

Travel industry customer service criticised in new research

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The travel sector has the second worst reputation for customer service, new research has found.

As part of its new [Make Every Conversation Count](#) report, [FM Outsource](#) asked 1,000 people about their experiences with and attitudes towards customer service in 10 business sectors including utilities, travel, banking, insurance, hospitality, logistics, fashion retail and grocery retail.

Respondents were asked to rate each sector's reputation when it comes to customer service, taking into account the experiences of other people they know and those they've read in online reviews, as well as their own.

The research found that the travel sector was one of the most likely to be rated poor or extremely poor (29% vs average of 20%), second only to the utilities sector (32%). On the other hand, grocery and banking were the most likely to be rated good or very good (45% and 43% respectively, vs average of 38%).

Respondents were also asked to rate the quality of customer service delivery from good to poor based on

their experience.

The travel sector was again one of the most likely to be rated poor or extremely poor (21% vs average of 17%), whereas banking and grocery were most likely to be rated as good or very good (49% and 50% respectively, vs average of 42%).

The report has found that these negative customer service interactions are having a detrimental effect on a brand as 86% of consumers agreed it has had a negative impact on their relationships with a business. Notably, nearly a third (31%) of consumers have told friends or family to avoid a brand following a negative customer service interaction, and 26% have left a critical review online.

At the same time, the research also revealed that the vast majority (80%) of consumers believe that poor delivery of customer service reveals a brand's general lack of care towards its customers. Only 11% said that it is unrelated.

Martin Brown, CCO at FM Outsource, said: "Our findings show that, as far as consumers are concerned, the travel sector currently offers one of the lowest standards of customer service and therefore has one of the worst reputations.

"Airlines in particular are currently undergoing a very challenging time following the effects of the pandemic, with thousands of customers awaiting refunds and compensation for cancelled or rescheduled flights.

"Travel should be an enjoyable experience for all and frustratingly this year the experience has been very stressful for many customers, largely due to the way customer service teams have handled the disruptions. The value of a smooth, efficient customer service function at times like these cannot be underestimated. While customers may be unhappy about changes to their travel plans, the relationship with those customers can be protected with the help of a professional, highly trained customer service team."