

A hand is shown ringing a silver service bell. The background is a dark blue gradient with a subtle grid pattern.

THE ENTERPRISE CALL EXPERIENCE: *TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY*

THE NEED FOR TRUSTED CONNECTIONS

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A TransUnion[®] Company

INTRODUCTION

For travel agencies, airlines, hotels and other hospitality-based businesses, phone calls are critical to customer service. From complicated bookings to special requests, and urgent changes to confidential information, the personal, high-touch nature of voice calls proves to be a powerful tool in shaping the customer experience—and promoting your brand.

But, robocalls, call spoofing, and anti-robocall mandates like STIR/SHAKEN call authentication can mistakenly label calls as spam, or even block them. It's clear that the need for solutions that help reassure customers it's you calling—so they answer the phone—has never been greater.

In January 2021, Omdia Research conducted a survey on our behalf to enterprises that make large volumes of outbound calls across twelve different industries in the U.S. (including financial services, health care, insurance, and retail) to gain insights on the current customer call experience.

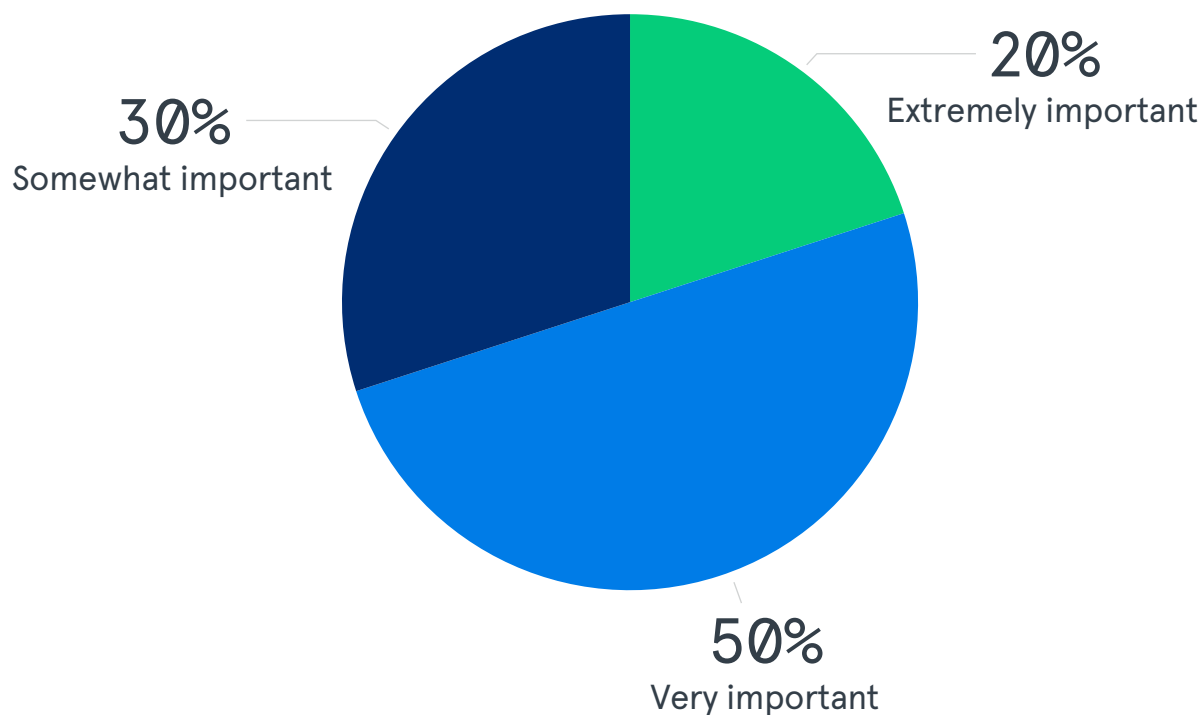
Seventy-eight percent of respondents said they need a branded calling solution. Branded calling, which lets users add logo, reason for the call, and more, helps hospitality-oriented companies increase answer rates up to 56%, while reducing costs and improving customer engagement.

Learn what else respondents in the Travel and Hospitality industry had to say.

1

THE PHONE IS INTEGRAL TO THE OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

How important is it that your customers' call experience is aligned with their overall omnichannel journey, including digital experiences?



When asked how important it is that their customers' call experience is aligned with their overall omnichannel journey, including the digital experience, 70 percent of hospitality and travel firms answered extremely or very important, and another 30 percent answered somewhat important.

Calls are important to every single respondent! By understanding customer needs and expectations, like the preference for phone calls for some service transactions, travel and hospitality companies can create an omnichannel strategy that helps build customer trust and brand loyalty.

100%

Said the phone is important.

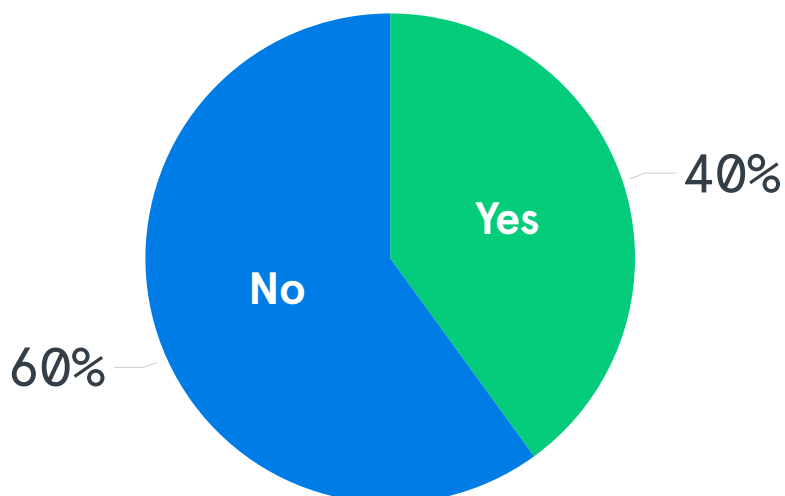
2

BUT THERE'S A GAP AND IT'S COSTING YOU

It's widely recognized that the phone channel has lagged behind other digital channels. Sixty percent of our respondents said their customers' call experience was not in alignment, or the same quality, as their overall digital experience.

It's critical that brands like yours identify any gaps in the customer experience, and work towards meeting customers' high expectations for technology that's fast, effortless, secure, and personalized. This is particularly true as contactless technologies play an expanding role in the guest experience, before, during and after they actually travel.

In your view, is your customers' call experience currently in alignment with or the same quality of their digital experience?



Because of the quality gap between customers' call and digital experience...

33%

Saw an increase in negative reviews.

50%

Saw increased costs.

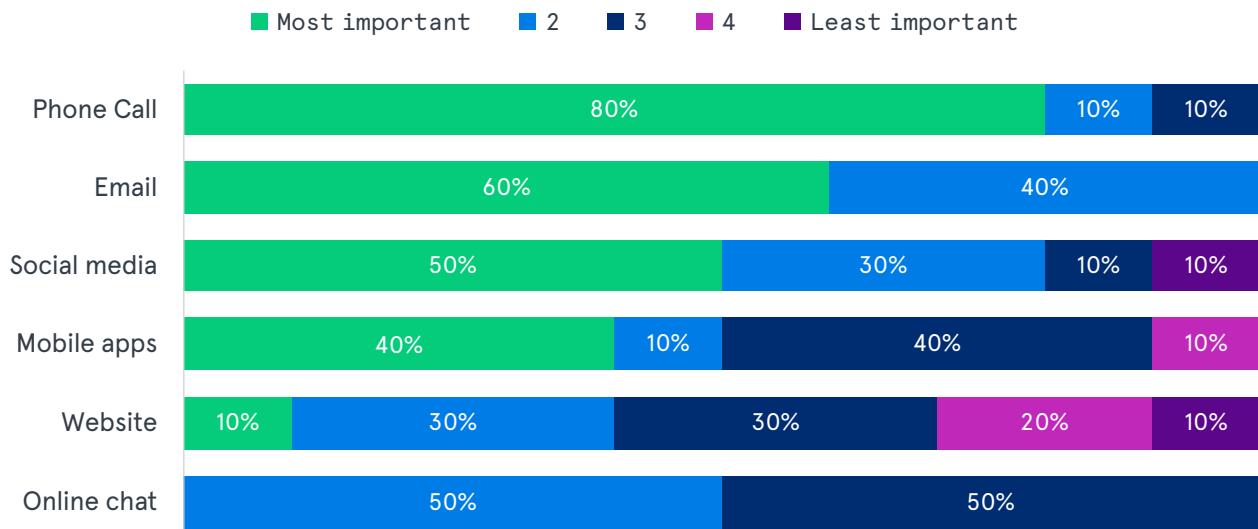
67%

Saw reduced customer satisfaction.

3

THE PHONE IS CRITICAL FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

How would you rate the importance of these channels for communicating with customers?



A significant 80 percent of respondents said the phone was their most important channel for communicating with customers, followed by email, social media, and mobile apps.

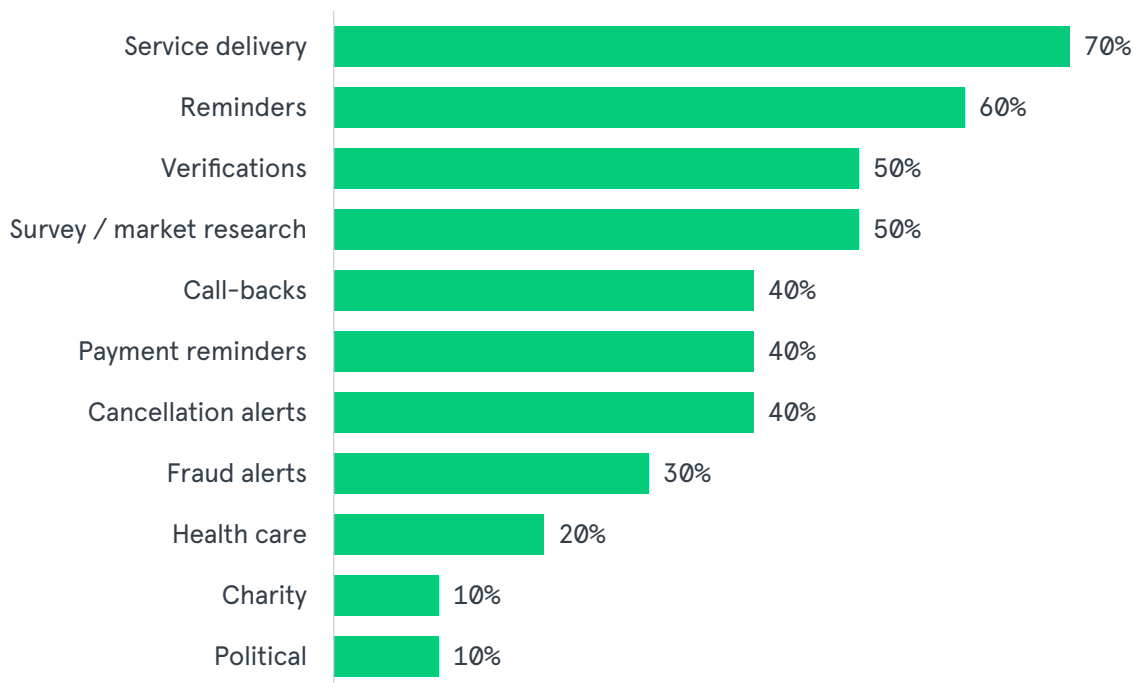
#1

Phone calls remain the most important one-to-one communication with customers.

4

THE PHONE IS USED ACROSS NUMEROUS TOUCHPOINTS

What are the main types of outbound calls that your company makes?



70%

Said their outbound calls are mainly for service delivery.

Because news about upcoming travel plans is high on customers' priority list, most people answer the phone if they can trust it's their hospitality provider who's calling. In fact, phone calls are the highly personalized and timely communications necessary for many service aspects of hospitality that require a discussion or decision.

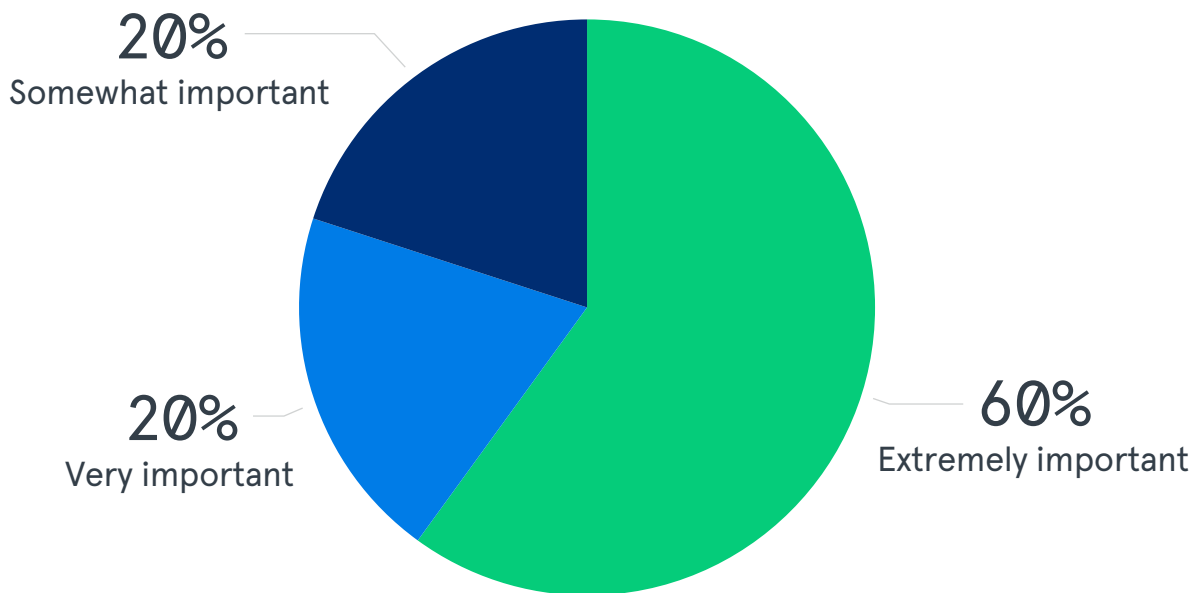
It's no surprise, then that seventy percent of respondents named service delivery as the reason for outbound calls, followed by reminders (60%), verification (50%), surveys (50%) and call backs and cancellations (40% each).

Today's guests expect to be recognized and treated as individuals. In response, establishments are going the extra mile to provide guest-specific communications, like phone calls.

5

AND IS SIGNIFICANT TO BRAND PERCEPTION

How important do you deem your customers' call experience to your company's overall brand perception?



Hospitality brands recognize one constant in their service: the customer experience matters. For hoteliers and other travel service providers, controlling the guest experience is absolutely essential to building brand loyalty in a competitive market. With the power of social media at customers' fingertips, brands that falter stand to lose more than a single disgruntled customer.

In fact, the uncertainty surrounding travel during the pandemic has led many companies to return to more traditional methods of customer service, like phone calls, to instill customer confidence, provide information, and restore trust in travel once again.

100%

Said the customer call experience is important to their brand perception.

6

THERE'S BEEN AN INCREASE IN CALL VOLUME

Please think about your company's current outbound call volume.
How has it changed in the past year? In the past six months?

■ Significantly higher ■ Slightly higher ■ About the same ■ Slightly lower ■ Significantly lower

Compared to one year ago,
our current outbound call volume is:



Compared to six months ago,
our current outbound call volume is:



40%

Said outbound call volume is
slightly or significantly higher than
last year and even 6 months ago.

While the travel industry continues to recover after extended pandemic shutdowns, new, tech-savvy Gen X and Gen Y consumers have joined the market with distinctly different preferences.

To meet these consumers in their comfort zone and add value to every traveler's experience, brands have ushered in technology-assisted options, such as mobile check-in, contactless payments, and in-app requests, while also increasing outbound call volume.

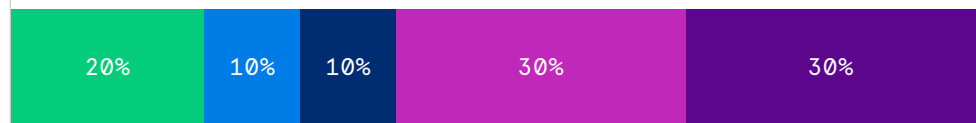
7

BUT, ANSWER RATES HAVE DROPPED

Have you experienced a change in answer rates in the past year?
In the past six months?

■ Significantly higher ■ Slightly higher ■ About the same ■ Slightly lower ■ Significantly lower

Compared to one year ago,
our current answer rates are:



Compared to six months ago,
our current answer rates are:



Compared to six months ago, travel and hospitality firms said that their call answer rates were slightly or significantly lower.

Since there were 45.9 billion robocalls in 2020, with 45% of those scams, it's not surprising that these calls go unanswered. Consumers no longer trust the phone.

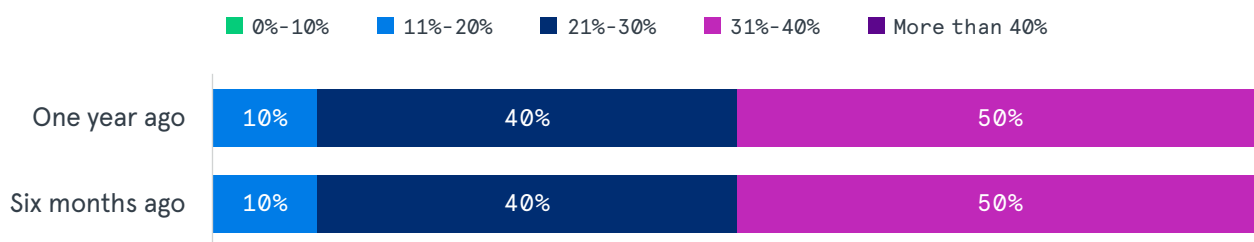
60%

Said answer rates are
lower than 6 months ago.

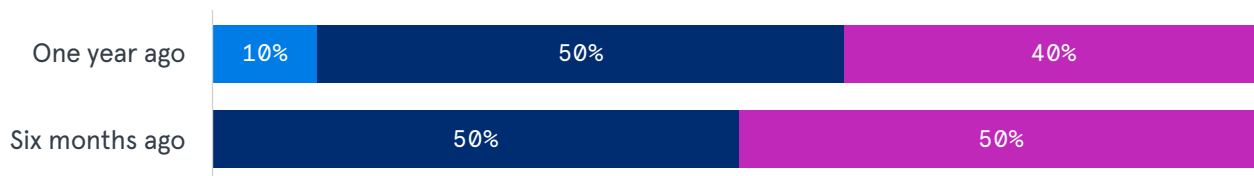
8

CALLS CONTINUE TO BE BLOCKED AND/OR MISLABELED AS SPAM

In your view, what percentage of your company's outbound calls were blocked one year ago? What percentage were blocked six months ago?



In your view, what percentage of your company's outbound calls were mislabeled, e.g. as spam, one year ago? What percentage were mislabeled six months ago?



100%

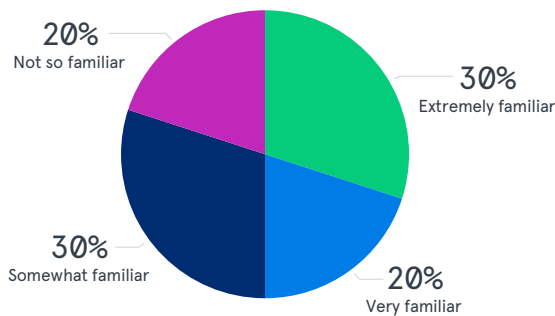
Said over 20% of their calls were mislabeled as spam in the past six months.

Ninety percent of respondents said that over 20% of their calls were blocked a year ago. That stayed the same in the past six months. Hospitality services hoping to nurture customer relationships or provide high-touch experiences for priority customers may not even be able to get through.

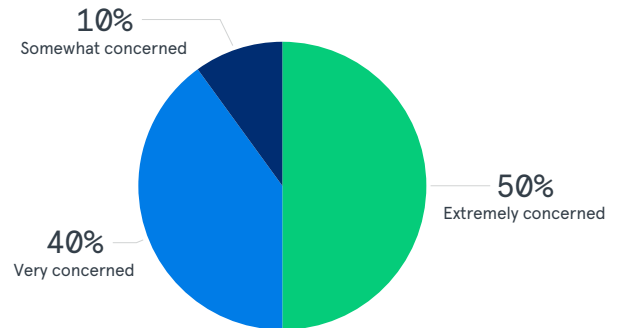
9

THE CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF REGULATIONS IS REAL

Are you familiar with the STIR/SHAKEN standards set to be implemented by June 2021?



How concerned are you that more of your company's outbound calls could be blocked in the future, as phone companies increasingly block suspect or unverified calls by default using call authentication systems such as STIR/SHAKEN?



While fifty percent of respondents said they are extremely or very familiar with the mandate for Communications Service Providers (CSPs) to implement STIR/SHAKEN call authentication (the deadline was June 2021), many may not understand the impact it can have on their outbound calls.

Legitimate calls to customers may be blocked or marked as spam as more and more service providers implement STIR/SHAKEN to protect enterprises and consumers from call spoofing and scams, and use robocall analytics tools.

Every company we spoke with said that they are concerned that more calls could be blocked in the future by call authentication frameworks like STIR/SHAKEN.

50%

Said they are extremely or very familiar with STIR/SHAKEN.

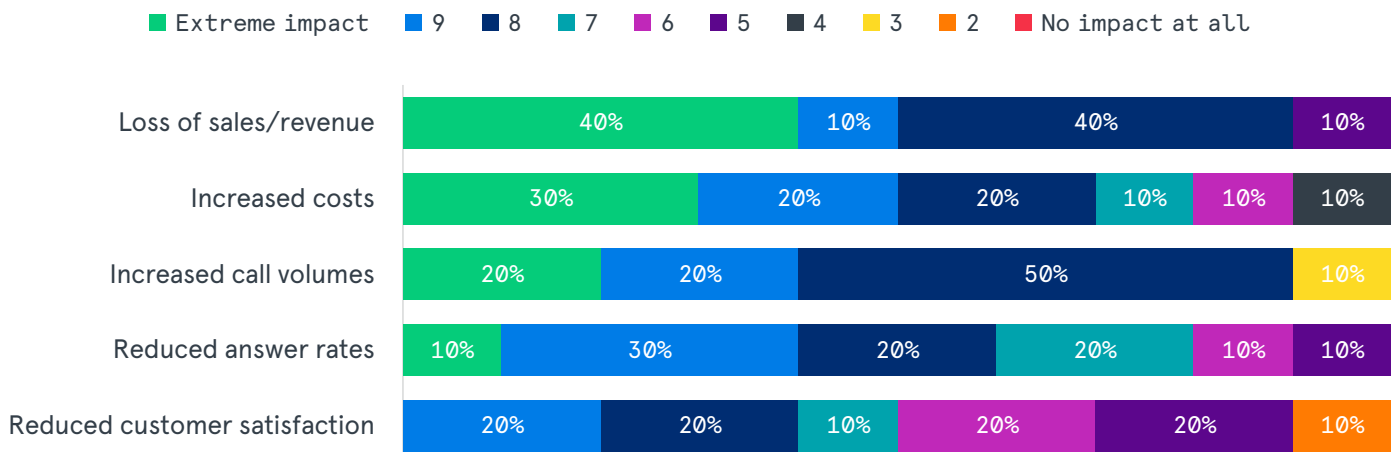
100%

Said they are concerned that more calls could be impacted by call authentication.

10

THE IMPACT OF BLOCKED CALLS IS FELT ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

What is the impact of your company's calls being blocked or flagged as spam? Please use a 10-point scale where 1 means No impact at all and 10 means Extreme impact.



40%

Said when calls are blocked or flagged as spam, it has an extreme impact on sales and revenue.

Thirty percent of respondents said blocked calls or calls marked as spam dramatically increase operational costs for their travel or hospitality firm.

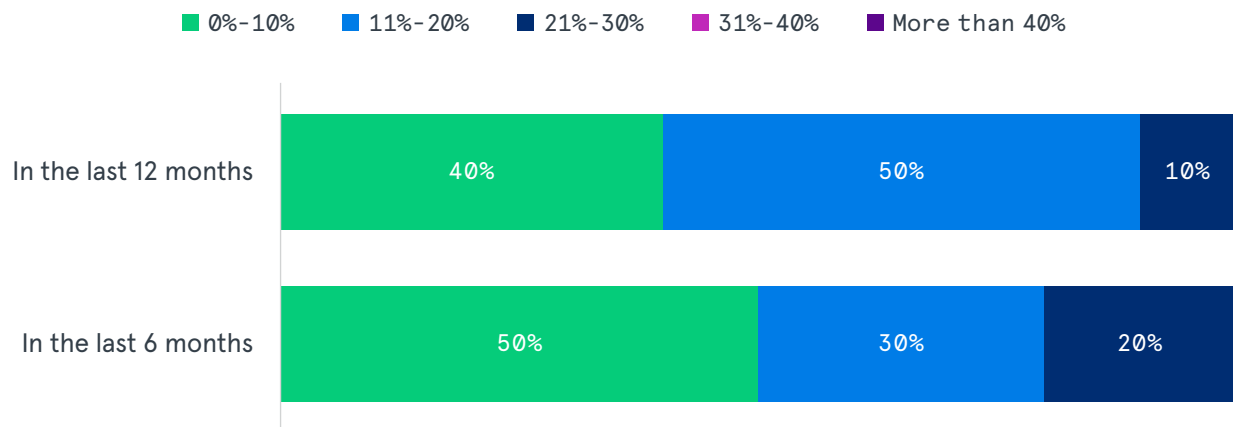
There's a ripple effect. When customers miss important calls about their travel plans because calls can't get through, it results in lost sales and revenue (40%), increased costs (30%), and reduced customer satisfaction (20%).

Low answer rates and unending phone tag can lead to travel-plan altering levels of customer frustration, as well as increased phone tag, diminished value and trust, and even potential fraud risks.

11

NO SALES, NO REVENUE

In your view, what percentage of revenue loss has your company experienced, as a result of negative call experiences such as call blocking/tagging, in the last 12 months? In the last 6 months?



When asked about the revenue impact, 60% of respondents said they lost more than 10% in revenue a year ago. Fifty percent said they lost over 10% in the past six months—a slight improvement.

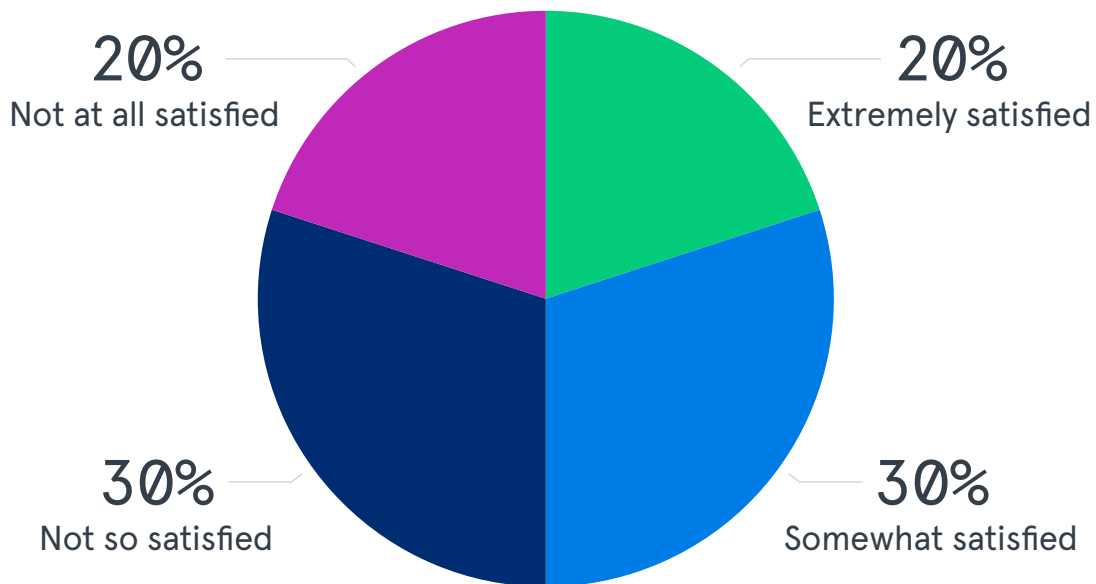
50%

Said they lost over 10% in revenues due to mis-tagging or blocked calls in the past six months.

12

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES ARE NOT SATISFIED

How satisfied are you with your company's current capabilities to be made aware of or to prevent your outbound calls from being blocked or flagged as spam?



50%

Said they are not satisfied with their current ability to be aware of, or prevent, tagging and blocking.

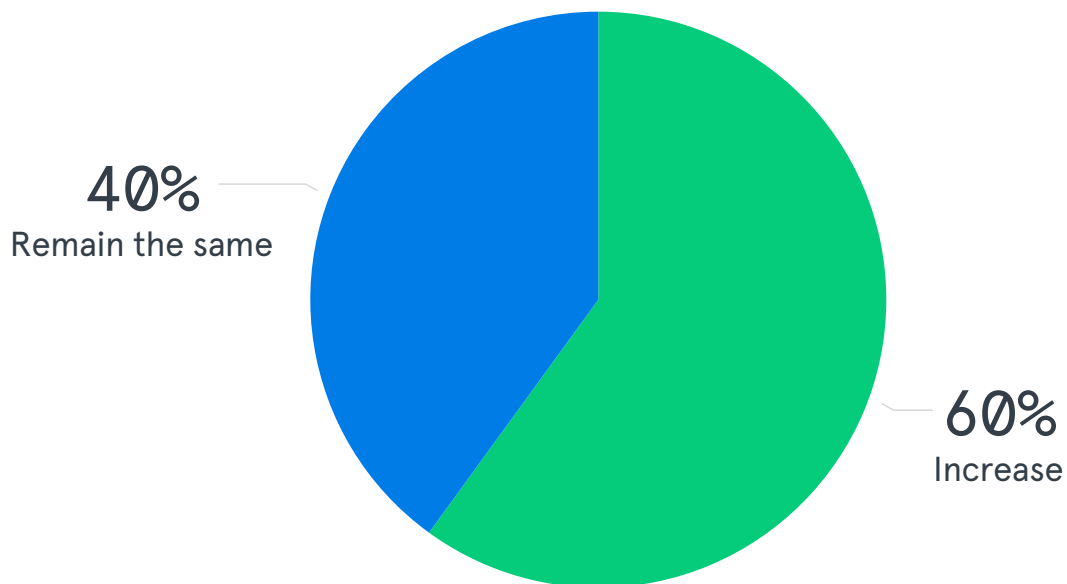
Fifty percent of respondents said they were not satisfied with their organization's ability to be aware of, or prevent, their calls from being tagged or blocked.

In a service-driven industry, it's important that all companies understand the reason why their calls are being blocked, recognize the number of calls impacted, and become aware of solutions available to address the problem.

13

BUT, CALL SPEND IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE

Are you planning to increase or decrease your call experience spend in 2021?



Sixty percent of respondents said they plan to spend more money to enhance the call experience for their customers in the next year. Another 40 percent said their spending will remain the same. Not one respondent said they would decrease spending on the call experience in the next year.

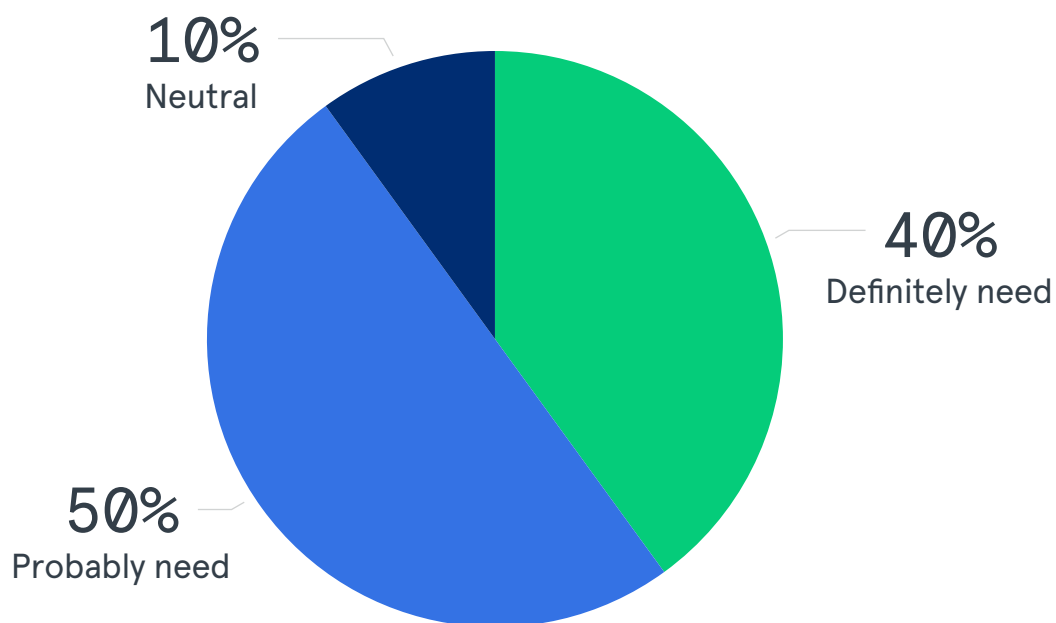
60%

Said they plan to increase call experience spend.

14

INCREASE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE WITH BRANDED CALLING

Do you see branded calling as something your company would find valuable?



90%

Said branding calling is something they would find valuable.

In spite of the challenges faced by the Travel and Hospitality sector when it comes to outbound calling, the phone remains an essential, preferred communications channel.

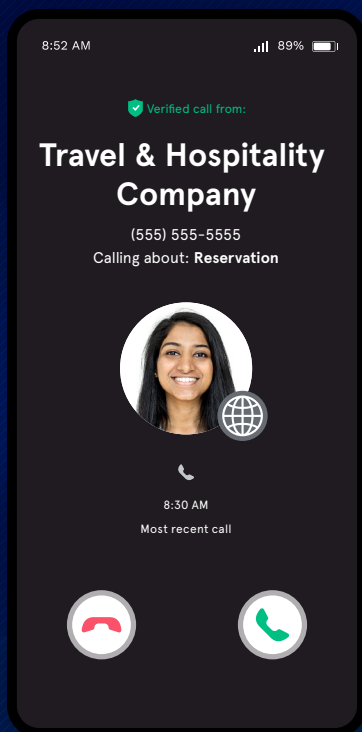
Branded calling offers a way for hospitality services to begin the customer experience before they even answer the call. Branded calling also ensures that calls reach customers, ending frustrations, helping to safeguard their brand reputation, and reversing revenue loss.

CONCLUSION

Neustar's [Branded Call Display \(BCD\)](#) informs consumers with logos, social media links, and call reasons, even before they answer, as well as URLs and callback numbers in the call history log for completed or missed calls.

In a competitive industry like Travel and Hospitality, having a branded, secure, 1:1 form of communication with customers is essential to delivering high-value service while shaping the CX.

[Learn More](#)



Transforming the call experience with Branded Call Display helps keep customers happy, protects your brand, and results in increased revenues.

About the Survey: Methodology

The basis of this research is an online survey that Omdia conducted in January and February 2021 of 100 large enterprises (defined as having 1,000 or more employees) based in the U.S. that make large volumes of robocalls. Omdia also conducted additional primary and secondary research to produce this white paper, which was commissioned by Neustar but produced independently by Omdia.

About Omdia

[Omdia](#) is a market-leading data, research, and consulting business focused on helping digital service providers, technology companies, and enterprise decision-makers thrive in the connected digital economy.

About TransUnion (NYSE: TRU)

TransUnion is a global information and insights company that makes trust possible in the modern economy. We do this by providing an actionable picture of each person so they can be reliably represented in the marketplace. As a result, businesses and consumers can transact with confidence and achieve great things. We call this Information for Good.®

A leading presence in more than 30 countries across five continents, TransUnion provides solutions that help create economic opportunity, great experiences, and personal empowerment for hundreds of millions of people.

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About Neustar

Neustar, a TransUnion company, is a leader in identity resolution providing the data and technology that enable trusted connections between companies and people at the moments that matter most. Neustar offers industry-leading solutions in marketing, risk and communications that responsibly connect data on people, devices and locations, continuously corroborated through billions of transactions. Learn how your company can benefit from the power of trusted connections.

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