

Online is the consumers' choice

Web is 'cheaper and more reliable' than call centres

By Tash Shifrin

Most consumers find dealing with commercial organisations online more convenient, more reliable and cheaper than going through a call centre, new research has found.

A survey of 1,000 people from across the UK and Ireland found that internet services were thought to offer greater 24-hour convenience than call centres by 89% and to be more reliable by 68%.

Online services were thought to be cheaper than ringing a call centre by 92% of respondents to the survey carried out by marketing firm Vanson Bourne for enterprise software company CA. The survey also found that 77% of consumers felt navigation was speedier online.

By contrast, 70% of those surveyed had been asked – either “occasionally” or “frequently” over the past year – to call back because call centre systems were slow or had gone down.

The perception that consumers would receive a better service on the internet is pushing increasing numbers to switch to dealing with commercial organisations online in preference to other channels. More than half of those surveyed said they now interacted solely online with their bank, while 37% dealt only online with their telecoms or mobile phone provider.

Bradley de Souza, CA's UK and Ireland industry development director for communications, media and entertainment, said: “Consumers are now viewing call centres as a premium service and have higher service expectations associated with them, and call centres are failing to raise the bar.”