

# Singapore service wait times increase to 40 million hours on hold

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New report shows customers wait five days to resolve issues, while employees reveal it only takes 30 minutes – where does the time go?

**Singapore – 24 March 2025** – Singaporeans spent 40 million hours on hold to address a customer service complaint or issue, according to new research, by ServiceNow, the AI Platform for business transformation. Singaporeans now spend on average, nearly half a work week on hold - equivalent to 19 hours (an increase of two hours per person YoY).

The **ServiceNow Customer Experience Report** found long resolution times are adding to frustrations as Singaporeans report waiting an average of almost five working days to have their issue resolved, up 4% YoY. This compares with customer service employee perceptions that it only takes up to 30 minutes to resolve a complex customer issue.

## The 1.3 billion SGD customer service deficit

Serving people's needs matter more than ever, yet the national service gap is widening between customer expectations and employee effort. On average, customer service employees dedicate only one day in a typical five-day work week (18%) to address customer needs. The remaining time is spent on tasks that don't directly resolve customers' needs - such as administrative duties, waiting for answers, liaising with other departments or promoting sales or perks.

Adding to their burden, customer service employees must access over three systems to resolve one query.

CK Tan, APJ Innovation Officer, Singapore at ServiceNow, says: "Service is only complex because organisations are complex. Brands that are delivering the best service, make it feel like you're talking to one company. If you have to speak with five departments to resolve one issue, you risk losing business. Customers want to have one conversation to resolve their issue. To do this, businesses need to connect all systems for employees and AI agents to deliver the best, speedy service to customers, all in one."

## Singaporeans share the best service is a 'rule of three'

Customer expectations are consistently simple: the top three asks of business are to 'serve me quickly' (47%), 'don't transfer me' (45%) and 'give employees the power to resolve my issue' (32%).

Singaporeans are prepared to walk away from brands they've been loyal to, with 85% saying they will consider taking business elsewhere due to slow and poor service in 2025.

## Key trends

Singapore is renowned for high customer service rankings across the region, with government, Healthcare and Financial Services seeing the best customer service ratings, this year.

Tan says: "The Singapore Government continues to retain strong service leadership in ServiceNow's research year on year, with a focus to enable people with technology to improve services. Applying AI to drive value creation was further underscored in The Singapore 2025 to enhance national competitiveness and efficiency."

And while consumer sentiment is positive cross-industry, only financial services, retained their average time on hold, year-on-year. Other sectors, including Telecommunications and Transport saw the biggest wait increase for consumers trying to resolve issues.

For savvy customers, feeling the service gap, the research reveals that customers are turning to self-serve strategies – using technology to help fill a void and speed up the process. 75% of Singaporeans prefer to use self-service first before getting on the phone to customer service.

When seeking help to resolve a service issue, the research shows that social media is the fastest channel for resolution YoY (on average 1.5 hours).

## AI: Singapore consumers share great expectations

The study also revealed a growing customer belief in the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance 24/7

service access and speed. Approximately 62% of consumers identified round-the-clock service as the top benefit of AI in customer experience (CX). 75% of Singaporeans are open to AI replacing customer service roles, provided the service quality remains the same or improves.

The research also found that 62% of Singaporeans believe AI has made quality customer experiences more accessible. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of Singaporeans (65%) believe that new AI tools, such as Chat GPT, have raised their customer service expectations.

## Media contact

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