

# Customer Service Index

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# Introduction

The Brandwatch Customer  
Service Index

# INTRODUCTION:

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One of the major reasons brands use social media monitoring tools is to enhance their customer service offering - most brands realise that it's increasingly common for customers to talk about their experiences online, whether it's to advise, enquire, compliment or complain.

To learn more about how exactly customers are expressing their views online we monitored over 100 brands for tweets of them that were found in the context of customer service. To also see how these businesses are dealing with the growing demand for online attention, we looked at how they responded to these tweets.

# METHODOLOGY:

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**Twitter:** We focused on Twitter, as it has become one of the key social media portals for customer service issues, due to various inherent characteristics such as its openness and interconnectedness.

**Query:** For each brand we ran a query to find every time they were mentioned at the same time as the phrase “customer service(s)” OR “cust serv”.

The significance of this report is not in the volume of tweets, but the relative negative/positive coverage brands are getting online and the manner and extent to which they are responding.

To ensure that the figures are comparable and representative, the following report focuses only on the 42 brands that had at least 100 tweets relating to customer service in the last 4 months (the highest being 1400 tweets).

*NB: A list of all 58 brands with over 50 tweets is also [included for reference](#).*

The data was collected from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June and the brands come from a range of industries: technology, high street retail, broadband/phone, banks, airlines and mobile.



# Brands by Sentiment

The sentiment of tweets  
about customer service

## BRANDS BY SENTIMENT:

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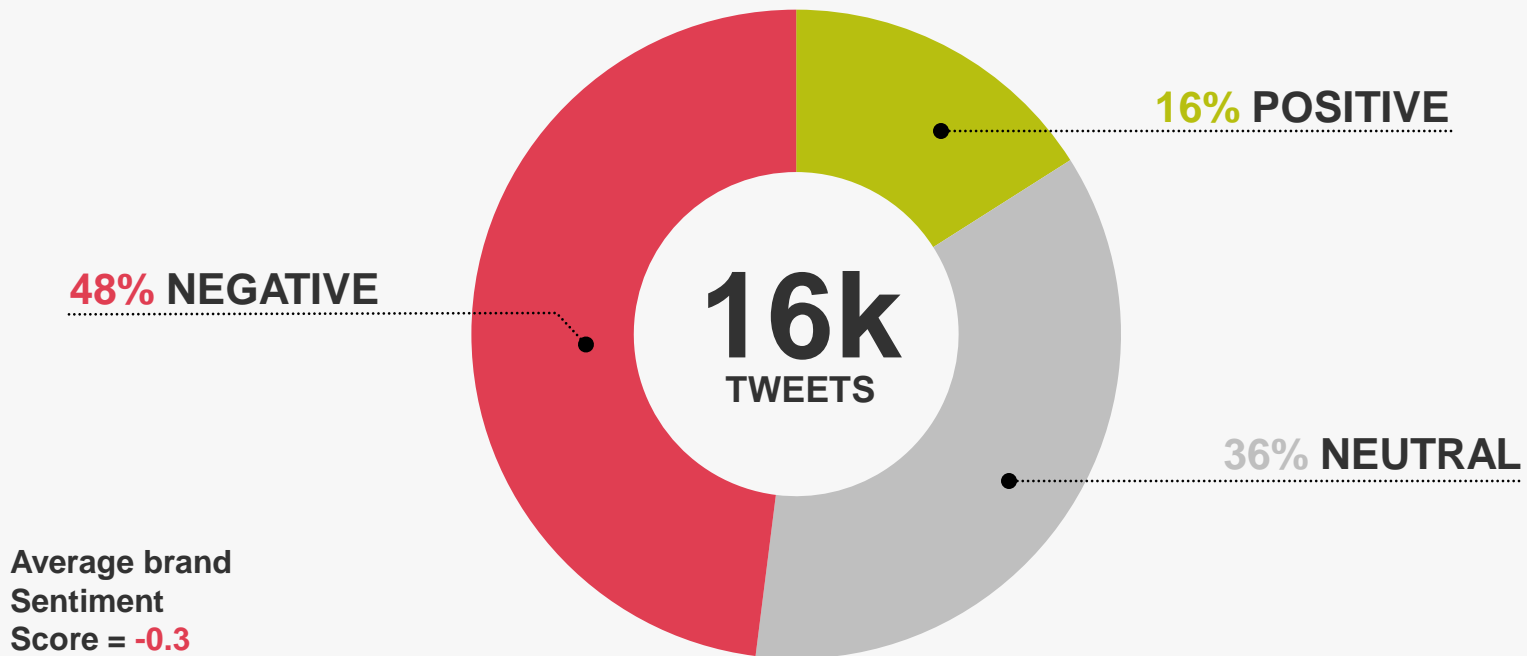
While sentiment analysis can prove a woolly area for any automated system, customer service tweets tend to be fairly unequivocal in their meaning and make the machine's job a lot easier. But, to ensure the data in this report is **as accurate as possible**, we had our analysts manually verify each mention too.

The desired conclusions of sentiment analysis here are quite simple: who has the most negative and who has the most positive. In other words, which brands' customer service do people complain about on Twitter and which do they praise?

We calculated a Sentiment Score to penalise the positive tweets for the negative tweets. It was worked out by subtracting the negative percentage from the positive and converting the result into a number between 1 and -1, where 1 is 100% positive and -1 is 100% negative. Any positive value means the brand received more positive than negative mentions, and vice versa.

# BRANDS BY SENTIMENT: Overall

People usually talk about customer service when there is a problem – if customer service was satisfactory or maybe good, it's rarely something considered tweet-worthy. With that in mind, it's perhaps not surprising to see that, overall, there are three times as many negative tweets as there are positive:



Data from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

## BRANDS BY SENTIMENT: Top 5s

- The five brands we monitored that had the most **negative** tweets about them:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Samsung</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	581	2%	95%
<b>Primark</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	118	3%	83%
<b>Talktalk</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	338	4%	80%
<b>Virgin Media</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	855	8%	79%
<b>BT</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	1212	9%	69%

- The five brands we monitored that had the most **positive** tweets about them:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Apple</b>	<b>0.4</b>	540	61%	18%
<b>Amazon</b>	<b>0.3</b>	264	46%	14%
<b>John Lewis</b>	<b>0.3</b>	171	56%	23%
<b>Zurich</b>	<b>0.1</b>	112	13%	0%
<b>Mercedes</b>	<b>0.0</b>	100	15%	16%

Data from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

# OBSERVATIONS:

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## **Across industries:**

It is perhaps not surprising to see a brand such as Primark in the top 5 negative and John Lewis in the top 5 positive – each brand is characterized by very different values which accord with these findings. But it is more of a surprise to see a brand such as Samsung performing very poorly in comparison to Apple, a company which is in many ways a competitor.

Brands from the broadband/phone provider industry perform particularly badly, making up 3 out of the 5 worst brands. There is not such a clear trend in the top 5 positive, with all 5 brands coming from different industries (technology, online, high street retail, finance and auto).

Mobile and broadband/phone providers also far outweigh the other sectors in terms of volume of tweets. A possible reason for this is that they are services as opposed to products – people continuously depend on them and as such can require assistance at any time. Conversely, few people tweet about top high street retail brands, perhaps because their issues typically require visiting the store in order to return a purchase and so this is the accepted contact point for customer services.



# Types of Customer Service Tweets


# TYPES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE TWEETS:

We grouped the different types of customer service tweets into the following categories:

“@VodafoneUK 3 cust serv promises re my number port. But now w/out serv 24 hours. May b April 1<sup>st</sup>, but it's very unfunny. What's going on?”

 **Direct Requests**


“#easyjet's idea of good customer service. 4 checkin desks open. This is 2 hrs b4 departure.  
<http://yfrog.com/h2ekgudzj>”

 **Possible Request**

“@AlanCarr santander need 2b trashed cos they a shit bank who have no customer service skills give em a petrol bomb lol”

 **General Abuse**

“Do they put prozac in the coffee machine at M&S? The staff are always so goddamn friendly! Excellent customer service”

 **General Praise**

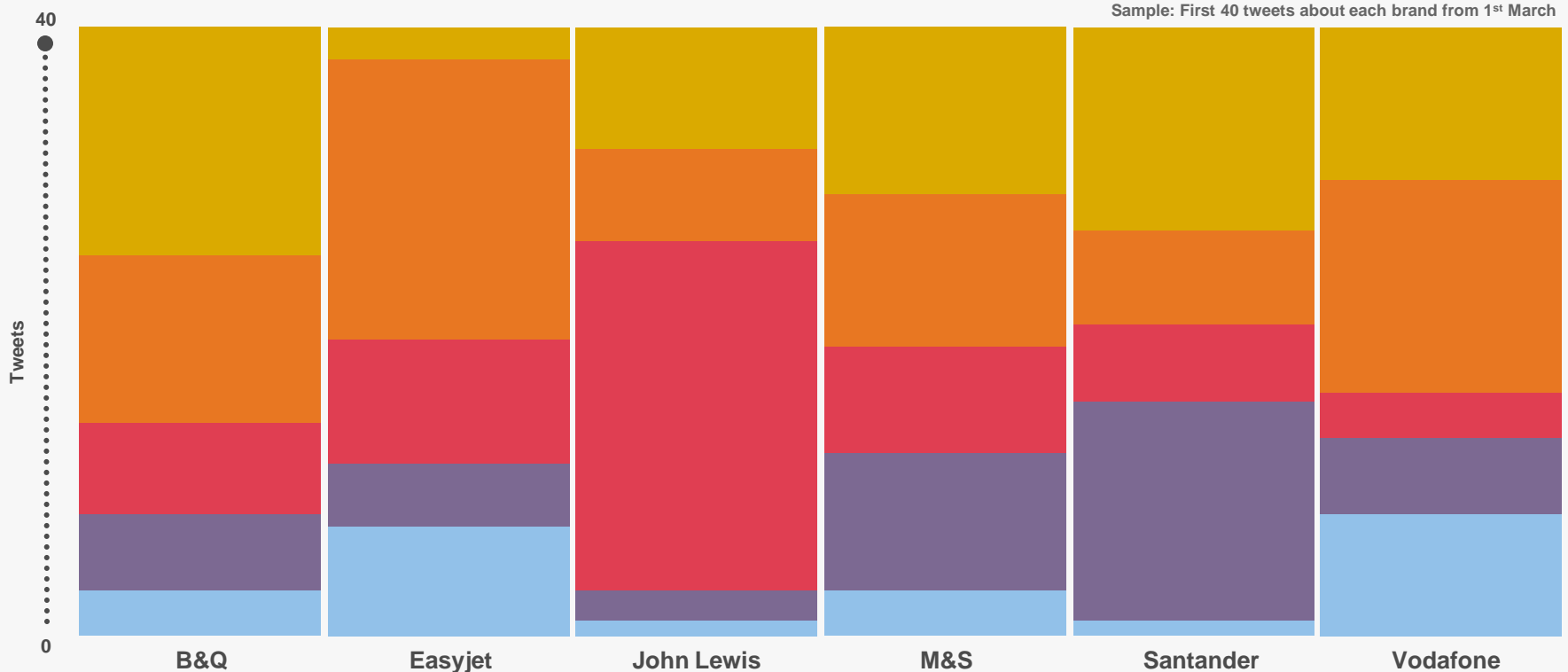
“Absolutely appalling customer service from Connect Distribution Services Ltd. They do spares for Buyspares, B&Q, and most others. Avoid!”

 **Other**

# BREAKDOWN OF TWEET-TYPES BY BRAND

We selected some brands from different industries and a sample of tweets to look in further depth at the kind of customer service related comments they are receiving:

■ Direct Request   ■ General Abuse   ■ General Praise   ■ Other   ■ Possible Request





# Brand Twitter Presence

# BRAND TWITTER PRESENCE:

We looked at each of these brand's Twitter presence to see how active they are online:

- Team size is based on the number of authors identifying themselves on the Twitter profile, usually by suffixing initials to tweets.
- % of tweets they reply to is based on the sample of 40 from the previous chart.

Brand	Twitter team size	Tweets/week	% Tweets they respond to
<b>B&amp;Q</b>	1	50	c. 25%
<b>Easyjet</b>	2	420	c. 35%
<b>John Lewis</b>	c. 2	50	c. 20%
<b>M&amp;S</b>	c. 1-2	70	c. 5%
<b>Santander</b>	1	50	c. 10%
<b>Vodafone</b>	5	900	c. 30%

The fact that Vodafone are by far the most active aligns with the previous observation that mobile brands get more tweets than high street brands.

Along with Easyjet, Vodafone also replied to the most tweets, possibly due to the relatively high number that were considered a 'direct request' (see previous chart).

# HOW THEY RESPOND

In the previous table we showed *how many* tweets they responded to; below is a more detailed look at *what* they responded to:

Brand	Direct Request	Possible Request	General Abuse	General Praise
<b>B&amp;Q</b>	100%	35%	20%	50%
<b>Easyjet</b>	60%	10%	50%	35%
<b>John Lewis</b>	100%	15%	50%	0%
<b>M&amp;S</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Santander</b>	0%	10%	0%	0%
<b>Vodafone</b>	85%	0%	25%	100%

Of the sample of 40 tweets we drew from March and April about M&S customer service, none of them were replied to.

This may be because the M&S Twitter account only seems to reply to people who @mention them, which could be down to policy or simply that they are missing the rest.

# CASE STUDY: John Lewis

John Lewis have a dedicated customer service Twitter account and a separate one for news and promotions:

**John Lewis**  
**@JLcustserv**  
The official customer service Twitter account for John Lewis, open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Follow @johnlewisretail for news, views and details from the retailer.  
<http://www.johnlewis.com>

About @JLcustserv  
879 Tweets | 3 Following | 263 Followers | 5 Listed

**John Lewis**  
**@johnlewisretail** UK  
The official Twitter account for John Lewis. Follow now for news, views and details from Britain's favourite retailer.  
<http://www.johnlewis.com>

About @johnlewisretail  
1,270 Tweets | 6,151 Following | 7,465 Followers | 176 Listed

This means tweets they make that apologise for customer service problems don't clog up their news and promotion activity - it proves them to be much more efficient than M&S who run only one Twitter account that attempts to cover everything.

The following examples of exchanges show the way in which @JLcustserv are picking up tweets. They handle them in two ways, either:

- Taking them offline by offering an email address for contact
- Requesting the customer's order number/details so they can address the issue directly

# CASE STUDY (2): John Lewis Example Exchanges

## Example 1

**SutchFun** Hana Sutch  
@JohnLewisRetail wishing u hadn't totally messed up our sofa order especially w/ still no news on when it'll be delivered. Cold on t'floor  
25 Apr

**JLcustserv** John Lewis  
@SutchFun Hi, if you can provide us with your order details we would like to look into the situation for you:  
email\_us@johnlewis.co.uk  
26 Apr ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

## Example 2

**BecsWillows** Rebecca Willows  
Terribly frustrated waiting from phone call from John Lewis. #incompetence. Despite waiting in all day yest- no replacement for my sideboard  
27 Apr

**JLcustserv** John Lewis  
@BecsWillows Contact: email\_us@johnlewis.co.uk  
27 Apr ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

**BecsWillows** Rebecca Willows  
@JLcustserv thanks for message. I have had phone conversations with your team & it seems that distribution at park royal isn't responding.

**JLcustserv** John Lewis  
@BecsWillows Hi, really sorry you've not had your replacement. Please mail through your order / customer number so we can assist.  
27 Apr ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

**BecsWillows** Rebecca Willows  
@JLcustserv yes please! My order number is 20334796. My Rma number is 2916748. It would just be great to know what is going on. Many thanks  
13 hours ago

**JLcustserv** John Lewis  
@BecsWillows We'd like to help. Please make contact if we can assist further: email\_us@johnlewis.co.uk Thanks  
22 hours ago ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

# Summary

# SUMMARY

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This report has comprised two elements. The first covering the sentiment of tweets about brands in relation to customer service; the second looking at how certain brands carry out customer service on Twitter.

## **Sentiment:**

- Overall, tweets about customer service are 48% negative and only 16% positive
- The only two brands with more positive tweets than negative were Apple (61% to 18%) and John Lewis (56% to 23%)
- Conversely, the two most negative brands were Samsung (95%) and Primark (83%)
- Mobile and broadband providers receive the highest number of tweets and generally much more negativity than other industries

## **Brand Twitter Presence**

- The brands that tweeted the most out of the 6 we looked at were Vodafone and Easyjet and the majority of their tweets were responses to others
- John Lewis performs better than M&S, aided by the fact they run a separate Twitter account dedicated to customer service

# Appendix

# BRANDS BY INDUSTRY:

- Technology:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Samsung</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	581	2%	95%
<b>Sony</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	357	7%	55%
<b>HP</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	206	14%	51%
<b>Dell</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	488	15%	45%
<b>Apple</b>	<b>0.4</b>	540	61%	18%

- High Street Retail

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Primark</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	118	3%	83%
<b>Argos</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	109	23%	46%
<b>Topshop</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	186	10%	27%
<b>M&amp;S</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	129	20%	36%
<b>John Lewis</b>	<b>0.3</b>	171	56%	23%

Data from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

# BRANDS BY INDUSTRY:

- Broadband/phone:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Talktalk</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	338	4%	80%
<b>Virgin Media</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	855	8%	79%
<b>BT</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	1212	9%	69%
<b>Sky</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	1150	16%	47%

- Airlines:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Ryanair</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	187	3%	61%
<b>Easyjet</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	187	21%	55%
<b>British Airways</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	312	11%	33%

Data from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

# BRANDS BY INDUSTRY:

- Banks:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Santander</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	416	5%	55%
<b>Natwest</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	222	15%	63%
<b>Barclays</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	189	17%	58%
<b>Lloyds</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	143	16%	48%
<b>HSBC</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	457	11%	40%
<b>Halifax</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	312	9%	16%

- Mobile:

BRAND	SENTIMENT SCORE	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<b>Orange</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	1453	14%	53%
<b>3 Mobile</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	189	5%	42%
<b>T-Mobile</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	269	20%	56%

Data from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

# INDEX OF ALL BRANDS: Brands with over 50 tweets

	BRAND	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
1	<b>Orange</b>	1453	14%	53%
2	<b>O2</b>	1432	19%	49%
3	<b>Vodafone</b>	1272	13%	54%
4	<b>BT</b>	1212	9%	69%
5	<b>Sky</b>	1150	16%	47%
6	<b>Virgin Media</b>	855	8%	79%
7	<b>Samsung</b>	581	2%	95%
8	<b>Apple</b>	540	61%	18%
9	<b>Dell</b>	488	15%	45%
10	<b>HSBC</b>	457	11%	40%
11	<b>Santander</b>	416	5%	55%
12	<b>Sony</b>	357	7%	55%
13	<b>Talktalk</b>	338	4%	80%
14	<b>British Airways</b>	312	11%	33%
15	<b>Halifax</b>	312	9%	16%
16	<b>Dixons Retail plc</b>	306	13%	52%
17	<b>Asda</b>	300	11%	54%
18	<b>T-Mobile</b>	269	20%	56%
19	<b>Amazon</b>	264	46%	14%
20	<b>Sainsbury's</b>	245	27%	46%
21	<b>Royal Mail</b>	234	7%	57%
22	<b>Natwest</b>	222	15%	63%
23	<b>Aldi</b>	210	16%	46%
24	<b>HP</b>	206	14%	51%
25	<b>Barclays</b>	189	17%	58%
26	<b>3 Mobile</b>	189	5%	42%
27	<b>Easyjet</b>	187	21%	55%
28	<b>Ryanair</b>	187	3%	61%
29	<b>Topshop</b>	186	10%	27%

	BRAND	TWEETS	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
30	<b>Virgin</b>	178	8%	79%
31	<b>John Lewis</b>	171	56%	23%
32	<b>B&amp;Q</b>	160	17%	51%
33	<b>British Gas</b>	152	19%	66%
34	<b>Lloyds</b>	143	16%	48%
35	<b>Audi</b>	142	20%	30%
36	<b>DHL</b>	137	9%	44%
37	<b>M&amp;S</b>	129	20%	36%
38	<b>BMW</b>	118	17%	33%
39	<b>Primark</b>	118	3%	83%
40	<b>Zurich</b>	112	13%	0%
41	<b>Argos</b>	109	23%	46%
42	<b>Mercedes</b>	100	15%	16%
43	<b>EDF</b>	97	11%	70%
44	<b>Lenovo</b>	94	22%	36%
45	<b>Comet</b>	93	16%	66%
46	<b>Eon</b>	93	10%	10%
47	<b>RBS</b>	84	5%	39%
48	<b>Waitrose</b>	80	50%	18%
49	<b>Toyota</b>	76	28%	14%
50	<b>Volkswagen</b>	74	31%	31%
51	<b>FirstDirect</b>	67	67%	15%
52	<b>Volvo</b>	57	14%	19%
53	<b>Debenhams</b>	56	25%	59%
54	<b>Burton</b>	55	5%	7%
55	<b>Nissan</b>	55	13%	36%
56	<b>Homebase</b>	53	15%	32%
57	<b>Boots</b>	52	31%	23%
58	<b>Plusnet</b>	51	51%	33%

Not included in analysis

# THANK YOU

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We hope you found this report interesting and informative. If you have any feedback or questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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