Transform your customer experience with Slack for support teams
# Table of contents

**Introduction** 3

Upgrade the customer experience by unlocking customer insights companywide 4
Slack makes customer insights equally accessible across teams 5

Drive faster resolutions through internal collaboration 8
Slack unifies your critical support systems 8

Enhance support team performance by reducing friction between tools 11
Slack cuts wasted time by connecting your support tech stack 12

Give your service teams the support they need to delight customers 14
Introduction

As the market shifts and customer experience becomes a critical competitive differentiator, gone are the days of customer service as just a cost center. Support teams have evolved into a key profit center for businesses.

Customer loyalty, lifetime value and retention rates are your new key performance indicators (KPIs)—and they require a more strategic and integrated approach to support. In fact, 82% of support leaders say customer service transformation is the key to staying competitive.

Companies that take the customer experience seriously reap the benefits. McKinsey & Company reports that companies that implement customer-experience programs see the impact on their bottom line.

Customer experience is more important than ever in our turbulent economic climate. During the 2007–2009 recession, companies that doubled down on customer experience saw three times higher returns for their shareholders.

Delivering world-class customer service hinges on your team’s ability to meet expectations for fast, connected and personal service. To achieve this transformation, you must remove the barriers that distance support teams from the rest of your business.

Agents need near-instant access to internal experts and company resources, and managers must be able to take quick action on customer insights. The whole company needs policies and processes that put the customer at the center of the organization.

But for too many teams, the reality is one of functional silos—customer insights scattered across a dozen different tools, and team communication limited to opaque email threads. Reducing these barriers to internal collaboration is one of the single most effective things you can do to empower your support team.

The longer your tools, people and data stay siloed, the longer you’ll feel the pain of slow resolutions, underdeveloped agents and less-than-ideal customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores. It’s time to demolish these interior walls and build a better, more collaborative way of serving customers.

To accomplish this, you need a support team for your support team. Enter Slack.

And in Salesforce’s State of Service report, 4 out of 5 customers agreed that “the experience a company provides is as important as its products and services.”

- 15%–20% increase in sales conversion rates
- 10%–20% improvement in customer satisfaction scores
- 20%–50% decline in service costs
Upgrade the customer experience by unlocking customer insights companywide

You likely have tons of rich customer data within your company: feedback, conversation history, preferences, recurring issues, and more. This customer data and the insights it provides are key to providing a fast, personal support experience.

However, only 1 in 4 executives say they’re able to fully leverage their available customer data, according to a global survey by Forbes Insights. The main reason for this disconnect? Siloed data.

These silos occur when data lives in multiple systems, such as your team’s ticketing tool, the sales team’s CRM, and an account manager’s inbox. Scattered data makes important customer insights hard to find and harder to act on across the entire organization. Product development teams often work without direct access to customer feedback, while agents struggle to reach internal experts who can help resolve complex tickets. The list goes on.

Collaboration between sales and support is especially important in creating long-term customer success. These two departments work the most directly with customers and often overlap when it comes to customer relationship management and growth initiatives.

Which other internal teams have you collaborated with to solve customer requests?

Sales
Operations
IT
Finance
Marketing
None
Product/Engineering
Other

% of surveyed customer service agents

Upgrade the customer experience by unlocking customer insights companywide

Scattered customer insights limit your company’s ability to deliver a good customer experience. Support becomes focused on putting out fires instead of proactively solving issues. At the same time, sales and product teams work with a restricted view of what customers expect from their brand.

Customers today simply don’t want to deal with the setbacks of data silos. According to Zendesk, 71% of customers now expect companies to collaborate internally on their behalf. They don’t want to work with a single department at a time; they want the support and expertise of your entire company from a single point of contact.

That’s a tall order when departments are operating in their own lanes. But luckily, it doesn’t have to take years of reorganization to merge your teams onto the path to customer success.

**Slack makes customer insights equally accessible across teams**

Slack brings your whole company closer to the customer voice, all while enabling you to act faster and smarter on customer insights.

In Slack, employees from all over the company can unite around a single topic or goal. Our platform’s channels are virtual spaces where teams can share messages, files and tools. This forms the basis of collaboration in Slack.

You can manage support operations via unlimited channels and organize them by different criteria—region, product, support tier or even individual incidents. You can easily customize your channels to the needs of your business.

Slack bridges the gap between agents and experts by democratizing customer insights across product, finance, marketing and sales teams. Add members from any team to your support channels, either to collaborate on a single issue or to regularly provide on-demand expertise.

The end result? Empowered agents are able to offer immediate, accurate solutions for customers because the friction of finding the internal expertise they need is gone.
When you keep your entire organization close to the customer, you align the company around your most important success barometer: customer satisfaction. Using Slack to turn customer insight into team action allows you to deliver a better experience to customers.

48
NPS points above industry average at Oscar Health1

70% CSAT increase at Nordstrom with Slack2

1Source: “How Oscar Health uses Slack to simplify health care and keep members happy,” Slack
2Source: “Unlocking better customer service with faster, connected teams,” Slack

“The customer experience (CX) team at Xero, a company that makes accounting software for small businesses, is made up of specialists who address all types of customer questions. Before Slack, this team relied on email to share guidance and documentation, which often led to information getting lost or being inaccessible.

Now Xero’s CX team uses Slack channels dedicated to each specialist group, and the customer support flow is smooth and streamlined. Today, when an agent needs guidance, they mention @coreseniors in their dedicated channel, which notifies every senior member who’s online. Whoever picks up the issue reacts with an emoji to indicate that they’re on the case. Then they’ll start a thread to provide a resolution.

“Slack is ingrained in the way we communicate and work at Xero. It has enabled faster and more transparent information sharing across our teams, improving employee engagement and ultimately making it easier to build beautiful products.”

Levi Allan
Executive general manager of practice and compliance, Xero

But internal expertise should flow both to and from support. When critical customer insights are accessible only to support, the entire company is limited in putting customers at the center of the business.

With Slack, support can continuously deliver feedback to product teams based on customer needs and issues. This feedback is key to delivering both an exceptional customer experience and an exceptional product. When product managers join support channels in Slack, they gain direct access to both customer sentiment and the agents who can help them understand and use it.

The product team at Oscar Health, a direct-to-consumer health insurance company, relies on Slack channels to take action on feedback. An automated workflow pipes real-time member feedback into channels, such as #web-member-feedback, where product managers suggest and act on new features.
“Every member response triggers an API call to Slack and posts the comment with a link to more information,” says Duncan Greenberg, the company’s senior director of product. “Often, we start threads on feedback and brainstorm design solutions directly within Slack.”

Meanwhile, Sam Gross, a senior technical product manager, uses Slack channels to watch for inefficient processes and common pain points. “If one Slack message about an issue spawns a thread of 100 more messages, that means it’s important and we might need to build something new,” he says.

Surfacing customer insights across teams isn’t enough to achieve these kinds of results, though. You must coordinate action on those insights to deliver excellent experiences and products.
Drive faster resolutions through internal collaboration

Access to knowledge is only half the battle—it’s what you do with the information that counts. Your team must use experts’ input and customer insights to deliver fast, accurate resolutions and meet customer expectations.

To that end, you’ve likely put a lot of time and effort into tailoring your ticketing tool to the needs of your support team. But even the best systems hit their limits when it comes to collaborating cross-functionally. Forbes Insights found that 52% of executives see scattered and siloed software applications as a major obstacle to better understanding (and therefore serving) their customers.

Even when teams have comprehensive support solutions, like Salesforce or Zendesk, many important conversations still take place outside the ticketing tool. Support agents often hunt down information in different apps—such as inboxes, custom dashboards, and knowledge bases—in order to solve a single ticket.

Agents need a way to collaborate effectively on issues—something that’s not easy within a ticketing platform. But when this collaboration is detached from tickets, you risk incomplete customer records as the case notes and other details become lost in email threads. That’s where Slack comes in.

Slack unifies your critical support systems

Slack bridges the gap between the tools where agents work and the tools where they collaborate by centering conversations on your ticketing platform. Software integrations and custom workflows empower teams to work together faster and maintain richer, more accurate customer records.

Slack integrates with hundreds of sales tools, knowledge bases, ticketing platforms and data analytics systems, so you can connect your support stack with key systems from across your company.

Commonly used apps

- Salesforce
- Zendesk
- Intercom
- Freshdesk
- Confluence Cloud
- HubSpot
- Olark
- Oracle
- Live Agent
These integrations enable agents to pull ticket information into Slack channels and collaborate directly with managers and internal experts on cases. As they work on a ticket, agents can update customer records and other internal databases from Slack to keep the case moving forward quickly.

Before Slack, this was a huge bottleneck: If Simpson wasn’t around, it wasn’t always clear who should be calling the shots, and questions would pile up in an unproductive Yammer group chat. After onboarding Slack, Simpson was able to build a custom workflow bot, called Kevbot by the team, to scale his operations.

To start, users open a direct message with Kevbot and ask, “Who’s the current WFC?” Kevbot will list the workflow coordinator, saving users from a frustrating and time-consuming search. Similarly, the bot can recognize keywords and route reps to the right specialists. Kevbot ensures that workflows continue, even when Simpson isn’t around to manage them.

By uniting experts with the tools they need to get the job done, Slack not only speeds up resolution time overall but also makes it possible to bring a variety of experts together to triage urgent issues in real time.

Iress, a financial services software platform, also used to use email and phone calls for urgent support issues and had to track people down individually. Messages were missed, emails bounced around, and time was lost. Now these critical issues are handled in Slack without missing a beat.
Iress’s product specialist team swarms priority issues in their #client_priority channel, which has more than 100 members capable of expediting and resolving the most serious situations. Leveraging Slack as part of a broader support strategy has helped the team cut the average response time for complex customer issues from eight days to two and led to a 64% decrease in the customer support ticket backlog.

Iress is far from the only company to see these kinds of improvements. According to a study done by IDC, teams using Slack with customer support see an average of 31% reduction in ticket resolution time, with 7% more tickets resolved correctly.

The results speak for themselves: For a faster, more accurate resolution, you need faster, more accurate collaboration. Integrated tools and increased data visibility are critical for teams to take action quickly. But to realize the full benefits of an integrated tech stack, you must empower your agents to make the most of your tools and data.
Integrations between Slack and your software stack aren’t just useful for collaboration across your organization. They’re also key to enabling agents to independently resolve customer issues.

Forty-six percent of support leaders say their tech stack creates a barrier to achieving their goals. It takes a lot of time and effort to learn and navigate the various tools and knowledge bases available to agents.

“Agents often work across multiple disconnected applications to get the information they need to resolve a single customer issue, leading to a drawn-out and inefficient resolution,” says Andrew Gillespie, a senior regional manager of customer experience at Slack. “And because agents are working across multiple disconnected systems and ticketing tools, valuable data about the support experience becomes fragmented.”

The sheer number of tools most support teams use is often what slows agents down. Seventy-seven percent of support teams use between one and 10 different tools just to do daily tasks, and 44% of teams use between six and 10 tools.

“Agents often work across multiple disconnected applications to get the information they need to resolve a single customer issue, leading to a drawn-out and inefficient resolution.”

Andrew Gillespie
Senior regional manager of customer experience, Slack

Moving back and forth between these tools, agents spend precious time and mental energy hunting down answers instead of taking action and delivering value to the customer.
Enhance support team performance by reducing friction between tools

Slack cuts wasted time by connecting your support tech stack

It might seem counterintuitive to consider adding yet another tool to fix an overburdened tech stack. But the truth is, you need a bridge between all your tools; otherwise that job will default to your already busy agents, which will slow them down even more.

Slack acts as the program manager for your support stack, smoothing workflows and providing agents with a single point of access to all your company resources. It’s a multiplier for your existing software—not replacing core tools but enhancing them and making them more accessible to the people who use them.

Access leads to action. For your agents to work proactively on customer issues, they can’t always rely on teammates for advice or direction. They must be able to easily find answers on their own.

With Slack, agents can use AI-powered search to conveniently find the information they need, no matter where it is. Quick access to company knowledge and customer history leads to more proactive (and happier) agents. And that means more satisfied customers.

Custom workflows in Slack amplify this effect even further. With Slack’s integrations, users can build bots that quickly find relevant customer information for support agents.

Take, for example, Intuit QuickBooks’s bot Quincy, a custom AI developed for use in Slack. During the 2020 Slack Frontiers conference, QuickBooks showed how Quincy is powerful enough to answer more than 60% of support agents’ questions. When stumped, the bot knows which product champions within the company to query for the answer. It has increased confidence and efficiency in agents and, as a result, raised the company’s Net Promoter Score by 12%.

“It used to take us about two days to resolve a case, on average,” says Omer Khan, a former customer success digital lead at QuickBooks. “With the help of Quincy, we improved that by 36%—so, from two days to around 1.2 days.” Annually, he estimates, this amounts to roughly 9,000 hours saved for the agents.
If the bot is unable to answer a question, the workflow will prompt the agent to create a ticket and assign it to a subject-matter expert or product champion. This expert can then interact with the agent, ask any questions, and provide the support needed. Oftentimes, according to Khan, this process takes no more than a minute and a half.

Before implementing this custom Slack workflow, Khan says, overall agent confidence in knowledge of their product and in helping customers was at about 60%. After launching Quincy, Intuit QuickBooks instantly saw a 20% jump in agent confidence, which the company says comes across in conversations with customers.

Quincy is only one example of the kinds of comprehensive tools that teams can easily build in Slack. Workflows and integrations allow you to use Slack as the source of truth for your support team—one that references and accesses all your other data systems.

Slack is not just another tool to throw on the pile. It’s the glue that fills the cracks between your other tools to make your overall support stack stronger and more useful to your agents.
Give your service teams the support they need to delight customers

As customer expectations grow, the margin for error shrinks. **Roughly half of customers** say they would switch to a competitor after a single bad customer service experience. If they have more than one bad experience, the percentage jumps to 80%.

Slack empowers support teams to perform at their best, with fast access to customer insights, internal experts and powerful tools. It’s not just a different tool—it’s a different way of working.

To learn more about how Slack can help your company deliver faster, more personal customer experiences, **contact our sales team**.
About Slack

Slack makes work simpler, more pleasant and more productive. It’s a channel-based messaging platform for enterprise that brings the right people, information and tools together to get work done.

From FTSE 100 companies to corner shops, millions of people around the world use Slack to connect their teams, unify their systems and drive their business forward.

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