

4 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRENDS FOR ITALY DURING 2023

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Introduction

So far, for many brands the 2020s have been as unpredictable as they have been transformative. A litany of events have come to pass in just three years, forcing companies to quickly adapt how they operate and support their customers in rapidly changing circumstances.

Will the 12 months ahead be characterised by the same level of disruption? Massimo Canturi, CEO of Konecta Italy, lays out four trends that lie in store for brands operating in the country during 2023 and what they mean for delivering customer experience.

Digitalisation in a time of uncertainty

The last few years have underlined the level of uncertainty with which brands have to contend. A worldwide pandemic, supply chain disruption, geopolitical troubles, and an energy crisis are just

some of the major events to rock the global – and Italian – economy since 2020.

Each of them, in turn, has impacted how brands interact with and manage their customers. According to McKinsey, these events have demonstrated that the businesses that best recover are those which have invested in innovation. When it comes to customer interaction, that means not only in the visuals that support their experience but the channels and content too.

In that respect, digitalisation has been an increasingly important trend in customer experience, particularly in Italy's public sector. Building on Europe's Recovery Plan, which followed the Covid-19 pandemic, this will create greater need to provide remote assistance to Italy's citizens.

It is certainly a new customer management story in Italy, which has developed over the past couple

of years and continues to evolve. It is also a sector where Konecta has significant experience and capabilities, with the ability to support large scale digital transformation programmes.

A focus on sustainability

Sustainability has been one of thy key topics since the initial stages of the pandemic – and it’s a theme that only looks like remaining a top priority for consumers and brands alike as net zero target draws nearer. Research from UNICEF found a desire to help the environment is leading more people to purchase from environmentally friendly brands: around 30% of consumers want to help the environment, and 22% intend to reduce their carbon footprint.

In Italy the situation is no different – consumers have a growing preference for sustainable, locally-produced products and organic foods. A 2021 study from Bord Bia found that 90% of Italian consumers claimed to have made an effort to buy products with higher welfare standards, and more than half said sustainability is very important when choosing food and drink.

Indeed, further research from McKinsey suggested that consumers in Italy were joint with their French peers to consider climate change a top concern at 11% – significantly ahead of Spain (6%), Germany (6%), and the UK (5%). This means it’s more important than ever for brands

operating in Italy to demonstrate their environmental, societal, and governance (ESG) credentials and communicate them to customers.

Empathy in customer service

While sustainability is important to consumers, the cost-of-living crisis is a universally important theme across major European economies.

According to McKinsey, just 14% of Italian consumers are optimistic about the economy, while 41% were pessimistic and the remaining 45% were neutral. Meanwhile, rising prices were the top concern for 52% of Italians surveyed.

With inflation remaining persistently high in the first quarter of 2023 and the conflict in Ukraine ongoing, this situation is unlikely to change. At the same time, the European Central Bank’s base interest rate has increased to 3.5% from 0.5% in less than a year, increasing the cost of mortgages and credit for millions of people in Italy.

All of these factors combined mean that many consumers will be feeling the pinch and may find themselves in tricky financial situations. This means that, more than ever, customer management needs to demonstrate empathy and provide support wherever possible – especially in sectors such as utilities, where cost increases have been particularly sharp.

Greater adoption of business process outsourcing (BPO)

Historically, the level of BPO in customer management has been lower in Italy than in comparable markets like France, Spain, Germany, and the UK.

There are many reasons behind this, one of which is the complexities involved from a legal and compliance perspective. Another is that many of the biggest companies in the country still have a lot of capacity to keep operations in house, but this comes with challenges including increased rigidity and reduced agility.

These drawbacks in a continually changing landscape are forcing many brands to re-consider their approach, with customer experience becoming a key differentiator from competitors. More companies are beginning to see the advantages of outsourcing customer management, particularly as the market in Italy consolidates. Figures from Statista suggest the Italian BPO market will reach revenues of €5.71 billion in 2023, which will increase by an annual growth rate of 4.48% to €6.81 billion by 2027.

As the largest supplier in the Italian market, we expect to be at the forefront of these developments in the market. While we are growing in all our geographies, Italy is still our most diversified and most advanced in terms of capabilities and market share.

Contact us to find out more

We would love to talk more with you about the market in Italy and how we can help you rethink your business processes, improve your customer management or plan your transition to digital. To find out more, get in touch.



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