



# 2020 Customer Voices Report

Unsolicited Customer Feedback  
in Healthcare

## Table of Contents

- 03 Introduction
- 04 Trend 1: Communication breakdown is destroying customer experience
- 05 Trend 2: Complicated processes are confusing customers
- 06 Trend 3: Flexible problem-solving delivers measurable impact
- 07 Trend 4: Economic instability is at a high
- 08 Trend 5: Agent empathy is down across the board
- 09 Recommendations
- 11 About Authenticx

# Let customers guide the way.

**Listening matters now more than ever.** Healthcare leaders can no longer afford to ignore the clues that customers are dropping throughout their day-to-day conversations.

We need to understand what customers are saying and how our teams are responding so we can better support both our customers and the agents who serve them.

“Your recorded greeting says these calls are recorded for quality purposes...does anyone actually listen to these?”  
- Healthcare Customer

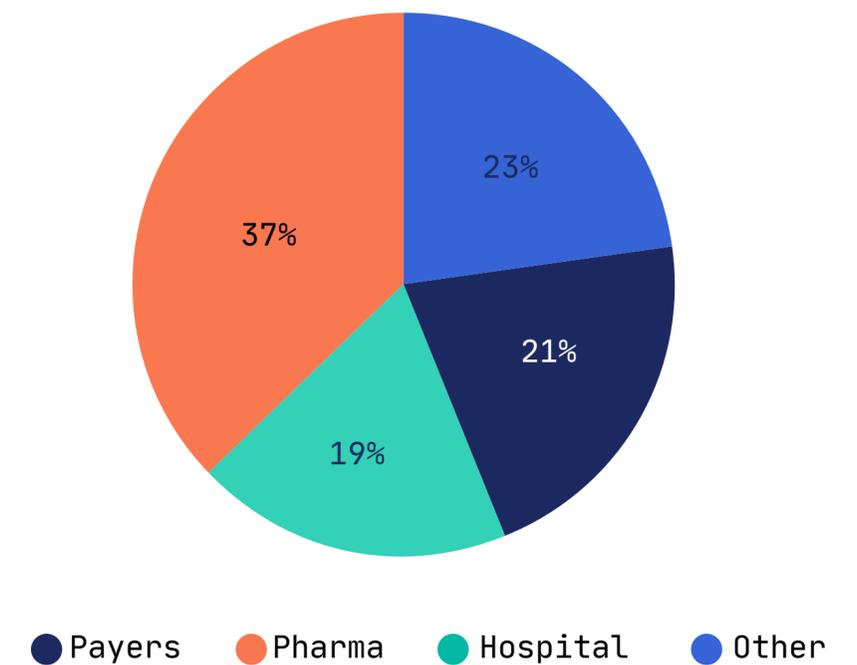
It's time to move past soulless customer feedback and get to the heart of what's being asked of us. Powerful unsolicited feedback is everywhere if you know where to look for it and what to do with it.

Your customers are sharing hidden barriers, motivators, and transformational strategies in their daily interactions with your brand and your team. Are you listening?

Within this report, you'll discover what's top of mind for healthcare consumers today, so that you can identify what matters most to your customers and take action within your own organization.

The following trends were gathered from Authenticix customer data over the past year. These trends were formulated by reviewing 45,000 unique insights across a sample of 14,000 customer interactions. The data spans health systems, pharmaceutical companies, health insurance providers, and other relevant organizations. Authenticix experts analyzed this data, looked for shared trends, and surfaced what they found.

Insights by Industry



# Communication breakdown is destroying customer experience.

20% of healthcare customers are stuck in their customer journey. We call this phenomenon the Eddy Effect. Just like a river eddy interrupts the main water current and pulls objects into an ever-spinning whirlpool, customers are getting stuck and being forced to return to your company over and over again in order to overcome the obstacle. To make matters worse, customers consider being stuck in an Eddy one of the most negative brand experiences possible.

According to our data, the most common reason (or Eddy) healthcare customers reach out today is to check on the status of their case because an open issue hasn't been resolved. Due to a communication breakdown, either the message isn't getting to the right stakeholders internally so they can take action, or the action is occurring and the customer isn't being informed. During a customer conversation, this type of Eddy sound like:

“This is the third time I've had to call about this,” or “Two days ago I was told I'd get a callback and I haven't yet.”

## Implications

Eddies generate waste. They create the need for company

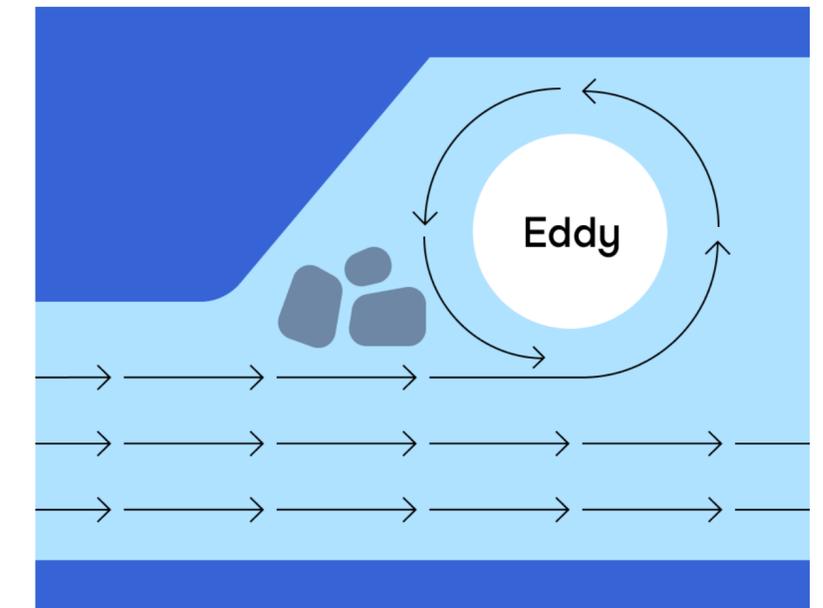
resources to be spent resolving problems that never should have occurred in the first place. They also create a tremendous amount of frustration for your customers, who are burdened to seek out information that should have been provided to them. When customers get stuck in an Eddy, it negatively impacts brand perception, customer retention, and ultimately revenue.

For agents, measuring Eddies is the antithesis of First Call Resolution. In other words, if you measure the percentage of customers who have hit an Eddy, it should hold you honest to your First Call Resolution metric.

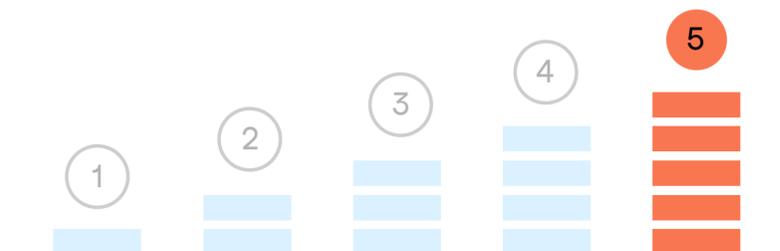
And finally, leaders need to be mindful of ways to create better systems for communicating case status to customers and managing expectations about follow-up communication. Initiating follow-up with customers is a powerful tactic that customers value greatly and reduces inbound calls.

It's essential to identify and take action on Eddies in your organization. If you aren't actively measuring them, you should. [Learn more about the Eddy Effect.](#)

## The Eddy Effect



On a scale of 1 to 5, customers rank Eddies among worst brand experiences.



# Complicated processes are confusing customers.

Customers are telling you what you're not doing well, you just need to listen. On average, 50% of all customer interactions include an unsolicited mention of at least one specific reason they are unhappy with your brand.

Being aware of unsolicited, negative feedback about your products or services means that you can take targeted action to address your customers' challenges. Aggregating sources of brand detractors gives you a better sense of what's driving negative brand perception so you can develop a strategy to improve it.

According to our data, common brand detractors for the healthcare industry include digital experiences, website portals, service, and customer journey processes. Most problematic, however, is that 1 out of every 3 brand detractors mentioned by customers relate to confusing bills or complicated processes.

Customers are confused about charges, insurance coverage or lack thereof, how billing works, and how to navigate services like Medicare, insurance, collections, social service organizations, pharmaceutical programs, or claims processing.

It's evident there is a disconnect between healthcare processes

and the customers they're designed to serve. Either these processes don't actually or consistently solve customer problems, or they're not being implemented and communicated effectively.

## Implications

Processes are falling short and the burden is being placed on contact center agents to fill in the gaps. On 33% of calls, agents must serve as educators for customers. It becomes their responsibility to translate corporate policies into language customers can understand. This often requires that agents have mastery of services and processes beyond the scope of their primary business unit. It also requires agents to act as empathetic listeners and complex problem solvers on behalf of their customers.

Every time a customer calls to express frustration or confusion around a corporate policy, it costs your organization money and presents the risk of losing that customer for good because of a poor experience. Rather than empowering customers to pay their bills, company resources must be deployed to help them navigate a confusing process.

Your organization must pinpoint where customers are getting lost so you can modify policies to support, not stress, your agents and customers. [Learn more about identifying and correcting brand detractors.](#)

## Real Customer Voices



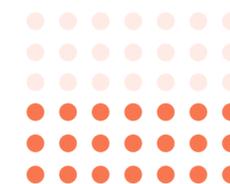
"So I'm confused. I want to get clarity from billing on what we owe."



"I will say they have created a monster when it relates to understanding what to order . . . you are kind of ordering in the dark."



"You guys make this really difficult to know. It's so confusing."



**50%** of all customer interactions include one or more brand detractor.

# Flexible problem-solving delivers measurable impact.

Customers also freely share what they do like about your brand, also known as brand attractors. On average, 40% of customer calls include mention of one or more brand attractors. These unsolicited comments often reveal important insights that leaders don't realize their organization is appreciated or recognized for.

Our research reveals that 61% of the brand attractors expressed by healthcare customers are related to service. Customers articulated that they appreciate agent knowledge, swift problem-solving, and agents going above and beyond to understand a problem and find a solution.

## Implications

From this data, we know that agents are most effective when they are empowered to offer flexible options to customers. Specifically, agents should be listening for emotions as well as the content of customer calls. When agents demonstrate empathy, go above and beyond to problem solve, and offer options, customers implicitly value the company, not just the agent.

Unmet customer needs are only going to increase, and customer service has the opportunity to be a big differentiator and brand-value driver for your organization.

*"I was so intimidated and every phone call I make to you has been so clear, like you are trying to make my life so much easier."*

Additionally, it presents the opportunity to turn dissatisfied customers into loyal ones, provided that you identify brand detractors and root causes so you can move the needle on customer satisfaction.

Your business will benefit from empowering agents to be flexible problem-solvers. [Learn more about maximizing the impact of unsolicited brand attractors.](#)

## Real Customer Voices



"I sure appreciate your knowledge and efficiency."



"Thank you for all your help on this. I know we all make mistakes and I appreciate you figuring it out."



"I'm really impressed with your company. You folks really try to help your people out. So I really appreciate it. You've been very helpful and you're personable too."

## The Impact of Brand Attractors

40%

of calls include one or more brand attractors.

61%

of brand attractors expressed are related to the agent or business service.

## Economic instability is at a high.

Customers are not only sharing their perceptions of your brand, they're also sharing unsolicited indicators of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) that impact their daily healthcare decisions. These indicators provide a rich source of insights that can be leveraged by the clinical teams within your organization for more real-time intervention.

Our research revealed that in a COVID-19 world, the number one expression of SDOH is economic instability. All other concerns - education, food insecurity, environmental, etc. - pale in comparison. The data demonstrates that customers are freely expressing the impact of this economic hardship to anyone willing to listen, not just nurses or social workers. Billing specialists and tier 1 customer support lines are also the recipients of this weighty personal information shared by customers.

### Implications

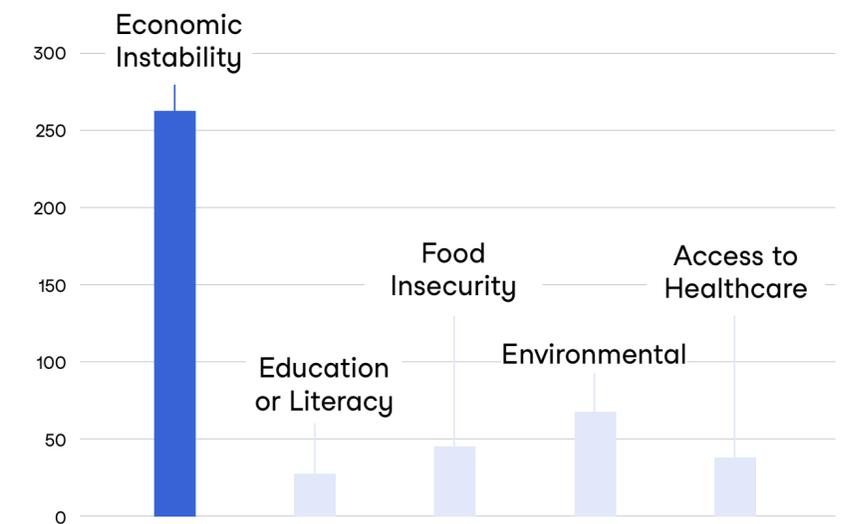
Most healthcare providers could not have foreseen the extensive impact of a global pandemic on their customers or their employees. Pre-pandemic policies and procedures may no longer be efficient, especially considering changes in SDOH such as an increase in economic instability. Revisiting

your policies and the communication of those policies will provide more support to those in distress.

While agents are at the forefront of your organization, they are not prepared to field and address new customer realities. Additional investment in your people through new training, call scripts, and FAQs will better enable them to follow through on your brand promise.

Ultimately, failure to adapt could cost your organization in the form of: decreased customer loyalty, decline in revenue, increased call center volume, and lack of adequate resources. [Learn how to adapt your contact centers.](#)

Since COVID-19, the biggest shift has been expressions of economic instability.



### Real Customer Voice



"I'm not able [to make that payment] right now with everything that's been going on. I'm gonna try to pay a little bit every chance I get to it."

## Agent empathy is down across the board.

For additional valuable insights, it's time to start listening to conversations from the agent's point of view. As we've seen so far in the data, agent performance plays a critical role in brand perception and the quality of customer experience.

Two fundamental agent characteristics separate average customer experiences from exceptional ones: accountability for customer needs and authenticity or empathy. Especially during a global pandemic, it's critical for healthcare providers to deliver an excellent customer experience. Unfortunately, our research suggests that agents are met with more pain, trauma, and fear than they have been trained to respond to. Our data shows that empathetic and authentic agent expressions have actually decreased, with agents averaging a 78% on "demonstrates perspective" compared to the 90% benchmark.

This decrease in empathy scores is not due to agents caring less. They are simply not prepared for the heavy topics (e.g. joblessness, bankruptcy, illness) that meet them on the other end of customer interactions.

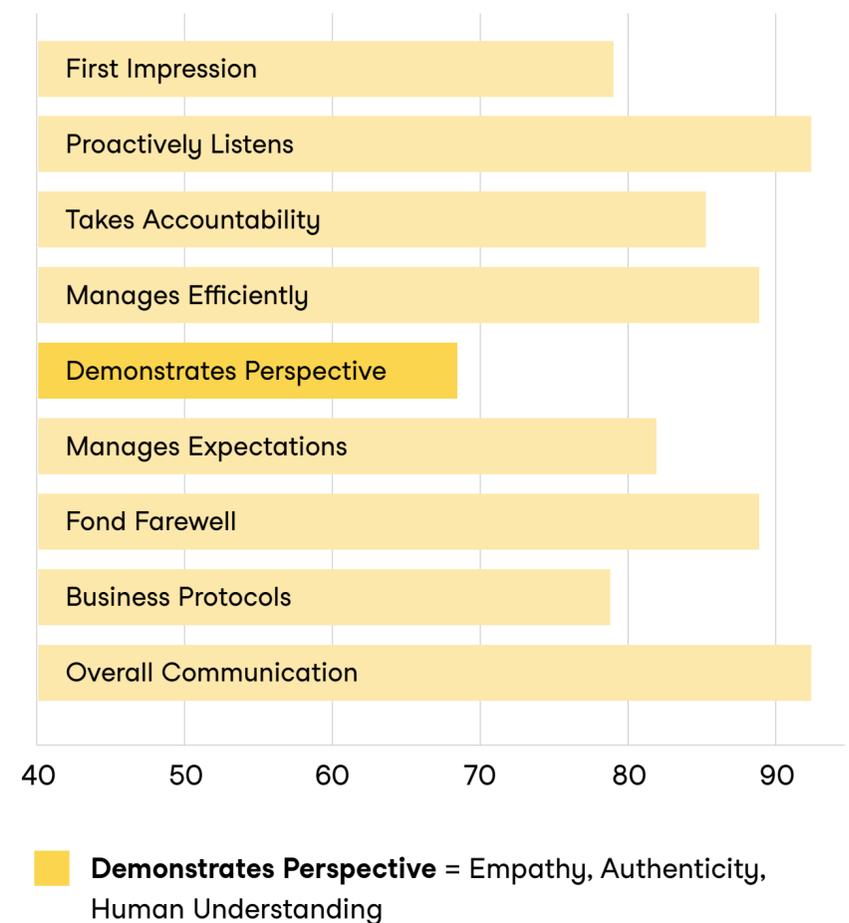
### Implications

Empathy is a critical component to helping solve the new challenges customers face. It creates tremendous value for your customers, and in turn for your organization. When it exists, it drives brand value and creates a deeper connection with those customers. In its absence, that brand attractor becomes a brand detractor, eating away at your reputation.

Service and empathetic problem-solving play a large role in brand perception (see Brand Attractors on page 6). As circumstances change for many Americans (see SDOH on page 7), call center workforces will continue to field calls about lack of housing, food, or finances. If agents aren't properly equipped to display empathy, it can result in unhappy customers, an increase in required resources, and loss of revenue.

As leaders, we must provide agents with the tools and support they need to effectively and empathetically respond to customers. Investing in empathy training and coaching will equip your team to deliver. [Learn about transforming agent performance.](#)

### Customer circumstances have impacted agent performance.



# Recommendations

TREND 1 | THE EDDY EFFECT

TREND 2 | BRAND DETRACTORS

TREND 3 | BRAND ATTRACTORS

TREND 4 | SDOH

TREND 5 | AGENT PERFORMANCE

## In Summary

It's never been more critical for healthcare organizations to deliver customer service with empathy, flexibility, and problem-solving excellence. Customers are demanding humanity from the brands they interact with, across all areas of the business. Every department has lessons to learn from listening to the voice of the customer. Based on the trends observed in this report, the next page includes actions to consider taking within your own team.

# Recommendations

Based on the trends observed in this report, here are actions to consider taking within your own team.

## Marketing Leaders

Revisit your brand identity and values, highlighting your strengths based on what your customers say.

Improve digital experiences to address brand detractors and Eddies.

Update messaging and campaigns to acknowledge the “here and now.” Avoid being tone-deaf.

[See how one organization increased their online purchase conversion rate by 20% →](#)

## Operations Leaders

Support agents with coaching, resources, and respite. Be responsive to the heaviness they navigate as they field interactions with customers in crisis.

Consider revising policies, like your payment policy, based on Eddies and brand detractors.

Revisit communication processes and resolve gaps that cause unnecessary inbound contacts or drain profitability.

[Discover how a hospital system increased their empathy scores by an average of 5 points in 60 days. →](#)

## Compliance Leaders

Implement a corporate listening program and regularly update call scripts, compliance training programs, and scenario modeling based on results.

Identify and address compliance process gaps that are evidenced in the conversations with your customers.

Update FAQ insights for agents to ensure their answers are responsive and compliant to the questions that are top-of-mind for customers.

[Learn how one compliance team reduced error rates by 75%. →](#)

# Need to move faster? We'll help you take action on your customer voices.

From getting to the heart of your current Eddies to identifying exactly which brand attractors to amplify, Authenticx is here to accelerate your efforts.

Our goal is simple: we help healthcare organizations uncover hidden insights from customer interactions that already take place each and every day. From specific brand detractors to SDOH, we know that all interactions contain value, waiting to be discovered.

We'll help you combine existing customer interactions across call center data, texts, chats, emails, and more into one place so you can identify the threats and opportunities for your organization. If you're looking for a way to truly listen and see what's locked inside your customer interactions, Authenticx can help.

Start Listening

