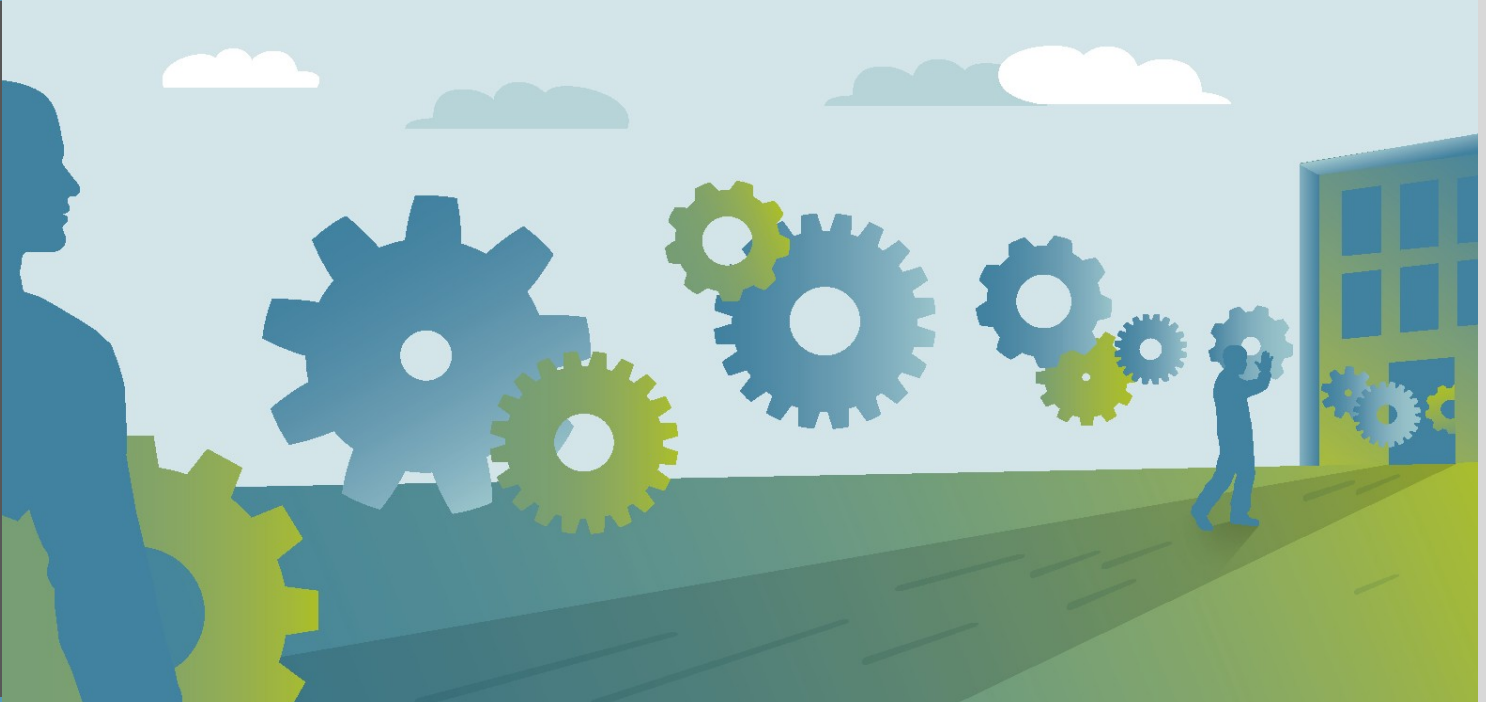


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# Customers Gravitating Toward New Engagement Channels

As technological advances provide customers with a greater variety of ways to interact with businesses, companies would be wise to align their offerings with evolving customer preferences.

According to the 2011 Pew Internet and American Life Project, text messaging may be emerging as the medium of choice. Pew research suggested that 53 percent of American adults prefer a voice call to a text message. However, nearly one-third now prefer to receive text messages over phone calls.

Companies approaching customer relationship management (CRM) with voice over internet protocol (VoIP) and interactive voice response (IVR) strategies may still be satisfying the majority of customers, but the growing preference for text-based communication is worth noting.

With Pew researchers finding a strong preference for texting among respondents ages 18 through 24, it may be wise to incorporate this additional customer engagement channel into any long-term CRM strategies.

Understanding the demographics of one's customer base and target audience is essential when deciding upon a CRM strategy. Customer preferences seem to be evolving away from traditional voice interactions and toward social media and text-based engagement. While VoIP and IVR will likely continue to serve as cornerstones of CRM, incorporating new channels into a company's customer engagement strategy may soon become necessary.

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