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**Execs In The Know**

# **State of the Tech: AI in the Contact Center**

In partnership with:  **ASAPP**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Partner Commentary	4
Structure and Objectives of Survey Participants	10
Current Use of AI, Performance, and Outcomes	15
AI Planning and Spend	23
Concerns, Challenges, and Future Views	29
Key Takeaways and Considerations	32
Methodology	33
About the Study's Authors	34-35



# INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly tech-driven landscape of customer experience (CX), the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) is widely viewed as a transformative force that can redefine the way businesses interact with their customers, and the way agents conduct the business of helping customers.

This report, *State of the Tech: AI in the Contact Center*, delves into the current state of AI adoption in the contact center, exploring how organizations are leveraging AI technologies to enhance customer satisfaction, reduce operational costs, and drive overall business performance.

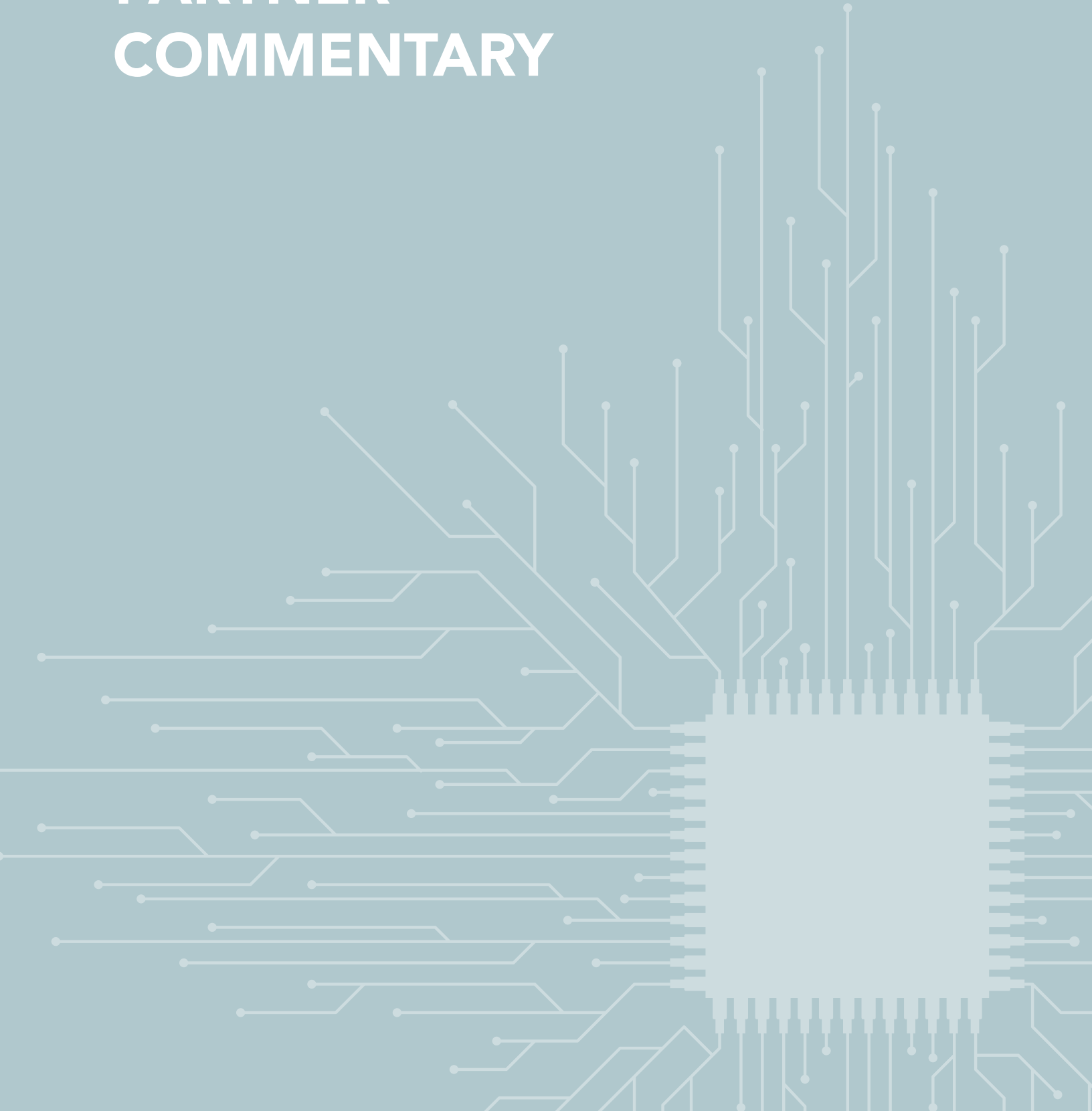
Key findings from this research highlight a growing commitment among organizations to integrate AI into their CX strategies. Notably, 22% of survey respondents indicated that they have already established an AI executive leadership role within their organization, with an additional 18% planning to fill such a position in the future. This proactive approach is further underscored by the fact that 68% of respondents anticipate increases in their AI-dedicated budgets over the next 12 months, reflecting a strong belief in the potential of AI to drive innovation and improve customer outcomes.

Expectations are high and growing. Fifty-one percent of organizations reported improvements in their overall customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores following the deployment of AI-powered solutions, while 67% of those with customer-facing AI applications noted a positive reception from their customers. AI for CX has come a long way in a very short time, and strategies and future plans need to match the innovation and speed of the technology.

Special thanks to the over 30 CX leaders who participated in surveying in support of this research, providing invaluable insights into their experiences and perspectives, as well as those leaders who took their participation one step further by contributing a Practitioner's Perspective, including Paul Brandt (GoodLeap) and Shannon Burch (Neo Financial).

And a very special thanks to project partners ASAPP. Be sure to check out the special commentary by Dan Rood, SVP of Marketing at ASAPP, found on page four, where Dan shares his views on the current AI landscape and discusses how organizations might better achieve their goals for AI in the contact center.

# PARTNER COMMENTARY





# PARTNER COMMENTARY



## AI for CX

*Understanding the Current Landscape*

By Dan Rood  
SVP of Marketing

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### INTRODUCTION

Contact centers rely heavily on technology to support customers and agents, with AI often touted as a magical solution that will deliver dramatic results. Yet, the widespread enthusiasm and hype for AI is also met with significant hesitation, as the actual impact of these tools is often not as direct as hoped.

In our “State of the Tech: AI in the Contact Center” survey with Execs In The Know, we explore the reality of AI within contact centers, and dive into CX leaders’ perceptions of AI — what’s working, what isn’t, and whether the impact of AI aligns with the initial goals set by organizations.

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### CUSTOMERS AT THE HEART OF AI DEPLOYMENT

While AI is often perceived primarily as an efficiency or productivity tool, our survey tells a different story. The main motivation for implementing AI-powered CX solutions is to improve the customer experience (42%, page 12), with streamlining services and processes a distant second. Only 10% of respondents cite cost reduction as their primary goal.

This focus on customer experience is also reflected in the concerns about increasing AI reliance. The top worries are customer frustration with suboptimal AI interactions, and AI solutions being unable to resolve specific issues — both directly linked to customer experience.

These findings put customer experience at the center of AI deployment and implementation.

**To achieve the goal of improving the customer experience, contact centers should seek out AI solutions that are purpose-built for CX; solutions that simply apply a conversational interface to existing infrastructure are unlikely to yield significant improvements.**

# PARTNER COMMENTARY CONT.

## COMPANIES ARE BECOMING AI-READY

More than 40% of CX leaders prioritize AI-powered CX technologies, and 68% anticipate an increase in their AI-dedicated budget over the next year (page 28). Nearly a quarter of the organizations have already established AI executive roles (page 11), with another quarter considering them. This rapid shift, unimaginable just a few years ago, indicates a growing recognition of AI's impact.

There is also growing confidence among CX leaders in their understanding of AI and its CX applications, with nearly half feeling either very or extremely confident (page 14). Most view their organizations as AI-ready — either very ready (29%) or somewhat prepared (42%) (page 13).

**Organizations are acknowledging AI's potential and are allocating resources and staffing to effectively implement it in their business and CX strategies.**

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## GENERATIVE AI: PRIMARILY SUPPORTING AGENTS, NOT CUSTOMERS

The current focus of AI-powered solutions lies in customer-facing and agent-facing applications. Interestingly, our survey shows that 42% of organizations are using generative AI to support agents, while only 29% are applying it to customer-facing scenarios (page 17).

Results suggest that organizations are most interested in customer-facing AI applications. Despite this, utilization in the next 12–24 months is still predominantly in agent support (71%) rather than direct customer interaction (58%) (page 26). Why?

Although the survey doesn't explore the specific reasons behind this discrepancy, it does ask respondents which areas of AI-powered technology they believe need the most improvement. They point to the need for AI to be more lifelike and have better accuracy in its understanding as the most needed advancements (page 31).

Generative AI represents a significant leap forward in addressing these concerns. The viability of the technology in contact center applications and the rapid innovation in generative AI agents are likely driving the increased willingness among CX leaders to plan customer-facing deployments.

# PARTNER COMMENTARY CONT.

## GOALS VS. OUTCOMES: WHERE AI STANDS

Despite the intention to improve customer experience, the immediate results of implementing AI solutions in contact centers have been somewhat mixed on that point. More often, CX leaders have found that AI drives productivity and efficiency gains but does not lead to significant improvements in customer satisfaction.

Over half of the respondents report AI solutions meeting or exceeding expectations (page 21). When digging deeper, though, we find that the performance of AI tools has been good, but not exceptional, in many aspects — from customer satisfaction to cost saving. Instead, many point to improvements in efficiency, processes, and productivity.

Notably, 53% say there has been no significant impact on customer satisfaction scores, with 35% seeing an increase and only six percent saying it greatly increased (page 22). On the one hand, it is a positive sign to see that implementation of AI solutions does not lead to reduced customer satisfaction. That seems to be a reasonable worry, given the concern expressed about the need for AI to be more lifelike and accurate in its understanding. On the other hand, if the ultimate goal is to improve customer satisfaction, then many current AI deployments are falling short.

**While AI tools generally improve agent workflows and streamline processes, achieving substantial gains in customer satisfaction remains a common challenge.**

We have seen first-hand much more tangible benefits with customer-facing generative AI agents, including 23% reductions in cost per interaction, 91% first call resolution rates with GenerativeAgent, and 34% fewer agents needed to handle the same volume of requests.

**This underscores the need for innovative AI solutions that directly target the customer experience in addition to streamlining and speeding internal contact center processes.**

## DEPLOYMENT HURDLES: SAFETY AND CONSISTENCY

AI deployment in contact centers presents several key challenges. Besides concerns over lacking internal expertise, safety and security risks also stand out (page 30). These issues are often overshadowed by the unrealistic hype surrounding AI.

**CX leaders deserve transparent conversations and clear guidance from their solution providers.**

The most advanced generative AI solutions incorporate a wide range of safety mechanisms to maintain data security and privacy, prevent hallucinations and other erroneous outputs, and enable continuous monitoring for both compliance and performance optimization. CX leaders should expect transparency on issues of safety and security from any AI solution provider they engage with.

As AI technology is deployed across various channels — such as online chat, chatbots, websites, emails, mobile apps, and social media — ensuring a consistent experience becomes critical. When customers can resolve an issue through the mobile app but not through a chatbot on the website, for example, it feels more difficult to get what they need. That decreases customer satisfaction and loyalty. Organizations relying on multiple platforms and solutions to manage these interactions need to prioritize consistency across channels and ease of use for customers when implementing AI solutions.

# PARTNER COMMENTARY, CONT.

## HOW AI CAN TRANSFORM CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE NOW

There is no doubt that customers will remain central to AI strategies in contact centers. However, many current AI solutions lead to incremental improvements in agent productivity and process optimization, with the hope that these changes will trickle down to enhance customer experience. Our survey reveals that this approach might not be enough.

Customer-facing AI solutions — such as generative AI agents — are where AI can drive the most noticeable improvements in customer satisfaction. Solutions that add a conversational interaction to existing infrastructure are likely to deliver only incremental improvements. Solutions that are purpose-built on a foundation of generative AI to tackle specific CX challenges safely and securely are better poised to deliver transformational results for both customer satisfaction and business objectives.

Generative AI agents can already handle many customer interactions on their own. As their role in the contact center expands, their impact on operations will grow. The need for human agents to handle simple interactions will decrease, easing the burdens created by agent churn. With a large proportion of agents planning to leave their roles soon and many companies struggling to find replacements, tackling this problem can lead to substantial gains in customer satisfaction, cost savings, and process efficiency. Generative AI agents can address this issue, fill the empty agent seats, and greatly improve resolution rates and the brand's relationship with its customers. This is backed by data from our existing customers.

Drawing from the survey and our decade-long experience in creating purpose-built AI solutions for CX, we believe organizations are poised for a paradigm shift in how AI can make a difference in the customer experience. CX leaders are ready to implement AI solutions that will have a direct and positive impact on solving customer problems.

We hope this research provides a good understanding of the current landscape of AI in CX; it is now up to us to take contact centers into the future.



**Dan Rood**  
SVP of Marketing



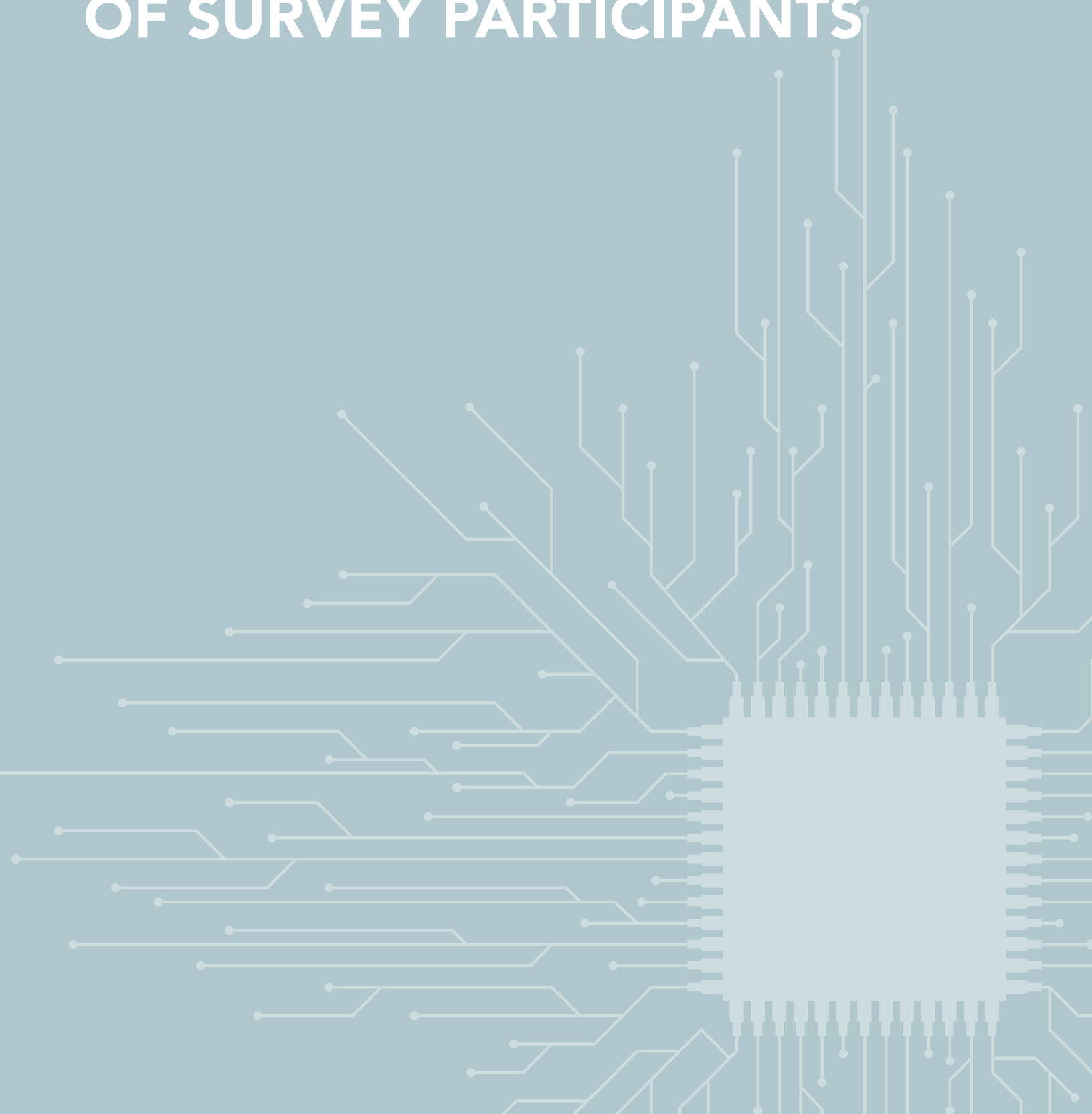
Dan Rood is the SVP of Marketing at ASAPP, the generative AI leader in the customer experience space. For over 12 years, Dan has been leading marketing organizations within the CX space with special emphasis on narrative frameworks to transform product positioning. Dan spent the first part of his career in B2B SaaS sales at companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Expedia, and American Express. Dan's primary passion is his wife and four kiddos. His life's purpose is to perfect the smoking of a beef brisket, which has eluded him for over five years.



# SURVEY RESULTS



# STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

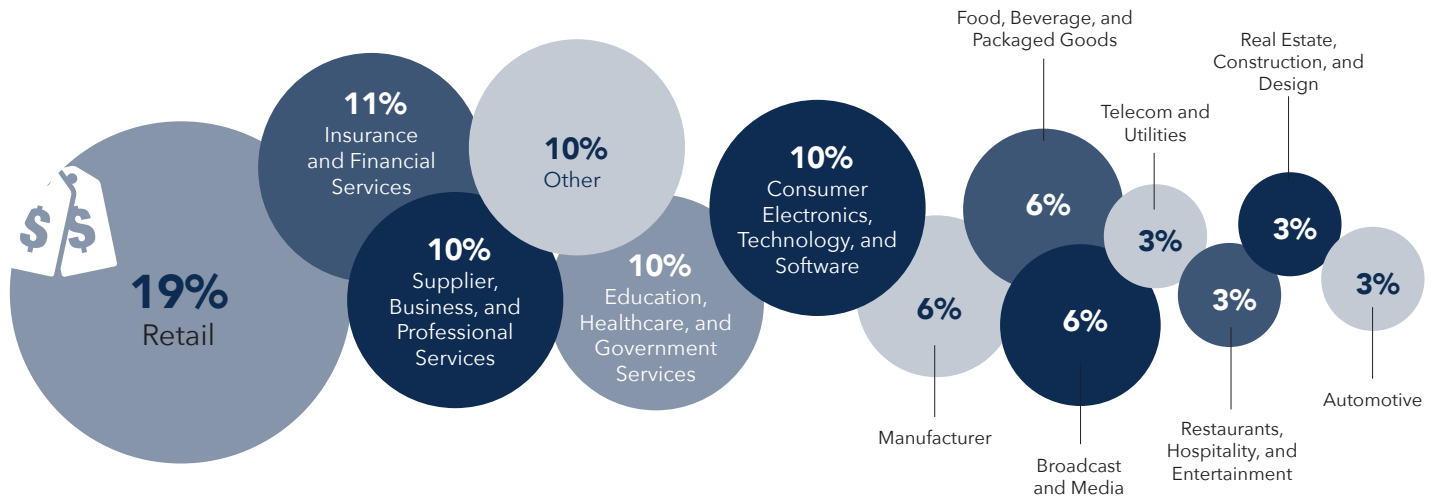


## STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

### PARTICIPATING INDUSTRIES, LEADERSHIP ROLES, AND TECH SETUP

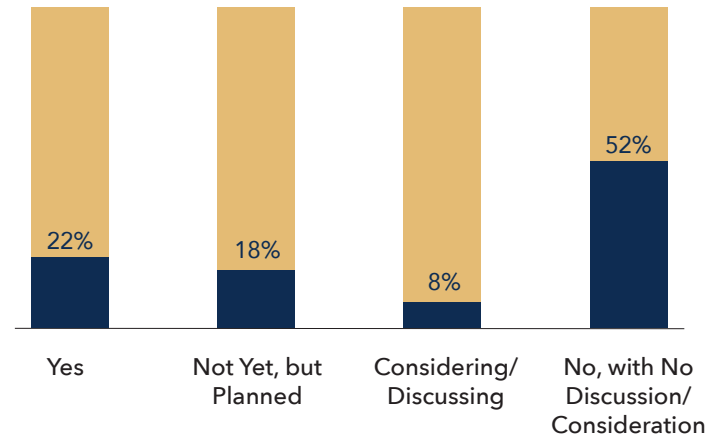
Participation in the AI for CX corporate survey was broadly spread across verticals, with CX leaders from the Retail sector comprising the largest block of representation (19%). Thirty-one individuals participated in the survey in total, with 52% having a title of Vice President or above, including four Chief Experience Officers (CEOs).

#### Which industry does your company represent?



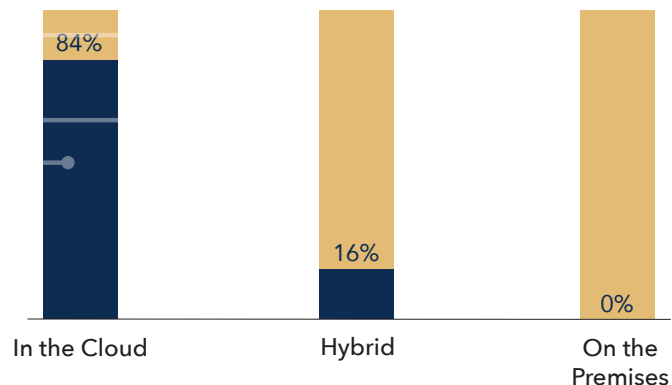
Forty percent of those surveyed already had an executive leadership role dedicated to AI at their organizations or have such a role planned. AI continues to evolve rapidly, and it is a technology that often touches many areas of an organization, including customer experience. Because of this, a dedicated C-Suite role is incredibly helpful in educating leadership and the wider organization, and focusing resources to get critical projects over the finish line.

#### Does your organization have an AI executive leadership role?



The bulk of survey participants (84%) describe their CX technology as purely in the cloud, with not a single respondent indicating “on the premises” as their CX technology arrangement. This truly highlights the borderless flexibility of CX, as well as the ability to project CX operations globally, both aiding in work-from-home, recruiting, and opening the door a little wider to BPO partnerships that might previously have been too challenging to pursue.

#### How would you characterize the majority of your CX technology?

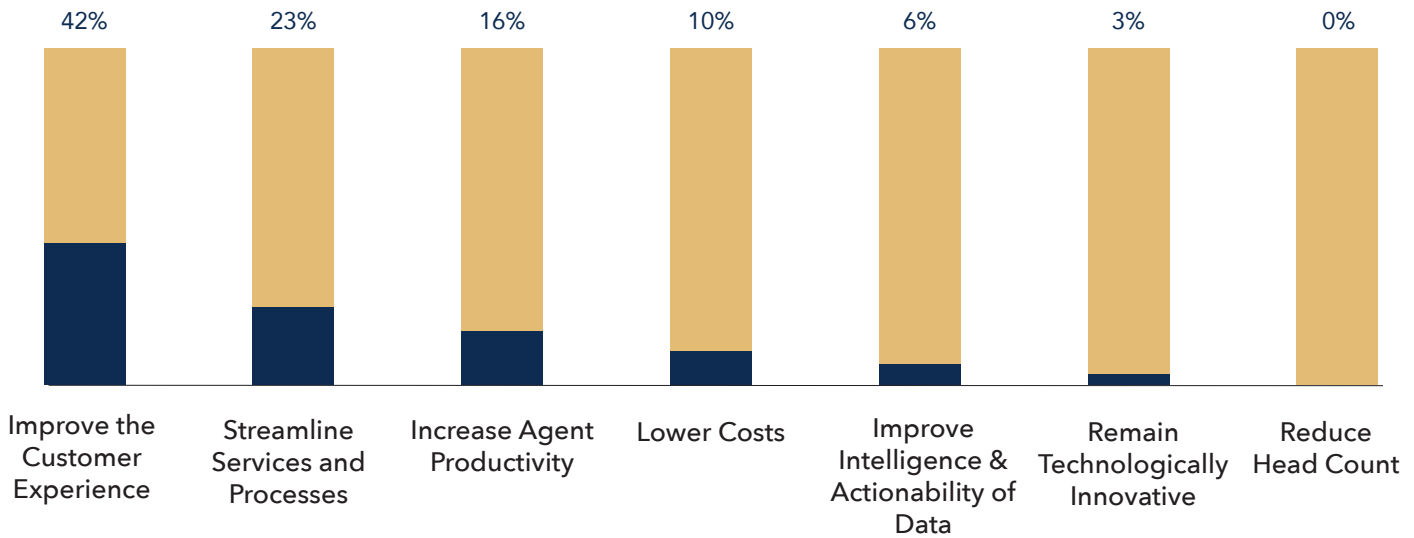


## STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

### AI OBJECTIVES

Improving the customer experience is the top driver of AI-powered solutions — the primary motivation for 42% of respondents. This result is consistent with findings on page 22, where 41% of respondents indicated that the deployment of AI has had either “Greatly Increased” or “Increased” their overall customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores. Furthermore, following deployment of AI for CX, 37% of respondents experienced a decrease in cost per interaction (page 20) and 52% experienced either a reduction in head count or expect to see a reduction in head count in the future. In other words, a large percentage of organizations are seeing benefits that fall outside of their stated motivation for deploying AI for CX.

#### How would you best describe your organization’s primary motivation for deploying or thinking about deploying AI-powered CX solutions and technologies?



#### Improving CX is the primary driver of AI for many organizations. In what ways has AI improved the experience of your customers, and what are the benefits to come?

“

AI provides one more method for our customers to interact with GoodLeap via their preferred channel. Our implementation of AI (which we call Gabby) is so lifelike that people often forget they are not interacting with a real person. The implementation of Gabby allows us to provide true 24/7/365 support, expanding on our traditional 100-hour-per-week support model. This means that as a user, I can get a very high level of support at any time, whether day, night, weekend, or holiday. From a B2B perspective, many of our users are on the go and need the flexibility of AI to support their specific use cases. For us, that meant ensuring Gabby would be available to them via SMS or WhatsApp. Gabby also provides proactive outbound notifications to our users based on key milestones that we know they care about. This provides them immediate awareness as these milestones are achieved, while also alleviating the need for users having to request that information on their own.



Our initial implementation of Gabby has been a resounding success, but I believe we’re just scratching the surface. There are many more capabilities that we’ll be adding to further enhance the customer experience. Relatedly, we’ve also launched an agent-facing version of Gabby that acts as a “co-pilot” for our internal support agents. This internal version makes access to SOPs, training materials, guidelines, policy documents, etc. super easy to find and reference. Users simply ask a question of Gabby via a web-based UI and get an answer within 2-3 seconds. Agents love this tool, and it has really enhanced our employee experience.

— Paul Brandt  
Chief Experience Officer, GoodLeap

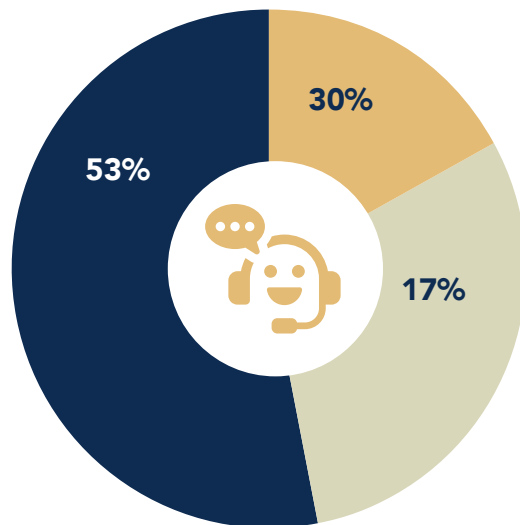
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## STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

### CONTACT CENTER STRUCTURE AND READINESS

#### How are your contact center teams structured?

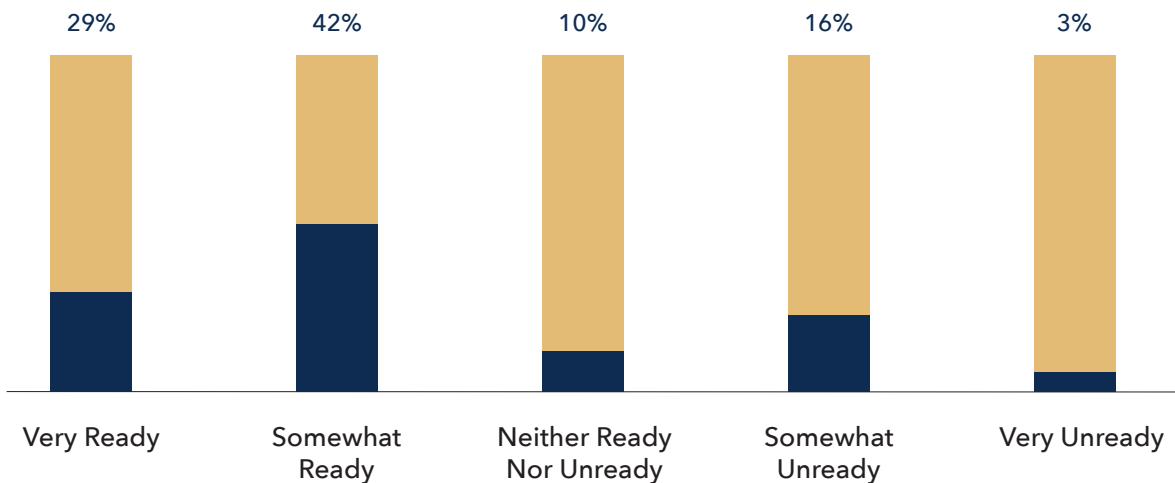
Alongside the increased use of self-help solutions, the global COVID-19 pandemic also brought about a greater reliance on “universal agents” — agents trained to handle a variety of issue types across a diverse range of channels. Seemingly, these changes have held firm with only 17% of respondents indicating the use of separate teams for Voice- and Text-Based interactions. As the issues handled by humans become increasingly complex, issues will begin to matter more than the channel for routing purposes, and the reliance on universal agents is likely to only increase.



- The Same Team for both Voice-Based and Text-Based Interactions
- A Mix of Teams with Some Handling Both Voice-Based and Text-Based Interactions
- Different Teams for both Voice-Based and Text-Based Interactions

Survey respondents displayed a moderate level of confidence in their readiness to adopt and deploy Generative AI-powered CX solutions with a combined 71% considering their organizations either “Very Ready” or “Somewhat Ready.” On the flip side, nearly one fifth (19%) felt unready, though it is unclear in which specific areas companies felt unprepared. Organizational readiness encompasses several elements, including leadership buy-in, constructive internal relationships (particularly between IT and other key stakeholders), adequate budget, a unified strategy/ vision, realistic expectations and goals, expert internal guidance, and strong relationships with the right external partners and vendors.

#### How would you characterize your organization’s readiness (culturally, organizationally, and technologically) to adopt and deploy future Generative AI-powered CX solutions?

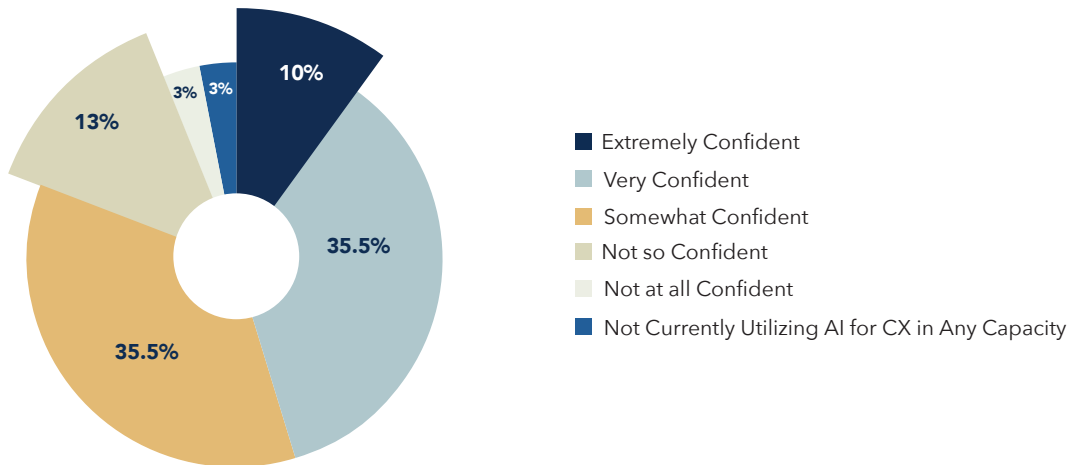




## UNDERSTANDING OF AI

Along with the question on the previous page regarding readiness, survey respondents had a relatively high level of confidence in their understanding of AI and its application to CX. In fact, nearly half of respondents (45.5%) felt either “Extremely Confident” or “Very Confident” in their AI knowledge, with another 35.5% feeling “Somewhat Confident.” Only a combined 16% felt their confidence was lacking.

How confident are you in your understanding of the different types of AI and their applications for CX?

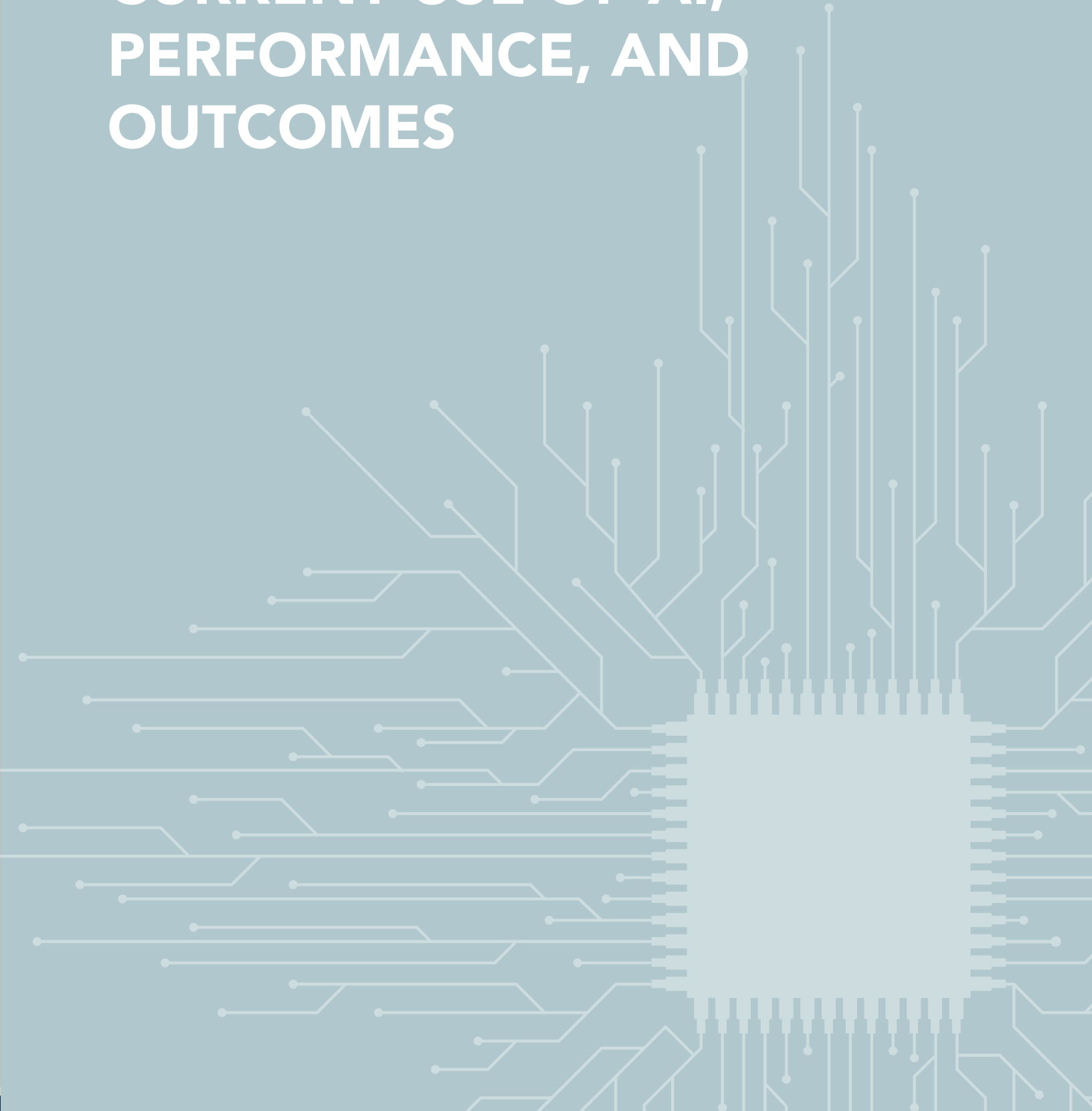


Although there are many options out there for CX leaders to expand their knowledge on AI (including events, online resources, product demos, etc.), peer-to-peer networking is a great way to hear about specific use cases and outcomes. One such peer-to-peer networking resource is Execs In The Know’s “Know It All” (KIA) online community — a free, exclusive platform for corporate CX leaders to share ideas, ask questions, and network with their corporate peers in a safe, sales-free environment.

Learn more or join KIA now: <https://community.execsintheknow.com/home>.



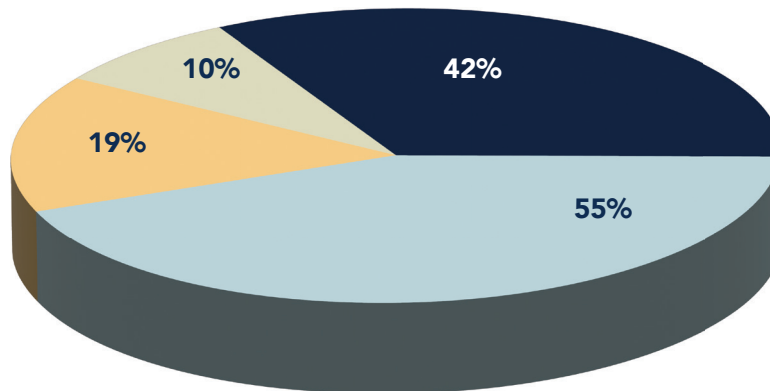
# CURRENT USE OF AI, PERFORMANCE, AND OUTCOMES



## CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION OF AI TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to what type of AI for CX is currently deployed in contact centers, non-generative AI solutions (including the application of machine learning) has an edge among survey respondents. Although it's difficult to infer much off a single year's worth of data, there is an assumption in the marketplace that the use of GenAI solutions is set to grow rapidly in the coming quarters and years. Consumer acceptance of GenAI solutions is also expected to grow as the technology improves, leading to more deployment, investment, and advancement, creating a sort of feedback loop. Early adopters of GenAI technology are likely to gain a competitive advantage as they develop expertise and experience in working with and deploying the technology, which also gives their customers early exposure to GenAI, providing them with a head start on acceptance and adoption.

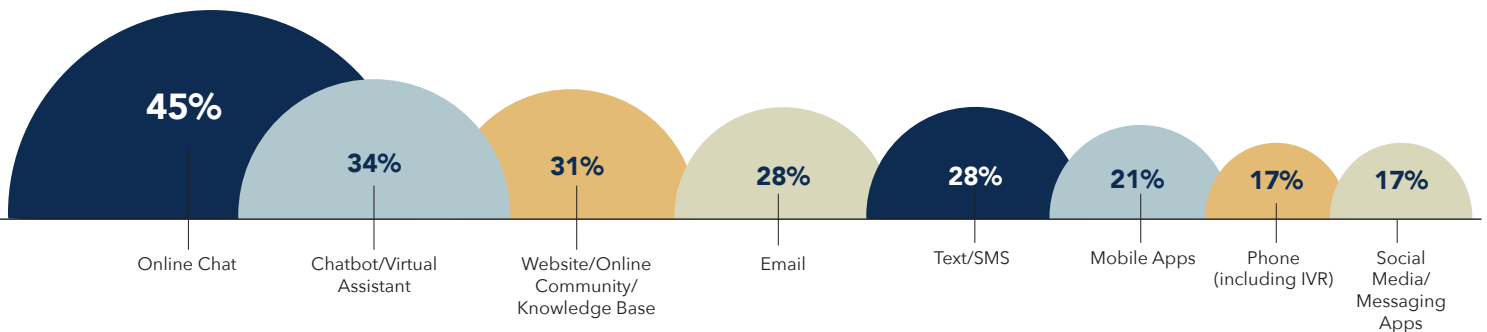
How would you categorize the AI-powered CX solutions implemented in your contact center today? (Select all that apply.)



- **Generative AI:** AI that creates new outputs on the fly, such as ChatGPT or products based on other large language models
- **Non-Generative AI/Machine Learning:** AI that detects patterns and makes predictions, such as forecasting, interaction routing, predetermined bot flows, and journey analysis
- Not Currently Utilizing AI for CX in Any Capacity
- Other

AI and GenAI technology is widely deployed across channels, with Online Chats, Chatbots/Virtual Assistants, and online resources (websites, communities, etc.) leading the way. These results also align closely with the channels in which AI is planned for future deployment (page 25). This indicates that no single channel is ideal for AI or, rather, AI is ideal for all channels. It could also be the case that companies are highly strategic in their deployment of AI for CX, picking channels that are uniquely suited to their specific product and/or customer base.

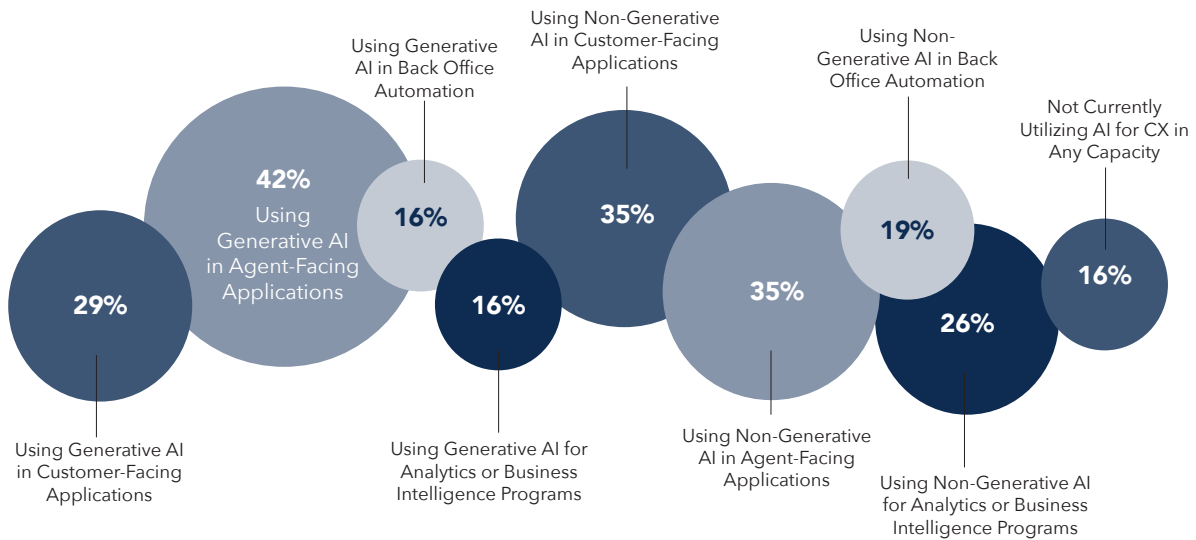
In which customer-facing solutions are you currently deploying AI and/or Generative AI technologies? (Select all that apply.)



## HOW AI IS BEING UTILIZED AND PERFORMANCE

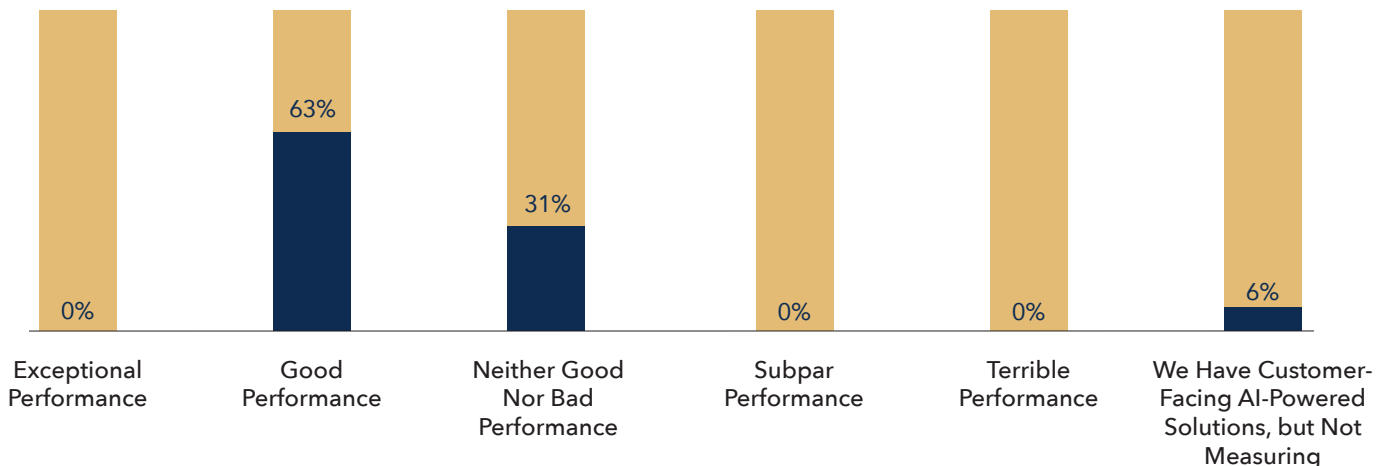
While the previous page exploring what type of AI technology was being utilized and on which channels, the results below provides greater detail around how the technology is being used. Accordingly, agent-facing GenAI solutions appear to be the most common way in which AI tech is being used, followed closely by customer- and agent-facing non-GenAI applications, as well as customer-facing GenAI. In the future, it's likely that customer-facing solutions will expand as both the technology improves and consumers become more accepting of AI solutions, especially of the GenAI variety. Like AI, those companies that move early to adopt GenAI solutions will enjoy multiple early-mover benefits, including invaluable experience and early exposure for customers, which can only serve to encourage adoption and acceptance if properly executed.

**Which best describes how your organization is currently utilizing AI-powered solutions within your contact center? (Select all that apply.)**



Interestingly, virtually every respondent viewed the performance of their customer-facing AI-powered solutions as either "Good" or neutral. This speaks to the advancement of the technology, whereas only a couple of years ago, the performance of many AI-powered solutions would have faced greater criticism (from both consumers and program managers). It's also interesting to note that only six percent of respondents with a customer-facing AI-powered CX solution fail to measure the performance of said solution. Naturally, measurement is the first step in understanding how well such solutions are performing for both the organization and its customers. In fact, it's safe to say measurement is as important as the strategy behind the deployment of the technology.

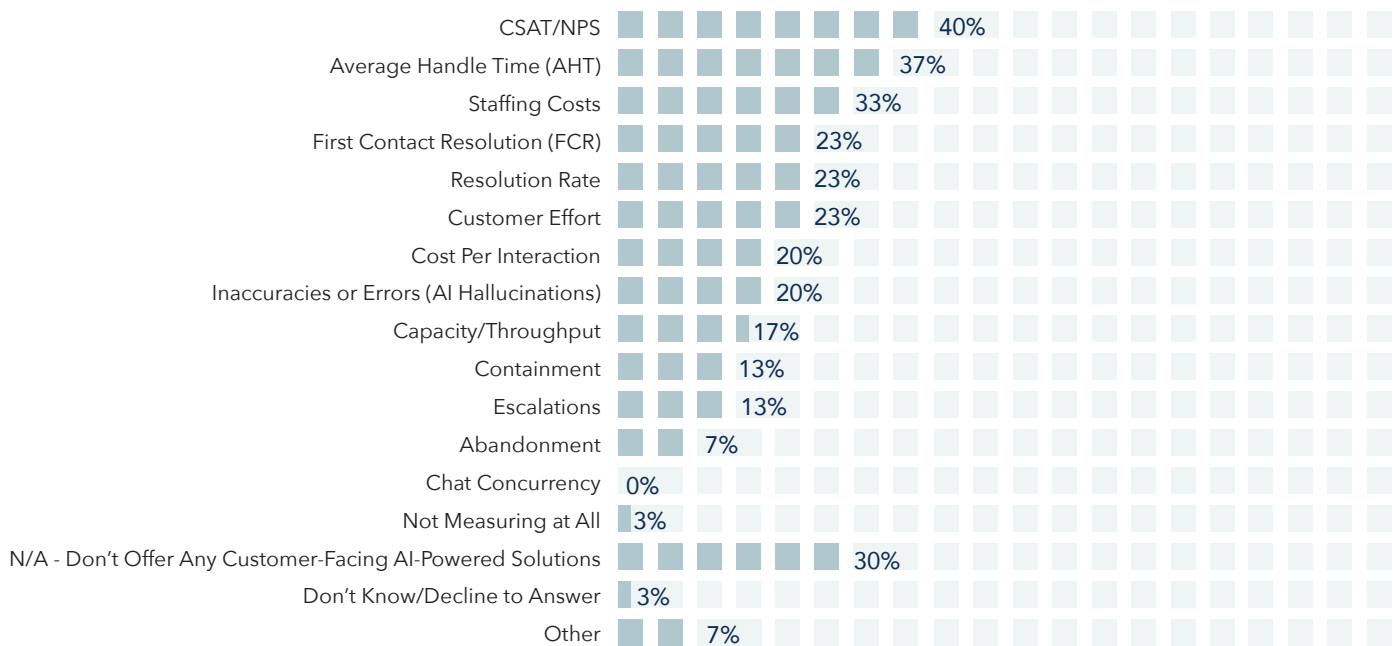
**If you are measuring the performance (CSAT, Resolution, Abandonment, etc.) of your customer-facing AI-powered CX solutions, how would you describe the performance?**



## MEASURING THE PERFORMANCE OF AI FOR CX

Although AI performance is being measured in a variety of ways at different organizations, the technology itself likely remains under-monitored in most applications. While channels like Phone, Email, and Online Chat are measured heavily in terms of CSAT, NPS, and AHT, measurement using any single method tops out at 40% (CSAT/NPS) for AI-powered solutions. Also of interest is the 33% of respondents who indicated “Staffing Costs” as a measurement of AI-powered, customer-facing solutions. This harkens back to the combined 26% of respondents who indicated the motivation for deploying AI was to either “Increase Agent Productivity” (16%) or “Lower Costs” (10%) (page 12). Also of interest is the fact that so few companies measure for effectiveness (i.e., Resolution Rate [23%] and Abandonment [7%]).

### In what ways are you measuring the performance of your AI-powered, customer-facing CX solutions? (Select all that apply.)



### It's difficult to define success without metrics and measurements. How does your organization determine success for AI within the contact center?

“ AI can be somewhat ‘unconventional’ when it comes to how we measure success, though many traditional measurements still apply. That is, we still want to know how often customers are using AI (frequency measurements), how satisfied they are with Gabby, our AI-powered assistant (various CSAT metrics), and the quality of Gabby’s responses (QA results) — just to mention a few items.

So, the basic contact center metrics shouldn’t change. But what could change, or could be new, will be determined based on each organization’s objectives for releasing AI tools. For example, with Gabby handling many of the interactions from our users, our ‘calls per application’ (i.e., the number of calls we receive at our support center related to loan/lease/PPA applications) is trending down. This equates to a cost savings for us.



At the same time, our NPS for our B2B users continues to be phenomenally high (in the upper 80s). Finally, I can observe an increase in users connecting with Gabby outside of our normal hours of operation (HOOP), which is a strong demonstration of the value of Gabby’s 24/7 availability. As we enhance and add new features to Gabby, we’ll continue to measure the success of those new functions with new and existing metrics.

— Paul Brandt  
Chief Experience Officer, GoodLeap



## CURRENT USE OF AI, PERFORMANCE, AND OUTCOMES

# POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF AI FOR CX

The implementation of AI and automation in customer service operations has led to various improvements, including a reduction in handle times and moderately increased CSAT scores. These changes have simplified processes, made time spent more efficient, and reduced the workload on agents, allowing for faster customer response times and higher levels of attention for customers when live assistance is required. The use of AI for quality assurance in call analysis has also become a significant tool, aiding in a more robust examination of calls.

Conversely, bringing AI and automation into the contact center hasn't been without its challenges and limitations. Some concerns include the loss of control over interactions, overcoming agent skepticism, guarding against inaccuracies in AI responses, and tackling the difficulties of training AI, especially in overcoming new or evolving scenarios. Although incidents of significant consequence (usually PR-related) are few and far between, there remain enough snags that opportunity abounds.

As a part of the survey that forms the basis for this report, participants were asked about the positive and negative impacts of deploying an AI-powered CX technology in a pair of open-ended questions. Below is a selection of verbatim that typify the responses received.

### If you have deployed AI-powered CX technologies within your organization, what has been the most positive outcome or impact of doing so?

“

- *We are automating the scoring of a much larger percentage of our calls, and we can more easily identify patterns, trends to focus on for improved experiences and results.*
- *Deflection and keeping live contact volume down.*
- *Internally, it's been the ability to provide better support & tools to our agents. Externally, the ability to supplement our services and provide customers a true 24/7 option for service.*
- *Quicker access to the right information and most appropriate response.*

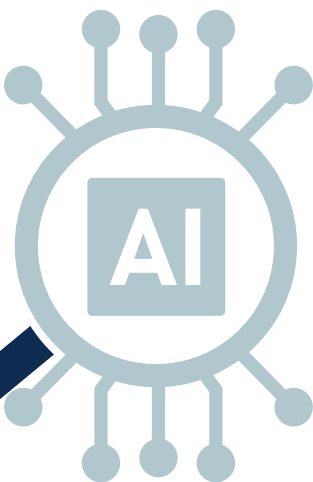
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### If you have deployed AI-powered CX technologies within your organization, what has been the most negative outcome or impact of doing so?

“

- *Poor levels of agent adoption and trust.*
- *Too much time was needed to set up and test the accuracy of machine learning prior to launch.*
- *Lots of rework of process and data was needed to feed the AI, particularly for agent-facing tools.*
- *We experienced very slow adoption by users.*

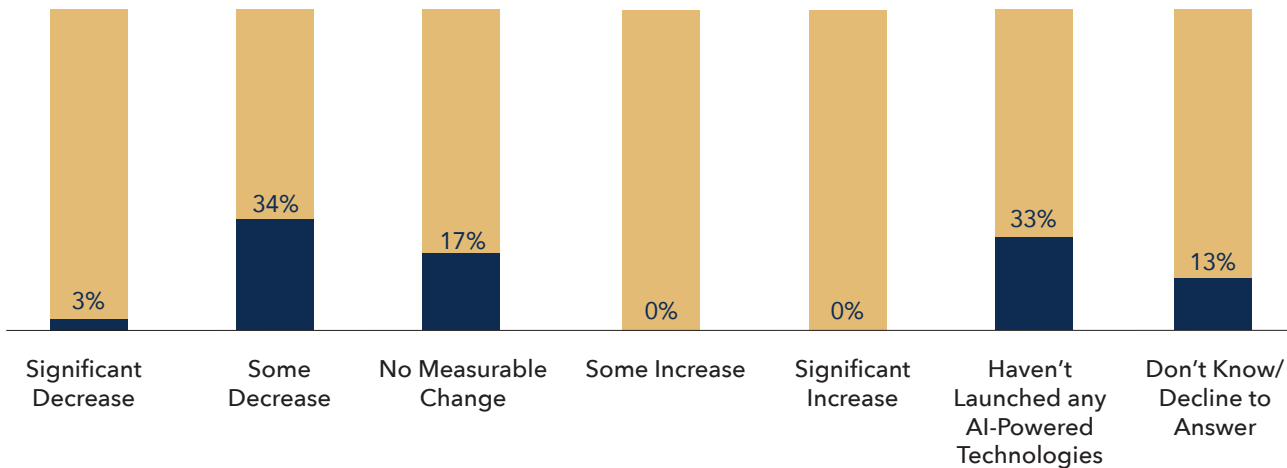
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## IMPACT ON COST PER INTERACTION AND HEAD COUNT

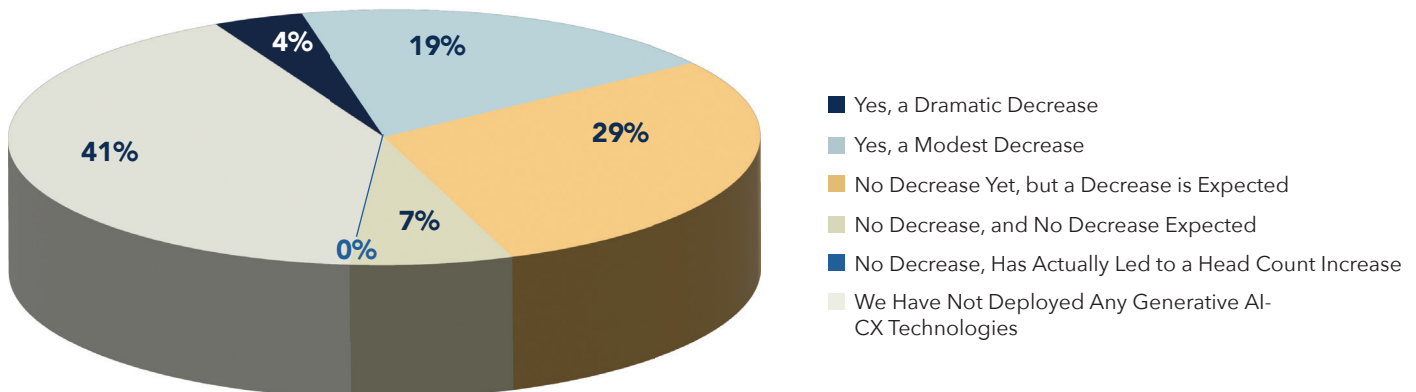
According to survey respondents, implementation of AI for CX results in a reduction in the per interaction most of the time; and no cost increases of any type were observed in the data. In fact, if the below results are recalculated to remove the N/As (the two columns at far right), a reduction in cost per interaction was reported by 69% of respondents (N=16). The question then becomes, has the reduction made the effort worthwhile? This question is generally answered on page 28, where 53% of applicable respondents indicated they so far have gotten either "Very Good Value" or "Good Value" out of their AI for CX investments.

**If your organization has launched one or more AI-powered CX technologies, what has been the impact on cost per interaction?**



Although reducing head count was the primary motivation for deploying AI for CX among exactly zero respondents (page 12), reductions in head count were frequently encountered or expected among those surveyed. No respondents indicated the implementation of AI for CX resulting in an increase in head count, but half of those with AI for CX deployed (exactly 50%) expected a decrease in head count in the future, with another 38% having already undergone a reduction in head count since implementing AI.

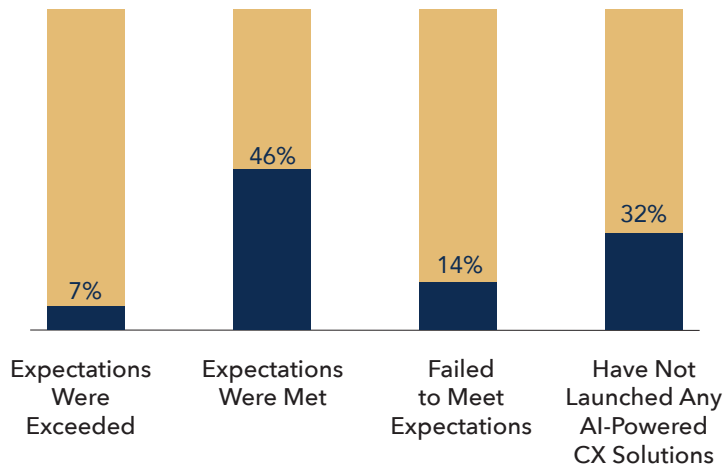
**Has the deployment of Generative AI-powered CX technologies led to a decrease in head count at your organization?**



## MEETING EXPECTATIONS

If your organization has launched one or more AI-powered CX solutions, generally speaking, how well did the reality of the solution(s) align with expectations and what was promised?

Among those respondents who had launched an AI-powered CX solution in the past, expectations were met or exceeded 79% of the time, with about one in five (21%) of respondents indicating their expectations were not met. Given results that showed strong views on cost reductions (page 20) and value (page 28), it might be safe to assume expectations may have, in some cases, been unrealistic or misinformed. Setting realistic expectations of a technology likely gets easier with experience.



### Given the rapid evolution of the technology, how did you approach your expectations to ensure your goals and objectives were met?



- Test and learn
- Enhancement to the agent user experience first
- Expand to Customer user enhancements
- Dedicate a team to design, manage, and test the GenAI
- Results exceeded expectations

As a forward-thinking fintech company, Neo Financial is continuously eager to engage with the latest technological advancements. I firmly believe that our ability to make swift, informed decisions regarding technology deployment is largely due to the robust implementation framework we have developed. This framework empowers us to assess potential partners, identify suitable use cases, and predict outcomes with remarkable efficiency.

At the heart of our approach lies a “test and learn” philosophy, which informs every deployment initiative we undertake. We strive to minimize the time spent in the implementation phase, allowing us to rapidly gather insights and enhance our technology to better meet the evolving needs of both our agents and customers. The strength of this methodology is amplified by the widespread familiarity with our processes across the organization, which in turn boosts our overall effectiveness in delivering on strategic goals and achieving desired outcomes.

A key factor contributing to our success in exceeding expectations is our commitment to creating dedicated teams of experts responsible for the ongoing training and adaptation of our technologies. Unlike many organizations I have worked with, where such critical tasks are relegated to secondary priorities, we recognize the importance of allocating focused resources and expertise to this endeavor. This strategic approach ensures that our teams have the time and attention required to monitor performance data, make necessary adjustments, and collaborate effectively with our technology partners.

From day one, we are able to see tangible results that foster collaboration and provide visibility into areas for improvement or innovation. Equally important is our ability to swiftly identify and mitigate any adverse outcomes for our agents or customers.

When a change does not resonate as anticipated, our agile framework enables us to roll back modifications quickly, thereby reducing potential risks inherent in a “test and learn” environment.



After reviewing the recent survey results, I am very optimistic about the high percentage of companies embracing new technologies. I firmly believe we are on the brink of a current revolution that will profoundly impact the Customer Experience landscape over the coming decades. This evolution promises to create a dynamic and responsive ecosystem in which both our customers and employees can truly thrive.

**neo**

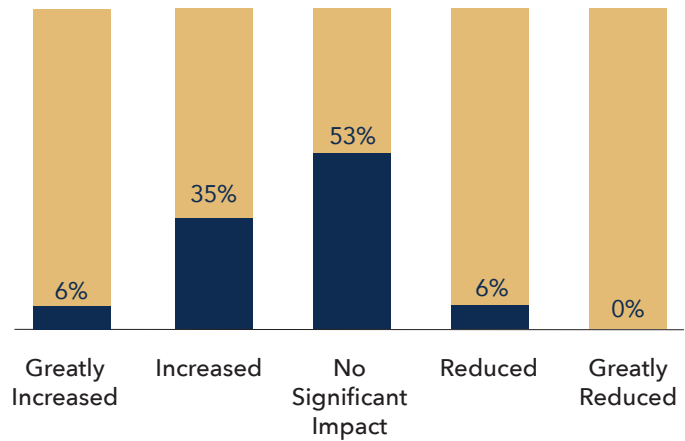
— Shannon Burch  
Vice President Experience



IMPACT ON CSAT AND RECEPTIVENESS

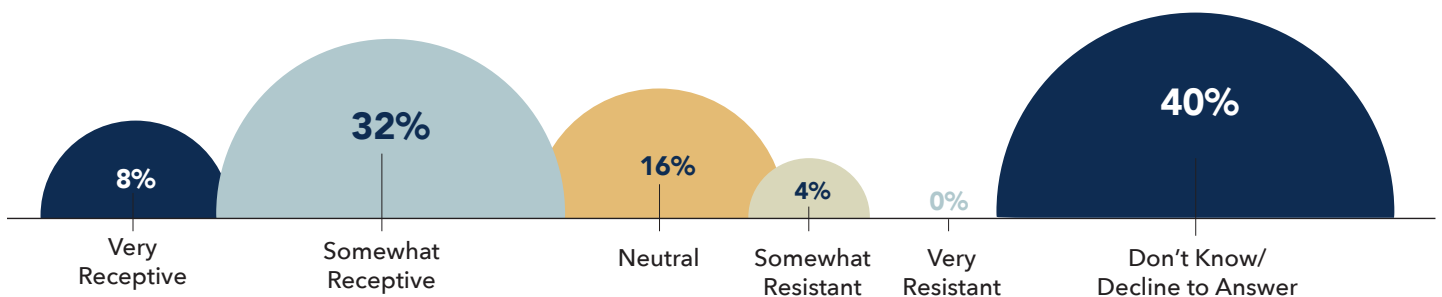
Following the implementation of AI within CX operations, a decrease in CSAT scores was observed by only a single respondent (amounting to 6% of the total), while 41% of respondents observed an overall CSAT score that either "Greatly Increased" or "Increased," with about half (53%) indicating there was no significant impact, either positive or negative.

What has the use of AI at your organization done to your overall Customer Satisfaction scores?

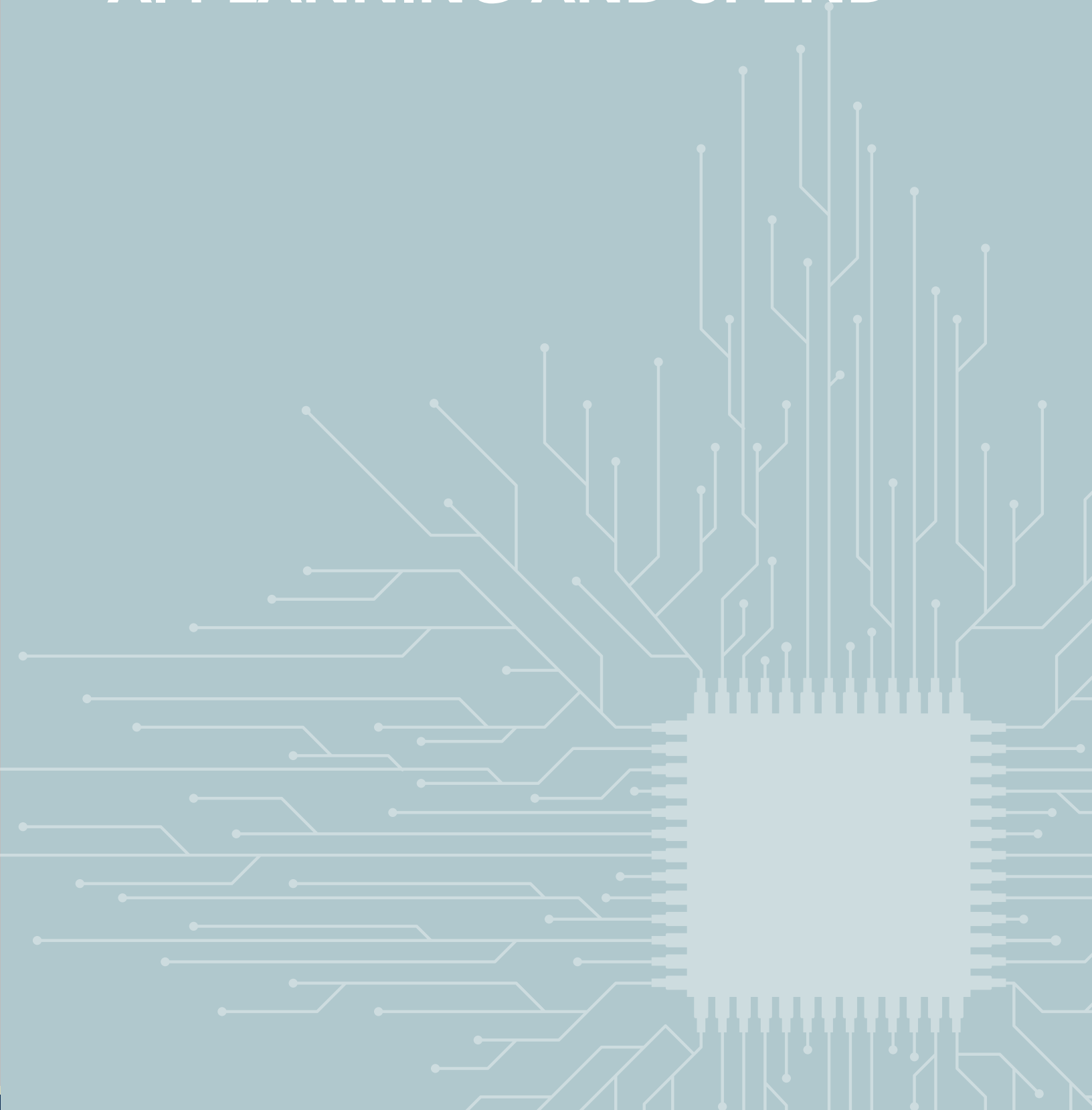


Regarding the question of customer receptiveness, 67% of respondents with one or more deployed AI-powered CX solutions indicated their customers were either "Very Receptive" or "Somewhat Receptive" to the technology, while 27% indicated their customers were neutral on their receptiveness. Although no survey respondents felt their customers were "Very Resistant," a single respondent felt their customers were "Somewhat Resistant."

If you have deployed one or more customer-facing AI-powered CX solutions, how would you generally describe the receptiveness of your customers?



# AI PLANNING AND SPEND

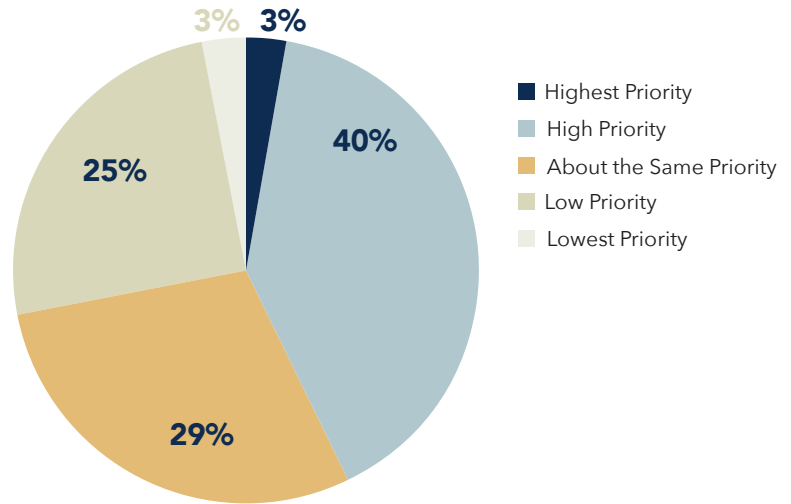




## PRIORITIZING AI FOR CX AND INTEREST IN FUTURE INVESTMENTS

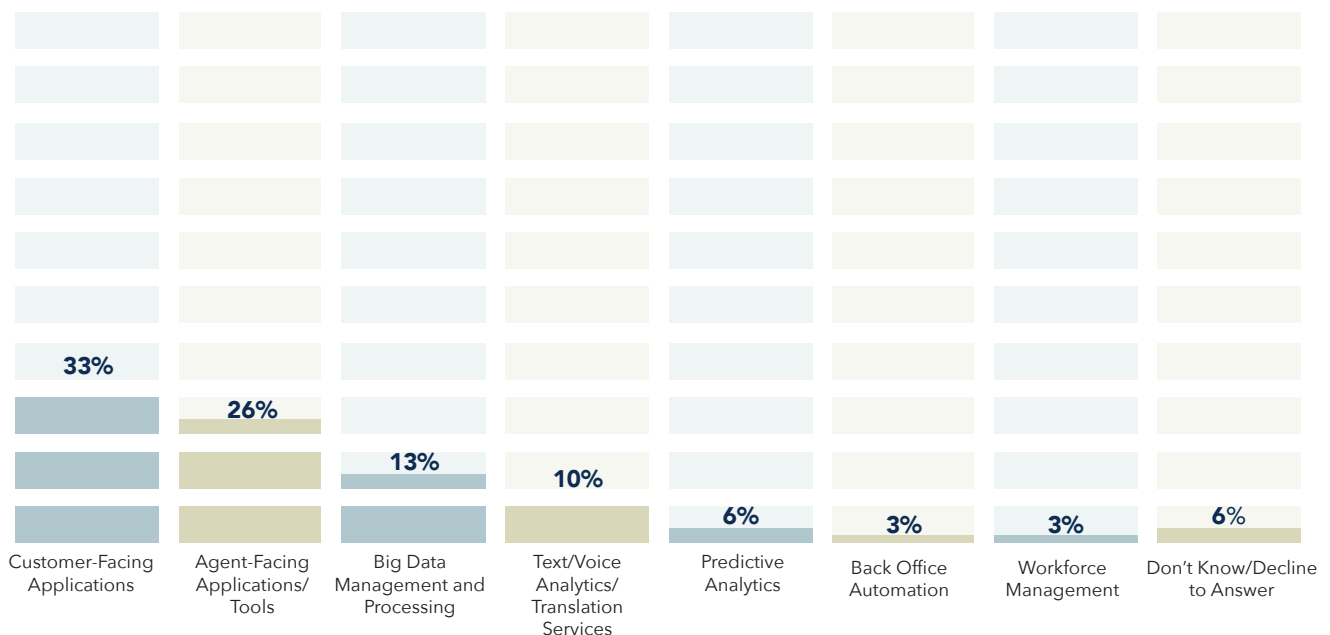
Compared to other CX technologies, what priority does your organization give to AI-powered CX technologies in terms of time, attention, and resources?

Given the seemingly strong value proposition (page 28 and positive impact on CSAT (page 22) brought about by AI for CX implementations, it's surprising that only 43% of respondents indicated they considered such investments to be a higher priority than other CX technologies, while a combined 28% felt AI for CX was a lower priority, with another 29% considering AI-powered CX to be a neutral priority.



Earlier results (page 17) indicate today's GenAI tools lean toward agent-facing solutions with 42% of respondents having agent-facing solutions compared to only 29% with consumer-facing solutions. But in reviewing the results below, this dynamic may be poised for change. Interest in consumer-facing applications is taking center stage. It may be the case that companies used agent-facing tools to get comfortable with AI and are now more confident in rolling out AI to their customers. At any rate, this trend is likely to continue. There is also a question of how rapidly AI tech can evolve, and whether it will surpass the expectations of CX leaders who envision a future where the use of agent-facing solutions continues to outpace those that are consumer-facing.

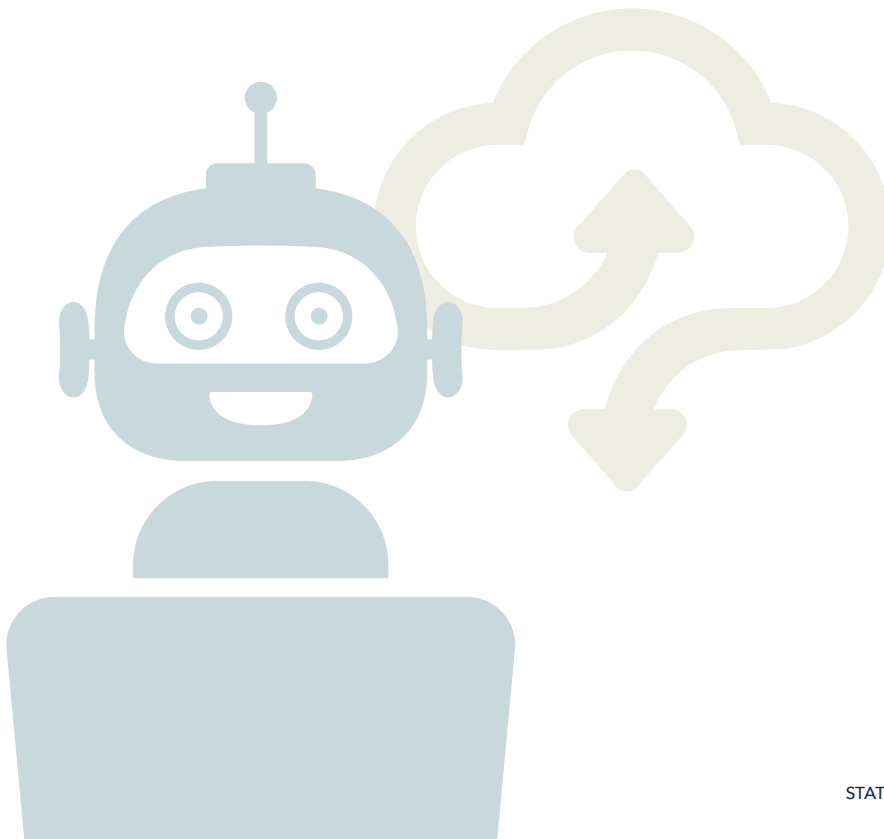
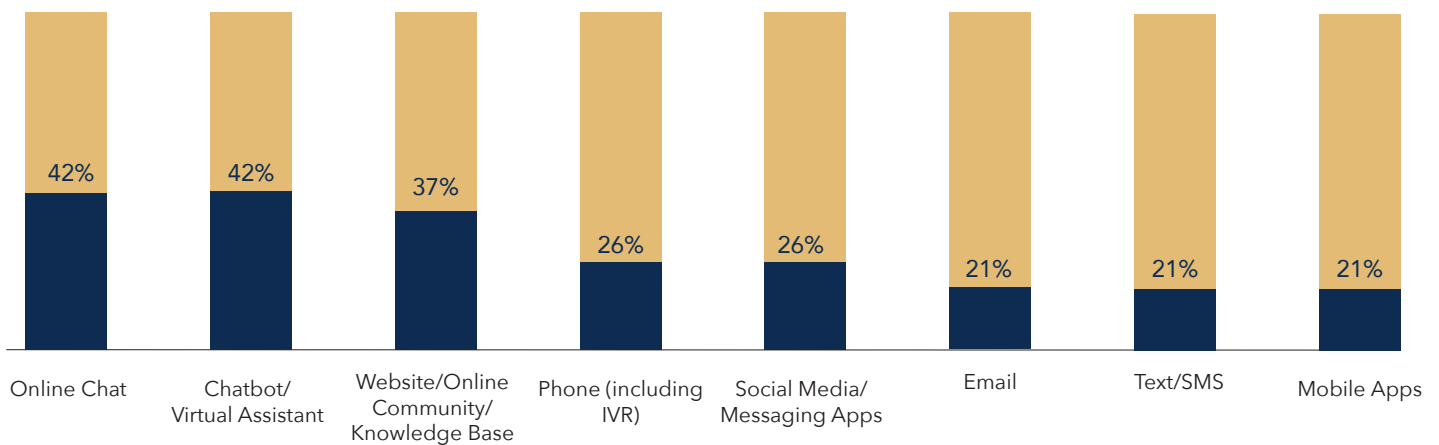
Which types of AI-powered solutions and/or technologies is your organization most interested in over the next 12 to 24 months? (Select all that apply.)



## PLANNED AI DEPLOYMENT AND EXPECTED FUTURE USE

Online Chat and Chatbot/Virtual Assistant AI-powered solutions (which are equivalent in so many ways) are expected to grow the most in future deployments. Interestingly, the waterfall of results matches well where organizations have been guiding volume for years — away from phone and email and into online chat, websites/knowledge bases, and even social media. As AI shows promise across channels, now might be a good time for companies to better understand the channel preference of their customers, especially if AI for CX can transform interactions into a commodity, creating cost-per-interaction parity between channels.

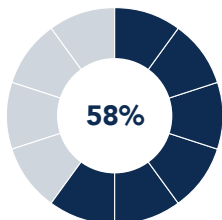
**In which customer-facing solutions do you not currently deploy AI and/or Generative AI technologies, but plan to do so in the future? (Select all that apply.)**



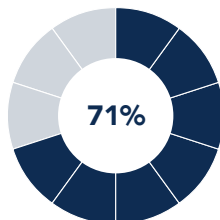
## PLANNED AI DEPLOYMENT AND EXPECTED FUTURE USE

Even though interest in consumer-facing solutions is expected to be higher among respondents in the next 12 to 24 months (page 24), the expectation is that GenAI solutions will dominate and, more specifically, agent-facing solutions will be more abundant than consumer-facing solutions. See how current use and future expectations align on the following page for insights into where the most AI for CX growth is expected.

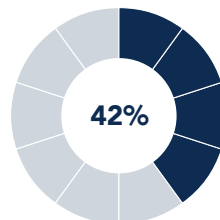
Which best describes how you expect your organization to be utilizing AI-powered solutions in the next 12 to 24 months? (Select all that apply.)



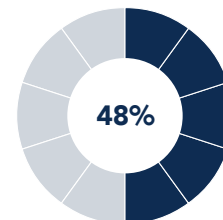
Using Generative AI in Customer-Facing Applications



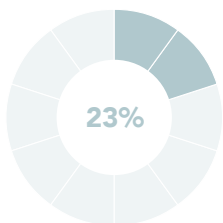
Using Generative AI in Agent-Facing Applications



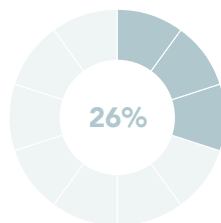
Using Generative AI in Back Office Automation



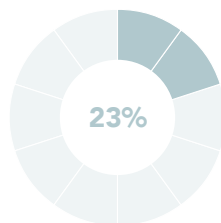
Using Generative AI for Analytics or Business Intelligence Programs



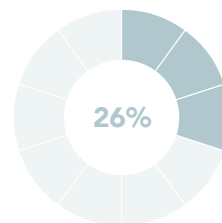
Using Non-Generative AI in Customer-Facing Applications



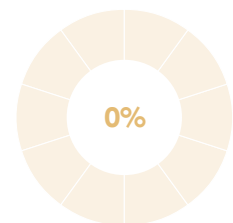
Using Non-Generative AI in Agent-Facing Applications



Using Non-Generative AI in Back Office Automation



Using Non-Generative AI for Analytics or Business Intelligence Programs

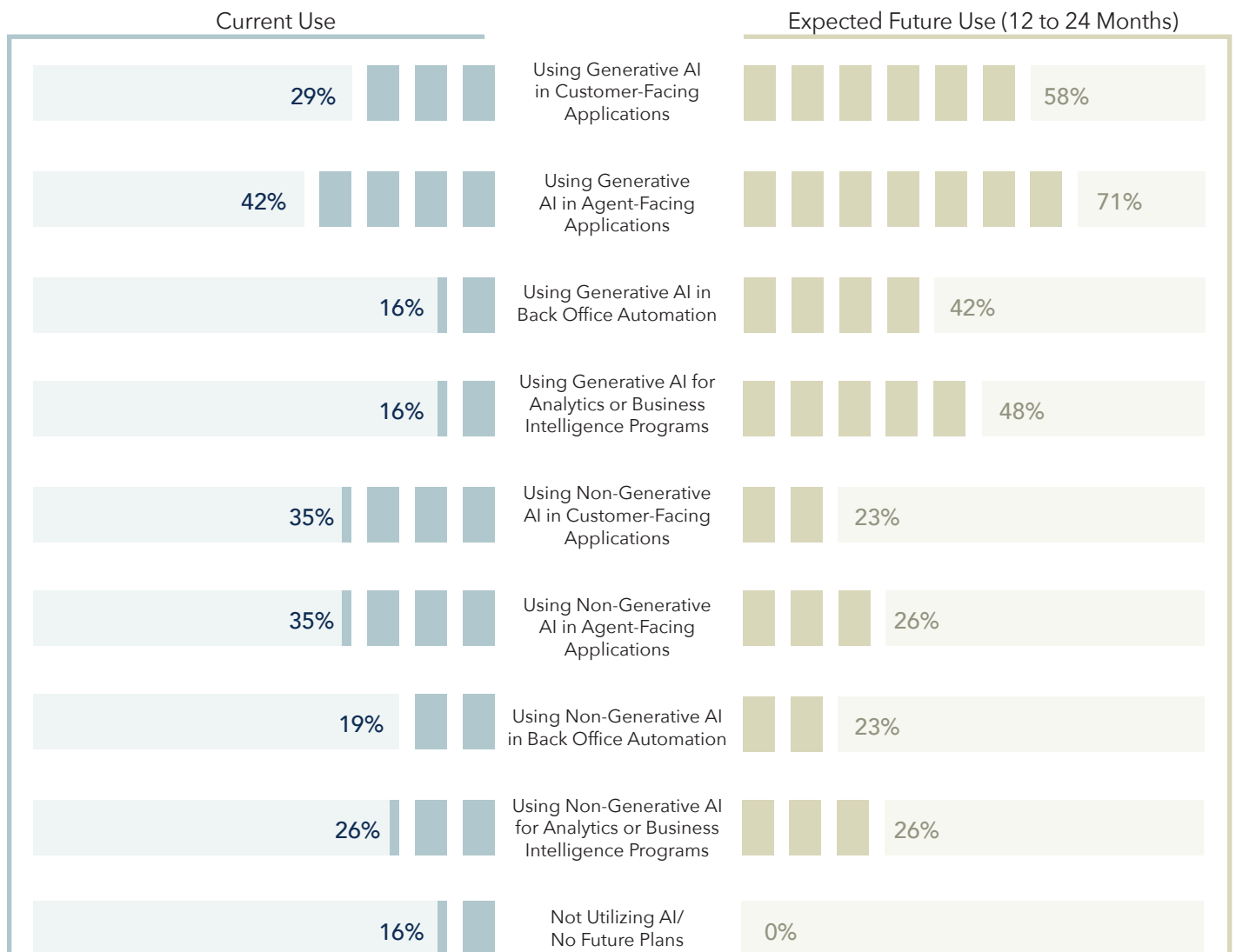


No Future Plans for Utilizing AI for CX in Any Capacity

## COMPARING CURRENT USE TO EXPECTED USE

Combining current use (page 17) and expected future use (page 26) results yields an interesting look at where AI growth is expected to come in the coming years. The industry should look for dynamic growth in the use of GenAI, which portends growth in all areas. Conversely, use of Non-GenAI is expected to either stall or slow. Furthermore, none of the survey respondents expected to be neither using nor planning to use AI-powered solutions within the next 24 months, indicating an oncoming surge in the use of AI for CX solutions.

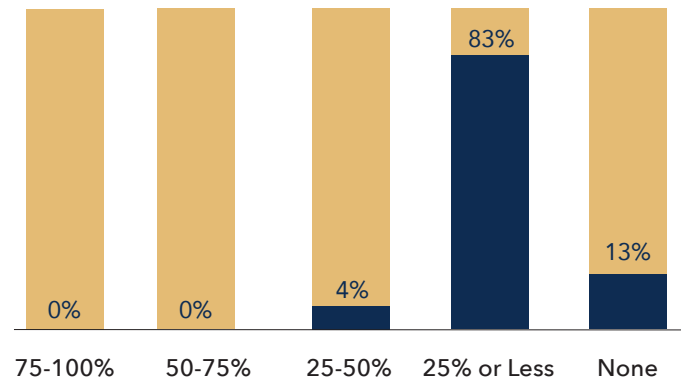
### Current Versus Expected Future Use of AI for CX Solutions



## BUDGET ALLOCATION, RETURN ON INVESTMENT, AND EXPECTED CHANGES

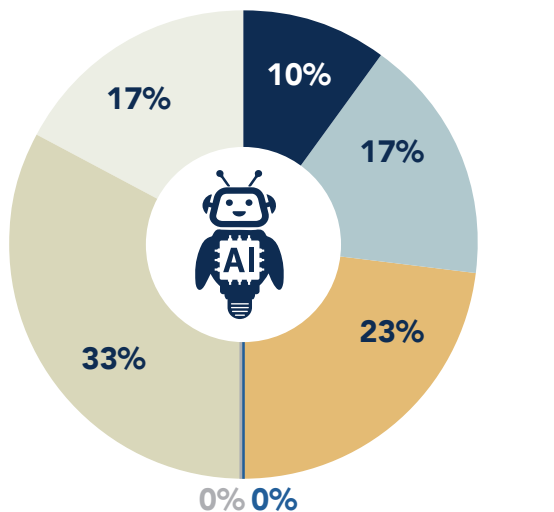
What percentage of your current annual technology budget would you estimate is allocated to AI-powered CX technologies?

In a result that might provide the clearest answer on the precise percentage of companies not currently utilizing AI for CX in any capacity (13%), it appears that AI for CX consumes a somewhat limited amount of the current tech budget. In fact, only one survey respondent indicated that their current AI for CX budget exceeded 25% of their total tech budget. In review of results below, which indicate the potential for strong investment growth, it's likely more companies will spin up the percentage of their budgets dedicated to AI spend in the coming quarters and years.



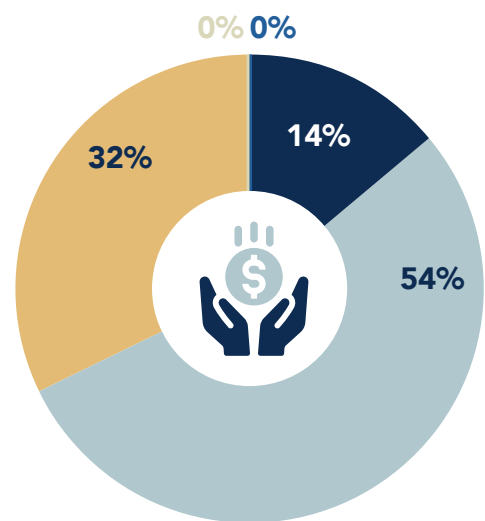
Companies that have invested in AI-powered solutions have so far seen good returns, with most seeing either "Very Good" or "Good" value from those investments. Furthermore, no single survey respondent indicated they received either "Very Poor" or "Poor" value from their AI-powered investments. This fact, and the gains on things like CSAT (page 22) and the decrease in cost per interaction (page 20) likely lend themselves to the expected expansion of AI budgets. Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents expect to see some growth in their AI-dedicated budgets in the coming 12 months, while none see decreases coming.

How would you generally describe the value your organization has gotten so far out of its investments in AI-powered CX technologies?



- Very Good Value
- Good Value
- Expected Value
- Poor Value
- Very Poor Value
- Have Not Made Any AI-Powered CX Technology Investments
- Don't Know/Decline to Answer

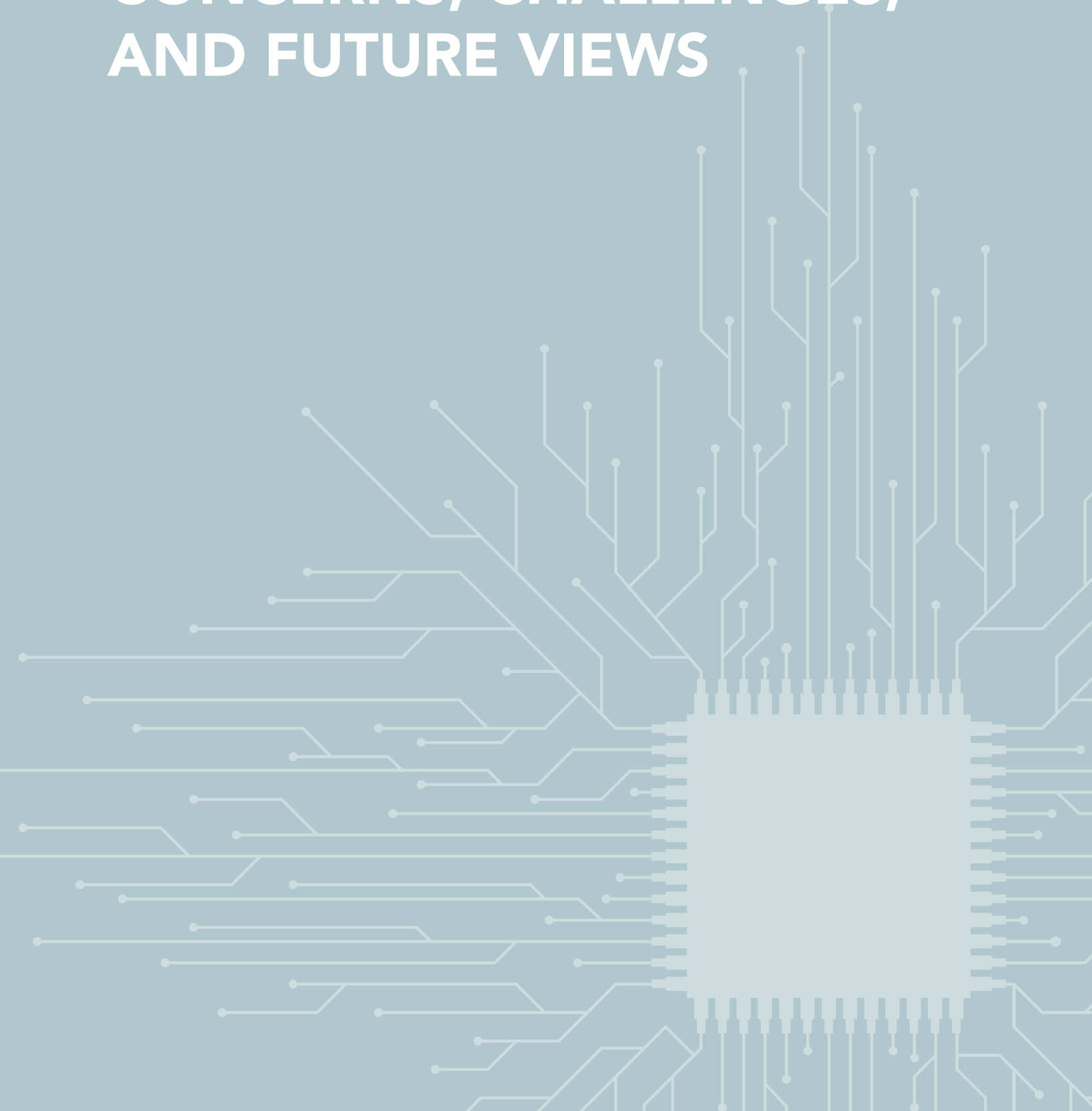
What do you expect to happen to your AI-dedicated budget over the next 12 months?



- Increase Greatly
- Increase Moderately
- Neither Increase or Decrease
- Decrease Moderately
- Decrease Greatly



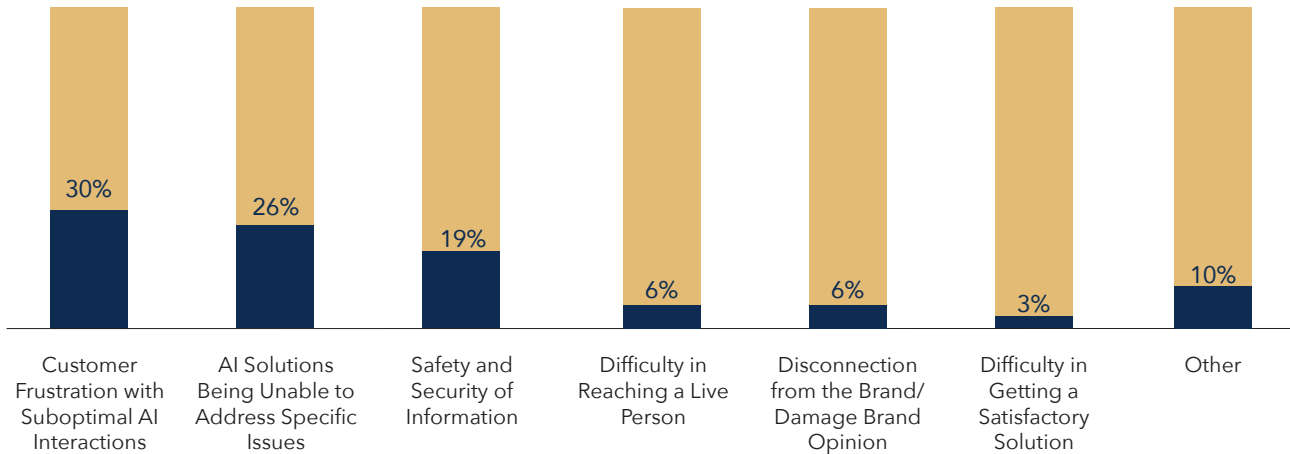
# CONCERNS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE VIEWS



## AI CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

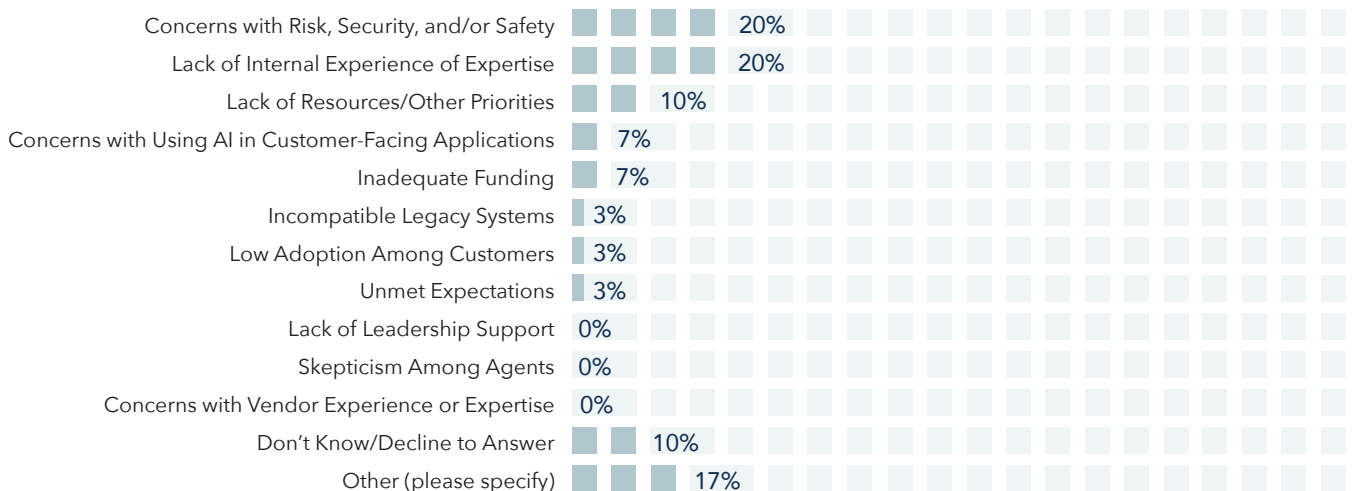
When it comes to concerns for the increased use of AI for CX, care leaders mostly pointed to three concerns: customer frustration, ineffectiveness, and safety/security concerns. Among "Other" concerns were data management complexities, gaps in accuracy, and sluggish internal adoption.

### What is your biggest concern with your company increasingly relying on AI solutions for customer care?



Again, safety and security were at the forefront, with 20% of survey respondents indicating challenges. An equal share were challenged by a lack of internal expertise. This result harkens back to the finding on page 11 where it was shown that only 22% of organizations maintained an executive leadership role dedicated to AI. Among the "Other" responses: challenges gaining internal buy-in, inaccuracies in AI responses, data management headaches, and unanticipated delays.

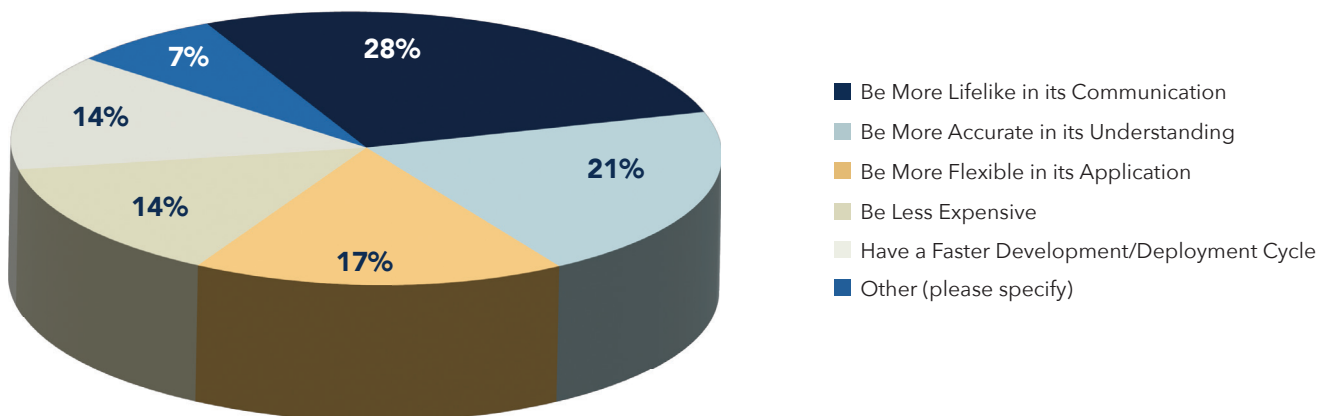
### Which of the following have posed challenges in deploying AI-powered CX technologies at your organization?



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

When asked where AI could improve, CX leaders were diverse in their responses. On the performance front, more lifelike communications, better accuracy, and more flexible application (all indicators of performance) were top choices. Those looking for improvement in cost and rollout combined to account for about a quarter of all respondents (28%). Among "Other" were comments on the need for improving accuracy, consistency, and solutions to current AI challenges, like the limitations of self-referencing.

### In your opinion, in what way is AI-powered technology most in need of improvement?



### What sorts of innovations or advancements would you like to see from third parties that develop and support AI-powered CX solutions?



In an open-ended question meant to uncover opportunity, many leaders indicated the need for more life-like interactions, cleaner and faster deployments and integration, better reporting and processes for improvement, and more complete and encompassing solutions.

At right is a sampling of verbatim that typify the pool of responses.

- *Making it less obvious to customers that AI is powering the interaction. Make tools more 'lifelike.'*
- *Cleaner integration across communication channels to provide a consistent customer experience.*
- *Enhance natural language processing capabilities to understand and respond to customer inquiries more accurately and naturally, reducing the gap between human and machine interactions.*
- *Voice and Digital AI to be in the same solution. That is the unicorn.*
- *KPIs and reports that show where an AI solution needs training or correction.*
- *Better security of data and better playbooks for success.*
- *More demos and use cases pertinent to our line of business.*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS AND CONSIDERATIONS

## *Key findings from this research show that among survey respondents:*

- Twenty-two percent indicated there is an AI executive leadership role at their organization, with another 18% indicating the existence of plans for such a role.
- Fifty-one percent indicated an improvement in overall CSAT scores following deployment, while only six percent indicate a deterioration of same.
- Sixty-seven percent of those with customer-facing, AI-powered solutions in place indicated their customers were receptive (either “Very” or “Somewhat”) to such solutions.
- Sixty-eight percent expect increases in their AI-dedicated budget in the next 12 months, while decreases were anticipated by no one.

Many companies are past recognizing the importance of AI in enhancing the efficiency of their CX operations and have moved on to how AI might improve CX while lowering costs. In fact, 51% of organizations reported improvements in their overall CSAT scores following the deployment of AI-powered solutions, and 69% of respondents indicated their AI deployments lowered their per interaction costs. Furthermore, a reduction in head count was present among 38% of those respondents who had previously launched one or more AI for CX solutions. Together, these results suggest that when implemented thoughtfully, AI can significantly impact some of the most critical metrics of the contact center, including business-specific metrics.

The journey toward fully realizing the potential of AI in customer experience is ongoing. In fact, in many ways, it appears to be ramping up, especially given the overwhelming expectation of increased AI-dedicated budgets over the next 12 months. These plans reflect a strong commitment to investing in AI technologies, especially customer-facing solutions, which are expected to capture a little more of the spotlight in the next 12 to 24 months. As organizations continue to expand their use of AI, maintaining a balance between automation and the human touch will be essential to ensuring that customer experiences remain personalized and engaging. By focusing on thoughtful implementation and ongoing evaluation of AI strategies, companies can leverage these technologies to build stronger, more resilient relationships with their customers, transforming technology innovation into loyal customers.

# METHODOLOGY

This report, *The State of the Tech: AI in the Contact Center*, was developed based on results derived from a custom 34-question survey delivered via the SurveyMonkey online platform. Surveying occurred from July 24–26, 2024. Private invitations to partake in the survey were delivered by email to the Execs In The Know community and via promotion within Execs In The Know's private online community, Know It All. Invitations targeted individuals responsible for managing investments in AI for CX solutions primarily in the United States and Canada.

The survey benefited from the participation of 31 CX leaders with sample sizes ranging from 16 to 31 responses. Smaller sample sizes are reflective of results that were selective only to those CX leaders who had launched one or more AI for CX solutions within their operations.



# ABOUT ASAPP

ASAPP is a research-focused artificial intelligence cloud provider founded in 2014 with the mission of elevating human performance through the power of generative AI. Its comprehensive suite of native AI cloud applications helps contact centers transform the customer experience by improving automation, increasing agent productivity, and uncovering deep business insights. The company, which is backed by more than 60 patents and a who's who leadership team of tech luminaries, has helped some of the largest enterprises in the world transform their customer experience and drive economic impact by solving their most complex data problems. ASAPP is a winner of Business Intelligence Group's 2023 AI Excellence Award and was named among *Inc. Magazine's* 2023 Best Workplaces.

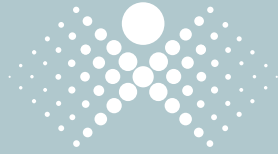
Learn more about ASAPP at [ASAPP.com](https://ASAPP.com).

# ABOUT EXECS IN THE KNOW

Execs In The Know brings together customer experience (CX) leaders from across industries in an effort to advance the conversation and set a new agenda for delivering amazing experiences for consumers. As a global community of the brightest minds in CX, Execs In The Know provides opportunities to learn, share, network, and engage to innovate. Operating under the motto, “Leaders Learning From Leaders,” Execs In The Know facilitates many opportunities for community engagement, such as its biannual national Customer Response Summit and private online community, Know It All “KIA.” There are also exclusive, laser-focused engagements like industry briefings and executive roundtables. Execs In The Know also guides and informs the industry with a rich tapestry of CX-related content that includes *CX Insight* magazine, industry research, webinars, blogs, and much more.

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