

# Delivering great customer service

Here at Hermes we've recently commissioned an international report into usage and attitudes towards parcel deliveries.

Now in its fifth year, this independent research is designed to track trends in purchasing habits and delivery requirements, as well as exploring attitudes to existing services and needs of online shoppers across three European countries. It is our aim to provide valuable insight not only to our customers, but also to the wider retail community. We're committed to gaining a better understanding of how the international consumer buys online, as well as demonstrating our support for the continued growth in internet shopping, both in the UK and overseas.

The research was carried out by BDRC Continental, an independent, full-service market research agency with over 20 years specialising in transport, logistics, travel, and hospitality research. BDRC have experience of carrying out surveys in over 80 countries and this year we have expanded our sample to include 1,000 online shoppers from France, in addition to the 2,000 people in the UK and 1,000 people in Germany who had taken deliveries from e-retailers at least three times in the preceding three months. We've also included new insights into how consumers shop online, such as research into multichannel shopping behaviours and the returns process.

## How research helps

At Hermes, as the UK's leading consumer delivery experts, we want to make sure that the parcel recipient is receiving the customer experience they deserve. That's why it's important for us to use our research findings to tailor our offering and make the services we have work as hard as they can. Last year we introduced an industry-first Sunday delivery service, as a result of our 2012 report, which showed 59% of people had asked to receive parcels on Sundays. This year's report again gives us a valuable insight into international delivery preferences and has allowed us to think about how we can improve our services once more. We've outlined some of the most important findings in this white paper to help you discover ways in which your business can interact with your consumers in a way that leaves them satisfied.

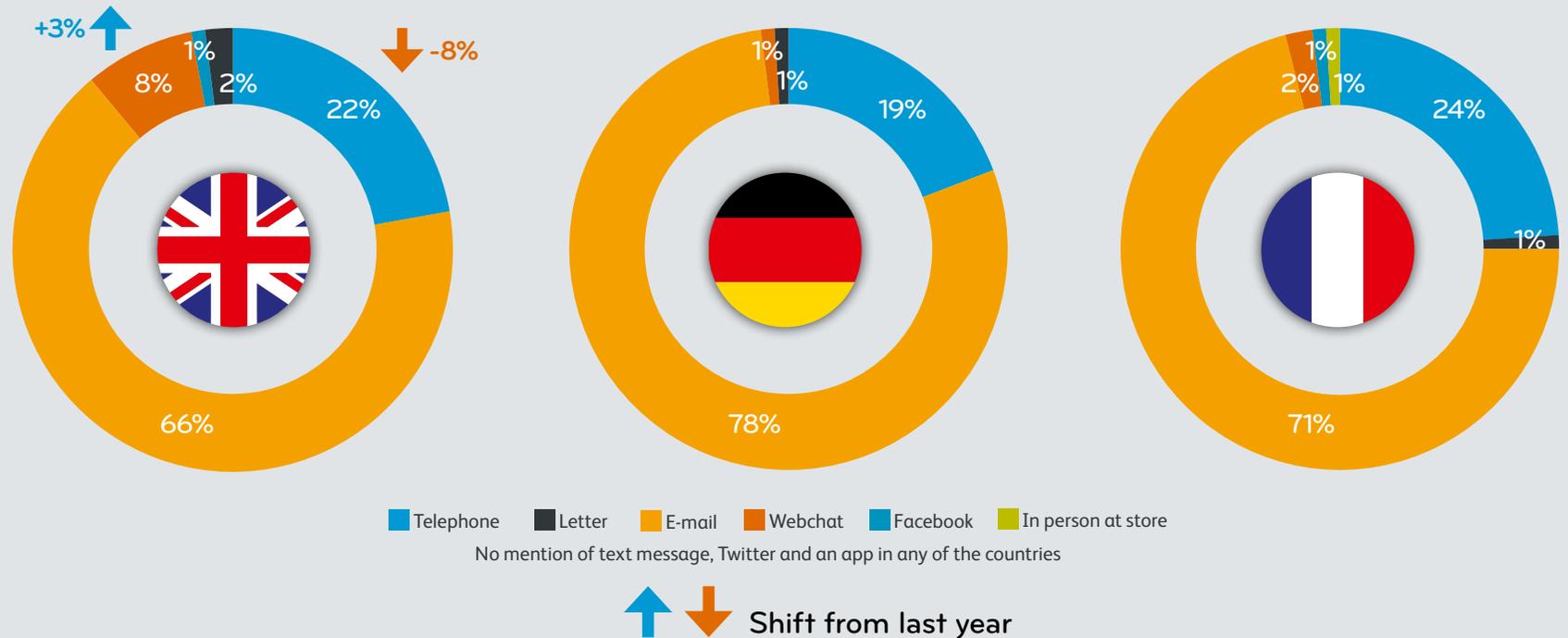
# VIEWS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES

## Preferred way to contact the retailer on customer service issues

Out of all the channels of communication between consumer and retailer, the clear favourite is e-mail. Well over half of the correspondents stated that this was their preferred way to get in touch. The biggest reason for using e-mail, agreed across all countries, is how easy it is. An average of over 80% stated that this was the top reason for using e-mail, with many also agreeing that it

helps in keeping a record of correspondence. The second favourite channel is telephone, with roughly 20% of those questioned stating this as their chosen method of getting in touch. The main reason for using the telephone was given as preferring to speak to a person, although those questioned in Germany tended to agree it was “easy to do” and was a “good way to clearly communicate the problem.”

In the UK, webchat is an increasingly used method of contacting retailers, with a 3% rise in usage upon last year. Those questioned gave their reasons for using webchat as “it is easy to do”, and “delivers a much quicker response”. Very few people chose to send a letter or get in touch through Facebook, and even fewer chose to see someone in-store.



Base: All regular online shoppers (UK 2,003, Germany 1,003, France 1,000) Q22, Q23

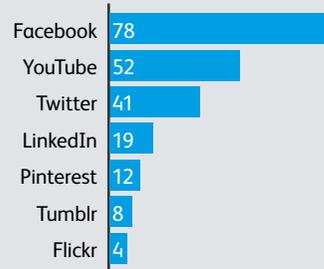
Web chat – sample size too small for analysis

# VIEWS ON VOICING DISSATISFACTION WITH ONLINE RETAILERS

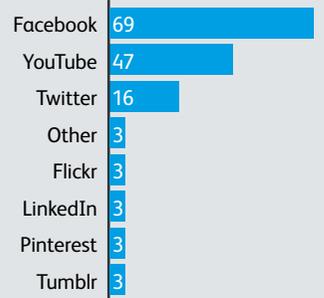
## Social media usage for voicing dissatisfaction with online retailers

We asked the online shoppers who had experienced a customer service issue if they had interacted with a retailer on social media. With Facebook being the most-used social media website, it's no surprise it came out on top as the most-used site to express dissatisfaction with a retailer.

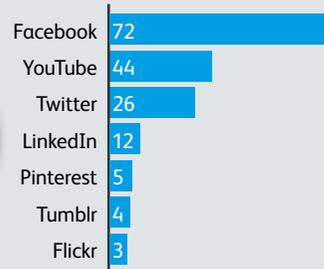
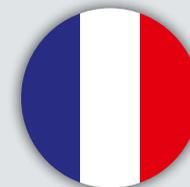
### Social media websites used (%)



87% use social media websites



81% use social media websites



82% use social media websites

### Social media websites used to express dissatisfaction with retailer



24% posted a comment on their Facebook page

18% tweeted a comment

13% posted a comment on retailer Facebook page

8% posted a comment on a forum

5% posted a comment on a blog

Not used social media for that purpose (net) 59%



12% posted a comment on their Facebook page

9% posted a comment on retailer Facebook page

6% tweeted a comment

6% posted a comment on a forum

3% posted a comment on a blog

Not used social media for that purpose (net) 78%



21% posted a comment on their Facebook page

15% posted a comment on retailer Facebook page

12% posted a comment on a forum

10% tweeted a comment

8% posted a comment on a blog

Not used social media for that purpose (net) 62%

Base: All who use social media websites (UK 1,735, Germany 777, France 805);  
All who use social media to complain (UK 708, Germany 160, France 295) Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27

# VIEWS ON VOICING DISSATISFACTION WITH ONLINE RETAILERS

## Social media usage for voicing dissatisfaction with online retailers

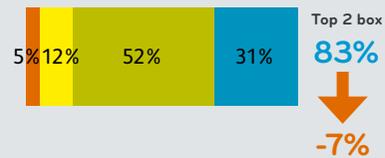


Received response directly from the retailer

58%

Satisfaction with retailer's response

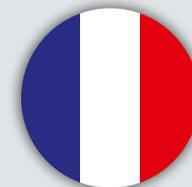
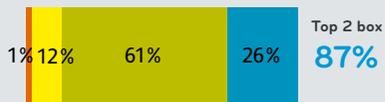
Not at all satisfied Not very satisfied  
Quite satisfied Very satisfied



64%

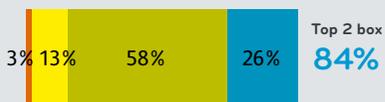
↑ +9%

Not at all satisfied Not very satisfied  
Quite satisfied Very satisfied



67%

Not at all satisfied Not very satisfied  
Quite satisfied Very satisfied



Upwards of 20% of respondents had posted a comment on their Facebook page in the UK and France to express a problem with a retailer. However, Germans are more private, with 78% never having used social media to complain. The UK leads with the use of Twitter to register their unhappiness, with 18% having tweeted about their dissatisfaction, whereas France and Germany fall back to 10% and 6% respectively.

Between 58% and 67% of those surveyed received a response directly from the retailer, with the largest proportion of those being quite satisfied with the reply they received. Upwards of 83% said they were either quite or very satisfied, however this figure has fallen by 7% in the UK in the last year.

Base: All who use social media websites (UK 1,735, Germany 777, France 805);  
All who use social media to complain (UK 708, Germany 160, France 295) Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27

↑ ↓ Shift from last year

# THE RETAILER'S RESPONSE

## Reasons for dissatisfaction with the retailer's response



- 'Because they still tell you to ring them.'
- 'They didn't actually respond, they blocked me from their page.'
- 'It appeared to be a standard response.'
- 'They were trying to blame me for their services.'
- 'They did not address the problem and basically blagged me off.'
- 'They were not very helpful.'
- 'They still did not offer a solution to the issue.'
- 'They promised a phone call from their customer excellence team that never materialised.'
- 'Took several days and I am still waiting for a refund.'
- 'They just said they were sorry but did nothing to fix the issue; it was only sorted out when I called them.'



- 'Because the retailer was convinced of the quality of their goods and did not accept my complaint.'
- 'There was a delay in receiving the reply.'
- 'Answer was inadequate.'
- 'The response was rude.'
- 'It was a standard response.'
- 'They would not admit their mistake.'
- 'They did not solve the problem. They have directed me to their customer service.'
- 'The retailer was not interested in my complaint.'



- 'Reply was ambiguous.'
- 'It has not resolved my problem.'
- 'They have directed me to their customer service.'
- 'Inadequate and incomplete response.'
- 'I have waited too long for a response.'
- 'No response.'
- 'It was a standard response.'

Base: All who had response from retailer (UK 404, Germany 104, France 193) Q28

# EXPECTING A RESPONSE

## How quickly would you expect a response?

Weekdays are when people expect the quickest responses, with an average of 37% anticipating a reply within a couple of hours if they complain on social media during the week between 8am and 6pm. Consumers are more patient if they complain after 6pm on a Friday, or over the weekend, with over 60% expecting that they will have to wait more than a day for a response.



	Within 1 hour	Within 1-2 hours	Within 2-4 hours	Within 4-8 hours	Next working day (24-48 hours)	Third working day (48-72 hours)	Within 7 days	Don't know
Monday-Thursday 8am-12noon	20%	23%	15%	14%	18%	2%	1%	7%
Monday-Thursday 12noon-6pm	15%	24%	16%	12%	22%	3%	1%	7%
Monday-Thursday past 6pm	6%	9%	9%	10%	52%	5%	2%	7%
Friday 8am-12noon	16%	19%	16%	14%	17%	9%	2%	7%
Friday 12noon-6pm	14%	18%	15%	12%	20%	10%	4%	7%
Friday past 6pm	5%	8%	7%	7%	40%	18%	6%	8%
Saturday any time	5%	8%	10%	7%	33%	21%	8%	8%
Sunday any time	4%	6%	8%	5%	44%	17%	8%	8%

Base: All who use social media to complain  
(UK 708, Germany 160, France 295) Q29

## Conclusion

Our research findings have revealed a lot about how customers want to interact with your business, and their preferred channels. We know it's important for you to keep your customers happy, and that's why we make it our top priority. Investing in research has helped us to understand the mentality of the online shopper, and has enabled us to tailor our service, so that every parcel you send leaves a smile at the other end.

Here at Hermes, we can offer you and your customers our free Parcel Manager service which will provide your customers with real-time parcel information through our mobile app, e-mails and SMS messages. By keeping the customer informed at every step of the way, it reduces the number of parcel-related customer service enquires to your contact centres.

**To find out how Hermes can help you to develop a delivery service to suit your business then call us on 0844 543 7067, or e-mail us on [hermes-uk@hermesworld.com](mailto:hermes-uk@hermesworld.com). To find out more about the services we offer, please visit [www.hermesworld.com](http://www.hermesworld.com)**

