



Automating the Consumer Experience

A starter's guide to building brand engagement through automated services.

How to use this guide



What is it?

A summary of a study commissioned by Google and conducted by Ipsos among 4000 respondents, in which a mixed-method approach was used to test the likeability of automated services on brand-owned websites, as well as the intuitive acceptance of personal details used to power such services.



Who is it for?

Brands looking to better serve their customers through personalised, automated services.



How does it work?

Showing how, when, and by whom automated services are more likely to be accepted or rejected, this guide will allow brands to start building brand engagement through automated services in a mindful way.

1

Acceptance

2

Personal
information

3

Context

4

Personal
characteristics

1

When are automated services accepted?

Consumers do allow brands to help them with automated services, but to which extent they like this is mainly dependent on the strength of the relationship they have with the brand.

2

How personal can it get?

Brands that have a stronger relationship with their consumers can also use more personal information than brands without a trusted and emotional relationship.

3

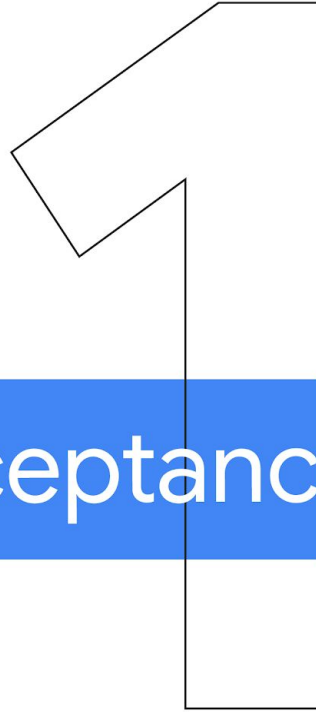
In what context?

Consumers who are busy and in a public space, accept more help than those who are not busy and in a private place.

4

Who likes it?

Automated services are more likely to be accepted by women, people with lower education, and/or those more open to innovation.



Acceptance

1 Acceptance

Are automated services accepted, and when?

Consumers are fairly open to automated services — 46% of them reports to like it.

They are more likely to accept automated services when they experience a higher degree of trust and closeness towards the brand.

The level of acceptance also depends on the vertical a brand operates in. In travel and retail, brands are sooner considered to be going too far with automation, whereas personalised services from finance brands are accepted regardless of the level of helpfulness.

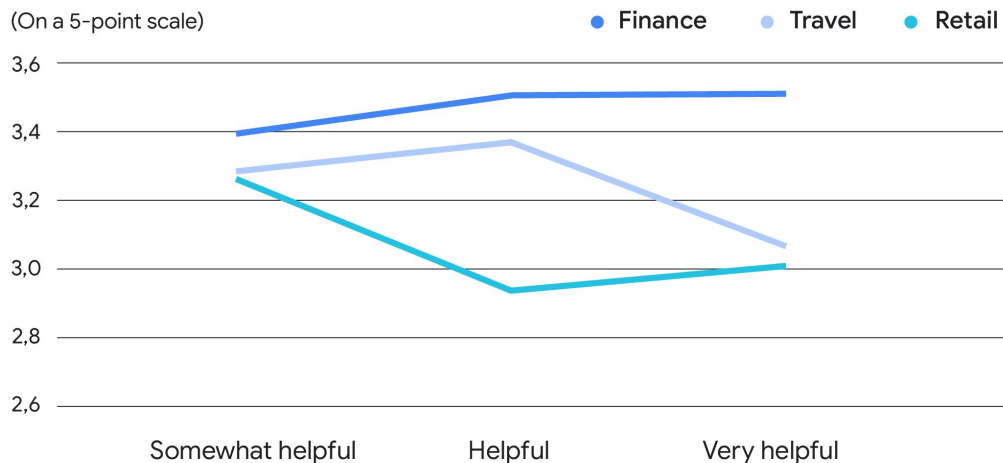


1

Acceptance

In travel and retail, automated services are less accepted than in the finance sector.

The level of acceptance per industry and degree of helpfulness



1

Acceptance

Example: Would you like the following service?

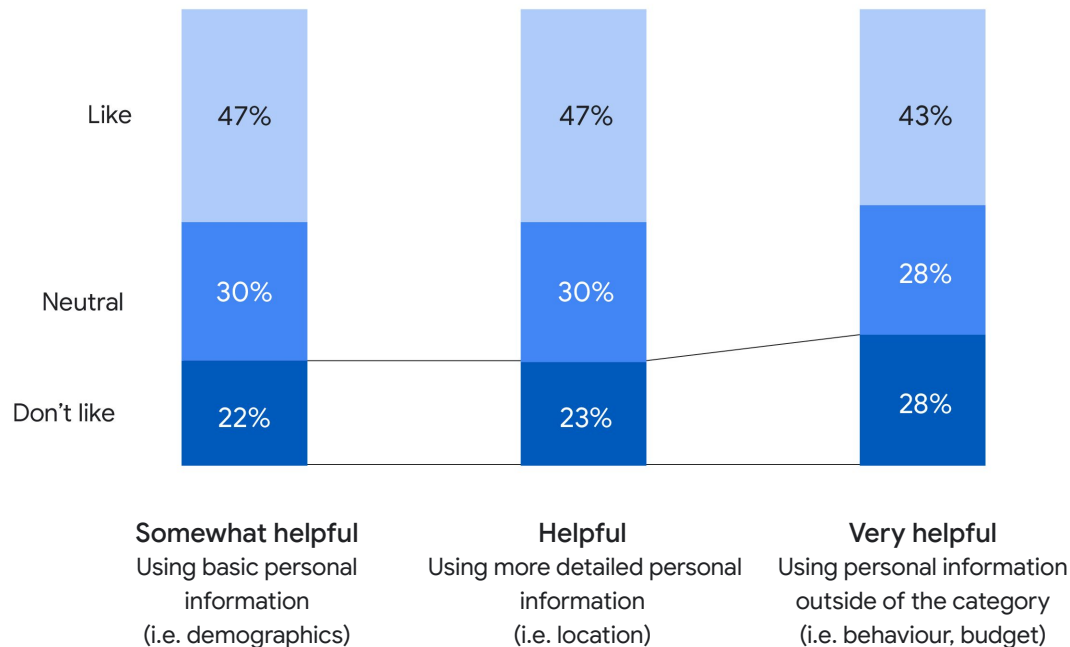
You're waiting for the train so you can get home after a long day at work, when you receive a confirmation email for a new pair of shoes you just ordered. They are scheduled for delivery tomorrow afternoon, but you realise you won't be home then.

On your phone, you visit the carrier website to change the delivery slot, where you get the following pop-up: *"Based on your calendar, we suggest you change the delivery time to tomorrow evening, between 8pm and 10pm. Do you agree?"*



1 Acceptance

More helpful automated services, using more personal information, are less liked.



1 Acceptance

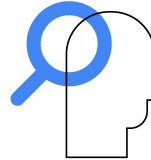
Three areas where automated services can be helpful to consumers.



“Help me do the things I love”

To save me time and energy by taking over tasks

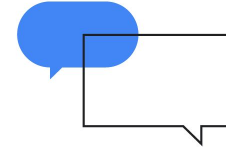
- Make information available upon request
 - Make bespoke and objective recommendations
 - Help relieve hectic family life
- Let me shop without the hassle of having to commit to social norms



“Help me be a better me”

To extend my capacities by doing things I cannot

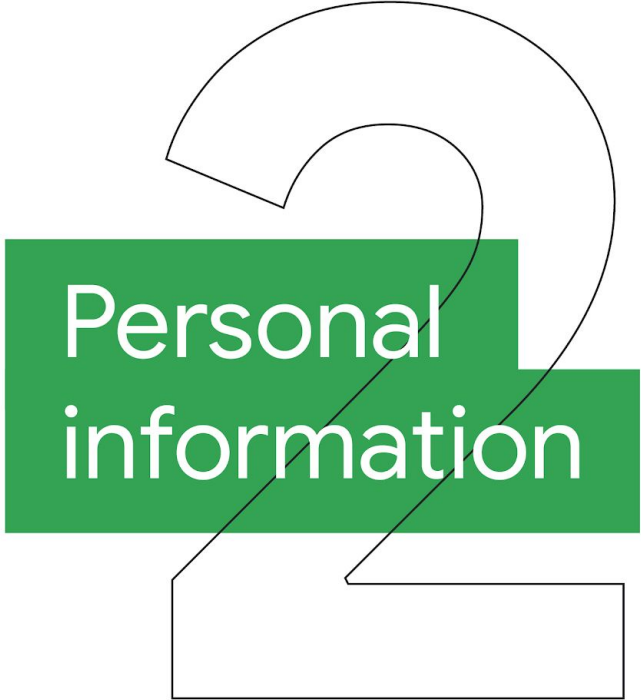
- Let me comprehend unknown languages
- Provide an unlimited source of knowledge
- Provide unlimited memory storing capacity
- Limit the risks of overlooking important things



“Help me be social”

To connect me with people via technology

- Allow me to check in on family at anytime
 - Assist ‘co-working’ via Facetime
- Enable and feed family conversation
 - Make online interactions easier

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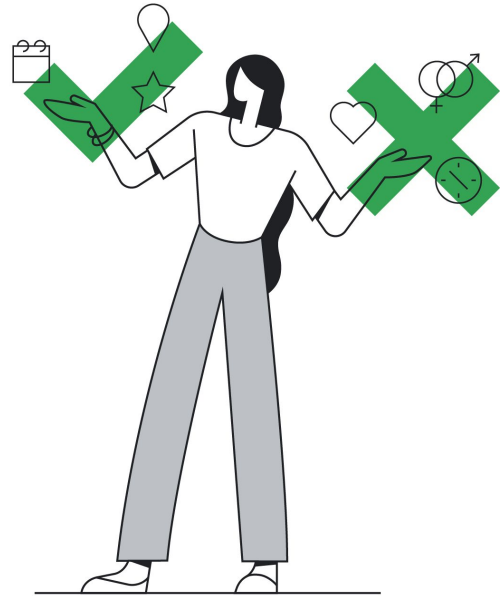
Personal
information

2 Personal information

What personal information can a brand use?

All brands can use information that is general and cannot be tracked back to one particular person (e.g. age group, gender, or places visited).

Brands that consumers trust and/or feel close to are allowed to use more personal information, including websites visited, date of birth, monthly spending budget, clothing size, household composition, and home address. Sensitive personal information (e.g. insurance details, medical history, race) is a no-go area for all brands.



2 Personal information

Correct use of information is key to meet consumer expectations.



Use of basic information

When consumers trust and are loyal to a brand, they expect to receive personalised automated services in basic ways, such as newsletters addressed to their first name.



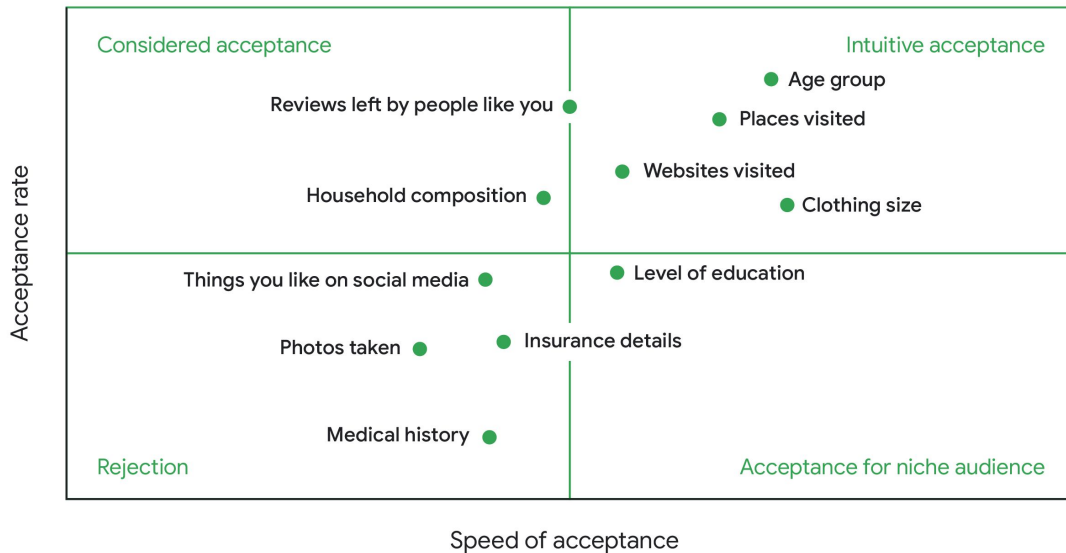
Shift towards more personalisation

But consumer expectations are shifting and brands need to keep up. While consumers expect brands to provide an increasingly flawless personalised service, they don't want them to be rude, for example by using personal information they didn't expect them to have or use, like medical history.

2

Personal information

The more personal the information brands use, the more likely it is that they get rejected.





3

Context

How does context impact on a consumer's acceptance of automated services?

Consumers are more likely to accept automated services when they are busy and/or in a public setting.

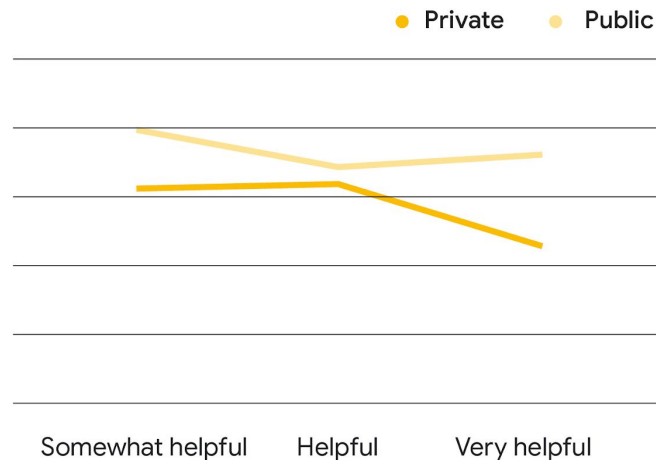
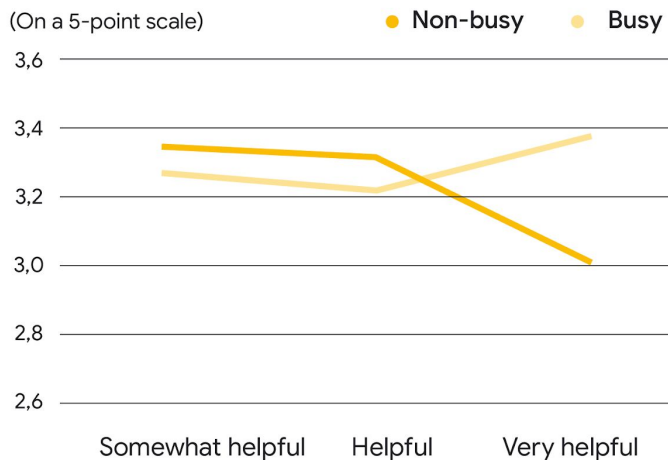


3 Context

Very helpful automated services are more accepted in busy, public settings.

Acceptance of automated services in different contexts and varying degrees of helpfulness

(On a 5-point scale)



3

Context

Consumers don't want to be seen as lazy or stupid.

By automating a task, consumers worry that people might think they can't or don't want to do it themselves.

Some participants of the study fear actually losing their own intelligence or memory capacity by outsourcing simple tasks, such as keeping a shopping list, to automated services.

Participants feel particularly uncomfortable with outsourcing tasks that involve social interaction, like entertaining the kids. Some even say they would feel guilty about it.



3 Context

Consumers fear losing control over technology.

Consumers start feeling uneasy when technology and automated services are too complicated for them to understand, resulting in, for example, not knowing how to switch off their hardware.

When it comes to the exact implicit working mechanisms, automation and smart technology are a black box for the consumer: they can only make assumptions about the way in which information is linked. The less visible the link, the more intense the feeling of lost control. Example: seeing an ad about a holiday destination they talked about, but didn't search for.



3 Context

Consumers fear that automated services won't treat them respectfully.

Firstly, in terms of time and energy, it's not always appropriate to bother consumers with (targeted) messages or pop-ups, like during their family dinner or when they are already late for work.

Secondly, they fear that automated services might not treat their (sensitive) personal information respectfully. Being placed in an age, gender, or other 'group' can be confrontational, even if it's true.



A large, stylized number '4' is centered on the page. It is composed of a black outline and a solid red fill. The red fill is in the shape of a blocky, lowercase 'a' that extends to the right and bottom of the '4' outline. The text 'Personal characteristics' is written in white, sans-serif font across the red area.

Personal
characteristics

4

Personal characteristics

What are the personal characteristics of consumers most likely to accept automated services?

Female and/or younger consumers are more open to automated services. Late adopters and people who aren't part of a young family are less open to it.



4 Personal characteristics

Groups who are more likely to accept automated services.



+25%

Innovators are 25% more likely to accept automated services than **the early majority***.



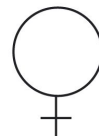
+16%

Consumers with a **high income** are 16% more likely to accept automated services than those with a **low income**.



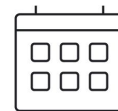
+14%

Young families are 14% more likely to accept automated services than **other types of families**.



+12%

Women are 12% more likely to accept automated services than **men**.



+9%

Consumers **aged 18-24** are 9% more likely to accept automated services than consumers **aged 35-49**.

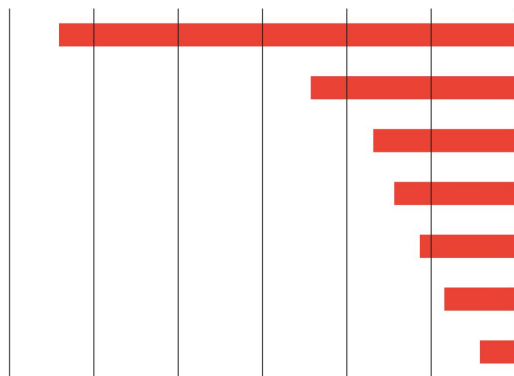
*Innovators are the first to use new products and services; early majority are followers, who wait longer before using it.

4 Personal characteristics

Brand closeness and trust can be increased by activating certain touchpoints.



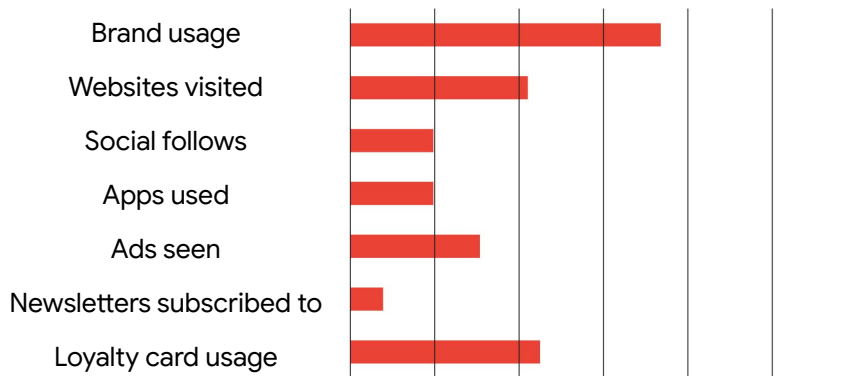
Brand closeness



Impact of individual touchpoints



Brand trust



Impact of individual touchpoints

Method and timeline

Phase 1
07.2019 – 08.2019



Ethnography

London N=4,
Hamburg N=2

Phase 2
09.2019 – 11.2019



Online interviews

Respondents: 4000 men and women aged 18-65 (n=1000 per country) from Great Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden. Representative target group for age, gender, and region in each country.

Phase 3
02.2020



Integrated report

Insights from both research phases were combined in an integrated report to outline people's response to online automated services, and their logic behind this response.



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