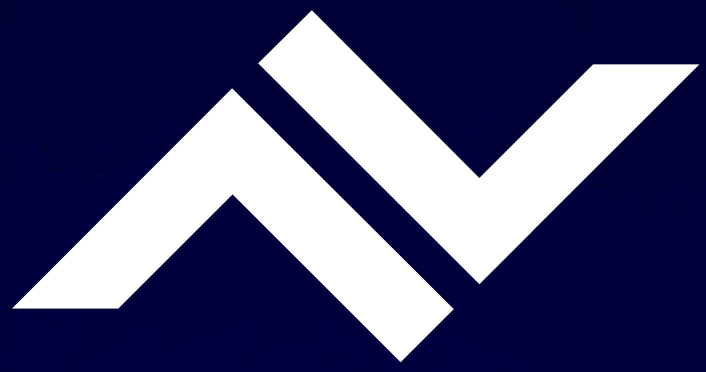




When retail peaks, **trust must scale.**

How **intelligent communication** helps retailers protect trust when demand, delays, and service pressure rise.



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Do not make your customers feel your complexity



Retail service is judged in moments that often look small from the outside: a delivery update before anxiety turns into a call, a return label after opening hours, a store question answered before a shopper gives up, or an agent who already understands the full story when a customer finally escalates.

To the customer, these moments feel simple. They do not think in terms of web shop, store network, carrier feed, CRM, ticketing system, phone line, chatbot, inbox, or contact centre queue. They experience one brand and one promise.

When that promise holds, the retailer feels reliable. When it breaks, the customer sees the complexity that should have stayed behind the scenes.

That is why communication has become a business-critical operating layer for retail and e-commerce. It protects confidence before purchase, reassurance after purchase, trust during returns, and employee focus during peaks.

The old question was how to answer more contacts. **The stronger question now is how to help more customers make progress faster.**

This matters most when demand rises. Delivery questions, return requests, billing issues, and complaints may look routine inside the business. To the customer, they often decide whether the retailer is still in control. A fast answer is useful only if it reduces uncertainty or moves the next step forward. If it does not, the customer comes back, switches channel, escalates, or gives up.

NFON helps retailers turn these moments into structured progress. Customer intent can be understood earlier. Routine enquiries can be completed automatically. Complex cases can move to human employees with the relevant context already captured.

Leaders can see which topics are creating pressure, where journeys are breaking, and whether automated steps are being handled with the transparency, control, and European trust that retail service requires.

The result is a calmer operating model: customers reach the right next step faster, teams spend less time on repeat work, agents enter conversations with context, and the business stays in control of quality during the moments when trust is easiest to lose.



The retailer that wins the next peak will not simply answer more contacts. **They will turn communication into an intelligent operating layer that understands intent, completes routine journeys, preserves context, protects trust, and brings human expertise into the moments where judgement and empathy decide the relationship.**

Your customer does not see channels. They feel the promise.

It is late November. A customer orders a personalised gift. The website says the delivery window still works. Two days later, the carrier update is unclear. The customer refreshes tracking during a lunch break, opens chat after work, sends an email before bed, and calls the next morning because the date matters.

The question is simple: where is my order?

Inside the retailer, the answer may sit across multiple systems, teams and data sources. The customer does not care where the answer comes from. They care whether the retailer is still in control.

This is the retail communication problem in its purest form. The customer experiences one promise. The organisation experiences a chain of systems, teams, policies, exceptions, and handovers. When the chain is invisible, trust grows. When the chain becomes visible, trust weakens.

The same pattern appears before purchasing. A shopper wants to know whether a product is available, whether a store has it locally or delivery will arrive on time, and whether a promotion applies. The question may sound informational, but the business outcome is commercial. A clear answer can protect the shopping basket. A delayed answer can lose the moment.

The same pattern appears after purchase. A return, refund, damaged item, cancellation, complaint, or delivery exception often needs action, not just information. The customer is not asking for a policy paragraph. They are asking the retailer to carry the promise through to completion.



For the customer, good service means not having to understand the retailer's internal structure. They should not have to know which channel owns the issue, which system contains the answer, which team can approve the next step, or why they need to repeat the same details again.

They came with a need. The retailer's job is to help them move forward.

The customer's hidden message

Do not make me understand your systems. Do not make me repeat myself. Do not force me into the wrong channel. Do not give me an answer that leaves the work to me.

Help me complete what I came to do.

From the retailer's side, the same moment looks different.

A queue is rarely just a queue. It is usually the first visible sign that something earlier in the journey did not work: a missing update, a confusing policy, a disconnected channel, an outdated answer, a broken handover, or a routine task with no automated path forward.

For the customer, this hidden friction becomes waiting. For the agent, it becomes extra work. For the retailer, it becomes cost, pressure, risk, and lost trust.

The same friction appears differently across the business. Customer service teams see rising contact volumes, repeat demand, and customers who arrive already frustrated. Contact centre managers see unstable queues, weak handovers, and agents spending time reconstructing the story before they can solve the issue. E-commerce and returns teams see order, cancellation, refund, and complaint journeys breaking when customers move between web, phone, email, and chat. IT teams see tool sprawl, integration risk, security questions, and data-residency requirements. Store teams see missed calls, wrong transfers, and avoidable interruptions while serving customers face to face.

The point is not that one team is failing. The point is that retail communication pressure is now shared across the whole operating model. One customer's pain becomes service pressure, operational rework, technical complexity, and leadership risk.



That is why the next step is not simply to answer more contacts. Retailers need to understand which journeys create avoidable demand, where customers lose confidence, and which routine steps can be completed or prepared before they reach the queue.

Repeat demand and peak pressure make trust fragile.

A delivery-status question may appear as just another ticket in the queue. To the customer, it may be a birthday gift that needs to arrive before the weekend, or a last-minute purchase that cannot be replaced. A product availability question may decide whether a shopping basket converts. A store question may decide whether a shopper visits at all.

This is the challenge many retail and e-commerce teams face. The same requests arrive every day. The questions may be repetitive, but the customer situations behind them are not.

Peak periods expose every weakness in the service journey. Demand rises, pressure builds, and customers look for proof that the brand can still deliver when it matters most.

Speed matters, but speed alone is not enough. A fast but vague answer only moves frustration forward. Customers want certainty: what is true, what happens next, and whether action is required from them. If the first answer does not reduce uncertainty, customers come back, switch channel, escalate, or abandon the journey.

NFON helps retailers turn repeat demand into structured first contact. Customers can describe what they need in natural language, receive immediate help when an answer is available, and be routed seamlessly when human expertise is required. Routine enquiries are resolved faster, unclear requests are structured before they reach an agent, and supervisors gain visibility into the topics that are creating pressure.



The opportunity is significant. In retail chat benchmarks, 53% of retailers enabled order tracking through chat when customers provided order details such as an order number or contact information. Delivery status and delivery options accounted for 29% of retail chat usage among consumers who had used chat in the previous 12 months, while post-purchase product questions accounted for 27%, highlighting how much service demand revolves around repeatable post-purchase interactions (Forrester, The State Of Conversational Commerce In US Retail 2024).

Proof in practice: Peak demand

In one European retail service environment, **seasonal order volumes rose by up to 400%**, creating urgent, repetitive and emotionally sensitive enquiries at the busiest time of year.

NFON helped make key service journeys available 24/7, so customers could get faster support outside normal opening hours. In another high-volume environment, NFON helped automate 25% of calls, reduce missed calls by more than 40 percentage points, and cut enquiry processing from up to three weeks to a few days or hours.

What this pain point really says: Repeated questions are not low-value contacts. They are often the moments where customers are checking whether the brand can still be trusted under pressure.

Customers need completion, not another answer.

When a purchase goes off track, customers do not want a policy. They want progress.

The interaction quickly moves beyond customer service and into operations. What appears simple to the customer often requires several steps behind the scenes before progress can happen. If self-service can only provide information, the work ultimately returns to an agent anyway.

NFON helps retailers turn conversations into completed workflows. Routine requests can move forward automatically, while more complex situations arrive with the context needed for a faster human response. When judgement, empathy, or exception handling is required, the conversation transitions seamlessly to a human employee.



The importance of operationally capable service becomes particularly visible during checkout and order correction journeys. According to Forrester, 14% of online adults have completed a purchase with incorrect billing or shipping information, while 79% want the ability to cancel an online order immediately after placing it (Forrester, Don't Just Speed Up Checkout; Help Customers Fix Their Mistakes Promptly, 2025).

Billing and payment issues create similar pressure. Forrester found that 53% of online adults contacted a company about billing or payment matters during the previous year, and 59% of those customers experienced difficulties getting their issue resolved (Forrester, Overhaul Digital Billing And Payment Experiences To Improve Customer Experiences, 2025).

Proof in practice: Completion

In another retail deployment, **NFON helped turn complaint and return conversations into guided service journeys. Customers can now complete key steps such as photo upload, form creation and return-label generation, while callers are identified and routed by intent across voice and digital channels.**

The result is not simply “we have received your message.” It is the next step already in motion.

What this pain point really says: A service journey is not complete when the customer receives information. It is complete when the next step has actually moved forward.

Channel choice must feel continuous, not fragmented.

A shopper starts in chat, follows up by email, and calls when the issue becomes urgent. They expect the retailer to recognise the journey, not ask them to start it again.

More channels do not automatically create better service. Phone, email, chat, messaging, social, and store support may all be available, but if they do not share context, every channel becomes a new beginning. The customer experiences choice on the surface, but fragmentation underneath.

For agents, this creates avoidable work. Customers arrive expecting progress, while agents often begin by reconstructing the story. They search across systems, interpret previous messages, ask for details again, and manage frustration that has already built up before the conversation even starts.

NFON helps retailers make channel choices feel continuous. Intent, history, captured details, conversation summaries, and ticket context can move with the customer into the next interaction. When a handover is needed, the next employee can continue the story instead of restarting it.

This matters because customers do not all choose the same channel. For example, Baby Boomers show a 61% preference for voice calls and 47% for email, while Gen Z shows a more distributed preference across voice, email, SMS/text, and chat (Forrester, How (And When) To Scale Social Customer Care, 2025).

Retail service therefore cannot rely on one “best” channel. It needs a connected experience across all of them.

Traditional service models can leave approximately 60% to 70% of agent time on routine, repetitive queries, while only 30% to 40% is spent on complex problem-solving that requires human judgement (Forrester, AI Agents Will Transform The Customer Service Workforce, 2025). Benchmarking research also finds that agents typically handle between 20 and 50 interactions per day, depending on organisational size, interaction complexity, and automation maturity (Forrester, 2025 Service Desk Benchmarks, Global, 2025).





Proof in practice: Context and handover

NFON helps service teams use automation to protect human attention, not replace it. In high-volume environments, routine tasks and emails can be handled earlier, while customer history, ticket context and conversation summaries prepare agents before they step in.

The impact is measurable: **up to 70% of repetitive tasks and up to 86% of routine customer emails can be automated.** That gives agents more time for the cases that need judgement, reassurance and care.

What this pain point really says: Customers do not want every channel to be identical. They want every channel to remember enough to make the next step easier, and they want agents to begin with the story already prepared.

AI has to be trusted, transparent, and easy to leave.

Customers may welcome an instant answer when the question is simple. Where is my order? Can I change the delivery address? What is the return status? In those moments, automation feels helpful. But trust breaks quickly when the issue becomes sensitive. Customers want to know what is happening, why automation is involved, and how they can reach a person when the moment requires it.

For retailers, this makes AI a trust decision as much as a service decision. Every conversation can contain names, addresses, order histories, payment references and other sensitive information. In Europe, automation must be governed, transparent, and controlled.

The risk is not only when AI gives a wrong answer. The larger risk is that customers feel trapped in an automated journey that cannot understand the situation, cannot explain what it is doing, and cannot hand over to a human when judgement or empathy is needed. In those moments, automation stops feeling efficient and starts feeling careless.

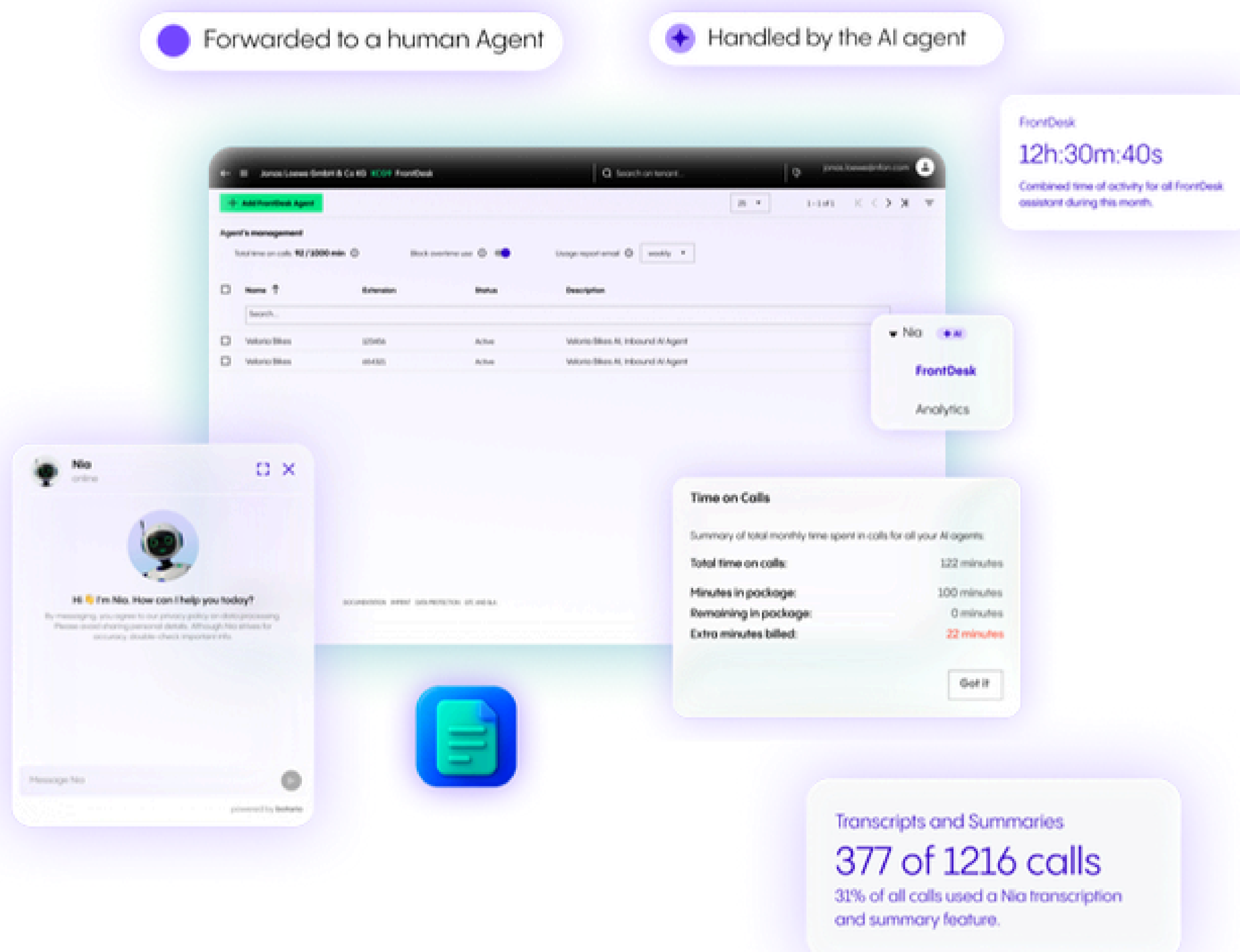
NFON helps retailers adopt AI as controlled intelligence, not as a black box. Knowledge sources can be managed. Escalation paths can be defined. Handover rules can stay clear. Conversation logic and data flows can remain visible to the business. Human employees can step in when the situation requires judgement, exception handling, or reassurance.

This is especially important in European retail, where customers are increasingly aware of data protection and transparency. Only 17% of online adults across France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK say they are aware when AI is used in their interactions with companies (Forrester, Consumer Insights: Trust In AI In Europe, 2025). Across those same six countries, 51% to 62% believe companies should disclose when they use AI with customers (Forrester's Global Government, Society, And Trust Survey, 2025). Privacy behaviour is already active too: 42% of German online adults and 39% of Italian online adults have restricted cookie usage. (Forrester, The Future Of Commerce (Europe-5), 2025).

Proof in practice: Governed AI

In an anonymised enterprise retail deployment, **NFON helped make AI usable under strict data-protection expectations. The setup gave the business visibility into data flows, conversation logic and integrations, while supporting controlled deployment through German hosting, GDPR compliance, and private or on-premise options.**

AI can be extended around real workflows without losing control of customer data, brand logic or compliance requirements.



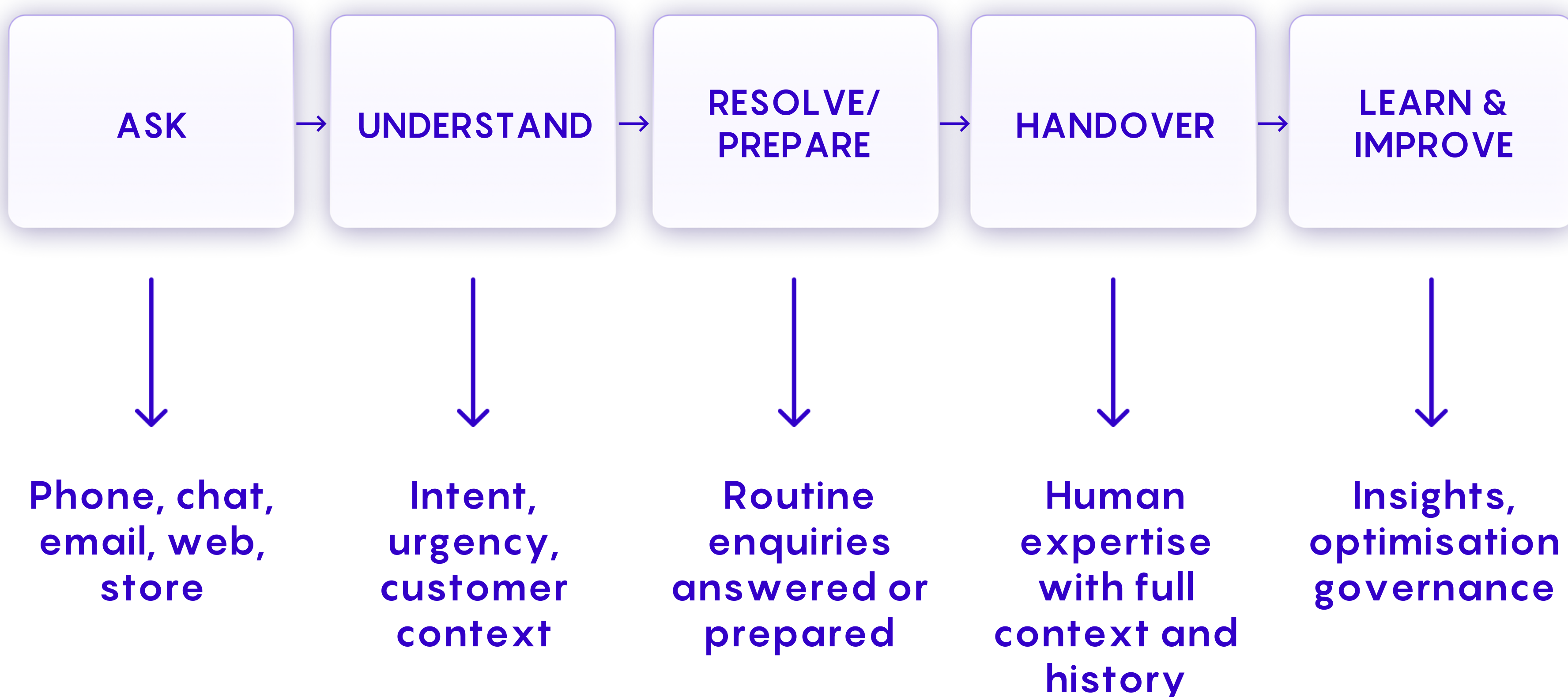


From retail contact to customer progress.

Retailers do not need another isolated tool that answers one channel and creates another handover. They need a way to make the whole service journey work better: first contact, routine resolution, human escalation, follow-up, measurement, and governance.

NFON helps turn communication from a response function into a progress layer. Customer intent is understood earlier. Routine steps are answered, completed, or prepared before they reach the queue. Complex cases move to human employees with context already captured. Leaders gain visibility into repeated demand, broken journeys, and service pressure.

The simplified journey is clear: customers ask through the channel that fits the moment; intent and urgency are understood early; routine enquiries are resolved or prepared; complex cases are handed over with context; and demand patterns reveal where journeys can improve.





Retailers often measure service by activity: number of contacts answered, average handling time, queue length, missed calls, or response speed. These metrics matter, but they do not always show whether the customer moved forward.

A retailer can answer faster and still leave customers stuck. A chatbot can respond instantly and still create a handover. An agent can close a ticket while the customer still waits for the next step.

The stronger question is: did the interaction create progress?



Keep the promise when the moment matters.

Retail peaks do not create new service problems. They expose the problems that were already there: unclear journeys, disconnected channels, manual work, weak handovers, and routine requests with no easy path forward.

Customers do not judge these issues as internal complexity. They judge them as the retailer's ability to keep its promise.

The retailer that wins the next peak will not only answer more contacts. It will understand intent earlier, complete or prepare routine journeys, preserve context across channels, and bring human expertise into the moments where judgement and empathy matter most.

That is how communication becomes more than a response function. It becomes a way to protect trust, recover capacity, and help customers make progress when it matters most.

NFON helps retailers automate routine demand, preserve context across channels, and give customers progress faster, while keeping control of trust, data, and human escalation.

Start with the retail journey creating the most pressure today.

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