CCW CUSTOMER CONTACT WEEK DIGITAL

CX In 2030: Future Of The OMNICHANNEL Contact Center



2025 JUNE MARKET STUDY | WWW.CUSTOMERCONTACTWEEKDIGITAL.COM

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Intro

In 2023, 57% of consumers felt their experiences with businesses were getting worse. In 2024, 55% expressed that sobering sentiment.

Unfortunately, that slight improvement was not the start of a course correction. According to CCW Digital's 2025 Consumer Preferences Survey, an alarming **59% now feel that experiences are headed in the wrong direction.**

The regression is unsurprising. In addition to experiencing many of the *same pain points* they have for years, including long wait times, repetitive questions, and impersonal interactions, consumers are encountering new challenges and reservations related to artificial intelligence (AI). Indeed, the technology that was supposed to alleviate customer frustration is only exacerbating the ill will.

Clearly, brands are doing enough to "compete on the customer experience." They are not doing enough to make their promises of "customer centricity" a reality.

Enough is enough. It is time to elevate the customer experience. It is time to turn the customer contact operation into a legitimate "value center." It is time to deploy technology that actually helps customers. It is time to cultivate the happy agents who create happy customers.

To support these efforts, CCW Digital will not simply use the pages of this Market Study to report the incriminating data from the Consumer Preferences Survey. Instead, it will extract actionable takeaways from the information. These takeaways will paint a picture of where customer experiences and contact center operations *need to go* as 2030 approaches.

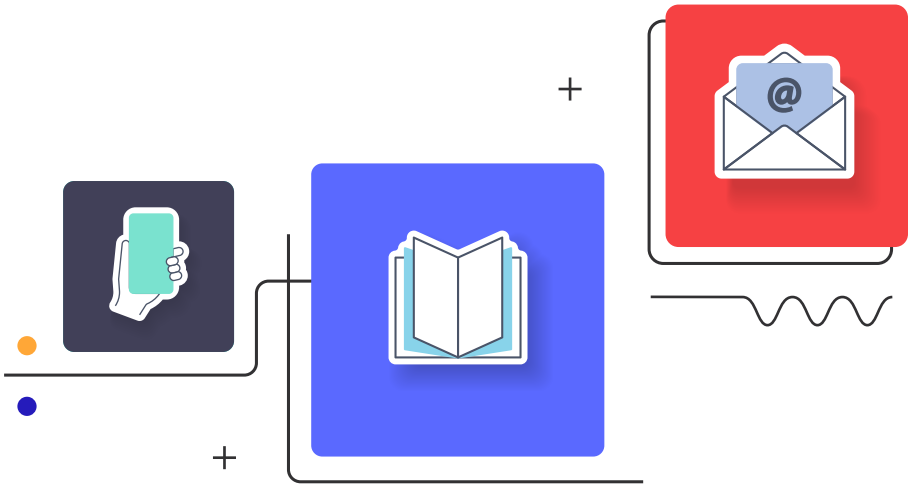


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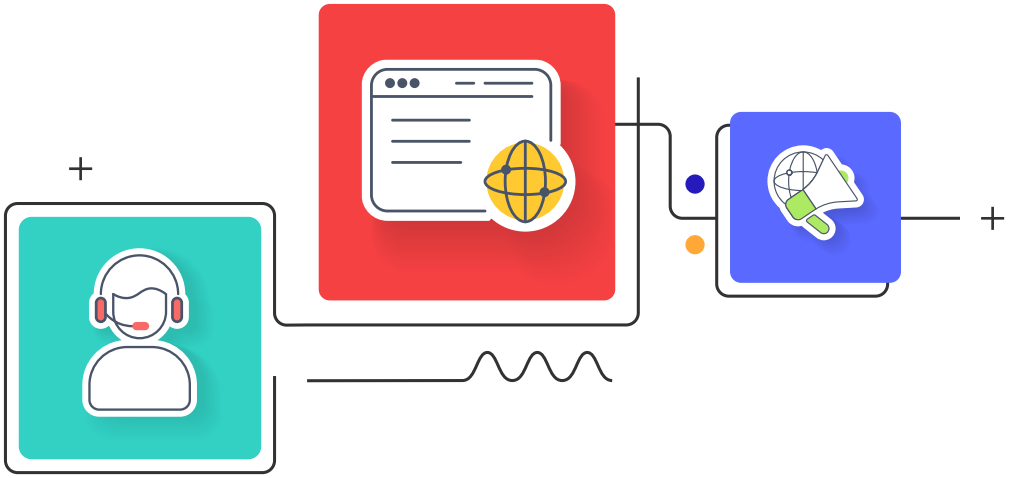
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Methodology & Demographics

To assess present and future customer experiences, CCW Digital issued its annual Consumer Preferences Survey in May 2025. The inquiry polled an audience of adult US consumers on their thoughts, hopes, and reservations when interacting with businesses.

The respondent audience included substantial representation for all age ranges and income levels, ensuring a fair and accurate portrayal of the modern-day consumer.

Audience targeting and question phrasing was designed to accommodate apples-to-apples comparisons with Consumer Preferences Surveys from past years.

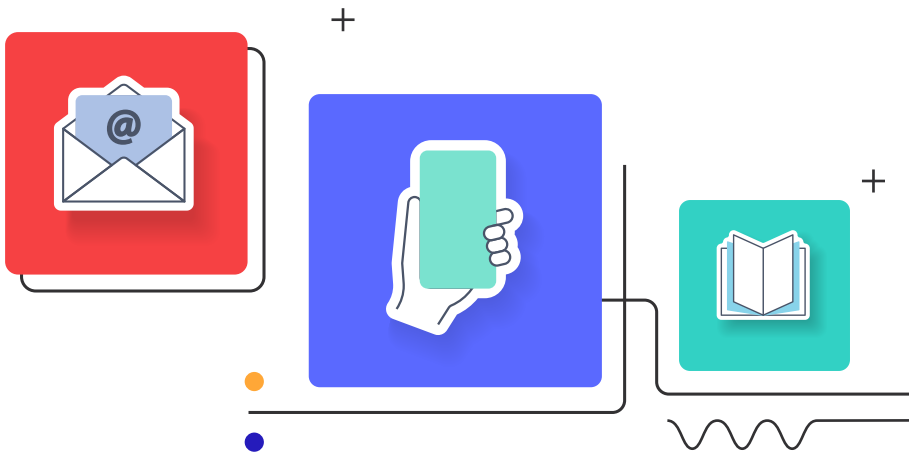
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Brian Cantor is the principal analyst and director for CCW Digital, the global online community and research hub for customer contact professionals. In his role, Brian leads all customer experience, contact center, technology, and employee engagement research initiatives for CCW. CCW Digital's articles, special reports, commentaries, infographics, executive interviews, webinars, and online events reach a community of over 180,000.

A passionate advocate for customer centricity, Brian regularly speaks on major CX conference agendas. He also advises organizations on customer experience and business development strategies.



Key Findings

1. A year has passed, but not much has changed. Consumers again express disappointment with customer experiences; the overwhelming majority do not feel their brand interactions are personalized, consistent, or convenient.

2. Consumers are also experiencing many of the same pain points; as was the case in 2024, upwards of 40% of customers *frequently* face difficulty reaching a live agent, long wait times, unhelpful automation tools, and repetitive questioning.

3. The stakes of these unremarkable experiences are significant: the majority of consumers feel moderately or even significantly upset when an interaction goes wrong. More than 57% will communicate that frustration to family, friends, and/or coworkers, and nearly 53% will try switching to a competitor.

4. A staggering 91% feel brands are increasingly forcing them to use AI-based self-service. Considering just 15% trust chatbots for customer service (compared with 17% in 2024), this overreliance on AI feels particularly anti-customer.

5. The disappointment goes beyond chatbots; in general, just 29% feel AI has thus far elevated customer experiences.

6. Granted, some customers *are* optimistic. Though they have not yet seen a positive impact, 36% believe one may be coming in the future.

7. To improve customer trust and adoption, brands will have to be transparent about when they are using AI.

8. They will also have to provide customers with the ability to seamlessly escalate to a live agent, while accommodating natural language within the automated interface. An emphasis on *voice AI* may also help, as consumers are warmer on that technology than they are text-based chatbots.

9. Although they prefer employees to chatbots, consumers are not over-the-moon about the care they receive from agents. The majority believe today's agents lack enthusiasm, knowledge, and focus for the brands, issues, and customers they are serving.

10. Viewing sympathy as a two-way street, the majority of consumers feel bad about the various challenges employees may face on a daily basis. Nonetheless, most still demand stellar performance, if not from the individual employee then at least from the greater business.

11. Mirroring data from the past several years, consumers resoundingly identify "phone" as the most trusted support option. They are again relatively trusting of live chat and email, while still comparatively unimpressed by social media.

12. The enduring confidence in telephony does not, however, mean brands should neglect their web-based channels. Before they directly reach out for help, the majority of consumers will look for answers using a web search, the company's website, social media, or an AI tool.



New Year, Same Struggles: The Sad State of the Customer Experience

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting a different result. In the eyes of customers, today's businesses must seem especially insane.

Consumers continue to encounter the same impersonal, inconsistent, and inconvenient journeys they have for the past many years.

Just 18% of today's consumers feel their typical experience is highly personalized, and an equally alarming percentage call brand interactions consistent. Only 22% have autonomy over where the interaction takes place, and less than 26% are content with the ease, speed, and convenience of these experiences.

The numbers reflect little-to-no improvement from 2024, when 16% said experiences were personalized, 17% celebrated consistency, 22% touted control over the omnichannel experience, and 26% confirmed the convenience factor.

Worse, whereas 22% felt brands were completely striking out in 2024, the number has risen to 28% in 2025.

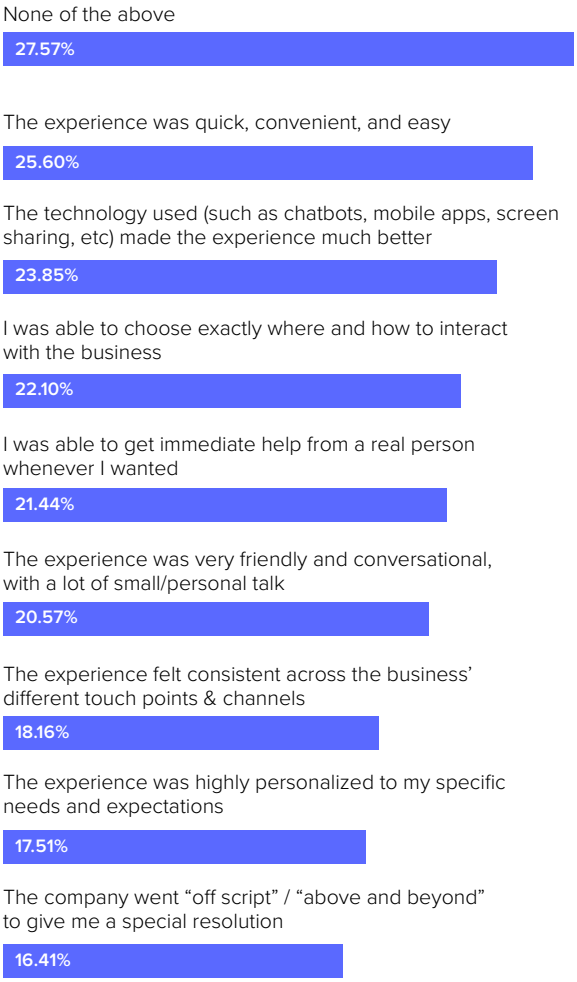
Ultimately, this means that all the emphasis on customer centricity, all the promises of omnichannel engagement, all the calls to reduce customer effort, all the attention on actionable customer intelligence, and all the focus on humanizing interactions have essentially been for naught. Brands are *not* moving any closer to bringing FP3 (frictionless, personalized, predictive, and proactive) experiences to fruition.

In general, do you feel businesses have gotten better or worse at delivering customer service over the past year?



- **31.95%** Customer service has gotten somewhat worse
- **27.35%** Customer service has gotten much worse
- **23.63%** No change
- **10.94%** Customer service has gotten somewhat better
- **6.13%** Customer service has gotten much better

Consider your typical customer service interaction over the past year. Which of the following would you say are true?



ENDURING AND EMERGING PAIN POINTS

Today's businesses are not simply failing to meet customer standards for elements like convenience, personalization, and omnichannel engagement. They are also subjecting customers to many of the same specific "pain points" that have plagued contact center interactions for decades.

More than 47% of consumers, for example, still *frequently* encounter long wait times when they interact with brands. More than 40% typically need to repeat information or answer repetitive questions, and 29% often endure transfers and escalations.

Measurable in terms of cost and inefficiency, these "pain points" can also weigh dramatically on customer sentiment. More than 25% of consumers, for example, say they are *always* frustrated by repetitive questions.

Another 65% become conditionally frustrated depending on context, while only 10% are willing to give brands a categorical pass.

On the radar in 2024 (when 48% were dealing with long wait times, 37% were frequently repeating information, and 25% were experiencing transfers), these are among the most cliché customer support issues. If customers are *still* running into these issues time and time again, it should come as no surprise that so few feel experiences are improving.

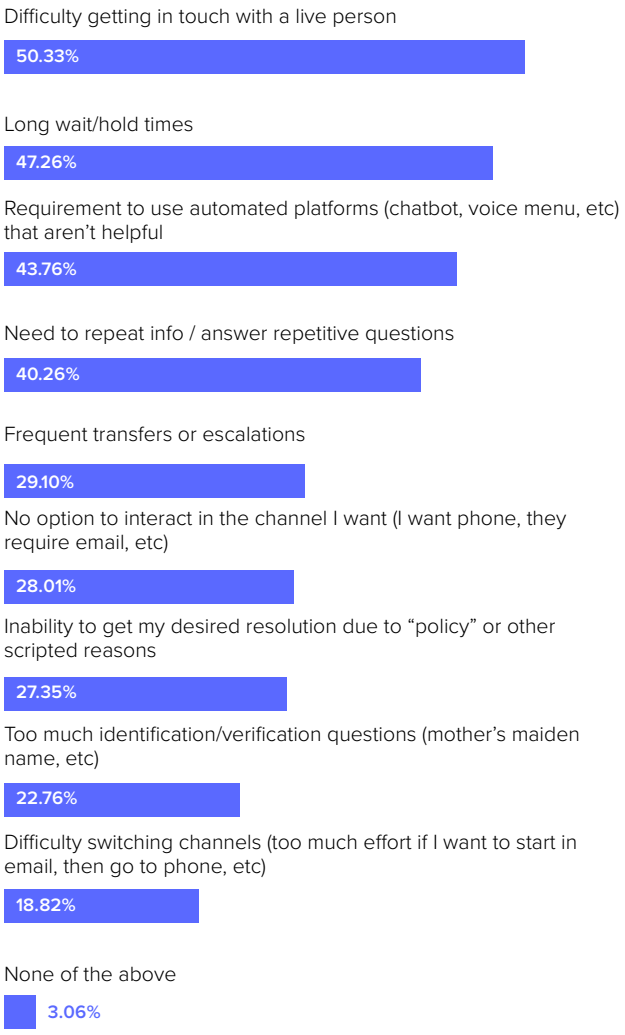
The 2024 iteration of this report also saw the ascent of two new, AI-related pain points. Just over 52% said it had become difficult to get in touch with a real person; almost certainly due to the rise of AI-powered self-service. Alarmingly, 49% said they were frequently experiencing *unhelpful* automated experiences.

These numbers, too, are fairly similar in 2025: 50% frequently struggle to reach a live person (making it the #1 pain point for the second year in a row), while 44% are repeatedly encountering disappointing automation systems.

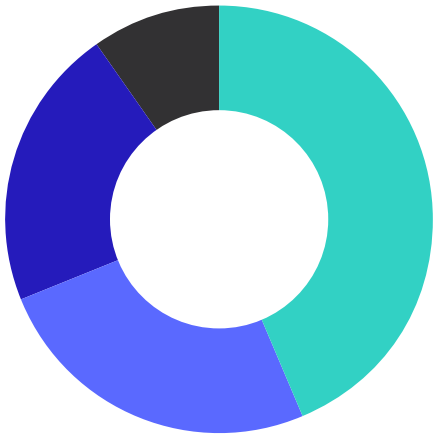
Collectively, customers find themselves in a lose-lose scenario. Those who want to speak to a live agent may not even have the option; even if they do, they are likely to deal with extensive wait times and slow, repetitive conversations.

What happened to making service better? What happened to innovating to empower faster, stronger human connections?

Which of the following challenges/issues do you often encounter when interacting with businesses (such as for customer service)?



Does it frustrate you when you have to repeat information when moving between contact channels or employees?



- **43.76%** Sometimes - I dislike repeating information when moving between channels (chatbot to phone, for example) but am OK repeating when I transfer between human employees
- **25.38%** Always - I do not believe I should ever have to repeat information
- **21.23%** Sometimes - I dislike repeating information when I transfer between human employees but am OK repeating when I transfer between channels (chatbot to phone, for example)
- **9.63%** Never - I understand repetitive questions are an inevitable part of the customer experience

CONTACT CENTER TECHNOLOGY: WHEN THE ANTIDOTE BECOMES THE DISEASE

Given the sobering data, it is rather self-evident that today's contact center technology is not elevating the experience. A deeper dive reveals just how disillusioning such innovation has been.

Roughly mirroring the 2024 number, just 24% of consumers feel that the technology they encounter adds value to their experiences. This means their issue goes beyond "forced" self-service or underwhelming chatbots; they quite plainly do not feel technology is making things better. They neither feel modern interfaces are easier to use, nor do they feel such solutions are unlocking more personalized journeys or empowering better agent performance. They instead feel brands are missing the mark on technology.

Considering the budget contact centers are devoting to technology – 99% say they are maintaining or increasing AI investment levels in 2025, and the numbers are similarly high for many other solution categories – it is clear brands have to rethink the tools they are purchasing, the use cases they are selecting, and the outcomes they are prioritizing.

If there is a silver lining, many consumers do believe brands want to do better. Only 33% believe cost-cutting is the primary driver for AI and digital transformations. By contrast, 34% believe improving the customer experience is the main driver, and 33% say brands are equally concerned about efficiency and customer centricity.

This suggests that consumers are not operating with an inherent ill-will toward technologically-driven experiences. If brands make the *right* innovation investments ahead of 2030, customers will be receptive.

Consider new customer service trends like digital communication channels or AI-based support. Do you believe these are designed with the customer in mind?



- **33.92%** Improving the customer experience is the main reason companies are pursuing these initiatives
- **33.04%** Improving the customer experience is important, but so too is reducing costs / improving efficiency
- **33.04%** Reducing costs / improving efficiency is the main reason companies are pursuing these initiatives

CX IN 2030: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Although the nuances of customer interactions are always changing, the core of a great experience remains what it always has been: frictionless, personalized, predictive, and proactive. This, of course, makes the lack of progress so frustrating – brands know what to do, they just have not been doing it.

To achieve a different landscape in 2030, successful brands will consider the following:

- **Respect customer preferences.** Giving customers options is great; imposing limitations is not. As brands introduce digital channels and emphasize automated engagement, they must be careful not to ignore existing preferences. The key is to honor those preferences in the short-term, while emphasizing *clear transparency* and *strong performance* to cultivate long-term trust in the alternatives.

- **Empower better workflow.** Consumers should not *still* be waiting for brands to eliminate wait time. By building trust in alternative channels, empowering agents with actionable intelligence, and more accurately predicting and proactively resolving customer needs, brands can say goodbye to inefficiency and hello to customer satisfaction.

- **Make personalization productive.** Personalization does not have to be elusive; the data needed to recognize customers, understand their historical journeys, assess the context of their issue, track their sentiment, and anticipate future intentions and actions is all readily available. The key is to unlock this data with analytics solutions, and then democratize it at all touch points.



The AI Question: Acceptance Remains a Challenge

Over the past few years, contact center AI has transformed from an exciting concept into the universal strategic priority. Virtually all enterprise contact centers are maintaining or increasing their AI investment levels in 2025.

Despite the widespread investment and growing public familiarity, customer trust in the technology is actually declining.

In 2023, 20% of customers said they trusted chatbots to solve their issues. In 2024, that number fell to 17%. In 2025, the chatbot option inspires confidence among just 15% of customers.

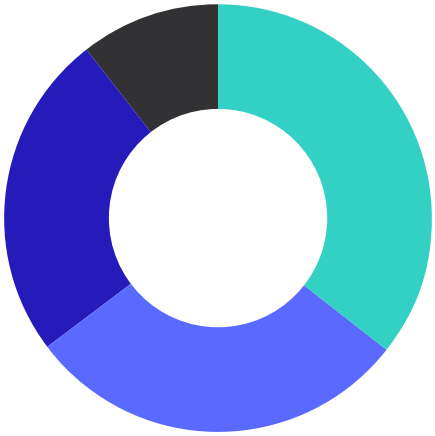
Although the decline certainly *could* be the consequence of rising standards rather than worsening technology, it still reflects a sobering reality for a technology that has become so pivotal to contact center operations.

Granted, the impact of contact center AI is not limited to chatbots, even in a self-service context. Some brands are actively investing in action-oriented *agentic AI* and branding their customer-facing tools as "AI agents" or "virtual assistants." Some are also using AI to automate matters beyond the scope of customer support, such as outbound marketing or personalized content creation.

This exploration of customer-facing AI says nothing of employee-facing AI, which aims to improve experiences by making *agents* better at their jobs.

Unfortunately, consumer disillusionment exists toward the full suite of AI use cases – and the totality of its impact on operations. Only 29% feel AI has definitely led to better experiences; an opposing 25% are quite pessimistic about its potential for positive transformation. Just shy of 36% have not yet seen a positive impact but think it can lead to better experiences in the future, while 10% are unsure.

Do you think the use of AI is helping to improve customer experiences?



- **35.67%** Not yet, but it may eventually
- **29.32%** Yes
- **24.73%** No
- **10.28%** Unsure

THE GREAT IMPOSITION: FORCING CUSTOMERS TO ENDURE A FLAWED EXPERIENCE

Despite customer disillusionment, brands are not hesitating to deploy AI. In fact, they are aggressively imposing automated experiences on customers.

A concerning 91% of consumers say companies have become more likely to force them to use self-service (either before or in lieu of speaking to a live agent), than they were last year.

This reality explains why "difficulty reaching a live agent" ranks as the #1 pain point for 2025. Brands are all-in on self-service. They are going to do everything in their power to make it a critical part of the customer journey, and they are not going to let *present-day* dissatisfaction discourage their ambition.

Recognizing this reality, 60% of consumers expect the trend to continue. They believe reaching a live agent will become even more *difficult* in the years ahead.

Consumers are also expressing other concerns about the rise of AI. More than 52%, for example, fear that AI will ultimately serve to make interactions more "automated" and "generic." Given that the majority are *already* citing a lack of personalization, this trend underscores doubt that brands will ever do what is required to tailor journeys and build meaningful connections.

Fearing a lack of transparency, nearly 46% are concerned that they will not know whether they are speaking to a bot or human moving forward. Insofar as 67% believe such transparency is *very important,* this represents a particularly high-stakes worry.

Two other prominent concerns focus on the *experience* of using AI engagement options. Nearly 38% believe they will end up spending too much time explaining their issues to chatbots, adding *inefficiency* to a landscape most customers already believe is inconvenient. More than 32% fear encountering chatbots or AI assistants that share inaccurate information.

Over the past year, do you feel like companies have been more likely to require you to use a self-service tool (chatbot, voice menu, etc) before, or instead of, speaking to a live human employee?



90.81% Yes

9.19% No

How important is it to you that companies are transparent with how they use AI in customer service?

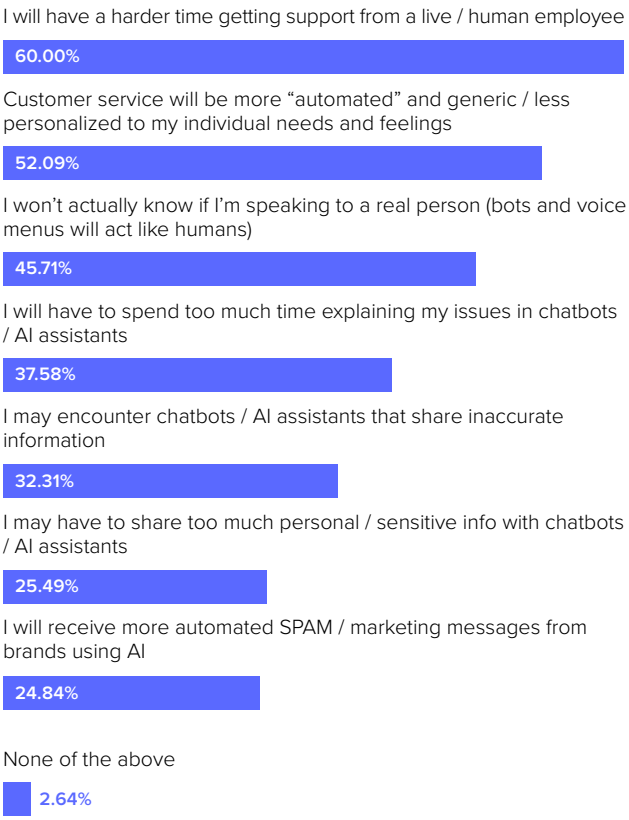


66.59% Very important - I would feel deceived if I used a chatbot thinking it was a human

25.49% Important, but I will still do business with them if they are committed to my privacy and satisfaction

7.91% Not important to me

Which of the following concerns do you have about the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in customer service?



OVERCOMING THE RESERVATIONS: SECURING TRUST IN AI-BASED ENGAGEMENT

Despite the dismal present-day reviews and widespread long-term reservations, all indications are that brands will continue investing in AI – and relying on customer-facing automation – in the lead-up to 2030.

They must, therefore, take steps to overcome the widespread customer resistance. They must work to cultivate trust in AI self-service.

How can brands build this confidence in AI?

Most notably, they can make it clear that customers are not required to use it.

Indeed, 59% of consumers say they would be more willing to use an AI self-service tool if they knew they could escalate to a live agent whenever they wanted. Nearly 36% stress that this escalation would have to be seamless, requiring no restating of their problem or answering repetitive questions.

The demand for smooth escalation is easy to understand. With assurance they will not be trapped in a self-service "doom loop," even the most skeptical customers – those who have been burned by ineffective chatbots or IVRs in the past – will have peace of mind. They will know that they will not be wasting time in the AI-powered channel.

By presenting self-service as an *option* rather than *obligation,* the brand will also be communicating symbolic confidence in the technology. It will be sending the message that while customers can always escalate to a live agent, the technology has become so advanced that they probably will not need to do so.

And even if customers do ultimately need to escalate in some cases, the fact that they will be approaching the technology with an open mind will still be a boon for the business. When customers seriously attempt to engage with AI tools, brands gain more accurate insight into their behaviors, sentiments, and intentions. They also gain a clearer understanding of what does and does not work, fueling better AI training and customer journey design.

Which of the following would make you more likely and/or comfortable to use a chatbot / AI assistant?



VOICE AI: A PROMISING OPPORTUNITY

By ensuring customers they will not be trapped if the self-service option fails, brands destigmatize contact center AI. They provide themselves with an opportunity to reeducate customers on the value of automation.

One way to seize this opportunity is to allow customers to communicate in natural language.

Fear that it will be too difficult to explain their issue is the #1 reason customers bypass self-service in favor of live agents. Assurance they could communicate in natural language, unsurprisingly, follows seamless escalation as the #2 way to increase their trust in AI-powered experiences.

Customers are, in fact, already demonstrating an affinity for conversational self-service experiences. Whereas few have trust in text-based chatbots, a non-trivial percentage are embracing voice AI interactions.

Just 28% of consumers have thus far been disappointed by voice AI experiences. On the other hand, 34% have had outright good experiences, and 18% believe voice AI is not only excellent but *superior to live agent support.*

Though not resounding enough to say all contact centers should immediately replace their agents with voice bots, the statistic provides considerable optimism about what voice AI can mean for the contact center of the future. It suggests that the technology can live up to the promise of actually augmenting customer engagement, as opposed to simply shifting some work from man to machine.

What has been your experience interacting with voice AI / interactive voice bots when calling a customer service phone number?



- **29.54%** Mixed - voice AI works well in some cases, poorly in others
- **28.45%** Bad - experiences are generally not good / inferior to human support
- **17.94%** Excellent - voice AI can be easier/better than speaking to a real human
- **15.75%** Good - voice AI has some issues, but it generally helps
- **8.32%** N/A - to my knowledge, I haven't interacted with a voice AI

CX IN 2030: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

AI may be all the rage among contact center *leaders,* but customer excitement is far more tempered. Today's customers have largely been underwhelmed by their automated experiences, and they have real concerns about what the rise of AI will mean for the future of the human touch.

To achieve a different landscape in 2030, successful brands will consider the following:

- **Keep agents at the center of the experience.** The majority of consumers identify "difficulty reaching a live agent" as a frequent pain point. Most distrust chatbots but say that providing a seamless escalation experience would grow their confidence. The conclusion is simple: contact centers cannot yet plan for a world without agents. Whether to support those who refuse to self-serve, aid those who are failing in a self-service environment, or address complex matters that cannot be automated, agents will remain the lifeblood of the customer contact function. They are how brands will appeal to customers – and how they will achieve lasting success.

- **Emphasize AI-human collaboration.** Rather than attempting to fully automate certain issues and entirely shift agents to others, pursue a middle ground. Use AI to simplify some aspects of the interaction, while still enabling agents to step in and support as needed. This will help introduce customers to the potential upside of AI, while still helping agents demonstrate more efficiency, focus, and personalization. Upon gathering more insight into this interplay, you can refine the AI-agent dynamic to further scale and optimize the support experience.

- **Commit to conversation.** Their programming may technically include some AI, but the majority of today's chatbots are little more than fancy, rules-based FAQ pages. They neither accommodate natural conversation nor deliver dynamic, personalized responses and actions. By harnessing the power of modern conversational, generative, and agentic AI solutions, brands can close this gap and create the kinds of convenient, relevant, and valuable experiences that will actually build trust in automation. Voice AI represents a particularly promising opportunity for supporting organic conversation, honoring the preference for voice communication, and elevating the customer contact operation.



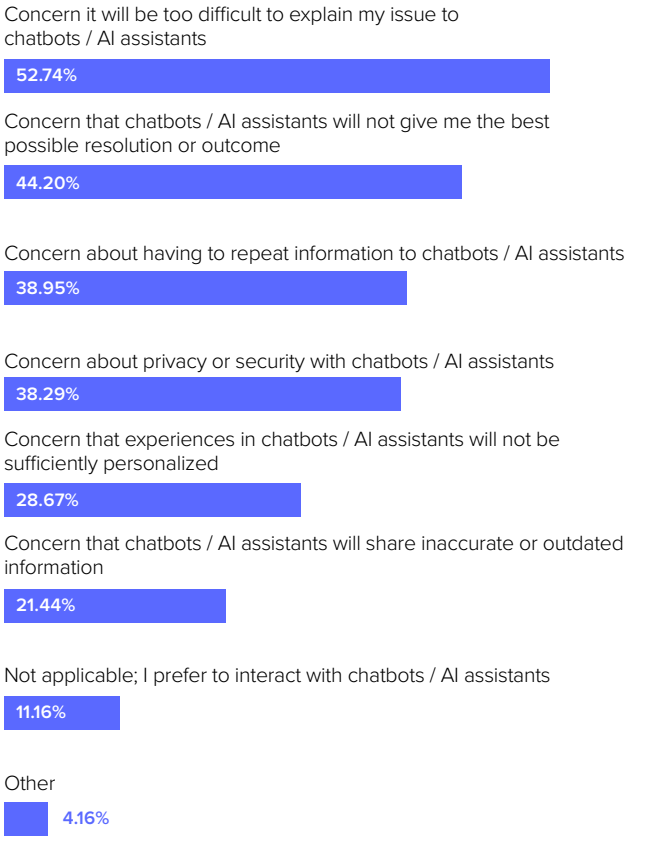
The Future of the Human Touch: What Role Will Employees Play in the CX of 2030?

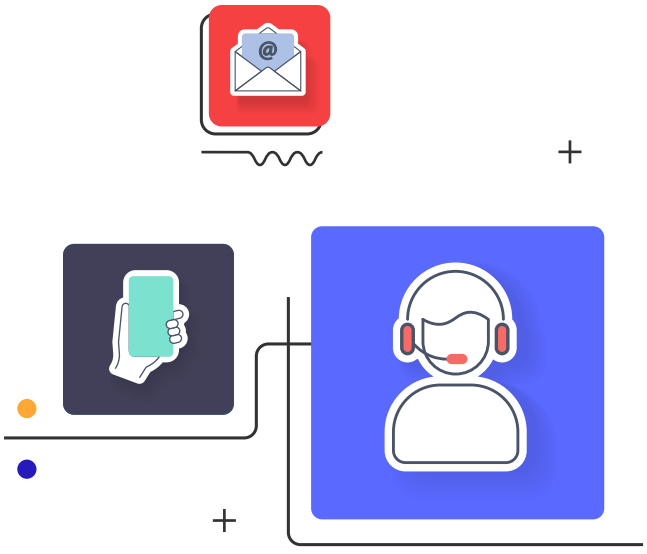
Today's consumers condemn brand experiences as slow and inconvenient. They complain about long wait times. They lament their inability to dictate where and when an interaction takes place.

In theory, these pain points underscore the need for an AI transformation. They suggest that customers should be wholeheartedly embracing self-service, a concept predicated on the idea of autonomy, convenience, and accessibility.

That is not what is happening in practice. Customers continue to demand human support, condemning difficulty reaching a live agent as their #1 source of frustration and citing easy access to a live agent as a prerequisite for trying self-service options. Moreover, they flag the potential loss of the human touch as a major fear about the rise of AI.

Which of the following are primary drivers for you wanting to interact with human agents over chatbots or other virtual or AI assistants?





Many consumers have other reasons for pursuing agents over bots – 52% say it is about the ease of explaining their issue, 44% say it is because they will get a better resolution, 39% believe it is to avoid answering repetitive questions, and 38% worry about privacy in self-service environments.

Regardless of the reason, customers still see agents as the superior option. And so they do wait. They do accept limitations on contact channels and business hours. They do reject theoretically easier options.

THE LOSE-LOSE SITUATION: TODAY'S AGENTS ARE NOT WORTH THE WAIT

Consumers accept restrictions, wait on hold, endure confusing journeys, restate their information, and deal with slow conversations just for the privilege to speak to live agents.

In a cruel twist of fate, these agents do not even reward customers for all the waiting and effort. They do not provide even satisfactory, let alone exceptional, experiences.

Just 12% feel the agents with whom they interact are excited about their jobs and the companies they represent. A similarly insignificant percentage feel agents know a lot about the customers and issues they are supporting.

Consumers are similarly bearish on agents' creative thinking (experienced by just 16% of consumers), emotional intelligence (16%), commitment to solving problems (20%), and level of focus (22%).

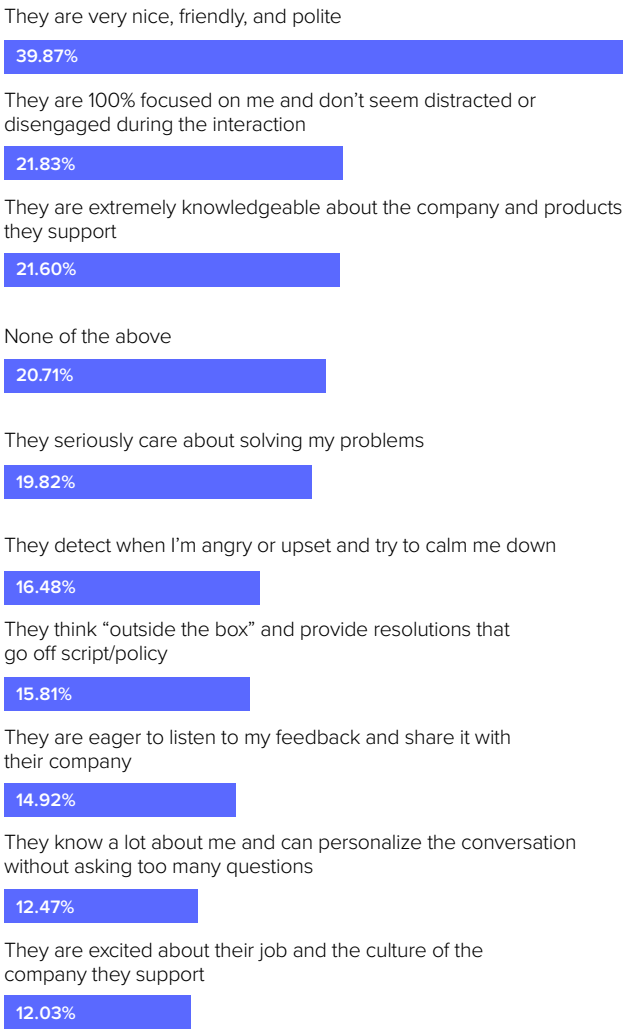
Beyond their efficacy at resolving support issues, the majority of consumers do not even believe the typical contact center agent is *friendly.*

In the same ballpark as the data from 2024 (when 10% cited agent excitement, 14% celebrated knowledge of customers and issues, 16% hyped emotional intelligence, 17% touted outside-the-box support, 19% trumpeted commitment to solving problems, 19% experienced high focus, and 36% acknowledged friendliness), the numbers question whether agents are even capable of engaging in meaningful conversation, let alone providing the complex, consultative support required in a world where "AI can handle simple issues."

The fact that customers will still demand access to live agents in spite of these weaknesses underscores just how little they trust self-service options.

But it also underscores the extent to which contact centers are squandering the opportunity to connect with customers. If the frontline faces of their business are coming across as cold, unprepared, unfocused, and ill-informed, there is no way they are building relationships to their fullest potential.

Consider the customer service employees with whom you've recently interacted. Which of the following do you feel is true for most of them?



CUSTOMERS GRANT EMPATHY, NOT EXCEPTIONS

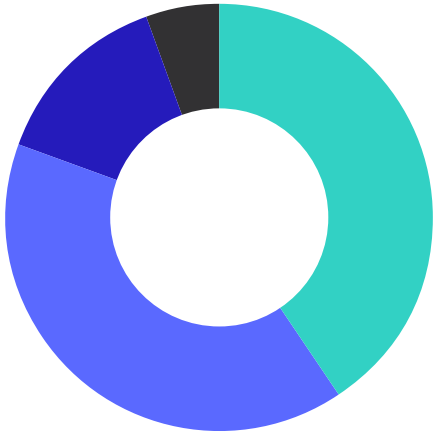
By and large, today's agents are not coming across as engaged, excited, or friendly. They do not seem especially enthusiastic about representing brands, connecting with customers, or solving challenging problems.

Obviously, this perceived disengagement is not *exclusively* a consequence of poor hiring. It is not as if the typical contact center leader is actively pursuing cold, indifferent employees to represent their brands.

Rather, it may also be the consequence of circumstance. The simple reality is that the job of a contact center agent can be very difficult and emotionally draining. As they navigate famously fragmented systems and convoluted processes, they are dealing with customers who are loudly, if not rudely, requesting solutions to their problems. Circumstantial factors like bad weather, excessive traffic, or personal sadness will only exacerbate the difficulty of the work – and increase the likelihood of a poor demeanor.

Consumers are themselves neither naive nor indifferent to these realities. More than 86%, in fact, acknowledge that they *do feel bad* when agents are going through undue difficulty.

Do you feel bad when a customer service employee is dealing with challenges (very hard job, bad weather, personal issue, lots of rude/ complaining customers, etc)?



40.75% I do feel bad, but I still expect them to perform their job and try delivering a great experience

39.87% I do feel bad, and it may make me less critical of the individual employee -- but I still hold the business accountable for a great experience

13.88% No, I don't feel bad; customer service is their job and I always expect them to perform it well

5.51% I do feel bad, and I'll accept a lesser experience as a result

But while they may *feel bad* about what agents are experiencing, they will generally not accept bad experiences for themselves. Only 6% say they will temper their service expectations when it is clear an agent is struggling.

Despite feeling bad about their situation, nearly 41% of consumers will still expect these agents to perform at their usual standard. Another 40% may refrain from criticizing the individual agent, but they will still hold the business accountable for exceptional performance.

The remaining 14% are those indifferent to agent suffering; naturally, they too expect stellar performance no matter what is happening.

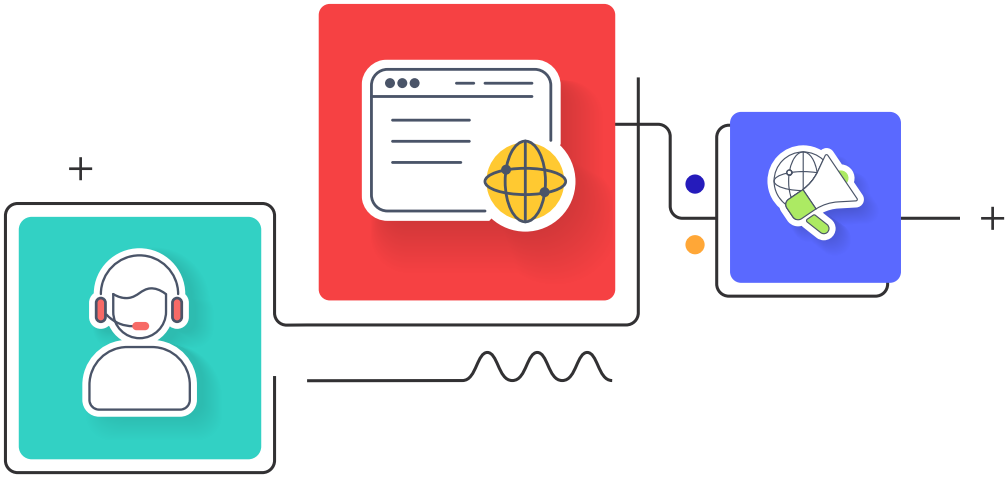
This data provides contact center leaders with two important takeaways. First, it underscores the importance of doing everything in their power to improve agent satisfaction, wellness, and happiness. Since the majority of consumers always expect agents to perform for customers, businesses must ensure employee experiences are simple, sentiment is high, and productivity is unwavering.

Second, insofar as the business will *certainly* be accountable even if individual agents get a pass, leaders will require robust, real-time insight into how agents are performing – and feeling. By quickly spotting red flags in agent performance and engagement, leaders can step in to provide the necessary assistance and coaching, while doing everything in their power to keep the affected customers happy.

When interacting with a customer service employee, which of the following is more important?



- **40.31%** They are very nice and friendly, even if they take a bit longer to solve my problem
- **34.80%** Both are essential; I need employees to be very fast AND friendly
- **24.89%** They quickly try to solve my problem, even if they're not that nice



CX IN 2030: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Human agents may possess clear advantages over AI self-service tools, but they are not even meeting today's customer expectations for demeanor, enthusiasm, empathy, and resolve. As customer standards continue to rise, and as agent workflow grows more complex, the consequences of inadequate employee performance and sentiment will only grow greater.

To achieve a different landscape in 2030, successful brands will consider the following:

- **Prepare agents for next-generation work.** Consumers are not alone in feeling that today's agents lack emotional intelligence, critical thinking ability, and mastery of complex topics. Leaders themselves acknowledge the same reality, with less than one-fourth expressing confidence that agents are ready for higher-value work. The use of AI for simple issues ensures that agents will, inevitably, shift their attention to complex, consultative interaction. This means that contact centers *must act now* to upskill agents for a future in which they spend less time reading scripts, and more time engaging in high-stakes matters.

- **Use AI to augment agent performance.** True agent empowerment requires more than enhanced training and coaching. It also requires real-time guidance, enabling agents to quickly and easily access the information they need to understand customers, appreciate context, navigate challenging matters, and take meaningful action. Agent-facing AI solutions provide this support, helping new agents demonstrate early expertise and experienced ones come across as powerhouse customer advisors. By streamlining processes and eliminating frustrating tasks, agent-facing AI also creates a better overall work experience.

- **Wholeheartedly commit to employee wellness.** Yes, optimized workflows, improved tools, and AI augmentation will remove common sources of agent frustration. However, the impending pivot to a more consultative role will introduce agents to more intellectually challenging work – and more demanding, emotionally charged customers. This pivot can have a considerable impact on agent sentiment and demeanor, and insofar as agent demeanor will have an even greater impact on "complex conversations" (40% of consumers say they prefer nice employees to efficient ones, while only 25% argue the latter), the consequences of agent burnout can be significant. Consumers are not going to give disillusioned agents a pass, which means leaders have the obligation to keep agents happy, motivated, and ready to deliver exceptionals support.



Portrait of the Modern Customer: Preferences, Proclivities, and Priorities

Designing the customer experience of 2030 requires more than simply understanding how consumers feel about the state of service. It also requires insight into how they behave. Where do they ultimately go for support? How do they react when things go wrong? When do they celebrate a customer interaction as successful?

YES, CUSTOMERS ARE STILL CALLING

They may be aware of the omnichannel revolution. They may be primarily using digital channels in their everyday lives. But when it comes to the service experience, consumers are still most confident in the traditional phone channel.

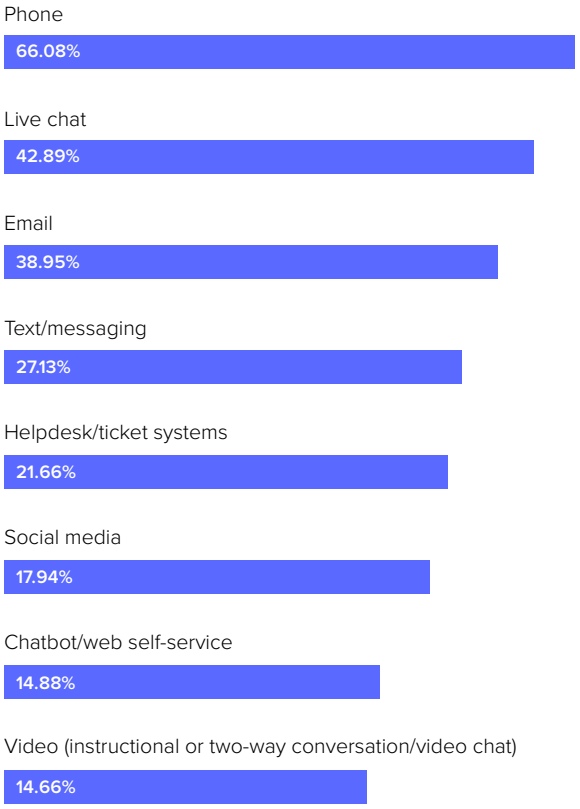
Matching the data from every previous CCW Digital Consumer Preferences Survey – and, really, every analysis since the dawn of the contact center – consumers resoundingly identify the phone call as their most trusted support option.

Trusted by 66%, telephony is actually the *only* option to elicit confidence from the majority of consumers. Live chat and email, the next-most trusted channels, boast respective confidence levels of 43% and 39%.

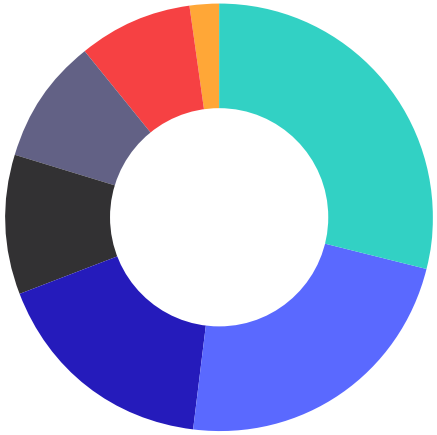
As phone again reigns supreme, emerging digital channels continue to lag. Only 27% of consumers feel confident resolving a support issue via text messaging, and a mere 22% have trust in helpdesk ticketing systems. The numbers for social media (17%), chatbots (15%), and video (15%) are even lower.

Because these channels are all relatively new, the comparatively low trust may seem intuitive. What is less understandable – and quite concerning, for that matter – is that confidence is not growing as familiarity builds. In the case of social media and chatbots, trust levels actually fell from 2024.

Suppose you have a customer service issue. In which of the following channels do you trust companies to successfully solve your problem?



When you encounter an issue with a product or experience that you cannot quickly solve on your own, what is typically the FIRST thing you would do to get more help?



- **29.07%** Search Google or an AI platform like ChatGPT
- **23.13%** Search the company's website, mobile app, or official knowledge base
- **17.18%** Contact the company via phone call (or in-person if applicable)
- **10.35%** Contact the company via text-based digital channels (messaging, email, social, chat, etc)
- **9.69%** Search social media (including video sites)
- **8.59%** Use the company's chatbot, voice menu, or other self-help tool
- **1.98%** Other

CALLING OUT A FALLACY: COMFORT DOES NOT MEAN PASSION

It is true that customers are considerably more confident in telephony than any other option, but that does not mean they *prefer* calling. It simply means they are not receiving the support they want from other, theoretically more appealing options.

When dealing with a problem they cannot immediately solve on their own, only 17% would *first* look to call for help. The remaining 83%, on the other hand, initially gravitate toward other options.

The overwhelming majority of these consumers will first explore information on the web. Just over 29% will search a resource like Google or ChatGPT, while 23% will pore through the company's official website or mobile app. Another 10% will review social media conversations about the topic.

The balance of customers will engage in alternative manners: 10% will connect with the brand in text-based environments like messaging or chat, while 9% will use an interactive self-service tool, including a chatbot or IVR.

Insofar as customers are still *most* confident in the traditional phone call, brands cannot abandon that option. Previous CCW Digital research actually confirms that customers look down upon brands that eliminate or obscure their phone lines in favor of digital-only support.

But insofar as customers instinctively consider other options, brands have a real opportunity to improve digital adoption – and create a more scalable, legitimately omnichannel contact center. By optimizing the relevance of search results, and strengthening the value of digital engagement channels, brands can satisfy the increasingly large contingent of customers that wishes it could *avoid* picking up the phone.

THE COSTS OF MISSING THE MARK: BAD WORD-OF-MOUTH, LOST CUSTOMERS

The fact that the same pain points exist year after year does not mean contact centers are making no effort to improve. It does, however, call into question the *urgency* and *creativity* with which they are attempting those improvements.

If brands are not only failing to improve factors like personalization and convenience but actively removing elements that matter to customers, such as access to live agents, it is clear someone within the organization does not fully fear the consequences of underperformance.

Whether that doubter exists within the contact center team or in the C-suite, the data says they are incorrect.

Poor experiences very much affect consumers, with 56% noting that they experience at least moderate frustration, sadness, or disappointment after just one bad interaction. A non-trivial 15% say they get significantly angry or upset.

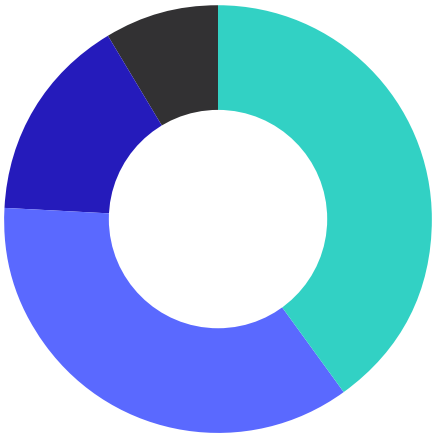
For a brand that wants to strengthen relationships and grow customer lifetime value, these emotional consequences should matter greatly. But even if a customer's individual sentiment is not sounding the alarm, their *actions* can speak far louder.

Upon having bad experiences with a company, 57% of consumers say they are likely to tell friends, family, or coworkers about the situation. Nearly 53% will attempt to switch to a competitive provider, while 38% will leave negative commentary on an online review site. More than 27% will do the same on social media.

From reducing immediate revenue to damaging the brand's reputation, these actions can have significant financial consequences.

Failure to elevate the experience, therefore, is not simply going to result in sobering future CCW Digital Market Studies and uncomfortable support conversations. It is going to hurt the bottom line.

Which best describes how you react when a customer service interaction goes poorly and/or does not result in the resolution you wanted or expected?



- 40.22% Moderate disappointment, frustration, or sadness
- 35.82% Mild disappointment or annoyance
- 15.38% Significant anger or sadness
- 8.57% No reaction, customer service doesn't impact my emotions or actions

Suppose you've been having bad experiences with a company. Which of the following are you likely to do?



SERVICE QUALITY: CAN YOU KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY?

Customer service absolutely matters to consumers, who feel moderate, if not significant, sadness when things go wrong. Naturally, many of them will want to know what to expect before they make a purchase.

Nearly 71%, in fact, consider the likely service experience when making a purchase. The most popular option is to evaluate review sites, with 55% considering that form of word-of-mouth.

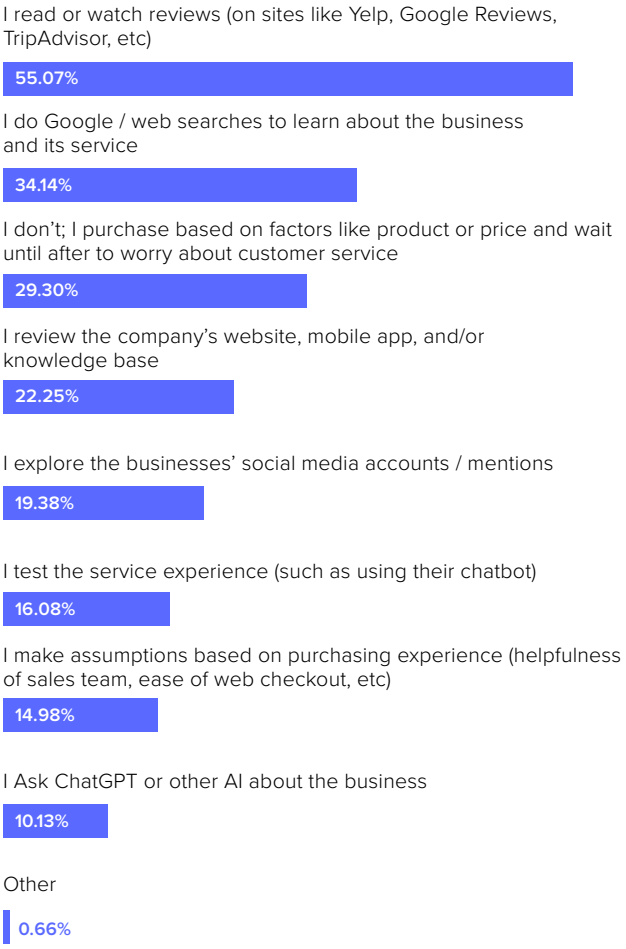
Other steps include running web searches about the business (34%), reviewing the business' official websites and knowledge bases (22%), exploring the business' social accounts (19%), and even testing existing support options (16%).

Whereas these efforts are clearly more pronounced in certain, high-stakes situations, the main takeaway is clear: today's customers consider far more than price and product quality when making a purchase. They do want to know they can be confident in the brand selling that product, and they do want to know that the process of getting support will be as seamless and valuable as possible.

An incentive to elevate all service channels, including the web-based ones that customers will more commonly use in the evaluation process, this data further underscores the inherent value of customer satisfaction. If a negative service experience prompts a customer to complain on a review or social site, that complaint could indeed deter a future purchase.

In that case, even the most innovative, well-marketed product could end up underperforming financially. Service can indeed be a dealbreaker – and gamechanger.

Before making a purchase, how do you assess a brand's likelihood to provide good customer service?



SOURCE OF ENTHUSIASM: WHAT DRIVES CUSTOMERS TO PAY MORE?

Fear of loss is not the only motivation to prioritize customer centricity. Brands that excel have the opportunity to cultivate more lucrative relationships.

Beyond increasing satisfaction, which can in turn lead to repeat revenue and powerful brand advocacy, a great customer experience can actually drive customers to buy – and *pay more* in the process.

More than 42% of customers say they would outright be willing to pay more for better customer service. Just shy of 39% add that the promise of *human* customer support employees would justify a higher price tag.

Other resonant value adds include strong warranties (38%), effective rewards and loyalty programs (37%), and a reputation for a strong employee experience (33%).

The lattermost driver is particularly compelling, as it underscores the premium customers place on a brand's culture, identity, and operating practices. With so many potential options at their fingertips, a substantial percentage of customers are demanding more than just a good product. They want to feel *good* about the brands they are supporting.

Many customers also want to feel seen by these brands. More than 54% of customers value personalization, with 24% confirming their outright *love* for proactive, highly tailored interactions.

Only 20% are unmoved by personalization efforts, and this resistance is largely due to the logistics (discomfort providing the requisite data) or efficacy (past examples of brands failing at personalization) than it is disinterest in the idea of customized experiences.

Would you be willing to pay more to buy from a company that demonstrated any of the following?



Is a personalized experience essential to you?



- **30.62%** I like when certain brands create personalized experiences, but it's not a must-have
- **25.33%** Whether or not I appreciate personalization from a brand depends on the industry
- **23.79%** I love when brands create personalized experiences that proactively address my needs
- **14.54%** Not a fan - I don't like when brands collect personal information that isn't absolutely necessary
- **5.73%** Not a fan - brands' predictions of what they think I like are often wrong

CX IN 2030: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

Not merely a "feel good" concept, customer centricity has a tangible impact on business performance. Customer behavior and revenue is directly tied to their perception of a brand, their experience doing business, and their happiness with support outcomes. This makes the year-over-year stagnation all the more concerning; if brands continue to squander opportunities to honor channel preference, reduce effort, increase personalization, and drive customer delight, they will hurt their bottom line.

To achieve a different landscape in 2030, successful brands will consider the following:

- **Take *omnichannel* seriously.** Omnichannel is not simply a call to be available everywhere. It is also not just a fancy word for digital transformation. It is a reminder that brands have to deliver consistently exceptional support across all channels, enabling customers to get what they want where they want it. Ahead of 2030, this will require elevating lower-touch digital touch points to satisfy customers who want a quick, easy pathway to resolutions. It will also require elevating the traditional phone experience, ensuring steady access to the channel customers still ultimately see as their safest bet for service.

- **Treat service as the value driver.** When speaking about their team's potential to drive value, some contact center leaders focus on upsell and cross-sell opportunities. Although these are important, they miss the point that simply delivering a great experience can *itself* create financial value. Beyond improving long-term customer loyalty, a great experience will attract more interest and purchasing (and even higher price points!) A bad one, on the other hand, will cause customers to cease doing business and share negative sentiment publicly – behaviors that will actively hurt revenue.

- **Think beyond support.** Customers will pay more for great service, but they will also place a premium on loyalty programs, warranties, and great company cultures. They will also respond to highly targeted sales and marketing messages. The ultimate takeaway is that there is no shortcut here – successful customer experiences fire on all cylinders, and successful contact centers play a vital role in delivering.

CCW CUSTOMER CONTACT WEEK DIGITAL

2025 June Market Study

PRACTICALITY GUIDE





Google Cloud

Rules of Engagement | Unlocking The Power of AI in the CX of 2030

With so many consumers enduring inconvenient, impersonal interactions as part of overly complex journeys, it is easy to see why artificial intelligence (AI) is commanding investment attention from 99% of enterprise contact centers.

AI represents a way to deliver customer centricity at scale. It provides a way to rapidly eliminate burdensome sources of friction, markedly improve the accessibility of support touch points, and resonantly empower efficient *and* empathetic agent performance. It offers an answer to the challenges that have long caused contact center leaders to lose sleep and long caused their businesses to lose customers.

Unfortunately, the results have not fully materialized in practice. Although some contact centers are beginning to celebrate wins, many report ongoing inefficiency on the frontlines and in back offices. Only 29% of consumers, meanwhile, feel AI is presently adding value to their experiences.

Overcoming these challenges is non-negotiable, which means refining the approach to contact center AI is imperative. It is the surest way to improve performance in the short-term, and a pivotal step in elevating the customer experience ahead of 2030.

In this briefing, we detail critical rules that will allow you to unlock the true power of AI investments – and the true benefits of unparalleled agent and customer experiences.

RULE #1 | ESTABLISH AN OMNICHANNEL FRAMEWORK

With 94% of contact centers reporting cost pressure and *all* actively competing on the customer experience, there is an understandable urgency to deploy AI.

But while some AI solutions, including those focused on process automation and data analysis, can make an immediate and resounding impact, savvy organizations will generally trade a reckless rush for responsible resourcefulness. They will recognize the importance of a big picture approach – one that involves building the right framework.

Specifically, they will pursue solutions that achieve integration across key data systems, knowledge bases, and contact channels, ensuring a smooth flow of information and seamless movement throughout the journey. This effort directly addresses the longstanding contact center fragmentation challenge, which has notoriously increased friction and inhibited service excellence.

> "Today, legacy systems are prohibiting organizations to have a complete view of the customer necessary to deliver relevant service, resulting in frustrating customer experiences within the same traditional channels."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Global Sales and GTM Leader, Customer Engagement Suite AI, Google

By committing to an omnichannel contact center framework and then selecting solutions built for integration, businesses will arm AI with the all-important "single source of truth." This is the gateway to fast, accurate, consistent, and personalized automation, and a prerequisite for enabling customers to easily move between AI and human agents at every phase of the journey.

> "AI is only as good as the data it has access to, therefore it is critical that organizations prepare and enable their data sources to be able to activate AI in the most effective way. Choosing AI-first solutions that are designed for enterprise readiness, allowing organizations to scale quickly, adapt to changing business needs, and integrate with existing technologies and partner ecosystems should be top-of-mind for contact centers as they prepare for future growth and innovation."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

RULE #2 | EMBRACE A HYBRID, USE CASE-CONSCIOUS APPROACH TO AI INVESTMENTS

When it comes to customer experience design, the most *advanced* initiative is not always the most appropriate pursuit.

This rule certainly applies to AI deployments. Many contact centers will rush to source and implement the most cutting-edge generative AI solutions, forgetting that these technologies may be ill-suited for critical use cases.

A savvier contact center will, instead, focus on the *nuances* of each opportunity. For each case, it will consider the likely user behavior, intention, and outcome preference – and then decide the appropriate AI solution to deploy.

In many situations, this will involve a combination of rules-based and generative solutions, pairing the simplicity and consistency of the former with the contextual cognizance and personalization capabilities of the latter. Whether in the form of customer-facing self-service or internal AI that augments agent performance, this hybrid approach will result in a best-of-all-worlds experience.

> "There are many use cases where deterministic flows are more beneficial, and therefore, a hybrid conversational agent - who can handle both generative flows and rules-based controls - is important. For instance, a customer speaking with a bank representative may have to verify their identity through a specific set of verification questions. At the same time, they may ask the bank: "Tell me what's the best mortgage offering for me? Can you compare it across the products you offer?" The first requires a deterministic flow. The second requires a generative flow. The key is having a hybrid agent who has the ability to do both."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

RULE #3 | GO BEYOND CLICHÉS AS YOU CULTIVATE NEXT-GENERATION AGENTS

There is superficial truth to the idea that "AI will handle simple issues so that agents can focus on complex ones," but successful contact center leaders know to dig deeper. They know to carefully consider exactly what AI will handle, how that will transform agent workflow, and what agents will need to thrive in this new normal.

With so many customers still resisting self-service, companies will still need to carefully consider the specific issues they feel comfortable automating. They will then have to analyze data to thoroughly assess what automating these issues means for conversation volume and workflow: knowing which customers will continue to outright reject self-service, who will escalate in certain conditions, and who will wholeheartedly embrace it will go a long way in anticipating how inbound contact volume will change.

Assuming AI powered self-service ultimately absorbs *some* tasks that would otherwise reach employees, contact center leaders will then have to evaluate what this means for agent performance standards and expectations. On which issues will agents begin to spend more of their time? How will expectations for agent engagement *change* now that customers can get simple, fact-based answers in AI environments? What new knowledge – and soft skills – will be required for success?

While assessing the impact on training, coaching, and workforce management, forward-thinking contact centers will harness the power of AI to improve readiness *and* optimize performance.

> "Looking to 2030, organizations have a tremendous opportunity to transform customer experience with AI. From a process-standpoint: AI is automating back office tasks and workflows, while also helping human agents work smarter, providing personalized agent guidance and information grounded for accuracy. AI will maximize the potential of every customer representative."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

Whether in the form of intelligent "hand-offs" between virtual and human agents, real-time assistance within the calls, or administrative process enhancement, AI will reduce agent frustration while enabling them to better tap into their intrinsic empathy, natural creativity, and flair for human connection. It will create a more satisfying and empowering work atmosphere, decreasing internal turnover while increasing success at growing customer loyalty and advocacy.

> "As AI will take care of automating mundane tasks, providing insights, and assisting in decision-making, human agents will have additional bandwidth for creativity and innovation, critical thinking and complex problem-solving, and emotional intelligence and empathy. They will have the ability to increase efficiency with real-time translation and knowledge assistance. By increasing customer satisfaction with timely and accurate issue resolution capabilities, they have the potential to increase their own employee satisfaction as well."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

As AI helps employees more successfully engage with customers, these employees will play a reciprocal role in elevating the quality of AI.

> "In terms of new roles and responsibilities, there will be a critical "human-in-the-loop" role that includes overseeing ethical and responsible use of AI, as well as providing feedback, refining parameters, and ensuring AI models are aligned with human values will require human oversight."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

RULE #4 | ADOPT MEASUREMENTS THAT REFLECT A HIGHER STANDARD OF CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

Yes, AI represents a promising solution to today's contact center challenges. But it can also mean so much more. It can be a pathway to *increasing* performance, helping brands reach standards for accessibility, proactivity, and personalization that were previously impossible in resource-starved operations.

It empowers an "always on" contact center dynamic, where consumers can receive high-value support from the optimal balance of technology and human ingenuity.

Knowing that what gets measured gets managed, successful contact centers will recalibrate their metrics to accommodate this more innovative, value-driven approach to the customer experience.

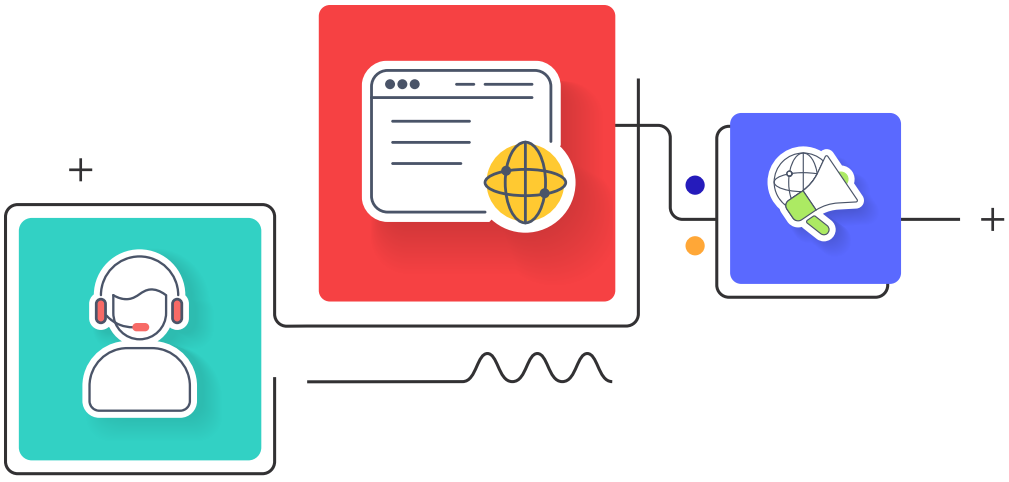
> "The contact center will transition from a cost center to a revenue generator, enabled by AI-powered, human-like, 'always on' engagement across voice, web, mobile, email, and apps, with success criteria that goes beyond reducing call handle time and deflection to increasing up-sell and cross-sell activities."
>
> – Geoff Schnell, Google

To ensure AI plays a role in supporting this revenue-driven "value center" of the future, contact centers will grade performance through the following dimensions:

- Measuring satisfaction levels and callback rates, not just deflection, containment, and volume reduction, when analyzing proactive communication *and* inbound self-service.
- Measuring growth in revenue – notably from increased customer lifetime value – when evaluating AI and agent-led interactions.
- Measuring "agent effort," including repetitive questioning, "time to resolution," and frequency of knowledge and data lookups, to grade employee-facing AI tools.
- Measuring individual agent performance, including success at personalizing interactions and achieving upsell revenue, to evaluate agent skills and empowerment.

Not simply useful in tracking these measures, AI can uncover actionable intelligence for driving improvement. Real-time conversation insights can provide opportunities to optimize bot- and human-led interactions, while also facilitating better journey orchestration. Dynamic quality monitoring can assess performance needs, and uncover personalized coaching opportunities, even when agents veer "off script" and into highly unique matters.

AI-powered analytics can also uncover gaps and shortcomings with technology implementations, helping brands identify better opportunities for automation – and urgent needs for additional training, language models, or guardrails.



FROM RULES TO RESULTS | THE REAL-WORLD IMPACT OF STRATEGIC AI INITIATIVES

Unwilling to wait until 2030, some of the world's most iconic brands are already designing AI strategies in accordance with the four rules of engagement. These strategies are paying off, yielding quantifiable results in the short-term and future-proofed operations for the long-term.

Guided by robust partnerships with Google, these success stories follow.

Company	Challenge	Solution & Result
TTEC	TTEC supports 15 BPO clients, as well as their own internal contact center operations. TTEC was looking to scale customer engagement to more than 1,400 of their customer care representatives support use cases such as HR and IT help desks, customer care, and sales.	With Conversational Agents, TTEC has been able to **automate up to 40%** of customer interactions across payroll, a benefits help desk, HR, new hire onboarding, equipment returns, emergency hotlines, and employee call out use cases. Agent Assist has led to a **40% reduction** in escalations and Knowledge Assist capabilities have led to a **11% reduction** in the average handle time, with new hires seeing **18% improvement.** Call Summarization has led to a **30 second reduction** in average handle time and after-call work time (the latter is the time agents spend completing tasks after an interaction). One client reported seeing a **4 minute reduction** in after-call work time. Data analytics from Conversational Insights helped reduce manual quality assurance processes, and a further **10% to 20% reduction** in average handle times from analytics-led process improvements.
Verizon	Verizon was looking to transform how they serve their more than 115 million wireless connections, looking to deliver faster, more personalized service, significantly reduce call times and empower their team to focus on what truly matters: their customers.	Verizon's Personal Research Assistant provides the company's 28,000 customer care representatives with the information they need to answer a customer's question instantly, and personalized for their unique needs. Able to answer 95% of questions, the Personal Research Assistant reduces the cognitive load so care representatives can focus on the customer, leading to faster and more satisfying resolutions.
Best Buy	Best Buy wanted to remove some of the mental burden on contact center agents, who juggle note-taking, summarizing calls, and navigating complex systems — all while trying to actively listen and talk to customers.	Best Buy implemented Google CES to automatically generate summaries for every customer interaction, removing the need for contact center agents to juggle multiple tasks at once and allowing them to concentrate on meeting customers with empathy, understanding customer needs, and figuring out the best way to help. Now, customer contact agents can hone in on what customers truly need and resolve issues up to 90 seconds faster without wasting time or energy manually recording summaries.
Wells Fargo	Wells Fargo aimed to bring a smart, intuitive experience to banking through a mobile experience that would be with their customers at all times, seamlessly working in the background to empower them to bank smarter.	Developed a virtual AI assistant called "Fargo" driven by Google Cloud's CES technology to hyper-personalize the customer experience. Fargo gives you the 'why' behind why things are happening. Where a mobile app is binary, Fargo offers personalized financial insights.



NICE

3 AI Mistakes That Must Be Solved Before 2030

The customer experience continues to evolve. In today's experience-centric environment, customers are looking for seamless interactions, instant responses and tailored support. Their expectations are realistic, but the standard for exceptional support is consistently being pushed further.

New technology has empowered brands to offer a heightened level of personalization and speed that will only become more common as we look ahead. By 2030, organizations should expect customers to seek out even more intelligent and streamlined support.

To get there, contact center leaders have their work cut out for them. Navigating disconnected systems, a multitude of solutions and an evolving agent role is not easy. And in 2025, the cracks have begun to show.

According to CCW Digital research, experiences are not as seamless as we might expect. In fact, 59% of customers say that businesses have gotten worse at delivering customer service over the past year.

When digging deeper into this sentiment, it is stemming from a few key areas. Customers are consistently repeating themselves across channels, they are finding it difficult to get in touch with a live person and are often required to use automated platforms.

To prepare for 2030, leaders must prioritize technology that adds value to the customer experience. Too many organizations are focusing on the wrong things when it comes to contact center technology. It is these misguided implementations that lead to chronic customer challenges.

This report will cover the customer experience of 2030 and how organizations can prepare. By avoiding AI challenges and directing innovation in the right areas, leaders will create an experience that feels both relevant and seamless for customers.

THE TOP AI CHALLENGES OF 2025

While AI has been a catalyst for change, it is also an obstacle for leaders who are not focusing on the right strategy. When organizations implement AI for the wrong reasons, customers don't see the real benefits of the technology. This lack of alignment leads to consistent challenges and diminishing satisfaction. With the help of AI experts at NiCE, we break down the top AI challenges preventing organizations from securing key outcomes in 2025.

#1 AI Is Not Being Used Intentionally

Customers are not averse to technology. So many individuals are open to leveraging self-service and AI, but it has to *work.* CCW Digital research found that as high as one-third of customers say that AI is not yet helping improve experiences, but may eventually.

In these cases, it is rarely a product of entirely inefficient technology, but a lack of strategy and intentional implementation.

Michele Carlson, Director of Product Marketing & Head of Content Strategy at NiCE, shares that innovation is not just about the technology, "For companies ready to modernize with AI, this isn't just a tech upgrade. It's a strategic shift, from fragmented tools to a unified, intelligent platform where every customer moment is connected, contextual, and complete."

AI is exciting — it has the potential to solve many of our persistent challenges, but it must be implemented intentionally to see real value. Many organizations see new technology as another tool to add to their stack, attempting to fit it into their already crowded lineup. This kind of implementation, however, lacks strategy and direction.

When technology ends up adding more complexity, it becomes another problem to solve instead of a seamless solution.

This is one of the key challenges leaders face today — managing continuous innovation with careful consideration and long-term strategy.

"AI doesn't just make things faster, it makes them smarter, smoother, and more welcoming. And it's doing so behind the scenes, turning complexity into clarity, and giving both customers and agents a more human experience," Carlson says.

This level of seamless innovation can only be achieved when leaders work toward a unified AI strategy. In 2030, it is this focus on human-centered design that will set brands apart.

#2 The Fear of AI is Diminishing Its Impact

When AI is not implemented with the customer in mind, its impact can be counterintuitive. Although it is meant to help customers and improve experiences, it can end up adding a level of complication to workflows that leaders are not accounting for.

This cycle has led to some negative sentiment surrounding AI. According to CCW Digital research, 50% of customers stated that they are fearful that customer service will be more automated and less personalized to their needs moving forward.

This fear is not coming out of nowhere. CCW Digital research confirmed that 92% of customers say that companies have been more likely to require them to use a self-service tool before or in place of speaking to a human.

Today's customers feel they are getting further and further from a human-led interaction, giving them the impression that this will only get harder as we look ahead. This forced journey makes customers more averse to leveraging self-service and AI, when it should be doing the opposite.

"The goal isn't just automation – it's orchestration. The right AI platform connects your people, processes, and data in a way that's scalable, efficient, and remarkably human – to connect with your agents, as well as your customers," says Tamsin Dollin, Director of Product Marketing at NiCE.

When customers are accustomed to robotic, dead-end digital interactions, they do not gravitate towards self-service. However, when done right, customers should lean into AI-powered channels as they benefit from streamlined, accessible support.

This is a key challenge that must be addressed as we progress toward the CX of 2030. Ensuring that customers feel not just comfortable but excited to leverage the technology is critical. When it is not actively adding value to the experience, customers will not see it as a necessary tool. This cycle leaves companies investing in technology that customers do not want to use. By orchestrating an experience, instead of a transaction, companies can enhance adoption over the long term.

#3 The AI Check Box

AI has been top of mind for so many leaders over the last few years. With 99% of contact center leaders stating that they are maintaining or increasing their investment in AI this year, the pressure to innovate is intense.

This pressure, although productive at times, can also lead to poor decision making. With the increasing popularity of AI, so many leaders feel they need to implement it to keep up. And while that may be true, it positions it as a checkbox item over a total transformation.

"Adopting AI just to check a box is a fast path to frustration. When organizations adopt artificial intelligence merely to keep pace with the hot new trend, they miss the transformative potential that strategic implementation offers," says Carlson.

When this is the path organizations take, it is obvious to customers. The technology becomes an add on to the experience, not a tool to orchestrate an effective journey.

With this, it also impacts the bottom line. Carlson shares, "According to Constellation Research, while 92% of C-suite executives report deploying AI, fewer than half say they are seeing meaningful ROI. That's a wake-up call."

AI is not meant to be a means to keep up with the hype, this hype has been established *because of* its transformative powers. It cannot act as an add on, it is the change catalyst.

Looking ahead to the contact center of 2030, it will be clear when organizations adopted AI to solve specific problems and transform key aspects of the experience. To avoid buying into the hype, leaders must look at the long-term implications of technology.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE: CX OF 2030

The challenges contact center leaders are facing are not inevitable. These obstacles are completely avoidable with comprehensive planning and intentional CX technology strategy. With these challenges outlined, here we share next steps for what success looks like in the contact center of 2030.

Leverage AI As An Orchestration Tool

AI obviously offers so much potential, but contact center leaders are not yet prepared to reap the rewards. To do so, organizations must work to lead with a more holistic approach. This starts with understanding how customers engage with your brand.

> "Today's customers don't think in channels. They expect connected, intelligent, and frictionless service—whether they start on your website, switch to an app, or end up on the phone with a live agent. What they don't expect? To repeat themselves or start from scratch," shares Tamsin Dollin.

AI can support a more connected experience with effective context and insight travelling across channels. Customers don't want to engage with channels that won't solve their problem, forcing them to escalate to an agent who has no knowledge of any previous interaction. By leveraging AI to bridge these gaps, customers benefit from a truly seamless experience.

Dollin continues, "That's where AI, especially agentic and generative AI, is driving real transformation. AI is now orchestrating the entire experience, connecting front-office interactions and back-office processes. It keeps context flowing, eliminates silos, and ensures each handoff is seamless."

This level of connection adds value to the customer experience. Individuals will be much more willing to engage with self-service channels if they know their context will be preserved across every interaction. Once they trust that they will receive a resolution, brands will see increased adoption.

AI can empower brands to achieve a truly seamless journey, keeping customers happy and agents prepared to deliver meaningful support. These are the outcomes that organizations should be achieving in the contact center of 2030.

Establish A Unified AI Strategy

When making technology decisions, it's not just about the product itself — leaders must ensure that the technology *actually fits* into their AI tech stack. The more companies invest in one-off solutions, the more difficult it is to establish a unified AI strategy.

Additionally, legacy systems that may have worked in the past may become more of a challenge as leaders look to integrate new tools. Michele Carlson says, "As the market floods with AI and automation tools, many organizations face an unintended consequence: more silos, not fewer. Point solutions may solve isolated problems, but they create fragmented customer journeys, disconnected teams, and incomplete data. In customer service, that kind of chaos isn't just inefficient, it's costly."

To avoid this, organizations should look for all-in-one platforms. Unified, enterprise-grade AI platforms allow companies to seamlessly improve operations, without the added complexity. With more streamlined workflows and purpose-built technology, employees benefit from more accessible insight and simplified journeys.

Avoiding these inefficiencies before implementation is critical. Looking ahead, ensuring a smooth implementation and roll out will be essential for continued success.

Use Cases For Continuous Success

To establish a more intentional implementation, leaders should focus on specific use cases to ensure success. Organizations should begin their transformations by solving the most urgent problems and expand from there.

"Beginning with a clear understanding of where AI can drive the greatest value at your organization is the biggest differentiator between promise and payoff. Maybe you want to focus on automating workflows, predicting service needs, or empowering agents in real-time. Regardless of where you begin, a trusted partner who brings not just technology, but deep customer experience expertise and solutions ready for you to use now," Michele Carlson shares.

AI is an incredible tool to enhance efficiency, improve operations and build meaningful customer connections. When implemented intentionally, there is endless potential. In the short term, contact center leaders should work to understand their greatest challenges and use AI as a means to solve these pain points.

From there, leaders can leverage AI to make broader changes and optimize workflows. But, starting small and making necessary changes will power a more effective and focused transformation.

The top use cases go beyond chatbots or basic deflection. Today, companies are using AI to:

- Automatically solve everyday problems so your team can focus on breakthrough moments.
- Give agents an AI sidekick that serves up the perfect suggestions at just the right time.
- Turn complex conversations into clear insights faster than ever before.
- Anticipate customer needs before they even know what they're looking for.
- Catch even the slightest issues before they become big headaches for customers.

Company	Challenge	Solution & Result
Sony Electronics	Sony Electronics set out to transform how customers connect with support, making every interaction feel effortless, personal, and empowering.	■ 40% increase in automation potential for customer inquiries ■ 22.5% increase in chat customer feedback response rate ■ 15.9% process containment to self-service and automated channels
Republic Services	Republic Services wanted to decode customer emotions, sharpen service skills, and turn every interaction into a moment of genuine connection.	■ 30% reduction in repeat calls ■ 33% decrease in negative customer sentiment ■ 120% increase in the number of coached actions in just three months post-go-live
Carnival UK	Carnival UK sought to create unforgettable guest journeys, unlock new revenue streams, and discover the insights that turn great vacations into lifelong memories.	■ 99% improvement in number of guest engagements assessed ■ 75% average engagement in bimonthly implementation update emails ■ Launched digital channels with live chat & integrated guest dashboard positioned to boost sales conversions.



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CX of 2030: 4 Actions To Win In The Age Of Zero Patience

Today's consumers are uncompromising, demanding instant, accurate, personalized solutions to their problems at all times, in all channels.

Today's contact centers are not delivering.

CCW Digital's Consumer Preferences Survey reveals that the typical experience is inconvenient, impersonal, and inconsistent. It imposes ineffective self-service technology on the wrong customers at the wrong times, while forcing those who want assistance from human agents to endure long wait times and repetitive questioning.

The consequences of this underperformance are significant; the majority of consumers will share negative reviews and attempt to switch providers following a bad experience. As 2030 arrives, customer demands rise, and the marketplace becomes more crowded and competitive, these stakes will only increase.

Contact centers cannot, therefore, hesitate to take action. They cannot delay initiatives that will pair innovative artificial intelligence (AI) technology with human-centric strategy.

Instead, they must imminently build a contact center framework that eliminates inefficiencies, cultivates lasting customer loyalty, and positions their businesses for unprecedented success in 2030 – and beyond.

In detailing four actions to win customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy in the age of zero patience, this guide will help you reach that new standard of excellence.

ACTION #1 | GO BEYOND "CONVENIENCE" AND DELIVER IMMEDIACY

More than 74% of consumers feel today's experiences are inconvenient, and many *frequently* encounter "long wait times" and "repetitive questions" throughout the journey.

Given the premium customers place on speed, urgently addressing these inefficiencies is imperative. But as contact centers look to 2030, their goal should be greater than simply creating slightly shorter queues or offering slightly faster responses. It should be about achieving immediacy, providing value to customers *before* they even enter a traditional support process.

> "We anticipate an increase in proactive outreach, voice-AI hybrids, and embedded service within apps and devices. We envisage a world with "always-on" service experiences via AI and voice assistants that solve issues in real time and before they even become issues."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Vice President and GM Contact Center, Zendesk

The journey to immediacy starts with unification. By connecting the entire customer contact ecosystem, businesses position themselves to fully understand customers, including their behaviors, sentiments, preferences, and intentions.

> "By 2030, customer behavior will be shaped by fluid, omnichannel engagement—where context follows the customer, not the channel. Businesses need to invest in platforms and architectures that unify customer data in a single source of truth. This enables real-time journey orchestration, allowing brands to anticipate needs, personalize interactions, and eliminate friction."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Zendesk

As they work to unify and orchestrate their journeys, successful businesses will ensure *every touch point* is convenient, intuitive, and contextually relevant.

This means ensuring that the AI solutions they embed within channels are conversational, easy-to-use, and guided by accurate intelligence and knowledge. Otherwise, customers will bypass these automated options in favor of the traditional, agent-led support process and negate any conceivable efficiency advantages.

Any proactive engagement, meanwhile, must be cognizant of the customer's situation and communication preferences. If customers view such outreach as an aggressive sales and marketing effort rather than instant value, they will tune out the engagement – and continue to clog call queues.

ACTION #2 | ELEVATE, DON'T ELIMINATE, VOICE EXPERIENCES

They may be increasingly using text-based digital channels, but today's consumers still value voice conversations. Phone remains the most trusted support channel, with the consumer confidence level *tripling* that of text messaging. Difficulty communicating their issue, moreover, ranks as the #1 reason consumers reject text-based chatbots.

Rather than denying this reality, the contact center of the future will embrace voice as an even more critical part of the support ecosystem.

> "Text-based channels have and will continue to play a vital part in the CX, but they are not eliminating the significance of voice. Voice is gaining new importance in today's digital, AI-driven world as the most natural communication mode for human interaction. Voice remains unparalleled for complex or emotional issues where trust and empathy are critical."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Zendesk

This does not, however, mean businesses should leave their traditional "call center experiences" untouched. The reality is that the voice experience can and must be improved in the build-up to 2030. AI can play a critical role in the process.

"Voice bots" are already receiving a promising reception from customers; more than 63% of consumers have had at least some positive experiences, and 18% feel engaging with voice AI can be more valuable than speaking to a live person. By continuing to deploy this technology within their journeys, brands will efficiently and scalably accommodate the enduring preference for voice – and enable consumers from around the world to speak in their natural languages.

The power of voice AI is not limited to self-service. By unlocking conversational intelligence about customers and their issues, the technology can facilitate more seamless hand-offs in the short-term and elevate customer journey design in the long run. Coupled with advances in intelligent routing and predictive dialing technology, this insight will augment *agent* performance, making the traditional "call center" experience more efficient and empathetic.

> "The voice experience of the future will be defined by AI-powered automation, including features like predictive dialing and intelligent call routing and contextual agent assist."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Zendesk

ACTION #3 | BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT THE AI-HUMAN BALANCE

Brands have not been approaching AI correctly, and the consequence has been negative customer sentiment. Only 15% of consumers currently trust chatbots to solve their problems, and 60% fear that the rise of AI could eliminate the human touch.

Ahead of 2030, it is imperative to remedy these mistakes – and approach AI from a more intentional, value-centric perspective.

This approach, most notably, involves being intentional about customer-facing AI deployments. Rather than recklessly deploying chatbots and virtual assistants, successful contact centers will review customer data and journey maps to determine the most logical and impactful use cases.

When deployed correctly, customer-facing AI will not come across as an effort to *deflect* volume and *cut costs* at the expense of customer satisfaction. Instead, it will empower customers to instantly get the support they need on their own terms.

> "All too often, brands automate without a clear strategy, resulting in disjointed experiences and frustrated customers. Automation should enhance, not replace, human support, and must be rooted in real use case analysis and journey mapping. We suggest crawl, walk and run approaches to introducing AI and AI agents to customer service workflows starting with eliminating high volume but low value interactions."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Zendesk

An intentional AI strategy also emphasizes human centricity at every turn. From a customer-facing perspective, this means harnessing conversational, generative, and agentic AI to accommodate natural language communication, uncover actionable intelligence, deliver personalized responses, and provide actual resolutions.

Internally, it means empowering agents with accurate knowledge, real-time customer context, and action recommendations to simplify workflow and improve focus. Without stressing over what to say, agents can focus on *how* to say it in the most empathetic, customer-centric way possible. They can finally transition from reading scripts to building relationships.

> "AI and automation tools can act as co-pilots for agents, automating routine tasks and ensuring seamless, high-quality customer interactions. Strategic technologies amplify these capabilities by integrating best-of-breed solutions into a cohesive CX ecosystem. Ultimately, the key is pairing intelligent systems with agents empowered by AI tools to meet evolving expectations at scale."
>
> – Jonathan Barouch, Zendesk

ACTION #4 | MAKE PERSONALIZATION ABOUT PRODUCTIVITY, NOT POLITENESS

Personalization matters to today's consumers, and it will remain pivotal in 2030. Successful contact centers will, however, rethink what personalization truly means in the era of immediate, omnichannel engagement.

Moving forward, personalization will not be about showcasing what one knows about customers via shallow name-drops and references at the start of a call or top of an email. Rather, it will be about using this information to show them a better experience.

It will require a 360-degree view of a customer's experiences with a business, so that future journeys can be optimized based on where a customer prefers to engage – and why they are likely interacting. When a brand uses its recognition of a customer to streamline the authentication process, instantly route them to the most suitable AI or human agent, bypass repetitive questions, provide a fast resolution, and make recommendations for the future, it will be reaching a new standard of personalization.

It will be prioritizing meaningful productivity over empty politeness.

START YOUR CX TRANSFORMATION RIGHT NOW

2030 may *seem* like the distant future, but successful transformation requires action right now. Without urgently rethinking your customer experience vision, building the necessary omnichannel ecosystem, and optimizing your AI and human resources, you will risk falling short of customer expectations and behind your competition.

The beauty of taking urgent action, however, is that you will not have to wait until 2030 to experience ROI. Thanks to its recent acquisition of Local Measure, Zendesk is adding unparalleled AI capabilities to its already robust, unified customer experience platform.

By taking the four actions and leveraging the power of this cutting-edge technology, you can deliver a more immediate, relevant, voice-centric experience for your customers *and* employees. You can bring humanity to customers – instantly and at scale.

Example success stories follow.

Company	Challenge	Solution & Result
Coco Republic	Coco Republic is a leading luxury furniture and design brand. They have operated for over 40 years with the firm belief that a home is a sanctuary and an essential part of achieving a sense of well-being. Delivering an exceptional and luxurious Customer Experience is a core focus for Coco Republic due to a very loyal and repeat customer base. Facing a period of significant business growth and expansion, IT Operations Manager, Richard Hay, identified an opportunity to migrate several expensive and complex legacy systems to the cloud.	■ **Quick Time-to-Value** - Up and running in 4 weeks. ■ **Fun and Easy Onboarding** - Completed in just two sessions of 1.5 hours ■ **Context and Knowledge** - More customer information at their fingertips so that they can respond to requests and solve issues faster. ■ **Agility to Scale as Required** - As customer needs and calls increase, the number of agents can be quickly scaled.

TELUS	TELUS is a world-leading communications technology company, generating over $20 billion in annual revenue and connecting more than 19 million customers through its advanced suite of broadband services, including internet access, voice communication, entertainment, healthcare, smart home automation, and IPTV services for consumers, businesses and the public sector.
	
	TELUS had traditional call centers that were experiencing challenges due to increasing operational costs and evolving customer expectations. The goal was to revolutionize customer service by encouraging asynchronous messaging through their mobile app, focusing on creating a seamless, efficient, and satisfying customer experience.
		■ **Reduced Operational Costs** - From deflection to a digital self-service channel in the first year.
		■ **24x7 Asynchronous Support** - Customers benefit from faster response times, increased convenience, and a personalized experience.
		■ **Increased Agent Efficiency** - AI-powered tools empower agents to handle more inquiries efficiently and accurately.
		  ■ After-call work reduced by 50%
		  ■ Doubled agent capacity for non-voice interactions

ZENDESK CONTACT CENTER: AI-POWERED CONTACT CENTER, BUILT FOR ANY SCALE

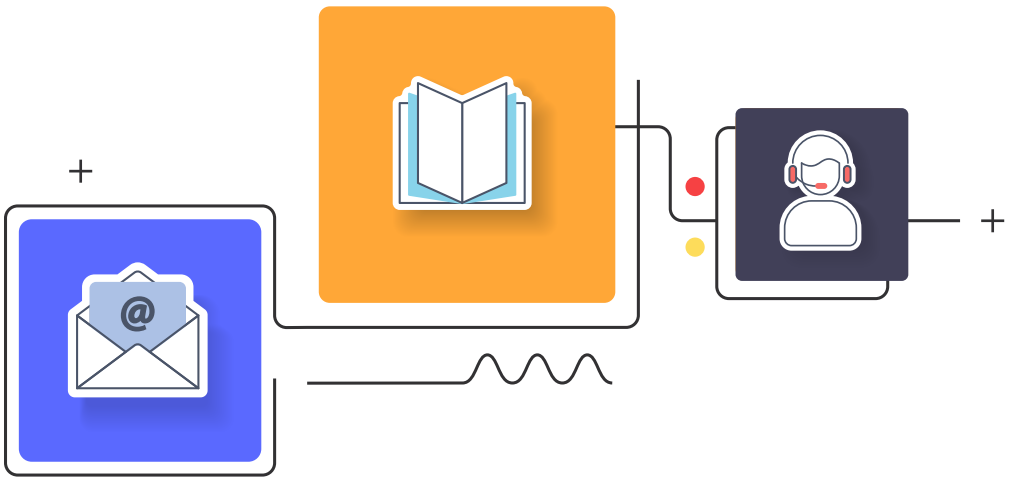
Modern contact centers are under pressure to deliver seamless, high-quality voice support in a landscape that's rapidly shifting toward digital and AI-powered interactions. Voice remains a critical touchpoint for customers—especially in moments of urgency or complexity—yet many contact centers struggle with outdated systems, rigid infrastructure, and disjointed communication channels. Businesses today need flexible, resilient voice solutions that not only scale with demand but also integrate deeply with digital experiences to meet customers wherever they are.

Zendesk is addressing this need head-on with its newly launched **Zendesk for Contact Center**, built on the foundation of its **recent acquisition of Local Measure**, a leading CCaaS and voice solutions provider. This powerful combination brings together Zendesk's intuitive, AI-powered customer experience platform and Local Measure's deep expertise in scalable voice technology.

Through seamless integration with Amazon Connect, Zendesk now offers a unified platform that merges digital and voice channels—enabling agents to deliver more personalized, efficient service while simplifying operations for contact center leaders.

With this strategic acquisition, Zendesk enhances its ability to serve large, high-volume service organizations, offering a solution that's both scalable and secure. The AI capabilities embedded in Zendesk's platform help automate workflows, personalize interactions, and protect sensitive customer data. Whether it's resolving issues quickly, adapting to spikes in volume, or supporting agents with intelligent insights, Zendesk for Contact Center is designed to meet the evolving needs of enterprise support teams.

To learn more about Zendesk for Contact Center and how the acquisition of Local Measure is shaping the future of AI-powered voice support, visit **https://www.zendesk.com/contact-center/.**



2025 Editorial Calendar

Market Studies:

JANUARY

State of Generative & Agentic AI

JUNE

CX In 2030: Future Of The Omnichannel Contact Center

SEPTEMBER

Modernizing Service Experiences With AI & Digital

DECEMBER

Tech vs. Humanity: Redefining The Agent Role

Vertical Market Studies:

MARCH

Rethinking Banking, Finance & Insurance CX In The Age Of AI

MAY

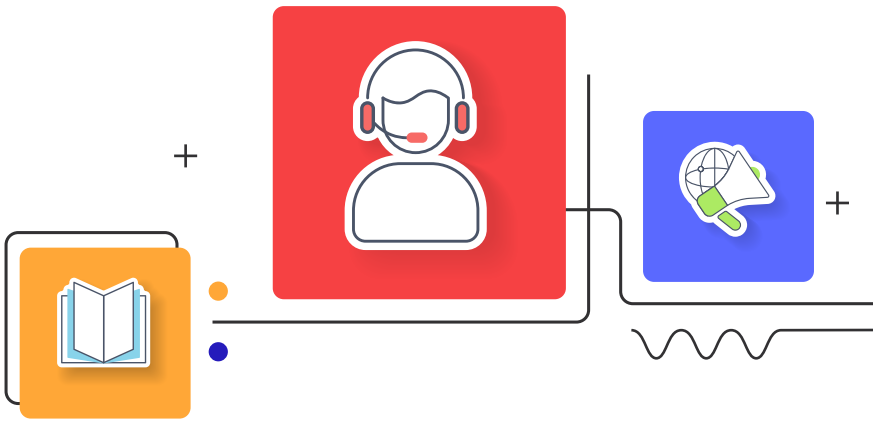
Technology vs. Humanity in Healthcare & Patient Experiences

SEPTEMBER

Personalization & The Future Of Retail CX

OCTOBER

State of Customer Experience In Higher Education



Meet the Team



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