



Survey: Two-Thirds of Respondents Say Technology is Not Delivering Stronger Customer Relationships

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65% of respondents say automation technologies only “somewhat effective” in providing all the data and context employees need

MCLEAN, Va., May 12, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Appian (NASDAQ: [APPN](#)) today announced the results of its “[Business Automation Technologies and the Customer Experience](#)” survey. The objective of the survey, conducted by IDG, was to understand employee attitudes at large organizations across the United States and Europe with respect to business automation technologies and the “humanization” of business-to-customer relationships. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, this question takes on even greater urgency for businesses. Today’s social distancing policies, which separate businesses from their consumers, only magnify the significance of leveraging technology to forge stronger customer relationships.



The central question is whether business automation technologies are creating experiences that enable companies to better serve and anticipate the needs of their customers, establish human connections, and create stronger customer relationships. **82%** of survey respondents agree that organizations need to focus on increasing the humanity of customer interactions and adding greater “personal touch.” However, only four in ten respondents (**41%**) view the way their organization is using automation as helpful “to a great extent” in forming stronger customer relationships.

The survey results show that:

- **65%** of respondents say that the automation technologies used by their organizations are only “somewhat effective” (at best) in providing all the data and context needed for a full picture of customers
- Fewer than half (**47%**) of all respondents report that their organization’s use of technology has significantly increased the amount of time they can spend with customers
- Only **30%** of respondents use technology tools that empower them “to a great extent” to address complex issues with creative problem-solving, or to change business processes on-the-fly
- Fewer than one-third (**32%**) of non-senior executive respondents feel their organization’s technology is highly flexible in helping to solve customer problems (compared to **47%** of senior executive respondents who believe so)

Business automation technologies should do more than accelerate work and reduce manual errors. They should provide contextual information and

process flexibility so an organization and its employees can foster strong customer relationships that engender brand loyalty. When respondents were asked to identify the keys to deploying technologies that create positive human experiences, the most-cited responses were:

- Enablement of a complete customer view (**57%**)
- More flexible and adaptable apps and business processes (**55%**)
- Accelerating delivery of new apps and enhancements (**49%**)

Off-the-Shelf Not Ideal for Personalization

The data also shows that commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software applications don't provide the needed flexibility to adapt to customer issues on the fly. **85%** of respondents indicated their organization has experienced one or more negative impacts from the use of COTS software, such as added complexity and lack of flexibility.

Chatbots and Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

Two-thirds (**66%**) of respondents' organizations are currently using a chatbot to communicate with customers, and an additional **23%** plan to use one. However, fewer than half (**42%**) of organizations currently using a chatbot report seeing customer satisfaction increase "to a great extent." While chatbots have increased in commonality so have interactive voice responses - with mixed reviews. More than 8 in 10 respondents (**85%**) have had a negative personal experience with IVR, with respondents pointing to a "cold and impersonal experience" (**43%**) and "difficulty reaching a human" (**43%**) as top issues.

"To create deeper customer relationships, employees need automation technologies that are integrated, provide all the data they need, and are faster to change," said Matt Calkins, CEO of Appian.

To download the survey results, go to appian.com/business-automation-technologies-survey/.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by IDG Communications and targeted people who work in IT management, business management and software development for organizations with 1,000 or more employees. More than 1,200 respondents in the U.S., the U.K. and the E.U. answered questions online from January 17, 2020 through February 1, 2020.

About Appian

Appian provides a [low-code automation platform](#) that accelerates the creation of high-impact business applications. Many of the world's largest organizations use Appian applications to improve customer experience, achieve operational excellence, and simplify global risk management and compliance. For more information, visit www.appian.com.

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