



**Gain Competitive
Advantage: Make
Service Excellence
Your Differentiator**



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Introduction

Nearly 56 percent of U.S. households have access to fiber broadbandⁱ, and that figure is set to reach 73 percent in 2026. As broadband attains near ubiquity, local and regional broadband service providers (BSPs) are vying for competitive advantages in increasingly crowded markets. Their challenge: how to differentiate themselves from a growing array of players—including 5G mobile service providers, Tier 1 fixed providers, and satellite providers—while identifying new opportunities to grow their businesses.

In a Heavy Ready study of BSP C-level executives that explores these competitive pressures, the most urgent priorities for these leaders are business growth/revenue generation, market strategies/new service introduction, and customer experience management. An exploration of growth strategies found most C-levels (60 percent) favor market expansion, either targeting markets outside of residential (such as small business) or extending their reach into new service areas. Other executives intend to deliver on their growth objectives by upselling subscribers on new differentiated services or diversifying their regional subscriber baseⁱⁱ.

The stakes could not be higher: 50 percent of consumers reporting they will switch to a competitor after just one bad support experience; 43 percent are only somewhat confident or not confident that they can reduce customer churn

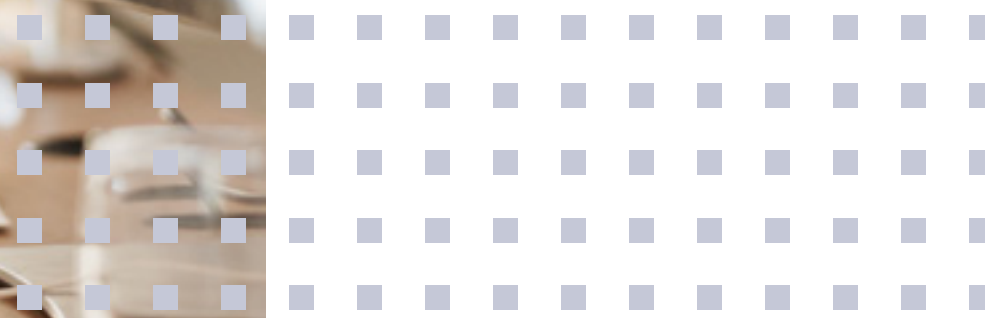




The customer service and support function—once viewed as a cost center—has taken on greater prominence as BSPs seek to capitalize on growth opportunities. For many rural BSPs, service excellence has become their key differentiator, the “secret sauce” in an exceptional subscriber experience, contributing to higher subscriber satisfaction and lower churn. And with 50 percent of consumers reporting they will switch to a competitor after just one bad support experience, the stakes could not be higherⁱⁱⁱ.

This looms even larger in the face of increasing competitive pressure. The Heavy Reading survey found that 43 percent of BSP executives are only somewhat confident or not confident that they can reduce customer churn. With subscriber retention at risk, BSPs need to deliver greater value and provide the subscriber experience to match. Fortunately, the growing adoption of cloud-based technologies dramatically simplifies BSPs’ ability to diversify their business models with managed services and deliver service excellence to increase subscriber satisfaction and loyalty.

This eBook will outline the steps BSPs can take to cement their competitive position throughout the service and support experience. We will explore how they can transform the subscriber experience with managed services, elevate the service experience, and personalize service to meet subscribers where they are. Further, we will examine the critical role of cloud-based technologies and tools in empowering BSP support teams to delight their subscribers and grow their businesses.

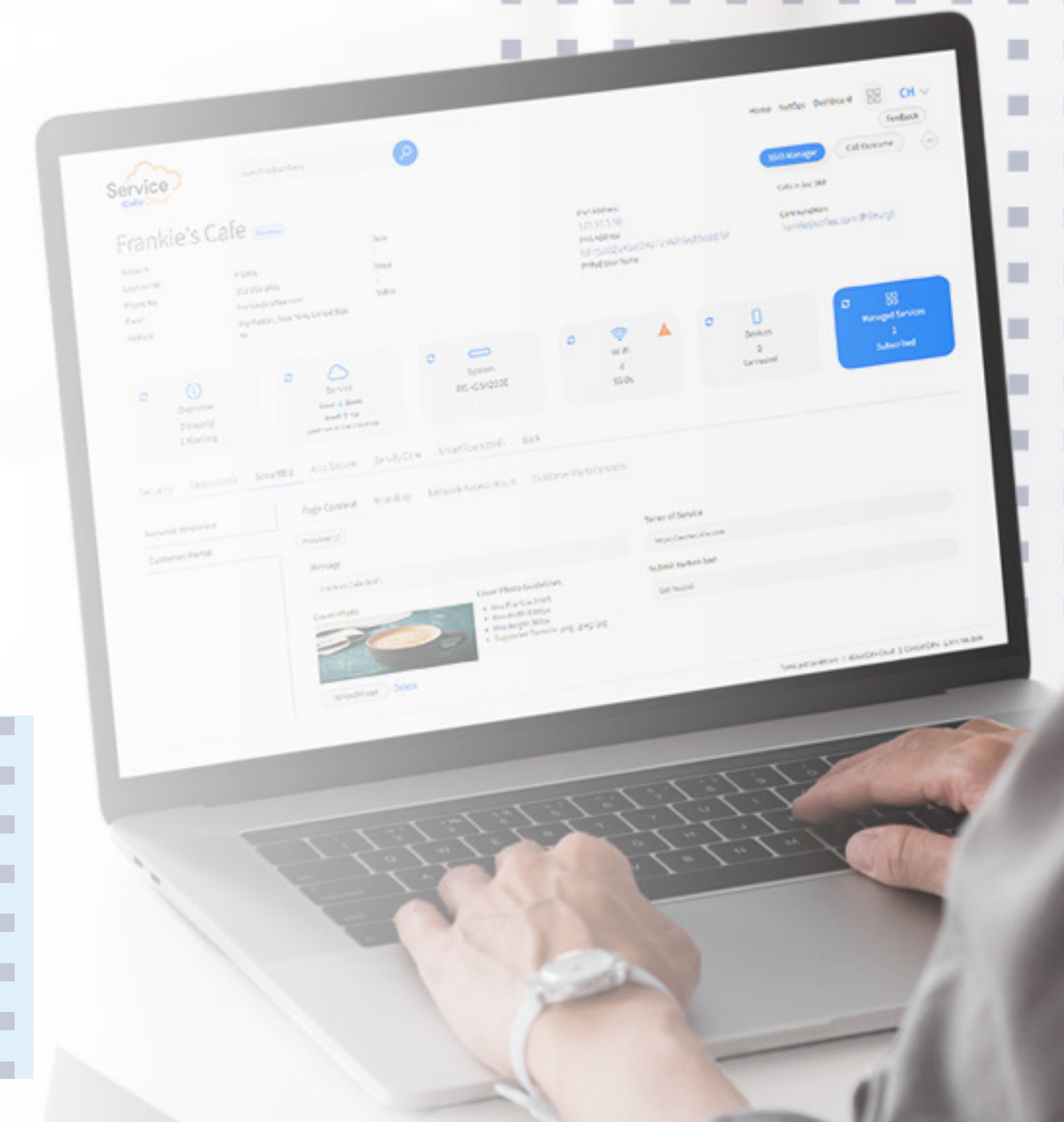


Transform the Subscriber Experience

Elevating the subscriber experience is imperative as broadband markets grow increasingly competitive. Doing so can have a marked impact on the top and bottom lines—research from McKinsey & Company reveals that improving the customer experience increased revenues by 2 to 7 percent and profitability by 1 to 2 percent.^{iv}

By launching and supporting value-added managed services, BSPs can transform the subscriber experience, breaking free from the speed-first mindset that has long dominated our industry. Services like premium managed Wi-Fi, home network security, advanced home controls, and social media monitoring allow BSPs to solve subscribers' problems and personalize the experience. Beyond boosting average revenue per user (ARPU), sticky managed services contribute to higher subscriber satisfaction and lower churn—priority key performance indicators (KPIs) for every service provider.

Core to effectively managing these services and offerings is a support solution that enables the BSP to configure, troubleshoot, and proactively monitor the experience with ease and efficiency. They need a single, intuitive support system that can address the unique needs of subscribers across different managed services as well as market segments without increasing workloads.

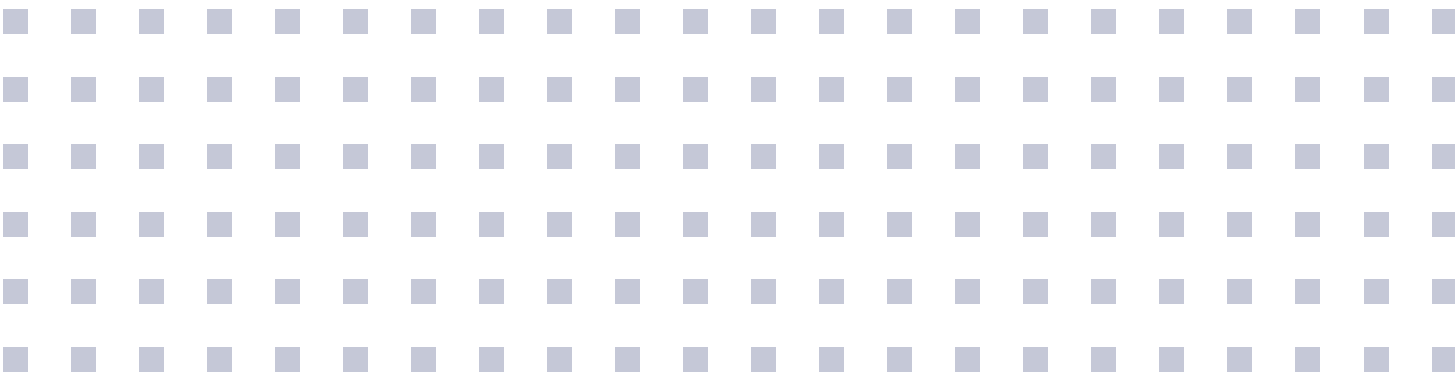


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Seamlessly Manage and Support New Services With Ease

In the not-too-distant past, introducing new services would have taken many months or even years. Thanks to cloud technologies, BSPs have much greater agility. By deploying a cloud-based broadband platform, BSPs can dramatically accelerate service and support velocity, rolling out new, value-added managed services in days or weeks.

The power of the cloud also means that support teams can seamlessly manage and scale new services. Customer service representatives (CSRs) have end-to-end visibility of the subscriber experience, from the WAN to the gateway, Wi-Fi, all connected devices, and even down to the apps. This 360-degree view not only allows support teams to troubleshoot and resolve issues quickly but also enables them to proactively identify and address potential problems before they impact subscribers. The operational efficiency gained can enable service providers to improve OPEX during a time of investment. Service providers can enhance the experience with self-service options, empowering subscribers and relieving pressure on support teams.



OTTC Reduces Truck Rolls by 19 Percent While Launching New Services

Ontario & Trumansburg Telephone Companies (OTTC), a New York-based BSP, launched Calix SmartHome™ managed services on top of their Wi-Fi offerings in weeks instead of months with the help of Calix Service Cloud. The 100-year-old BSP successfully expanded into competitive fiber markets by delivering differentiated value while increasing customer support workflow efficiency. As a result, OTTC lowered operating costs, reduced truck rolls by 19 percent, and reduced mean time to repair (MTTR) by 34 percent.



SCTelcom Transforms Rural Life With Managed Services for Home, School, and Around Town

SCTelcom is a great example of a company winning with managed services and excellent customer support. The Kansas-based cooperative continues a 70-year history of supporting their communities by leveraging the Calix broadband platform and SmartLife™ managed services to expand their business model. They now address three distinct markets—residential, schools and community spaces, and small businesses. Moreover, the platform allows SCTelcom to take advantage of operational efficiencies that support the launch of new managed services. The results are steady business growth, brand equity built on their services' positive impact in their communities, and a customer satisfaction score (CSAT) of 96 percent for upgraded members.

Address New Market Opportunities

With their cloud-based broadband platform in place, BSPs can easily expand the services they offer and the markets they serve with the same support experience reflecting their brand promise. On the residential side, they can start with managed Wi-Fi and layer on additional enhanced services to address subscriber demand, such as home network security, connected cameras, social media monitoring, cellular backup capabilities, and connected device protection.

They can then take advantage of the same platform to move into sectors such as the rapidly growing small business, community, and multi-dwelling unit markets. Because broadband teams can use the same Wi-Fi systems, cloud services, workflows, and training, they are able to dramatically simplify service rollout, management, and support. This means that BSPs of any size can easily build a portfolio of value-added services to not only transform the subscriber experience but also fuel business growth and do so with efficiency and ease.

Elevate the Service Experience

Against a backdrop of heightened expectations, service truly matters to consumers. As noted earlier, consumers place such a premium on good customer service that more than half would switch to a competitor after just one bad experience. Fortunately, consumers also reward those companies that deliver service excellence. Customers who receive value during a service interaction are 82 percent more likely to repurchase or renew when given the opportunity to switch.^v

But today's consumers want more. They want to feel unique and special; they want personalization. A McKinsey study found that 71 percent of consumers expect brands to personalize their interactions, and more than three-quarters of consumers get frustrated when that does not happen.^{vi} For companies that get personalization right, the payoff can be huge—70 percent of consumers purchase more from companies that offer seamless, conversational experiences that feel personalized.^{vii}

As broadband connectivity rapidly moves toward commoditization, elevating the subscriber service experience takes on even greater importance. Further research from McKinsey shows a strong correlation between telco subscriber satisfaction and retention, with overlap as high as 80 to 90 percent in some markets.^{viii} The top drivers for high satisfaction and retention? Subscribers' perception that they are being well taken care of by their service provider and that the company provides exceptional customer experience and support. Value for money follows closely behind. BSPs can hit the sweet spot of satisfaction and retention by providing subscriber-centric services at exceptional value, paired with personalized support.

McKinsey
& Company

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CTC Reimagines Their Service Experience and Subscriber Satisfaction Soars.

Minnesota cooperative CTC has taken advantage of Calix Cloud® to completely transform their service experience—and their business. During the pandemic, they developed their Broadband in a Box™ solution to set up new members without an in-home visit. Calix Service Cloud allows CSRs to monitor activations and ensure installations are successful. With complete visibility into their members' experience, they can diagnose and remotely troubleshoot most issues. CSRs can identify and resolve potential problems before members are aware of them. This proactive approach enabled CTC to eliminate 50 percent of truck rolls and connect 95 percent of new subscribers remotely—accelerating expansion while reducing operating costs. And their subscribers love the convenient, efficient, and fast service activation. In their first Net Promoter ScoreSM (NPS®) survey, CTC achieved a 69. That's 122 percent higher than the industry average. The best part: More than half of their "promoters" cited customer support as the primary reason for their high rating.

Personalizing the Service Experience From the Beginning

BSPs can personalize service from Day 1—at installation. Field service teams play an integral role in shaping the overall service experience—they are among the first interactions subscribers will have with their BSP. They are on the front lines of proactively addressing subscribers' pain points and delighting them with highly personalized service.

Thanks to cloud-based subscriber management systems, self-service mobile apps, and field service apps, it's easier than ever for BSPs to personalize service. Support teams can tailor installation processes to meet subscribers where they are, whether they are technophiles or technophobes, or somewhere in between. Options include:

- **Do-it-yourself installation.** Tech-savvy subscribers can take the DIY approach, using a mobile app to complete their self-install and immediately take advantage of managed services. In addition to increasing subscriber satisfaction, the DIY route enables BSPs to dramatically reduce truck rolls and associated OPEX.
- **Assisted self-installation.** Some subscribers might prefer a light touch over a full DIY approach. An assisted option gives subscribers the independence of self-installation with the support of their CSR to quickly get connected.
- **Onsite installation.** For subscribers that don't want to deal with installation at all, field technicians still make onsite visits to set up systems and activate services. With this personalized service, subscribers rest assured everything is running properly.

Optimizing Field Service with Ease and Efficiency

Just like the role of a CSR has evolved beyond trouble tickets and case management, the role of a field technician has evolved beyond installing and fixing on-site problems. They now act as brand ambassadors, educating subscribers about services and best practices to enhance their experience. To succeed in this expanded role, technicians need the right tools and data-driven insights when they are on the go.

BSPs can use a mobile app to give technicians a mini operations command center in their pocket. The Calix Field Service app provides technicians with end-to-end visibility of the subscriber home network, allowing them to diagnose and resolve problems faster. Capabilities like speed testing to the residential gateway or optical network terminal (ONT) and a Wi-Fi analyzer enable technicians to optimize device placement and make personalized upgrade recommendations to offer a better experience. Field techs can also use guided workflows to complete essential quality or educational points, increasing subscriber satisfaction.

These capabilities simplify troubleshooting and help reduce operational expenses by minimizing return visits and unnecessary truck rolls.



Give Subscribers What They Want, Where and When They Want It

Key to service personalization is ensuring that subscribers can access support where and when they want it. Subscribers' needs can vary greatly, so, when they do need support, it's important that they can use the channels they prefer.

While telephone and in-person continue to rank among the most popular support channels overall, more than half of consumers (57 percent) want to access service via digital channels.^{ix} But above all, they want options: 75 percent of consumers will use multiple channels in their interactions with brands.^x These can include email, phone, in-person, self-service mobile apps, online chat, online portals, text/SMS, messenger apps, online knowledge bases, social media, online communities, and video chat.

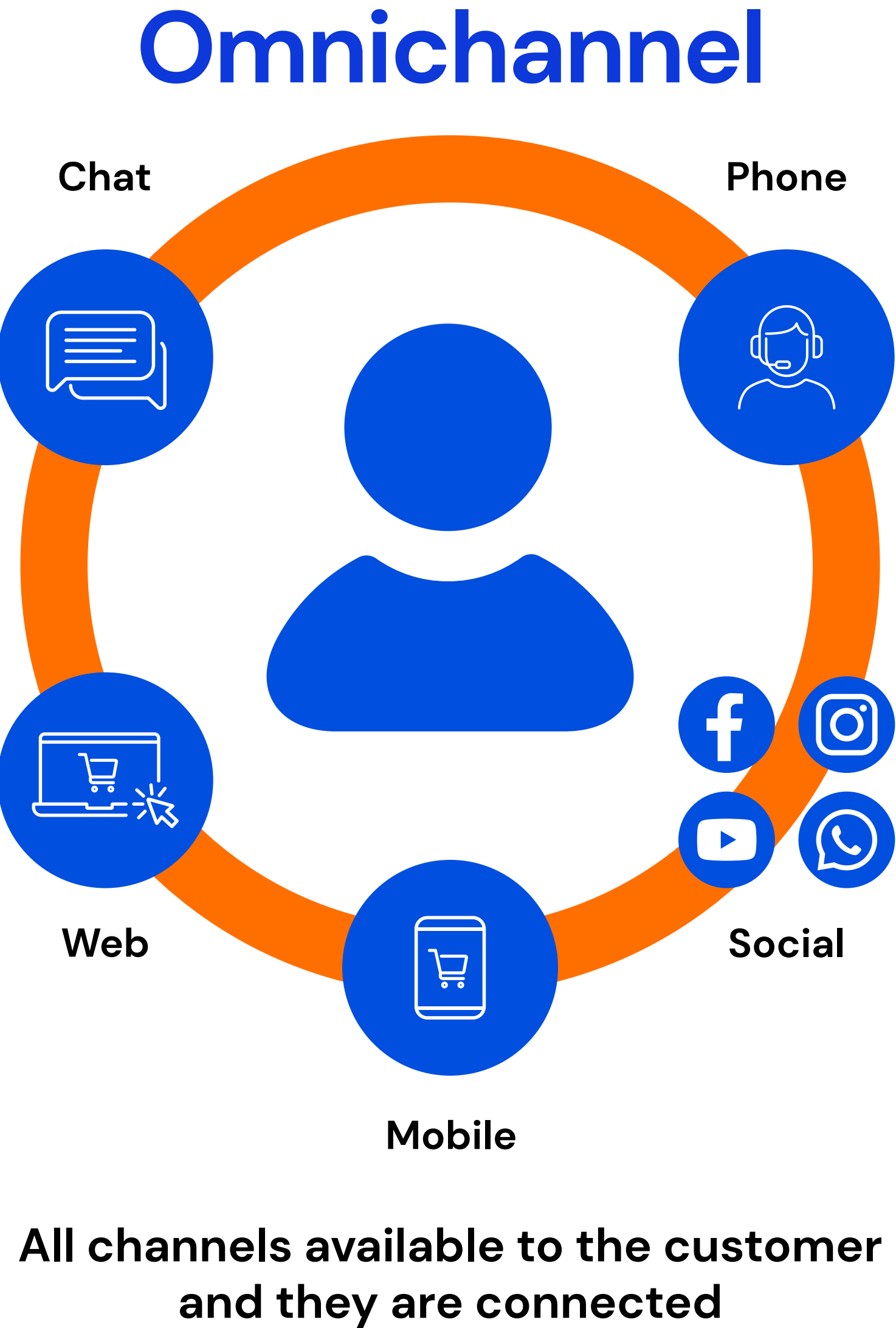
Service providers need to determine which support channels will best meet the needs and preferences of their subscriber base. Leveraging subscriber data and insights will help guide their service channel strategy. For instance, if they know that most of their subscribers are baby boomers, they may rely more on traditional channels like phone and email. Similarly, if a BSP serves mostly millennials, they'll want to be prepared to interact via social media, online forms, chat and text. It's all about meeting subscribers where they are.



The Path to Omnichannel Support

Because subscriber bases are generally not monolithic, most BSPs today are already offering multichannel support—phone and web, with some also having social media and chat capabilities. But the ultimate goal is to move beyond select channels and provide a more integrated, omnichannel support.

Here, a subscriber would use their preferred communication channel—perhaps a mobile app or chat—to submit their service request. Once the request is in the system, the subscriber receives tailored engagement to solve the problem. If necessary, the subscriber might be connected to a CSR who has the history at their fingertips. As the interaction continues and moves, the history and context also move making the experience more consistent, which benefits both the support team and subscribers.

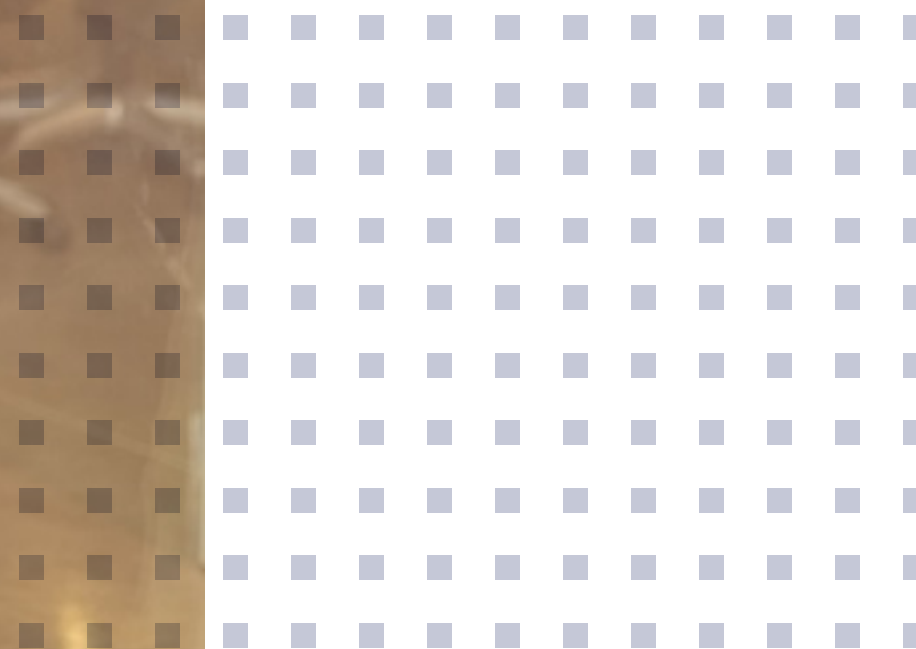




Powering the Service Experience at Scale

Service providers are increasingly taking advantage of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language to automate operational workflows and drive greater efficiency. Research estimates that more than 80 percent of support tasks and 50 to 80 percent of subscriber contacts can be automated with AI.^{xi} This approach frees up the support team to do more challenging and creative work like proactive care. It also enables this automation to evolve so the experience is tailored to the subscriber for a more personalized engagement at scale. Life becomes easier for both the support team and the subscriber.

For instance, recommendation engines that leverage subscriber experience and network intelligence can accelerate resolution by providing guidance to narrow the list. These engines also give CSRs real-time subscriber insights that help them personalize the experience with relevant product and service suggestions. We are just scratching the surface with these advanced capabilities—new support use cases will emerge just as quickly as the technology is evolving.



Conclusion

As BSPs face new competition in increasingly saturated markets, it's vital for them to establish their competitive advantage. For many rural and regional BSPs, providing outstanding customer support has been a defining differentiator. These BSPs now have the opportunity to take this differentiation to the next level and deliver service excellence throughout the support experience.

It starts with transforming the subscriber experience with new and exciting managed services. By embracing managed services, BSPs can not only increase subscriber satisfaction and retention, but also diversify their business model to fuel growth. At the same time, support teams can elevate the service experience by anticipating subscriber needs and providing attentive, personalized support from the very first interaction with subscribers. Support teams can take personalization even further by meeting subscribers where they are—in their preferred channels—and deliver an engaging experience that increases subscriber satisfaction.

To deliver at every step of this journey, support teams need to implement cloud-based technologies and tools. Backed by advanced subscriber management systems, support teams gain unparalleled visibility into subscriber insights and network intelligence. They can introduce, support, and scale managed services with ease, and move beyond reactive support to proactively address subscribers' pain points. And they can deliver service excellence that drives higher subscriber loyalty and retention. Now that's a competitive differentiator.

[Schedule a consult today to learn how you can achieve service excellence with Calix.](#)



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