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This research document highlights the importance of mastering customer experience (CX) fluency to delight clients, grow revenue, and ensure operational efficiency. It highlights activities and technologies CX leaders must use to implement one of the four steps for total CX excellence: use automation to keep up with the pace of customer expectations.

Future-Ready Your CX with Automation

CX programs have become more complex than ever before. Customers today use numerous devices and channels to interact with firms while companies must synchronize how they manage these interactions across all departments. On top of that, the speed of business has accelerated. Gone are the days when firms can make annual plans and expect to manage their activities accordingly. In today's world, business conditions such as economic factors, supply chain efficiency, and customer expectations change weekly, sometimes even daily, and firms must stay on top of these changes to proactively adjust their activities in line with changing conditions. Enter automation.

Managing contact center activities – such as agent scheduling by factoring in changes in contact volume / traffic across all engagement channels, routing each contact to the right agents that have the right skills to address the issue, observing each interaction for quality assurance, designing and implementing self-service to provide clients with the tools to help themselves – are among the many complex but repeated activities business leaders manage as part of CX programs. Unfortunately, relying on manual management of these repetitive and complex tasks is not scalable and highly prone to errors and inefficiencies. Instead, observing and designing workflows and leveraging tools such as robotic process automation (RPA) allows business leaders to be more fluent in delivering CX fluency (see below).

Definition: CX Fluency

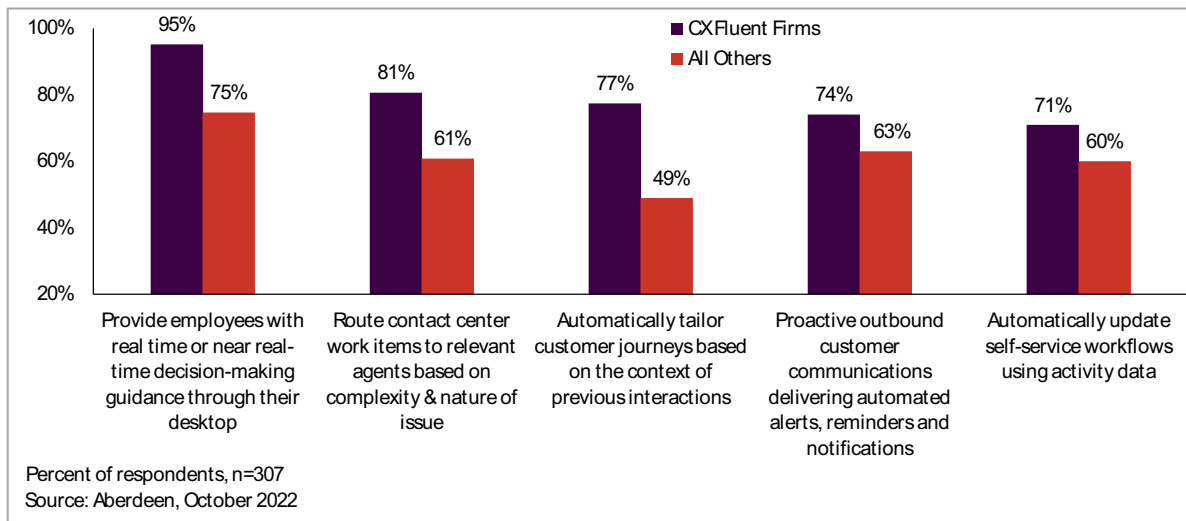
Aberdeen surveyed 307 businesses regarding the key trends and best practices influencing their contact center interactions. Four self-reported performance metrics were used to evaluate organizational performance and rank respondents in their CX fluency. **CX Fluency refers to companies using all the processes and tools in harmony to meet and exceed buyer expectations across all channels and departments.** The top 20% of the surveyed respondents were ranked as 'Best-in-Class' – referred to as 'CX-Fluent Firms' within this research. The remaining 80% represent lower performing firms – referred to as 'All Others.' The metrics used to evaluate performance and comparative performance results between CX-Fluent Firms, and All Others are as follows:

- ▶ **Customer Retention Rate:** CX-Fluent Firms: 81% vs. All Others: 63%
- ▶ **Year-over-year (YoY) change in customer satisfaction:** CX-Fluent Firms: 27.3% vs. All Others: 3.1%
- ▶ **YoY improvement in first contact resolution rates:** CX-Fluent Firms: 23.9% vs. All Others: 0.4%
- ▶ **YoY improvement in agent productivity:** CX-Fluent Firms: 22.2% vs. All Others: 2.1%
- ▶ **YoY improvement (decrease) in average handle time:** CX-Fluent Firms: 12.5% vs. All Others: -1.4%

Findings from Aberdeen's *Contact Center Trends* survey show that CX-Fluent Firms are 96% more likely to use automation versus their counterparts (47% vs. 24%). Furthermore, firms report continued focus on incorporating and widening the use of the technology within their CX activities. Figure 1 (next page) shows several key activities where infusing automation helps business leaders boost their success. Customer care interactions today take place through two main methods: assisted service and self-service. Regarding the former, it's vital for firms to have the right

employees with the right skills but also connect them to the right clients and empower employees to succeed in addressing customer needs. CX-Fluent Firms are 27% more likely to provide employees with real-time guidance through the agent desktop (95% vs. 75%) as well as 33% more likely to route customer issues to the right agent based on the context of the issue (81% vs. 61%). Automation helps streamline these activities by providing employees with relevant guidance as well as optimizing routing.

Figure 1: Leading Firms Make Automation a Key Part of Their CX Fluency



Regarding self-service, CX-Fluent Firms are also ahead of their peers where they are 18% more likely to automatically update self-service workflows based on interaction insights (71% vs. 60%). This is

done through using machine learning and analytics to observe self-service activity data in correlation with CX results such as customer satisfaction and behavioral data, automatically updating workflows when observing poor results, and maintaining workflows that help achieve desired outcomes. Using automation also enables providing automated alerts to supervisors with suggested next-best-actions to observe and adjust self-service workflows based on activity results.

Regardless of the type of customer interactions – assisted or self-service – it’s important for business leaders to ensure that each interaction with each department through each channel is also hyper-personalized to the needs of each client. To do so, Figure 1 shows that CX-Fluent Firms are 57% more likely to use interaction data to automatically tailor customer journeys (77% vs. 49%). They also go beyond simply reacting to customer issues and instead proactively deliver automated alerts, reminders, and notifications to their clientele, transforming the business into a trusted partner that monitors and addresses client needs even before the customers may need to contact the business to seek support. Weaving automation in such a strategic and pervasive fashion is essential for the modern enterprise to excel in delivering total CX excellence despite the uncertainty and constant changes affecting the business landscape.

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