convenient' calculation method first introduced in Figure 7 above, it is observed that Simplicity Seekers tend to reject contact during weekday evenings and on weekends. This is in stark contrast to all other personas, for whom contact on weekday evenings and weekends is considered convenient by most.

Simplicity Seekers also tend to be less favourable to weekday afternoons from 3-6pm when compared with other personas.

Tradition Maintainers are the most favourable to weekday office hours (perhaps because they're the most likely to be retired, as shown later in this report). Efficiency Optimisers are comparatively less favourable to weekdays, but are the most favourable of all to Saturdays and Sundays.

Figure 15: We'd like to know which times of the day and week would be convenient for you to contact a company or organisation for customer service, if you needed to.

For each time slot, please select an answer from 1 to 5, where 5 equals 'extremely convenient for me to contact customer service' and 1 equals 'not at all convenient for me to contact customer service' ['Net convenient' scores shown]

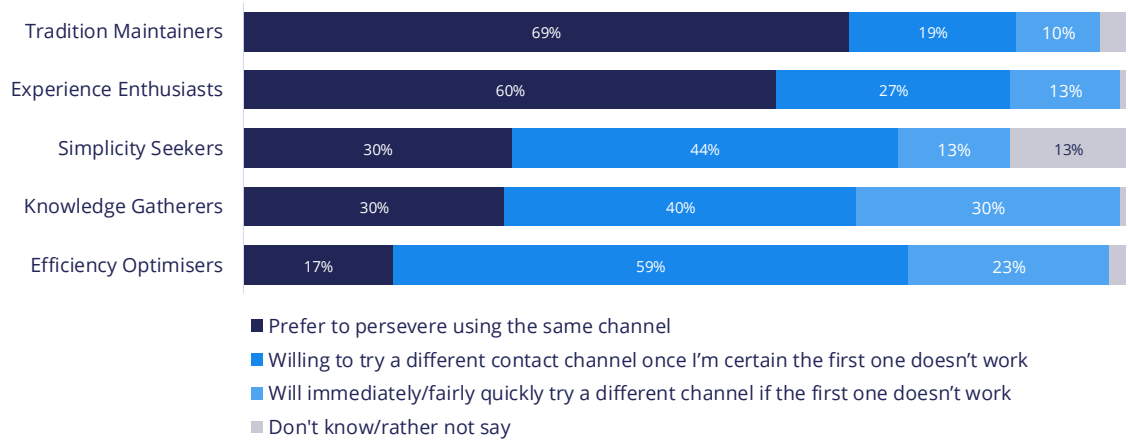
	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
8am to noon weekdays	+31	+54	+66	+34	+61
Noon to 3pm weekdays	+34	+54	+60	+34	+75
3-6pm weekdays	+46	+56	+60	+5	+71
After 6pm weekdays	+44	+47	+50	-32	+35
Saturdays	+73	+65	+62	-18	+68
Sundays	+57	+51	+52	-30	+51

Propensity to Switch Channel

When asked if they prefer to persevere with a contact channel or prefer to switch if experiencing problems, clear differences between personas are observed as shown in Figure 16.

Tradition Maintainers and Experience Enthusiasts tend to say they prefer to stick with a channel. On the other hand, Efficiency Optimisers are the least likely of all personas to say they will persevere, and are the most likely to say they will switch if the channel they are using doesn't work. Further evidencing their high level of comfort with multiple channels, Knowledge Gatherers are the most likely to say they will switch right away without hesitation.

Figure 16: Generally speaking, how willing are you to try a different contact channel for customer service if the first method is not successful? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 equals 'I strongly prefer to persevere using the same contact channel' and 5 equals 'I will immediately try a different contact channel if the first one doesn't work'.



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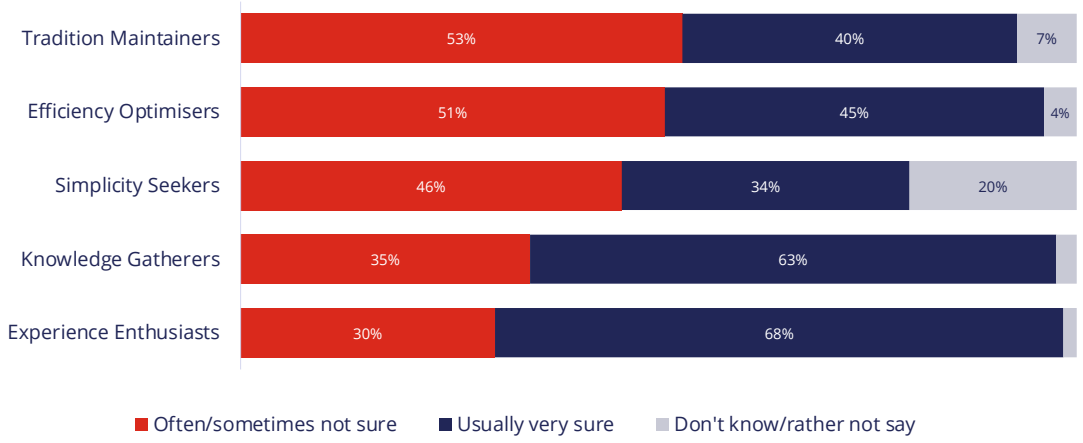
Certainty that Self-Serve Transaction was Successfully Completed

Channel preference may partially be understood as a need for reassurance. For many contact centres, people ringing to confirm if their self-serve transaction was successfully completed has become a significant driver of inbound phone demand. Figure 18 shows that Tradition Maintainers and Efficiency Optimisers are the most likely of all the personas to feel unsure if their self-serve transaction was completed.

Note the relatively high level of 'don't know' responses for Simplicity Seekers, which is indicative of their lower level of engagement.

Figure 17: When using self-serve channels to conduct transactions with providers and organisations, do you ever find yourself uncertain if the transaction was successfully completed or not? Examples of transactions include making a payment, changing account details, or making an application.



Propensity to Share Feedback After Experience

Figure 18 reveals stark differences between personas when it comes to sharing customer experiences, both via online posts and also proactively contacting providers directly with feedback.

Experience Enthusiasts are the most likely of all the personas to share feedback, with three in four (74%) saying they have posted online about a good customer experience and a comparable proportion (76%) saying they have proactively contacted a provider to share praise.

A large proportion of Knowledge Gatherers have also shared feedback online and proactively with providers, especially after a good experience. Sharing feedback, either online or by contacting providers, tends to be much less likely for Efficiency Optimisers, Simplicity Seekers and Tradition Maintainers. And the latter personas are more prone to chastise than to praise: proactively sharing feedback with providers is more likely after a poor experience than after a good one.

Figure 18: Have you ever posted online publicly about an experience with customer service? Have you ever proactively contacted an organisation about an experience with customer service? Proactively means you took it upon yourself to make contact (not asked for feedback).

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Posted online after bad experience	17%	46%	67%	12%	20%
Posted online after good experience	17%	60%	74%	17%	24%
Contacted provider after bad experience	26%	55%	71%	18%	28%
Contacted provider after good experience	13%	57%	76%	15%	18%

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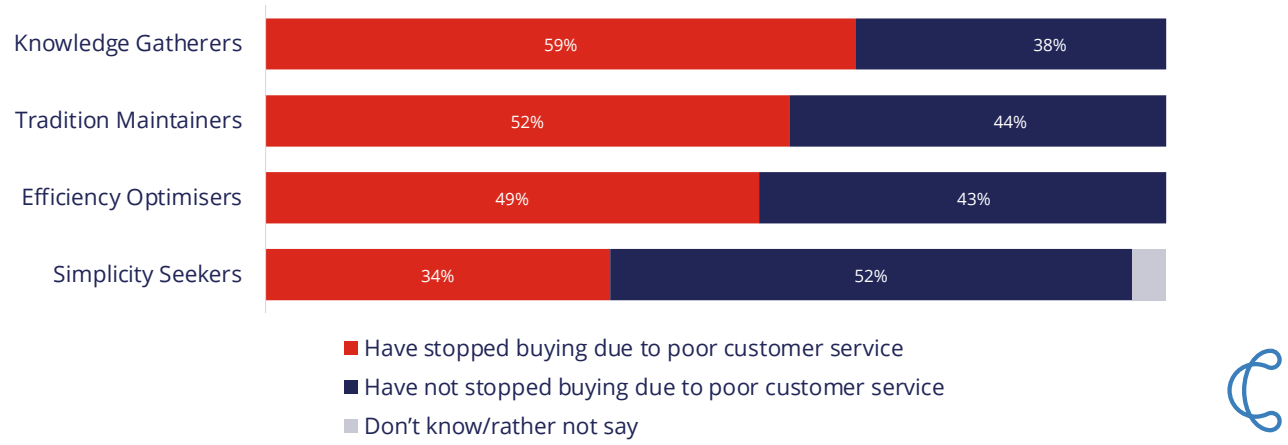
Impact of a Poor Experience on Customer Retention

Experience Enthusiasts are the most likely to say that a poor customer experience led them to stop buying from a provider, as Figure 19 shows, Experience Enthusiasts are twice as likely as Simplicity Seekers to say this (66% versus 34% respectively).

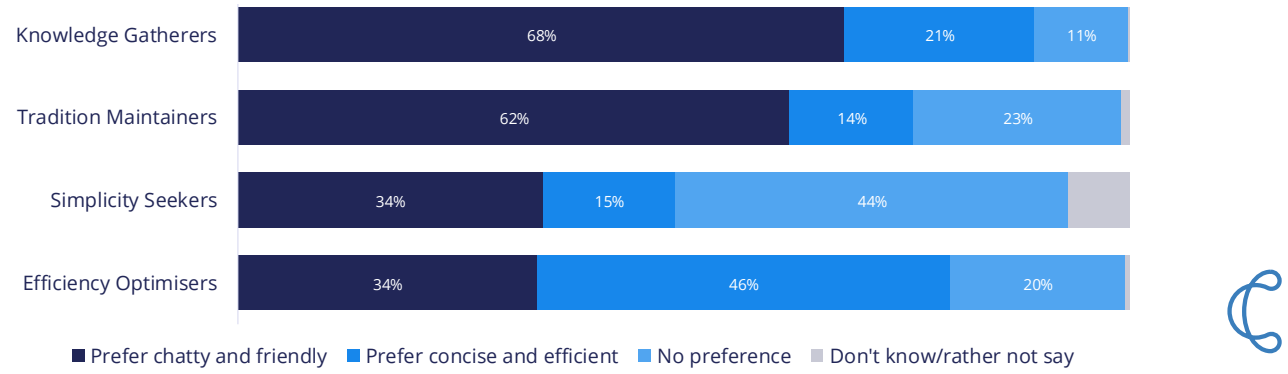
Figure 19: Have you ever stopped buying from a brand or provider, either temporarily or permanently, because of poor customer service?



Chatty Versus Concise Advisor

Figure 20 shows that the vast majority of Experience Enthusiasts (85%) state a preference for a chatty, friendly contact advisor. Knowledge Gatherers and Tradition Maintainers also tend to prefer a chatty, friendly advisor. Conversely, Efficiency Optimisers tend to prefer a concise advisor while Simplicity Seekers are notable for their large proportion with no preference (44%).

Figure 20: When interacting with customer-service advisors, do you generally prefer them to be chatty and friendly, or as concise and efficient as possible?



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Perception of AI Benefits

Knowledge Gatherers are the most likely of all the personas to recognise AI's benefits, whereas Tradition Maintainers and Simplicity Seekers are less likely to do so.

Survey participants were shown a set of six statements corresponding to potential benefits of AI in customer service, and to select the statements they agreed with. The results are shown in Figure 21, revealing major differences between personas.

Efficiency Optimisers, Experience Enthusiasts and particularly Knowledge Gatherers are most likely to recognise AI's potential, most notably to assist human advisors and to provide personalised recommendations.

> 49% of Tradition Maintainers answered 'none of the above', actively rejecting all six benefits.

Higher proportions of 'don't know' responses are observed among Simplicity Seekers (31%) and Tradition Maintainers (21%), representing a lack of awareness/knowledge rather than outright rejection.

Figure 21: The following are some descriptions of how artificial intelligence (AI) might positively impact customer service. Please select all of the ones which you believe are true, or none if you believe none of them are true

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Assist human advisors in contact centres	41%	56%	30%	13%	8%
Personalised recommendations and solutions	30%	44%	33%	9%	7%
Use customer feedback to improve products	35%	46%	25%	8%	6%
Scale during peak times	29%	44%	23%	9%	5%
Resolve queries more quickly than humans	27%	39%	25%	8%	9%
Accurate and consistent responses	21%	40%	25%	7%	7%
None of the above	22%	3%	4%	38%	49%
Don't know	9%	2%	1%	31%	21%

Perception of AI Risks

Efficiency Optimisers are the most alert of all the Personas to AI risks. Tradition Maintainers are considerably more conscious of AI risks than they are of AI benefits, although as with Simplicity Seekers there is also comparatively higher share of 'don't knows'.

Survey participants were also asked to select from a list of potential AI risks, with the findings shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22: The following are some descriptions of how AI might negatively impact customer service. Please select all of the ones which you believe are true, or none if you believe none of them are true

	Efficiency Optimisers	Knowledge Gatherers	Experience Enthusiasts	Simplicity Seekers	Tradition Maintainers
Lack of human interaction	64%	54%	35%	25%	40%
Misunderstanding customer inputs	62%	46%	31%	23%	39%
Impact on service if system fails	57%	47%	33%	21%	35%
Human advisors losing jobs	54%	44%	27%	21%	34%
Privacy and data security	48%	40%	29%	17%	32%
Bias and discrimination	43%	34%	22%	13%	24%
None of the above	4%	5%	3%	24%	15%
Don't know	5%	3%	1%	28%	16%

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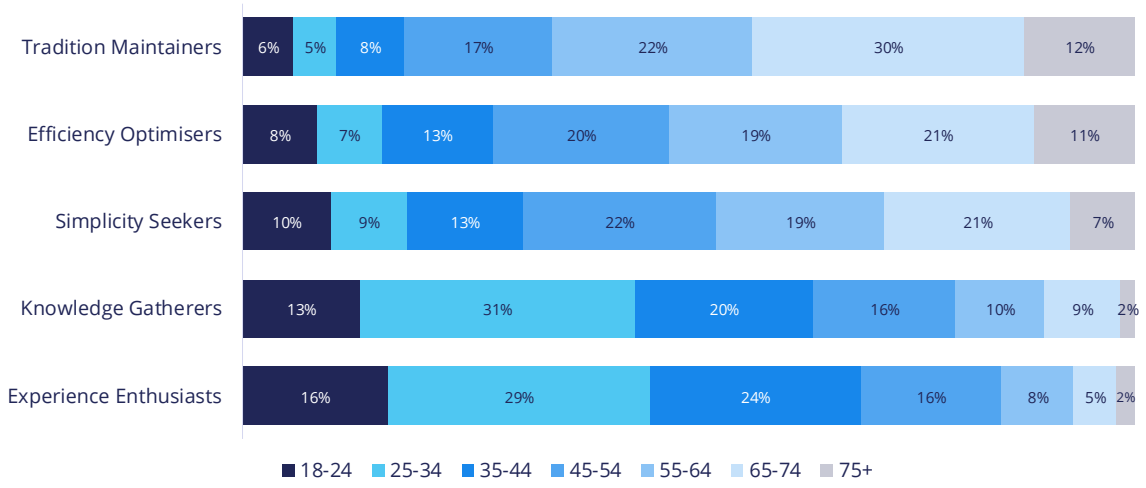
Demographics

Age

Figure 23 shows that Knowledge Gatherers and Experience Enthusiasts tend to be younger than other personas, with Tradition Maintainers exhibiting the most mature age profile.

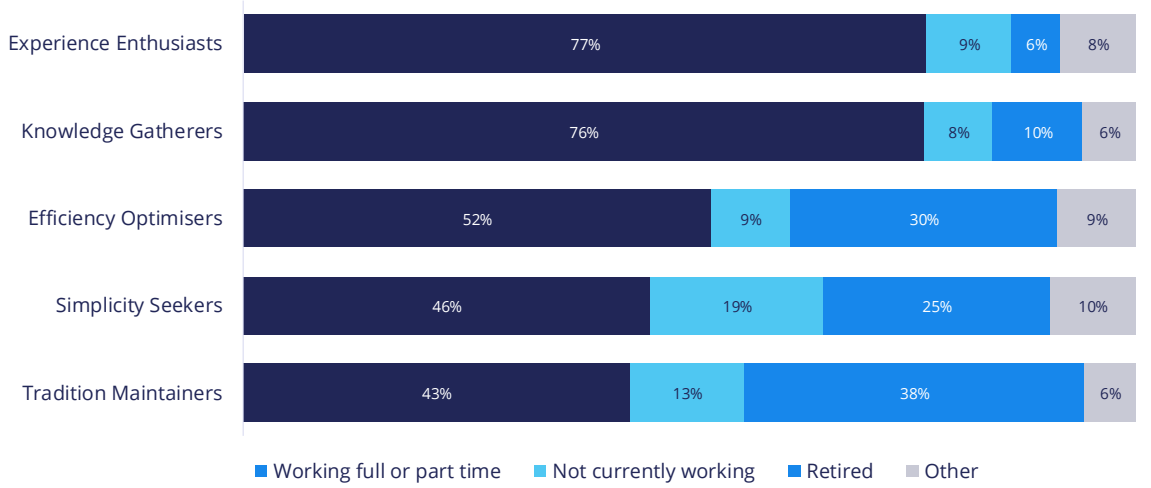
Figure 23: What is your age?



Employment Status

Knowledge Gatherers and Experience Enthusiasts are most likely to be employed, as shown in Figure 24. Tradition Maintainers are the most likely to be retired (38%), while Simplicity Seekers are the most likely to be not currently working (19%).

Figure 24: Which of the following best describes your employment status?



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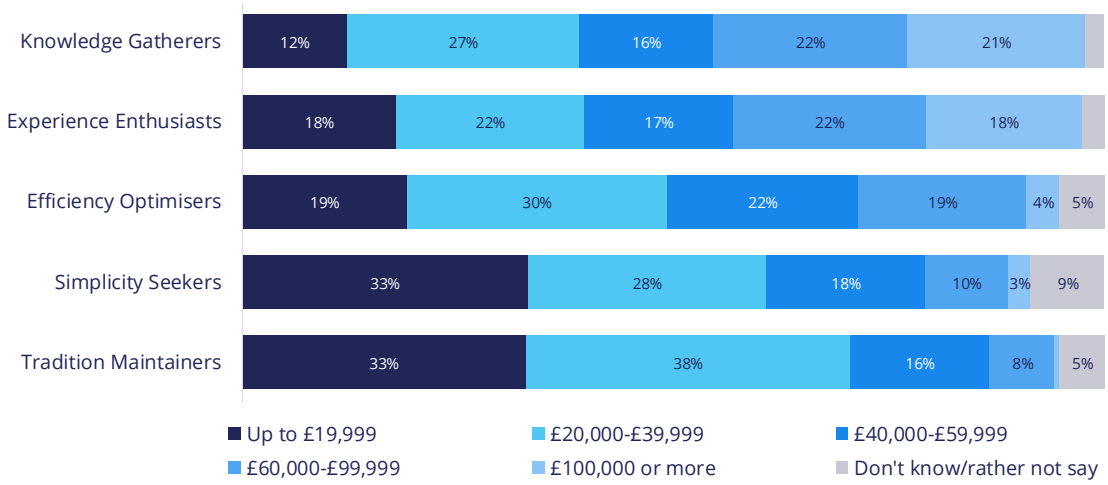
Income

Knowledge Gatherers and Experience Enthusiasts tend to have a higher household income than other personas, which is likely linked to their higher proportions of employment as evidenced in Figure 24 above.

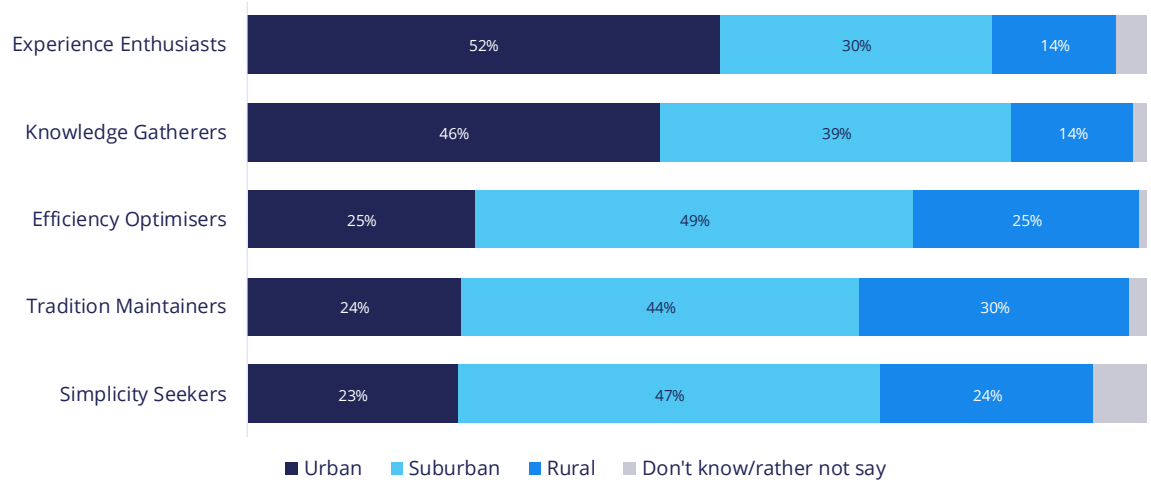
Figure 25: What is your annual household income, before tax and deductions?



Home Location

Experience Enthusiasts and Knowledge Gatherers are much more likely than other personas to live in an urban area (52% and 46% respectively). Tradition Maintainers are the most likely to live in a rural area (30%).

Figure 26: Which of the following best describes where you live?



NB Base sizes for each of the charts in the above section are:
Efficiency Optimisers n=540
Knowledge Gatherers n=494
Experience Enthusiasts n=381
Simplicity Seekers n=375
Tradition Maintainers n=210

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Personalising Contact Experiences for Personas

This research has uncovered the many differences between individuals' contact needs and preferences. This final section provides recommendations on how to personalise the contact experience for each of the five personas, based on each of their distinctive characteristics.

Experience Enthusiasts

DO

- Make it easy to share post-experience, for example by embedding links to review sites in the contact journey
- Invite feedback, good and bad
- Ensure advisors are personable and friendly; greet customer by name
- Connect with CRM data to incorporate customer behavioural history into the contact experience

DON'T

- Be overly businesslike or abrupt
- Treat customer like a 'number'

Knowledge Gatherers

DO

- Make switching easy, with nudges and links to alternative channels
- Maximise self-serve capabilities, enabling self-resolution of complex queries
- Provide comprehensive FAQs and knowledgebases
- Embrace advanced automation and AI as long as the customer benefits are clearly apparent and the tools are sophisticated

DON'T

- Force phoning when an email or self-serve option would suffice
- Implement outdated or limited automation or AI

Efficiency Optimisers

DO

- Minimise journey friction and customer effort
- Make it easy to switch from self-serve to phone
- Be available on weekends

DON'T

- Make lots of small talk
- Deflect without clearly communicating customer benefits

Simplicity Seekers

DO

- Minimise journey friction and customer effort
- Use straightforward language
- Be available during office hours
- Prioritise FCR

DON'T

- Contact during evenings or weekends
- Force usage of FAQs, knowledgebases which require significant cognitive effort
- Implement automation or AI without thorough prior communication

Tradition Maintainers

DO

- Deliver maximum phone availability and minimal waiting times
- Always make a phone option available
- Over-communicate to provide reassurance during self-serve journeys

DON'T

- Implement automation or AI without thorough prior communication
- Deflect without thoroughly testing alternative journeys with this persona

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About the CCMA

For more than 30 years, the CCMA has been dedicated to supporting contact centre leaders. We push ourselves to do more for our thriving membership base, which is the largest community of industry professionals in the UK.

The CCMA was founded with the goal of sharing best practice and networking to improve skills and knowledge in order to progress contact centre operations – and we live by that to this day.

We give those who work in contact centres the chance to discuss ideas and share experiences through member–only events online and in–person. Member organisations are invited to become Accredited through the Contact Centre Standards Framework and get independent guidance on where they can improve. There is the opportunity to compare operations against industry standards and 25+ KPIs, via our annual CCMA Benchmark.

Our training arm, CCMA Academy gives contact centre professionals at all levels a structured learning opportunity to support both personal and professional development for the benefit of their operations. We also celebrate the progress our industry is making through the UK National Contact Centres Awards. Those that win go on to share their stories through channels such as the UK National Contact Centre Conference, Best Practice Visits and CareerTalk, while also providing input into our CCMA Circles and other events.

In 2026, the CCMA coordinated the UK's first National Contact Centre Day, a celebration that engaged more than 4m people both within and outside the sector, via online and in–person events held by a vast range of organisations across the country. The event will take place annually, with the next National Contact Centre Day set. for 3 March 2027.

www.ccma.org.uk

About Route 101

Route 101 is an award-winning technology systems integrator, delivering market-leading cloud contact centre and customer engagement software and solutions. Its products and services help clients to transform their customer engagement, support, empower their workforce, and boost their business operations.
A supplier to global organisations, and some of the UKI's biggest brands, Route 101 specialises in the implementation and support of true cloud transformation solutions, having built strong relationships with leading technology vendors. The Route 101 team works tirelessly to deliver exceptional standards of support to its customers. The quality of the solutions offered, the strength of partner and customer relationships, and the emphasis on quality service means Route 101 continues to act as a disruptor within the contact centre and CX technology space.

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www.ccma.org.uk/membership

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