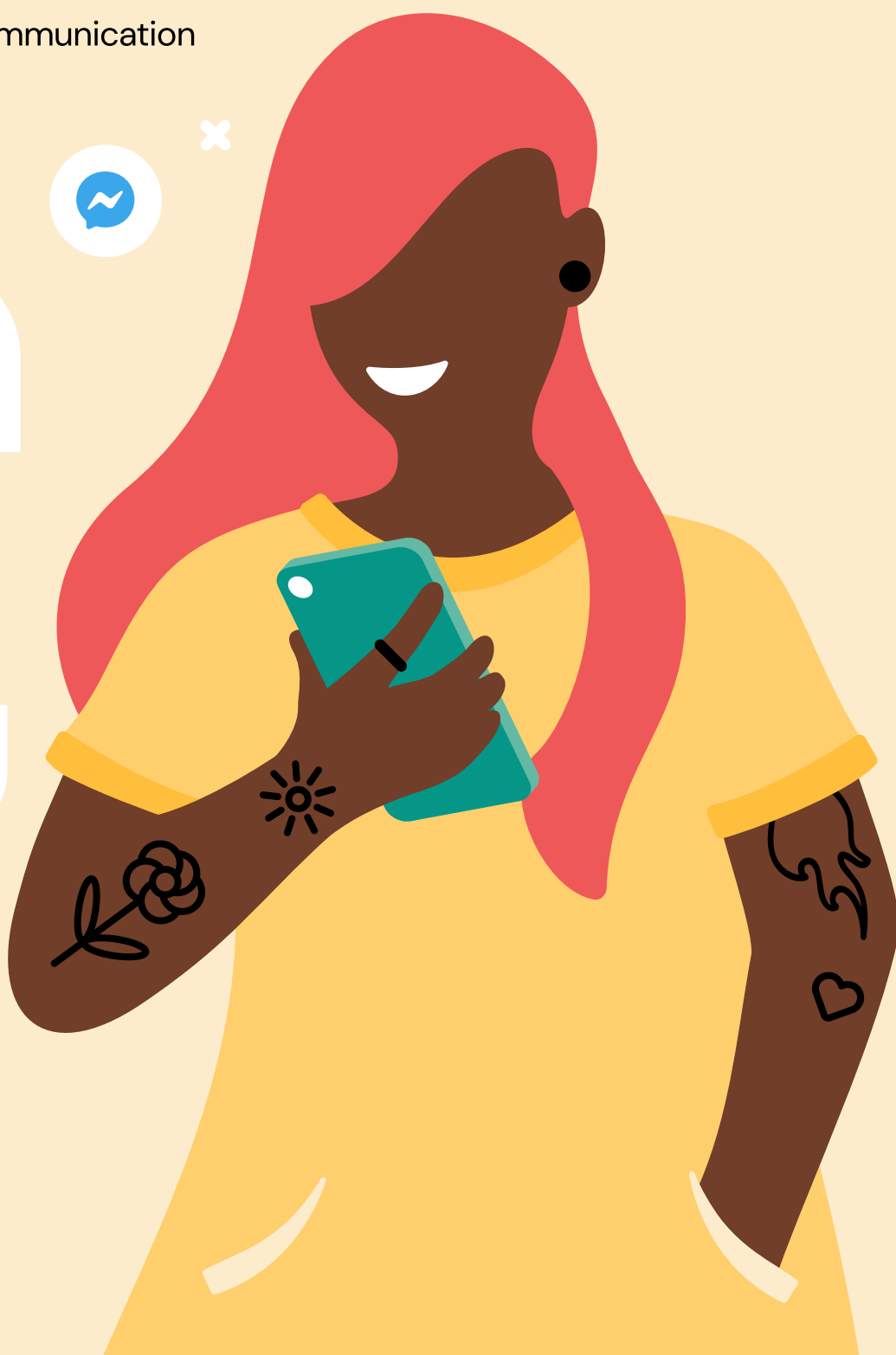


E-BOOK

# The omnichannel hero's journey

Aligning customer communication  
with the right story



# Reimagining customer experiences

Before we dive into customer journeys, the customer experience, and omnichannel communications, let's talk about life.

## Life is full of twists and turns, isn't it?

Take a minute and think about some of the memorable moments in your life: The challenges you've overcome, the wins and losses, the heartbreaks, and the happy endings. They are stories you tell yourself and share with others. Each of those stories stars you as the main character, and there's no doubt that different brands and products played supporting roles.

Maybe it was a fitness app that helped you reach your health goals. It could have been a real estate agency that helped you sell a house and move into your dream home. Perhaps a SaaS company helped your business grow, or a platform helped you land a job.

The keyword is helped – you are the hero in these stories. You found helpful tools, sage advice, encouragement, and ideal solutions.

As a champion of your company's brand, the roles are reversed. You become the hero's helper. You're like Han Solo and Chewbacca backing up Luke Skywalker.



## When someone moves through their journey (or story) with a brand, they'll use many channels.

They might start out with a marketing email, then switch to a text message for a reminder or a confirmation. They might need customer service via voice, video, or a chat platform. Next on the list could be a search for more info on products and services with social messaging apps. Maybe they'll even interact with artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of a predictive chatbot. Who knows?

Now, imagine a world with a seamless, connected customer experience. A world where customers can begin their journey on one channel, then move to another and another without losing context or conversation history. Sounds good, right? That's omnichannel communication in action.

If a customer-centric strategy is your goal, it's critical to reach people wherever they are in life, and in their journey with your brand. Being available on all the channels your customers use is the key to success.

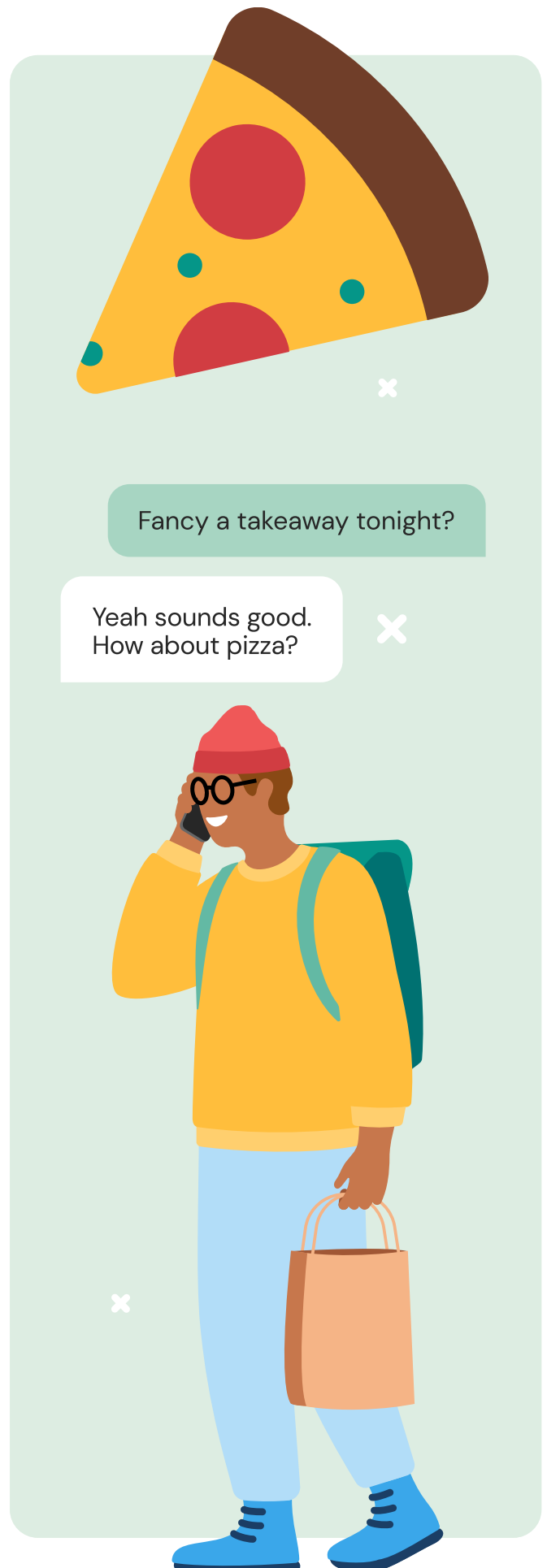
## We're entering a new era of brand communication with many digital channels for businesses and customers to engage in highly personalized two-way conversations.

To succeed in this new era, brands need to reach target audiences

- ✓ At the right time
- ✓ With the right message
- ✓ On the channels the customer prefers

In other words, you need a solid understanding of your customers and what they're going through. Don't forget – they are the heroes, and you are the helper.

Come on a journey with Sinch as we explore how to build an omnichannel communication strategy!



## PART 1

# Omnichannel 101

Not that long ago, the channels brands used to communicate with customers were very limited.

You could try telemarketing, send direct mail, or, more recently, email.

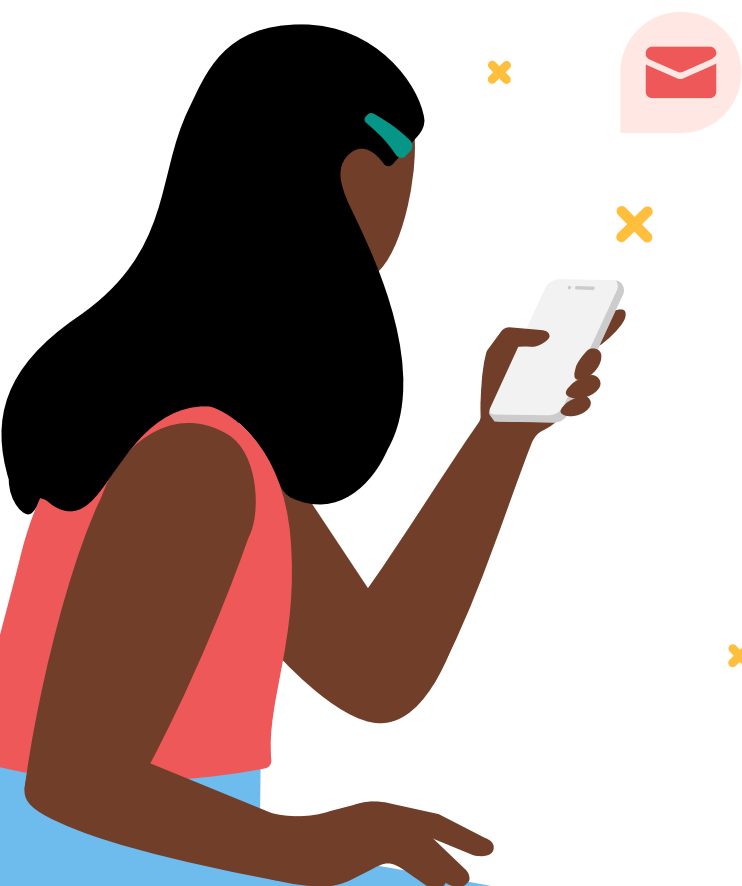
Then, the smartphone came onto the scene, and everything changed. Now, more than 6.5 billion people worldwide carry mobile devices that connect them with brands any time, any place.

These ultra-personal mobile devices offer many ways for brands to reach customers. Building them into a digitally transformed communication strategy is a sure-fire way to boost success.



## Six key digital communication technologies

Let's take a quick look at a few digital communication channels and how they're used in the customer experience.



### 1. Email

[Email](#) is the godfather of digital communications. Gary Thurek sent the first marketing email in 1978. He claims it generated \$13 million in sales.

While emails aren't used for personal communication so much since instant messaging stepped in, it's still a vital channel for brand communication. Beyond marketing and promotions, transactional emails help customers with everything from order confirmations and shipping updates to opening accounts and password recovery.

### Omnichannel stats:

# 333B

It's estimated that more than [333 billion emails](#) a day will be sent in 2022. Other [research suggests](#) that most generations feel email is the most personal method of brand communication.



## 2. SMS, MMS, and RCS

All three of these acronyms are forms of mobile messaging:

- ✓ **SMS**  
Simple Messaging Service
- ✓ **MMS**  
Multimedia Messaging Service
- ✓ **RCS**  
Rich Communication Service  
(only supported on Android devices right now)

SMS, like email, is often used for order confirmations, appointment reminders, marketing, and promotional campaigns. It's also used for fraud notifications, two-factor authentication, and emergency alerts where speed and security are vital.

MMS supports messages with images and video, making them more visually appealing and engaging than SMS.

RCS offers even more advanced features, including suggested replies, CTAs via response buttons, and video messages.

It's important to note that mobile messaging is subject to many regulations including GDPR and CCPA, although these vary by region.

### Omnichannel stats:

95%

[SMSComparison.com](https://SMSComparison.com) suggests that 95% of text messages are read and responded to within three minutes. SMS has an impressive average clickthrough rate of 19%.



### 3. Voice

Voice communication typically involves customized solutions that support, engage, and convert customers through inbound, outbound, and automated phone and in-app calls. It's perfect for alerts and notifications, plus it supports verification, one-to-one, and anonymous calling, including number masking.

Automated voice systems can include features like interactive voice response (IVR) technology and text-to-speech functionality. Of course, if customers need to talk to a human, they can always connect with a live customer service agent.

### 4. Video

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people got the hang of video calls for business and personal affairs. This opened up opportunities for brands to use video as a powerful communication channel.

Innovative brands have already started integrating voice and video calling into their apps to help build a more authentic face-to-face customer experience. Telehealth is an everyday use case for video, but it's also the perfect way to support physical and digital products, including maintenance, DIY repairs, and talking to customer service about product defects.

#### Omnichannel stats:

# 70%

Nearly 70% of people in a [2021 survey](#) said they preferred speaking to a live customer service agent on the phone. But, it's also [estimated](#) that there will be 8.4 billion digital voice assistants in use by 2024. That's more digital assistants than people on the planet!



# 38x

[McKinsey & Co.](#) reports that the use of telehealth evened out at 38-times higher than its pre-COVID baseline. Video conferencing is also handy for many other professionals, including lawyers, financial advisors, tutors, and business consultants.

## 5. Messaging app

The SMS inbox isn't the only place where direct messaging happens between brands and customers. Mobile messaging apps offer endless chances to connect. Some of the most popular messaging apps include:

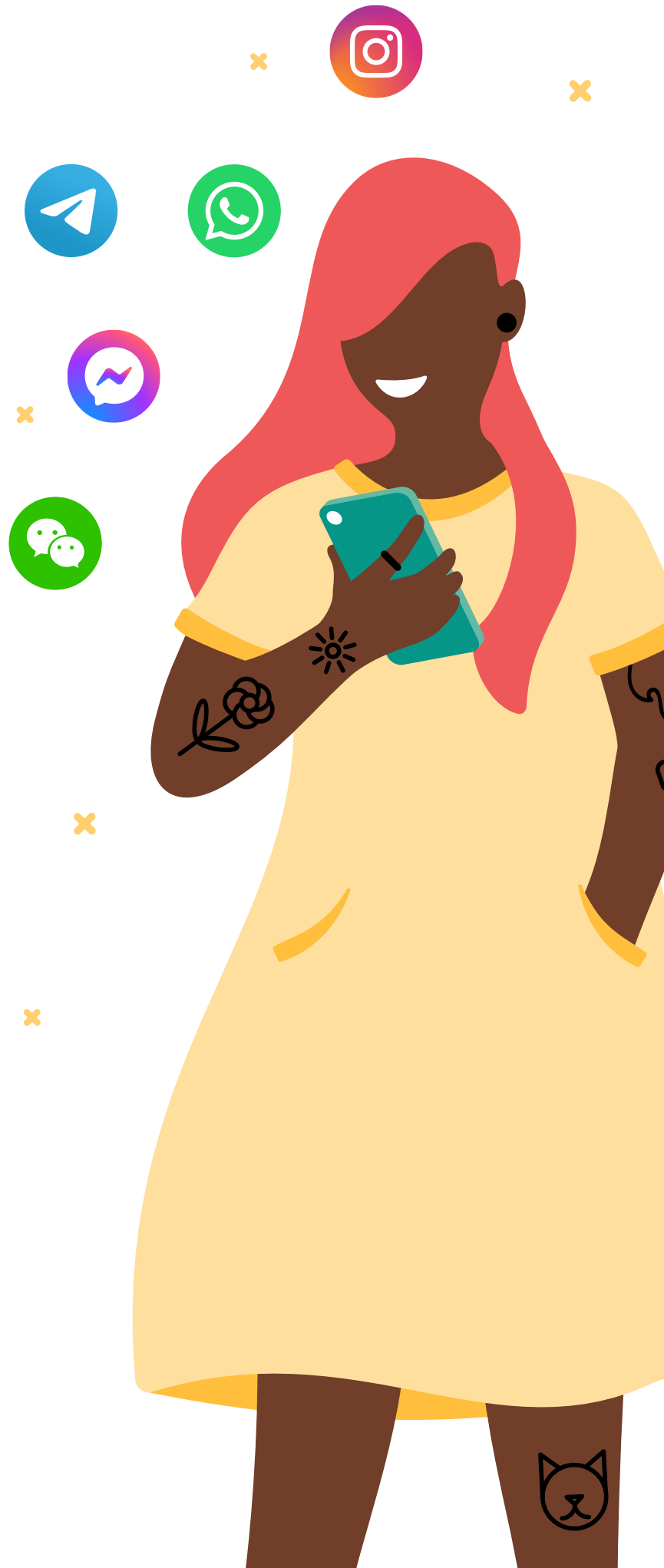
- Facebook Messenger
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- Telegram
- WeChat

Messaging apps help customers engage with brands on their preferred channel. They can also be used for personalized conversational marketing and commerce to help brands boost engagements and conversions.

Omnichannel stats:

# \$290B

Conversational commerce is on the rise. Among retailers, [Juniper Research](#) predicts a 590% increase between 2021 and 2025. Global consumer spending through conversational commerce was \$41 billion in 2021 and could hit \$290 billion by 2025!



## 6. Conversational AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) is shaping the future of customer communication and experience, with custom chatbots. These friendly bots answer FAQs 24/7, significantly cutting contact center volumes and saving customers worldwide from call center hold queue nightmares. Fear not, though – when customers need to speak with a human being, chatbot AI can hand them off seamlessly to a live agent.

Conversational AI plays a massive role in transforming communications from one-way notifications to two-way conversations, boosting customer engagement and lead qualification. Not only this, but Conversational AI has the power to offer a personalized sales experience over digital channels, too, allowing any webshop or messaging channel to become a highly efficient and optimized sales assistant or agent.

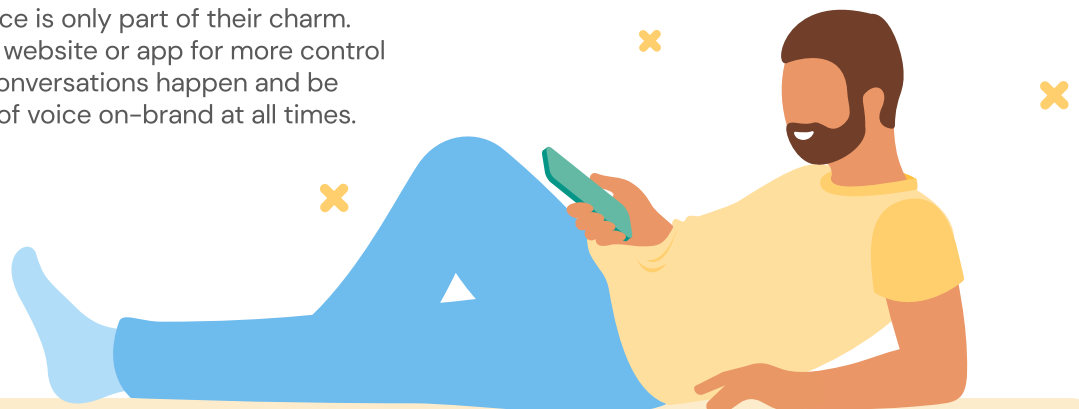
Chatbots built with conversational customer engagement at their core offer the most authentic customer experience. Their flexibility to work across several messaging channels and maintain a consistent conversation experience is only part of their charm. Put them to work on a website or app for more control over where and how conversations happen and be sure to keep the tone of voice on-brand at all times.

### Omnichannel stats:

# \$142B

Chatbots are the fastest-growing communication solution. Insider Intelligence predicts worldwide [retail spending via chatbots](#) will reach \$142 billion in 2024, up from \$2.8 billion in 2019. According to [Salesforce](#), 69% of consumers prefer using chatbots for quick answers.

If you think that automation makes a message cold and calculated, think again! Conversational customer engagement is critical in an effective omnichannel strategy. And that's 100% possible with AI. As a recent white paper from IDC points out:



AI adds an emotional flair that converts an interaction into an enjoyable engagement to ensure repeat engagement. It elevates interactions from transactional to emotional and leaves a lasting impression.

**Courtney Munroe,**  
Research Vice President, IDC

# Omnichannel vs multichannel

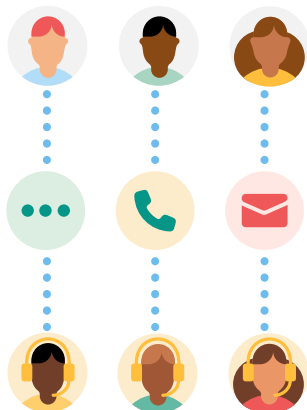
It's important to note that omnichannel and multichannel are different.

An eye-opening [report from Sinch and IDC](#) found that 100% of survey respondents used more than one channel for customer engagement. This isn't omnichannel, though – it's multichannel. There's more to omnichannel communication than using several channels.

Omni literally means all. This suggests an all-inclusive approach to customer communication. But even more importantly, an omnichannel approach breaks down silos. It's an all-inclusive approach to customer communications that allows businesses to choose which channels work best for them and their customers. Instead of different conversations across multiple channels, an omnichannel communication strategy allows for a continuous, connected conversation, regardless of channel.



## Multichannel



## Omnichannel



## Four characteristics of omnichannel communication that separate it from a multichannel approach

### 1. Customer preferences:

Convenient for customers, not just the organization – people engage on platforms they use every day.

### 2. Conversational engagement:

Two-way conversations – not blasting messages out with no way to respond. It's about creating an experience, building relationships, and encouraging loyalty.

### 3. Connection:

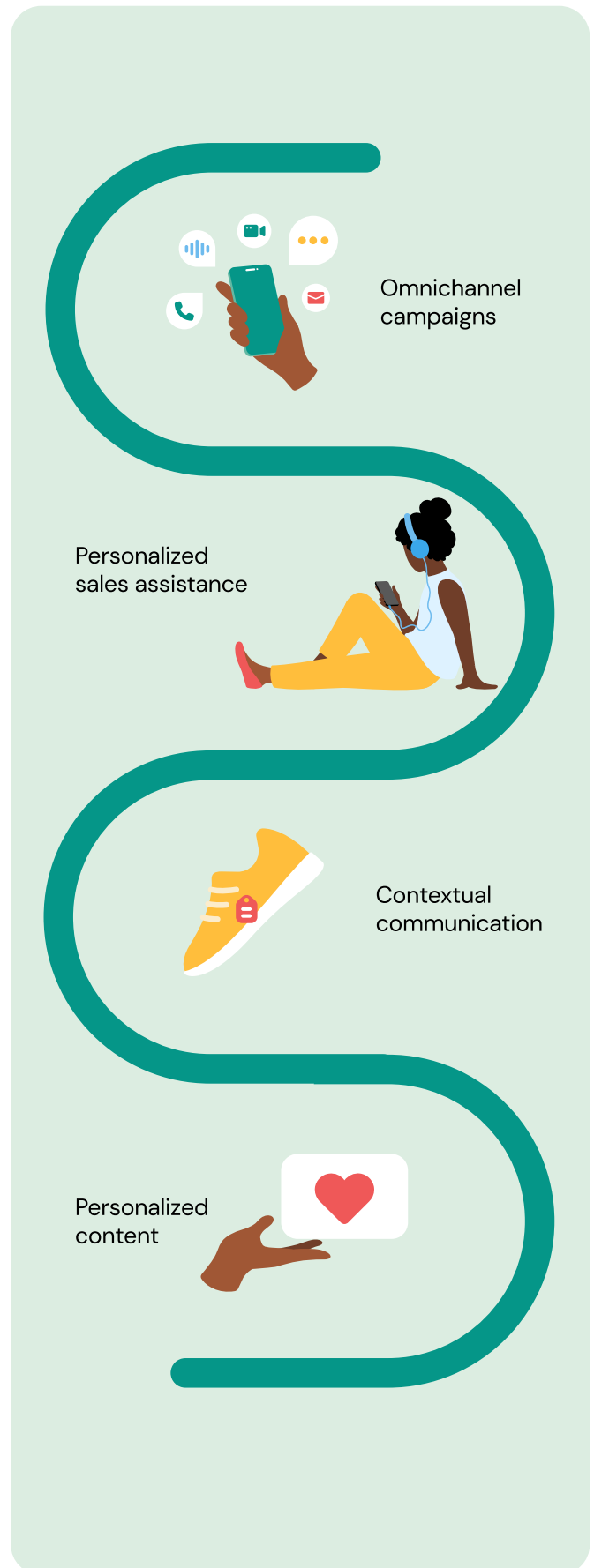
Encourages brands and consumers to connect as the channels are connected. A customer can start a conversation on SMS or in-app and continue it on social messaging.

### 4. Context:

Provides context to customer engagements. Information from conversations on one channel carries over to the next, creating a connected customer experience.

Omnichannel communications allows brands to tag along with customers on their journey – engaging at every touchpoint in the lifecycle from beginning to end. If done right, thanks to omnichannel, your brand can play a memorable role in the everyday stories of customer lives.

Honestly, there are no winning or losing channels in the future of communications. It's about designing the ideal experience for your business and your customers. Take it from our CEO:

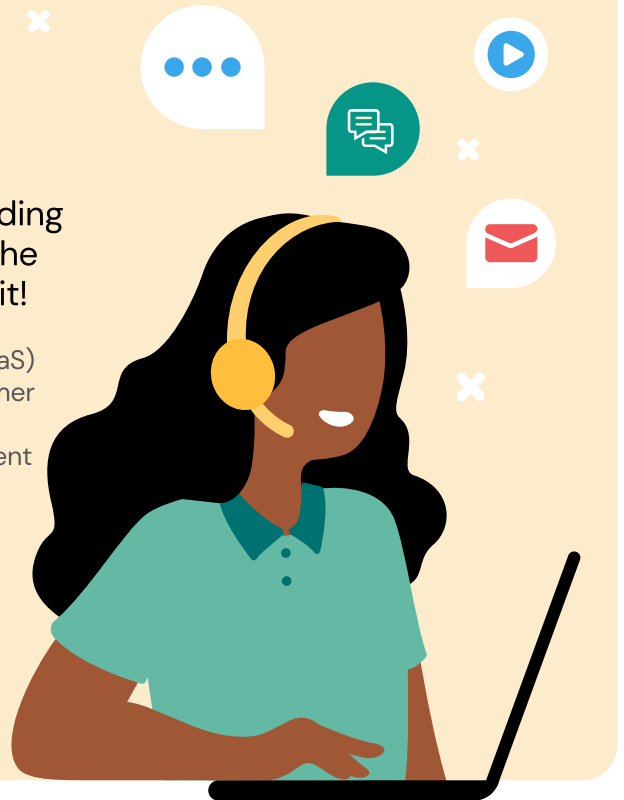


## CPaaS: The secret to managing omnichannel communication

If you're thinking about all these different methods of communication, the everexpanding customer experience, and wondering how the heck brands can handle all of this – we get it!

That's where Communication Platform as a Service (CPaaS) comes in. Think of it as your command center for customer communication. CPaaS offers brands APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and SDKs (Software Development Kits) to help integrate channels into business processes and applications.

CPaaS also includes enterprise solutions for IVR, authentication, mobile marketing, conversational AI, contact center, and number masking to help keep everything anonymous and secure. It's a complete communications solution.



### A robust CPaaS solution comes with benefits

#### 1. Seamless consistency:

CPaaS helps different platforms and channels integrate and talk to each other. It holds all the data for a personalized experience in one place and it connects customers to live agents without missing a beat.

#### 2. Scalability:

CPaaS makes adding new channels or expanding existing ones simple. It's crucial to be on the cutting edge of digital communication methods and adapting at the drop of a hat will keep customers coming back.

#### 3. Flexibility:

CPaaS is highly customizable. It has to be to meet both organization and customer needs. Thanks to a range of flexible APIs, brands can build the best solution and enjoy cool tech like custom chatbots.

#### 4. Privacy and security:

The right CPaaS provider has measures in place to protect sensitive customer data in a compliant way. The platform meets or exceeds regulatory requirements like GDPR and CCPA.

#### 5. Infrastructure:

CPaaS is cloud-based. It comes as standard with wireless carrier relationships and a network of telco partners to back it up. In other words, no extra spending on infrastructure and no carrier negotiations required.

#### 6. Complete solutions:

CPaaS comes with an intuitive user interface (UI) for messaging, voice, video, and email APIs across a single platform.

#### 7. Cost efficiency:

CPaaS reduces the need for multiple vendors across different communication solutions and the need for in-house maintenance. Plus, it's completely customizable, so you only pay for the features you need.

Ultimately, a CPaaS solution makes omnichannel communications easy and more enjoyable for everyone involved: developers, marketers, support, and most importantly, your customers.

#### The questions you need to ask are:

What journey are your customers on?

What role does your brand play in that journey?

How can CPaaS help improve the customer experience?

Believe it or not, we can find some answers about the future of digital communications by exploring myths and legends that have been around for centuries.

## PART 2

## The monomyth and marketing

Many marketers, innovators, and entrepreneurs think of themselves as brilliant storytellers.

But who are we telling stories about, and what kinds of stories do people respond to best? As it turns out, there's a particular type of story seen throughout history and across cultures. It's known as the monomyth or the hero's journey.

Credit for identifying the monomyth goes to literary professor Joseph Campbell who studied different stories worldwide and detailed them in his 1949 book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell noticed common themes and a framework across many different myths, regardless of when (or where) they first appeared.

You'll find it in ancient stories like *The Odyssey* and Native American legends. The hero's journey is present in Shakespeare, Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis. You'll also find monomythic storylines in nearly every Pixar movie and superhero blockbuster.

We're willing to bet that most of your all-time favorite books and movies follow the hero's journey because they tell us something about who we are as human beings. We identify with the heroes and relate to their stories. This kind of story is a powerful tool for developing marketing strategies and improving customer communication.



### Hero's journey basics

Campbell summed up the idea of a hero's journey like this:



A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."

Joseph Campbell,  
*The Hero with a Thousand Faces*



## The monomyth follows an individual who leaves their comfort zone and experiences the unknown.

After overcoming battles, meeting new friends, and fighting their foes, they return home with a reward.

There are several monomyth frameworks. Some get pretty complicated. Campbell's own version has 17 steps, which include mythical descriptions like "Meeting the Goddess," "Belly of the Whale," and "Atonement with the Father." Writer-director

Dan Harmon, the creator of shows like *Community* and *Rick and Morty*, uses a more simple eight-step outline he calls The Story Circle.

We'll base our story in this e-book on steps that author and screenwriter Christopher Vogler outlined in his book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*:

### 1. Ordinary world

The hero is at home and safe but may be unsatisfied.

### 2. Call to adventure

Something happens that requires the hero to take action.

### 3. Refusal of the call

At first, the hero tries to resist going on the journey.

### 4. Meeting the mentor

A wiser, often older character appears and offers help.

### 5. Crossing the threshold

The hero leaves the ordinary world for the unknown.

### 6. Friends, foes, and allies

Challenges arise as the hero meets partners and enemies.

### 7. Moment of despair

The hero must make a sacrifice or may feel that all is lost.

### 8. The ordeal

A final battle is fought as the hero faces the toughest challenge yet.

### 9. The reward

The hero wins the battle in the end and accomplishes the mission.

### 10. The return home

The transformed hero goes back to the ordinary world with the reward.

# Let's look at how these steps play out in two popular films with strong hero's journeys:

Star Wars: A New Hope and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.



## 1. Ordinary world

### STAR WARS

Orphaned Luke Skywalker leads a dull life on Tatooine with his aunt and uncle.

### HARRY POTTER

Orphaned Harry Potter lives under the stairs at his aunt and uncle's home.

## 2. Call to adventure

### STAR WARS

Luke discovers R2D2's holographic message from Princess Leia, asking for help.

### HARRY POTTER

Owls bearing letters from Hogwarts start arriving and invite Harry to join the magical school.



## 3. Refusal of the call

### STAR WARS

Luke tells Obi-Wan he needs to stay on Tatooine and fulfill his obligation to work with his uncle.

### HARRY POTTER

Harry loses hope as his uncle tries to stop the invitations from coming and hides Harry in a lighthouse.



#### 4. Meeting the mentor

##### STAR WARS

After his aunt and uncle are killed, Luke decides to join Obi-Wan, learn to use the Force, and become a Jedi.

##### HARRY POTTER

Hagrid arrives to take the wizard-to-be with him to Diagon Alley and introduce him to the magical world.

#### 5. Crossing the threshold

##### STAR WARS

Luke leaves Tatooine and ventures into the galaxy, taking a quick stop at the Cantina.

##### HARRY POTTER

Harry leaves his normal life behind, boards the Hogwarts Express, and arrives at his new school.



#### 6. Friends, foes, and allies

##### STAR WARS

Luke joins up with Han Solo and Luke joins up with Han Solo, and Chewbacca – Obi-Wan teaches him to use the Force. They rescue Princess Leia and steal plans for the Death Star.

##### HARRY POTTER

Harry befriends classmates Ron and Hermione and meets mentors like Dumbledore. But he also makes rivals like Draco Malfoy and learns about Voldemort.



## 7. Moment of despair

### STAR WARS

Darth Vader and the Empire use the Death Star to destroy the planet Alderaan, killing millions of people.

### HARRY POTTER

Harry and his friends go through a series of dangerous tests. Harry gets separated from Ron and Hermione, leaving him to face the final battle alone.

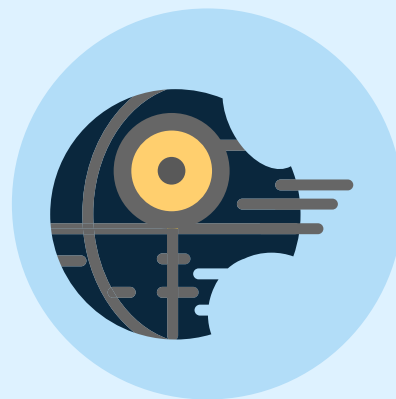
## 8. The ordeal

### STAR WARS

Luke joins the Rebel Alliance and flies an X-Wing. Luke is pursued by Darth Vader but manages to blow up the Death Star.

### HARRY POTTER

Harry comes face-to-face with Voldemort and passes out as Voldemort tries to get the Sorcerer's stone.



## 9. The reward

### STAR WARS

Luke proves himself to be a real Jedi and becomes the hero he was destined to be.

### HARRY POTTER

Harry keeps the stone away from Voldemort, wakes up in the infirmary surrounded by gifts, and is hailed a hero.



## 10. Return home

### STAR WARS

Princess Leia awards Luke and Han Solo medals for their bravery and service to the Rebel Alliance.

### HARRY POTTER

Harry returns to the world of muggles with newfound confidence and the knowledge that he'll be heading back to Hogwarts next school year.

## Your brand's role in a hero's journey

So, how does this apply to your brand's omnichannel communication strategy?

For one thing, sales and marketing professionals can be expert storytellers. But, it's not only the stories you tell customers and prospects that count. What's just as important are the stories you tell yourself about your customers. That's what sets your frame of reference for the target audience and how to reach them.

Imagine your ideal customer as the hero. What part does your brand play in their journey?

In some cases, your brand might play the role of mentor, like Dumbledore or Obi-Wan Kenobi. Your brand might also provide the hero's secret weapon, or maybe something you sell represents the treasure or reward the hero seeks.

Keeping customers at the center of the story helps you access the real emotions people experience as they engage with your brand. Because the truth is, we all make big decisions based on our feelings. We only use logic to justify our emotions about the decision.

A [Harvard Business Review article](#) titled "When to sell with facts and figures, and when to appeal to emotions" says: "If you want to influence how a customer feels about your product, provide an experience that creates the desired emotion."

The hero's journey is a creative framework that can help you view customer personas, build journey maps, and craft experiences.

Interestingly, the customer journey and the hero's journey line up quite well. That's what we'll explore next.



## PART 3

# The hero's journey and the customer journey

Let's be clear, the hero's journey is not a replacement for a customer journey – it's more like another way to look at the path to purchase and overall customer experience.

Before applying the hero's journey to a marketing and communication strategy, you should do customer research, create personas, and develop a marketing funnel.

You'll find that the traditional steps in a customer journey, including awareness, research, consideration and comparison, purchase decision, and loyalty, reflect the steps in a hero's journey.



Let's look at how these journeys align:

## The customer journey



### Everyday life

The customer is in their comfort zone, the usual routine.



### Needs awareness

A problem arises, or a life change occurs, and the customer needs something.

## The hero's journey



### Ordinary world

The hero is at home in a familiar, safe, and predictable place.



### Call to adventure

The hero is called to leave the ordinary world and go on a quest.

## The customer journey



### Research and content consumption

The customer starts looking for solutions, using search engines to find and gather helpful info from experts and thought leaders.



### Consideration and comparison

The customer weighs their options and debates: who can be trusted? Who is on their side? Do people like me do business with brands like this?



### Purchase

It's decision time. The customer must give something up (time, money, etc.) to solve their problem and get what they need.



### Onboarding

The customer has the solution, and it's the moment of truth. Will they learn to use the tool and solve their problem, or will they abandon the journey for a different path?



### Product adoption

The customer experiences the value of the purchase decision. Their problem is solved, and their needs are met.



### Loyalty

The satisfied customer goes back to their everyday life. But now, they have a positive story to tell family, friends, and colleagues.

## The hero's journey



### Crossing the threshold/ meeting the mentor

The hero leaves the ordinary world behind and meets an older, wiser character who helps prepare and guide the hero for the quest.



### Friends, foes, and allies

The hero encounters a cast of characters. Some provide help; others betray the hero or distract them from the mission.



### Moment of despair

On the road to finding the treasure and winning the battle, the hero must pay the price or lose something along the way.



### The ordeal

The hero has power and confidence but must still risk their lives to defeat an enemy or overcome the biggest obstacle of the journey.



### The reward

The hero's mission is complete. They have captured the treasure, defeated the enemy, or found the answers they'd been seeking.



### The return home

The triumphant hero goes back to where they came from. But because of the journey, they are changed, and so is the world around them.

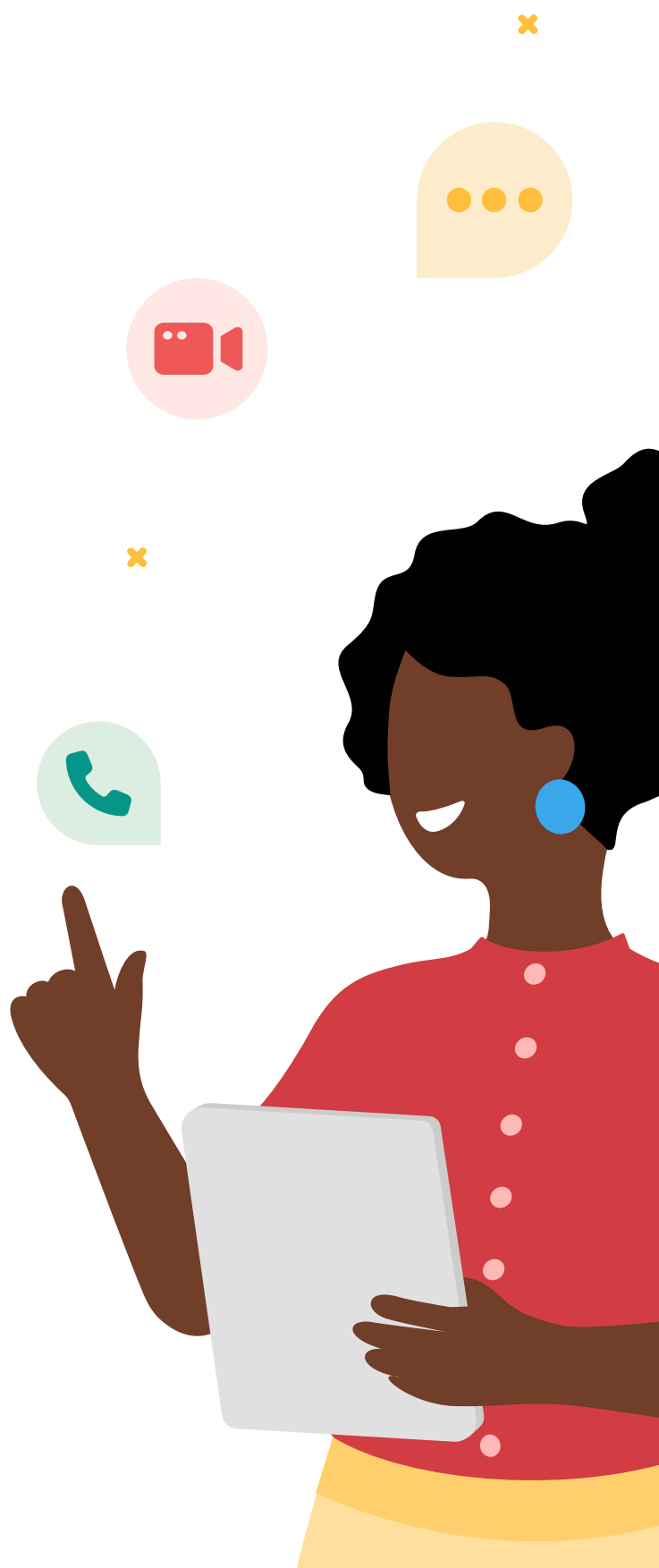
## One of the drawbacks of marketing funnels and journey mapping is that they emphasize the purchase decision.

This might work for big purchases like a new car or choosing a marketing automation platform. But in reality, a customer journey is about more than just making a purchase. There's usually something else at the core of the need. Imagining the customer's life in terms of a hero's journey provides a different perspective.

For example, it's hard to picture a consumer going on a dramatic journey to choose the best brand of organic milk. But choosing the best milk isn't the ultimate goal or the reward they're looking for. Instead, it may be part of a journey towards a healthier lifestyle or more sustainable food choices.

Considering a hero's journey helps you think about the customer experience differently. It helps you build the experience around your customers' everyday lives – not just the purchase itself.

That's also one of the biggest strengths of an omnichannel communication strategy. It lets brands reach customers on the platform they prefer, and it helps them deliver engaging, conversational messages at the perfect time.



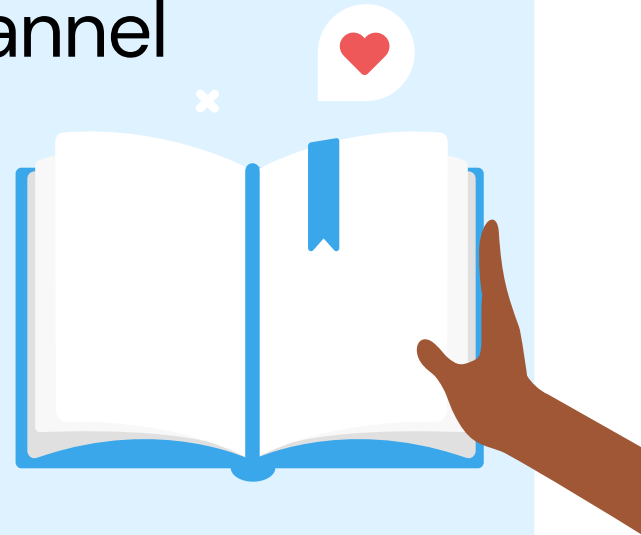


## PART 4

# Delivering an omnichannel customer experience

OK, it's storytime. Are you ready?

In this section, we'll put everything we've talked about so far into a connected narrative that follows a young couple through the journey of becoming first-time parents. We'll tell the tale of how they interact with two brands through omnichannel communications.



## Meet our heroes



### Ryan's bio

32-year-old Ryan is originally from India but came to the U.S. for a job where he met Angie and moved to Austin, Texas.

Ryan works in corporate IT and is very tech-savvy. He always has his phone with him and researches nearly every purchase the couple makes, especially when it comes to big purchases involving their growing family.

Ryan often uses WhatsApp to communicate with friends and family back in India. His mother is very excited about visiting after the birth.



### Angie's bio

29-year-old Angie is an only child who never experienced what it was like to have a new baby in the home. Now she's preparing to be a new mom and has many questions.

Angie plans to keep working at her job as a preschool teacher until a week before her due date. But that means she's busy and needs help keeping track of all the appointments leading up to the big day.

Angie is an active social media user who posts to Instagram every day. She's using the app to document her new parent journey and find trendy baby products.

## Meet the brands

# A+HENA



### Athena Women's Care Clinic

This innovative regional healthcare provider specializes in serving women throughout their pregnancy.

It uses groundbreaking treatments, cutting-edge technology, and a human touch to give expectant mothers all the care and attention they need.

This brand will act as a mentor that provides expert advice on the hero's journey.

### Bambino Baby Products

Millennial parents love this brand's stylish and sustainable options and its exceptional e-commerce experience.

Thanks to creative digital marketing efforts and reliable customer service, the company has grown a lot in recent years.

This brand will act as an ally that provides tools for the hero's journey.



So we've met our cast of characters. Let's dive into the story and learn how our two brands use omnichannel communication to help this young couple navigate a massive life change. We'll use the steps of a hero's journey to tell the story and call out important omnichannel touchpoints as we go.

### Ordinary world

Since getting married four years ago, the Patels have settled into life as a couple without kids. They have lots of friends, free time, and steady jobs. They know children are part of the plan sometime soon, but not today.

Little do they know – their lives are about to change.

## Call to adventure

One day, Ryan comes home from work, and Angie is waiting for him with a positive pregnancy test. They're both shocked. The first thing they need to do is to schedule an appointment with an obstetrician.

While looking into the best doctors in the area, Ryan finds Athena Women's Care, and they sign up for emails on prenatal health.

Omnichannel touchpoint #1

### Email marketing automation

A welcome email from Athena congratulates and encourages the Patels. Because they filled out a form on sign-up, all the emails in the series that follow are personalized and help guide the couple on what to expect as first-time parents.



Heroes sometimes experience what's known as the "Refusal of the Call." i.e. they don't feel they can handle the challenges ahead. It's only natural that expectant parents feel unsure about raising children. The right message, delivered at the right time, helps calm the Patels' worries. It also convinces them that Athena Women's Care is a provider they like and trust.

The first step on their healthcare journey is an appointment with Angie's obstetrician.

Omnichannel touchpoint #2

### Appointment confirmations and reminders

Ryan and Angie opted for appointment confirmations and reminders over MMS when they set up their account with Athena. These multimedia reminders prove super helpful in balancing busy schedules with the demands of pregnancy. Plus, they never miss an appointment and can reschedule if needed. Opting out is always an option if it gets too much though.



## Meeting the mentor

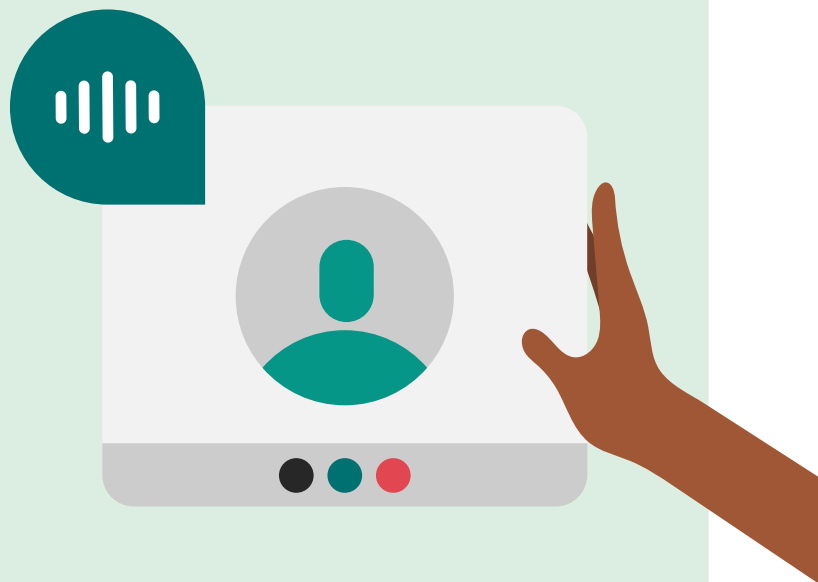
Athena Women's Care offers a birth coaching service for new moms who want a little extra support. Angie's birth coach works from home three days a week. So, some of their sessions will need to be virtual.

Omnichannel touchpoint #3

### Telehealth video calls

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Athena set up in-app video calling so that doctors and specialists could meet patients as safely as possible. It's still a popular way to meet with patients because it fits into busy schedules, reduces costs, and cuts down on no-shows.

Angie and her birth coach meet twice a month. The coach mentors her through the different stages of the pregnancy and preps her for what's to come. All Angie has to do is log in to the app and click a button to start the appointment.



Brands can offer support in many creative ways. It doesn't have to be as direct as this example. Your brand can act as a mentor through educational or informational content to highlight expertise. Don't forget that the Patels will receive emails from Athena directing them to helpful articles, videos, and other resources throughout their journey.

## Crossing the threshold

After that first doctor's appointment, everything feels very real. The Patels have crossed the threshold into the universe of expectant parents. It's a whole new world where they'll need to make a lot of purchases.

Angie and Ryan discover the brand Bambino Baby Products via an Instagram influencer. They both love Bambino's trendy baby furniture. Angie follows them on social media, and the Patels start shopping.

Omnichannel touchpoint #4

### Conversational selling

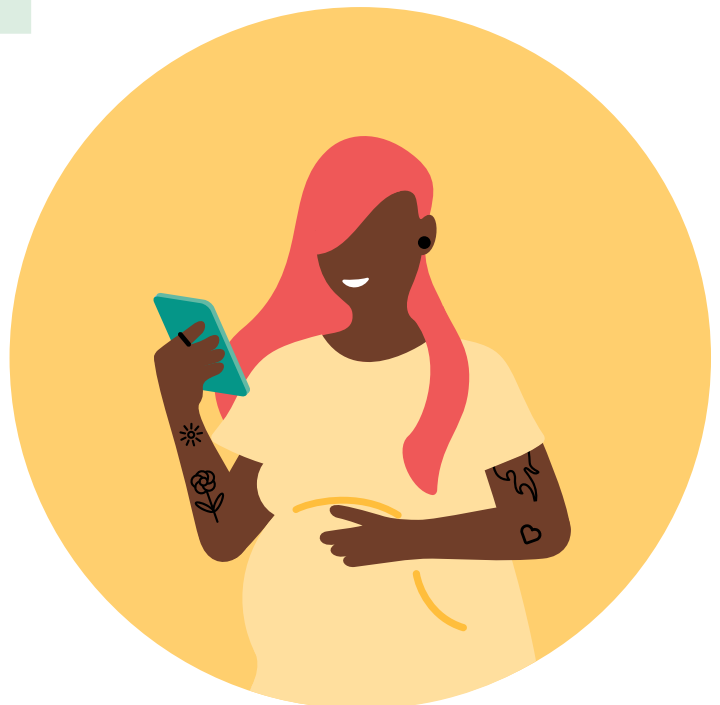
It's not long before Angie has questions, so she messages Bambino on Instagram about a crib she likes. Then, she places her first order via Instagram, thanks to conversational commerce.

Angie has a positive, natural conversation with the brand over automated artificial intelligence (AI). The conversational AI helps with customization, answers her questions, and even cracks a joke. Angie decides to buy some sheets and a changing table that matches the crib.



How should I clean the textiles and bedding in my Bambino baby crib?

All Bambino baby textiles and bedding sets are 100% cotton or terry cloth and are fully machine washable at 40°C



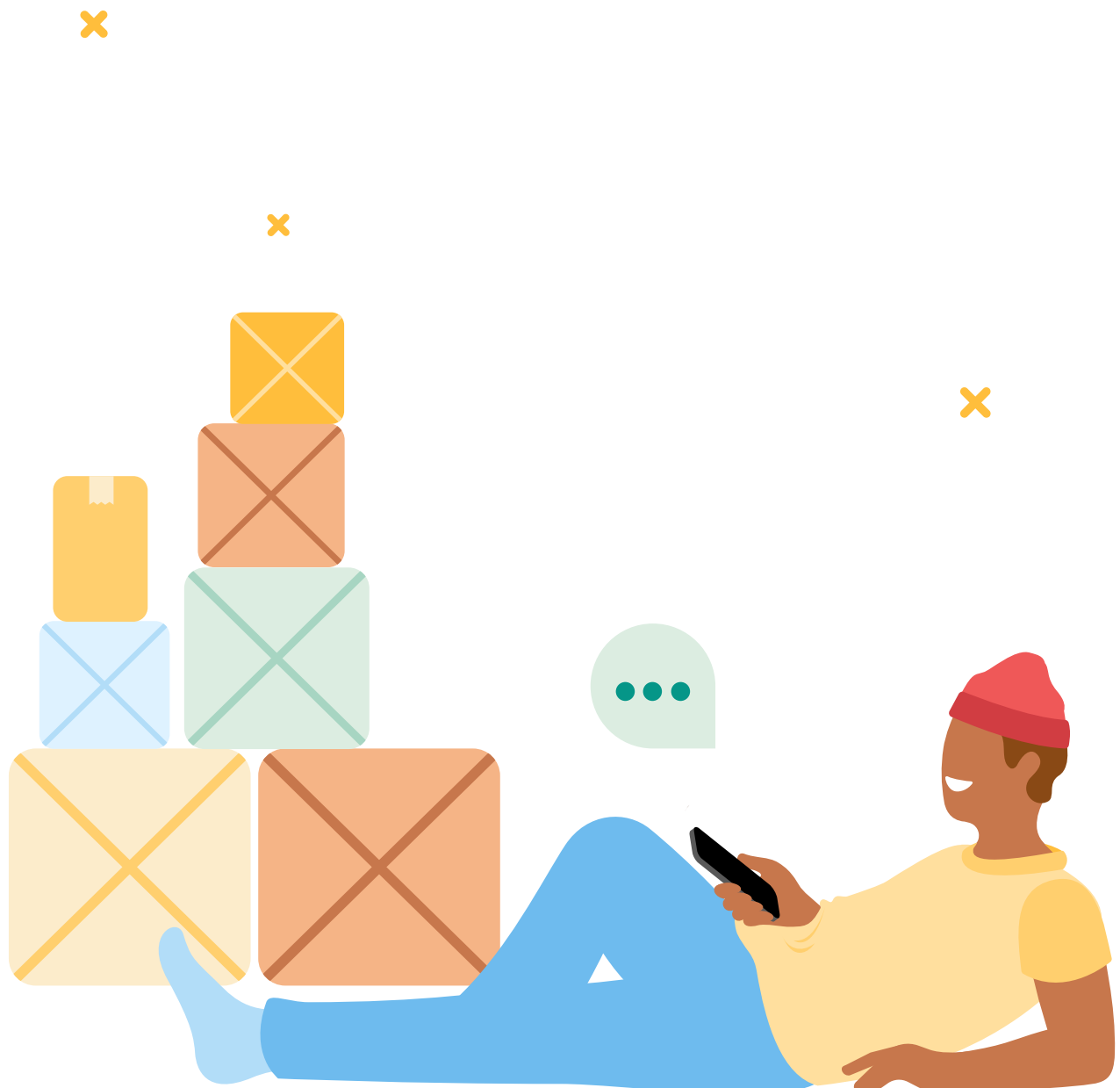
Boxes start arriving at the Patels' door every day. So many deliveries it's hard to know what to expect and when. Because Ryan wants to stay organized, he tracks everything and checks it off the list when it arrives. After all, these products are the tools they'll need to survive in this new world.

Omnichannel touchpoint #5

### Order confirmations and shipping updates

Every time the Patels buy something online, they get a message or an email to confirm. These messages act as receipts and provide helpful tracking information. Ryan also uses SMS to reschedule a few deliveries.

Some order tracking emails include real-time shipping updates; others ask for satisfaction ratings or reviews.



## Friends, foes, and allies

There will be many twists and turns along Angie and Ryan's road to parenthood. Sometimes, brands will bring challenges other times, they help. In fact, customer frustration is the perfect chance for brands to be allies through omnichannel communication.

For example, after ordering a car seat from Bambino Baby, Angie and Ryan decide to install it months ahead of the new arrival. But it's not as easy as they thought. The directions confuse Ryan, and he wants to make sure the car seat is safely installed.

Omnichannel touchpoint #6

### Customer service chats

First, Ryan contacts the Bambino chatbot on WhatsApp for help. But he's still confused, so the bot transfers him to a live support agent.

Now, Ryan can have a two-way conversation with a human being; he can send pictures and get help. The Bambino agent already has Ryan's purchase history and can see the chatbot conversation because it's all integrated into a CPaaS platform. This means no time is wasted repeating product numbers and other basic info.



I've lost my instruction manual – where can I find a new one?

For instruction manuals for our current models, please click [here](#).





Angie has a lot of questions about her health throughout the pregnancy. Is all this heartburn normal? Is back pain a sign of something more serious? When will the baby start kicking? She's not comfortable with random internet advice, so she goes to her healthcare provider. Helpful content is delivered in the personalized emails from Athena Women's Care, but there are times when she needs specific answers right away.

When can I expect the baby to start kicking?

You should start to feel your baby move between around 16 to 24 weeks of pregnancy. If this is your first baby, you might not feel movements until after 20 weeks.

Omnichannel touchpoint #7

### FAQs and beyond

Athena Women's Care has a chatbot to answer common pregnancy questions. They found it helps cut call volume while still giving patients trustworthy and timely information.

Angie learns that heartburn and back pain are perfectly normal symptoms, and she finds out which over-the-counter medications she can take for relief.

However, if she'd had a more complex question, the AI in the chatbot is programmed to know when it's time to transfer Angie to a live healthcare professional for help.

If that happens: the healthcare professional she speaks to will have access to Angie's conversation with the chatbot. Patients can also contact a toll-free, 24-hour nurse hotline when tough questions and urgent situations arise. Angie can even send a text to the same toll-free number if she has follow-up questions.

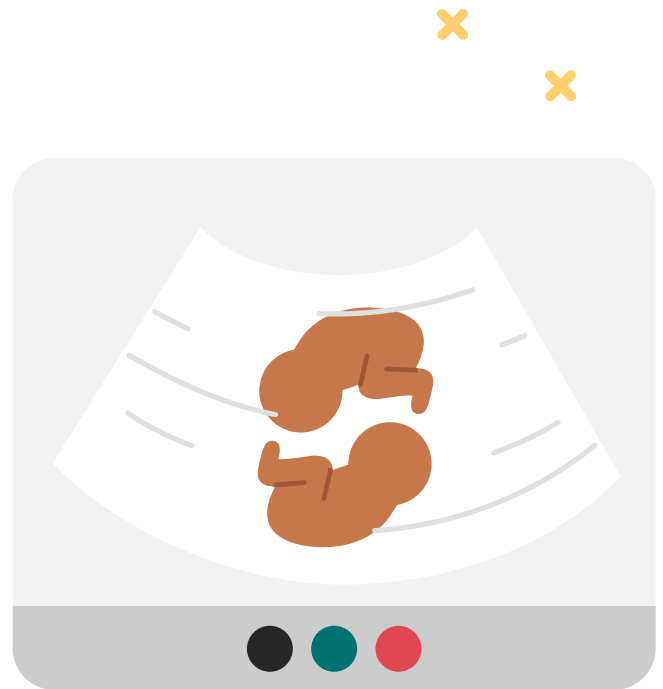
Some challenges are scary; others are just annoying. For example, Angie experiences some forgetfulness (aka pregnancy brain) and can't remember her password for the online account with Athena Women's Care.

#### Omnichannel touchpoint #8

##### Password resets and verifications

Angie requests a password reset in the app, then she can choose to get a one-time passcode via SMS or a flash call on her Android smartphone to verify her identity. With the former, she'll have to enter it into the app manually and with the latter, a dropped call to her phone will allow her to get access seamlessly. Either way, now she's in – it's that easy!

Not only is the experience painless, but it also builds trust in the brand. Angie knows that Athena is protecting her sensitive health information with two-factor authentication.



## Moment of despair

In the hero's journey, the main character eventually hits a roadblock that throws them off course. It's the final plot twist before the big showdown. At this point, the hero questions themselves and their ability to complete the journey.

For the Patels, this moment comes during the ultrasound appointment. They plan to find out if they're having a boy or a girl. Instead, they find out they are having one of each... twins. The news may not cause them to "despair," but they definitely feel overwhelmed.

This is when Angie and Ryan start thinking about the true price of becoming parents. They're giving up their freedom and taking on a massive responsibility. The realization of having twins amplifies all their expectations about the journey.

#### Omnichannel touchpoint #9

##### Email nurturing

Once Athena Women's Care gets the update about Angie's pregnancy, they include the Patels in a new subscribers segment to make sure emails are tailored. Now, the Patels get personalized emails on giving birth to twins. It also connects them to a local parent support network for parents of multiples.

Of course, now that the Patels are expecting two bundles of joy, they need to do more online shopping. Some of their new baby products, like the stroller, won't work with twins.

#### Omnichannel touchpoint #10

### Returns, exchanges, and repeat purchases

Ryan goes to his email inbox to find and print return labels for products still in boxes. For things he's already put together, Ryan finds the order confirmation email, clicks on the embedded 'click to WhatsApp' button and starts a conversation with a customer service representative at Bambino Baby Products via WhatsApp.

Angie prefers SMS for customer communications, and with an omnichannel approach, that can also be a rich experience. RCS (Rich Communication Services) brings an app-like feel to text messaging. Angie can browse different colors and designs for baby products she's already purchased – because now she needs two of everything!

## The ordeal

The peak of the Patels' journey will be the birth of their twins. This is what it's all been leading up to. It's where everything they've learned, all the solutions they've gathered, and everyone who's helped them come together.

Even now, there are opportunities for omnichannel communication to make a difference.

Because having twins is considered high-risk, the Patels decide to schedule a delivery date and have Angie induced rather than waiting for labor to start naturally.

#### Omnichannel touchpoint #11

### The final communications

The couple meets with Angie's doctor and birth coach on a video call to discuss the birth plan. They discuss everything from pain medication to the lighting in the room during delivery. Because this call takes place on the clinic's platform, sensitive medical information is 100% protected.

Since the delivery is scheduled, Athena Women's Care sends the Patels a few reminders ahead of the big day. Encouraging emails and text messages highlight personal items Angie might need during her hospital stay and help boost her confidence.

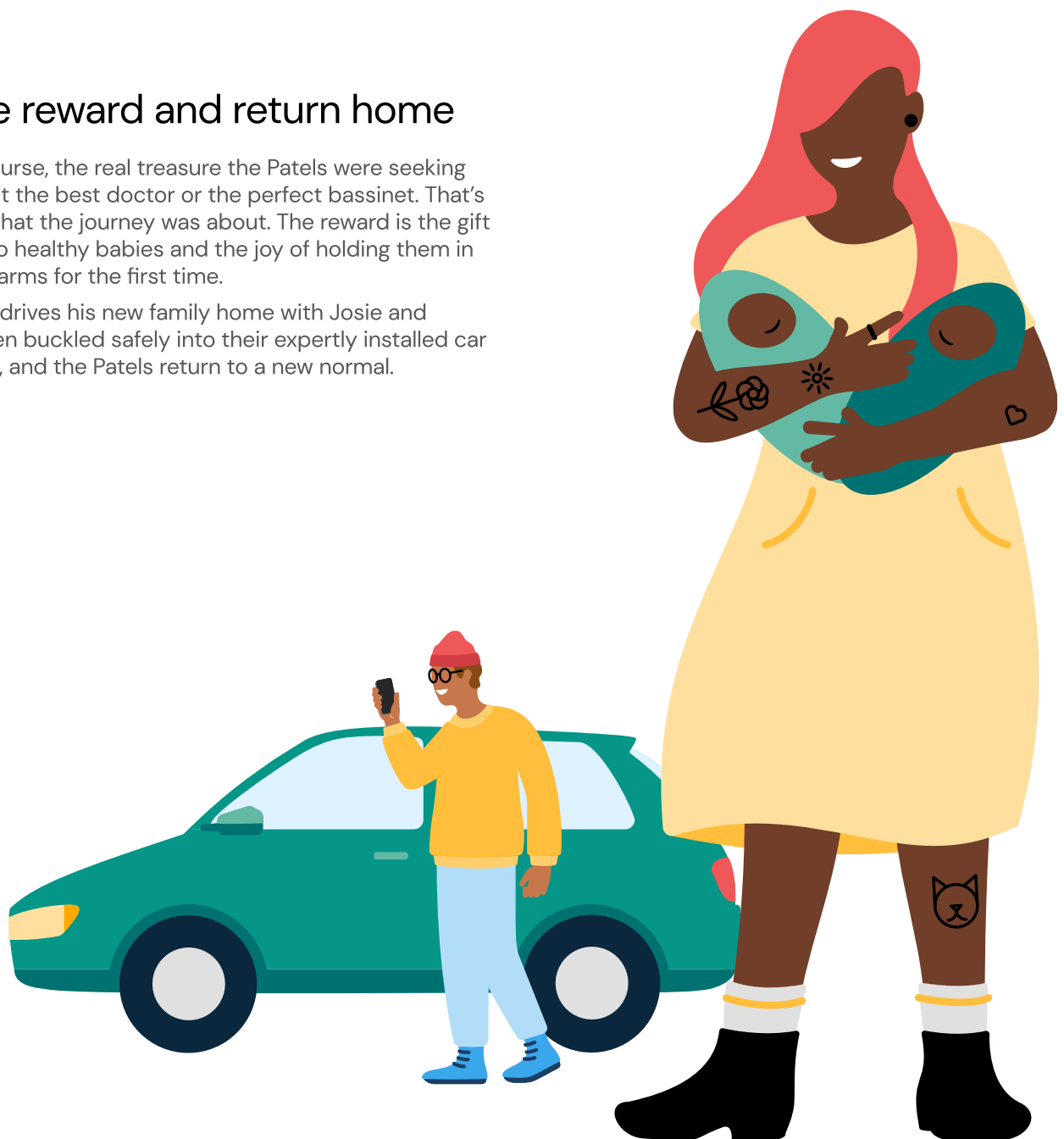


Finally, the moment of truth arrives. While nobody would say that labor and delivery were easy, the twins come into the world without any complications. Angie and the two newborns, Josie and Jayden, are happy and healthy.

## The reward and return home

Of course, the real treasure the Patels were seeking wasn't the best doctor or the perfect bassinet. That's not what the journey was about. The reward is the gift of two healthy babies and the joy of holding them in their arms for the first time.

Ryan drives his new family home with Josie and Jayden buckled safely into their expertly installed car seats, and the Patels return to a new normal.



## How other brands can act as allies

The brands with exceptional customer/patient experiences played an important role in this adventure. But, as one journey ends another begins. In Hollywood, they call that a sequel. For the Patels, it's more like life goes on.

Let's look at how brands in other industries could use omnichannel communication to play the part of an ally, friend, or mentor as the Patels continue their journey into parenthood.

### Food delivery

While Angie is home on maternity leave, she gets her favorite food delivered from local restaurants. Omnichannel communications over email and SMS cover verifying transactions and order tracking. She even ordered a pizza on Instagram.

One day, a driver delivers the wrong order by mistake. Thankfully, Angie can call the driver via the food delivery service's mobile app. The app includes a number masking or anonymous calling feature which means Angie and the driver can talk to each other while keeping their phone numbers private and secure.

### Travel and transport

Ryan's mother is excited to come from India to visit her new grandchildren. Ryan arranges a flight, and the airline delivers email and SMS confirmation messages, mobile boarding passes, flight reminders, and gate change information to grandma's preferred communication channels.

After landing at the airport and requesting a ride, Ryan's mother has trouble finding her driver. But thanks to in-app voice calling, the driver calls and points her in the right direction for pickup.

### Financial services

Ryan and Angie have big dreams for the twins' futures, and college degrees are part of the plan. So, they open college savings accounts for Josie and Jayden a few months after they're born.

They meet with a financial advisor over video chat to discuss a savings strategy. Then they securely set up an online account that includes two-factor authentication. Their bank lets them know via SMS if there's any suspicious or fraudulent activity and emails them monthly statements so they can track their savings progress.

### Media and entertainment

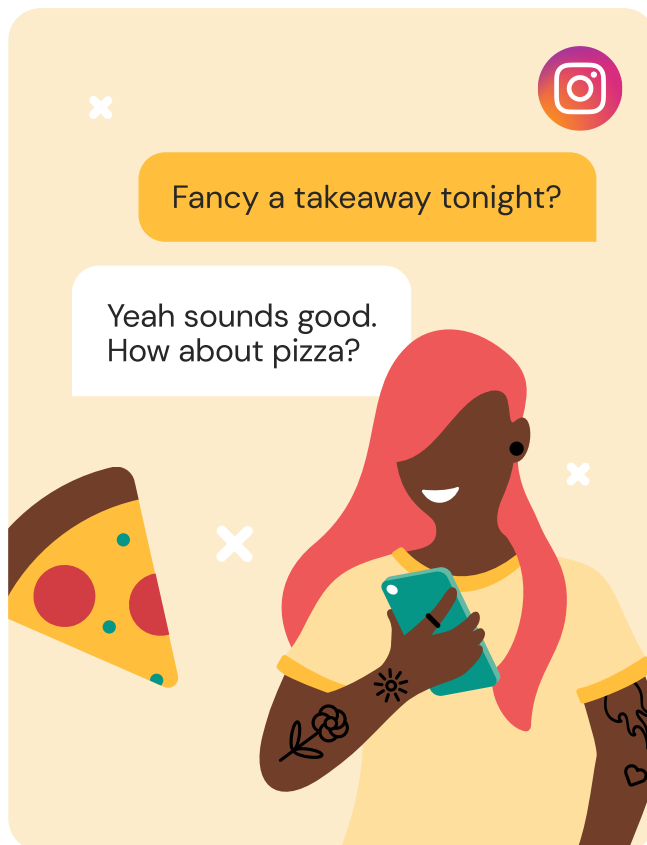
There's plenty of late-night feeds and interrupted sleep in the early days. Thankfully, Ryan and Angie stay awake and entertained bingeing shows on media streaming services.

When they finish the last season of their favorite program, Angie gets email tips on what to watch next. Later, she engages with the streaming service's chatbot on Facebook Messenger to explore more content on the platform. Because the bot's built with conversational AI, it feels like she's having a chat with a friend who knows all about the best movies and TV shows.

### Automotive

The lease ends on Ryan's sports car not long after the twins are born. He and Angie decide it's time to become a minivan family. Rather than take babies to visit a dealership, they buy a vehicle online.

Ryan and Angie get questions about minivan safety answered by a chatbot, and a personalized email delivers them options based on their needs. Instead of a test drive, they take some virtual video tours to learn about the features of their top choices. The sales rep they work with sends them a thank you email after they make a purchase. Finally, Ryan gets SMS notifications about parts recalls and reminders for regular maintenance at the local dealership.



## PART 5

# What about B2B?

We've talked a lot about how an omnichannel communication strategy affects a brand's relationship with consumers.

So, does an omnichannel strategy have a place in the business-to-business marketing and communications? Of course. Can you apply a hero's journey to B2B customers? Absolutely.

After all, it's still a human being at the other end of your messages.



## B2B omnichannel communication

Getting B2B omnichannel communications right is simply a matter of understanding the customer journey, identifying important touchpoints, and determining the best channels and messages for that moment in the journey.

Take a SaaS customer experience as an example. A new customer might:

- ✓ Sign up for email communications and get into a personalized nurture track
- ✓ Reach customer service, sales, or support via a messaging app
- ✓ Join a video call with sales reps to watch a product demo
- ✓ Get email and SMS payment confirmations after signing up for a monthly plan
- ✓ Use SMS for two-factor authentication when accessing their account
- ✓ Receive helpful onboarding content emailed to their inbox
- ✓ Interact with a chatbot for basic support questions
- ✓ Connect with a live agent when things get overly complicated
- ✓ Fill out a customer satisfaction survey using quick reply buttons or interactive email

With a detailed omnichannel strategy and a CPaaS solution to manage it all, companies can provide a seamless customer experience.

B2B brands already taking an omnichannel sales approach are seeing success. According to [McKinsey & Co.](#), 83% of B2B leaders believe omnichannel selling is more effective than a "face-to-face only approach." That's up from 54% who felt that way before the pandemic in 2020.

## The B2B hero's journey

B2B contacts will have personal preferences for different types of communication. Likewise, B2B customers and prospects will go on unique, emotional, and sometimes risky customer journeys leading to purchase decisions and partnerships.

[Research from Google](#) found that B2B relationships tend to be even more emotionally driven than B2C brands and buyers. Google and the CEB Marketing Leadership Council had Motista conduct a survey of B2B and B2C brands with interesting results:



Not only did the B2B brands drive more emotional connections than B2C brands, but they weren't even close... On average, B2B customers are significantly more emotionally connected to their vendors and service providers than consumers.

**Think with Google,**  
From Promotion to Emotion: Connecting  
B2B Customers to Brands



One reason for this is that B2B purchase decisions can be very high stakes. The future of the company or someone's career may be on the line (not to mention large sums of money).

Emotions also run high because multiple stakeholders are often involved in B2B purchase decisions. This means there are also opinions, egos, and personal relationships in the mix.

When imagining a B2B hero's journey, it's important to think about what's at stake and the emotions behind decisions. Since multiple people are involved, it might help to imagine the journey as a cast of heroes.



## PART 6

## Final thoughts: Your journey begins now

Does it feel like you're about  
to enter a strange new world?

Consider this e-book your call to adventure. Will you refuse the call and remain in your ordinary world? Or will you cross the threshold and become the hero your company and customers need?

As you seek the treasure of a better customer communication experience, you'll need to find the right allies and secret weapons to overcome challenges along the way. That means finding solutions and partners that can grow with you on the journey into omnichannel communications.

Your goal is to keep customers at the center of the story. To do that, you'll need an omnichannel communication strategy that creates a positive experience along a customer journey. Remember, the journey, the experience, and communication are all connected.

Going after an omnichannel communication strategy is a huge task that will take time. But every brand has to start somewhere. Think about how to slowly but surely enhance programs to build in the benefits an omnichannel approach can offer.

- ✓ Could you create a more personalized experience?
- ✓ How can you start introducing more two-way communications?
- ✓ Are there ways to integrate channels and apps for more close-knit communications?
- ✓ Which channels are your customers using? Can you add them to your strategy?



The journey of a  
thousand miles  
begins with a  
single step.

Lao Tzu,  
from the "Tao Te Ching"





Your life and your career are full of different journeys. Whether you're going on your own adventure or helping a customer achieve success, you just need to take the first step.



## How we can help



Sinch is the one-stop-shop for all your communication needs, empowering you to reach your customers in innovative ways. From messaging to voice or email, Sinch's customer engagement platform powers meaningful communication at scale on any channel and helps you deliver next-level customer experiences.

Build a mobile-first, connected brand experience with solutions for SMS, MMS, RCS, and all the leading messaging applications. Use Conversation API to connect everything with a single API for an omnichannel experience.

Turn marketing messages into conversation starters, boost sales with virtual assistants, and provide exceptional customer service with ready-to-use application solutions for mobile marketing, customer service, and conversational AI platform.

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