

How consumer expectations are shaping the workplace



Every successful business now understands the imperative of a seamless customer experience.

The ubiquity of apps and service across many channels—phone and email, but also chat and platforms like Twitter—has created an expectation among consumers that service be seamless and

omnichannel. Think Uber and Instacart. This critical concept is starting to have a broader relevance across different facets of consumers' daily lives, including where most people spend the bulk of their time: the workplace.

Employee expectations are evolving along with rising customer expectations. Your employees, after all, are consumers too, and they expect the same kind of service in their place of work as they do from the businesses they patronize: personalized, efficient, and convenient. Where a customer may have questions about a delivery date, return policy, or warranty with the expectation of prompt, polite service, an employee may need assistance with benefits selection, payroll, a buggy laptop, or a lost security badge. They'll also form impressions of your company based on your interviewing and onboarding processes. A new hire might be blown away by your efficiency... or might go home with a foggy understanding of healthcare benefits. Consumer or employee, the expectation of stellar service is now the same.

Table of Contents

3	Expectations, retention, and success
4	Drivers of employee experience
5	Encourage engaged employees
6	Boost team productivity
8	Optimize performance
9	Conclusion



Expectations, retention, and success

According to a recent study by [McKinsey](#), there are three major areas of dissatisfaction that employees experience with internal services: the availability and clarity of information; the overall time needed to complete tasks required by support functions; and the effort required to go through processes involving support functions. A rewarding workplace experience is directly tied to employee retention, an increasingly key metric. “The modern workforce knows what’s important to them and isn’t going to settle,” says [Gallup](#), adding that most professionals “want their work to have meaning and purpose. They want to use their talents and strengths to do what they do best every day. They want to learn and develop.” It may not take much effort to retain disengaged employees... the ones who do the bare minimum, at best, and at worst, poison the well.

[One study of companies named to “best places to work” lists](#) found that between 2009 and 2014, the companies on Fortune’s annual list outperformed the S&P 500 by 84 percent, and those in [a similar report from Accenture](#) beat the market by 122 percent. A positive workplace experience makes employees feel valued, and satisfied employees do a better job. They’re more motivated, more loyal, more collaborative. [Another study](#) showed a link between employee satisfaction and company performance measures like operating margin, revenue per employee, and return on company assets.

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Drivers of employee experience

Two departments have the most interactions with and deliver the greatest overall daily impact on employees: IT and HR. Quiet superheroes, they are also under the most pressure to deliver the best employee experiences, to ensure that employees are successful and happy in their jobs. “HR is undergoing a transformation of operational HR processes to become automated and data-driven,” says Ann Catrina-Kligman, global director, HR shared services, at Zendesk. “Such data insights are enabling HR to move from being a back-office, reactive administrative function into a data-driven strategic partner with the business, using proactive insights to shape talent strategies and the future of work.”

Another example of an internal use case, the IT department makes choices that affect every staffer and works with your staff daily to troubleshoot and solve problems great and small. Companies can create and leverage a flexible, easy-to-use internal portal that allows teams to support employees locally and across the globe, giving them a one-stop shop for everything from requesting paid time off to checking out regional events and the latest opportunities for volunteering. “We love self-service, and are set up so our customers (Zendesk employees) can easily find what they need. This relieves stress on departments such as IT, HR, marketing, and finance, and delivers a great experience for our stakeholders,” says Jim Gearhart, senior director, enterprise business applications and development, at Zendesk.



Thousands of companies around the world use Zendesk to foster a seamless experience with their customers. But its ability to promote a seamless employee experience is just as powerful—and ever more relevant to your company’s success. Offerings like self-service, AI, app integrations, and reporting encourage efficiency and foster the building of robust internal help desks. Accenture found that over half of business leaders said they have plans to create employee experiences comparable to consumer experiences. Read on to better understand how to implement three core pillars of the employee experience.

Encourage engaged employees

There's an old saying that one bad apple spoils the bunch. [Gallup's 2017 State of the American Workplace Report](#) found that only 33 percent of U.S. employees are engaged at work, versus 70 percent at the world's best organizations. A single employee who is actively disengaged—openly job hunting, disparaging the team and the company, skulking around like a black cloud—can sow apathy and distrust. Actively disengaged employees account for 16 percent of American employees, says Gallup, and “are miserable in the workplace and destroy what the most engaged employees build.” If they stay, you lose. If they leave and inspire others to go too, you pay a steep cost in replacing them—the [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#) reported that to replace an employee, it costs a company six to nine months of that person's salary. Then there's the intangible hit that inevitably comes through Glassdoor reviews and word of mouth.

Engaged employees have a positive effect on everyone around them, boosting motivation and basic happiness. Gallup says these professionals “love their jobs and make their organization...better every day.” But there are many challenges to fostering engagement. Employees get overwhelmed with the number of internal resources and systems available, and may not know where to go or who to go to for information. They can also get frustrated by lack of transparency and responsiveness with their requests.

A great internal help center is one way in which Zendesk brings value. Zendesk can give employees more visibility into their requests and keep them in the loop on status by prioritizing and tracking requests, creating a culture of transparency.

A great internal help center, powered by Zendesk Guide, is one way help-desk teams can empower employees through self-service. Help centers allow employees to find information quickly with a user-friendly tool that's easily searchable and used across teams, including HR, IT, marketing, and finance. To keep employees engaged, Zendesk Connect lets teams proactively reach out to them about upcoming changes or urgent announcements, like service outages. And by giving employees the ability to stay connected across channels, including chat, email, and phone, Zendesk allows employees to stay more engaged and empowered in their roles.

In late 2015, [grocery giant Tesco](#)—a company that serves 79 million shopping trips per week across the world—realized it needed a more efficient way to manage internal technology issues and queries for its 460,000 employees located across nine countries. Tesco has found that since it rolled out self-service with Zendesk Guide, employees are viewing around 30,000 articles a week across its various help centers. Approximately 79 percent of all tickets are resolved by the first assigned group, without rerouting or escalation. “The internal demand has been huge since that initial deployment,” said Adam Bruce, lead product manager for Tesco's Service Desk. “Other teams have seen how Zendesk has improved service and want to start using it too.”



1.8 hours

The average employee spends 1.8 hours each day searching for and gathering information at work.

Boost team productivity

Ensuring help desk teams are productive and efficient, and have all of the information they need to resolve an employee task at hand plays an equally important role in establishing a culture of transparency and meeting employee expectations. But with the high volume of daily tickets internal help-desk teams receive and the amount of tools their teams use on a daily basis, keeping up with employee requests with limited resources is a significant challenge.

The average employee spends [1.8 hours](#) each day searching for and gathering information at work. Most help-desk teams use multiple tools, systems, and applications in their day-to-day roles to resolve employee issues. Using a high volume of applications can bring many challenges for help-desk teams, including the fact that all of these tools impact team efficiency, creating extra work by giving teams one additional place to go to gather information when responding to a ticket.

Zendesk allows teams to integrate applications, systems, and employee interactions in one integrated hub. This allows teams to more easily access the systems they use every day for faster, more contextually relevant and enjoyable employee experiences. Zendesk has more than [750 app integrations](#), including the apps most relevant to help-desk teams, like for productivity and time-tracking (Tymeshift), change and asset management (Oomnitza, Myndbend, Samanage, Panorama9), and project management and collaboration (Slack, Dropbox, Trello).

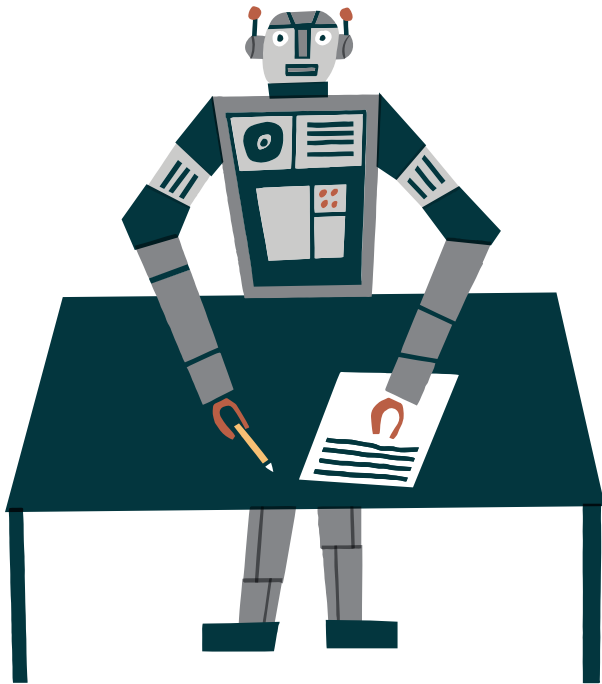
Initially, the [Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#) turned to Zendesk Support in March 2014 because it needed metrics to determine

what wasn't working in its unemployment insurance process. Over time, it has dramatically expanded its use of Zendesk. This included not only seeking other innovative applications of Zendesk products, but also seeking third-party tools that might integrate with that solution. Two are [Innotas](#) for managing projects and [Oomnitza](#) for keeping track of IT assets. In addition, [Geckboard](#) and Rise Vision, an open source product, provide KPI dashboards and digital signage, respectively, for smart TVs that keep directors and other employees aware of how the department is performing.

When using Zendesk for customer service, agents and administrators are the primary users. But when Zendesk is used internally, the customers are your employees, and so are the agents. An HR manager, for example, who acts as an agent, could submit a request to IT as an employee. This dynamic impacts the volume of requests that help-desk teams are bound to receive. In the case of a large retailer, for example, only a fraction of consumers are ever going to reach out for support. But every employee will reach out at some point, and no company can handle every request efficiently.

This is where automation comes into play: AI is a crucial tool in taking care of easy-to-resolve questions so that your employees are free to tackle higher-level problems. With [Answer Bot](#), help desk teams can automate answers to repetitive employee questions, such as payroll schedule, expediting support. Additionally, the Knowledge Capture app allows agents to solve tickets faster with relevant help-center content at their fingertips. By automatically [searching and suggesting](#) articles based on the brand and language of the ticket, the Knowledge Capture app can surface AI-powered article recommendations that agents can link to ticket responses in just one click.

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Optimize performance

When it comes to operational performance, admins have long struggled with visibility, which is just as major an issue for teams in-house as it is for support desks. It's hard, if not impossible, to thrive if you lack a clear sense of what's going on. This is increasingly dangerous for companies that are trying to scale, especially on a budget.

A clear view of how teams are performing is critical. With Zendesk Explore, you get instant access to the customer analytics that matter—and the deeper understanding of your customers and business that comes with it. Teams can track metrics like CSAT, first reply time, and resolution time to help them analyze team performance, take stock of operational metrics, or get a better understanding of their employee experience. With data from the [Zendesk Benchmark](#), our index of nearly 50,000 companies using Zendesk around the world, we found that companies

that optimize their performance using analytics reduce their resolution times by an average of [16%](#). This reporting is key for teams like HR, finance, and IT in identifying bottlenecks, measuring predicted backlog and managing overall productivity to ensure that performance goals are met.

At [mortgage lender Homebridge](#), the marketing, HR, compliance, operations, and customer success departments across their brands use Zendesk Support, Guide, and Chat to process customer service requests via phone, email, and chat, and to offer self-service.

“Zendesk is a key contributor and an asset to ensuring that the wholesale business can maintain that speed,” said Ben Chapman, director of client-facing experience and analytics at Homebridge. “Not only through improvements in workflow, triaging, and service, but also in managing all the data that needs to be passed back and forth between customers and the teams processing these loans. [Zendesk Explore](#) helps us monitor and analyze where there might be gaps, where employees might be lagging behind for one reason or another so we can improve performance.”

Chapman adds, “We're able to see everything, we're able to report on everything. We're able to stitch internal and external communications together so we can collaborate better.”

Conclusion

A seamless, positive employee experience is key to the future of work. The talent you wish to retain has options, and these professionals have the same expectations of their workplace as they do of the businesses they patronize. Just as Zendesk facilitates ease in your customer relationships, it can also create visibility, help you gather critical feedback, and encourage engagement inside your company.

[Learn more](#) about how Zendesk can help you build better employee experiences.