

numero research uncovers the best and worst in customer service performance in the UK

- Blind testing of over 80 leading brands reveals significant differences in the response times for customer service provision in the UK
- Top performers respond to e-mail enquiries within 10 minutes – worst performers taking more than one week
- Service levels for email responses can be as long as 20 days, although 50% do not even state a service level
- None of the brands currently offers support for SMS (text) enquiries, one of the most cost effective channels available
- Web users can find correct contact points of the top performers via a single click from a search engine
- Fewer than 4 out of 10 brands offer context sensitive self-help resources on their websites, with the majority providing generic FAQs (frequently asked questions)

numero, a privately-owned British business based in Stockport, has commissioned research into the customer service performance of over eighty leading businesses operating in the retail, leisure, financial services, entertainment, healthcare, logistics, travel and utilities sectors.

The research provides a benchmark of customer service performance in the in UK relation to:

- the voice channel (agent and IVR)
- the non-voice channel (email, web forms, web chat, online FAQs and SMS messages).

A report summarising the results of the 'non-voice' channel research is published today at the CCA Global Customer Contact Convention. The report makes interesting reading for customer service professionals as the findings identify the best, worst and average performance of customer services businesses. The findings (including those listed above) identify significant variances in customer service performance in the UK. For example, some businesses respond to email enquiries within a few minutes while others take over a week; some businesses make it easy for customers to find the right contact details online (via a single click), while others take customers on a wild goose chase that takes an unacceptable amount of time. These findings (and many more) are detailed within numero's research summary report, which is available free of charge to professionals who work in the customer services field.

numero commissioned the research to help establish a benchmark for businesses to evaluate their own performance. It is hoped that leading brands will use the findings and numero's other research into the customer service expectations and preferences of different customer segments (including the Fire &

Forget Consumerist, Audit Trail Trouble Shooter and Digital DIY Dude); to improve their customer systems for the benefit of consumers. Commenting on the research, numero CEO Guy Colclough said:

“Throughout our work in delivering customer service solutions for large corporations, we are continually seeking ways to streamline customer journeys in order to help businesses to do the right thing for each and every customer. Whilst, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence of good, bad and indifferent customer service, there seems little in the way of hard fact for businesses to assess their performance against.”

Colclough added:

“Findings from this research, including the fact that none of the leading brands currently offers text messaging support for customer service enquiries, highlights the need to recognise and address the very different communication preferences of different consumer segments. numero research not only identifies communication gaps, but also the opportunities for business to address these for their competitive advantage.”

Each of the organisations selected for the fieldwork was ‘blind tested’ using a structured methodology and rated according to their performance using a balanced scorecard approach – full details of the methodology are available at www.thisisnumero.com/methodology. The findings were then compiled within reports – the first of which (related to the non-voice channel) is published today.

Copies of the report are available on request from numero and will be available to delegates of the CCA Global Customer Contact Convention which takes place in Edinburgh on 4-5 November 2009. Details of the customer segments identified by numero research are available at www.thisisnumero.com.

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About numero

numero is a British business that has grown rapidly since formation in 2003. The company employs over 60 people from headquarters in Stockport, England including software development and professional services teams who are responsible for the numero software platform and solution. numero clients include 2 of the top 3 supermarkets chains in the UK along with 30 other household name businesses.

Clients are supported by the 3 cornerstones of the numero business, namely:

numero act

This step-by-step process is provided free-of-charge to clients and establishes findings for the business case (including ROI, immediate benefits or a longer term gain) along with proposals that relate directly to the real world situations clients face.

numero uno

The state-of-the-art customer service solutions numero creates for contact centres, web applications and back office functions are powered by the numero uno software platform. numero uno streamlines customer journeys via any communication channel including phone, email, online and written correspondence.

numero pro

The professional services organisation – numero pro – provides a complete portfolio of services to clients, encompassing everything from pre-sales consultation to post implementation support. Providing everything needed to ensure that client projects are scoped, designed, implemented and supported to the highest standards.