

CX Lessons Learned From Studying 200M Conversations on Black Friday and Cyber Monday

to help you get ahead
of the 2021 holiday rush



Ebook

6 BFCM CX Lessons

CX + BFCM = Successful Shopping Season

Black Friday/Cyber Monday 2020 clocked industry-records despite—or rather as a result of—the global pandemic. Shopify revealed that the platform’s store owners collectively made a whopping **\$5.1 billion USD** in sales that weekend, up **76%** from last year.

84%

of consumers shopped online in 2020

64%

of customers started using a new customer services channel in 2020

With this shift to online shopping also came a rise in digital brand interactions. Customers want to talk to brands. They want hyper personalized, proactive, conversational shopping experiences. If your strategy for dealing with the BFCM interaction volume spike is to shut it down, your brand is going to get left behind.

With endless options trying to steal people’s scarce attention, CX has become a top differentiator online—and brands that deliver a fantastic, engaging experience are seeing the greatest returns.

92%

customers are more likely to engage and spend money with a brand that provides a good customer experience

91%

consumers are more loyal to brands that provide personalized experiences across the customer journey

To set you up for success, we analyzed over 200 million aggregated brand interactions that took place during BFCM 2020 from industry-leading ecommerce brands like Aeropost, Shopify, Tile, Balsam Hill, Shapermint, and Raise.

From that, we surfaced 6 actionable lessons to help ecommerce and retail brands prioritize CX investments to knock BFCM 2021 out of the park.

6 BFCM CX Lessons

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Lesson 1

Leverage automation to help customers help themselves

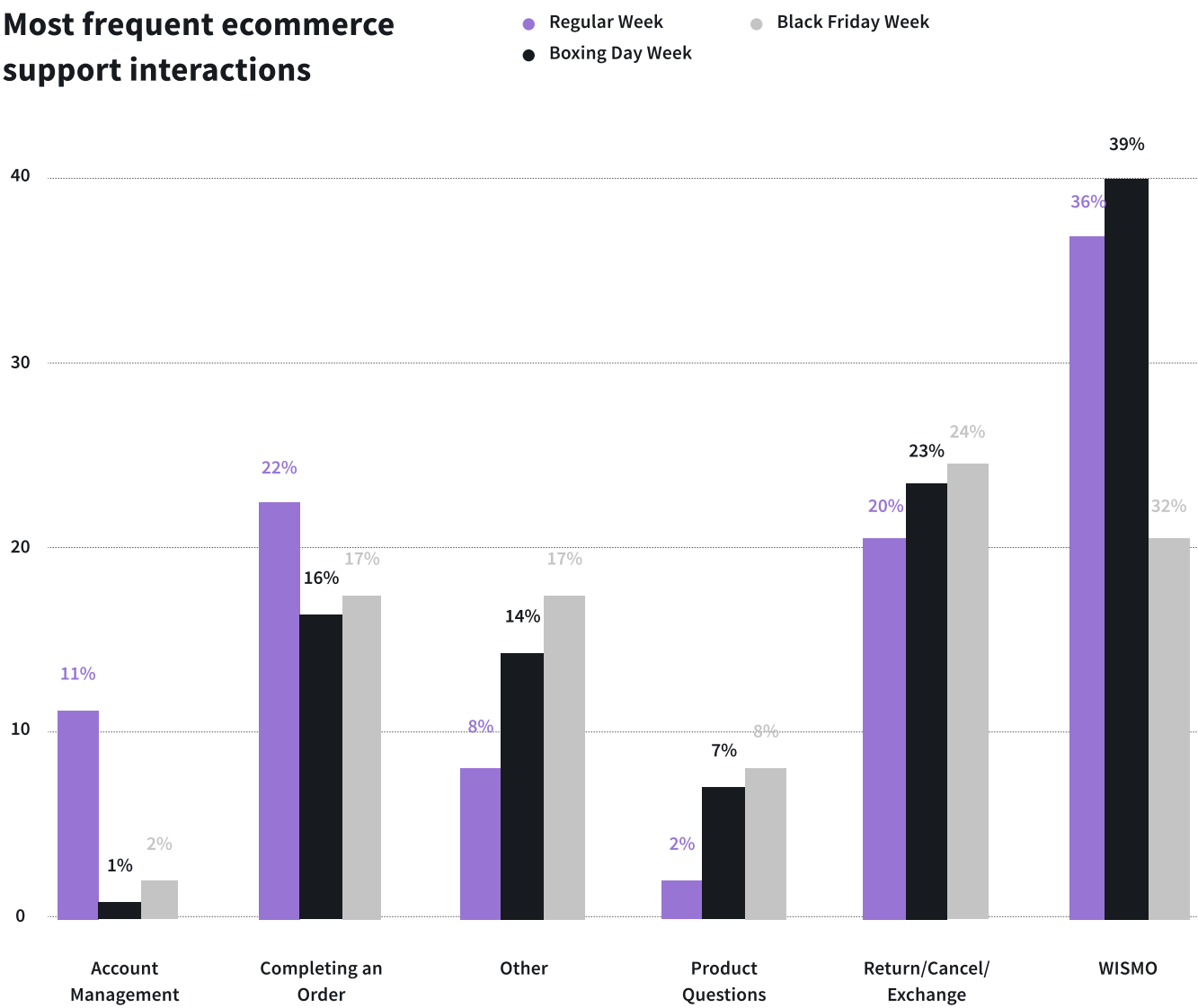
When you consider an automated customer experience (ACX®) solution, you might think this is a replacement for human agents. This couldn't be further from the truth.

The power of ACX lies in its ability to automate complex and highly personalized actions without limiting your agents or your customers.

We've found that almost 80% of brand interactions are common, repeat inquiries which a robust conversational AI can handle, without sacrificing on personalization or your brand's tone and voice.

- 55% of all shoppers say they want a chatbot to provide support for finding specific products, in addition to customer service
- 83% of US online shoppers expect regular communication about their purchases

Most frequent ecommerce support interactions



As we said before, customers want to talk to your brand, but they’re also very demanding. They expect instant answers to their questions, 24/7, and on the channels they prefer. If you can meet these demands, you’re well on your way to making more sales.

Leveraging a brand interaction platform facilitates a conversation between your brand and customers, such that all incoming interactions from all channels are funnelled through this platform. To your customers, this interaction layer will look like a dynamic and thoughtfully branded chatbot interface, on your website, app, social channels, and SMS.

The bot can then automate tasks and actions to enable customers to self-serve. Things like:

- Product recommendations
- Upsell & cross-sell based on past purchases, items in cart, or browsing history
- Styling or size questions
- Stock and inventory updates
- Shipping inquiries
- WISMO inquiries and order tracking

The bot can also proactively offer targeted discounts or promos at cart or checkout pages, or based on customer segments.

In a six month period, over 30,000 customers used Indigo’s “Instant Help” chatbot to check their tracking status – resulting in more than \$150,000 in savings in customer service staffing costs.

By automating self-serve tasks, you free up agents to address the remaining 20% of brand interactions that require a human touch. This will allow them to have more meaningful and accessible conversations with customers who need help the most, further reinforcing the notion that your brand cares deeply about customer needs.

“Ada helps Raise achieve our goals everyday by increasing efficiency for our agents, by decreasing turnaround time for our members, by allowing us to quickly get any new information in front of them. We’re hoping to use it as a marketing and revenue-generating tool to increase brand awareness.”



ERIN BRUSSEAU
VP OPERATIONS,
RAISE MARKETPLACE

Lesson 2

Prepare for interaction spikes that start before BFCM and last through the holidays

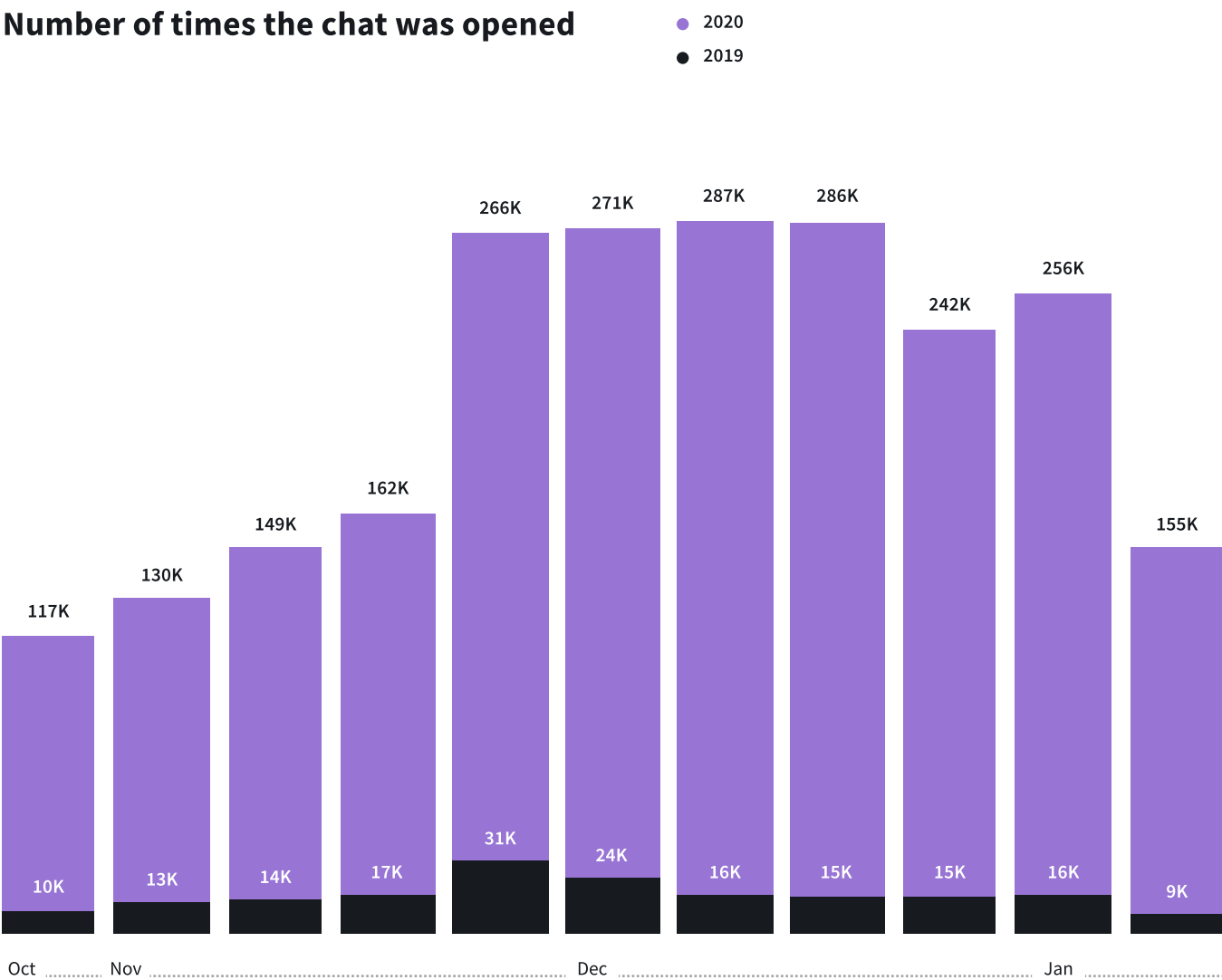
Forbes surveys found that 30% of customers are starting their holiday shopping earlier than usual.

As you can see in the graph below, 2020 saw a significant bump in chat volume leading up to BF, which remained consistent until the end of the year. Comparatively in 2019, chat volumes died down 1-2 weeks after BFCM.

Knowing this, you'll need to prepare your CX team for up to 8 weeks of ballooning interaction volumes that last from early November until the end of December.

If you're planning to hire seasonal agents or contractors, it's time to rethink your strategy. Not only is this expensive and inefficient, temporary hires will not be as familiar with your brand voice and brand promise. This is a bigger problem than you think.

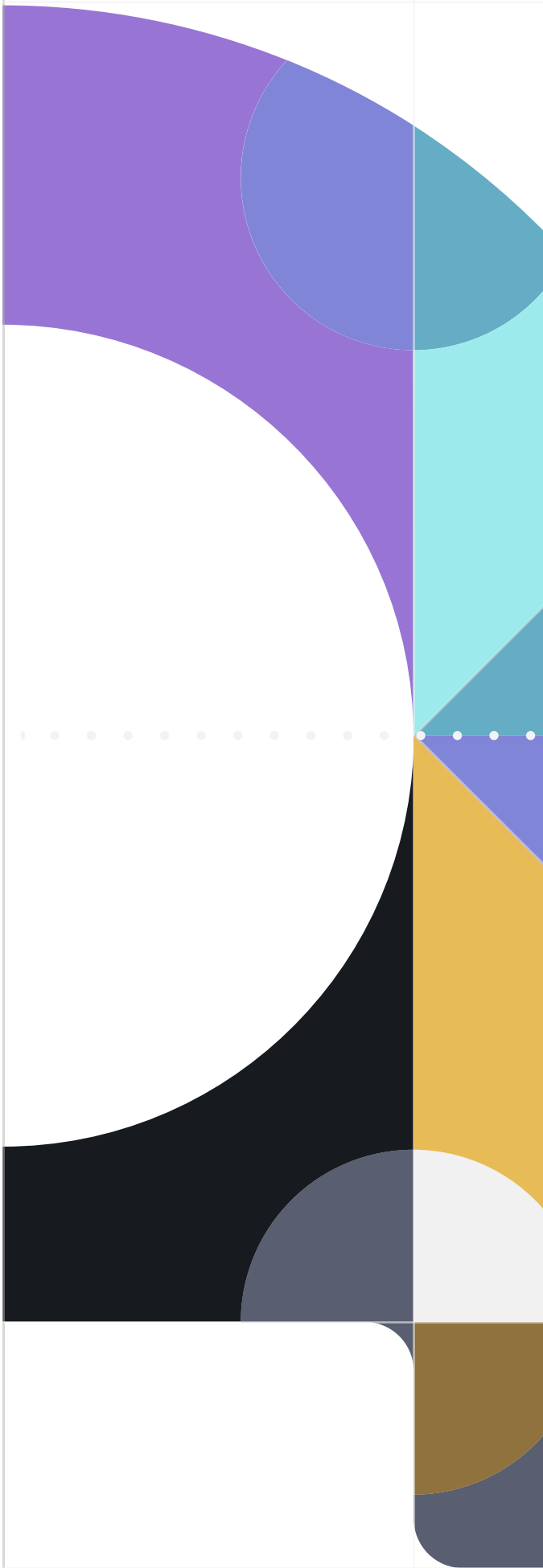
Number of times the chat was opened



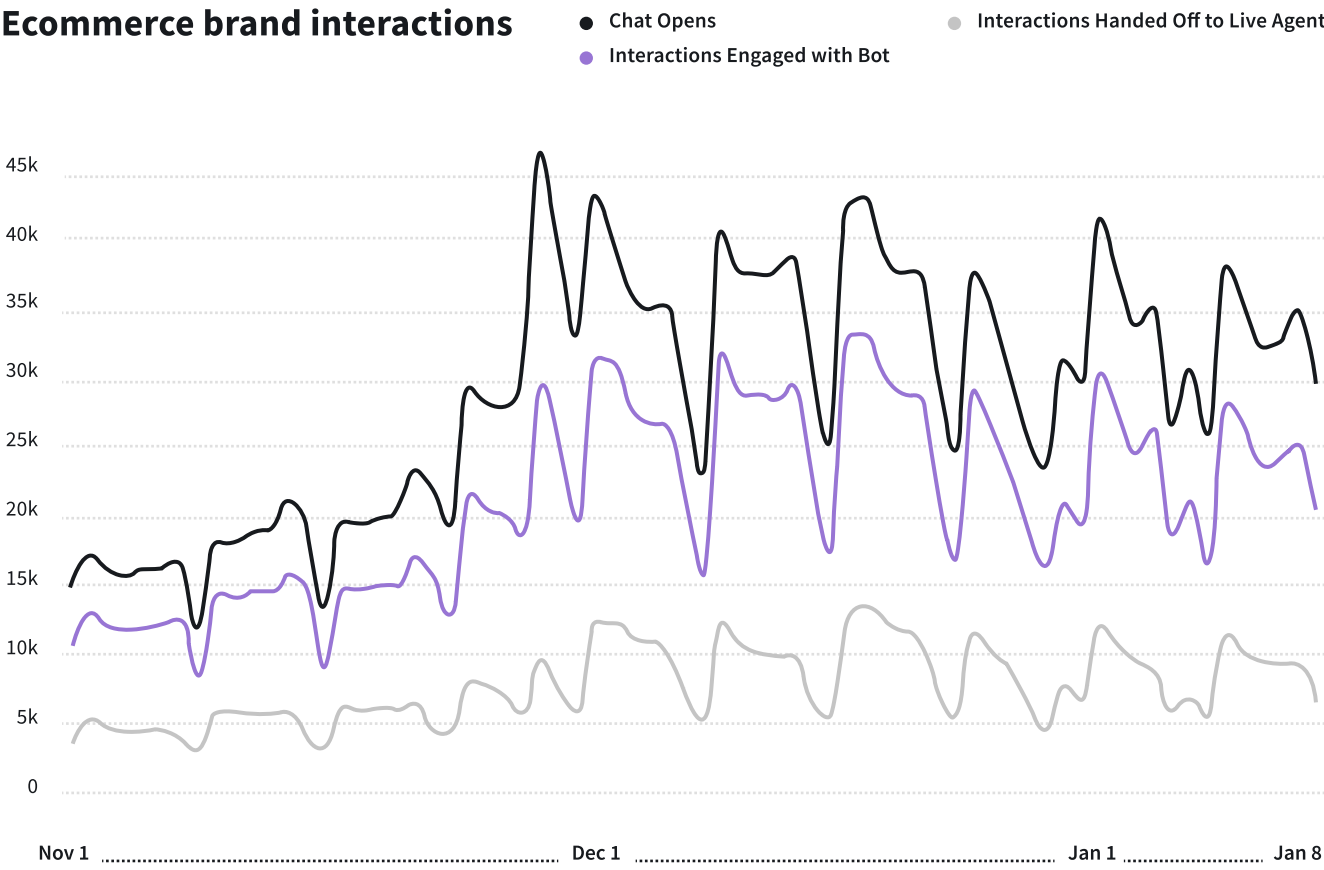
In the minds of customers, any interaction with your brand is a reflection of the brand itself. The lines between “brand” and “customer experience” are all but dissolved for customers, and if your business isn’t acknowledging this, you’re at risk of disappointing customers and not living up to your brand promise.

Disappointed customers will spend less on your products— if not leave for your competitors—and broken brand promises lead to more expensive customer acquisition and higher customer churn.

An ACX strategy, underpinned by a brand interaction platform is the scalable solution your brand needs. By leaning into the power of automation (see Lesson 1), your brand will be able to easily handle customer interaction spikes during the busiest time of year, then automatically scale back when volumes diminish afterwards without costing you time or money.



Ecommerce brand interactions



The data above shows that while the number of engaged conversations increased during BFCM, Ada did well to keep the handoff to live agents relatively flat.

“When our company grew from 0 to 4 million customers in two years, it was nearly impossible to scale our one-to-one customer experience at the same pace. Now with Ada, our agents have more time to connect with customers to solve complex problems and our customers always have quick access to help right when they need it.”



LORISSA ANCHETA
CUSTOMER CARE MANAGER,
SHAPERMINT

Lesson 3

Prioritize chat over other brand interactions

Customers today expect instant access to your brand, as well as immediate support. Channels like phone support and email are dying out as a result—email wait times are way too long and honestly no one wants to deal with IVR or being on hold.

As an integral component of your brand’s interaction platform, the conversational AI chatbot covers the end-to-end customer journey, providing a—well—conversational CX for your customers.

The new mantra is:
chat is where it’s at.

20B+

messages exchanged between people and businesses each month on Messenger

69%

of US consumers who message businesses say that being able to message a business helps them feel more confident about the brand

70%

According to Shopify’s BFCM 2020 data, businesses who responded to customer chats within 5 minutes were 70% more likely to convert the customer



Think of all the ways that a fantastic in-store salesperson would help a customer:

- Answering questions about product availability
- Helping out with size guides or styling
- Notifying them of a current sale or promotion
- Recommending complementary products
- Assisting during checkout
- Helping with returns or exchanges

Your customers still want to have these conversations with your brand online, and chat can make that happen.

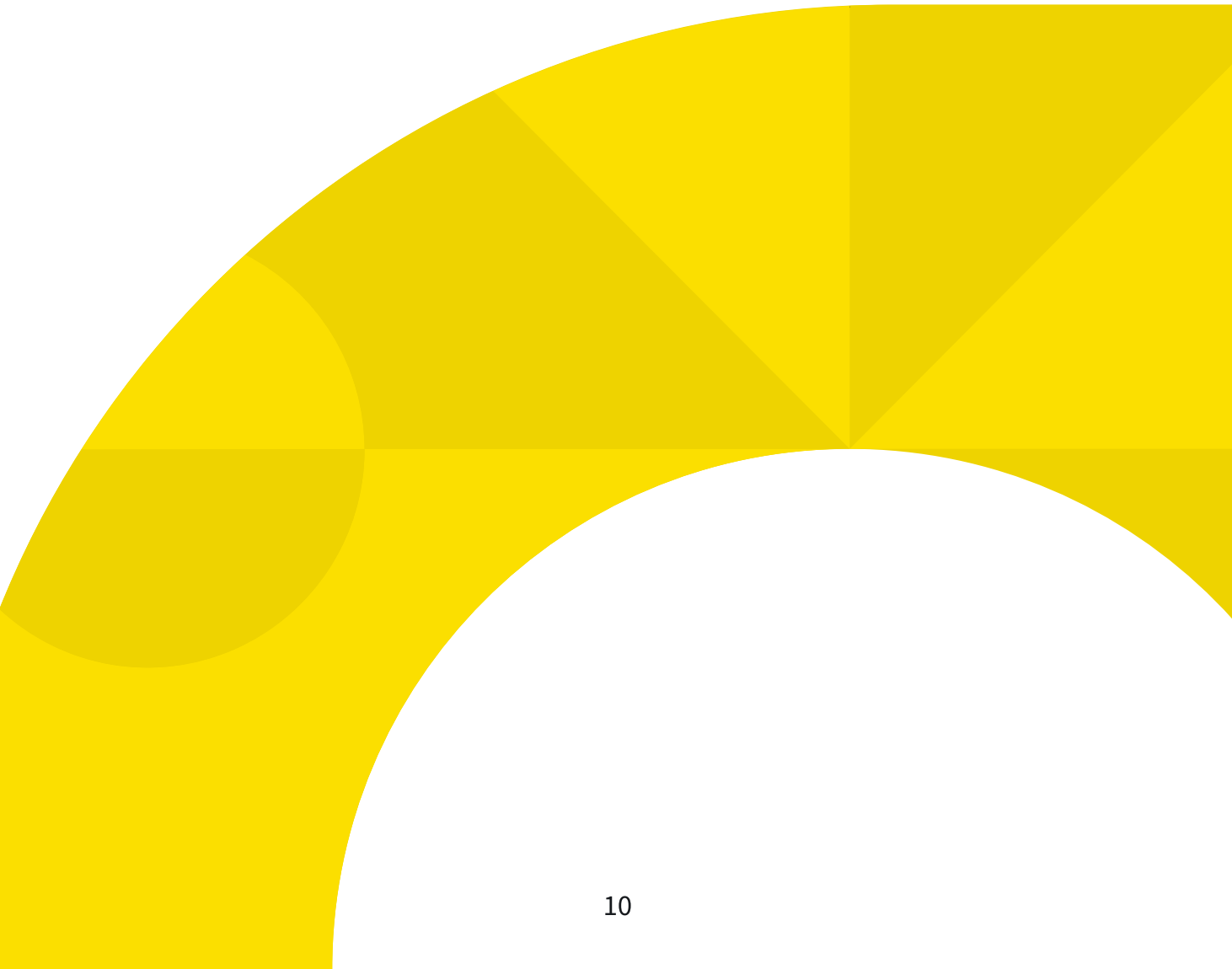
71%

of users are willing to receive customer service through a messaging app

2.8x

Site visitors who chat are 2.8x more likely to convert and will spend 60% more than those who don't

If you're only leveraging a chatbot for support, it's time to think of what other areas of your customer journey it can help conversationalize.



Lesson 4

Focus on proactive engagement for revenue generation

We’ve said this before and we’ll say it again: **every brand interaction is an opportunity for generating revenue—either immediately or long term.** You should be finding ways to have more interactions with customers, not less.

Making the first move will set your CX apart from competition. It’s a great way to build relationships and brand loyalty—done correctly, proactive messaging can lead to a 170% engagement rate with customers. This in turn leads to higher value carts, increases successful checkout rates, and increases the likelihood of repeat purchases.

The higher the engagement is, the higher your revenue can be.

10%

increase in the average order value from customers who engaged in a chat before making a purchase, than those that did not

86%

of online shoppers prefer proactive customer support

5x

Ada ecommerce clients found that chat open rates increased 5x with proactive campaigns, and customers were 2.5x more likely to engage with the bot

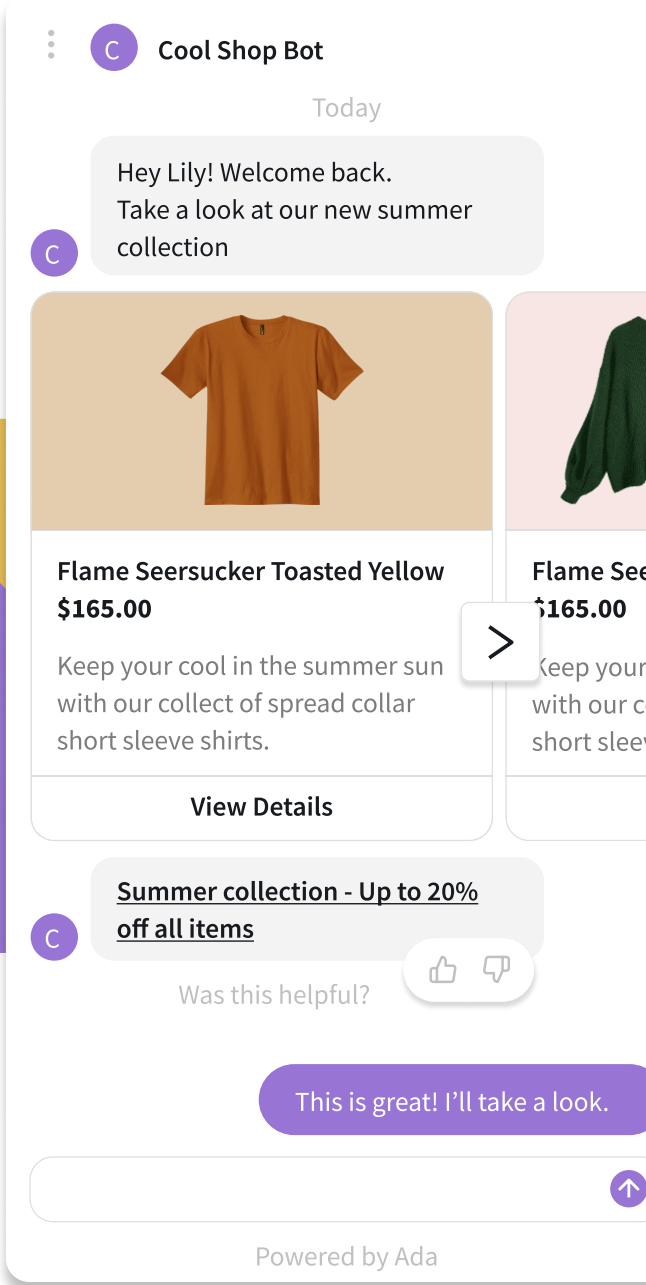


The key is personalization, and centralizing all customer data in one tool. The data should update in real-time based on interactions, conversations, and web events. Then, learn from this data and anticipate customers' needs—which is the first step towards creating a successful proactive campaign. This is very important because data on its own doesn't tell a story, the insight generated from it does.

Using this insight, you can orchestrate automated outbound interactions across different channels based on real-time data and web events. Say hello to more sales this BFCM/holiday season.

You can use a conversational AI bot to:

- Proactively welcome customers
- Remind customers about unused loyalty points
- Send new collections/product recommendations to help with their product discovery
- Target the right group of customers with coupons or promotion offers to increase conversion rates



Lesson 5

Create more meaningful brand interactions with hyper personalization

Personalized CX has gone from nice-to-have to a customer expectation. For brands looking to make customers feel valued and create a genuine connection with them to inspire trust, hyper personalization is the holy grail.

80%

want personalization from retailers, according to a survey of 1,000 US adults by Epsilon and GBH

92%

of CX leaders interviewed agreed that customers want convenient and highly personalized experiences when they interact with the brand

91%

of CX leaders agreed that consumers are more loyal to brands that provide personalized experiences across the customer journey.



Your brand should have a full understanding of a customer, and this customer’s interaction history with the brand, to be able to offer targeted engagement that truly helps them in their journey and enhances their experience.

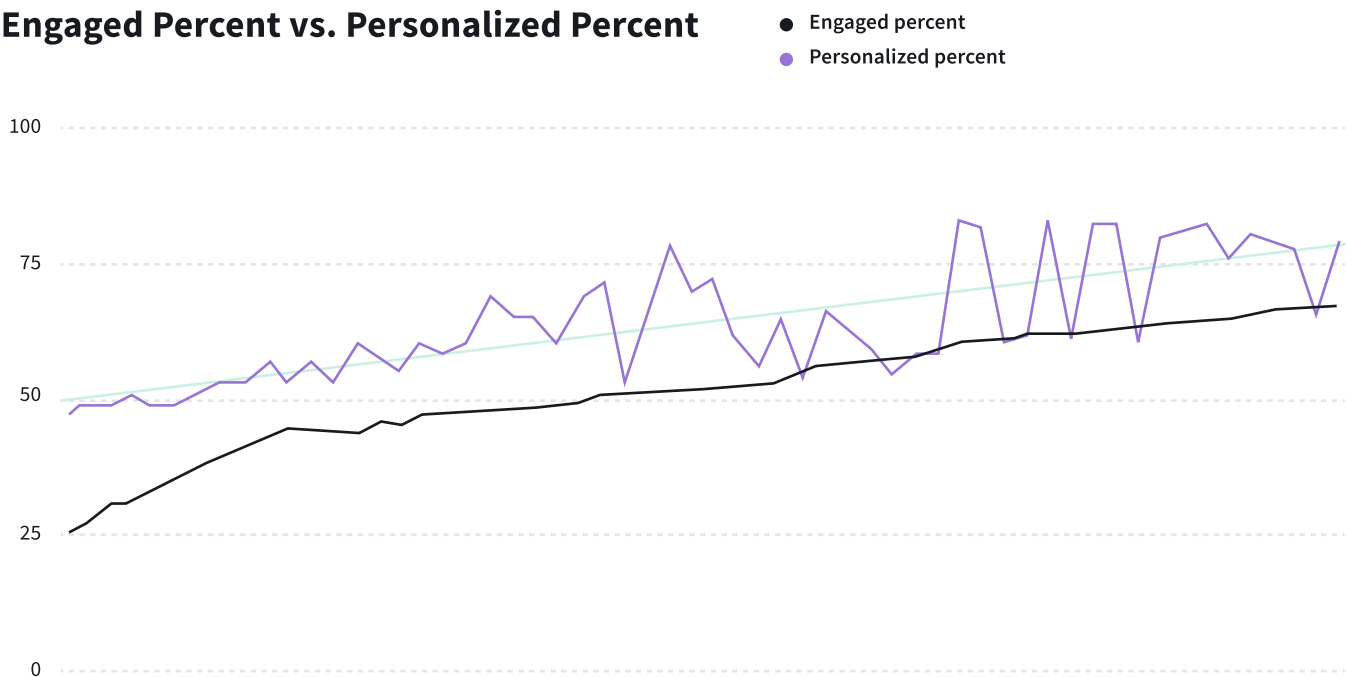
Much like proactive engagement, the key to personalizing ACX is to use all the data that’s available to you. Brands should focus on unifying sales, marketing, product, and support teams by centralizing customer information and brand interactions. This will give you a 360 view of each customer, including past interactions as well as personal information and demographics. You can then use that data to personalize the entire customer journey, not just one part of it.

And when you do that correctly, good things happen.

Lesson 5: Create more meaningful brand interactions with hyper personalization

There is a linear correlation between personalized messages and engagement rate. Customers who see personalization in proactive messaging are more likely to chat.

Engaged Percent vs. Personalized Percent



30%

By personalizing the customer journey, Balsam Hill saw a 30% reduction in cart abandonment

49%

shoppers surveyed by Segment have purchased a product that they did not initially intend to buy after receiving a personalized recommendation from a brand

Lesson 6

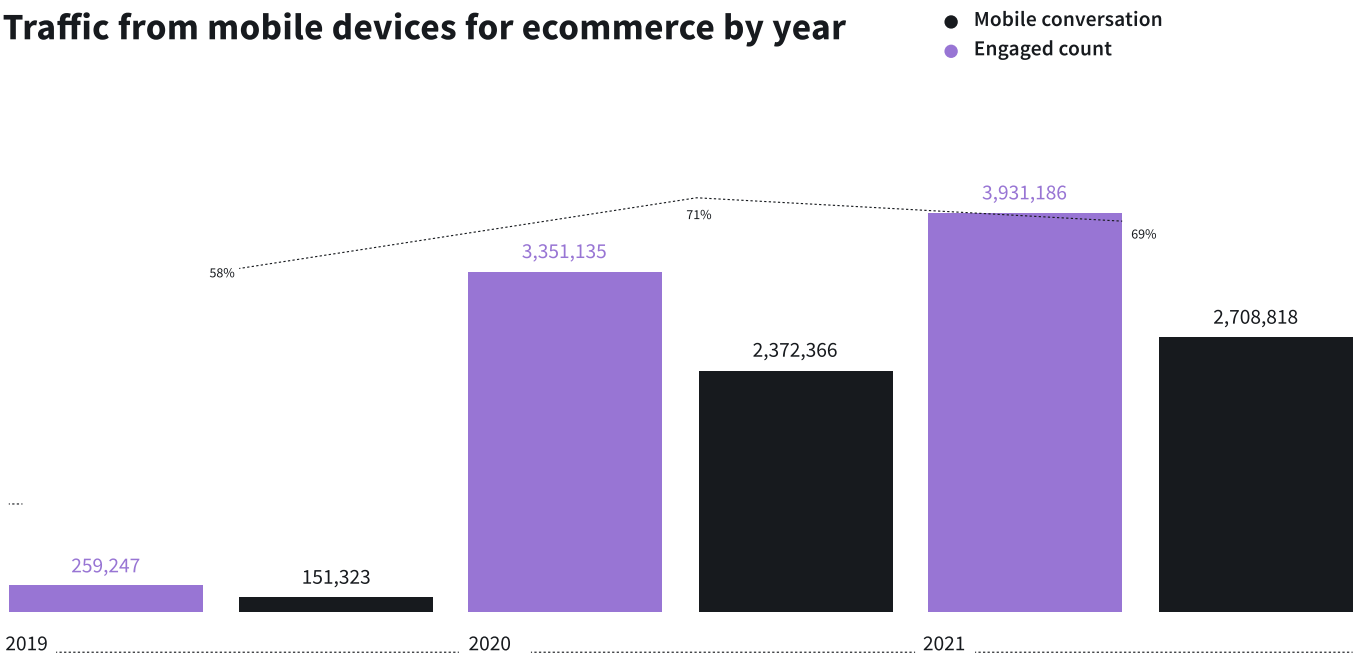
Meet customers on smartphones and social networks

Customers are becoming increasingly adept at using smartphones to find what they need and make a purchase. This trend is further reinforced by social marketplaces such as Facebook and Instagram. Customers can now be served an ad on Instagram, click through to the product, and purchase it immediately, without ever leaving the platform.

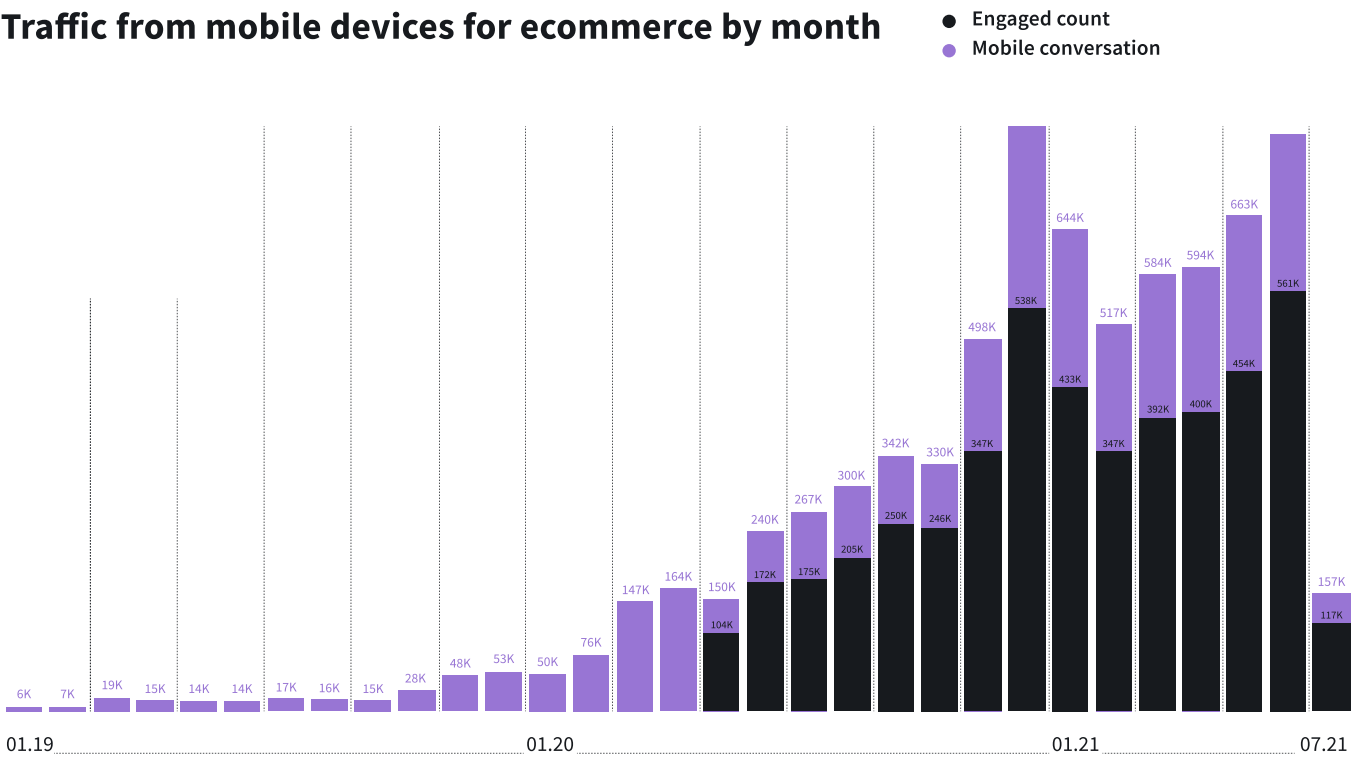
What’s curious is that this trend affects only smartphones, not tablets or laptops as well. In fact, tablet and laptop use for holiday shopping continues to decline year-over-year

73%
of US online consumers used a mobile phone to shop online during BFCM 2020

Traffic from mobile devices for ecommerce by year



Traffic from mobile devices for ecommerce by month



Customers don’t have time to wait for email answers in their moment of need or decision-making—and they definitely won’t deal with obtuse or unintuitive experiences. For example, if they find your store on Facebook, they expect to communicate with your brand and make their purchases there as well. They don’t want to open a new browser window or app to connect.

You need to start thinking of an omnichannel CX strategy that offers the same consistent, hyper personalized, conversational experience no matter which channel or device customers are reaching you on. The easier you make it for customers to get what they need, the more likely they are to keep coming back.



42%
of US online adults in 2020 said that it was important for retailers to offer live online chat on their websites

74%
of millennials report that their perception of a brand improves when it is clear the company responds to customers' social media inquiries

Get ahead of the competition with Ada

With a human-first approach to CX, brand interactions don't scale, they break. It's unreasonable for CX teams to be able to provide the kind of experiences customers want—consistently, 24/7, completely personalized, and on the channels customers prefer.

And during the busiest shopping season of the year, every interaction counts. If replies are late or feel impersonal, customers are left hanging and sent right to competitors. Sales are lost. And all your brand promises fall apart.


The solution is to implement a brand interaction platform that drives an automation-first approach to CX. This automated customer experience (ACX) will enable your brand to connect with every customer in a meaningful way: no matter where they are in their journey or how they prefer to interact. The brand interaction platform allows every customer to talk directly to your brand while empowering you to live up to brand promise.

While other businesses are trying to talk to customers less, Ada helps you talk to customers more.

With Ada, brands talk.

Ada is the leading technology provider of Automated Brand Interactions, empowering the world's fastest growing companies, like Zoom, Facebook, and Square, with best-in-class solutions that deliver digital-first, omni-channel experiences at scale.

Fueling interactions between brands and the people who love them—prospective and loyal customers, stakeholders and employees—Ada transforms reactive CX models into proactive, tailored profit generators that span the entire customer journey. For more information, visit www.ada.cx.

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The data for this report was sourced from Ada's own ecommerce client analytics as well as...

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