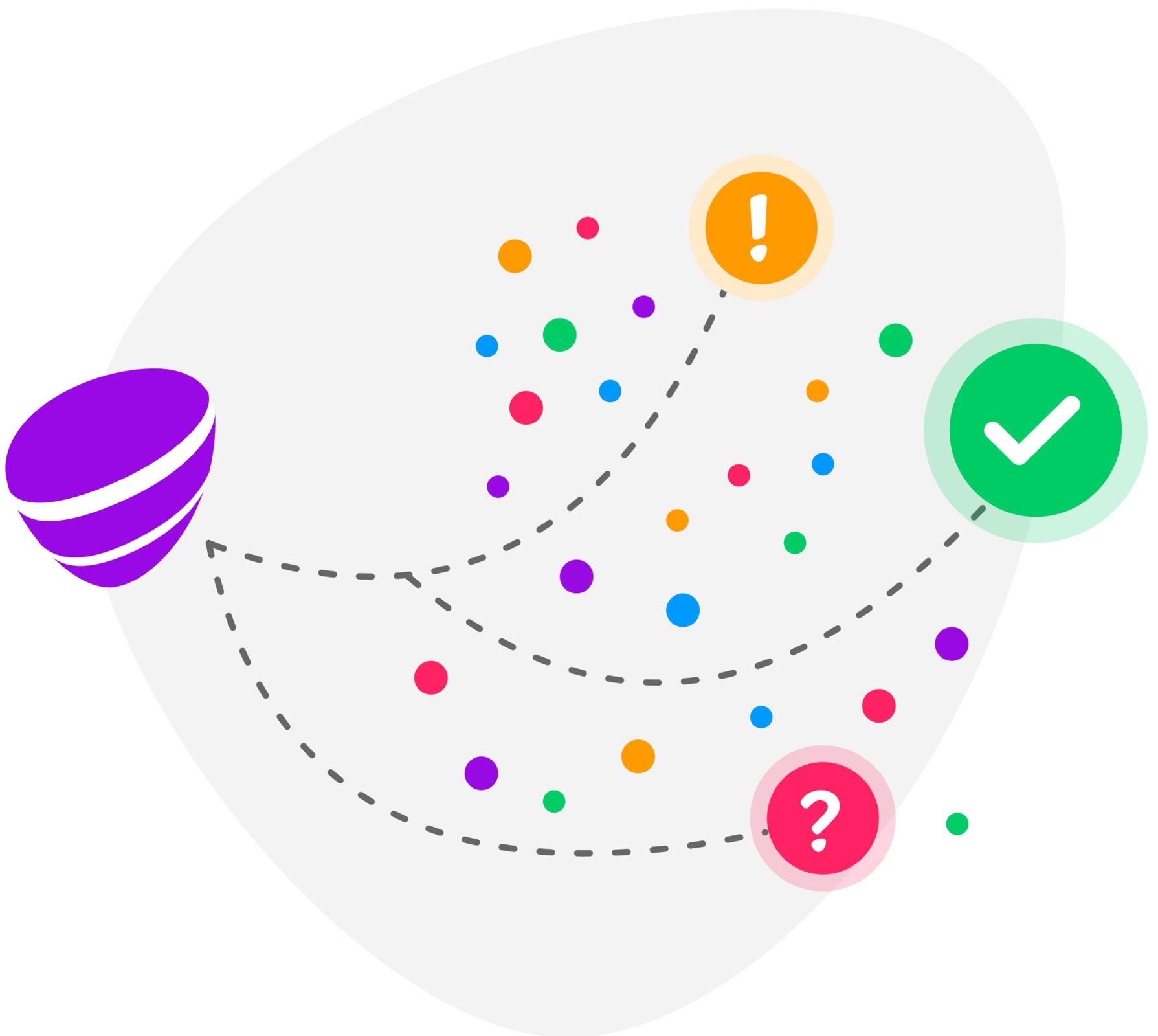


MAKING CONVERSATIONS FLOW



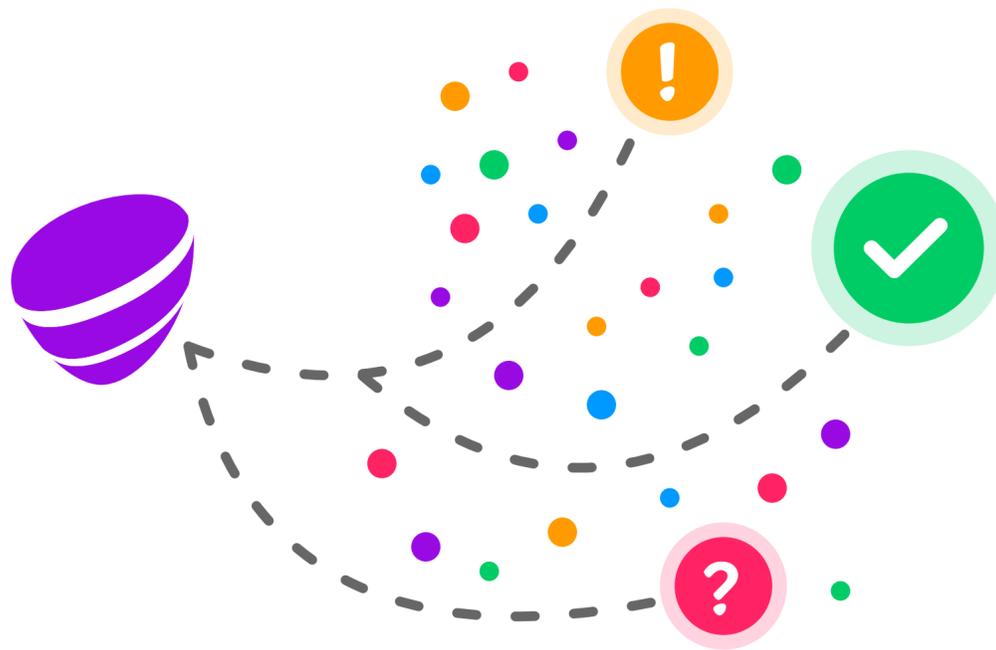
# INSIGHTS FROM TELIA ACE CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

2017-2021



# CUSTOMER MEETING TRENDS 2021

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Now that we have left 2020 behind, we can agree that it was a year that didn't turn out quite as we had expected. In many organizations, strategic questions had to be put on the back burner for a while in order to focus on activities that would keep the business running, such as moving from a physical to a digital arena, both in terms of where we work and where we meet our customers. It has been interesting to see that a lot of the interactions that we didn't think could be carried out online actually did, such as visits to a health care professional or important business meetings.

Something else that turned out to be perfectly possible was to move our annual Nordic Roadshow online and renaming it Customer Experience Weeks. Just like every year since we started, we asked the participants a number of questions about the customer engagement. In this report you can check out the figures that we thought were the most interesting and share our analysis of them.

Obviously, this year's answers have been influenced by the pandemic, and on the last few pages we even have a pandemic deep dive. But even though Covid-19 turned a lot of things upside down this year, the numbers tell us that you still keep a strategic focus on digitalization and self-service. We are particularly happy about the fact that there is a growing interest in the tools that will send the agents flying in the future.

Thank you for letting us share your journey toward the digital customer meeting in 2021!

Head of Sales Telia ACE Nordic

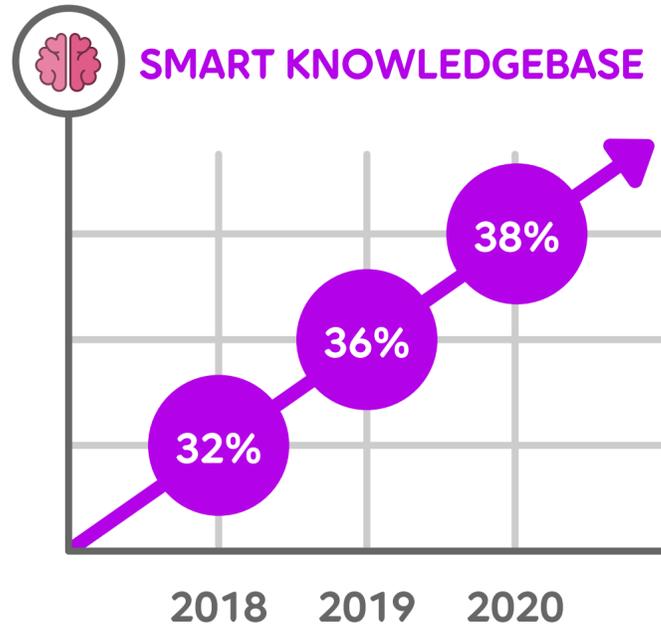
## SURVEY QUESTION 1: WHAT IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT FOCUS AREA?

In our business, access to the right knowledge is an important part of the customer experience, regardless of whether it is a live engagement with a human being or a digital service. All conversations that we have with our customers are about adding value in one way or another. Already back in 2012 an IDC study showed that we on average spend six hours per week searching for and compiling information<sup>1</sup>.

According to Gartner<sup>2</sup> customer service professionals spend on average 20 percent of their time trying to understand questions, looking for the right information and answering the customer. And it's not just them. The customers also spend a lot of time looking for information.

### KNOWLEDGE TO NEW HEIGHTS

Our survey shows that Smart Knowledgebase is working its way up the list as a strategic focus area, which means that the interest to take control over how we create, share and provide information is growing.



AI/CHATBOT	
2017	31%
2018	60% ▲
2019	68% ▲
2020	55% ▼

ROBOTIZATION	
2017	26%
2018	38% ▲
2019	46% ▲
2020	36% ▼

### WE GET THAT AI IS NOT A SIMPLE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING

The journey toward the digital customer meeting has just started and we see a continued interest in using AI, and work with chatbots and robotization, to offer better self-service.

The numbers that have tapered off can be a sign that it has shifted from being a focus area to a natural part of the business. There is a great potential, but in order for the initiatives to be successful it is not enough to implement – we also have to be ‘good parents’ and work with them.

<sup>1</sup> IDC Information worker survey

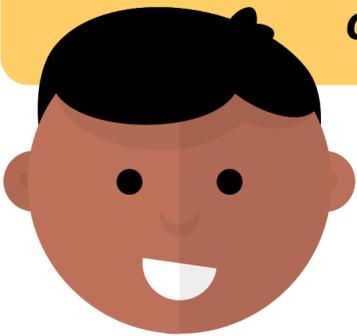
<sup>2</sup> Gartner, 2019: Delivering relevant content and knowledge to customers is key to great customer service.

## SURVEY QUESTION 2: MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE CUSTOMER MEETING?

Just like the years before, simplicity is at the top of the list of what is important for the customer meeting of the future. But it doesn't matter if a service is simple to use if it is not designed in a way that provides the customer with a good experience. Communication with our customers often has an inside out perspective.

An example where simplicity often fails are menu choices in an IVR that mirror the organizational structure rather than being designed in a way that is intuitive for the customer. Another way to make things complicated is to ask the customer to provide an invoice- or customer number when he or she wants to cancel an order, rather than asking for an e-mail address or something else that the customer knows from the top of the head.

***"An important aspect of availability is to communicate in a way that is relevant to the customer."***



SIMPLICITY	
2017	75%
2018	78% ▲
2019	74% ▼
2020	68% ▼

SELF-SERVICE	
2017	50%
2018	57% ▲
2019	56% ▼
2020	56% —

AVAILABILITY	
2017	55%
2018	59% ▲
2019	48% ▼
2020	57% ▲

### INTEREST FOR SELF-SERVICE REMAINS HIGH

Availability and self-service are two important focus areas that are closely related. They both aim at improving the customer experience (because who enjoys waiting in line?) and to make internal workflows more effective. Self-service is particularly useful when the customer is in a hurry, and when he or she can decide what customer service channel to use to get their inquiry sorted out. That's real simplicity.

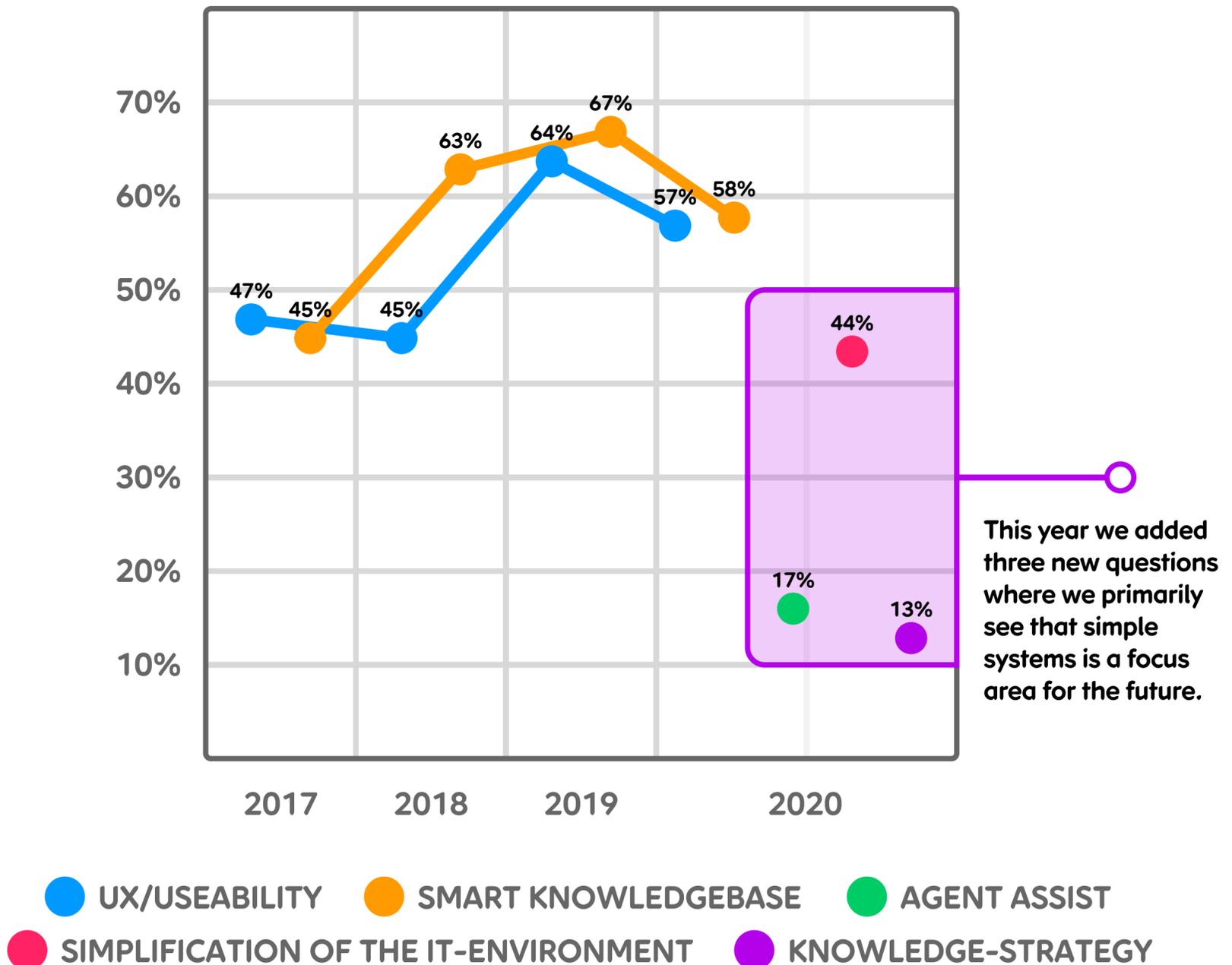
***"Simplicity, availability and self-service remain the cornerstones in all customer service."***



## SURVEY QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTIONALITIES FOR THE AGENT?

Intuitive and user-friendly tools, and access to the right information for the agent, is what makes superheroes in customer service. And as the digitalization of the customer engagement continues, they will be even more important. Simple interactions will be automated and the cases that the agents get involved in will be more complex. Each contact requires a super-agent, and they need to have access to the right information and good systems.

During the pandemic it has become increasingly obvious that we need to work with the accessibility and simplicity of the IT-systems. The most common problem that was expressed in the survey was the fact that it was difficult to access different supporting systems remotely. According to Venetana Research<sup>3</sup> the average agent uses four different systems, 22 percent use more than six systems and 28 percent use more than one computer to sort out a customer service interaction.



<sup>3</sup>Venetana Research The Unified Agent Desktop and customer experience

## ABOUT THE PANDEMIC

### WORKING IN THE CRISIS

It's not particularly unexpected that our survey shows that a lot of the people in our industry have worked from home during the pandemic. About four out of five states that they have worked remotely 50 percent of the time or more, and as a whole we rate our distance-working productivity as high. A majority says that the technology has worked well, even though some miss having two computer screens and other tools that are available at the office.

***"I don't like having my job at home, just like I wouldn't enjoy bringing my kitchen table to work."***



### WE MISS EACH OTHER

The number one thing that we miss is, without a doubt, each other. A lot of us miss the social connection that we get when we talk to our colleagues, and look forward to real-life meetings and workshops with our customers:

*"I engage with our customers over the phone and miss sharing a few words with a colleague after a call that has been particularly good or challenging."*

*"I miss the social interaction, spontaneous meetings and to meet people IRL!"*

*"My experience is that there are a lot of things that I miss when there is no office chit chat to pick up."*

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### WHAT IS NORMAL AND REASONABLE IN THE FUTURE?

We have had this idea that some types of jobs and tasks have to be carried out in a specific physical location, and that we must travel to certain meetings. Up until now we have not been forced to challenge that truth. Maybe we have even considered it rude to ask for a digital meeting in order not to have to travel from Helsinki to Stavanger for a presentation of a proposal that takes an hour?

During the years to come we will probably challenge what we consider 'normal and reasonable'. When it comes to travelling, the pandemic has shoved us in the direction of the imminent adjustment, given the climate crisis.

In a future we will carry out a greater number of our inquiries in digital rooms, and will see a growing overlap between customer service and consultancy services. Tools for screen sharing and video meetings will be important for the super-agents to create a personal connection and to be able to look at something together with the customer.



## GET IN TOUCH

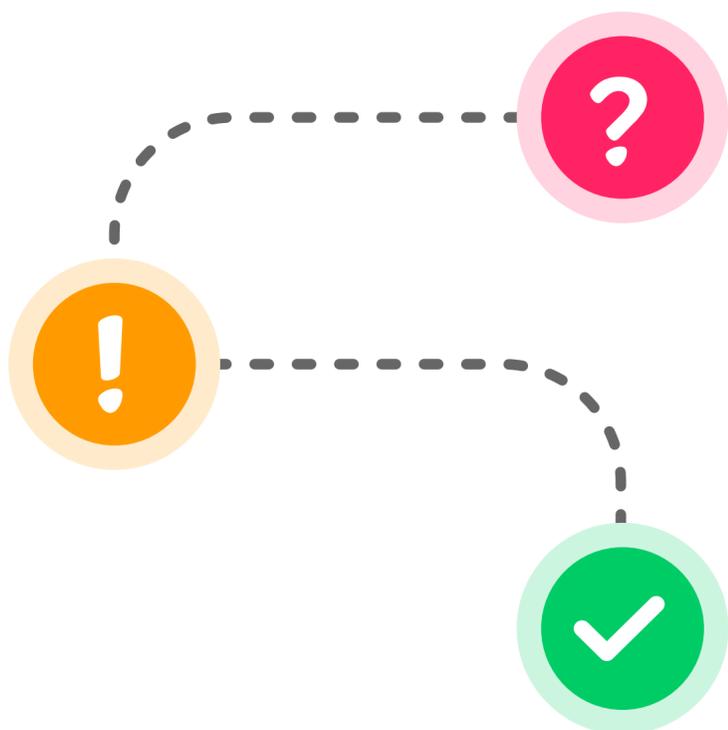
Please contact us if you want to talk about digitalization and the customer meeting of the future. Two hot tips from us are to explore the opportunities with screen sharing and to share the knowledge in the organization with a smart knowledgebase. Right now you can try ACE Knowledge free of charge.

Download your free trial here:

[ace-showcase.com/ace\\_product/knowledge/](https://ace-showcase.com/ace_product/knowledge/)

If you want to contact us, please send us an e-mail:

[ace-contact@teliacompany.com](mailto:ace-contact@teliacompany.com)



## ABOUT ACE CUSTOMER SURVEY

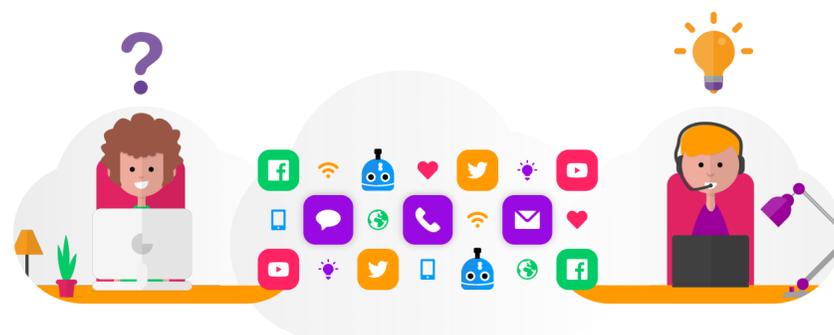
Telia ACE Customer Service Survey is an annual exploration of the customer meeting trends on the Nordic market. Previously we have conducted the survey during our Nordic Roadshow in May and June, but this year it was carried out in November during our digital customer event: Customer Experience Weeks.

The one thing that everybody who has participated in the survey has in common is that they work with customer engagements in one way or another, as a manager, customer service staff as well as personnel and decision makers in IT, in the public sector and in different private business segments.

## VISIT US ONLINE

Do you want more information and inspiration about the customer meeting of the future and learn more about Telia ACE? Visit us at:

[showcase.ace.teliacompany.com](https://showcase.ace.teliacompany.com)



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