



# Making the switch: How 8 companies improved customer experience with Zendesk



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# Your business is never too big to deliver a powerful, personal customer-service experience

When you think about the best customer-service experiences, what do you remember?

You probably easily accessed the customer support contact information, reached out on the channel that works best for you, and encountered a friendly customer-service representative who took time to really listen to you, going above and beyond to solve your problem. The person on the other end of the line or the live chat always seemed to know the context of your issue, no matter how many interactions it took before resolution. And even if you couldn't see their face, you could tell they delivered service with a smile and genuinely cared.

The bigger your business gets, the more challenging it can become to deliver the kind of personal, thoughtful experiences that stand out in your customers' memories. But that doesn't mean it's impossible. Agents willing to tackle difficult problems, who are empowered with the right technology that preserves important context about each support issue, are what it takes to deliver exceptional customer support at scale.

We've had ample opportunity to see how powerful that combination can be. Across industries, enterprise companies have improved efficiency, maximized ROI, and delivered exceptional customer service by merging the the right tools with a strategic, customer-centric approach. You're probably thinking about the daunting task of implementing such tools and technologies, not to mention, initiating this type of transformation in your own organization. But it really can be simple with a modern, easy-to-use CRM solution that can be quickly deployed and solves problems to support business growth on day one.

To help you visualize doing the same for your business, we've collected some of those success stories.

# 1

## Implementation: Tackling complexity with a simple, quick- to-deploy solution

### **With size and scale come complexity.**

Whether it's offering a diverse product portfolio, servicing multiple audiences, or depending on a variety of technology partners for the business to run smoothly, your needs can get complicated. But whatever that looks like on the back end, the customer has to come first, and their experience must be seamless.

Technology platforms sometimes add to the complexity in a growing business. Disorganized migrations, convoluted code management, and unclear platform strategies with legacy systems can all lead to unnecessary complication behind the scenes, resulting in a confusing experience for customers who need help. But with streamlined and intuitive platforms, it can become part of the solution, allowing you to centralize operations and immediately start creating a better experience for your customers.



## StanleyBlack&Decker

### Business complexity

20 brands

50 tools sold every second

10,000 tickets processed monthly

4 languages

5 support channels

### Simplicity achieved

Product implementation time: 3 weeks

Training time: 1 day

Support channels integrated

Help center locations connected

### CX results

90% CSAT

100% adherence to 1-hour SLA

500% increase in Black Friday sales YOY



## The challenge

As the largest tool company in the world, Stanley Black and Decker's customer support team has a lot of organizational challenges. The company is more than a century old and manages multiple lines of business within a growing global footprint. That means they not only have to deliver customer service across multiple channels, but also in multiple languages and for a wide variety of product types. To do all that, they need to effectively manage teams in call centers located across time zones—from Turkey to Argentina to Brazil.

The support team previously struggled to manage all that complexity, and their customer service suffered as a result. "Our contact centers were not designed around multichannel response, so we didn't really have a way to answer questions coming in through different channels," Orlando Gadea Ros, Business Innovation Manager, explained.

But switching solutions posed a risk. With 10,000 tickets processed in an average month, any disruption to their customer-service processes could lead to thousands of unhappy customers—not acceptable.





## Making the switch

“We wanted a solution that integrated all channels and that gave us the flexibility to implement in the way that we needed,” says Gadea. He had previous experience with Zendesk and knew it provided the omnichannel support they sought.

The time to value was almost no time at all. Easy implementation meant the entire system was up and running in three weeks, and training agents on the platform only took one day.

By connecting all their support channels on the back end—the omnichannel solution—Zendesk enabled a better experience for customers and an improved, intuitive workflow for agents.

“I would use the word ‘efficiency’ to describe Zendesk,” Gadea says.

Streamlining the customer experience with their new omnichannel solution came in especially handy on the first Black Friday after implementation. Zendesk’s Web Widget, which embeds customer-service options throughout the website experience, helped increase sales by 500 percent over the previous year.

**“It’s been amazing to showcase what technology can do and what we can be doing with real-time, live data—Zendesk helps us to be efficient, and without having to employ a large budget.”**

Orlando Gadea Ros  
Business Innovation Manager



# Uber

## Business complexity

30,000 chats per week  
Thousands of agents  
10 languages  
450 cities  
79 countries  
Multiple products

## Simplicity achieved

Fast onboarding  
Real-time communication  
Improved workflows

## CX results

CSAT 95%  
Chat first-response: < 30 seconds



## The challenge

Uber grew at a rate most startups dream of, spreading operations over more than 420 cities, rapidly onboarding drivers, and acquiring customers in each region. Not only was their community growing at an incredible pace, the company added new lines of business on top of their rideshare service, like Uber Eats and Uber for Business.

That growth, combined with Uber's business model—which requires appealing to and managing relationships with multiple audiences—creates unique challenges. Their support team services their entire community, which includes customers, drivers, and restaurants. In order to continue creating seamless experiences for everyone, the support team also grew—from a couple dozen to more than 1,000 dedicated agents in just a couple of years.

For every customer-service issue that comes up, the company needs a way to make sure all parties are on the same page and can communicate in real time. And they need to be able to resolve issues fast—harried customers trying to get to the airport for a flight, or someone desperately hungry for dinner, won't be happy if kept waiting.



## Scaling with Zendesk

Uber started using Zendesk early in the company's history, so instead of making a switch, they were able to adapt the product to their changing needs as they grew. With more relationships to manage and additional products available, Zendesk Chat became a particularly important tool.

"Chat is great for onboarding new drivers, empowering agents to answer many questions in one interaction," says Ashley Bradford, Global Chat Support Program Manager. The business model only works if they have enough drivers, so getting them ready for their first ride quickly is important for the bottom line.

"Uber Eats is also an interesting use case for chat," Bradford added, "because we're connecting three parties—'eaters' with restaurants, and then couriers handling the delivery."

A successful Uber Eats delivery requires careful coordination between the driver and the restaurant at minimum, and, in many cases, an agent as well. And all of it has to happen behind the scenes so the experience is seamless for customers. Zendesk's real-time dashboard and chat features make that possible, and getting started with it is easy. The tools help Bradford's team keep the average CSAT score above 95 percent.

**"You can set up Zendesk Chat quickly and use it to test the user experience. All you really need is a strong Internet connection."**

Ashley Bradford  
Global Chat Support Program Manager





# 2

## Connections and customizations: Making tech work for you

On average, enterprise companies have more than **1,000 different tech products** in the cloud alone. One of the complexities of running a modern business is **making sure all the technologies that your company depends on integrate well together**. It is equally important that those technologies have built-in features, like advanced workflows, AI, and out-of-the-box integrations, to make it easy to customize and successfully meet your company's unique needs.



### Integrations achieved

UPS

InContact

More to come...

### CX results

35 point increase in CSAT

4-hour SLA met 95% of the time



## The challenge

Ingersoll Rand has a diverse product portfolio, which includes power tools, vehicles, and HVAC units. The company prides itself on making products that last a long time, which means they have to provide customers with comprehensive warranties and exceptional repair services.

With 5,000 licensed distributors helping them sell and service all their products, Ingersoll Rand handles a lot of customer-service inquiries. For a while, the team tried fielding them all with Lotus Notes and Microsoft Outlook, but they couldn't track response times on either platform, which kept them from meeting their customers' needs and becoming more efficient. The solution was one that enabled better tracking and a more integrated approach to customer-service processes.



**Every time I turned around, Zendesk was working with my team, teaching us and helping us grow.”**

**Kelly Dees**

Vice President of Global Customer Experience for Fluid Management

## Making the switch

After adopting Zendesk Support and Guide, the team could easily start tracking response times, as well as customer satisfaction (CSAT). For the first time, they had metrics to guide them toward creating better customer experiences. In addition, the [Zendesk API](#) allowed them to connect their customer service with all the other technologies used to monitor operations and shape the customer experience.

To start, they used the API to connect Zendesk with their delivery service. “We created an integration with UPS so that we can rapidly generate UPS labels for warranty evaluation, repair, and returns,” says product support engineer James Ripley. “That integration is pretty slick,” he added.

In addition, they linked their online customer support system with their phone system, InContact. Voice tickets are generated each time a call comes in, which makes them easy to track alongside email messages, which compose the majority of their support requests.

With a more streamlined system, they’ve seen their customer satisfaction rate go up by 35 points. Their support team now meets their goal of responding to a ticket within four hours 95 percent of the time.

“It is a substantial leap forward,” says Ripley. And because those integrations worked so well, they plan to use the API to build a larger integration that connects their back-end systems for submitting warranty claims, ordering parts, and communicating with repair centers.





#### Unique needs

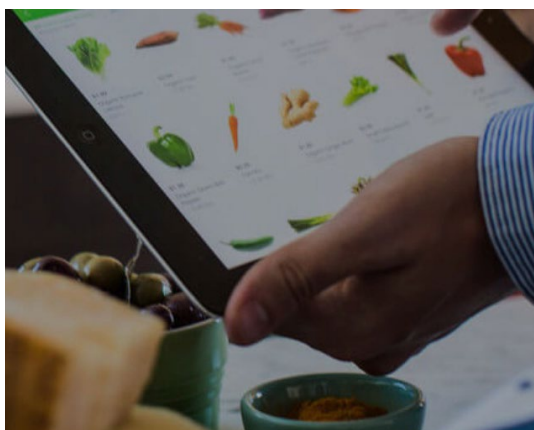
Segmentation for two audiences  
Integration with custom tools  
40,000 support calls and emails a week

#### Customizations and integrations achieved

User data included in product view  
[Five Most Recent](#) app  
Internal support provided

#### CX results

90%+ CSAT  
Better understanding of customer journey



## The challenge

Instacart's business model requires serving two unique audiences effectively: shoppers and customers. Their support process depends on having data about both audiences, and the ability to find that data at a moment's notice. To do this, the company needed a system that could integrate with the custom internal tools used to track and organize that data.

"When helping customers, it's important to know contact information, recent order information, and coupon and credit balance," says Jeremy Flanagan, Customer Ops Project Lead of Tools. "When helping shoppers, it's important to know what type of shopper they are, and if their status is active or dormant."

The team needed a way to keep those two worlds of data separate, but equally accessible. And they needed their system to help them efficiently serve a high volume of service requests—up to 20,000 calls and another 20,000 emails a week.

## Making the switch

The most important feature they were looking for in a customer-support product was the ability to call up user data whenever it was needed. Since it integrates nicely with the company's custom data tools, Zendesk helps provide a holistic view of the relationship the company has with each customer and shopper, enabling more productive conversations in crucial moments.

"We have almost every piece of relevant data coming in on the ticket based on the user," says Flanagan. This helps them route each request to the best support agent and ensure they have all the information they need to deliver quick, effective service—paving the way for an exceptional customer experience.

Zendesk's [Five Most Recent](#) app provides even more useful information each time an agent helps a customer by displaying the five past tickets they've submitted. "It's always helpful to gain more context around a user's past support requests," says Flanagan.

**"It's paramount for us to be able to build exactly what we need. Zendesk provides a vast collection of integrations and opportunities for customization as part of our subscription."**

Jeremy Flanagan

Customer Ops Project Lead of Tools at Instacart



# 3

## Differentiate through CX: Delivering superior experiences

Speed of implementation and improved efficiency are important for every business to consider when choosing the right vendor. But what matters most in customer service is creating the best possible experience for the people you serve.

The right customer-service software empowers your agents to deliver exceptional customer experience (CX), and the right vendor will partner with you to help your team achieve that goal. Rest assured, you don't have to choose between delivering great CX and enjoying speed, efficiency, and cost savings. We've seen Zendesk customers do it all.





#### Customer challenges

8 brands  
2.5 million members  
18,000 tickets per month  
50 agents  
4 channels

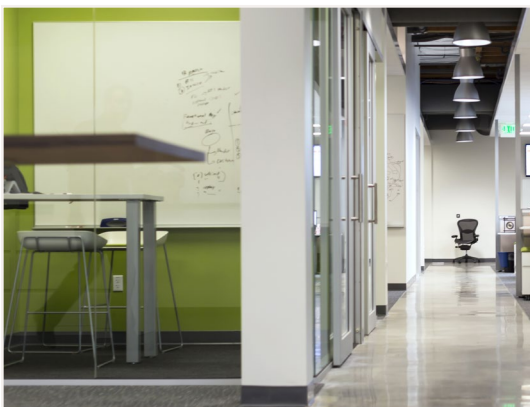
#### CX results

95% CSAT  
80% adherence to SLAs

## The challenge

An important part of serving customers well is understanding their common needs and questions. Bill.com was able to use their previous provider, Oracle RightNow, to provide quick answers. But because they couldn't bring all their channels into one system, they struggled without a single source of truth. Taking each inquiry on a case-by-case basis meant they weren't able to take a holistic approach to their customer-service strategy. The solution was finding a partner that allowed them to be more proactive.

"We want to optimize our support organization and customer experience to ensure that the customer's needs are being met, maybe even before they even know they have a need," explained Director of Customer Support, Ashish Patel.





**"Our solution with Zendesk has created this ecosystem that gives us a single source of truth from a customer support standpoint, but that has also helped us optimize the agent experience inside the organization."**

Ashish Patel  
Director of Customer Support

## Making the switch

Moving their customer support system to Zendesk streamlined internal processes, ensuring all support conversations across channels happen in one place. That makes tracking what customers want and need at different points in their journey much easier.

"Now we're looking at what's actually happening with the customer wherever they are in their journey with us," says Patel.

Instead of scrambling to respond to each ticket as it comes in, agents begin each interaction knowing where the customer is in that journey. Furthermore, agents are trained to know the top concerns at each of those points. For example, this could mean the difference between common questions from brand-new customers vs those who have been using Bill.com for a while.

"Zendesk has become a one-stop shop for us, and has allowed us to be strategic in ways we might not have been able to be with other software providers," said Patel.

With all the information they need at their disposal, the company is comfortable holding their agents to ambitious SLAs: answering all emails within one business day, 80 percent of chats in less than two minutes, and 80 percent of scheduled calls within an hour. The agents pull it off 80 percent of the time.



#### Customer challenges

191 countries  
65,000 cities  
20 languages  
4 million+ listings  
More than 100 million guests

#### CX results

Personalized support  
360-degree view of customers  
Phone calls answered within minutes  
Emails answered within 24 hours  
1-1 messaging enabled



## The challenge

Airbnb went from booking three million guests a year in 2012—already surpassing many established hotel chains—to more than 100 million in 2017. In addition to serving a huge number of travelers, they also cater to hosts located in more than 65,000 cities.

To satisfy the needs of so many different people, the company has thousands of customer-service agents operating out of 20 locations around the world. Given the nature of their business, when someone needs help, they need it fast. Agents need a way to quickly get up to speed on the situation of any traveler or host that gets in touch, no matter what channel they use—be it email, social media, SMS, or other messaging channels.

Furthermore, every issue those customers face is unique, and agents have to tailor each response to make sure it applies to the location of a traveler or host, the rental type in question, and the specific issue the customer is facing.

Providing personalized support to multiple audiences in more than 100 countries, and 20 languages, therefore, would be no easy feat. The company needed a tool that could handle that complexity, and a vendor willing to help them tailor it for those needs.



## Scaling with Zendesk

While the team was weighing their options for the right customer-service product, “scalability and reliability and 24/7 uptime were big factors,” says Shirley Lin, product lead for the Support Products Group. They started using Zendesk early on, and as the company’s needs became more complicated over time, the software continues delivering.

“We have customers that book room listings, but they also book experiences and have restaurant reservations,” she says. When they get in touch with customer service, the agent needs an easy way to see the details of their relationship with Airbnb and all the bookings and rentals associated with their account. Connecting Zendesk with Airbnb’s internal tools, they can tap into a 360-degree view of each customer and their history.

That helps them provide accurate, personalized responses quickly. The majority of phone calls are answered within minutes during peak periods, and emails are typically answered within 24 hours. This workflow was the result of working closely with Zendesk to customize the product for their needs.

“Having a partner that really understands our business, and how ambitious we are, is huge—because service, at the end of the day, needs to be in lockstep with every single track of work that’s happening within Airbnb,” says Lin.

**“Zendesk has been a good partner to us. They’ve constantly worked with us to make sure that Zendesk scales with Airbnb, which is no small feat.”**

Shirley Lin

product lead for the Support Products Group



# 4

## By the numbers: Making sure it pays off

Customer-service software stands to make life easier across an entire organization, not just within support. Though those ripple effects will likely come further down the line, support software has to start providing value ASAP. That's why it's crucial to select a solution that will prove a return on that investment, in terms of cost savings and support efficiency.

For our customers that have done the math, the ROI on Zendesk is clear.



#### ROI by the numbers

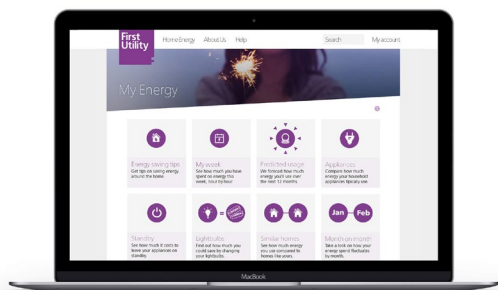
£200 million saved annually

50% reduction in onboarding time

#### CX results

Customer Service of the Year Award 2017

20-second reduction in average handle time



## The challenge

As the U.K.'s largest independent energy supplier, First Utility serves more than 800,000 homes with a variety of utility services. On top of the complications inherent in supplying multiple services to such a large number of customers, the amount of technology required to run an energy company brings an extra dose of complexity. First Utility uses multiple systems for different types of energy, for billing, for new provisions, and for home moving.

As the company's offerings and number of software systems it depended on grew, the Salesforce platform they used became increasingly difficult to integrate with everything else.

"It evolved into a difficult-to-manage beast," explained Rob Harris, Head of Customer Service Platforms. "We ended up in a place where we had a very convoluted interface, and the advisor experience was negatively impacted as a result of that."

While striving to meet their customers' needs in the face of continued growth, the Salesforce platform failed to adapt to their needs—limiting their ability to achieve their goals. "I would've ended up in a very restrictive place; uncomfortably dependent upon on a very complicated system that would only cost more as time went on," says Harris.





## Making the switch

Harris instead looked for a product that could seamlessly integrate with the other systems they used, and provide an ease of use that was lacking in their previous solution. Upon switching to Zendesk, they quickly saw a difference.

“It is far simpler to administer our Zendesk solution than it was to administer the Salesforce platform, partially because we’ve been able to clean up the interface and get rid of a lot of the old dead wood we had hanging around,” says Harris.

That simplicity led to measurable results in efficiency. Because of how much faster they can train advisors on the product, onboarding time went down by 50 percent, and average handle time was reduced by 20 seconds.

**“We’ve seen around a £2 million annualized benefit by making this move this year, and we certainly expect that to grow next year as we develop additional Zendesk apps to replace the different systems our advisors use when helping our customers.”**

**Rob Harris**  
Head of Customer Service Platforms



#### ROI by the numbers

Product implementation time: 2 months  
 90% of needs met "out of the box"  
 Employee satisfaction up 20 points  
 Attrition rate < 3%

#### CX results

98% CSAT  
 Portal adoption up 305%

## The challenge

MediaOcean first chose Zendesk in 2012. They considered 10 options before settling on Zendesk Support due to its clean interface and promise of improving efficiency.

"We saw a greater ROI in Zendesk versus the other options," says Stephanie Dorman, Senior Vice President of Client Services. "We did a cost analysis and showed how we were going to save money and increase productivity with Zendesk."

Their calculations in the decision-making process paid off and they were happy with their choice. "Both our internal users and our clients loved the product," according to Dorman.

Everything was going great until the company was bought, and a mandate from the new owners required they switch to a different customer-service product. The problems with the new product started as early as implementation. "It was complicated and incredibly expensive. Every time we turned around, there was another unanticipated customization or charge," Dorman says.

Both agent productivity and customer experience took a hit. The average number of tickets closed per day declined, and web-portal usage dropped 75 percent.



## Making the switch (back)

As the problems with their new vendor piled up, Dorman collected data on the consequences of the switch. On top of the decrease in efficiency, a matrix she and her team created showed that 90 percent of what they needed came standard with Zendesk, without requiring the expensive customizations they faced with the product they'd been forced to use.

Still, switching back wasn't an easy sell. "We had spent a ton of money to make the change," she explained. And going back before their contract was up would mean eating thousands of dollars. "But the more we went through the process, it became clear we needed to go back," she says.

The decision to go back to Zendesk paid off. Employee satisfaction increased by 40 points. Clients went back to the portal, with usage increasing by 305 percent. And training times decreased. Across the board, the company saw efficiencies, cost savings, and better customer satisfaction.

**"We saw a greater ROI in Zendesk versus the other options. We did a cost analysis and showed how we were going to save money and increase productivity with Zendesk."**

Stephanie Dorman  
Senior Vice President of Client Services





# Conclusion

Rolling out a new customer-service solution can be intimidating, especially for businesses with many interwoven stakeholders and processes. But with a product that's intuitive, easy to use, and armed with features that meet your needs and improve ROI, the switch can pay off fast, with minimal disruption.

Zendesk provides the mix of simplicity, flexibility, and rich features that businesses need to meet their customer service goals while supporting the bottom line. [Contact us](#) to learn more about making the switch.

