



4 Customer Expectations Shaping In-store Communications and Collaboration Needs



Zebra
Workforce Connect™



In this paper we will examine:

- The modern retail customer's ever-changing expectations
- What role in-store communication and collaboration tools in meeting those expectations
- What tools retailers need to elevate communication and collaboration to optimize the customer experience

Introduction

True success as a retailer is firmly rooted in customer satisfaction. When many retailers think of how to better satisfy customers, often lower prices, improved inventory selection and more-generous sales come to mind first. Rarely does associate collaboration and communication make the top of this list.

This is a major missed opportunity to optimize customer satisfaction. Many of the most common customer grievances about service – including excessive holds when calling stores, dismissive or uninformed associates, and difficulty finding the “right” associate to help them – are rooted in ineffective store communication and collaboration.

The world's most savvy retailers are increasingly turning to unified solutions for mobile devices as a means of improving customer service. Essentially, these solutions condense essential work functions like in-store messaging, phone calls, expert advice and more into a single interface, compatible with all major mobile devices. This streamlines the process of serving customers, maximizing efficiency and quality of service.

Here are four customer expectations that are driving retailers' needs for better communication and collaboration solutions:



Four Key Customer Expectations

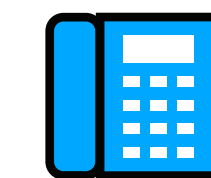
1 Expert advice from everyone



2 Full project support



3 Better phone support



4 Friendlier service



Expectation #1



Expert advice from everyone

Customers already spend enough time scouring massive stores with unreliable inventory for the right products. The last thing they need on top of that is to have to search for the right employee to help them.

Customers will no longer tolerate being told “That’s not my department!” – the first associate they encounter must be able to help them. Virtually all retailers train stumped employees in this situation to respond with “I don’t know, but let me find someone who does,” but that inevitably results in the employee having to launch their own search, prolonging the customer’s wait.

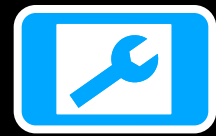
Retailers are seeking out unified communication solutions for mobile devices to better empower their people to help customers with a variety of needs. The ideal solutions offer one-touch communication (also known as Push-to-Talk, or PTT) with other associates across the store. One push of a button is all an associate must do to connect with the right person.

For example, consider this scenario: In a big-box store, a customer stops a passing employee to report that yellow onions are out of stock in the produce department. Although this employee works in Electronics, he simply pulls out his PTT-enabled mobile device, presses the PRODUCE button and is instantly connected to the on-duty produce clerk, who is cutting fruit in the back room. The Electronics employee informs the produce clerk of the out-of-stock, and the latter promises to bring more onions out shortly. A few minutes later, the customer is headed to checkout with the requested onions and the experience has been saved.

The best PTT solutions also utilize “shared device models.” In other words, these solutions enable retailers to create configured rules and profiles for individual workers or roles. This capability makes it remarkably easy to share devices across shifts.



Expectation #2



Full project support ("connected assistant experience")

Research shows that the modern retail customer makes fewer trips to the store, but spends more money per trip. This is a golden opportunity for retailers to cash in – IF they can create a unified experience that encourages upsells. The best unified communications solutions can empower associates to upsell their customers via tools that provide said customers with full project support.

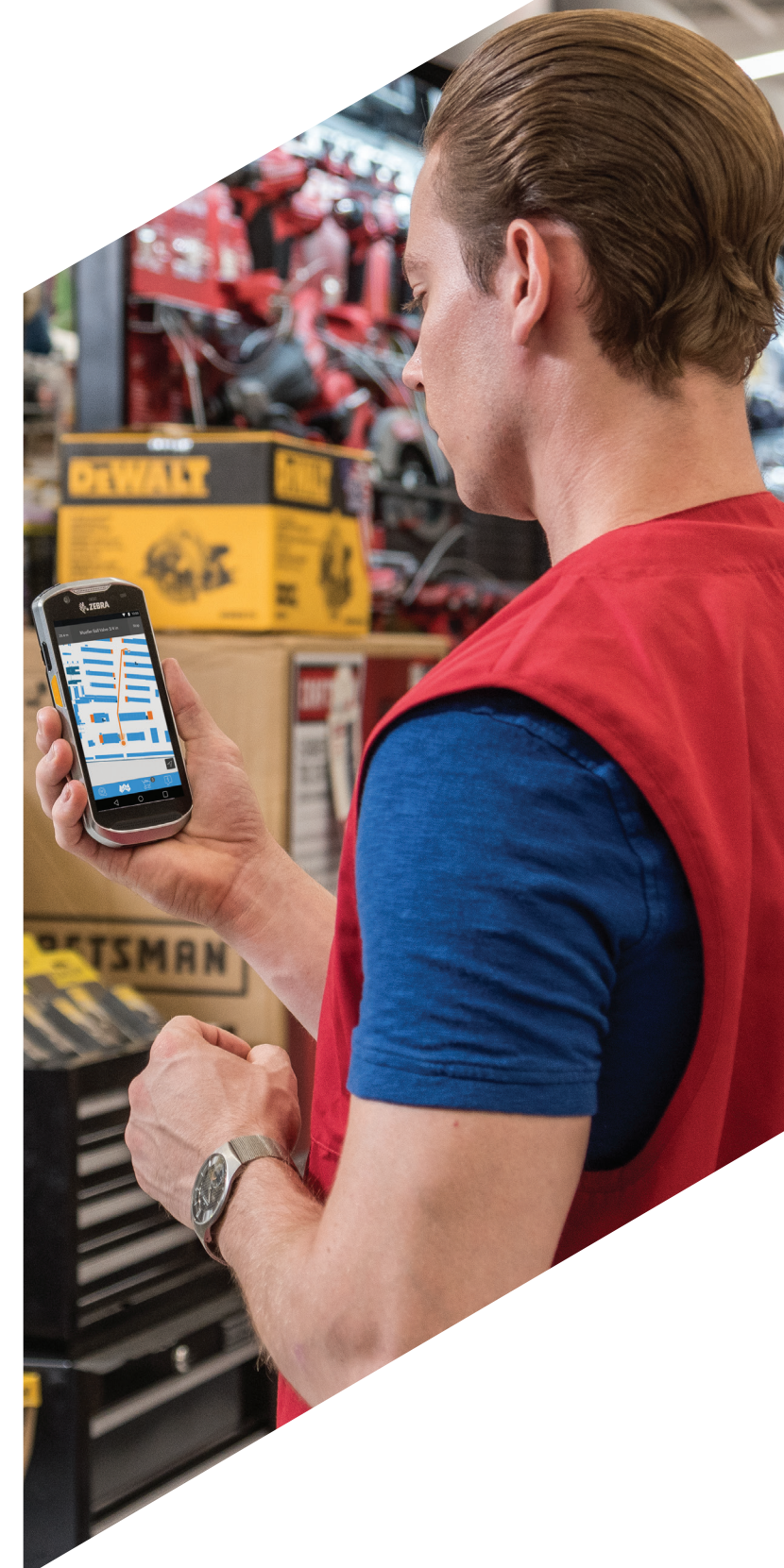
For example, consider a customer who plans to renovate his bathroom. He enters a home-improvement store and asks a Tools associate what he needs to break up his existing shower tiles, which is the next step in the project. The Tools associate tells him that all he needs is a basic hammer and a wide-bladed chisel.

Now the encounter is at a crossroads. In many cases the sale would end here, resulting in around \$10 in revenue. But what if the associate has a mobile device

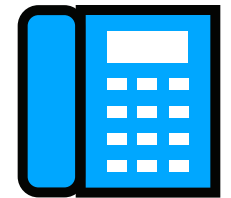
with a solution that supports customer project profiles?

In that case, the associate creates said profile and selects "bathroom renovation" as the project type. With the right solution, the associate can use this profile (and his single mobile device!) to suggest additional needed materials for other aspects of the reno; generate quotes for fixtures, flooring, paint, etc.; contact employees from other departments for advice; or even upload an image of the customer's bathroom for simulation purposes.

Just like that, a simple errand to buy tools has become a one-stop-shop for the customer's entire project and a huge upsell for the retailer – all thanks to a single mobile device powered by the right solution.



Expectation #3



Better phone support

No customer wants to call their favorite retail store with a simple question and suddenly feel like they're navigating the cable company's phone menu. Common grievances include uninformed employees, incorrect transfers, nightmarishly long holds (only to be told "Sorry, there is no employee on duty"), and others.

It is no longer practical to use the traditional workflow, whereby a courtesy-booth associate assigns a customer's call to an open store line, pages the department they want to speak with, and leaves the customer to idle.

The most advanced unified mobile solutions offer access to "intelligent store communications," whereby an AI engine identifies the right person for a customer to speak with, then transferring the call directly to said employee's enabled mobile device.

Consider a customer who calls their local grocery store to order a whole salmon. After the customer asks for the seafood department, the courtesy-booth worker presses

the SEAFOOD button in the unified mobile solution's menu. From there, the AI engine takes over. It analyzes timekeeping records and transfers the call directly to the mobile device of one of the following employees:

- On-duty seafood worker
- Seafood worker's replacement (often a cross-trained meat employee), if records show seafood worker is on break or already clocked out
- On-duty store manager, if no one is available to cover the seafood department

This AI-powered workflow ensures that customers will always be able to reach someone who can help them, regardless of a specific department's availability.



Expectation #4



Friendlier service

Top-notch customer service has never been more important than it is today. One poor experience and the modern retail customer will change brand loyalty faster than blinking. Customers must be served with the very friendliest, most professional service at all times – which is an ever-growing challenge.

Retailers should never forget that poor store associate or manager behavior rarely stems from pure disgruntlement or discontent. Rather, poor customer service is most often rooted in extreme stress from being overwhelmed at work. A major source of this stress can be eliminated by re-evaluating the number of retail devices assigned to employees.

Too many associate devices is a far more common issue than retailers may think. The classic TV comedy skit where a character tries frantically to answer 10 or more phones at once is no longer just fictional humor – it's reality for many retail employees. For instance, at the

largest retail stores, a night manager may carry:

- One tablet for inventory purposes
- One tablet for closing procedures
- One cordless phone
- One two-way radio
- One mobile device per department whose employees have already left

It is incredibly difficult to offer fast and friendly customer service if the manager (1) is already juggling several tasks via the mobile devices, (2) suddenly has to help a customer in the store, and (3) could receive even more new calls or tasks at any moment. Associates and managers alike face similar issues throughout the work day.





A good unified communications and collaboration solution can unite the functions of any number of mobile devices, condensing them into a single mobile device. With the right solution, all calls, requests for help, tasks and alerts can all be pushed to the above night manager's mobile device.

As an added bonus, the very best solutions also synchronize various tools within their interface, such as cameras, scanners, RFID trackers, workforce management interfaces and more. The result is reduced stress through fewer devices and simplified workflow, with customers will notice in the form of better, friendlier service.

For more information on improving in-store collaboration and communication via mobile devices, visit www.zebra.com/workforceconnect



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