Execs In The Know

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS

CORPORATE EDITION

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PREFACE

The CX landscape continues to evolve, driven primarily by advancements in technology (most notably artificial intelligence [AI]), shifting customer expectations, and a focus on "customer first." This year's *CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Corporate Edition reveals a sector that is making significant strides in key performance indicators (KPIs), yet is still grappling with operational legacy issues that hinder advancement and pose real challenges to providing exceptional experiences across channels. While brands are accelerating AI adoption, many customer interactions remain too complex to be fully automated, reinforcing the need for a balanced approach between technology and an irreplaceable human touch.

Encouragingly, organizations appear to be navigating these challenges with a renewed focus on customer-first strategies and cross-channel consistency. More companies than ever before are reporting improvements in their KPIs, signaling that investments in CX are yielding tangible results. However, with 42% of CX leaders citing legacy systems as their biggest operational hurdle, it is clear that outdated technologies and processes continue to slow progress. As brands push for digital transformation, overcoming these systemic barriers will be critical to ensuring long-term CX success.

AI is playing an increasingly central role in CX operations. A staggering 90% of brands have already deployed AI in some capacity or plan to do so soon, a significant jump from just 61% in 2022. Yet, AI alone is not a silver bullet, as 54% of CX leaders report that anywhere from 21 to 60% of total customer interactions remain too complex for self-service or AI-powered solutions. This underscores the importance of blending automation with human-driven support to deliver seamless experiences.

Another key finding this year is the growing investment in technology to unify customer interactions across channels. Seventy-four percent of respondents expect to implement new solutions to drive greater consistency, a move that will be crucial in reducing friction and improving engagement. At the same time, the industry is seeing a positive cultural shift, with 58% of CX leaders now believing their company culture fully aligns with a customer-first strategy, the highest level recorded since this metric was first tracked in 2018.

As CX leaders look ahead, the challenge will not just be in implementing AI and modernizing systems, as these are table stakes. It will more crucially be in ensuring these investments drive real, human-centered outcomes. Technology should enhance, rather than replace, the personal connections that define exceptional customer experiences. By integrating innovation with a strong cultural foundation, CX leaders can bridge the gap between automation and meaningful engagement, shaping the future of customer experience for years to come.

Highlights from this year's research:

- Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents reported improving KPIs over the past 12 months, the highest percentage recorded since 2021 (page 38).
- Legacy Systems/Processes/Tools remains the biggest barrier to successful CX operations, with 42% of survey respondents naming it as their top challenge (page 57).
- In 2024, 90% of brands have already deployed AI within their contact center or plan to do so soon, up from 61% in 2022 (page 66).
- Fifty-four percent of respondents believe 21-60% of customer engagements are too complex to be resolved using self-help or AI-powered solutions (page 71).
- Seventy-four percent of CX leaders expect to invest in new technology and/or integrated solutions to improve cross-channel consistency (page 52).
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents feel their company culture aligns with a customer-first strategy, the highest level recorded since 2018 (page 56).

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

We are absolutely thrilled to present the *2025 CX Leaders Trends & Insights*: Corporate Edition — a dynamic follow-up to the Consumer Edition released this past September!

This year's report brings exciting updates, with fresh insights and thoughtfully revised questions, all designed to spotlight the ever-evolving role of AI in CX. We've reimagined the content to focus on four key areas: Workforces and Workplaces, Touch Points, CX Initiatives and Strategies, and AI for CX. Our goal is to provide you with valuable knowledge and inspiration as you continue driving exceptional customer experiences within your organizations.

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible project partners, TELUS Digital, whose collaboration has been instrumental in shaping this research. Don't miss the expert commentary from Kory Laszewski, VP, Global CX Solutions at TELUS Digital, on page 6 — his insights offer a powerful perspective on this year's findings. We are also deeply grateful to the five CX leaders who generously shared their time and expertise, enriching this report with their reactions and analysis. You'll find their contributions highlighted throughout.

Here's to another year of innovation, transformation, and customer-first excellence!

The Execs In The Know Research Team

Execs In The Know

Thanks again to this edition's Practitioners! Their contributions can be found on these pages:

AMC NETWORKS
Nicholas Solomon
(Page 34)

TRAVELZOO
Lisa Oswald
(Page 37)

eMoney
Alex Rivera
(Page 43)

The Hartford
Stephen Hardenburg
(Page 56)

StanleyBlack&Decker
Emersson Chinchilla
(Page 67)

METHODOLOGY

This report, the *2025 CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Corporate Edition, was developed based on results derived from a custom 90-question survey delivered via the SurveyMonkey online platform.

Surveying occurred from October 29 through December 12, 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 the customer experience and customer care programs of large Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and B2C and Business-to-Business (B2B) organizations, primarily in the United States and Canada.

The survey benefited from the participation of 85 CX leaders with individual question sample sizes ranging from 67 to 85 responses. Eighty-five percent of survey participants held a title of Director or above. See page 13 for a detailed breakdown of this year's survey participants, including details about participation by industry, revenue, and customer type.

PARTNER
COMMENTARY

TELUS Digital

Under the Spotlight: Three Strategic Focus Areas for CX Leaders in 2025

By Kory Laszewski, Vice President, Global CX Solutions at TELUS Digital

Customer experience (CX) leaders are going to need to get used to the spotlight. As wider economic challenges persist, CX programs are a defiant source of optimism. This year, C-suites will be watching closely, scrutinizing CX programs and counting on them to win customer loyalty in the moments that matter.

But before we get into that, we have to look at the market context. Only 13% of those polled by Execs In The Know for this report described the state of their business as “Growing Quickly” for calendar year 2024, down from 21% the year prior (page 14). Conversely, 18% reported “Shrinking Moderately” in 2024, a figure that leaped up from 12% the previous year (page 14). Prompted to adapt, nearly half (46%) of all respondents said that they had already taken modest action in response to the uncertain economic conditions (page 15). It is clear that there is mounting pressure.

And yet, despite this challenging context, CX represents an enduring silver lining. In 2024, 76% of respondents said that their company’s customer experience improved relative to the previous year — according to a TELUS Digital report on digital customer experience priorities for 2025, which includes survey results from 250 enterprise leaders in the U.S. This optimism dovetails with Execs In The Know’s findings that show KPI performance is on the rise: Over two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents shared that their critical KPIs improved in 2024, with 17% of that group citing significant improvement (page 38).

This juxtaposition puts CX leaders in a spotlight they may not have anticipated. As organizations take a hard look at the overall business context and their own operations, the demonstrated success of CX initiatives in 2024 paradoxically intensifies the pressure on CX leaders going forward. To stand up to this heightened scrutiny, CX leaders must prove ROI consistently and prioritize decisively. This will require that they focus their energy and investment where it matters most — optimizing for quality, agent performance and speed.

A BACKDROP OF INCREASED SCRUTINY AND BUDGET PRESSURES

When Execs In The Know asked about the actions leaders have taken in response to the current economic conditions, the most common answer (64%) was "Increased Focus on ROI/Financials" (page 15). In 2025, for many CX leaders, no project or program is likely to go unchecked.

Despite increased scrutiny, however, there are reasons to be positive. The survey data shows a decrease in the number of organizations responding to the business environment by reducing budget for new programs, down to 27% from 46% in just one year. Similarly, there was a marked drop in the cancelation of programs and projects, with only 13% of respondents seeing this course of action — in contrast to 34% the year prior. This shows that organizations are opting to scrutinize and optimize CX investment, rather than dialing it back.

But even if budgets aren't being reduced, that doesn't mean they're sufficient. In fact, "inadequate budget" was cited by leaders as the main barrier to enabling a more dynamic digital strategy (page 59). No matter your budget, whether it is growing, shrinking or staying the same, if it feels inadequate relative to what you must achieve, prioritization is paramount. The spotlight is upon you. Rather than a time to speculate, now is the time to concentrate investments and efforts on what matters most.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS THAT STAND UP TO SCRUTINY

After looking at the data visualized in this report, as well as additional research from TELUS Digital, three clear areas of focus emerge for CX leaders in 2025. To put it simply: Leaders must optimize for quality, agent performance and speed.

Some might argue that these have always been priorities in CX — and they'd be right. However, the level of scrutiny we're seeing today gives cause to return to, and truly deliver on, the fundamentals of great customer experience. These aren't arbitrary choices — they represent the intersection of what customers demand, what technology enables and what drives business results in today's environment.

QUALITY

Despite budgets that might feel inadequate, customer experience leaders are demonstrating their unwillingness to sacrifice quality across the entire customer journey.

In the aforementioned TELUS Digital survey, 84% of our respondents said that improving the quality of customer service delivery was a critical priority, making it the most pressing objective for leaders in 2025. Along similar lines, customer satisfaction (CSAT) was the clear frontrunner in terms of how leaders are measuring the effectiveness of their efforts, with 54% of respondents singling out the metric.

Meanwhile, in this Execs In The Know report, you'll see that nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents selected CSAT as the KPI that is most critical and garners the most attention in the management of their CX operations (page 38).

But what does this all mean for how you lead in 2025?

Quality extends beyond individual interactions or specific channels, and should be a defining characteristic of every touch point in the customer journey — from initial brand awareness through purchase, usage and ongoing support. This holistic approach to quality can have a lasting effect on customer loyalty, a relationship that warrants comprehensive measurement and strategic thought.

Surprisingly, according to Execs In The Know data, only 40% of organizations measure the impact of their overall CX operations on customer loyalty (page 45), with just 31% feeling they do a good job using CX to drive loyalty (page 45). Addressing this gap is crucial for CX leaders, especially given the backdrop of heightened scrutiny and expectations for demonstrable ROI across all customer touch points. One compelling reason for this is that a clear understanding of the quality-loyalty connection is fundamental to reducing churn. In an uncertain environment, this potential can't be overlooked, particularly if you subscribe to the notion that retaining customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones.

Beyond customer retention, quality across all touch points contributes to operational efficiency, which is especially important if you consider your budget to be inadequate. For example, well-designed self-service channels can reduce the volume of human support interactions, while clear product information can prevent returns or complaints. This comprehensive approach to quality not only enhances customer satisfaction, but also optimizes resource allocation across the entire CX ecosystem.

AGENT PERFORMANCE

This report shows that 63% of leaders identify problem-solving ability and product knowledge as the primary aspects of agent performance they aim to improve over the next 12 months (page 21).

It's a timely focus that reflects an ongoing shift. As more and more routine customer inquiries are solved via self-service channels like customer-facing chatbots fueled by AI, it is the most nuanced questions and concerns that will be put to frontline team members. When customers escalate to human interaction, it's often their final attempt at resolution — making the agent's ability to navigate complexity with both expertise and empathy crucial to maintaining CSAT and preventing churn.

While leaders express a preference for digital channel adoption, voice remains a critical escalation path. These are high-stakes interactions capable of building, or breaking, customer loyalty. Fortunately, across all channels, 79% of respondents said their organization excels at phone support (page 29). And while this report also suggests that leaders would like to see more customers having their needs addressed by other channels, the fact of the matter is that customers still expect to be able to speak with a human agent. If your focus is truly on customer satisfaction, you need to be prepared to meet this expectation with empathetic and knowledgeable agents.

To meet evolving expectations, both from customers and from the C-suite, leaders should be thinking about the ways AI can be used to enhance problem-solving ability and product knowledge among their agents. While agents are actively supporting customers, agent-facing AI can surface relevant information, enabling agents to offer correct and comprehensive solutions without the need for additional touch points. Data from this survey shows 71% of leaders see generative AI (GenAI) as key to improving service delivery, and that 75% are already using AI for agent support (page 67).

Of course, we can't have a conversation about AI in CX without talking about speed.

SPEED

Speed is a critical focus area that complements, rather than compromises, the drive for quality and agent effectiveness. "Time to resolution/AHT" was the second most critical KPI among those surveyed for this report (after CSAT, as mentioned previously). In fact, the metric was selected by 47% of respondents, a 7% jump from the previous year (page 38). It's no surprise, really. So long as expectations for quality are met, customers want answers quickly.

The challenge, of course, is in delivering both quality and speed consistently. AI, and generative AI in particular, represents a transformative opportunity. The TELUS Digital survey I've referenced a few times found that 36% of respondents plan to allocate over $4 million to GenAI in 2025, and 71% see GenAI as a key driver for improving customer service delivery. When trained, managed and implemented effectively, GenAI models can significantly upgrade self-service channels, chatbots (both customer- and agent-facing) and more. In the business environment we find ourselves in, this technology can drive tangible improvements in speed without sacrificing quality.

Right now, it's clear that brands haven't quite managed to unlock the technology's full potential. Remember when I pointed out that 79% of those surveyed for this report said they excel at phone support? That number is just 11% for chatbots (page 29). And yet, as you'll see in this report, when asked about which channel leaders would prefer their customers use, 27% said chatbots — the leading answer by 10% (page 31). This gap between aspiration and current capability is telling: According to the TELUS Digital report, only 10% of organizations consider themselves in a "steady state" with GenAI, highlighting both the opportunity and the complexity of the journey ahead.

Achieving excellence across quality, agent performance, and speed — particularly through the strategic implementation of AI — requires expertise that many organizations are finding through strategic partnerships.

ADDRESSING YOUR FOCUS AREAS WITH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The data suggests that CX leaders are increasingly turning to strategic partnerships to deliver on these focus areas. According to TELUS Digital's report on digital CX priorities for 2025, 82% of organizations are either working with or planning to work with outsourcing partners this year. Meanwhile, in this Execs In The Know report, you can see external agent head count increasing to 67%, up from 56% the previous year (page 19).

When you consider the backdrop of increased scrutiny and budget pressure, a partnership approach makes sense. Rather than making bets, CX leaders need to be making informed decisions, and outsourcing with a partner that can stand behind their expertise and solutions is a sensible way to move forward. Quality management requires expertise and proven processes, agent performance demands access to skilled talent and ongoing development, and AI implementation calls for specialized technical knowledge. TELUS Digital research shows that organizations are seeking partners for AI-driven customer interactions (44%), data analytics (43%), and AI-driven agent tools (36%).

The most successful CX leaders will be those who can leverage these partnerships to not just meet current expectations, but to anticipate and shape the future of customer experience. As you consider your CX strategy for the coming year, ask yourself: Are you currently positioned to deliver the quality, performance and innovation that will stand up to scrutiny and drive your business forward?

TELUS Digital

Kory Laszewski
Vice President, Global CX Solutions

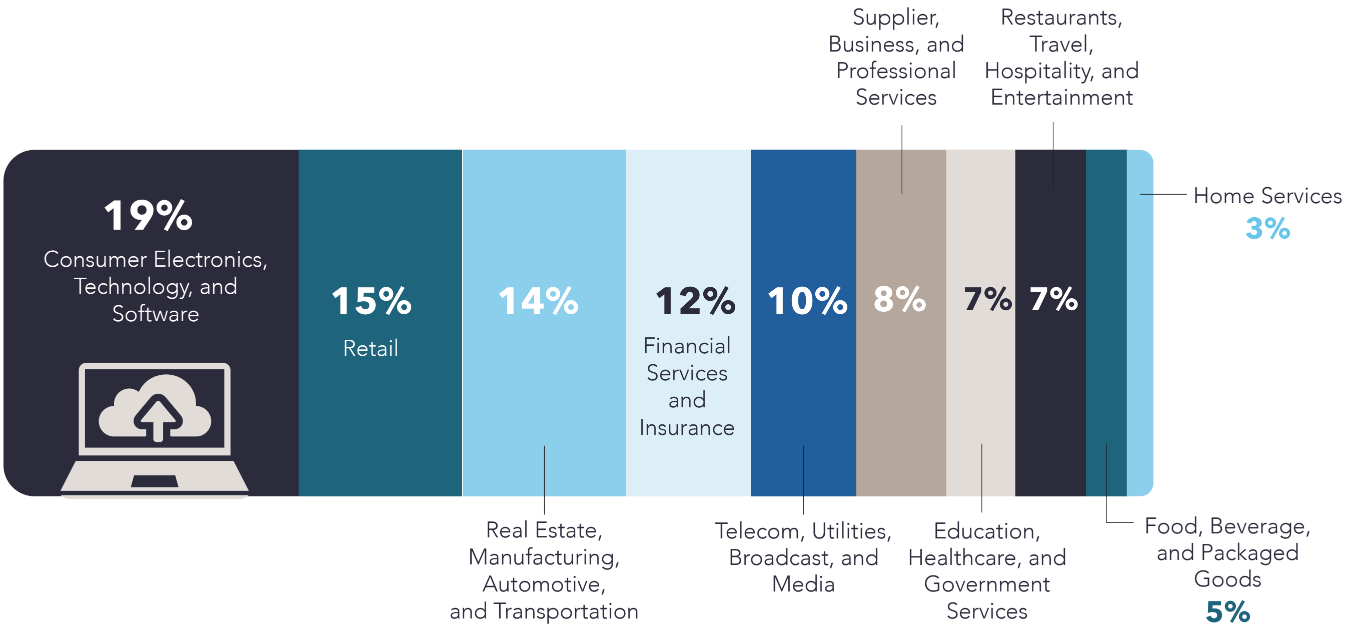
Kory Laszewski currently serves as Vice President, Global CX Solutions at TELUS Digital. He is responsible for leading a world-class team of professionals focused on the development and growth of a global client base, which consists of some of the world's largest and most disruptive brands within the communications and media, financial services, retail and CPG, travel and hospitality and healthcare industries.

As a veteran of the business process outsourcing (BPO) business, Kory has dedicated nearly 30 years of his career to supporting virtually every aspect of the contact center industry. Throughout this span of time, Kory has worked to build and grow organizations that now make up some of the largest BPO brands today. Over his career, Kory has been responsible for scaling and supporting complex contact center solutions in more than 25 countries and generating more than $1 billion in annual revenue.

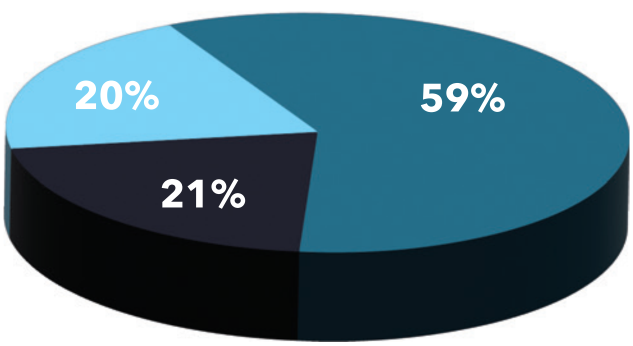
ABOUT THE **PARTICIPANTS' BUSINESSES**

This year's *CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Corporate Edition benefited from the participation of a broad range of verticals, with Consumer Electronics, Tech, and Software leading the way, followed closely by Retail, Financial Services and Insurance, and a bucket of verticals, including Real Estate, Manufacturing, Automotive, and Transportation. Broad participation creates a set of balanced results that provide a solid foundation for companies to benchmark against results. Throughout this report, look for "Compare Your Operations" tags on select results.

Verticals of Survey Participants



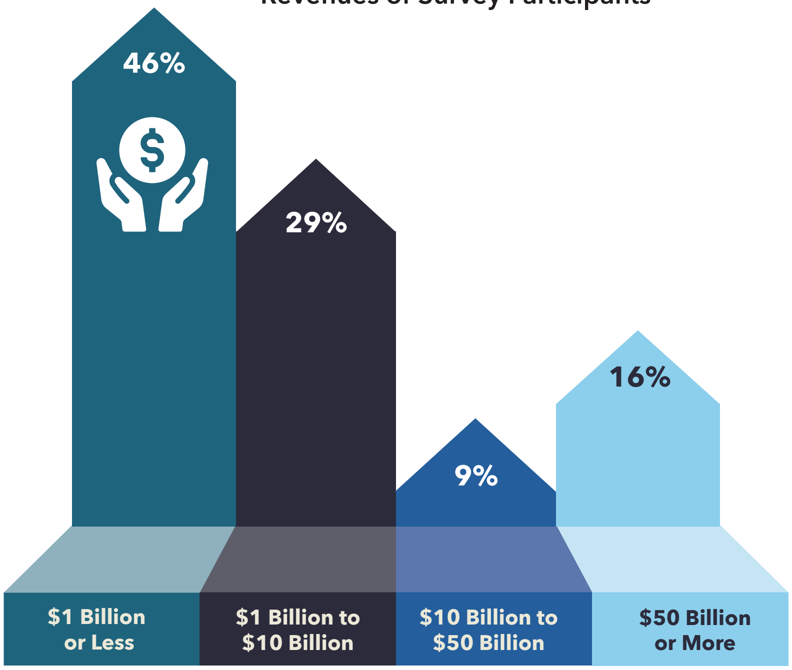
Business Type of Survey Participants



As with years past, most companies participating in this year's survey are of a hybrid model, serving both consumers and other businesses, with an even split of businesses dedicated to serving either consumers or other businesses.

- **Both B2B and B2C**
- **B2C (Business to Consumer)**
- **B2B (Business to Business)**

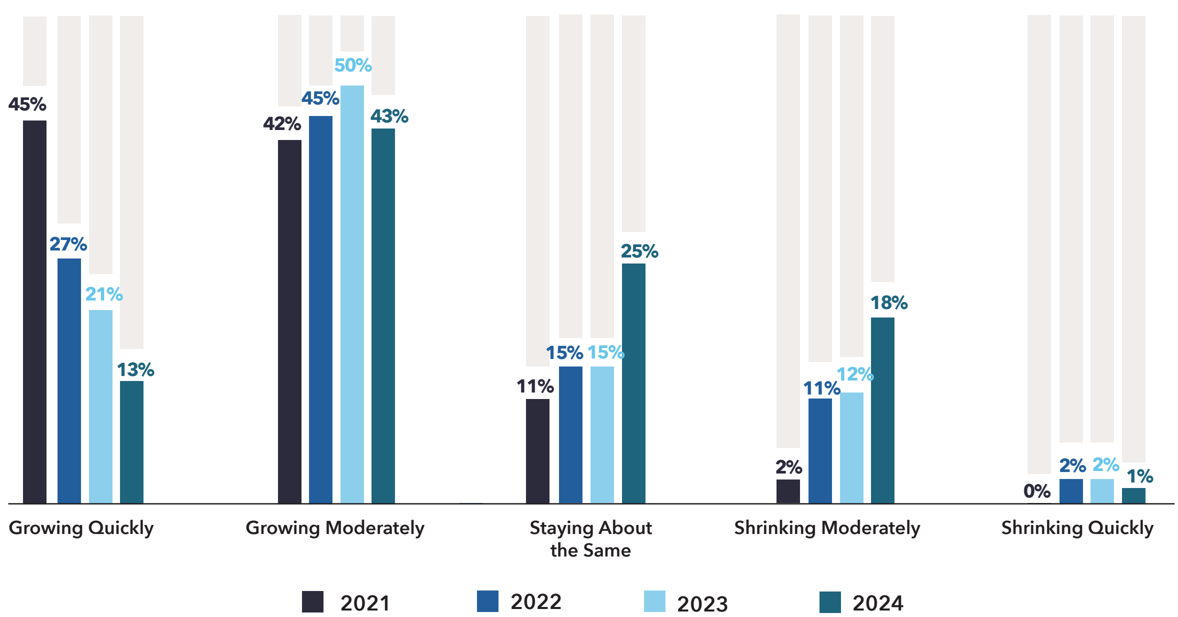
Revenues of Survey Participants



Companies doing $10 billion or more in annual revenue make up a quarter of all companies that participated in this year's survey, with those companies doing $10 billion or less comprising three-quarters of the participant companies. This breakdown is nearly identical to last year, indicating survey participant companies are reflective, at least from a revenue perspective, of those companies participating last year.

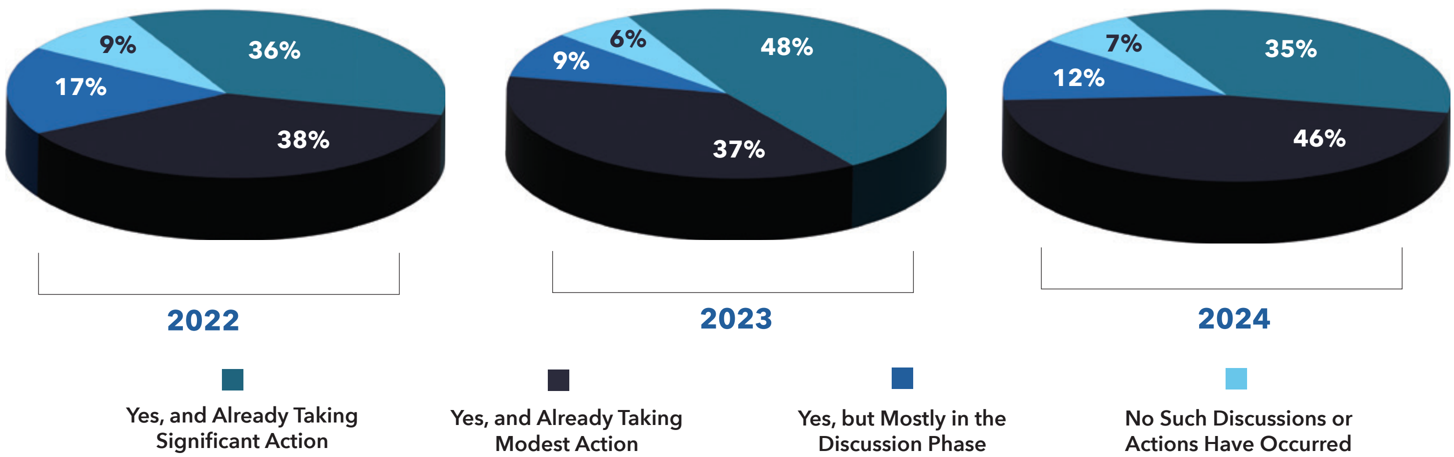
Economic growth continues to slow among survey respondents, particularly at the top end, with only 13% of survey respondents indicating their business was "Growing Quickly" over the past 12 months, down eight points from 2023 and 32 points from 2021. At the same time, there was a sizable increase in the number of companies indicating their business was "Shrinking Moderately" over the past twelve months, creeping up to 18%, a year-over-year (YoY) increase of six points. As business challenges heighten, brands will need to be careful not to lose sight of the customer experience, as doing so will only compound the challenges brought about by economic uncertainties.

How would you generally describe the state of the business over the past 12 months?



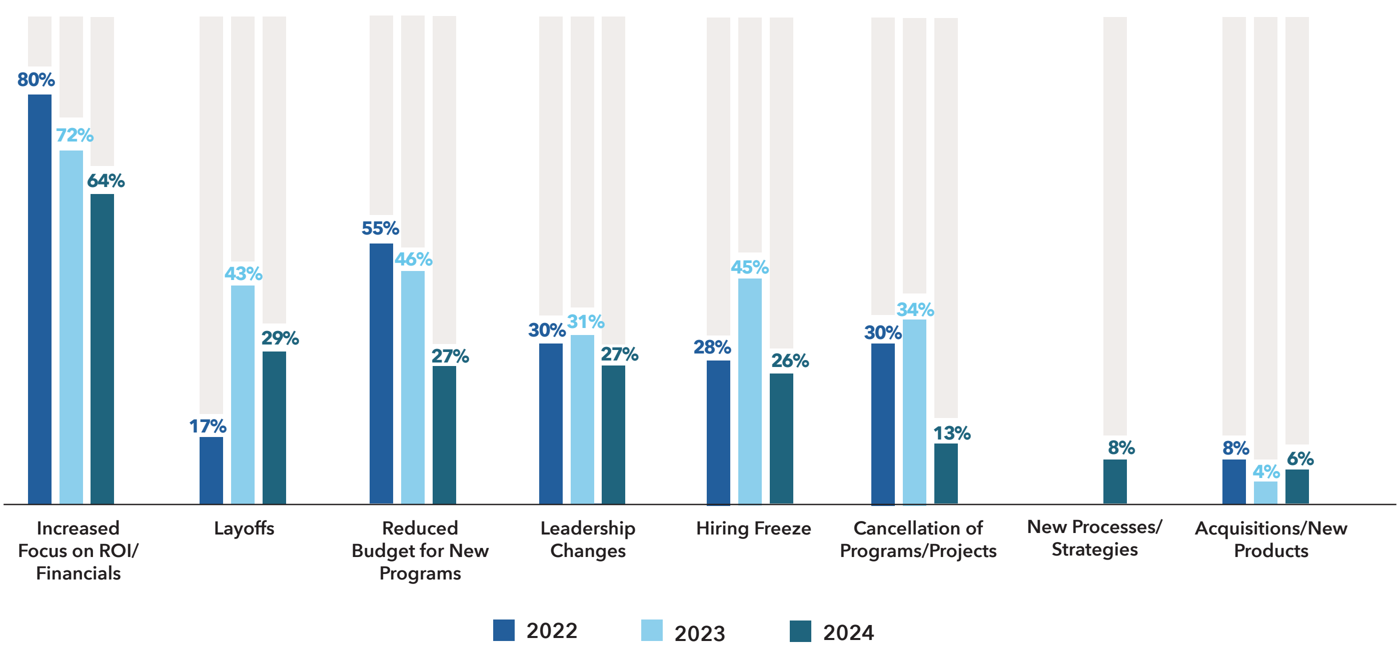
Economic uncertainty continued to be a major consideration for many companies in 2024, with 81% of brands indicating they were both discussing and taking either "Significant" or "Modest" actions on economic challenges. See results at the bottom of the page to understand exactly which actions were being taken.

Has your company begun discussing or acting on the uncertain economic conditions?



The most common course of action in response to economic uncertainties remains an "Increased Focus on ROI/ Financials." And although the focus in this area has fallen for a second consecutive year (from 80% to 72%, and from 72% to 64%), it dominates the mix of actions more than in any previous year. Tracking ROI in the CX space can be challenging, and to effectively do so, brands need to have a superb means of measuring results and understanding the impact on the customer experience.

Which of the following actions has your organization recently taken in response to the uncertain economic conditions? (Select all that apply.)



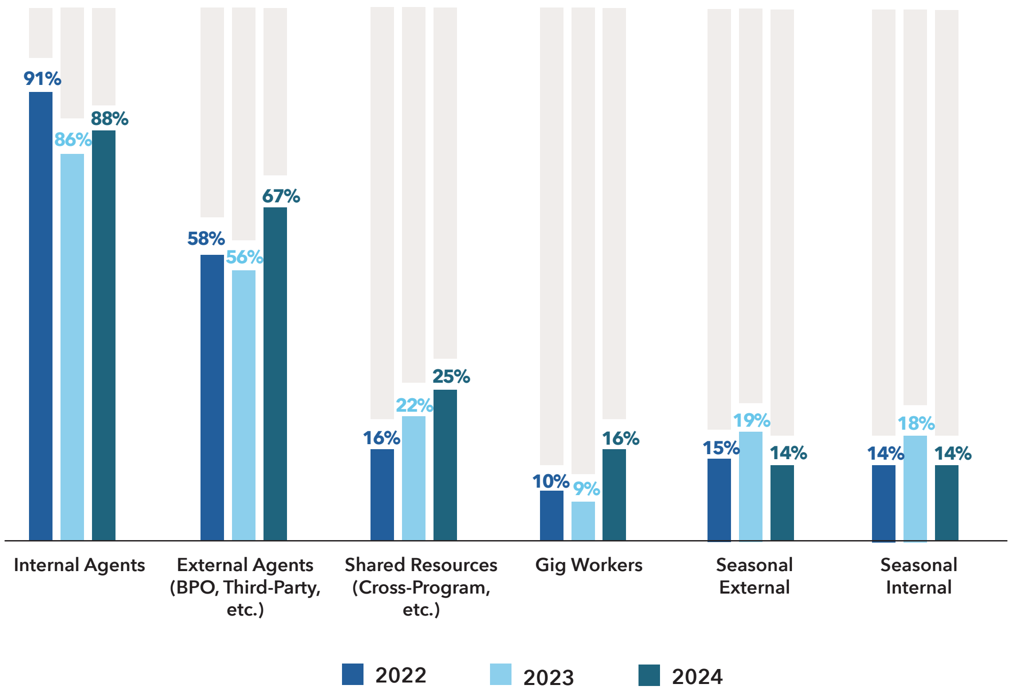
SURVEY **RESULTS**

WORKFORCES AND WORKPLACES

WORKFORCES

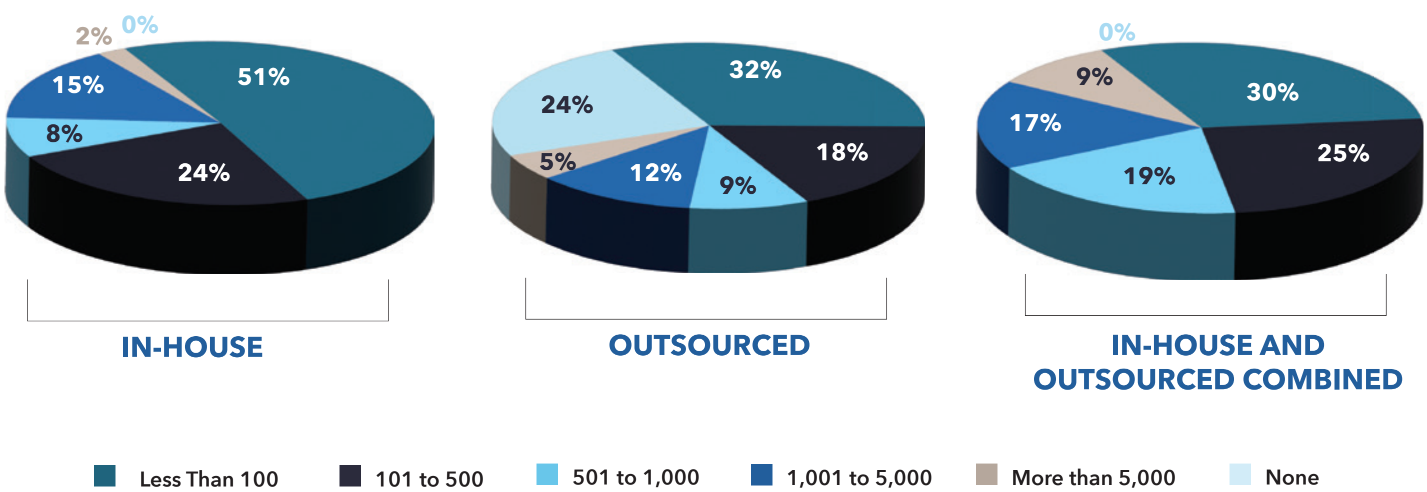
The most notable YoY change when it comes to the frontline workforce mix was the uptick in External Agents. In 2024, about one-third of survey respondents (67%) indicated they were using External Agents. This represents an 11-point gain compared to the previous year (up 20%). Gig Workers saw a steep rise of seven points (up 78%), which is especially interesting, given the simultaneous occurrence of an equivalent drop in seasonal hiring.

Which types of frontline workforce resources are deployed by your CX operations? (Select all that apply.)



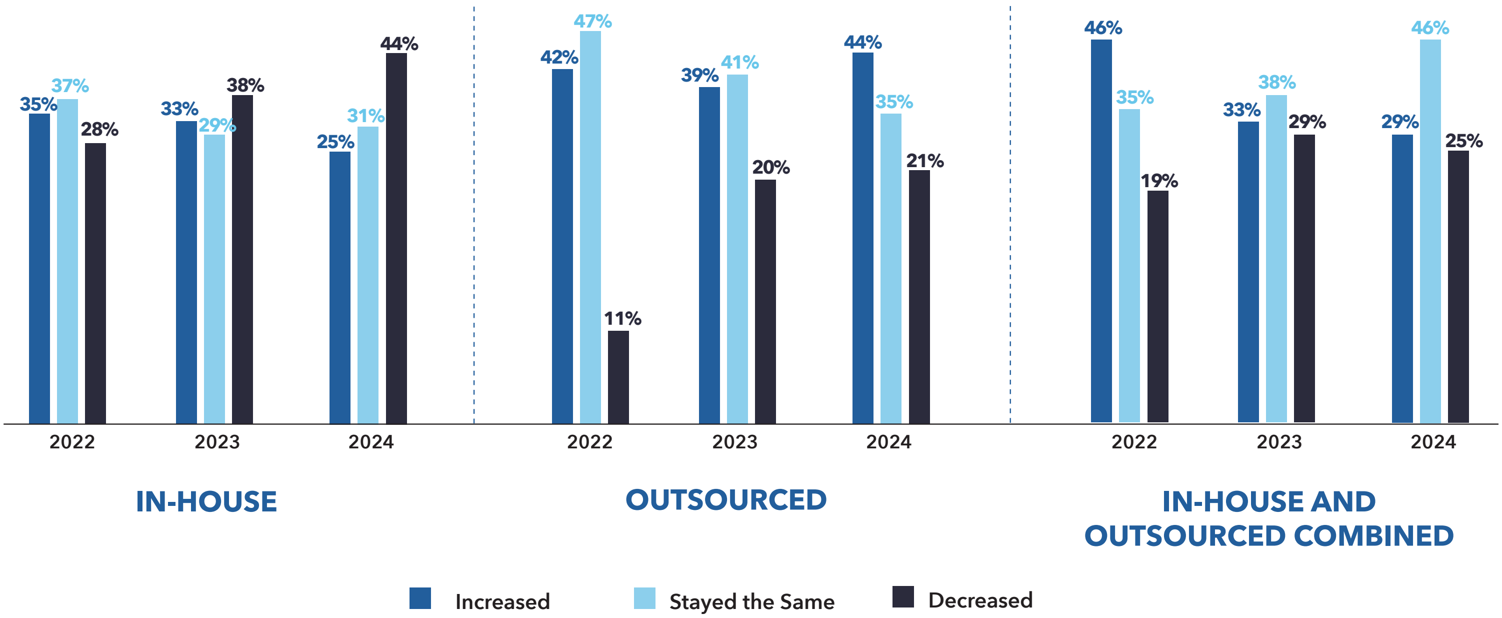
Roughly a quarter of survey respondents (26%) indicated they had program sizes of more than 1,000 total agents (including both In-House and Outsourced resources). At the opposite end of the spectrum, 30% of survey respondents had programs with fewer than 100 agents overall, and 24% of respondents had no outsourced agents at the time of surveying.

Approximately how many FTEs are a part of your contact center operations?



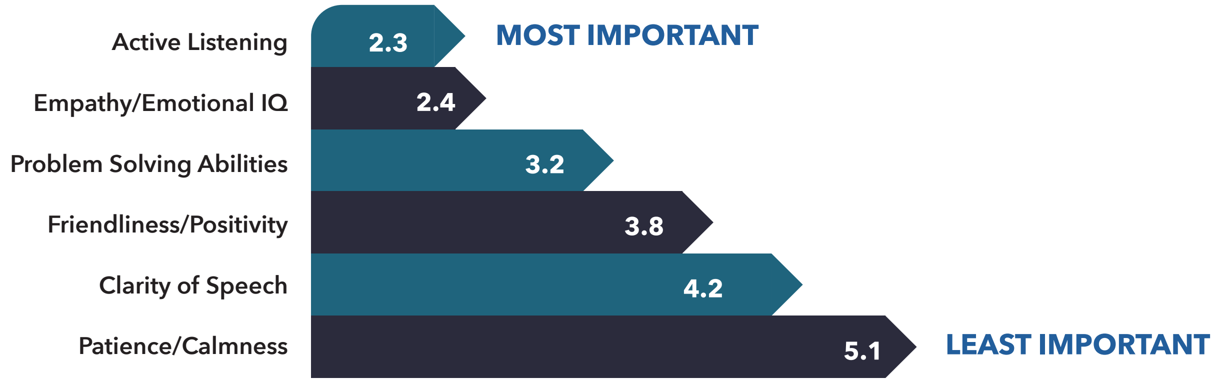
Aligning with results depicting slowing business growth (page 14) and the expanded use of AI-powered solutions, contact center operations experienced an acceleration of In-House head count declines (up six points YoY), along with slowing In-House head count growth. At the same time, Outsourced head count growth ticked up slightly YoY. With nearly half of survey respondents indicating a fall in In-House head counts, these results well illustrate the impact of both challenging economic times, as well as the continued expansion in the use of AI-powered solutions.

How has your contact center operations head count changed over the past 12 months?



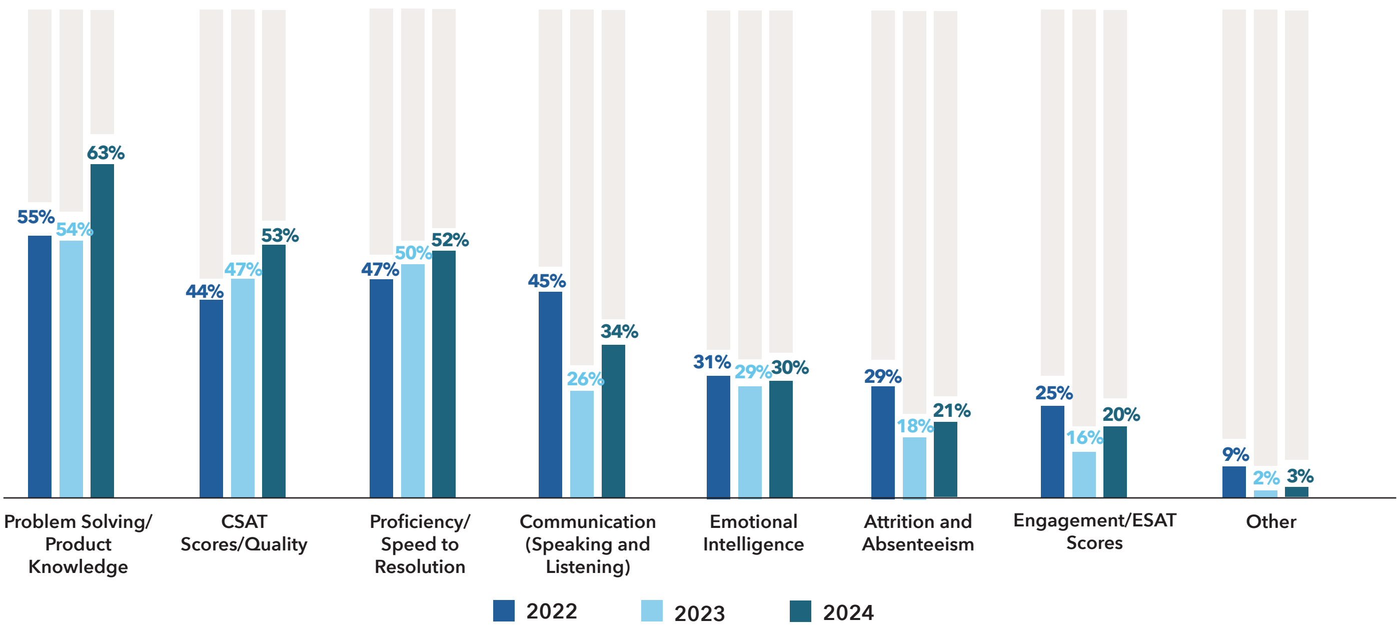
In a new question aimed at understanding how agent soft skills rank in the minds of CX leaders, Active Listening was viewed as the most important by the highest number of survey respondents. This was followed very closely by Empathy/Emotional IQ. This differs significantly from the consumer perspective, where Clear Communications and Efficiency/Professionalism are highly valued as opposed to attributes like Empathy and Active Listening. For details on exactly how consumer and corporate perspectives compare, check out the Consumer Comparisons section on page 76.

How do you rank the following soft skills in terms of importance for your agents (either internal or external)? (Lower Number = More Important.)



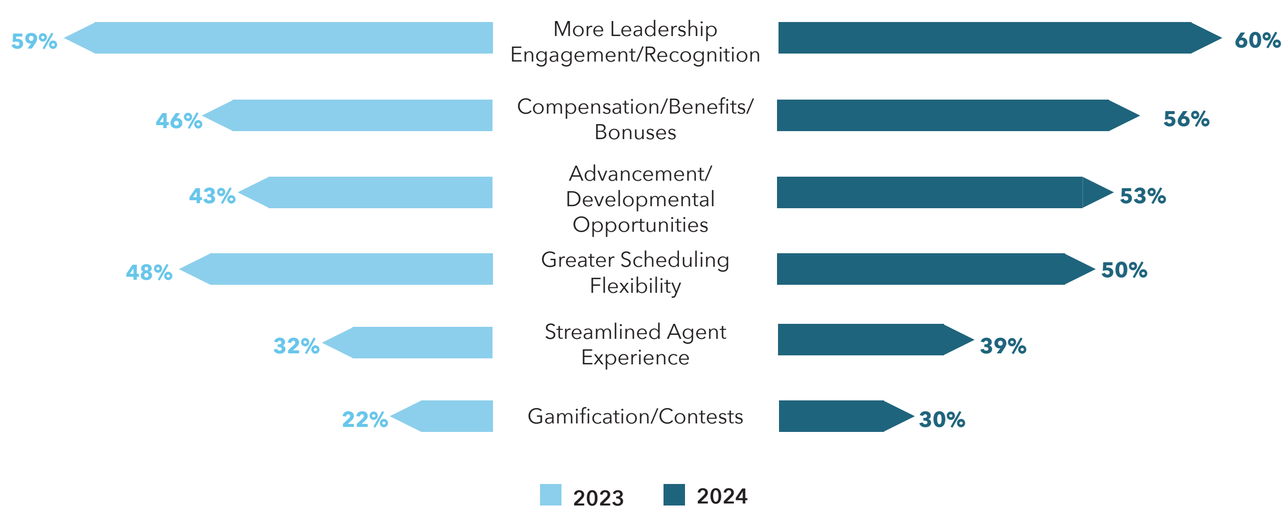
"Problem Solving/Product Knowledge" continue to top the list of areas where CX leaders are most keen on improving agent performance over the coming 12 months. In fact, there has never been greater focus on problem solving, and this is likely due to the shift in the complexity of the issues hitting agents' screens. As a higher number of simple transactions are automated by AI, the items put before agents become increasingly complex, requiring stronger problem solving skills.

In which area are you most interested in improving agent performance over the next 12 months? (Please select no more than three.)



CX leaders find a variety of activities to be motivating for their teams, indicating a multifaceted approach might be the most effective way to attract and keep talent. Greater involvement from leadership, particularly when it comes to recognition, remains most effective, with financial compensations, opportunities for advancement, and great schedule flexibility contributing.

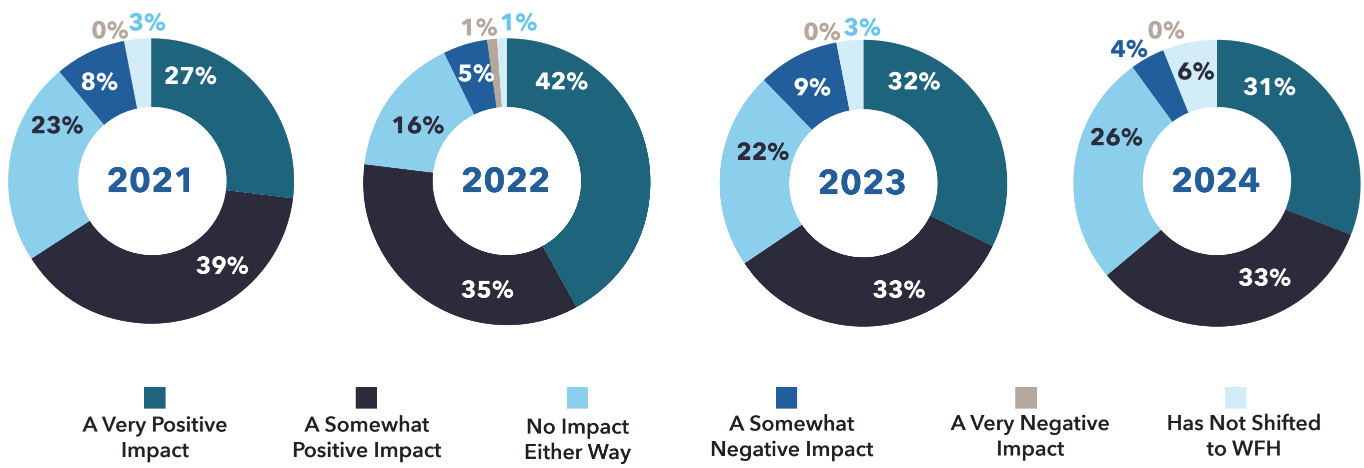
What have been some of the most effective motivators for your workforce? (Select all that apply.)



WORKPLACES

The shift to work-from-home (WFH) that occurred because of the 2020 global pandemic continues to be viewed as generally positive by CX leaders. In fact, fewer than five percent of respondents viewed the shift as having a "Negative" impact, with no respondents indicating a "Very Negative" impact. Conversely, 31% of respondents indicated the shift to WFH left a "Very Positive" legacy in terms of impact. See the verbatim below to understand in exactly what ways the shift to WFH has impacted meeting the needs and expectations of customers, either positive or negative.

Generally speaking, what long-term impact has your organization's shift to work-from-home (WFH) had on your ability to meet the needs and expectations of your customers?



BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHY THE WORK-FROM-HOME IMPACT HAS BEEN EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.

Positive Impact Verbatim to the above question:

"We have expanded our talent pool due to WFH and this level of flexibility has allowed us to source better candidates overall in addition to providing an improved associate experience."

"Our commitment to remote working has turned into an asset for hiring."

"Our decision to move to a work-from-home model was a positive decision designed to reduce overhead costs associated with maintaining office spaces."

"Work-from-home has increased productivity and work-life balance."

Negative Impact Verbatim to the above question:

"Culture has taken hit overall. Speed to resolution and general trouble shooting takes longer for more complex issues."

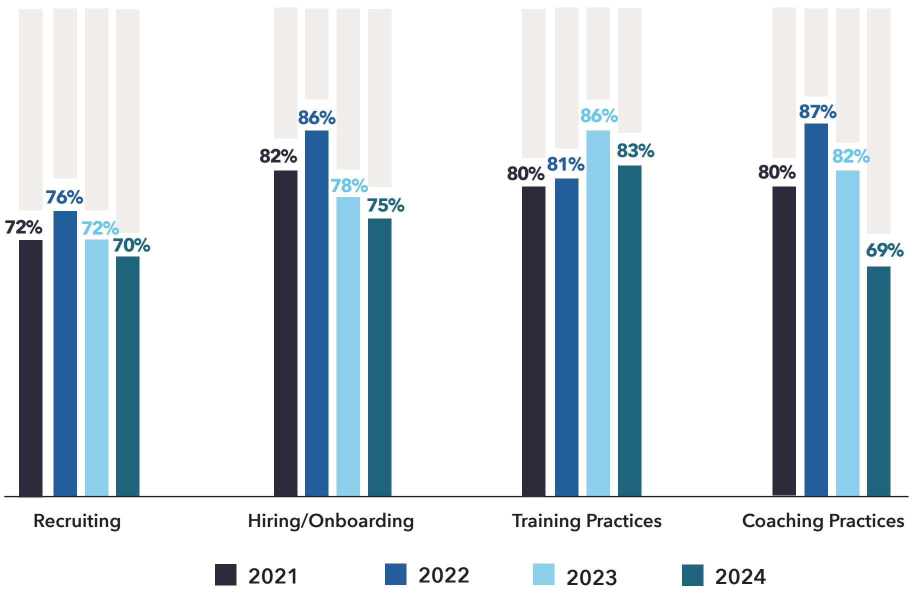
"Started out as positive during pandemic, but post-pandemic we noticed that collaborative efforts started to decline."

"We had a loss in productivity."

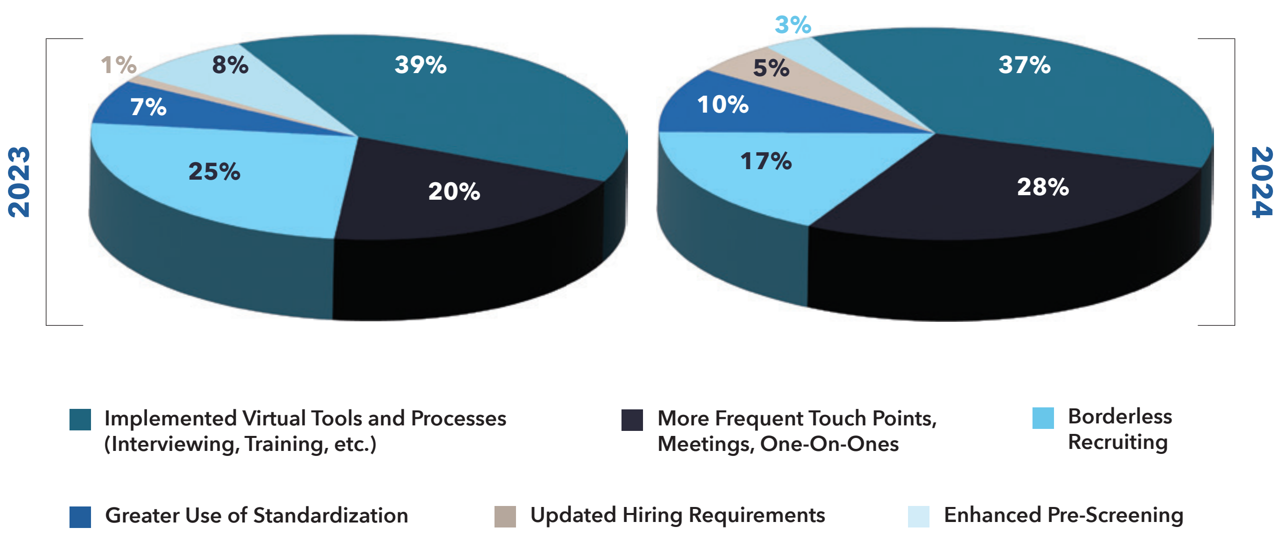
"We are still performing at the same level, but decisions are slower, and collaboration is harder."

The shift to WFH continues to impact how companies recruit, hire, train, and coach their agents, although marginally less than it has in the past. And while the shift to WFH has impacted the way brands operate their human resources related activities, so too has the rollout of AI-powered tools and solutions, impacting a number of key areas. These tools include AI-assisted recruitment and candidate identification, simulated training with AI-powered personas, and the automation of certain aspects of the coaching process, such as Quality Assurance (QA) and performance monitoring.

Percentage of companies that have adjusted their recruiting, hiring/onboarding, training, and/or coaching practices as a result of the shift to work-from-home.

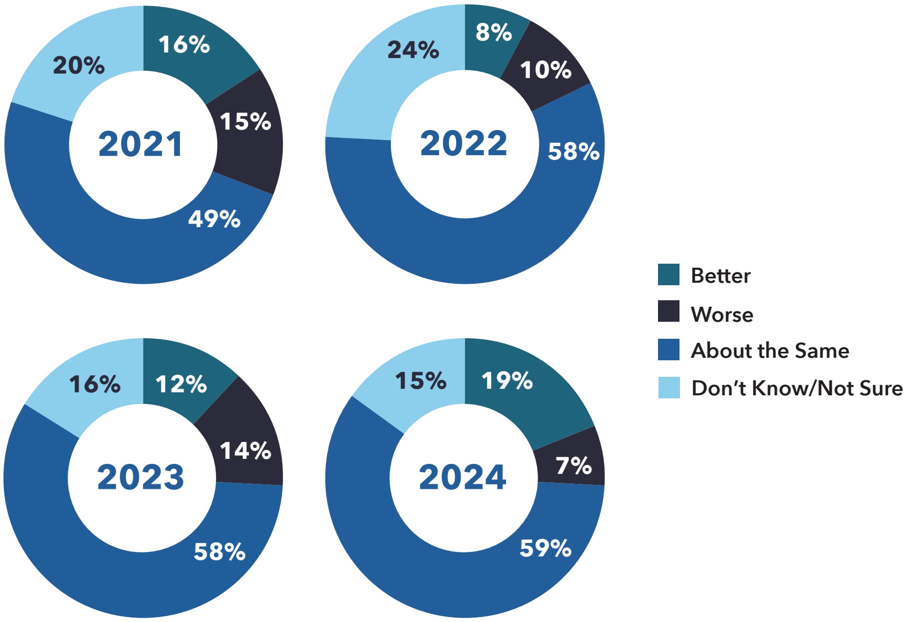


What has been the most impactful way you have changed your Recruiting, Hiring/Onboarding, Training, and Coaching practices in response to the shift to work-from-home?



The edge held by agents trained in a WFH environment hit a high point in 2024, with 19% of respondents indicating such agents performed better against those trained in-center, while only seven percent indicated performance was worse. These results marked a high point and a low point in each respective dataset, once again highlighting the generally positive impact WHF has had on the contact center space. Respondents were also less uncertain about this question than at any other time of its asking.

How do agents trained in a work-from-home environment perform against agents trained in-center?



Active and meaningful employee engagement is a key ingredient in leading a successful WFH-centric operation. To get a sense for how brands are best keeping their WFH agents engaged, survey respondents were asked to identify some of the specific ways in which they drive engagement. See below to learn how some brands are keeping up the engagement.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR ORGANIZATION HELPS ENCOURAGE AND/OR MAINTAIN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FOR WFH STAFF?

"With recognition programs, recreational groups/channels that happen remotely, routine on- and off-site get-togethers for in-person time, and remote-based events like volunteering. We also provide a healthy travel budget."

"Virtual and local social events and company-wide check-ins/updates on the business."

"We have several online contests and games, very much the same as we did in the office."

"We use the sticky note functionality in Zoom meetings to strategize, and we deliver out prizes and awards for those who are not local. We also make everyone in the office log into Zoom regardless if they are in the building or not."

"We use three main practices: 1) Empower through purpose and ownership; 2) Foster a strong sense of community; and 3) Support holistic well-being and flexibility."

"We have a 'return to office' program and include office incentives and clear expectations on how to earn them."

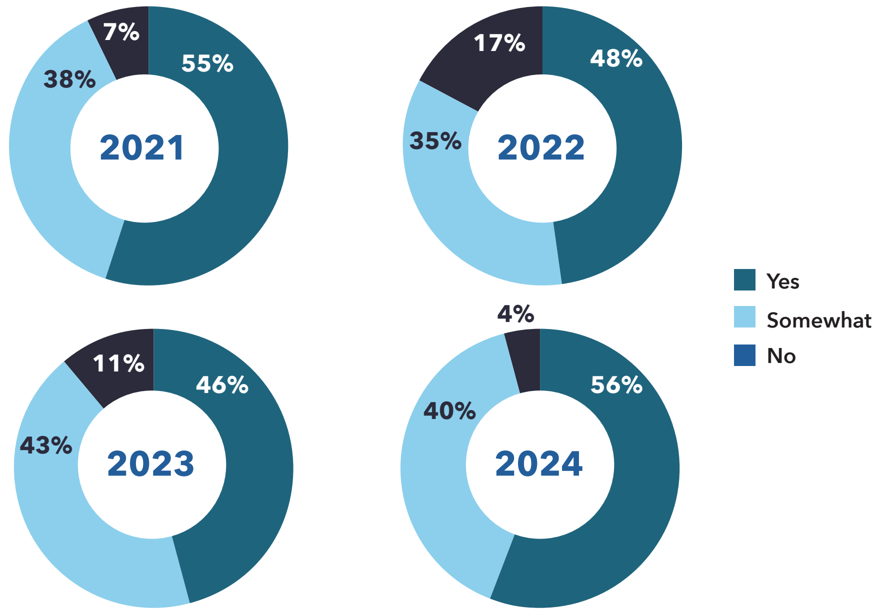
TOUCH POINTS

- Channels
- Measurements, Data, and Performance

CHANNELS

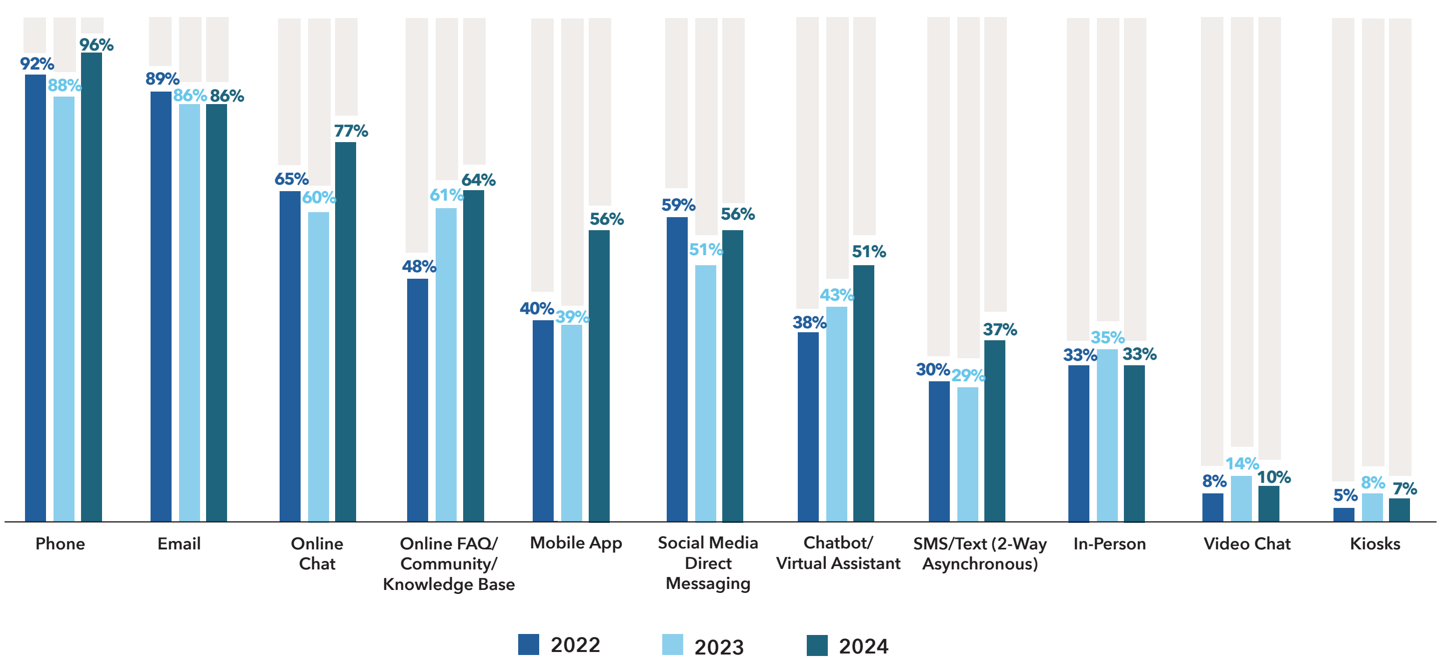
In 2024, CX leaders believed they had a better handle on the channel preferences of consumers compared to any other year of data collected. Understanding the channel preferences of customers is a product of reviewing program data (which channels customers are using, and how the volume flows between those channels), but it's also a product of Voice of the Customer data. Sometimes the best way to know a person's preferences is to simply ask.

Do you believe your company has a good understanding of which channels your customers prefer to use?



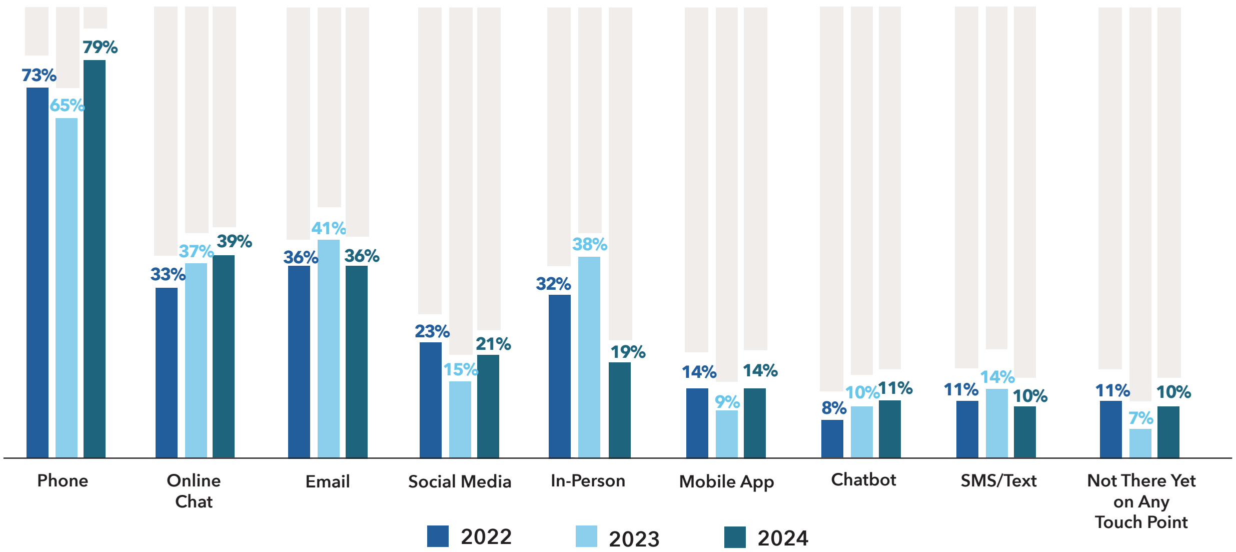
Phone and Email remain the predominate customer care solutions offered by brands, with Phone being ubiquitous within contact center operations. At the same time, Mobile App, Online Chat, and Chatbot/Virtual Assistant all experienced robust YoY gains — up 44%, 28%, and 19%, respectively. Chatbot/Virtual Assistant growth might not be the most dramatic, but it is the most consistent, achieving growth YoY for four consecutive years (going back to 2020).

Which of the following customer care solutions do you offer for your customers? (Please select all that apply.)



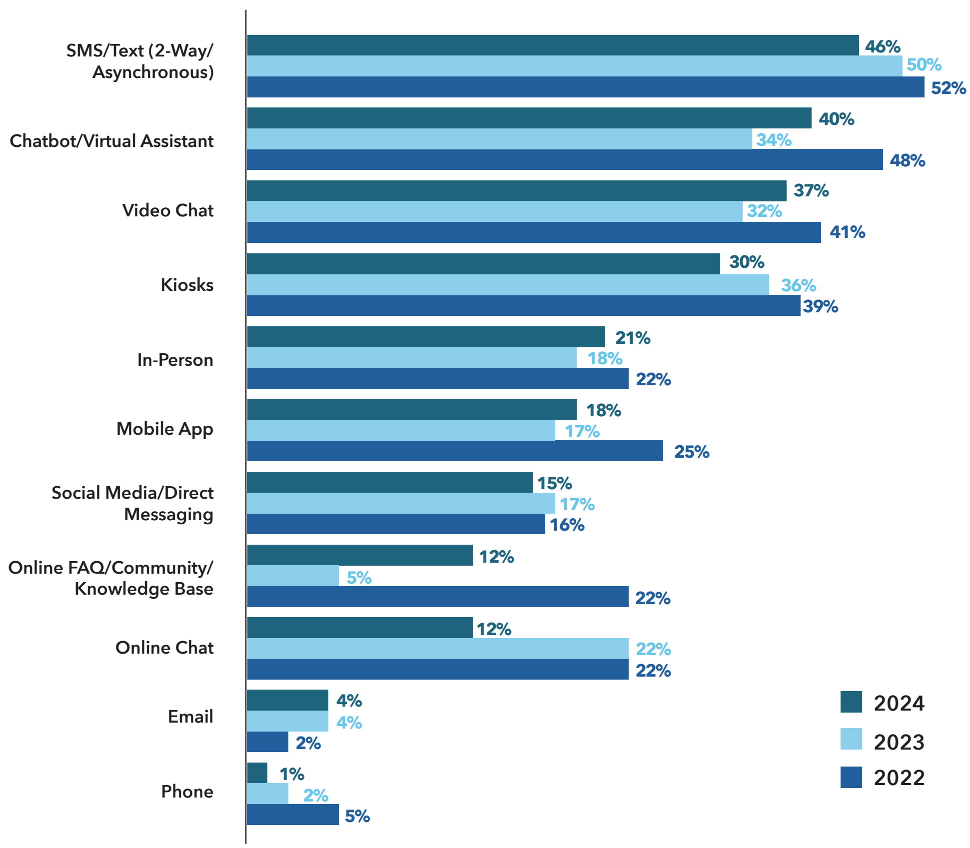
CX leaders continue to view Phone as their strongest channel of care (and by one of the most significant margins since this question was first asked). Respondents also noted continued improvement for Online Chat and Chatbot, although the improvements in Chatbot do not quite mirror the rapid advancement of the technology. Some keys to high channel performance are effective monitoring, enacting strategies for continuous improvement, and the ability to export successful processes from one channel to another.

Which customer touch point(s) do you feel your organization excels at? (Select all that apply.)



Which of the following solutions are not currently offered by your organization, but are a part of your short- to near-term plans? (Please select all that apply.)

As has been the case since 2021, SMS/Text is the top solution for future implementation among survey respondents. This is a sound strategy, particularly as more and more consumers shift their preference from Voice-Based to Text-Based solutions. Text/SMS also eases the immediacy needed to transact on the channel owing to the asynchronous capabilities of the channel.

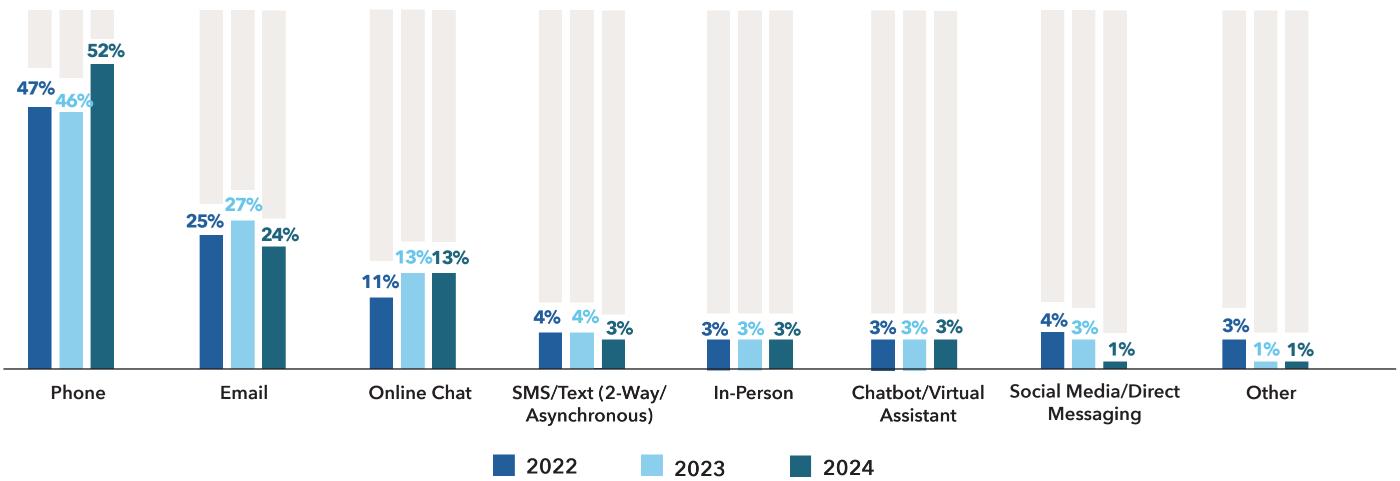


VOLUME FLOWS AND RESOLUTION RATES

Touch Points — Channels

Channel mix (page 28) and each respective channel's contribution to overall contact volume has remained remarkably steady since 2021, with Phone claiming the bulk of engagements and consistently hovering in the 46-52% range. As more companies invest in AI-powered solutions (such as Chatbots), it is expected that the volume flow will shift. However, for the shift to be successful, brands will have to find ways to elevate the resolution rate and effectiveness of unassisted channels.

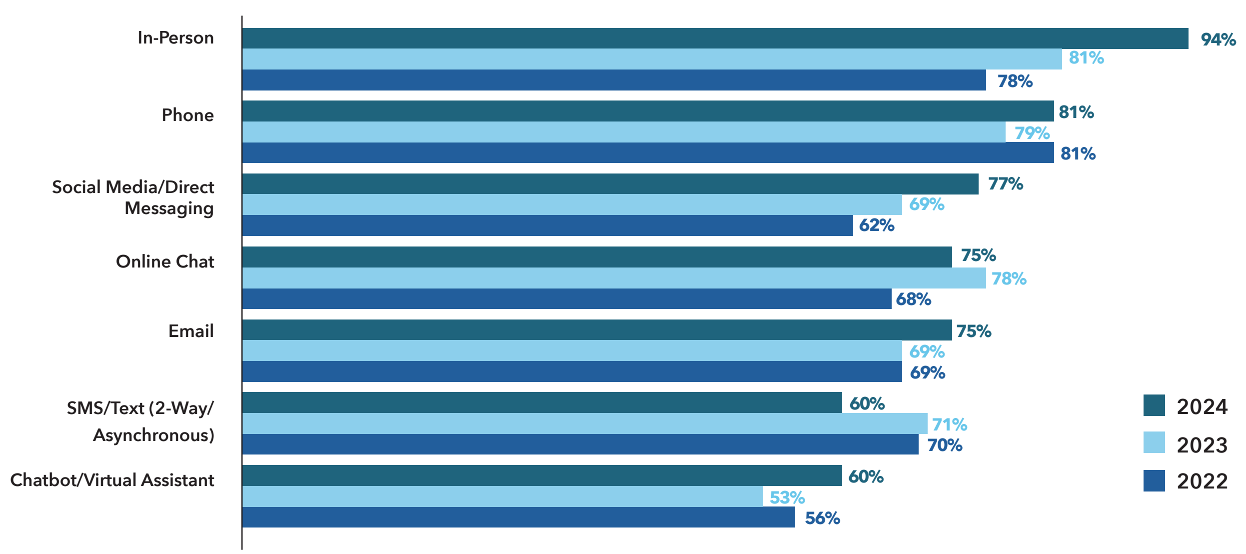
Please indicate what percentage each of the following solutions contributes to your program's Overall Contact Volume.



Compare Your Operations

In-Person and Phone continue to maintain very high levels of effectiveness in resolving customer care issues, with SMS/ Text and Chatbot/Virtual Assistant most in search of improvement. For customers to more readily shift to unassisted channels, brands will have to find effective ways to boost the resolution capabilities of such channels. This should start with close monitoring of such channels, including capability audits, experience mapping, and user testing.

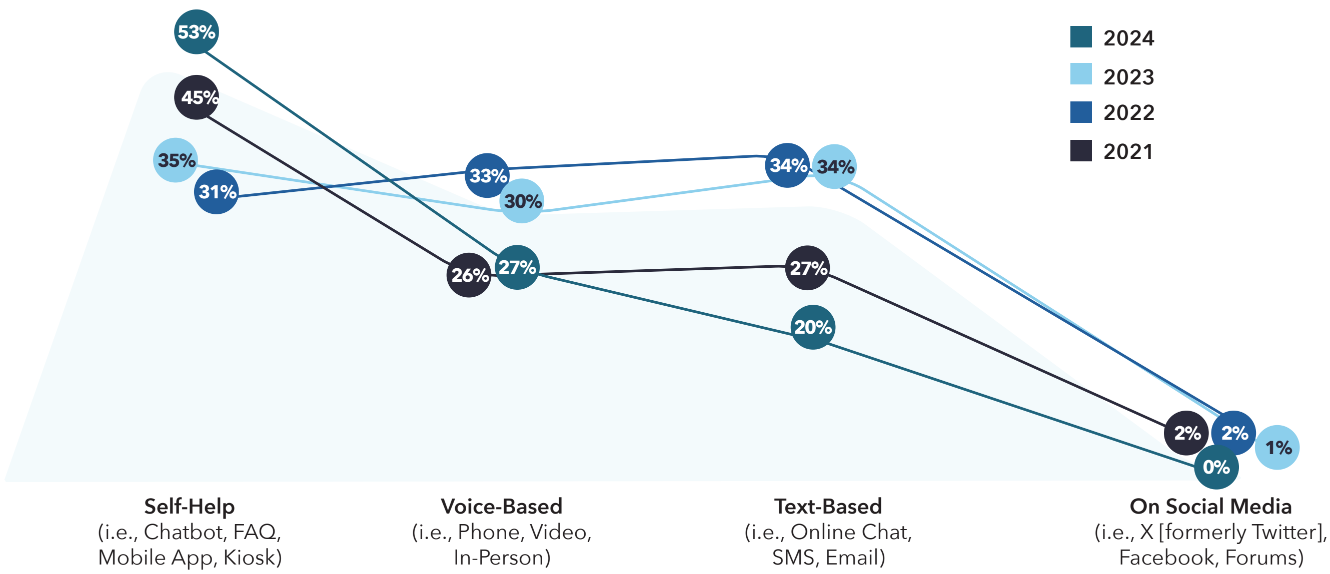
What is the approximate Resolution Rate of the following solutions?



Compare Your Operations

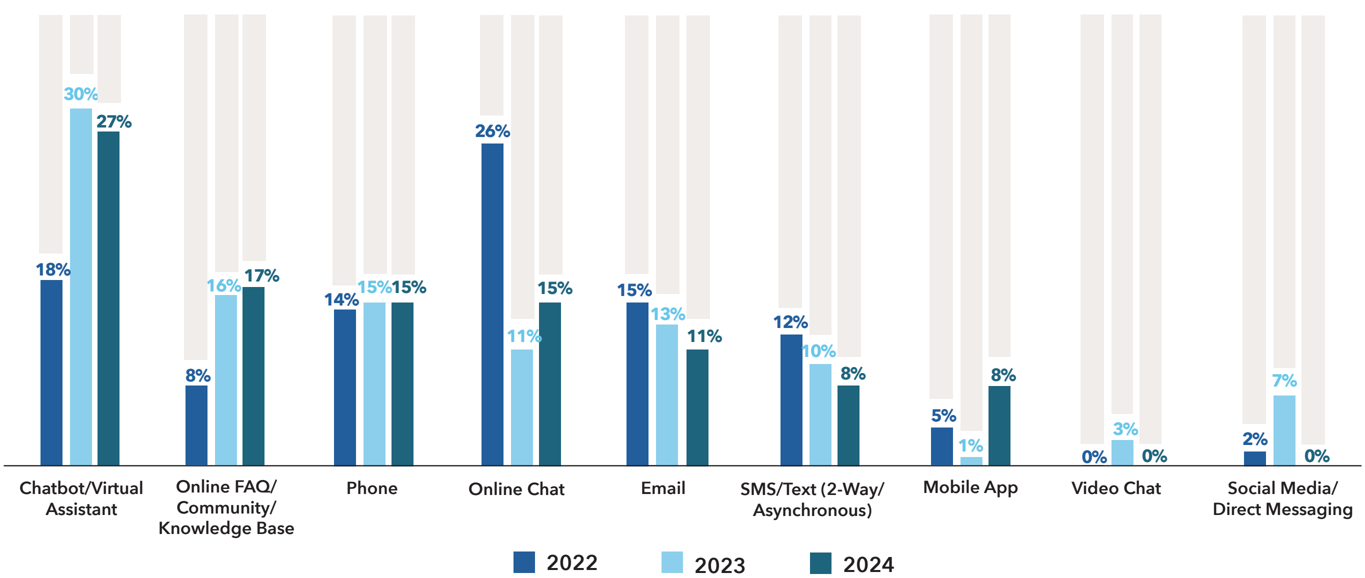
Although most CX leaders (53%) presume their customers would prefer to use Self-Help solutions in resolving their customer care issues (assuming successful resolution), the truth is different. In ongoing *CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Consumer Edition research, consumer preference is dominated by Text- and Voice-Based assisted solutions. In fact, in 2024, only one in five consumers indicated Self-Help as their preferred contact channel. For more details on how corporate and consumer perspective differ on the matter of channel preference, please see the Consumer Comparisons section on page 77.

Assuming the customer care issue would be resolved, which contact method do you think consumers would prefer to use?



Echoing the results above, CX leaders would prefer their customers use unassisted channels (such as chatbots, FAQ, and Knowledge Bases) over assisted channels. This again stands in contrast to what consumers indicate they want, with the consumer focused on Text- and Voice-Based assisted channels (page 77). To influence consumer preference, brands will have to work to boost the capabilities of unassisted solutions, particularly when it comes to privacy issues and complex engagement types which often require the expertise and flexibility of a live agent.

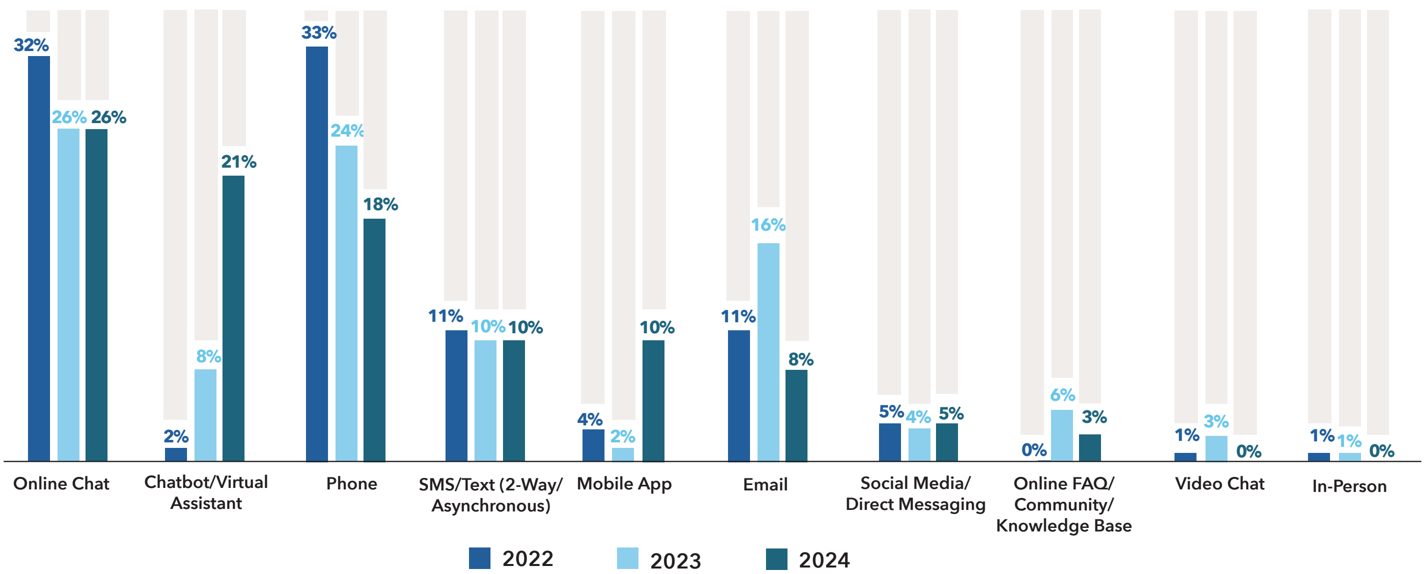
Assuming all solutions are equally capable of resolving a customer's issue, which channel would you prefer your customers use?



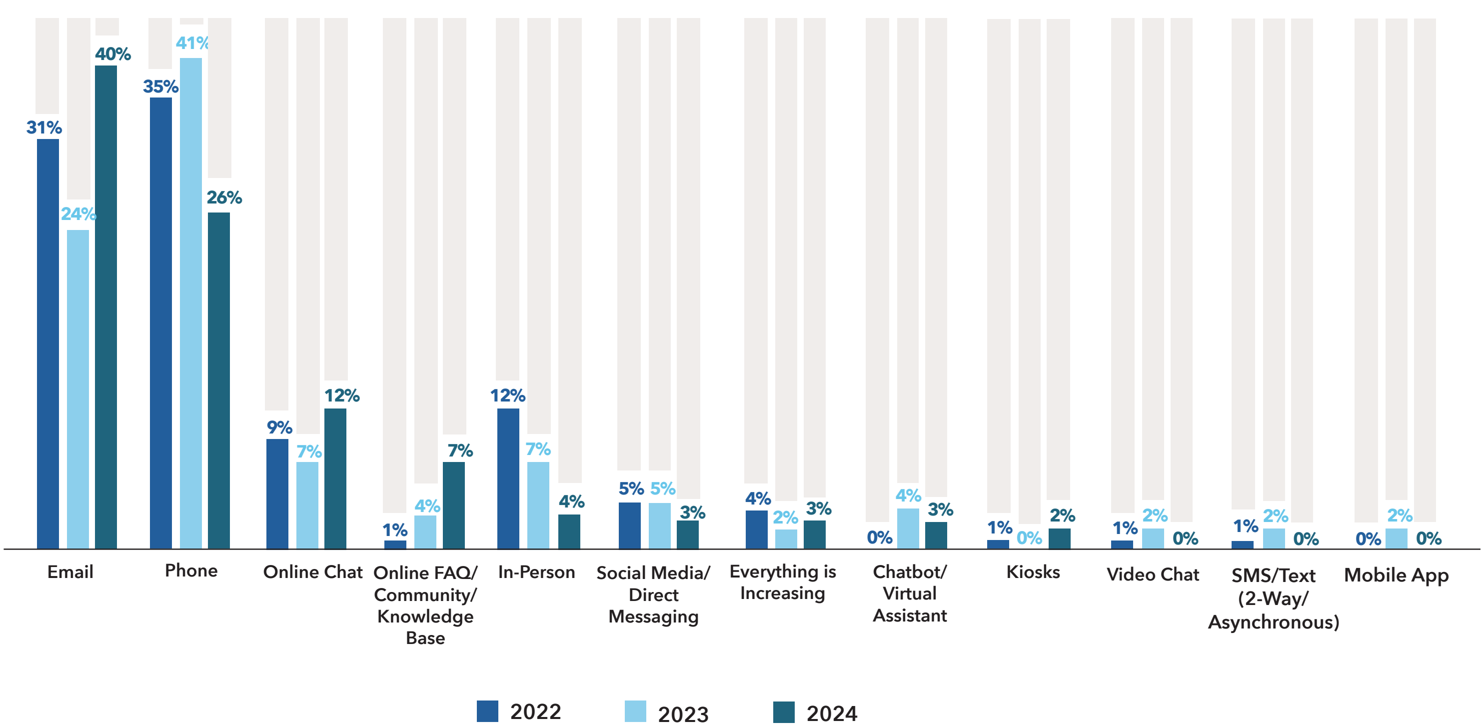
Touch Points — Channels

The volumetric growth of both Online Chat and Phone have cooled off in recent years, while Chatbot/Virtual Assistant has accelerated its growth YoY for two consecutive years. That said, online remains the most named channel for growth, although Chatbot/Virtual Assistant growth looks coiled and ready for explosive growth in 2025. Among decliners, Email and Phone lead the way, with 40% of survey respondents naming Email as the channel of greatest decline in 2024, followed by Phone at 26%.

Which of the following customer care solutions has seen the biggest increase in volume in the past 12 months?

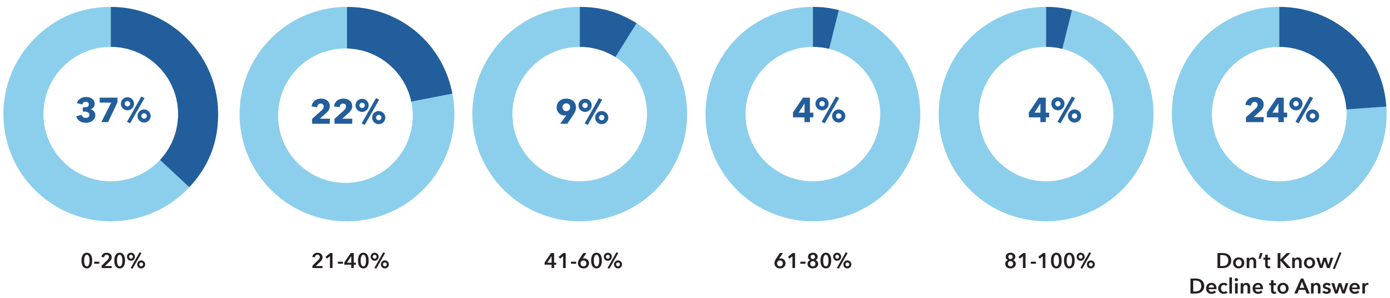


Which of the following customer care solutions has seen the biggest decrease in volume in the past 12 months?



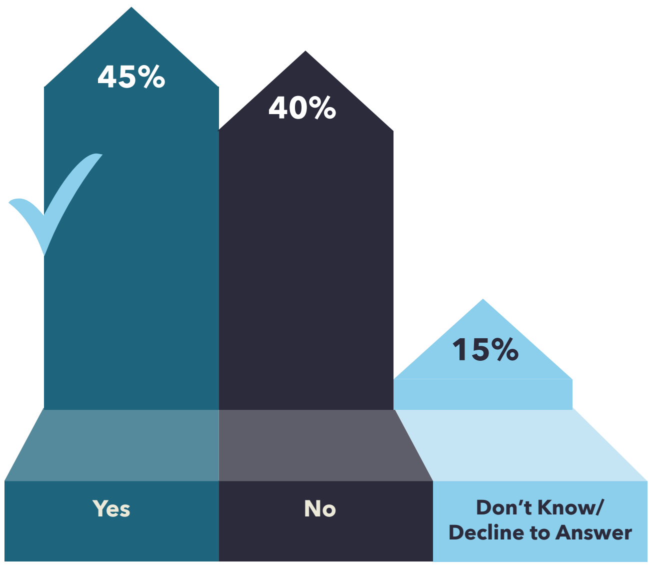
In a new question for 2024, survey respondents were asked to specify what percentage of customer issues take place across multiple channels as a part of the resolution process. Most respondents (59%) indicated that 40% or less of issues are resolved across multiple channels. But what is perhaps more surprising is the fact that 24% of respondents didn't know or declined to answer. Understanding how common (or rare) multichannel journeys are is a critical step in designing transitional ease and simplicity, including the reduction of redundant steps.

What percent of your customer's issues are resolved across multiple channels?



Compare Your Operations

Do you have a process in place to help customers avoid having to repeat information as they transition across channels and from unassisted to assisted solutions?

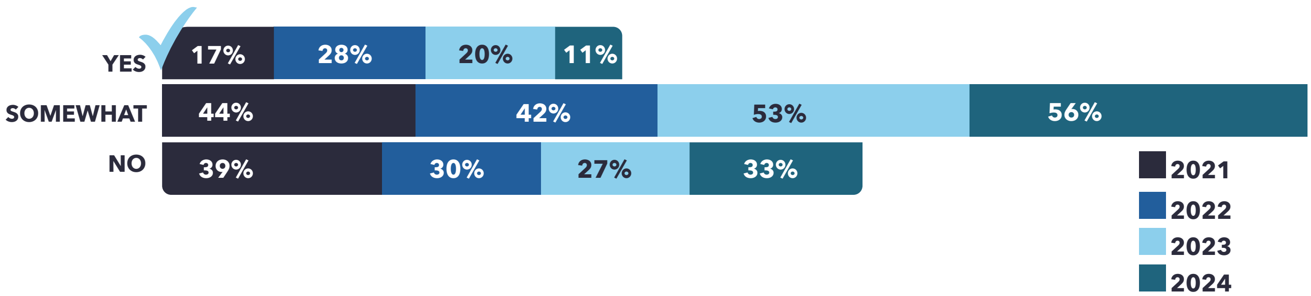


In a new question, related to the question above, survey respondents were asked whether they have a process in place to reduce the hassle of repeating information as customers transition across channels. While a good portion (45%) of brands do, almost as many (40%) don't. Having to repeat information, along with difficulty reaching a live person and long hold times, often top the list of consumer complaints when dealing with brands to resolve their customer care issues.

Compare Your Operations

Brands haven't had such low confidence in their ability to provide a seamless, consistent, and easy cross-channel experience since 2019, when only 10% of respondents answered in the affirmative to the below question. Cross-channel engagements are only likely to grow in commonality, especially as brands expand their use of AI-powered solutions, which often off-ramp more complicated issues to agent-assisted solutions, creating an instance of cross-channel engagement. One of the most effective ways to combat poor cross-channel experiences is to make sure live assistance is always one simple step away, and empowers the customer to be able to make the leap from unassisted to assisted themselves when they feel they've exhausted the unassisted option.

Does your organization do a good job of providing a seamless, consistent, and easy experience as your customers transition between different channels and solutions?



Few companies believe they are providing a seamless, and consistent experience across channels. How has your brand gotten better at this?

At AMC Networks, we are constantly looking at ways to enhance our customer and agent experiences and have transformed our support model to be aligned with our company goals and strategies. Specifically, we have created a seamless and consistent experience across channels by enhancing customer touch points, dramatically increasing our CSAT scores and NPS.

To elevate the customer experience, we executed several strategic initiatives in 2024 that yielded measurable improvements. These key initiatives included:

- Optimized survey design: Streamlined questions to emphasize CSAT and NPS metrics.
- Revised survey timing: Implemented immediate post-contact survey delivery, replacing the 48-hour delay.
- Enhanced Help Center: Redesigned to prioritize real-time support channels while deemphasizing email as the primary contact method.
- Process redesign: Enabled frontline Tier One agents to directly manage refund requests for faster resolutions.
- Advanced self-service tools: Deployed guided workflows to assist customers and introduced an AI copilot to support agents during interactions.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of contact centers, businesses must navigate the delicate balance between rising customer expectations and the risk of agent burnout. These enhancements have significantly strengthened customer satisfaction and loyalty across our organization and have improved agent satisfaction. I'm happy to report that over the course of 2024, we were able to significantly raise our CSAT to 84% while moving our NPS up to 34.

It was a herculean effort across our internal and external teams to execute on the initiatives, but we achieved significant improvements across all our contact channels, tools, and processes.

Nicholas Solomon
Vice President, Customer Service

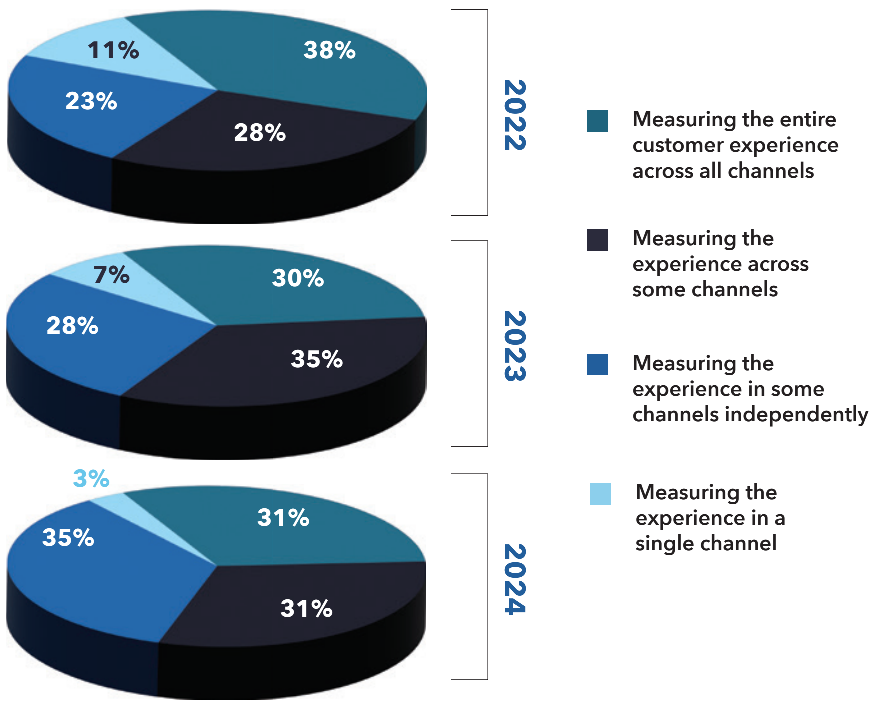
AMC NETWORKS

MEASUREMENT, DATA, AND PERFORMANCE

Although there are fewer brands measuring the experience in a single channel than ever before, the percentage of brands measuring the experience across all channels is also down from its peak in 2022. This may be the result of the introduction of new channels and the challenges posed by legacy systems and processes. Regardless, brands should seek to understand the journey as holistically as possible, since consumers judge brands by the entire experience, rather than a singular experience in a single channel.

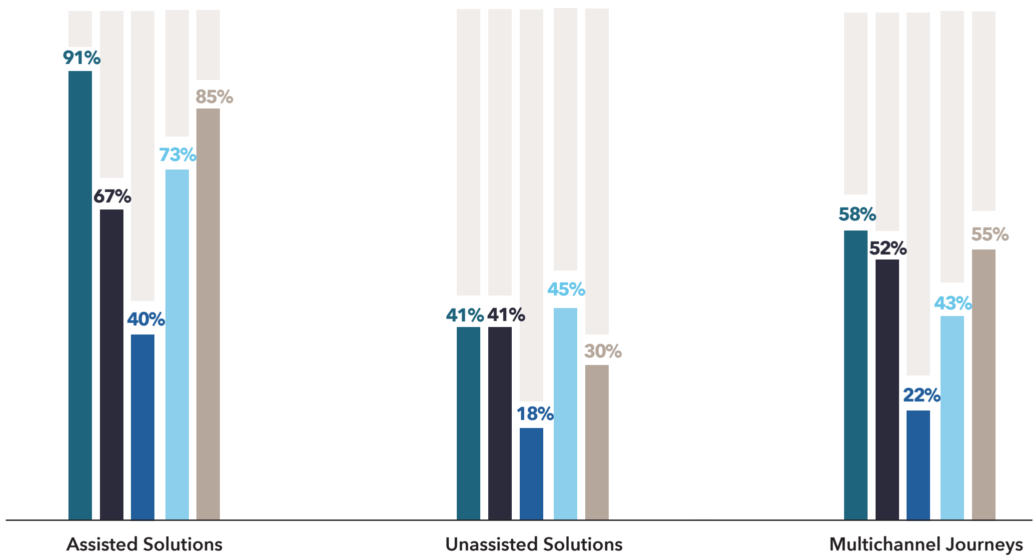
Compare Your Operations

How would you describe how you are measuring the customer experience?



Customer Satisfaction and Time to Resolution are the two most deployed metrics across Assisted Solutions and Multichannel Journeys, while Resolution Rate is the top metric within Unassisted Solutions. What is perhaps most striking about the results below is the contrast between the presence of measurement within Assisted versus Unassisted Solutions. Unassisted Solutions continue to pose challenges in terms of resolution rate (page 30), which only magnifies the importance of measuring the experience.

Which metric(s) do you use to measure the customer experience by solution type? (Check all that apply.)



What is preventing companies from measuring unassisted and multichannel experiences as broadly as assisted experiences?

There are many reasons why companies struggle to measure unassisted and multichannel experiences — at its core, the challenge often lies in scaling up measurement frameworks that were designed for direct interactions, leading to a broader reach, but without deeper insights.

Companies may believe they're collecting solid customer feedback, but standard surveys barely scratch the surface of what customers actually experience when moving between self-service and agent support. This creates critical blind spots in understanding the real customer journey.

When customers quietly stop using certain channels or features, companies often miss these warning signs because they're only measuring active feedback. They ignore silent churn. They measure what's easy, not what's important. Tracking a representative's friendliness or professionalism is simpler than understanding why customers had to reach out multiple times to solve their problem.

There's also often a disconnect between customer experience initiatives and business strategy. Organizations collect mountains of data without a clear plan for turning those insights into meaningful business improvements. Without this alignment, measurement efforts become expensive exercises in data collection that don't drive real change. Most importantly, we're likely not asking the right questions. Instead of focusing solely on satisfaction scores, we need to understand: How effectively do our digital solutions meet customer needs? Where do customers encounter friction when switching between channels? What improvements would deliver value for both customers and the business? The reality is, collecting surface-level feedback isn't enough.

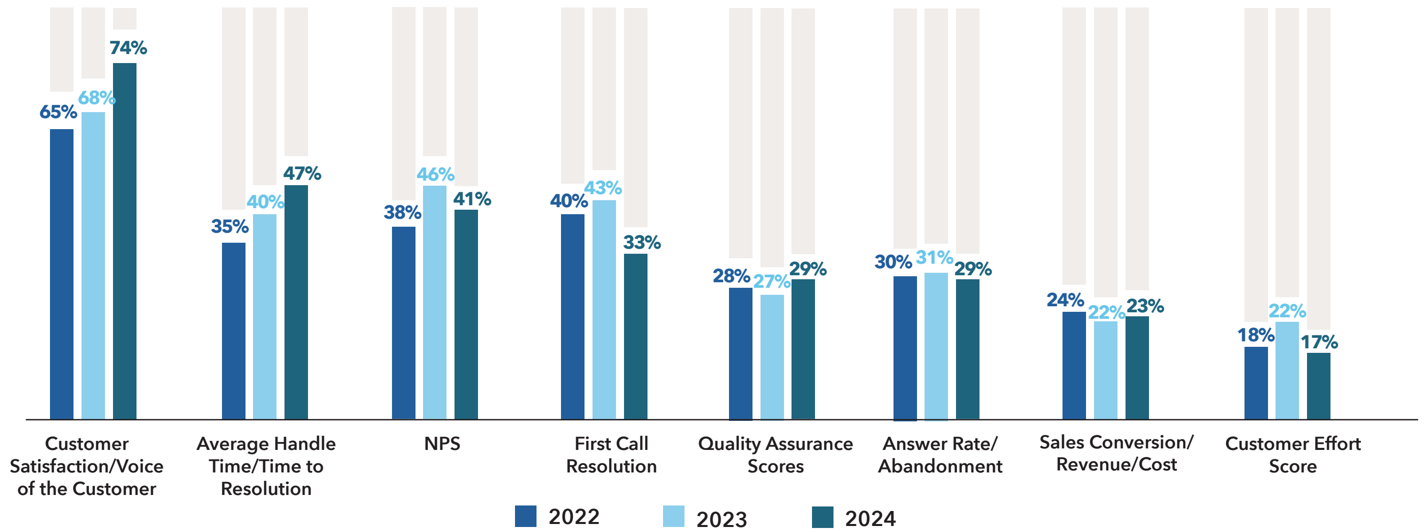
Lisa Oswald
Senior Vice President and Head of Customer Service

TRAVELZOO®

Touch Points — Measurement, Data, and Performance

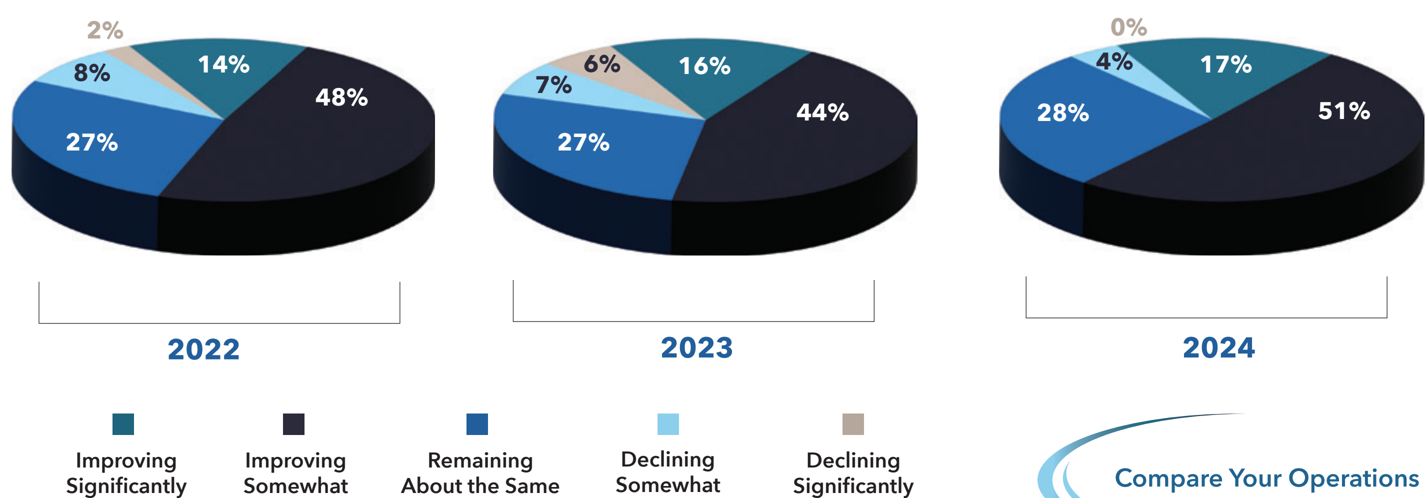
According to survey respondents, Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)/Voice of the Customer (VoC) continues to lead the way as the most critical KPI within CX operations, followed distantly by Average Handle Time (AHT)/Time to Resolution and Net Promoter Score (NPS). There has been little shift over the years in the way KPIs stack up in terms of importance, though there has been increased focus on speed of services with two consecutive years of greater attention.

Which three key performance indicators (KPIs) are most critical and garner the most attention in the management of your CX operations?



The past 12 months show the strongest results for improving KPIs since the question was first asked in 2021, with 68% of respondents indicating improving program results (either Significantly or Somewhat). Furthermore, the fewest percent of respondents (4%) indicated Somewhat Declining results, with no respondents indicating Significantly Declining results. Such results are good new for consumers and great news for CX operations that are trying to support business success.

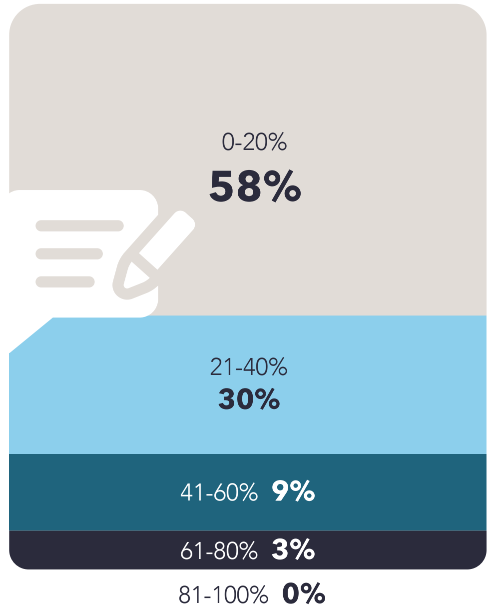
Generally speaking, over the past 12 months, have your critical program KPIs been improving, declining, or remaining the same?



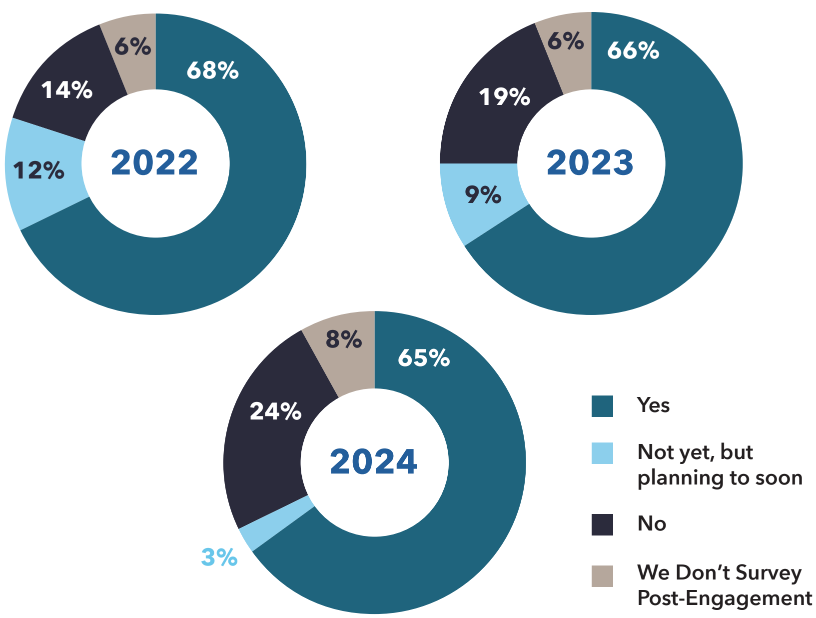
Compare Your Operations

In a new question for 2024, survey respondents were asked about the participation levels of their customer feedback programs. Most responses (88%) fell into the 0-40% grouping, meaning that 40% or fewer customers participate by providing feedback. Additionally, 58% of respondents indicated that 20% or fewer customers provide feedback when given the opportunity. With such low response rates, brands need to find ways to incentivize participation (without influencing outcomes). Furthermore, these results signal that brands should find ways to extract customer insights from data that needn't require the active participation of customers nor a specific opt-in. This might include things like running analytics on social media content, voice calls, text-based exchanges, and other user-generated content. See page 40 for details on how commonplace these methods are among survey respondents.

When you provide the opportunity to do so, what percentage of your customers provide feedback (such as survey response, sentiment, etc.) about their customer care experience?



When surveying customers post-engagement, does your organization take steps to ensure survey collection is truly randomized?

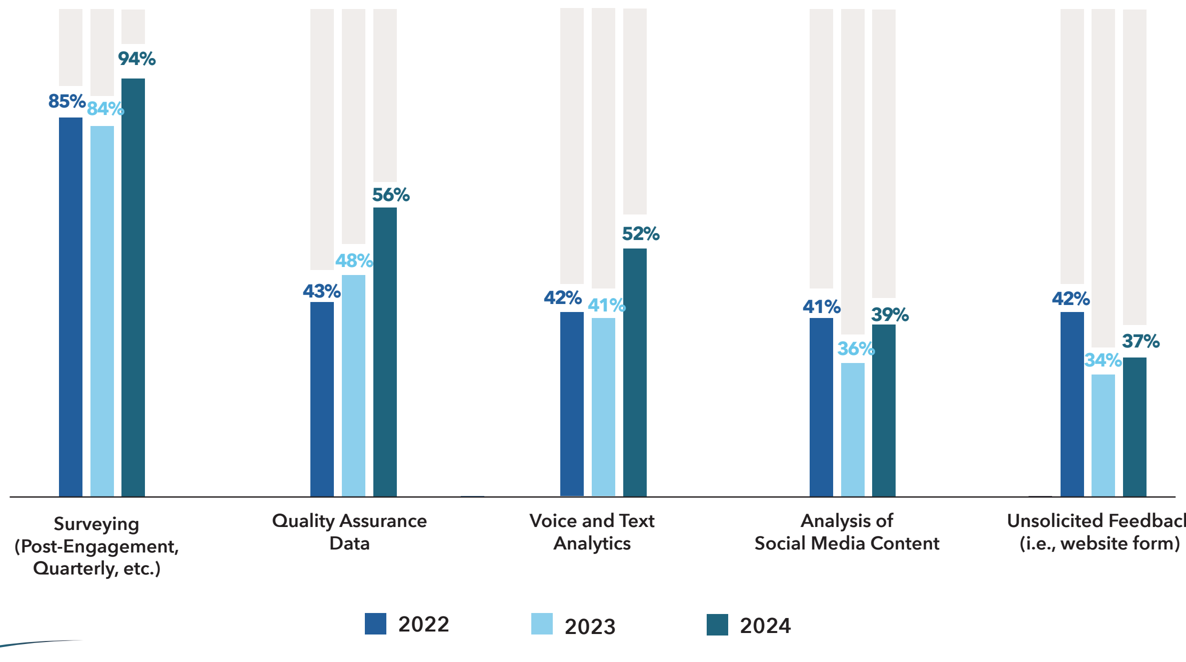


Randomization of post-engagement survey collection continues to be a best practice at most of the survey respondents' operations, with 65% indicating its use. Randomized collection helps promote a truer picture of program performance and improves the likelihood of spotting customer pain points and gaps in processes.

Compare Your Operations

Surveying continues to be the predominant method of capturing customer sentiment. That said, both Quality Assurance (QA) Data and Voice/Text Analytics have made headway in recent years, with both now being sourced at most organizations (56% and 52%, respectively). Customer sentiment and satisfaction data remains one of the most valuable sources for driving program improvements and hinting at potential initiatives.

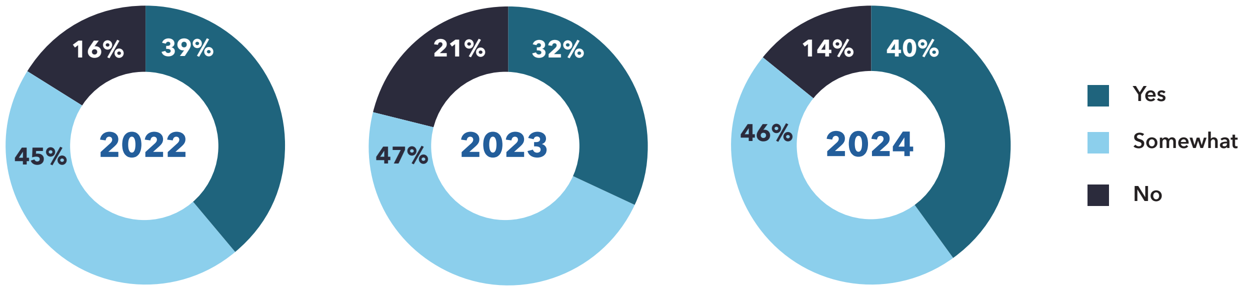
In which ways is your organization capturing customer sentiment and satisfaction information? (Please select all that apply.)



Compare Your Operations

Forty percent of survey respondents felt their organizations were using program data in an appropriate and productive way, the highest number of respondents since this question was first asked in 2021. Results from this year's surveying also saw the fewest percentage of respondents (14%), indicating they were not using such data appropriately or effectively. For such data to be of value to the organization (and the wider business), it must be analyzed, fed to the appropriate department in an easily digestible fashion, and action according to priority and impact. See the following page for an idea of how other brands are maximizing this data.

Do you feel your organization is using program data (things like Voice of the Customer and Quality Assurance data) in an appropriate and productive way?



In a question aimed at understanding what organizations could be doing to better maximize the value of program data, most of the open-ended responses received dealt with finding better ways to analyze the data to identify opportunities (including investing in Data Science), distribute the analysis, and action the insights. Many of the challenges revolved around finding better ways to automate the process, create clean streams, gain leadership buy-in, and find the dollars to enact change. See below for a section of verbatim from the answers provided.

WHAT COULD OR SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION BE DOING DIFFERENTLY TO MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF YOUR PROGRAM'S DATA, AND WHAT IS WORKING BEST CURRENTLY?

"We need more sophisticated modeling and broader data utilization by the enterprise."

"The goal is better analytical tools. We want to leverage AI to dig into millions of contacts and transcripts."

"We are working toward getting better at putting the information in front of the product teams."

"Greater investments in data science to steer the experiences and priorities. Our challenge right now is disparate systems and legacy issues."

"Developing a single data platform that functions as the sole repository database so that CRM functionality can work more effectively. We need to develop interfacing with this unified data repository."

"The VoC data should be reviewed and investigated in more detail by the Product teams. VoC data is too often dismissed as noise."

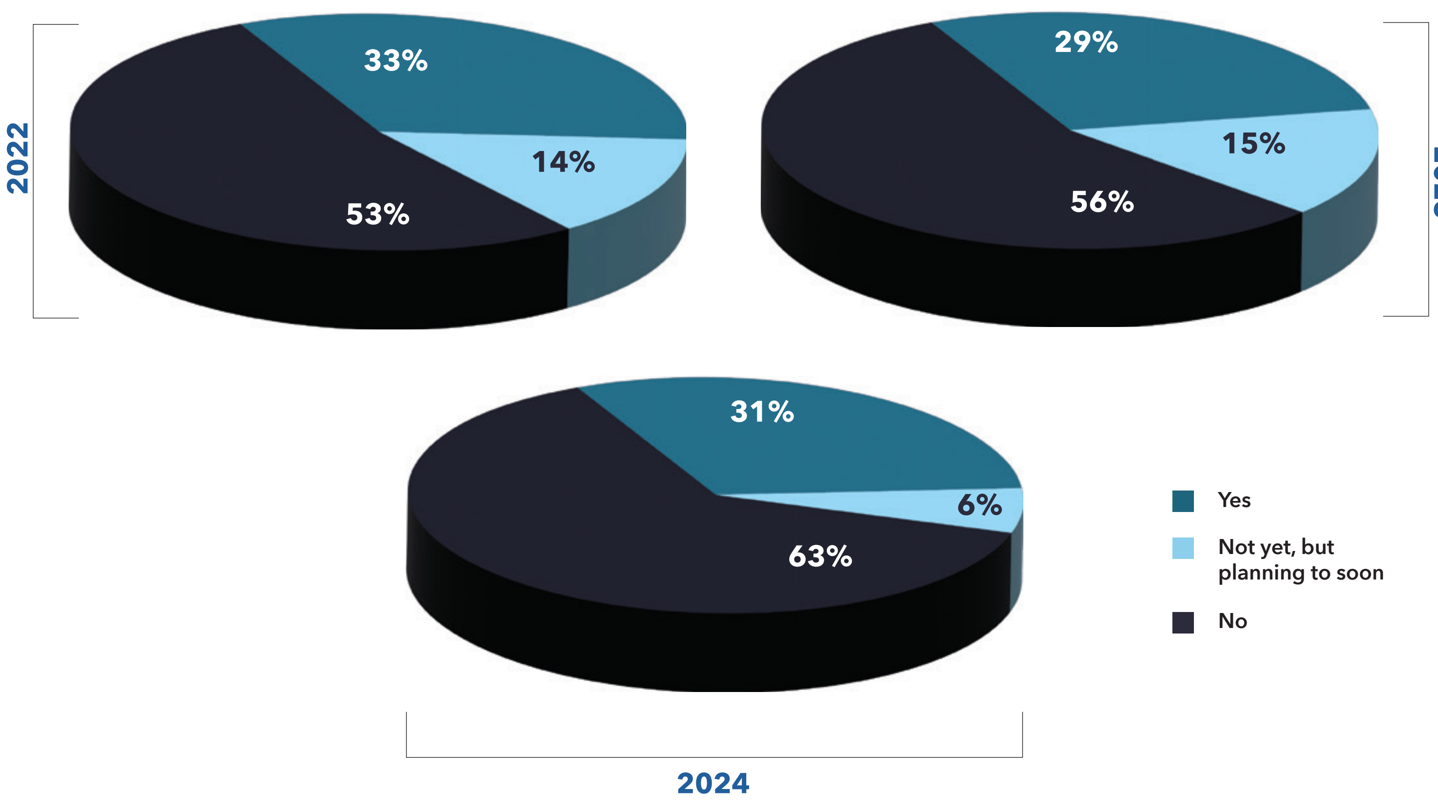
"We do a fairly good job of closing the inner loop but have room for improvement in the outer loop. Also, channels are still too siloed."

"We are seeking greater data analytics to identify trend, correlations, and predictive modeling."

"We need to socialize our Voice of Customer data more effectively across the company with groups like Marketing, Product Management, Product Quality, R&D, Customer Success, and Sales."

About one-third (31%) of survey respondents indicate that they are using demographics on customers to strategize solutions and processes. Age plays an especially big role in consumer channel preferences and in the adoption of emerging and non-traditional solution types. By understanding the demographical makeup of their customer base, brands can strategize which new channels to invest in, while simultaneously understanding which solutions might require more attention in terms of educating and encourage acceptance and adoption.

Are you using the demographics (age) of your customers to strategize solutions and processes within your CX organization?



Compare Your Operations

AGENT ACCESS TO DATA AND RATES OF PROACTIVE FOLLOW-UP

In a new question for 2025, survey respondents were asked about their agent's access to the complete history of their customers. Initial results indicate that roughly half (49%) of CX operations offer agents access to this historical information. Providing agents with rich, contextual, and timely information is certainly a best practice, especially if it is served up in a meaningful way to help agents zero in on the pieces that matter most in the moment. On the flip side, only four percent of respondents don't offer agents any access to a customer's history.

When working with a customer to resolve a customer care issue, do your agents (either internal or external) have access to the customer's complete history (purchase, previous interactions, etc.)?

Compare Your Operations

Contact history, streamlined views, and self-service options are all critical tools for resolving customer issues. How has your organization tackled these needs, and what have been the results of those efforts?

"In 2019, eMoney made a strategic shift to manage all customer interactions through Salesforce, our CRM, regardless of the contact channel. At the time, our contact mix was 82% phone, 8% chat, and 10% email.

We invested in upgraded technology, transitioning from a standalone chat solution to Salesforce Live Agent, and later to Salesforce's asynchronous messaging platform (MIAW). We also revamped our Salesforce account structure, consolidating customer data and contact history into one streamlined view. This reduced hold times and lowered Average Handle Time (AHT) by making it faster for representatives to access all necessary customer information.

To enhance our digital chat channel, we expanded support hours, grew our team, and adopted an asynchronous platform that lets customers share documents and communicate more efficiently. Additionally, we improved training to make our chat representatives subject matter experts across all areas of support. This eliminated the need for transfers, improving First Contact Resolution (FCR) and reducing wait times.

In 2022, we advanced the customer experience with an Intelligent Virtual Assistant (IVA), replacing our traditional IVR. This introduced self-service options like password resets and administrative tasks, with 20% of these actions happening outside regular support hours. Customers now resolve issues faster without needing a live representative.

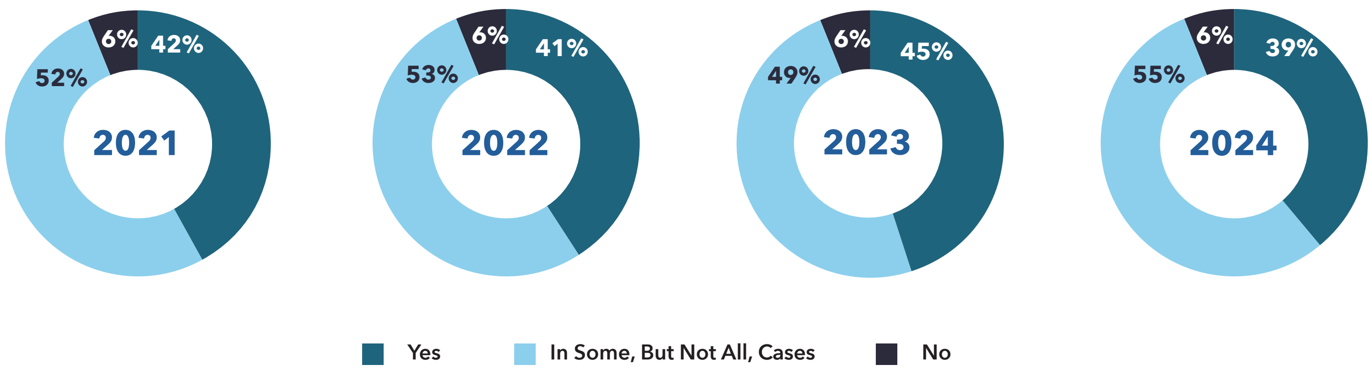
What happened to our CSAT, FCR and IR over that period of time?
By 2024, our contact mix evolved to 52% phone, 33% chat, 11% email, and 4% IVA self-service. These changes delivered record-breaking results: a 96.5% CSAT with representatives, 94% FCR, and 92% Issue Resolution (IR).

What's in the works for 2025 and beyond?
Looking ahead to 2025, we're developing the eMoney Support Assistant (chatbot) for self-service ticketing. This will empower customers to troubleshoot simple tech issues in real time, eliminating the need to submit tickets and further streamlining support."

Alex Rivera
Vice President, Client Support

The percentage of brands that practice universal proactive follow-ups dipped to its lowest in four years, falling below 40%. At the same time, the overall percentage of brands practicing some form of proactive follow-up remained precisely in line with past years, at 94%. Proactive follow-ups have been shown to improve overall satisfaction and resolution rates, all of which point to an environment that promotes customer loyalty.

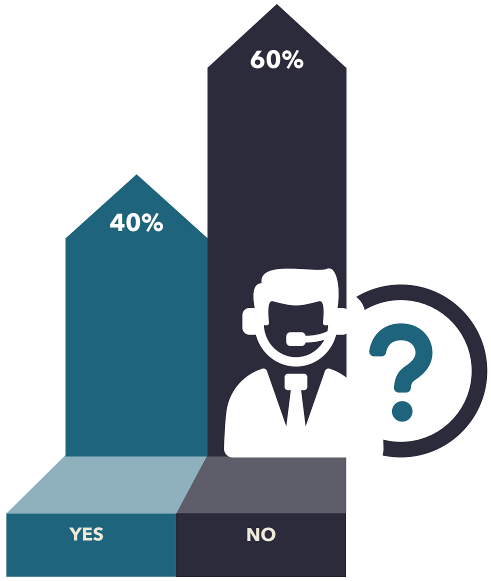
Following a negative customer care experience, does your organization proactively follow up with customers to help remedy or apologize for the situation?



Compare Your Operations

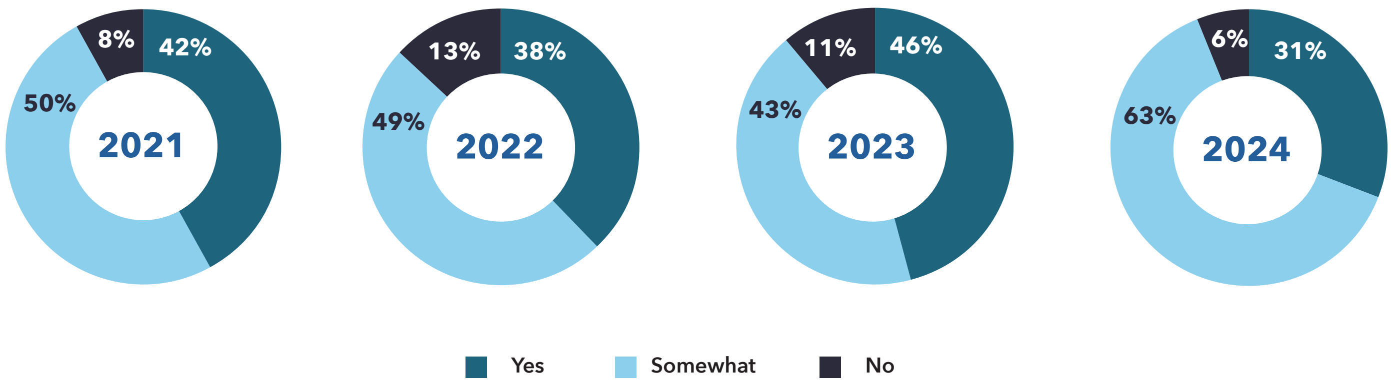
Does your organization measure the impact of your contact center operations on the loyalty of its customers?

Undoubtedly, contact center operations have a profound (and measurable) impact on customer loyalty. In another new question for 2024, it was revealed that 40% of brands are measuring this impact. The reason why it's important: it can aid in amplifying the influence of contact center operations across the wider organization. Loyalty is a key metric that leadership understands and can more easily invest in, and it is also a metric with direct ties to business success.



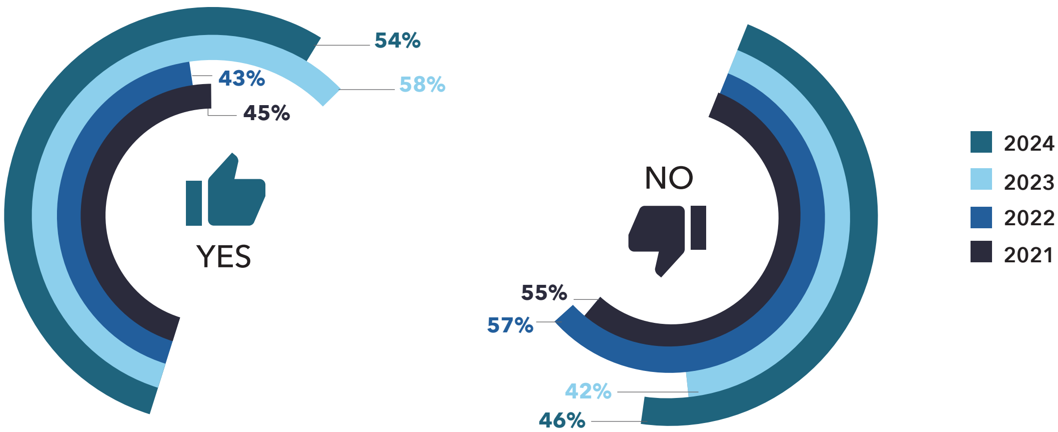
Echoing results from above, only 31% of respondents felt their CX operations were successful in driving customer loyalty. This was the lowest response in the affirmative since the question was first asked. Knowing how to even answer the question starts with the response to the question above. Understanding performance and impact start with measurement. On an encouraging note, only six percent of respondents indicated their CX operations did not do a good job of driving loyalty — the lowest result thus far.

Do you feel your organization does a good job of using its customer experience operations to drive customer loyalty?



The percentage of brands that monitor self-help abandonment continues to hold above 50%, providing indication that the practice is, in fact, a best practice. Although self-help functionality, capability, and ease have improved tremendously in recent years, endless loops, dead ends, and low rates of resolvability have continued to frustrate customers. By monitoring for abandonment, brands position themselves to spot (and stop) some of these pain points.

Do you measure how many customers attempt to use self-help or unassisted solutions but abandon the interaction before completing the task?



Compare Your Operations

TOUCH POINTS — CONCLUSIONS

Key Findings:

- Chatbot/Virtual Assistant saw the biggest increase in volume among 21% of survey respondents, second only to Online Chat at 26%.

- Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated improving KPIs over the past 12 months, the highest percent since the question was first asked in 2021.

- Forty percent of survey respondents indicated their organizations were using program data in an appropriate and productive way, the highest since the question was first asked in 2021.

- Forty-nine percent of survey respondents indicated their agents have access to a customer's complete history (including purchase, previous interactions, etc.).

The findings from this year's survey highlight a continued evolution in customer experience (CX) strategies, with technology playing an increasingly critical role. The surge in Chatbot and Virtual Assistant usage, second only to Online Chat, reflects a broader industry trend toward automation and AI-driven interactions. As organizations prioritize efficiency and scalability, Virtual Assistants are becoming a vital component of CX frameworks. However, balancing automation with human interaction remains essential to ensure customers still receive the personalized service they expect and a reliability they demand.

Encouragingly, CX performance appears to be improving, with 68% of respondents reporting improved KPIs over the past year — an all-time high. This suggests that businesses are refining their CX initiatives, leveraging data, and optimizing customer journeys more effectively. Additionally, 40% of organizations now report using program data in a productive manner, a significant step toward data-driven decision-making. The improved utilization of customer insights likely contributes to the rise in KPI performance, demonstrating the tangible benefits of integrating data analytics into CX strategies.

Another positive development is the growing accessibility of customer history for service agents, with 49% of respondents indicating full access to key customer information like purchase and interaction histories. This shift suggests a stronger focus on providing seamless, contextual customer support, which is crucial for enhancing satisfaction and loyalty. As businesses continue to break down data silos and integrate omnichannel solutions, service agents will be better equipped to deliver personalized and efficient support experiences.

These trends indicate a maturing CX landscape where digital transformation, data utilization, and agent empowerment are converging to drive improved customer outcomes. For the industry, this suggests a need for continued investment in AI-powered tools, data integration strategies, and agent enablement programs. Organizations that strike the right balance between automation and human-led service will likely maintain a competitive edge in delivering superior customer experiences.

CX INITIATIVES AND CX STRATEGIES

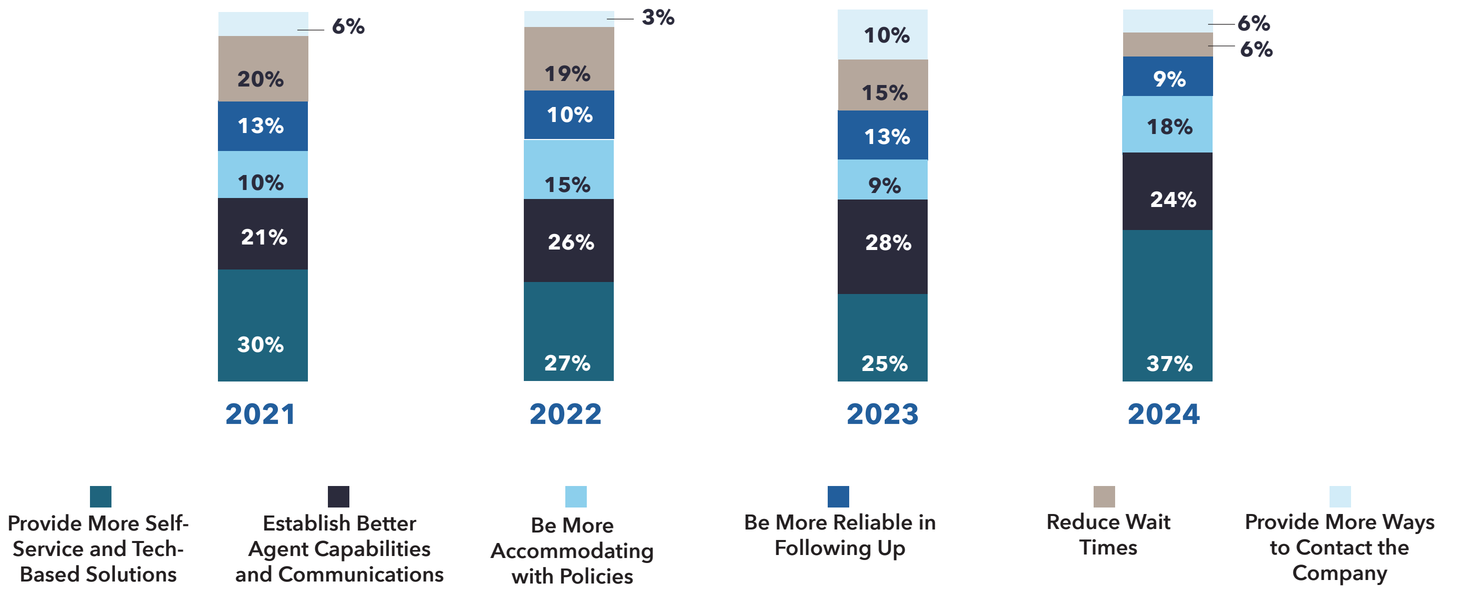
» CX Initiatives

» CX Strategies

CX INITIATIVES

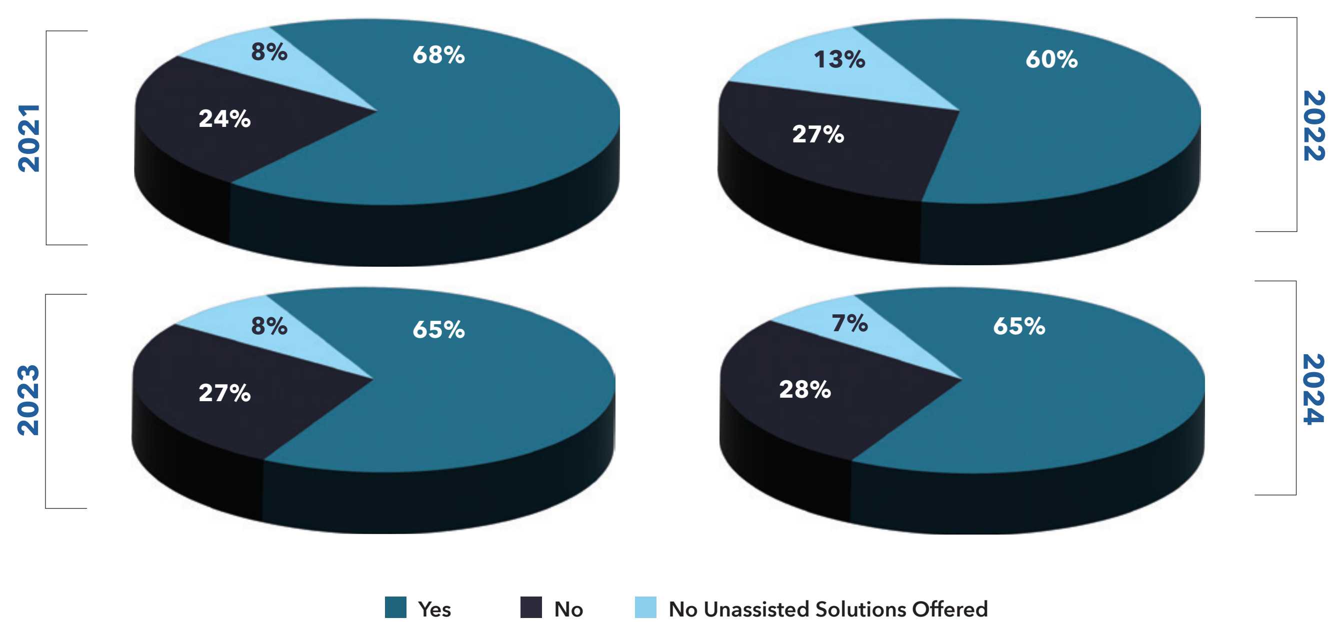
CX leaders continue to place tremendous emphasis on additional self-help and tech-based agents when they are asked to speculate on what consumers might want brands to do to create greater ease. But the reality is different. As it turns out, what consumers actually want is better agents. For a detailed comparison between consumers and corporate perspectives, please see the Consumer Comparison section on page 78.

What do you think consumers want brands to do to make the resolution process as easy as possible?



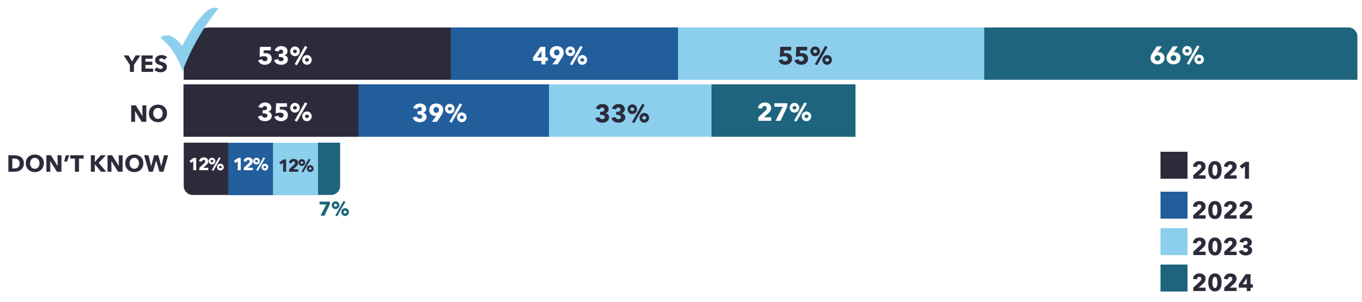
The most essential part of the customer care experience is resolution. Historically, self-help and unassisted solutions have lagged more traditional channels when it comes to resolutions rate. There are several factors contributing to this. Some of these factors are without an immediate fix, as all technologies have their limitations. But there are some things that can be done, and most brands that partook in the survey (65%) are acting to improve the unassisted experience.

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to increase the resolution capabilities of your unassisted solution(s)?



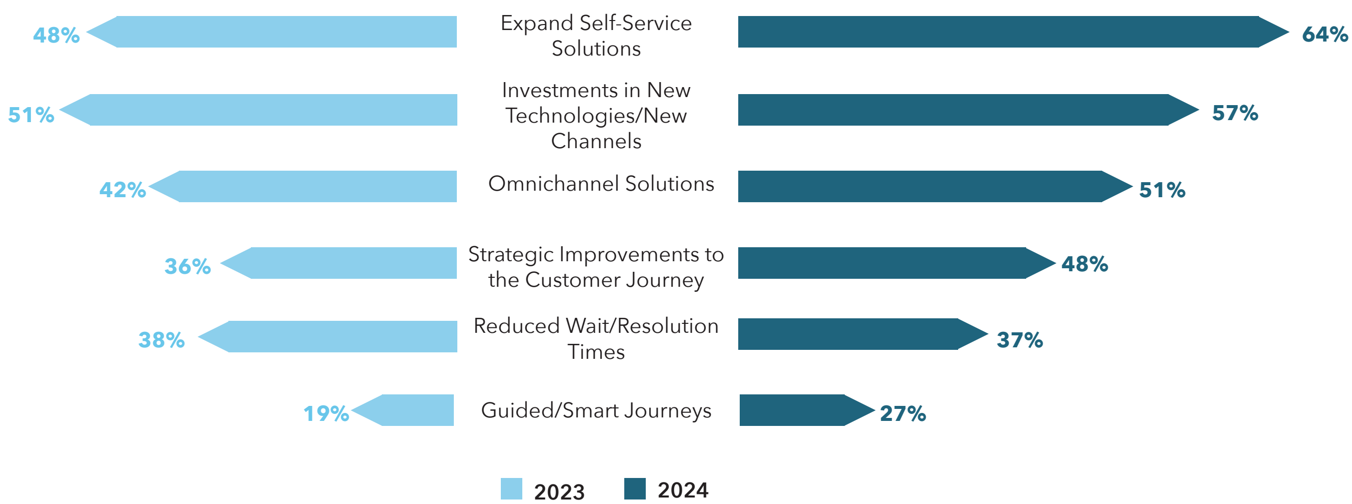
In 2024, more survey respondents than ever before (66%) indicated that they had specific initiatives to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels. This is great news for consumers, especially as multichannel engagements only become an even more common part of the customer care experience. See results below for the specifics of which types of initiatives are being implanted by survey respondents.

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels?



In 2024, "Expanding Self Service Solutions" claimed the lead when respondents were asked about the specific initiatives their organizations had implemented to create greater ease for customers. Interestingly though, what consumers actually want is faster, less complicated process and more access to live agents. To see how consumers would like to see their multichannel experience improved, and how those preferences compare to those below, please check out the Consumer Comparison section on page 79.

What are some of the specific initiatives your organization has implemented to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels? (Select all that apply.)

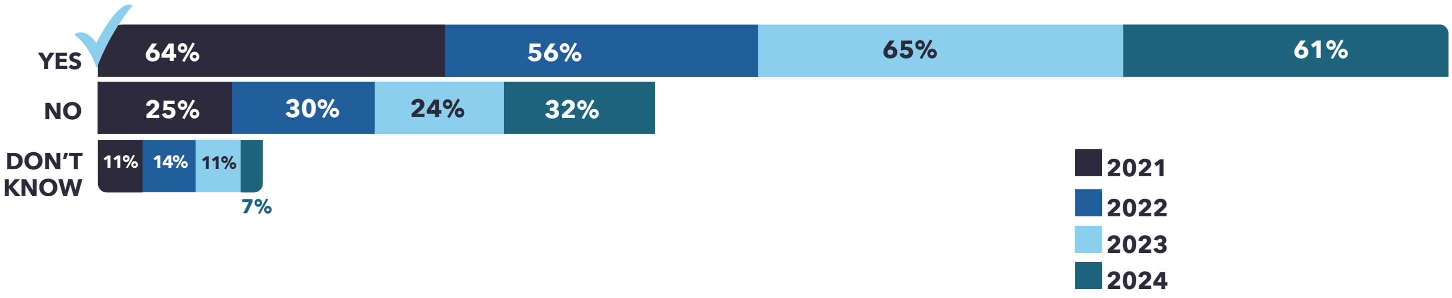


CREATING GREATER CONSISTENCY ACROSS CHANNELS

CX Initiatives and CX Strategies — CX Initiatives

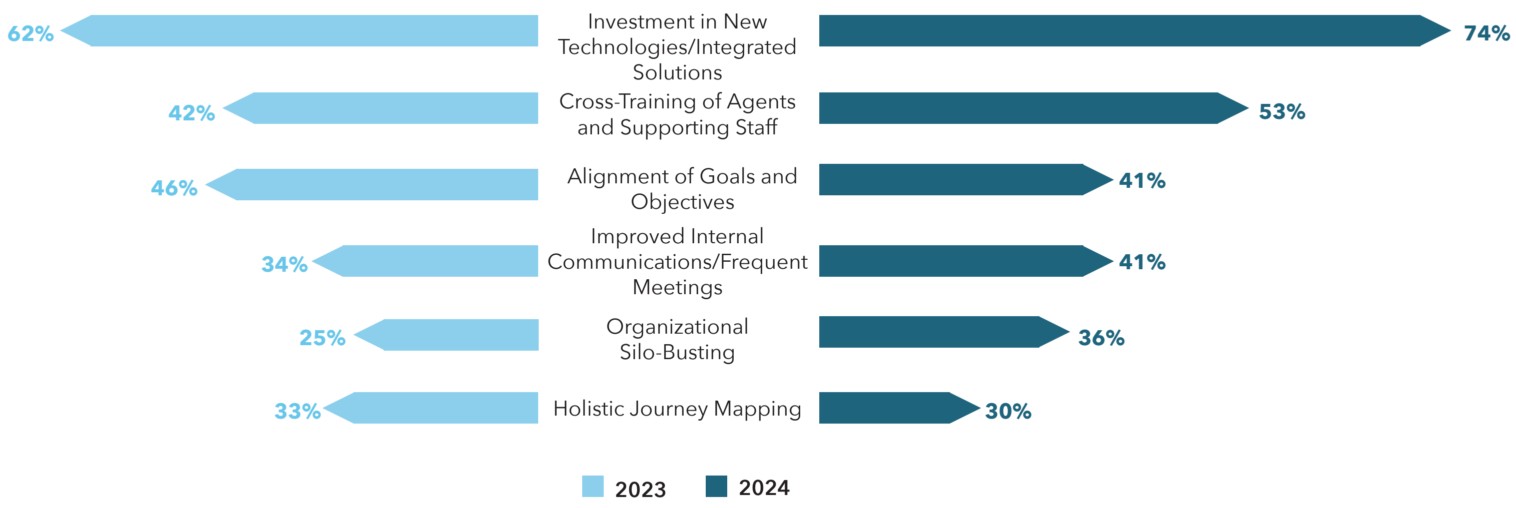
Like results on the previous page, most survey respondents (61%) indicated they did, indeed, have specific initiatives to create greater consistency across channels. In practice, creating greater consistency has always been about busting silos, sharing information more effectively, and overcoming the challenges posed by legacy systems and processes. A more consistent cross-channel experience means customers will have less confusion and will find more confidence in the brands they are dealing with.

Does your organization have any specific initiatives to create greater consistency across channels?



"Investment in New Technologies/Integrated Solutions" continues to be the leading initiative among survey respondents when it comes to creating greater consistency across channels. New investments in such areas can help companies break through barriers created by legacy systems and processes, ease the sharing of information, and help monitor the journey for breakdowns and disconnects.

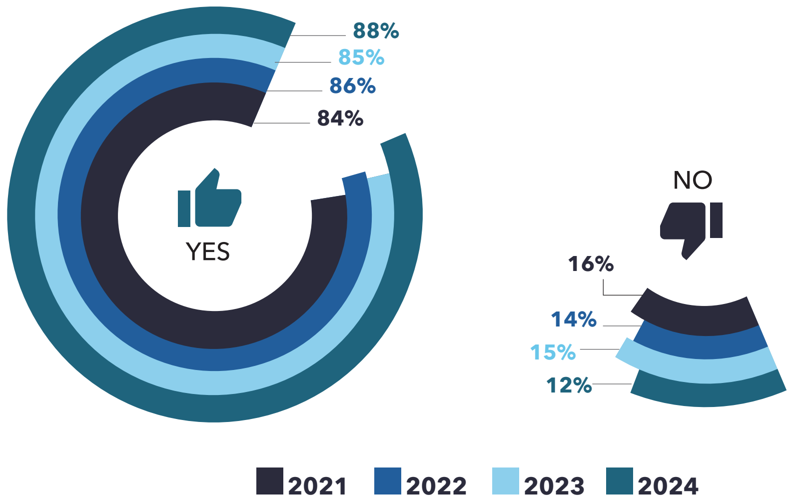
What are some of the specific initiatives your organization has implemented to create greater consistency across channels? (Select all that apply.)



CX STRATEGIES

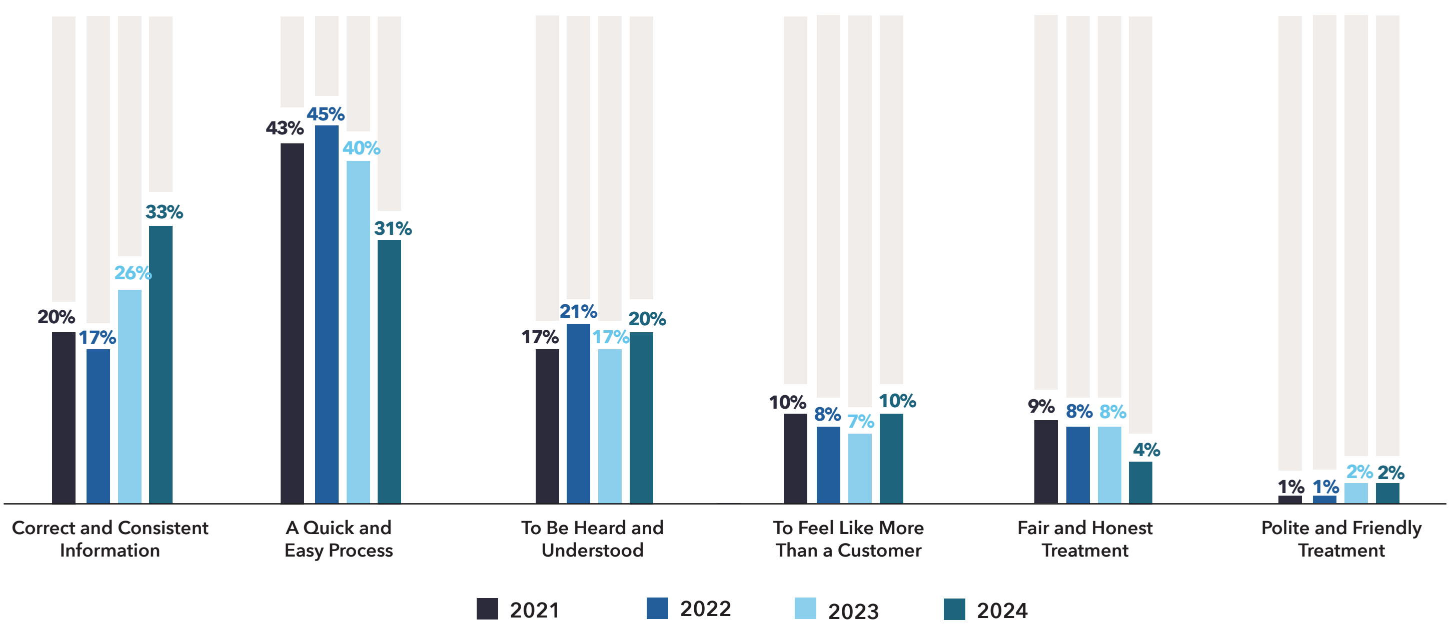
Do you feel your customer care organization is generally meeting the needs and expectations of your customers?

In one of the most consistent datasets in more than 10 years of Execs In The Know corporate surveying, the overwhelming majority of CX leaders continue to believe their organizations are generally meeting the needs and expectations of customers. Most consumers also tend to agree, with 69% of consumer respondents in agreement in a similarly worded question that appears in the *2024 CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Consumer Edition report.



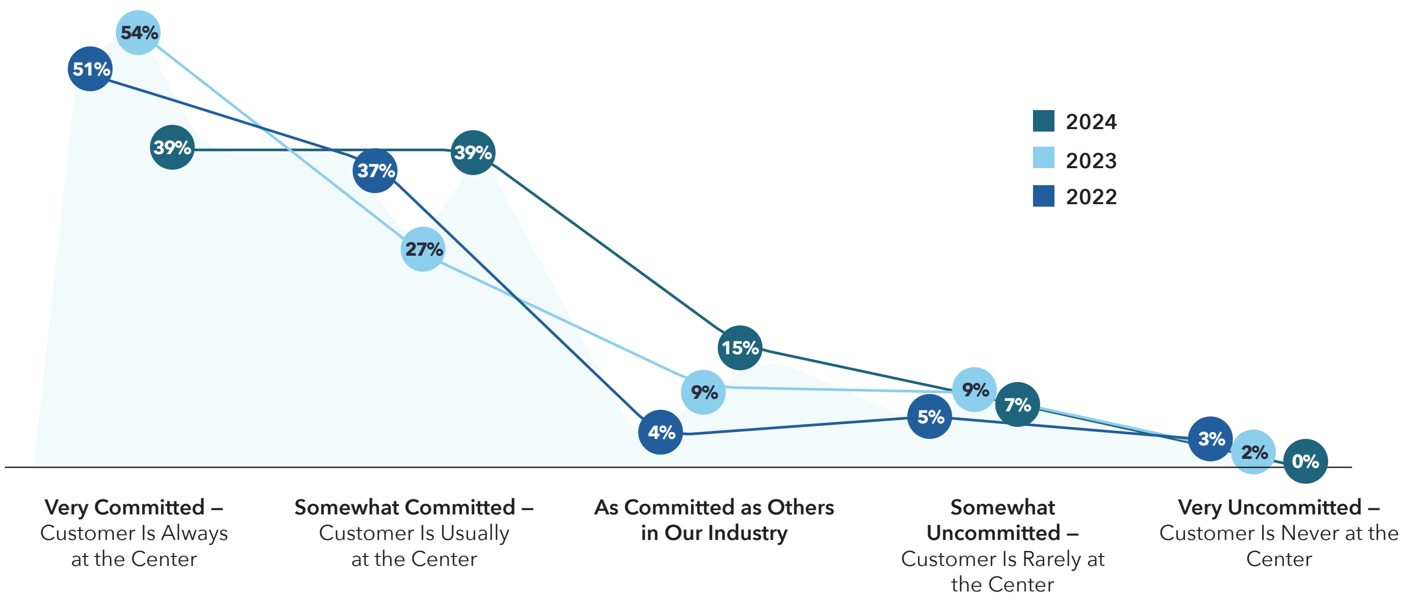
When asked what is most important to consumers when they are trying to resolve a customer care issue, many CX leaders pointed to "Correct and Consistent Information" and "A Quick and Easy Process." This speculation by CX leaders is partially on target. In addition to a quick and easy process and correct and consistent information, fair and honest treatment is also of very high importance to consumers. To see how the below answer matches up with a similar question asked of consumers, check out the Consumer Comparison section on page 80.

Aside from getting their issues resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important to your customers when trying to resolve a customer care issue?



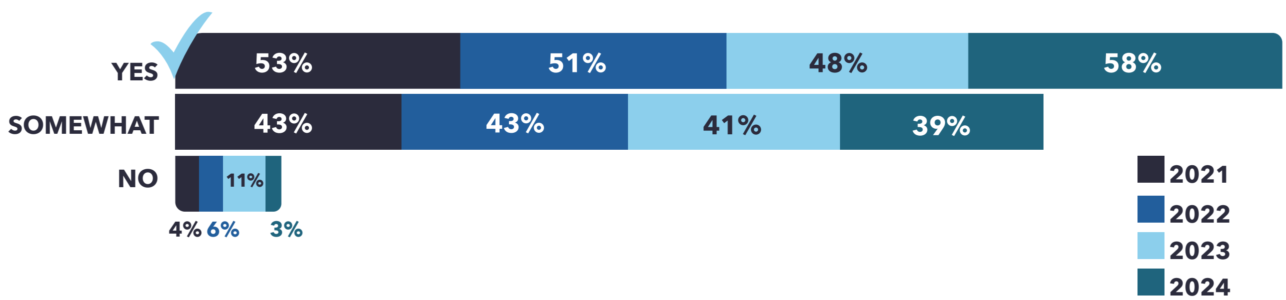
Commitment to the customer among survey respondents dipped significantly at the top end of the scale, with those indicating "Very Committed" to a "customer first" strategy, dropping off by 15 points year-over-year, down 28%. That said, overall support leveled off with a strong YoY rise in the number of respondents who indicate they are "Somewhat Committed."

How committed is your company to a "customer first" strategy?



The belief that company culture is aligned with a "customer first" strategy touched an all-time high in 2024, with 58% of participants indicating such. A customer first strategy is only as effective as the organization support that propels it. Cultural alignment, leadership support, and strategies that build customer loyalty are all critical components in building a well-oiled machine that puts the customer in the driver's seat.

Do you believe the culture of your company is aligned with a "customer first" strategy?



More CX leaders than ever think company culture is aligned with a "customer first" strategy. Yet commitment has fallen off. Why might this be?

"The Hartford's "customer first" strategy has always been deeply rooted in our culture, and we have never wavered. Our recently refreshed brand reflects an ambitious growth-and-innovation strategy centered on our customers and their changing needs. We leveraged the brand refresh to create lasting impressions and deepen relationships with customers, employees, and the world at large.

A "customer first" strategy needs to be built from the top down. It is impossible to build a customer-centric culture any other way. The Board, CEO, and executive team not only need to endorse the strategy, but actively drive it forward to affect change. Then, the team must engage employees and gain their buy-in. It is critical that employees understand how they impact customers, giving them a greater purpose and providing a greater connection between colleagues, an essential element needed to galvanize an organization.

Many leaders treat customer centricity as a disposable buzzword rather than a strategic imperative. This is where the concept of "You can't just talk the talk; you need to walk the walk" must be activated. As a result, you will ensure customers feel valued in every interaction they have with you. Customers are not just data points in presentations or figures in reports; they are unique individuals with distinct objectives, ambitions, and goals.

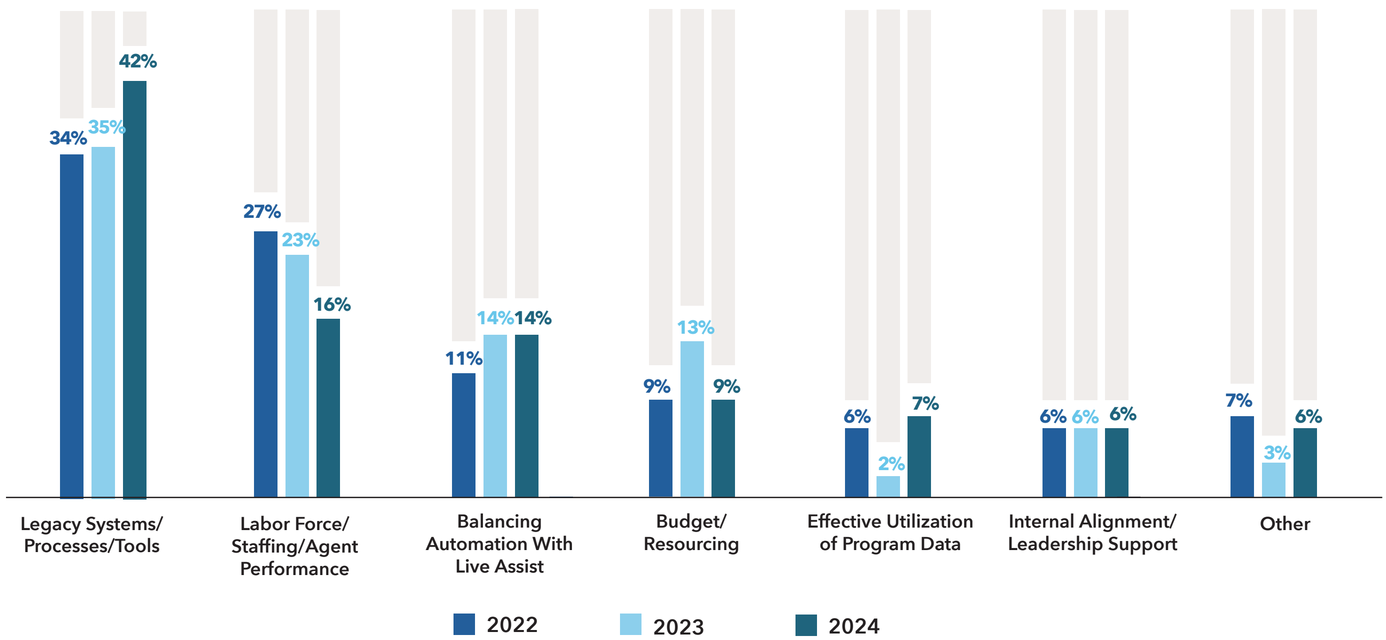
Many CX leaders focus on the wrong things, including vanity metrics such as NPS or CSAT. Unfortunately, these results do not always translate into actual business outcomes such as revenue growth, customer retention and lifetime value. We have found that the right approach is not to focus so heavily on NPS scores, but to focus on how your CX efforts impact business outcomes. Every dollar of customer retention is worth far more than a smiley face on a survey."

The Hartford

Stephen Hardenburg
Head of Customer Experience,
Small Business

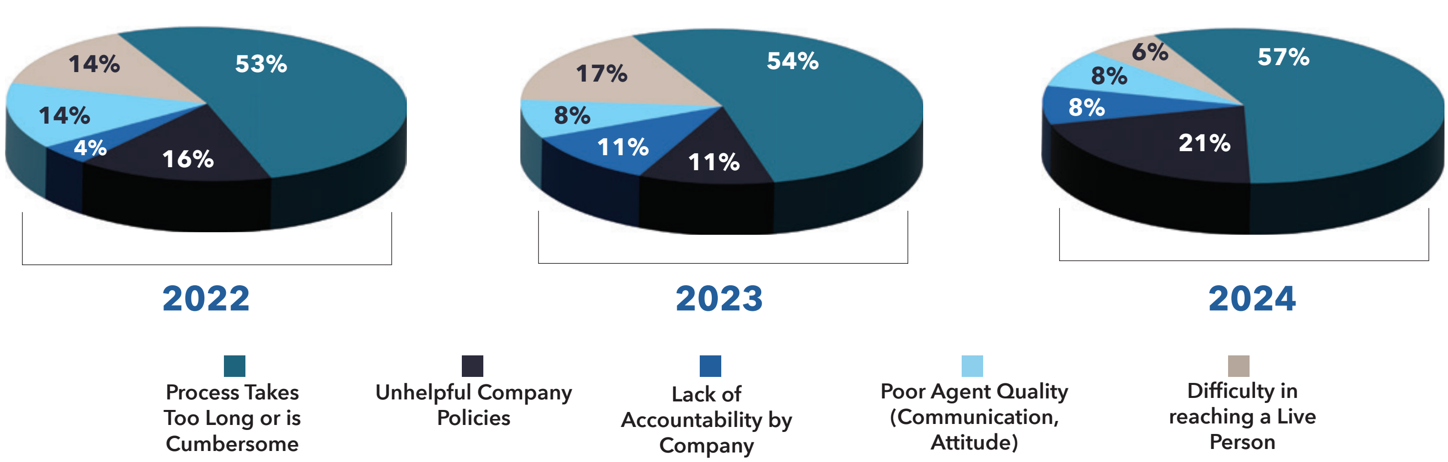
Legacy Systems/Processes/Tools not only continue to lead the list of biggest challenges facing CX operations, they have increased their level of threat. In 2024, slightly more than 40% of all survey respondents named "legacy" as their biggest challenge, vastly overshadowing other challenges such as staffing challenges, channel balance, and budget. These results seem to speak to the fact that the legacy issues are not merely budgetary in nature. Resolving legacy issues takes internal expertise, amazing technology partners, and forward-looking visions, as well as the right strategy to execute.

What is the single biggest challenge currently facing your CX operations?



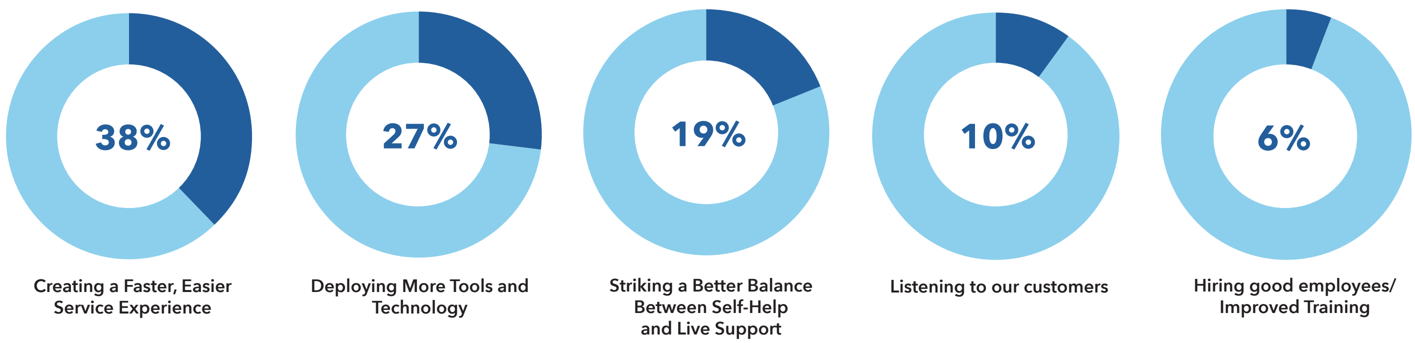
Although CX leaders are hyper confident that a long, cumbersome process is what frustrates consumers most, *CX Leaders Trends & Insights:* Consumer Edition results seem to suggest consumers are consistent in their belief that difficulty in reaching a live person is the biggest culprit in instilling frustration. For a more detailed look at how the below results stack up against consumers' actual views on customer care frustrations, visit the Consumer Comparison section on page 81.

What do you think is the most frustrating aspect of resolving a customer care issue for consumers?



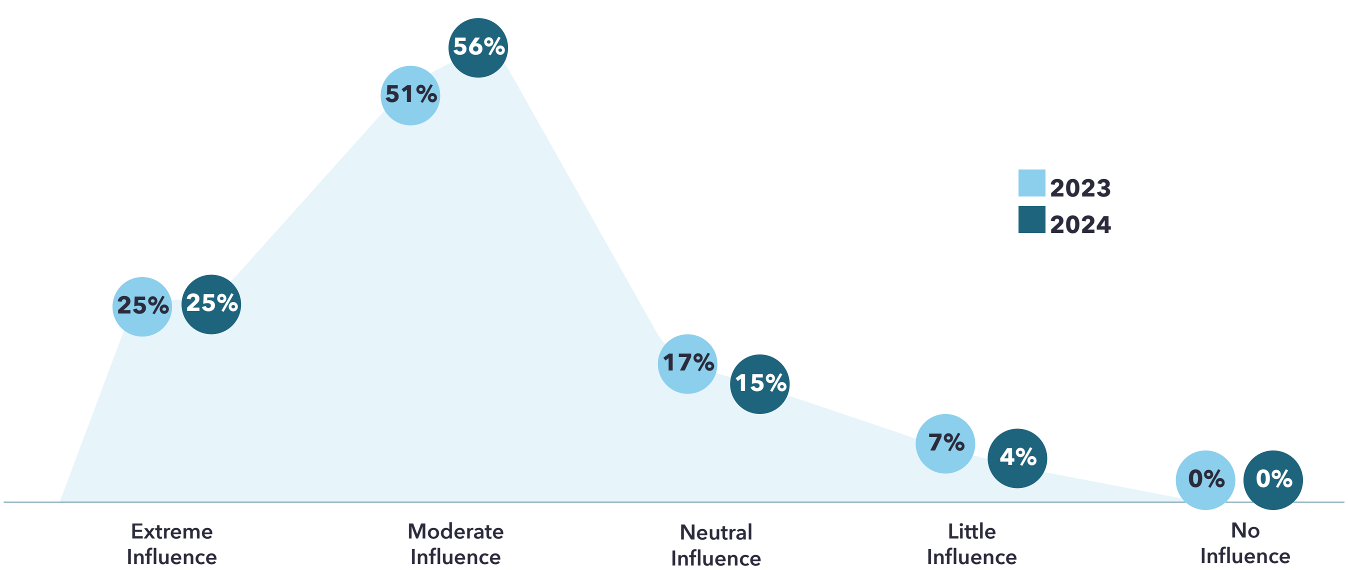
In a new question for 2024, survey respondents were asked about their priorities for 2025. A similar question was asked of consumers in 2024, and although consumers placed emphasis on getting a faster, easier experience, what they wanted companies to do most to create an exceptional customer care experience was "Listen to Their Customers." "Hire Good Employees" was also high up on the list. For a complete breakdown on corporate and consumer responses compared, see the Consumer Comparison section on page 82.

What is your top priority over the next 12 months in creating an exceptional customer care experience?



The level of influence that CX has within companies expanded marginally in 2024, with slight decreases in neutrality and responses of "Little Influence," while "Moderate Influence" responses expanded by five points (up 10%). Perhaps no other organization in a business has its ear to the ground like CX/customer care in terms of what customers want, need, and expect for the products and services they use. It is critical for CX/customer care to not only have an influential voice within the business, but also be positioned to deliver key insights across departments like product development and marketing.

How would you describe the level of influence CX strategies, initiatives, and priorities have within your company?

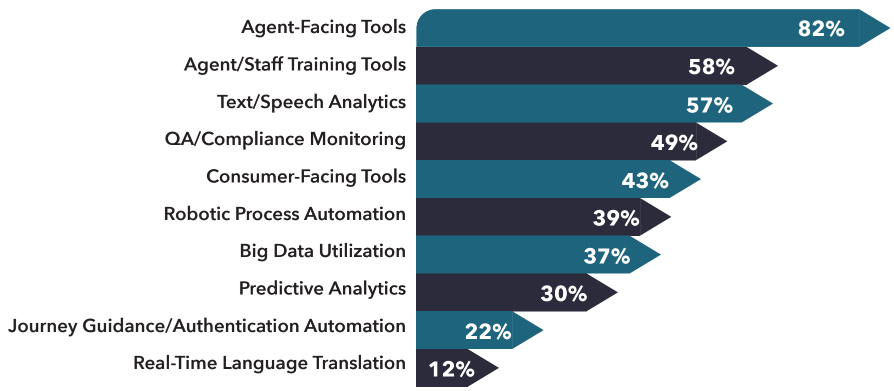


The three biggest barriers to deploying a more dynamic digital strategy remained the same YoY for survey respondents, with "Inadequate Budget," "More Pressing Priorities," and "Incompatible Legacy Systems" all continuing to play prominent and challenging roles. Also worth noting is the fact that not a single respondent indicated "Digital is Not on Our Roadmap," indicating digital transformation as a nearly universal strategy for 2025.

What are the main barriers to enabling a more dynamic digital strategy within your organization? (Select all that apply.)

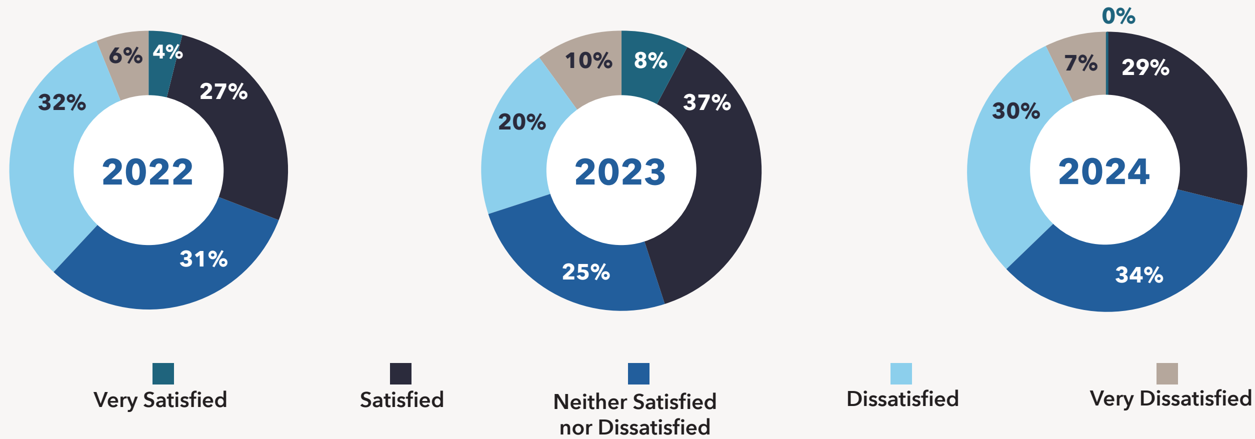
In a revamping of the question at right (including new and revised response options), Agent-Facing Tools is the most popular CX technology finding investment in 2024, followed distantly by Agent/Staff Training Tools and Text/Speech Analytics. Investment in agents is a sensible move given the fact that so many consumers see better agents as a path to an easier resolution process (page 78).

Which of these CX technologies is your organization currently investing in? (Select all that apply.)



Satisfaction with CX technology stacks hit an all-time low in 2024, with only 29% of survey respondents feeling "Satisfied," and not a single respondent feeling "Very Satisfied." Perhaps the two largest contributors to the lack of enthusiasm for the current CX tech stack is lack of adequate investment and disjointed and incompatible integration with legacy systems.

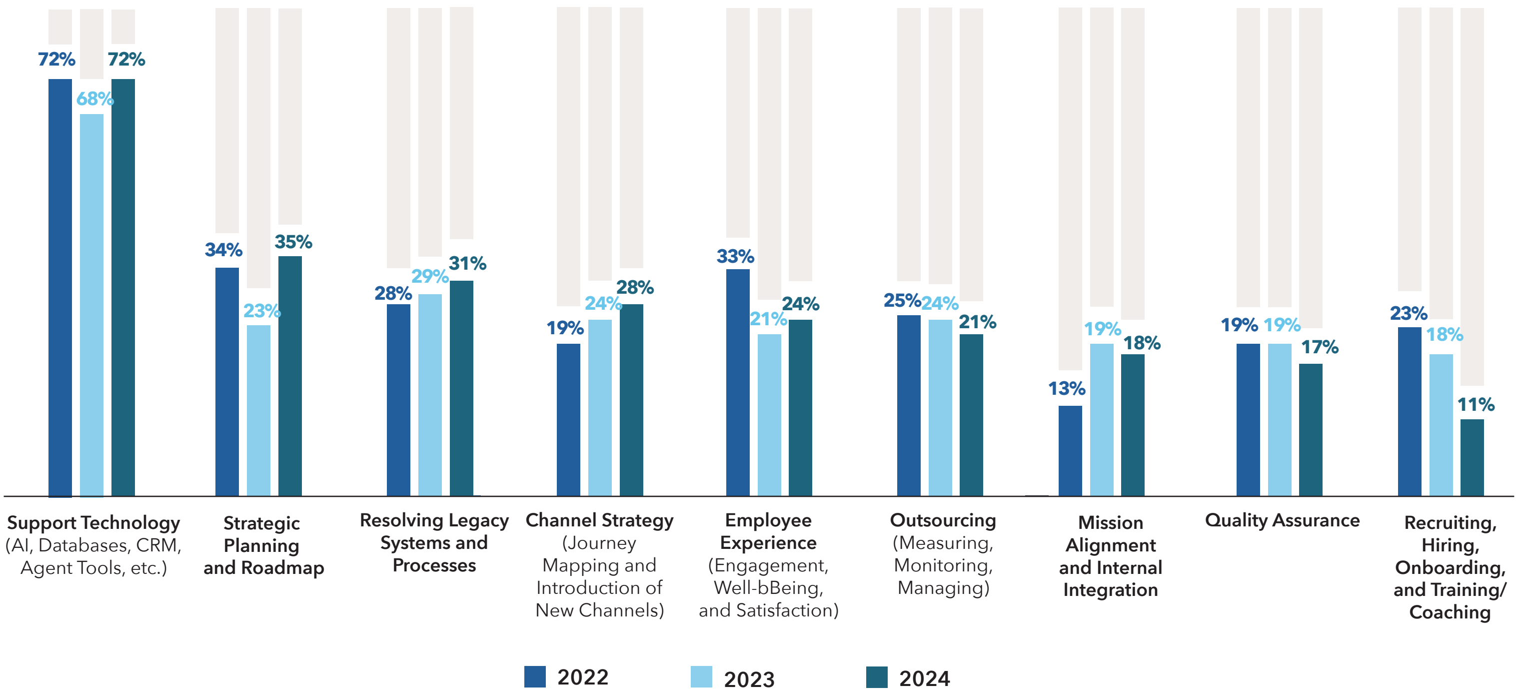
Are you satisfied with your organization's current CX technology stack?



CX Initiatives and CX Strategies — CX Strategies

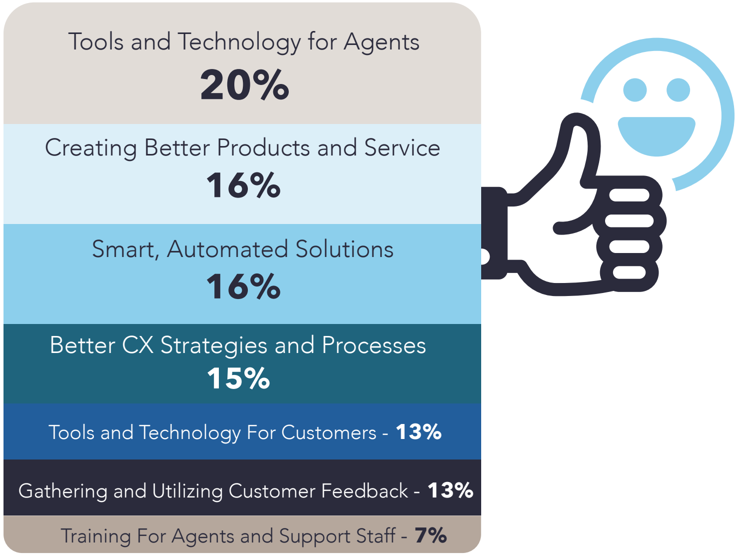
As expected, CX support technology (AI, most notably) continues to commandeer the bulk of the industry's budget and attention. Conversely (and perhaps because of the aforementioned), investment and attention paid to "Recruiting, Hiring, Onboarding, and Training/Coaching" has fallen off for the second year in a row. But this is more a matter of onboarding and growth versus investments in improving agent performance, as indicated at bottom, with strong importance placed on investing in tools and technology for agents.

Which area(s) of your CX program do you expect to receive the most investment and attention from your company in the next 12 months? (Select no more than three answers.)



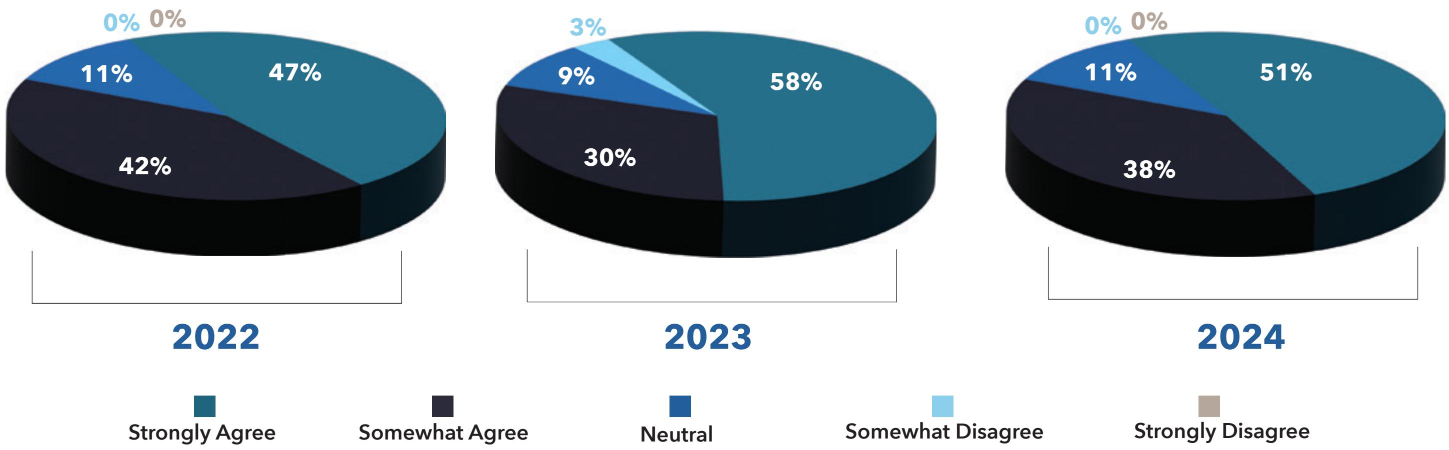
In your opinion, what is the single most important area of investment for effectively improving the customer experience?

Opinions on where investment is most important align well with where investment is flowing (above). CX leaders view investments in technology, particularly agent-assisting and those that aid in automation, as paramount. And, at the opposite end of the scale, training is once again of diminishing importance, just as it is of diminishing attention and investment in the results above. This could be an indication that brands are looking to maximize the workforce rather than grow it. Tools for agents, automation, and investment in the employee experience (as noted in results above) all support such notions.



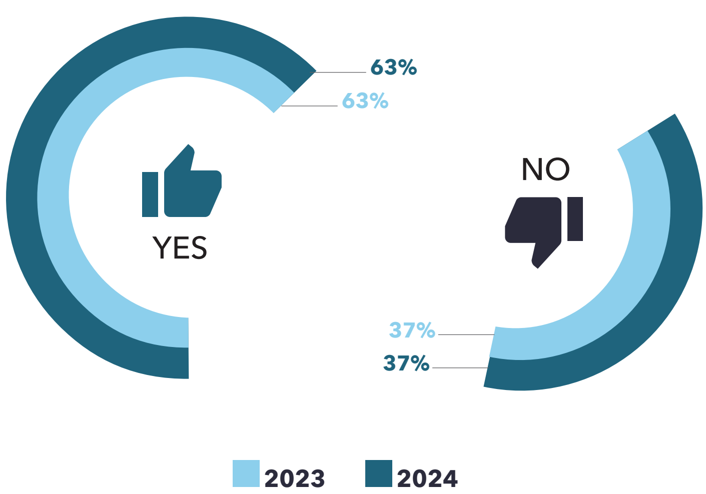
CX leaders and consumers are largely on the same page when it comes to the importance of brand passion among agents. Eighty-nine percent of CX leaders think their customers would either "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree" with the notion that brand passion is important for customer care agents. The reality is that a total of 78% of consumers either "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree" with the notion. For details on how the corporate and consumer results compare, check out page 83 of the Consumer Comparison section of this report.

In your opinion, how do you think YOUR CUSTOMERS feel about the following statement: It is important for customer care agents to be very passionate about the brands they represent.



In the second year of asking about whether customers might be willing to pay a little more for a product or service if it meant better care, results remained remarkably consistent. Furthermore, the speculation of CX leader on the matter nearly mirror actual consumer opinion. In 2024 surveying, 69% of consumers either "Strongly Agreeing" or "Somewhat Agreeing" with the notion of paying a little more for products and service if it meant they'd get world-class customer care. To learn more about how well the consumer and corporate surveying results aligned, see the Consumer Comparison section on page 84.

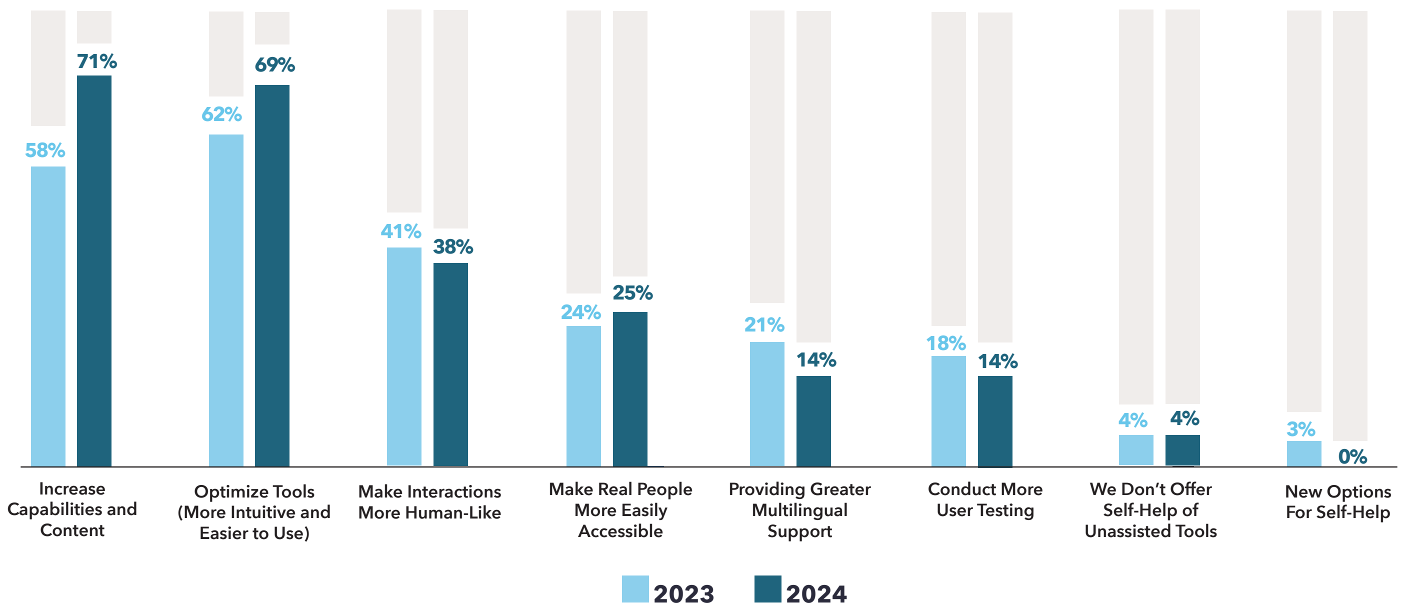
Do you think your customers would be willing to pay a little more for your products or services if it meant they'd get world-class customer care support?



CX Initiatives and CX Strategies — CX Strategies

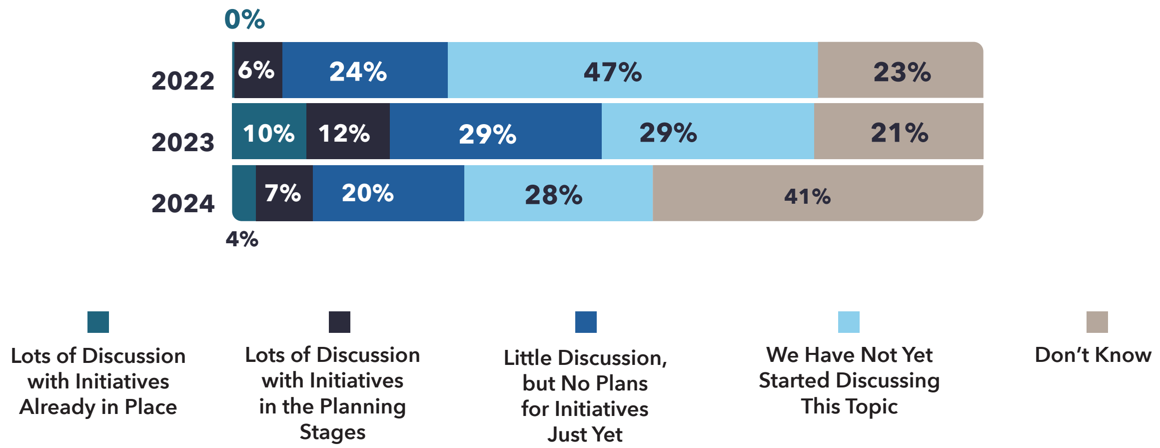
When asked about their plans for self-help and unassisted tools, most CX leaders point to increasing capabilities and optimizing for ease. Although these are important aspects to consumers, the thing that consistently matters most to consumers when using a solution powered by AI is "Easy Access to a Live Person." Perhaps an easy off-ramp to a live agent will matter less and less as solution capabilities improve. But until that happens, brands need to make sure customers can and are able to get to the right person (or solution) to best achieve a satisfactory resolution, even if that means an assisted engagement.

What future plans do you have for your self-help and unassisted tools to make them better, easier, and more enjoyable to use? (Select all that apply.)



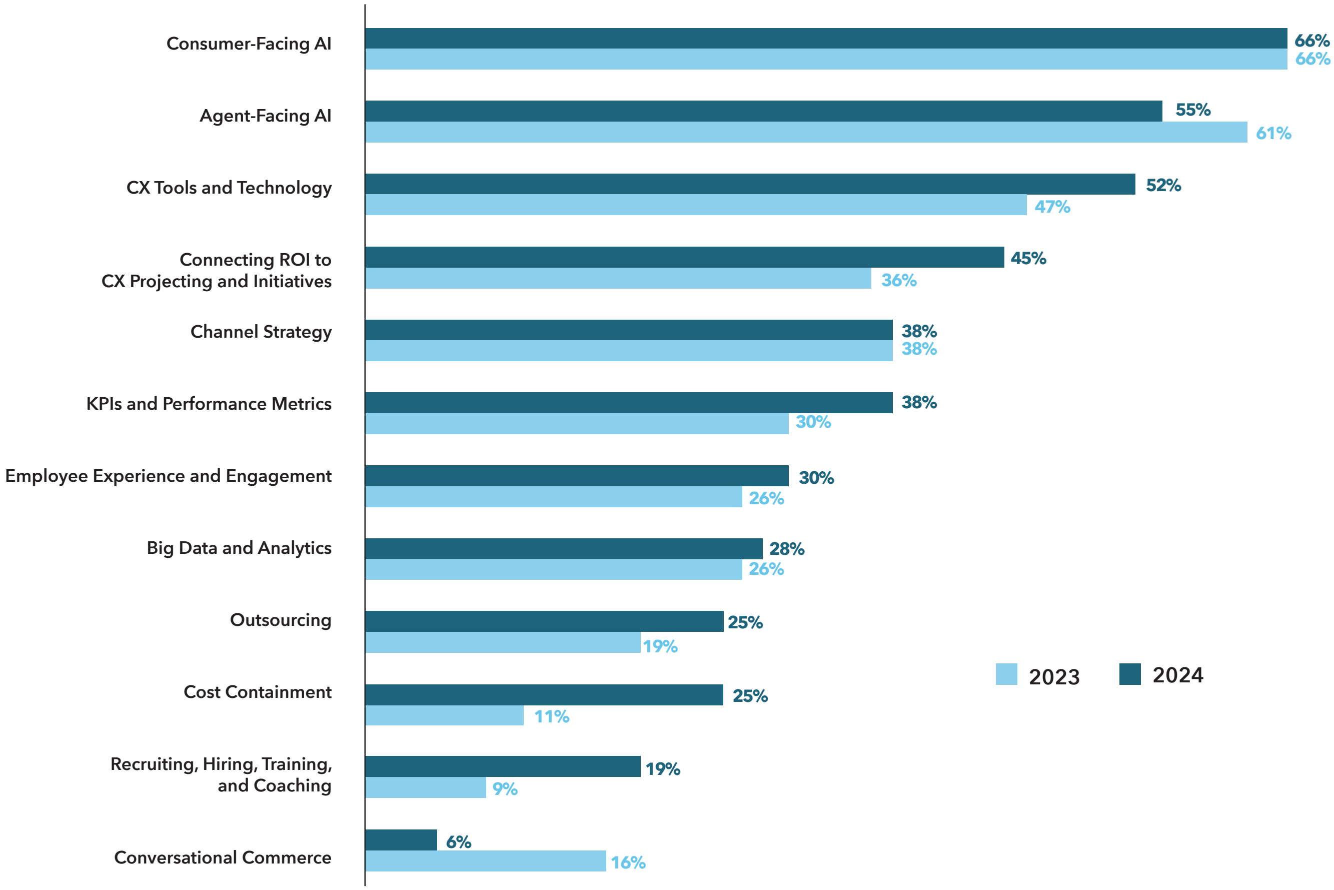
In 2024, the metaverse appears to have taken a step back from the limelight. The most notable change YoY is the dramatic increase in CX leaders who simply don't know the status of the discussions pertaining to the metaverse, NFTs, and associated technologies. With the change in administration, including changes at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), there is renewed hope in finding regulatory clarity when it comes to not only NFTs and digital ownership, but also cryptocurrencies. With this clarity, there is hope to reignite the digital ownership space.

Where is your company in discussing the implications of the metaverse, Web3.0, NFT, and digital ownership?



CX leaders continue to express high levels of interest in all things AI and CX tools and tech-related. There was also a large YoY expansion (an increase of nine points or up 25%) of interest in Connecting ROI to CX Projects and Initiatives and Cost Containment (an increase of 14 points or up 127%). This increased focus on containing costs and maximizing investments seems to align well with the increased focus on economic uncertainties (page 63). KPIs and metrics have also seen an uptick in interest YoY, highlighting the importance measurement plays in managing an environment of continuous improvement.

Which CX topics would you like to see explored in greater depth within EITK content and research? (Check all that apply.)



CX INITIATIVES AND CX STRATEGIES — **CONCLUSIONS**

Key Findings:

- Seventy-four percent of survey respondents expect to invest in new technology and/or integrated solutions to create greater consistency for cross channels interactions.

- Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents feel the culture of their company is aligned with a "customer first" strategy, the highest percent since this question was first asked in 2018.

- Legacy Systems/Processes/Tools is the biggest barrier to successful CX operations, with 42% of survey respondents naming it as their single biggest challenge.

- In 2024, 82% of survey respondents were investing in Agent-Facing Tools, followed by Agent/Staff Training Tools (58%) and Text/Speech Analytics (57%).

Results in the CX Initiatives and CX Strategies section highlight a commitment to advancing CX through investments in technology, integration, and cultural shifts that better enable a "customer first" strategy. With many survey respondents expecting to invest in new technology and integrated solutions, businesses clearly recognize the importance of providing seamless cross-channel interactions that provide consistency and reduced friction, especially as customers navigate from unassisted to assisted touch points. Organizations that prioritize these integrations will be better positioned to deliver a smooth, omnichannel experience.

Another promising insight is the increasing alignment of company culture with a "customer-first" strategy, with 58% of respondents indicating such alignment — the highest since the question was first asked in 2018. This result suggests that businesses are fostering an internal mindset that prioritizes customer satisfaction. A strong cultural foundation is essential for the success of CX initiatives, as it ensures that employees at all levels are committed to delivering exceptional service. However, while progress is evident, this percentage indicates there is still room for improvement in embedding customer-centric values across organizations.

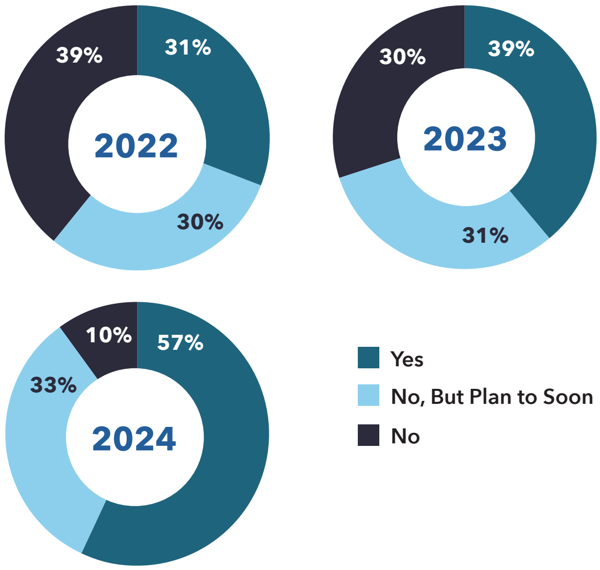
Despite these advancements, legacy systems, processes, and tools remain a significant obstacle, with 42% of respondents citing them as their biggest challenge to CX success. Outdated technology can hinder efficiency, limit data accessibility, and create disjointed customer experiences. Addressing this challenge will require businesses to modernize their tech stack, streamline workflows, and eliminate silos that prevent seamless service delivery. Companies that fail to address these barriers risk falling behind.

Many organizations are prioritizing solutions that empower their frontline teams. Investments in Agent-Facing Tools, Agent/Staff Training Tools, and Text/Speech Analytics demonstrate a clear focus on equipping employees and programs with the resources needed to provide higher-quality customer interactions. But technology alone is not enough — empowered and well-trained agents remain essential to delivering superior service.

AI FOR CX

The use of AI for CX continued along its track of growth in 2024, leaping forward an impressive 18 points (a YoY rise of 46%), with 57% of respondents now using AI within their contact center operations. Additionally, 33% of survey respondents held plans to soon deploy AI for CX, meaning nine in every ten survey respondents were involving themselves in the commerce of AI. The use of AI within the contact center appears to have become ubiquitous.

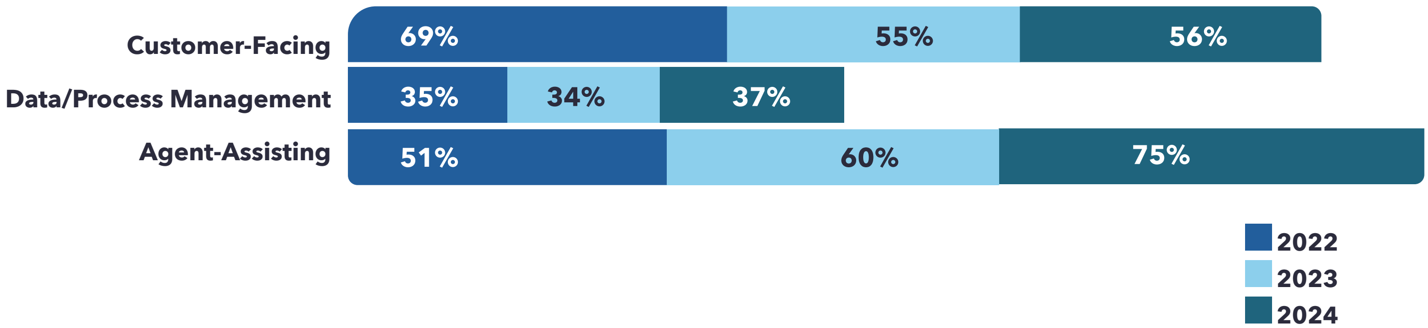
Has your company applied the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within your contact center organization?



Compare Your Operations

Agent-Assisting solutions continue to lead the way in how AI for CX is being deployed. Other categories of use remained stagnated YoY. One might expect growth in Customer-Facing solutions as the expansion of Agent-Assisting solutions provide space for learning, testing, and improving. But the challenge may still lay with issue complexity. AI-powered solutions still lag behind the human touch in achieving resolution (page 30).

How would you describe the specific application(s) of your AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply.)



Agent-assisting AI solutions continue to gain a greater share of use.
What advancements are needed to have customer-facing solutions also on the rise?

"Knowledge management focused on solving requests from both internal and external clients is key to optimally using a Gen AI solution. You can have the best solution on the market, but without data and information not organized to support requests, it is difficult to achieve adoption by users. Our position as CX or customer service leaders is already evolving to be not only content managers, but content creators, and to start working with databases of all kinds. Today, we are talking about assistants for agents but, incredibly, in less than six months, this is almost outdated, and now we must talk about solutions that are facing the client.

Many areas within the organization must be articulated so that it can be ready for this scenario. This happens from product, marketing, etc., and define and negotiate many aspects (mainly governance) to be effective in this initiative, since many areas handle information that must be integrated so as not to have uncovered aspects and to be able to have effective artificial intelligence that justifies the investment.

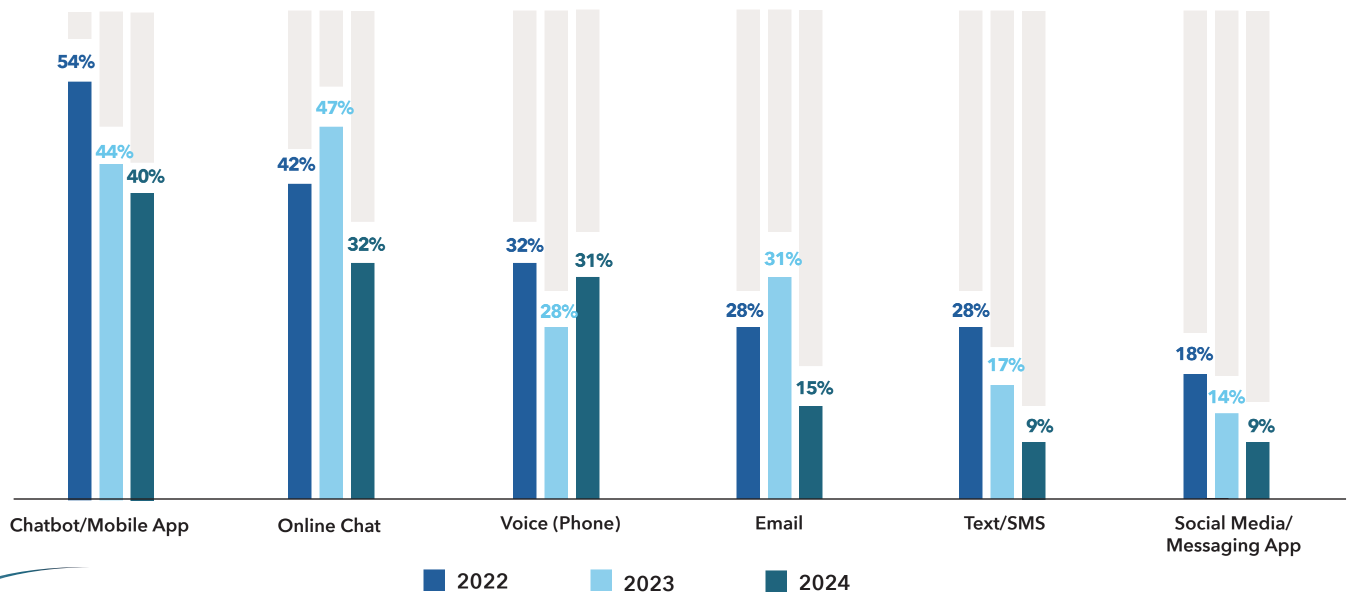
As experts in customer experience, we are professionals who know the vast majority of processes and details of the companies we work for. This gives us a perspective that other peers do not have, and which we can use to structure a good knowledge management initiative, which is a point to be developed by many companies and which gives us a great opportunity for growth and relevance in our organizations."

Emersson Chinchilla
Continuous Improvement Senior Manager

StanleyBlack&Decker

AI continues to touch a broad range of channels and in a variety of ways. Notable is the drop-off (sometimes steep) in AI's use in all but Voice (Phone), which saw only an incremental rise of 11% (up three points). This begs the question: How could this result make sense considering the broad expansion seen on the previous page? It could be the result of an inflow of companies new to AI, starting within few channels. Or, it could be the result of focused cutbacks in the use of AI within specific channels.

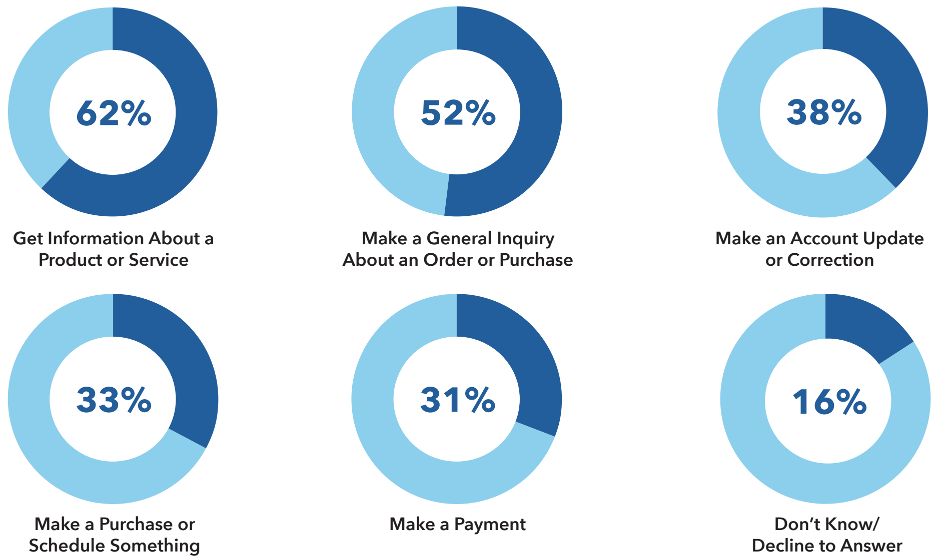
In which specific channels are you deploying customer-facing or customer-supporting AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply.)



Compare Your Operations

In a new question for 2024, one aimed at understanding the capabilities of AI, query-based functionality (things like getting info or order information) was most common. Issues that were transactional in nature (like purchasing, paying, or resolving an issue) were significantly less common. Such a broad stoke result warrants further breakdown and investigation when it comes to the capabilities of AI, especially as it applies to "Fix an Issue with a Product/Service," which might include issues of varying complexity.

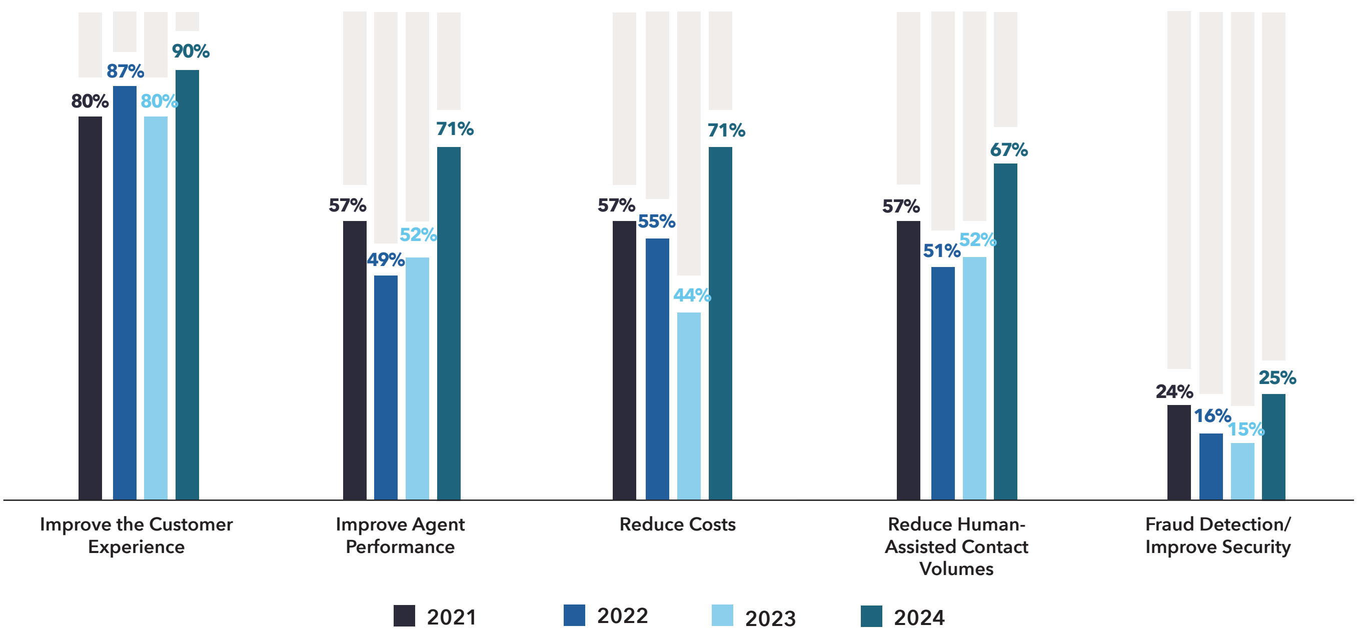
What common care issues are your customers able to resolve by using your brand's self-help or AI-powered solution(s)? (Select all that apply.)



Compare Your Operations

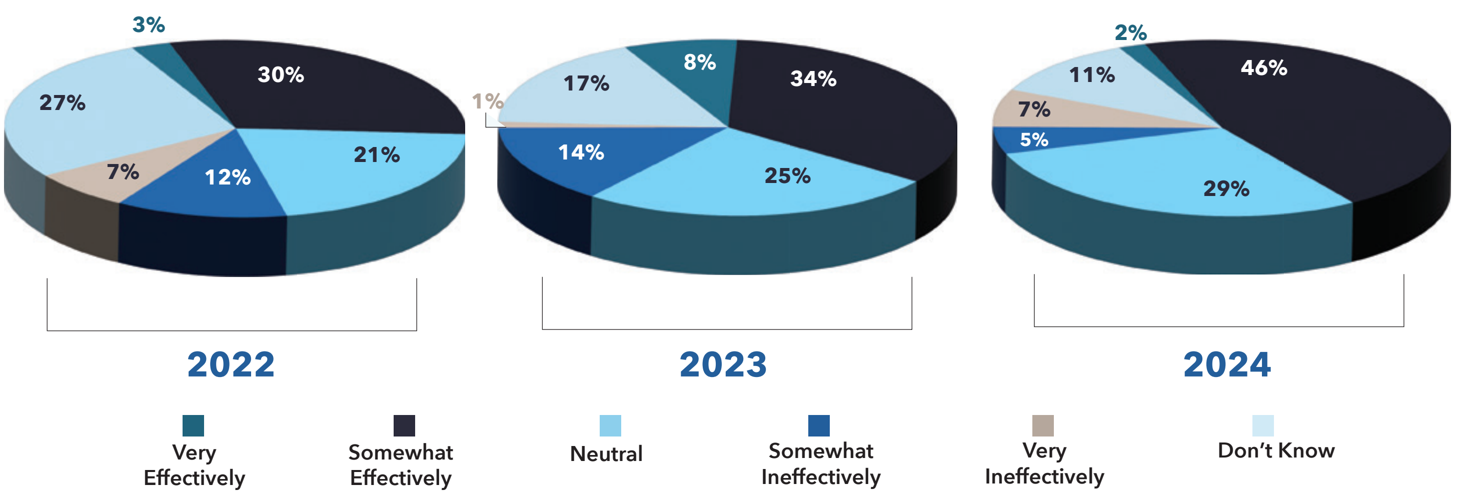
CX leaders expanded their objectives for AI in 2024, doing so across the board. This move reflects good news for the capabilities of the technology, as capabilities ultimately drive which objectives can be accomplished. Perhaps as a sign of the times, the biggest expansion came for the objective to "Reduce Cost," which underwent a 27-point increase — a YoY rise of 61%. "Improve Agent Performance" also saw a sizable bump, improving 19-points (up 37%).

Which objectives are you primarily trying to accomplish with your use or future use of AI-powered solutions? (Select all that apply.)



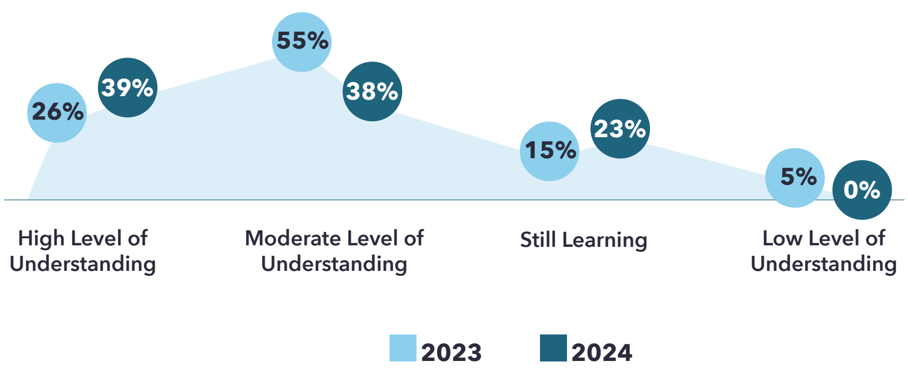
In general, companies grew slightly more successful YoY in meeting their objectives for AI, or at least became better informed on the matter. In 2023, 42% of respondents felt their AI-powered efforts were either "Very Effective" or "Somewhat Effective," compared to a total of 48% in 2024. Interestingly, very few respondents (only 2%) felt confident enough in their AI-powered endeavors to consider themselves "Very Effective" at meeting their objectives. This indicates that CX leaders believe there is likely room for improvement of the technology.

How effective are you in meeting your objectives with your use of AI-powered solutions?



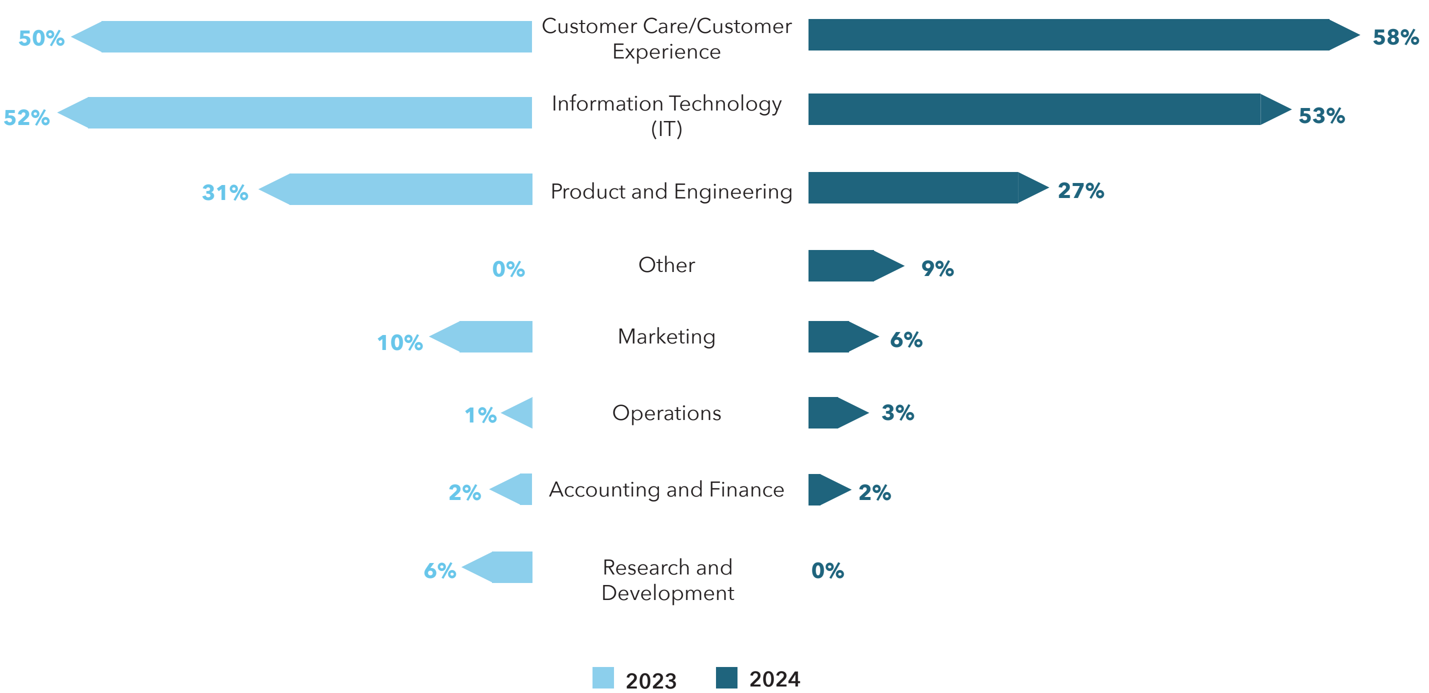
Based on the results at right, CX leaders expanded their understanding of AI in 2024, with nearly 40% of leaders considering themselves to have a "High Level of Understanding," up 13 points or 50% YoY. It may be the case that the technology of AI is evolving at such a rapid pace that there will always be new opportunities to learn and understand more. But certainly, CX leaders were doing their homework in 2024.

What is your current understanding of AI, AI concepts, and what the technology has to offer your CX operations?

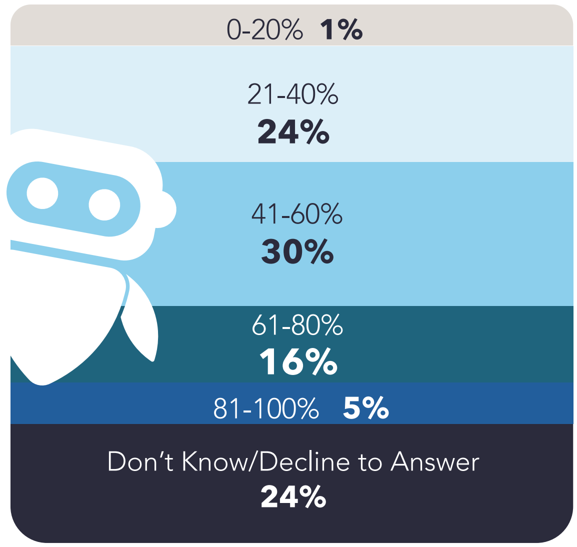


Ownership of AI remained relatively stable YoY, with Customer Care/CX and IT continuing to lead the way. Among departments named in the "Other" bucket were Operations, Digital, and Continuous Improvement/Support. Although AI can sometimes be solely owned, the technology has broad impact across the organization and, for that reason, its risks and capabilities should be understood beyond the department that holds ownership.

Who owns CX Technology/AI-powered solutions at your organization? (Select all that apply.)



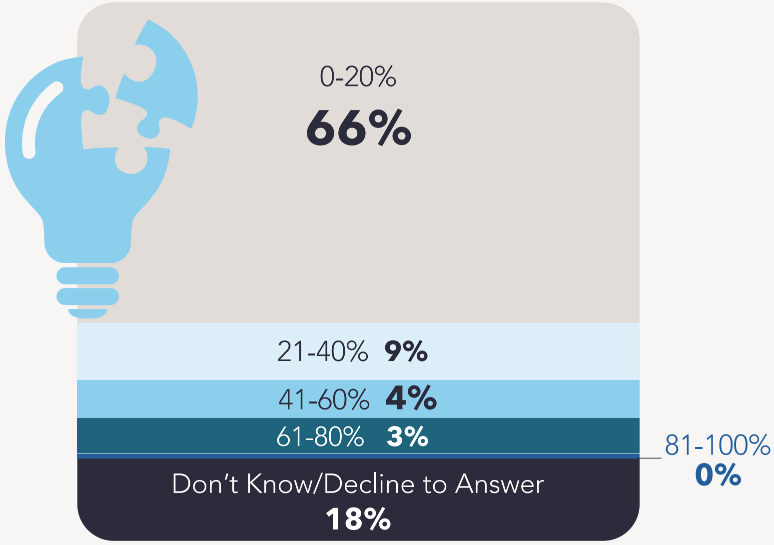
What percentage of your overall customer care engagements are too complex to be resolved using a self-help or AI-powered solution?



When correcting out those respondents who "Don't Know/Decline to Answer," 67% of respondents think anywhere from 40-100% of their overall customer care engagements are too complex to be handled by AI-powered solutions. This is a big number, and it highlights how far AI-powered solutions have to go in achieving the effectiveness of a human-assisted solution.

Compare Your Operations

What percentage of your overall contacts are resolved via self-help or AI-powered assistance?

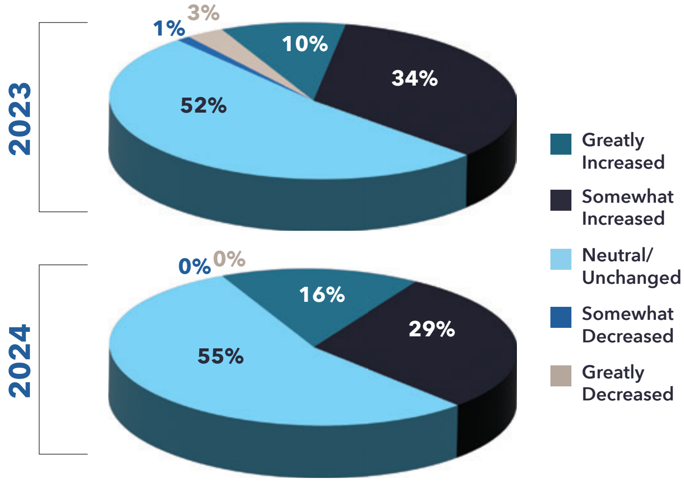


Given the results above, it should come as no surprise that most CX leaders (66%) see their self-help/AI-powered solutions as resolving only 20% or less of their overall customer care contacts. This result is not only a matter of volume directed to such solutions. AI-powered solutions still lag their human-assisted co-channels, especially when it comes to non-standard engagements, those requiring out-of-the-box thinking, compromise, and unique circumstances. This is an area where AI-powered solutions still have room to improve.

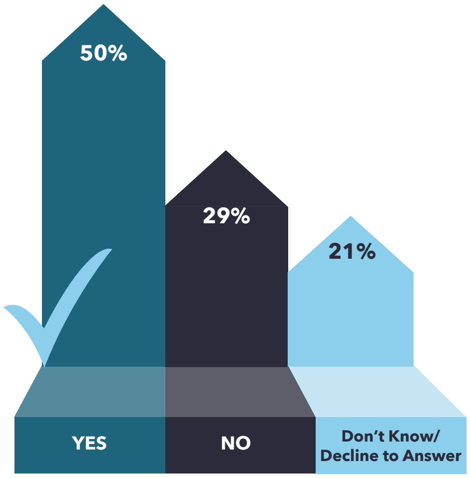
Compare Your Operations

Consumer acceptance of AI-powered solutions generally improved in the past 12 months, with no survey respondents reporting a decrease in acceptance of any kind. At the same time, those indicating a "Greatly Increased" acceptance rose six points (up 60%), while those seeing a "Somewhat Increased" level of acceptance moderated lower, falling five points (down 15%). As functionality, ease, and usability improve, it's likely that positive experiences will continue to reinforce acceptance of AI solutions among consumers. This is especially true if brands continue to make a conscious effort to make access to live assistance easy if and when it becomes necessary.

How would you describe your customers' acceptance and adoption of AI-powered solutions over the past 12 months?

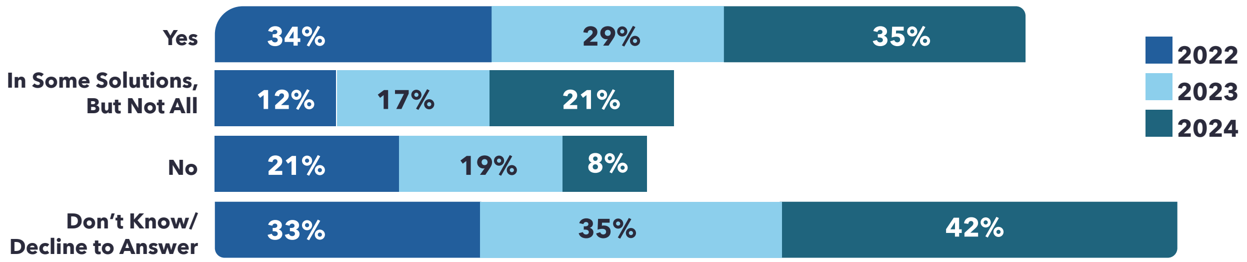


Has your organization consciously designed self-help and AI-powered customer care journeys to make live assistance easily accessible?



Among survey respondents who provided a response to the below question, 61% indicated they do clearly identify their AI-powered, non-human solutions as such at the start of an interaction. In an AI-specific consumer report released by Execs In The Know in August 2024, 84% of consumers felt brands should identify AI-powered, non-human solutions at the start of an interaction, and only 12% of consumers thought such action was unnecessary. The report, titled Artificial Intelligence for CX: Exploring Consumer Perceptions, covers a range of consumer expectations for AI-powered solutions, including likelihood of use and concerns for the technology.

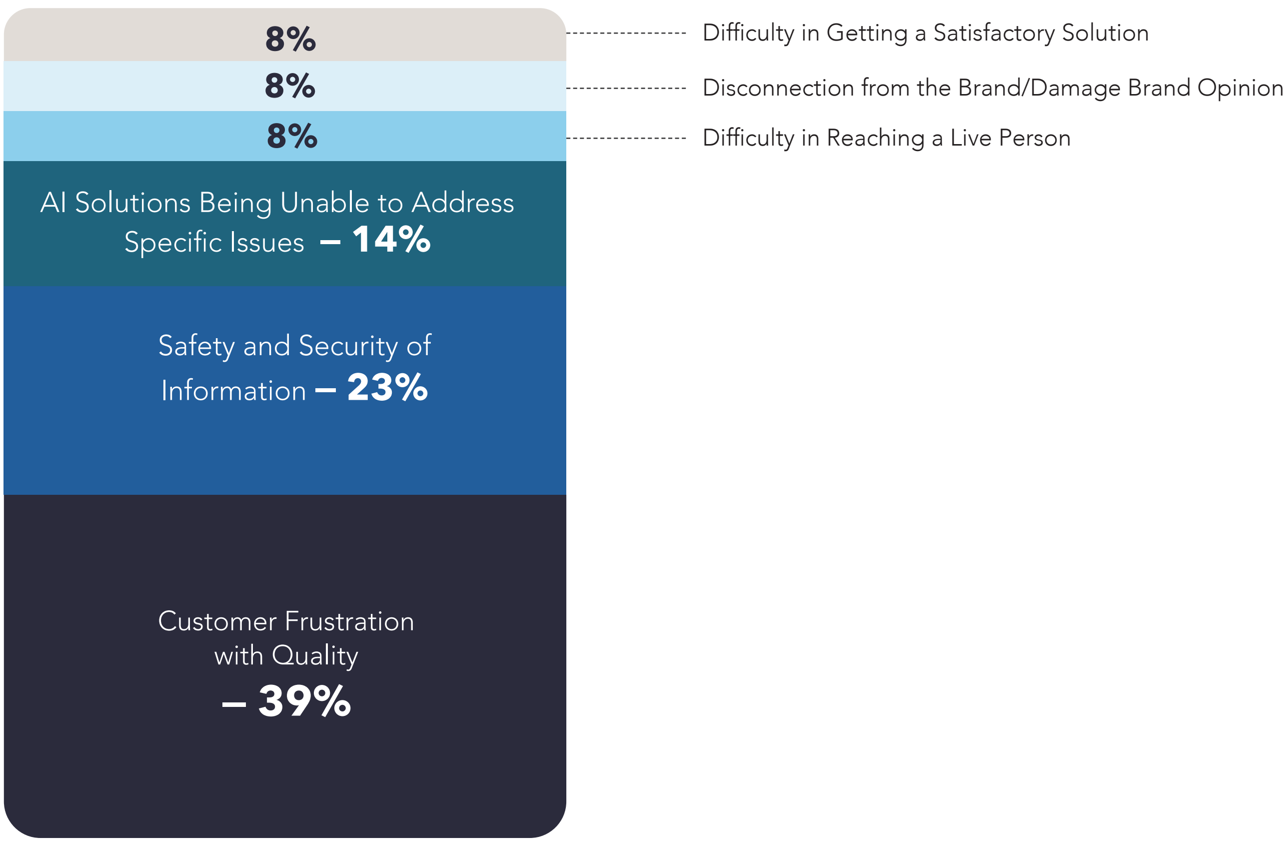
In utilizing customer-facing AI-powered solutions, do you clearly identify the solution as non-human at the start of an interaction?



Compare Your Operations

When asked about their biggest concern with the expanding use of AI for CX, the top response was "Customer Frustration with Quality." Although "Quality" is of paramount importance, when consumers were asked a similar question, responses most heavily pointed to "Difficulty Reaching a Live Person." For details on how corporate concerns match up with those of consumers, check out the Consumer Comparison section on page 85.

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



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CX — **CONCLUSIONS**

Key Findings:

- In 2024, 90% of brands have either already deployed AI within their contact center in some capacity or plan to do so soon, compared to 61% in 2022.
- Forty-eight percent of survey respondents feel they are either "Very Efficient" or "Somewhat Efficient" in meeting their objectives with AI, compared to 33% in 2022.
- Fifty-four percent of survey respondents feel that 21-60% of their overall customer care engagements are too complex to be resolved using self-help or an AI-powered solution.
- Fifty percent of survey respondents indicated that their organizations have consciously designed their self-help and/or AI-powered solutions to make live assistance easily accessible.

The rapid adoption of AI for CX is reshaping contact center operations, with 90% of brands having already deployed AI or planning to do so soon — up significantly from 61% in 2022. This surge underscores the industry's conclusion that AI is a critical enabler of greater efficiency and an improved customer experiences. To achieve success, AI-powered solutions must continue to improve in key areas, including resolution rate, accuracy, consistency, and overall CSAT.

While AI for CX adoption is increasing, the effectiveness of AI remains a work in progress. The percentage of organizations that consider themselves "Very Efficient" or "Somewhat Efficient" in meeting their AI objectives has grown to 48%, up from 33% in 2022. This indicates steady progress, but also suggests that many businesses are still finding their stride when it comes to AI for CX. Factors such as data quality, AI training, and integration with existing systems likely play a role in determining success. Organizations that invest in continuous AI improvement and employee training (to maximize the use AI tools) will be better positioned to capitalize on the AI for CX investments.

However, AI is not a universal solution for all customer care needs. A majority (54%) of respondents believe that 21-60% of their overall customer interactions remain too complex to be resolved through self-help or AI-powered solutions alone. This finding highlights the continued importance of human agents in handling nuanced, high-touch, or emotionally charged customer issues. AI should be seen as a complement and accompaniment to, rather than a replacement for, human expertise. Businesses must strike a balance between automation and personalized support to ensure customers receive appropriate and effective assistance.

Encouragingly, half of the organizations surveyed have consciously designed their AI and self-help solutions to provide easy access to live agents. Ensuring smooth transitions from AI to human support is crucial in building customer trust and preventing frustration. As AI capabilities continue to advance, companies that prioritize seamless escalation paths, AI-human collaboration, and ongoing refinements to their automation strategies will be best positioned to deliver superior CX.

CONSUMER COMPARISONS

WHICH AGENT SOFT SKILLS MATTER MOST

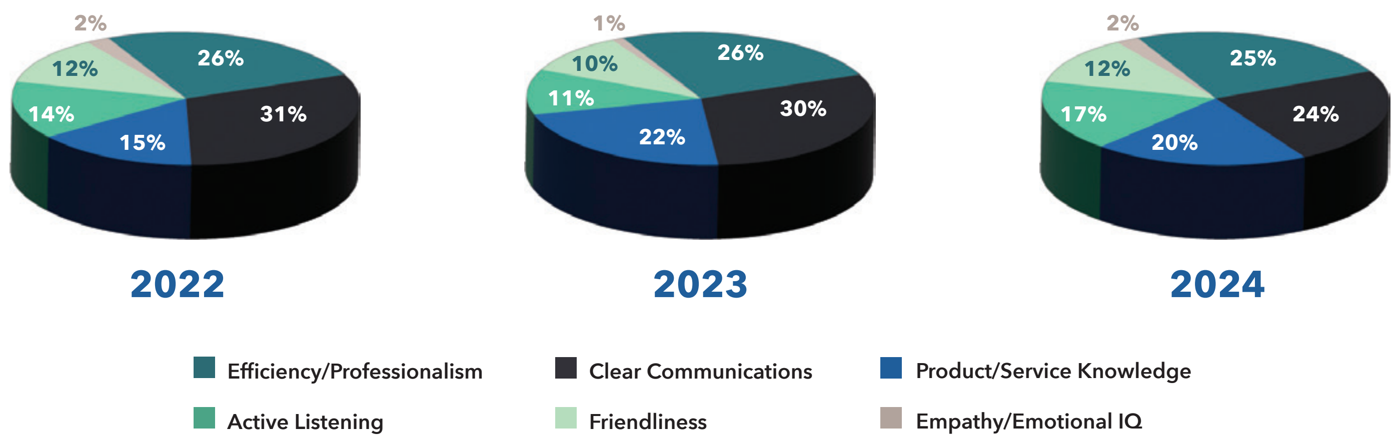
Consumer Comparisons

When consumers were asked what's most important in working with a customer care agent, and CX leaders were asked to rank the importance of soft skills, differences in opinion emerged. While CX leaders prioritize "Active Listening," only an average of 14% of consumers (over the past three years) agreed, while most consumers pointed to either "Efficiency/Professionalism" or "Clear Communications." Additionally, very few consumers place importance on "Empathy/Emotional IQ," whereas CX leaders find "Empathy/Emotional IQ" second only to "Active Listening" in terms of importance.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

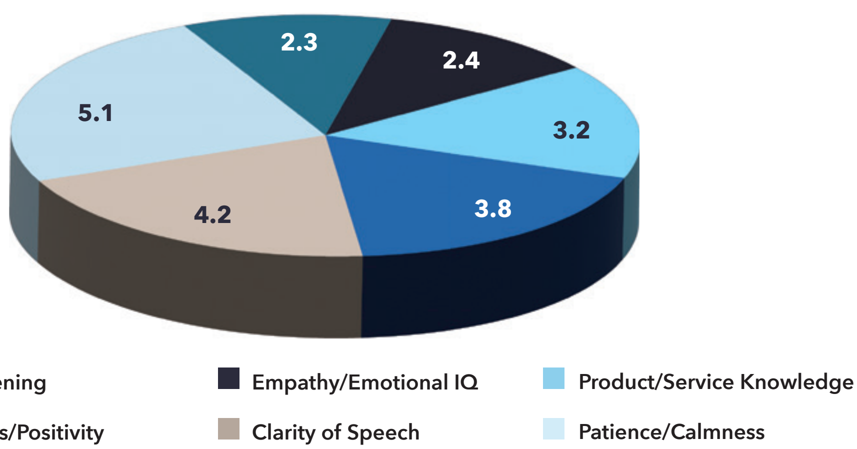
When talking to a customer care agent to resolve an issue with a product or service, what's most important to you?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

How do you rank the following soft skills in terms of importance for your agents (either internal or external)? (Lower number = More Important.)

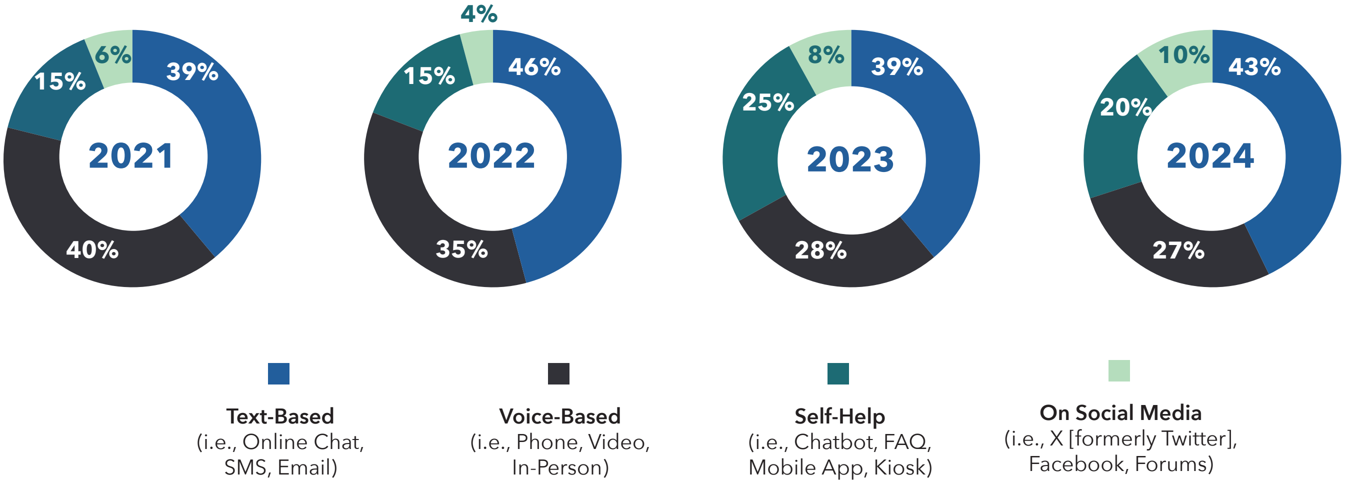


Many CX leaders (53%) are of the opinion that consumers overwhelmingly prefer Self-Help solutions when resolving a customer care issue. But only one in five consumers prefer to use a Self-Help solution, assuming their issue would be resolved. Rather, consumers gravitate most strongly toward Text-Based solutions (43%), followed somewhat distantly by Voice-Based solutions (27%). CX leaders should be careful not to overestimate consumer demand for Self-Help solutions. Such solutions can have on oversized impact on things like budget allocation, as well as the prioritization of initiatives, especially in an environment where many brands are in a rush to digitize the customer experience.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

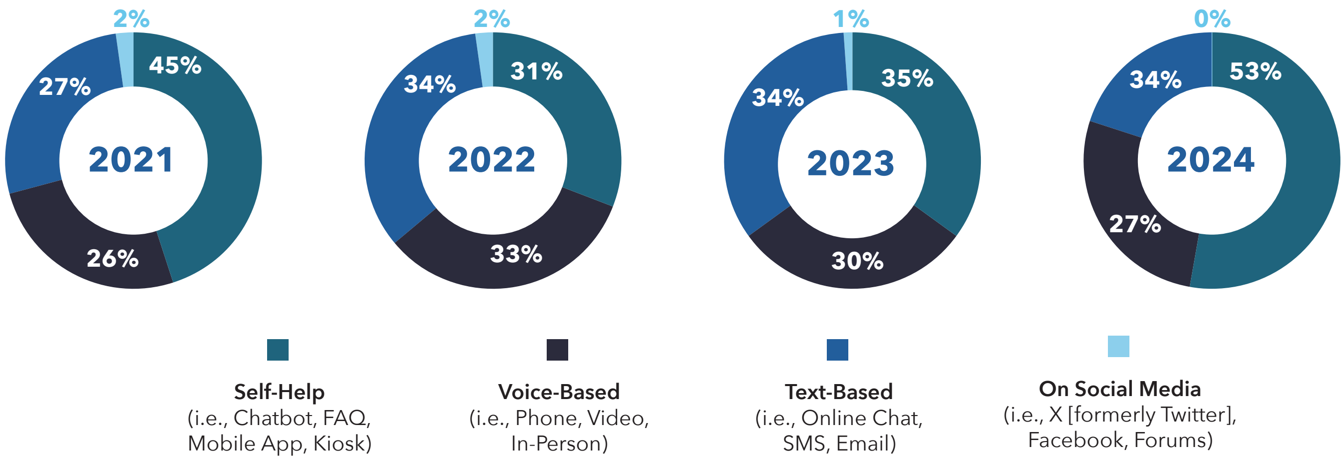
Assuming the customer care issue would be resolved, which contact method do you think consumers would prefer to use?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

Assuming the customer care issue would be resolved, which contact method do you think consumers would prefer to use?



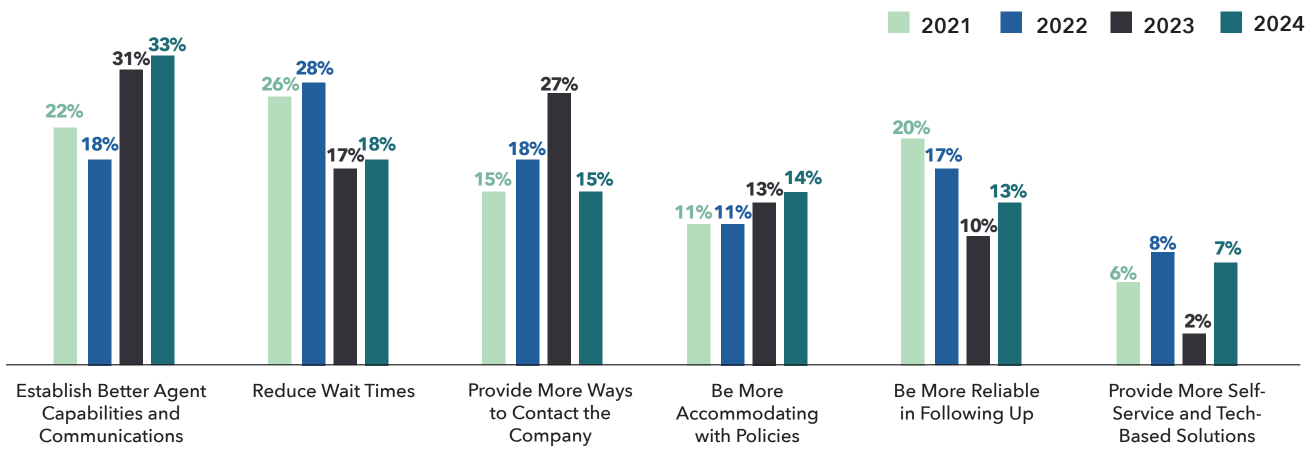
Consumer Comparisons

Expanding on some of the misconceptions raised on the previous page, the largest portion of consumers feel "Better Agent Capabilities and Communications" is the most effective path to making the resolution process as easy as possible. Conversely, consumers feel "More Self-Service and Tech-Based Solutions" is the least effective route to making the resolution process as easy as possible. This stands in stark contrast to the 37% of CX leaders who think consumers would point to "More Self-Help and Tech-Based Solutions" as the best path to making the resolution process easier. Naturally, consumer opinion on this matter varies by demographic, product category, and even brand, so companies should seek to understand the preferences of their individual customers.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

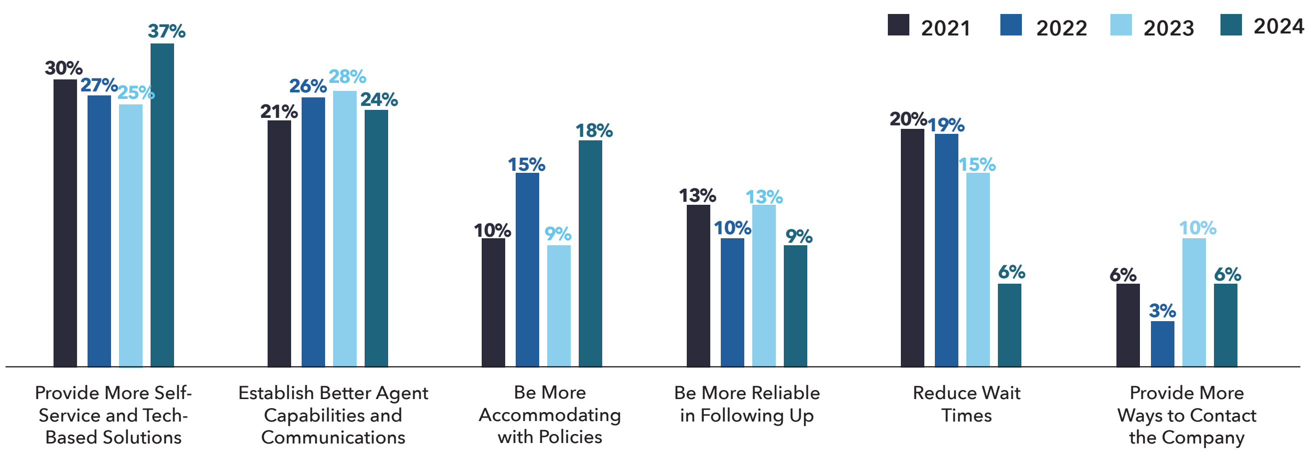
What can brands do differently to make the resolution process as easy as possible?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

What do you think consumers want brands to do to make the resolution process as easy as possible?

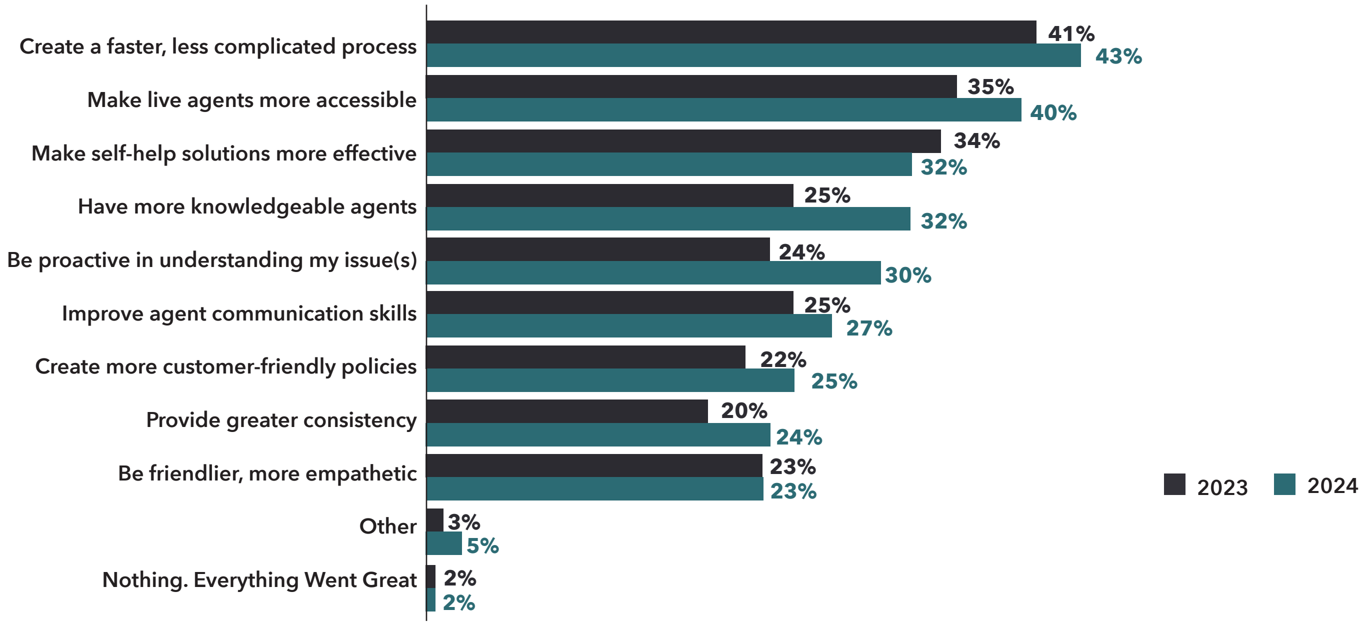


While consumers most certainly want faster, less complicated processes as they navigate across channels, an equal share also want greater access to live agents. Perhaps this is an extension of past experiences with ineffective self-help and unassisted solutions. But until non-human solutions catch up in terms of effectiveness and ease, consumers will want to continue to rely on assist solutions, especially for their most complex issues.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

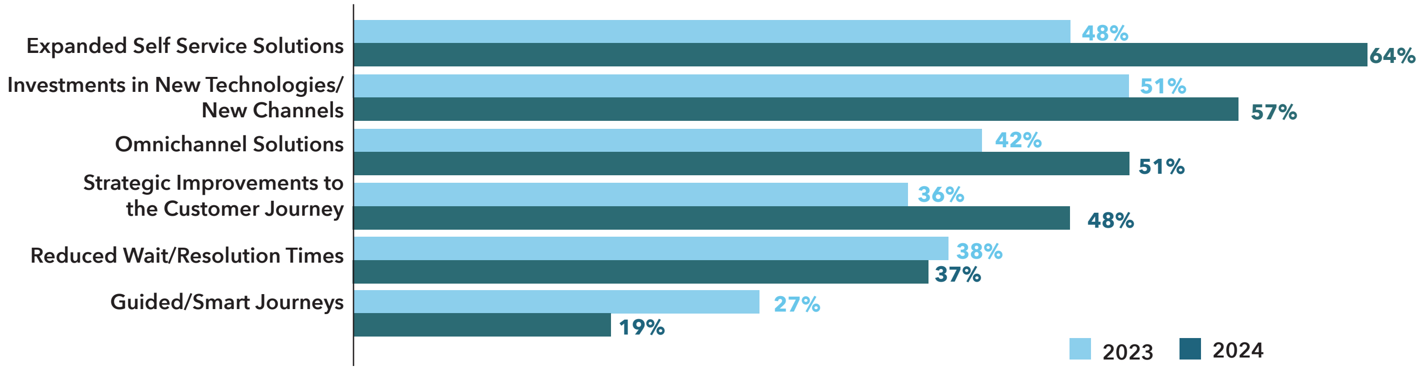
What could the customer care team you interacted with have done differently to improve your overall multichannel experience? (Select all that apply.)



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

What are some of the specific initiatives your organization has implemented to create greater ease for customers as they navigate across channels? (Select all that apply.)



WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN RESOLVING A CUSTOMER CARE ISSUE

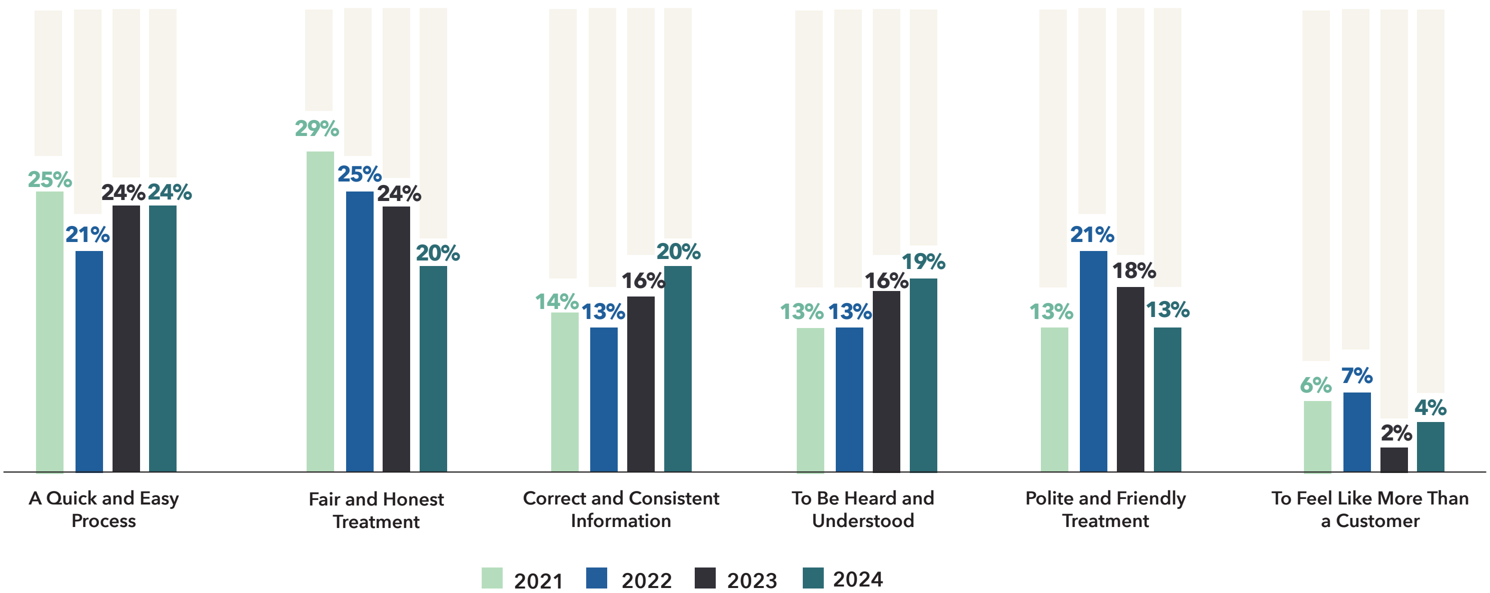
Consumer Comparisons

It's no surprise how highly consumers rate the importance of "A Quick and Easy Process" and "Correct and Consistent Information," something both consumers and CX leaders can agree on. But consumers also placed a lot of emphasis on "Fair and Honest Treatment," something very few CX leaders pointed to as of importance to consumers. Company policies play a big role in how consumers perceive brands, so companies should take the time to periodically investigate how their customers feel about the current set of policies, and adjust accordingly.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

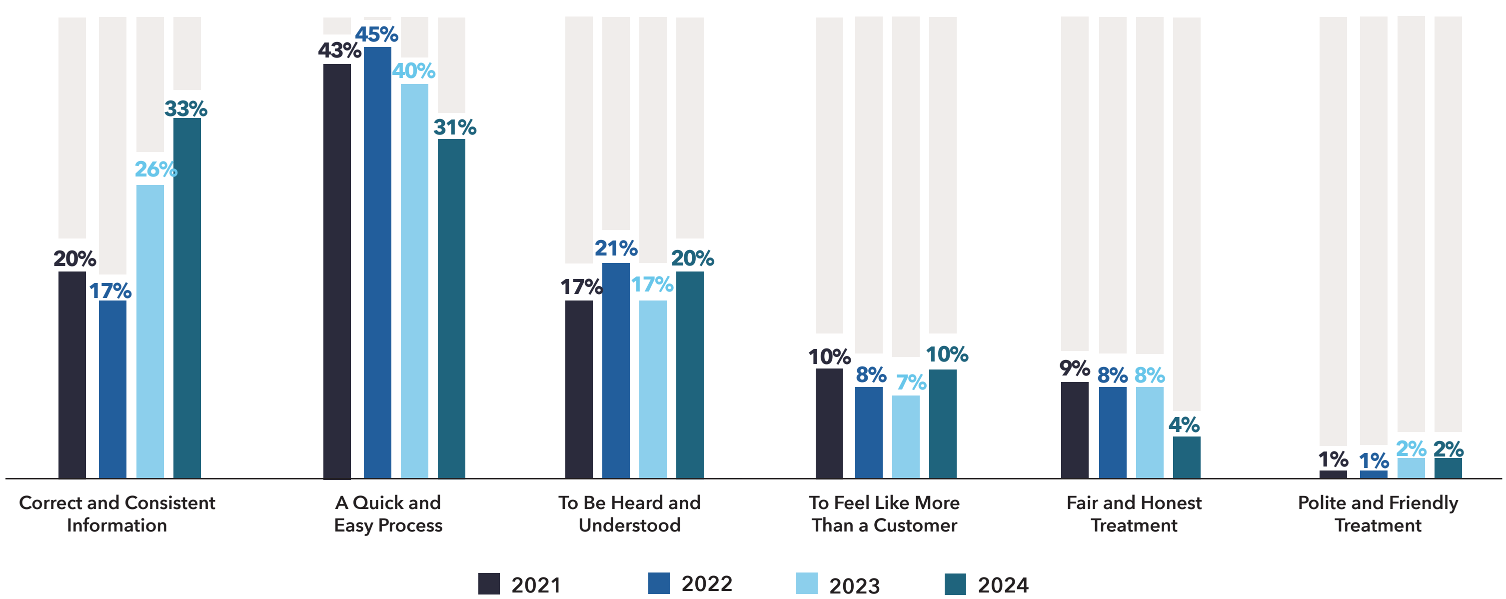
Aside from getting your issue resolved satisfactorily, what is most important when dealing with a large brand to resolve a customer care issue?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

Aside from getting their issues resolved satisfactorily, what do you think is most important to your customers when trying to resolve a customer-care issue?

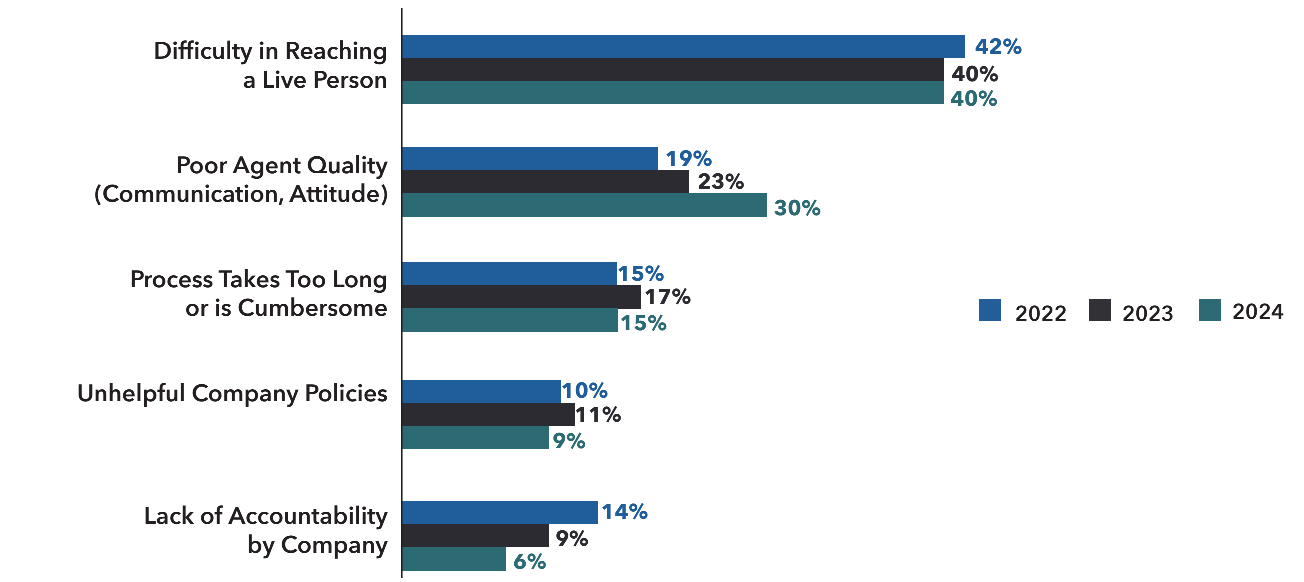


As highlighted elsewhere in this report, there continues to be a significant disconnect between consumers and CX leaders in understanding what drives frustration in resolving customer care issues. Consumers are pretty consistent in pointing to "Difficulty in Reaching a Live Person" as the primary driver of frustration, while CX leaders consistently place such concerns at or near the bottom of their list. Easy access to a live agent, even if that access is not utilized, provides customers with peace of mind, and its presence may even serve to boost adoption of unassisted solutions, knowing a helpful agent is just a click or two away.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

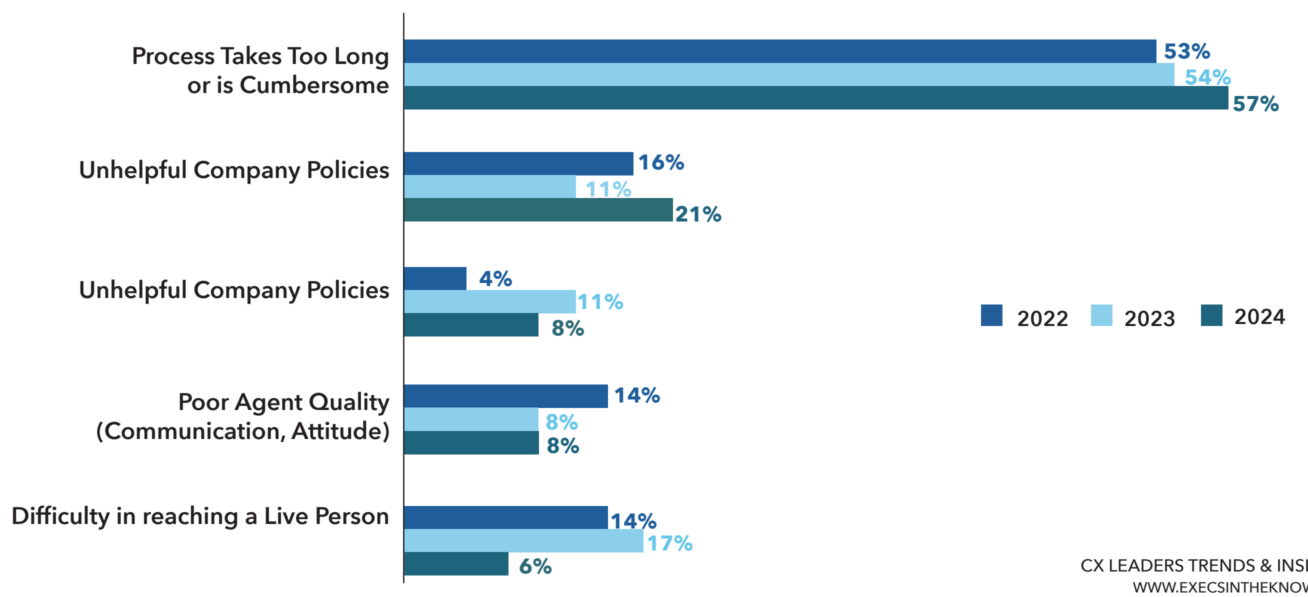
What do you find to be the most frustrating aspect of resolving a customer care issue with a brand?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

What do you think is the most frustrating aspect of resolving a customer care issue for consumers?



Consumer Comparisons

Compared to CX leaders, consumers are a lot more diversified in their opinion on how brands can create an exceptional customer care experience. While CX leaders focus on "Creating a Faster, Easier Service Experience" and "Deploying More Tools and Technology," consumers, first and foremost, want companies to listen to their customers, as well as create a faster, easier experience and focus on better employees (and better treatment for employees). One very noticeable difference between the two perspectives comes with "Deploy More Tools and Technology." While only five percent of consumers think companies should deploy such solutions to improve the experience, 27% of CX leaders point to deploying more tools and technology to create a better experience.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

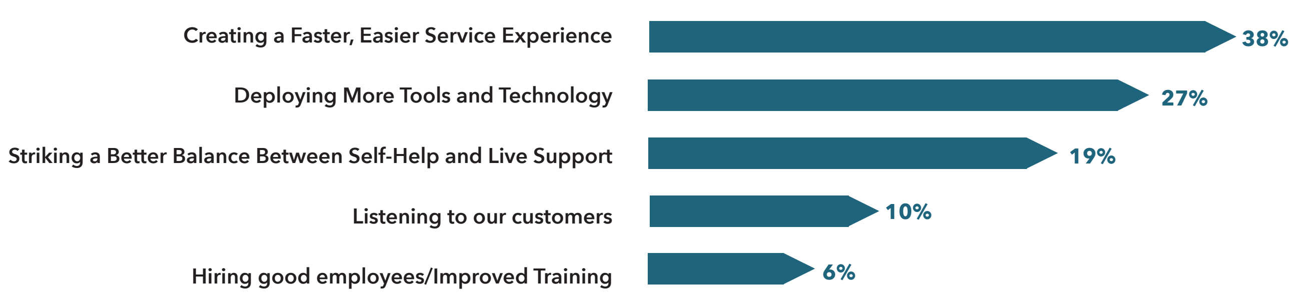
2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

What do companies need to do right in order to create an exceptional customer care experience?

CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

What is your top priority over the next 12 months in creating an exceptional customer care experience?

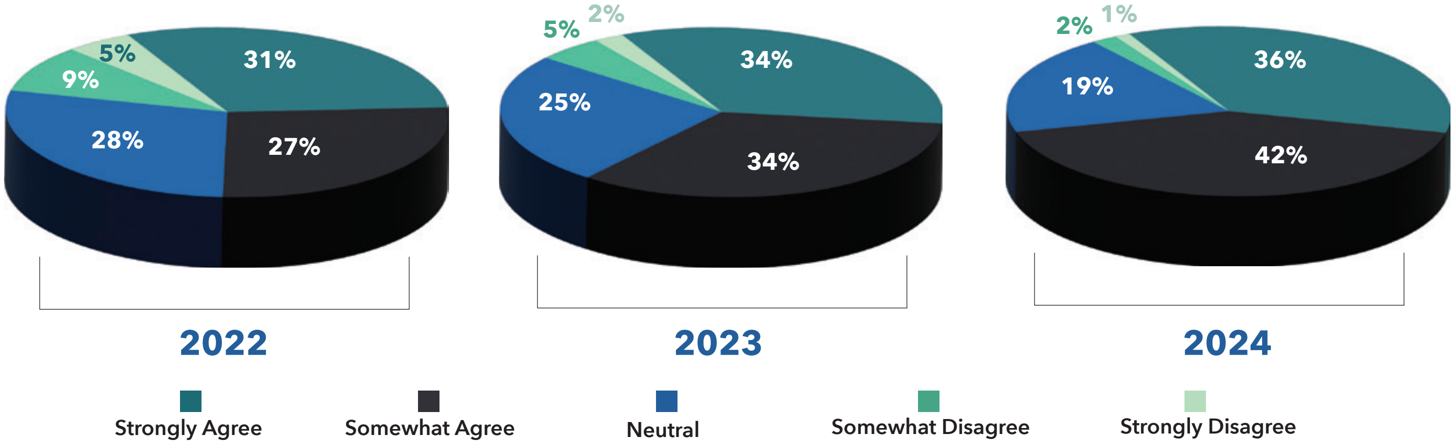


Consumers and CX leaders are generally in agreement about the importance of customer care agents being passionate about the brands they represent, with a combined 78% of consumers agreeing that it's important for customer care agents to be passionate, compared to 89% of CX leaders. Of course, this applies more strongly depending on the brand and product category. But generally speaking, agents who are more passionate about the brands they represent are more likely to be engaged, motivated to help, and provide exceptional stewardship for the brand.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

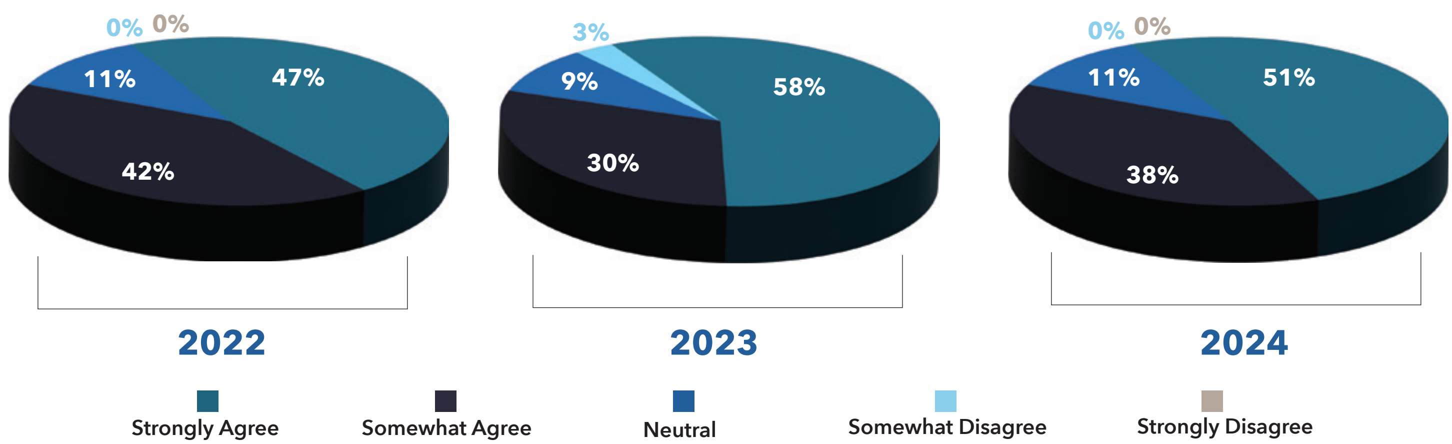
How do you feel about the following statement: It is important for customer care agents to be very passionate about the brands they represent.



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

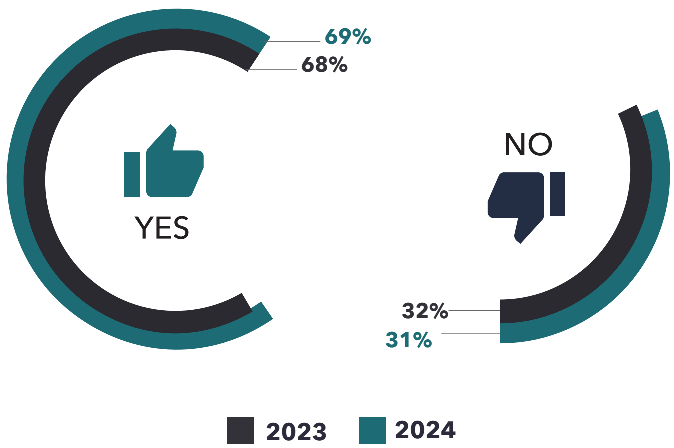
In your opinion, how do you think YOUR CUSTOMERS feel about the following statement: It is important for customer care agents to be very passionate about the brands they represent.



On the matter of paying a little more for a product or service to ensure world-class service, consumers are actually more into the idea than CX leaders give them credit for. In 2024, 69% of consumers indicated they'd be willing to pay a little more for a product or service to ensure world-class customer care support, while 63% of CX leaders indicated the same of their customers. This result highlights the importance among consumers of receiving exceptional customer care support, even at increased expense or the products and services they use. Brands should consider this fact as they invest in their customer care operations.

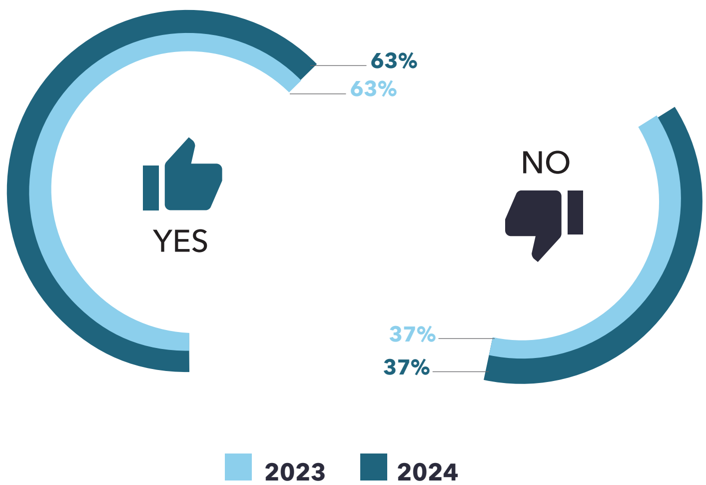
CONSUMER VIEWPOINT
2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

Would you be willing to pay a little more for a product or service if it meant you'd get world-class customer care support?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT
2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

Do you think your customers would be willing to pay a little more for your products or services if it meant they'd get world-class customer care support?

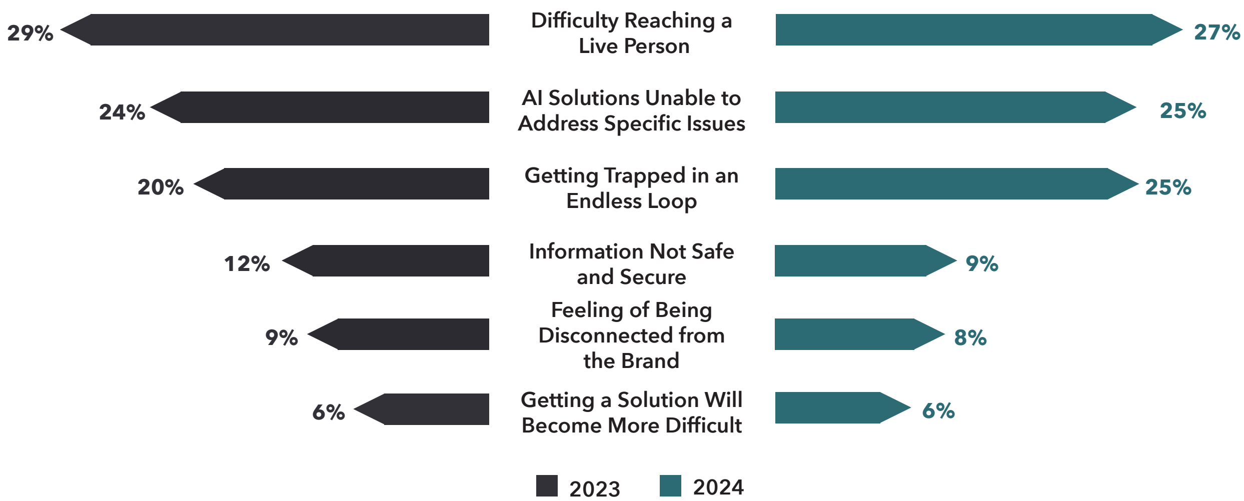


While consumers do have moderate concerns with issues that could arise from frustrations related to quality (i.e., "Getting Trapped in an Endless Loop"), the primary concerns of consumers having to do with companies increasingly relying on AI solutions continues to focus on "Difficultly Reaching a Live Person." Consumers are also considerably less concerned with the safety and security of information compared to CX leaders, and they are also moderately more concerned with AI solutions being unable to address specific issues as a part of the resolution process.

CONSUMER VIEWPOINT

2024 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CONSUMER EDITION

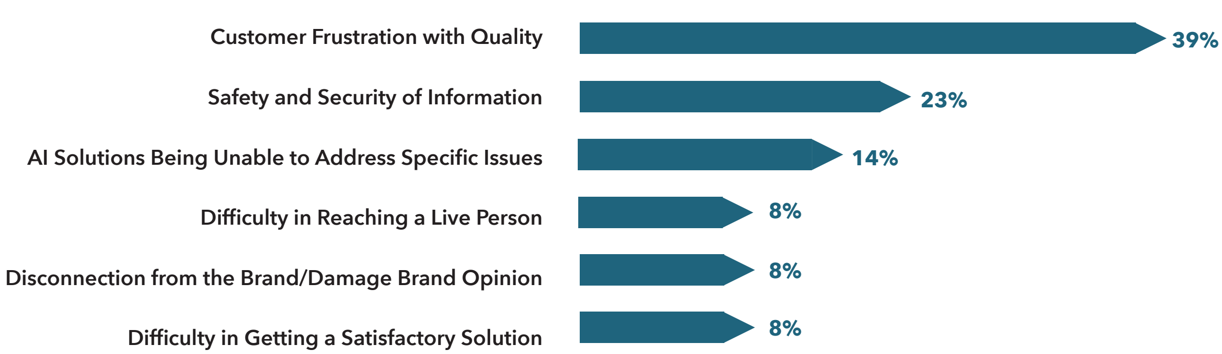
What's your biggest concern with companies increasingly relying on AI solutions for customer care?



CORPORATE VIEWPOINT

2025 CX LEADERS TRENDS & INSIGHTS: CORPORATE EDITION

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



ABOUT
Execs In The Know

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 bi-annual 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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TELUS Digital (NYSE & TSX: TIXT) crafts unique and enduring experiences for customers and employees, and creates future-focused digital transformations that stand the test of time. We are the brand behind the brands. Our global team members are both passionate ambassadors of our clients' products and services, and visionary technology experts resolute in our pursuit to elevate their end customer journeys, solve business challenges, mitigate risks, and drive continuous innovation. Our portfolio of end-to-end, integrated capabilities include digital IT services, such as cloud solutions and AI-fueled automation, trust and safety services, AI data solutions, including expertise in computer vision, and front-end digital design and consulting services. Fuel iX™ is TELUS Digital's proprietary GenAI engine at the heart of our innovation, helping enterprises advance their GenAI pilots to working prototypes and production at scale, quickly, securely and responsibly across multiple environments, applications and clouds.

Powered by purpose, TELUS Digital leverages technology, human ingenuity and compassion to fuel remarkable outcomes and create inclusive, thriving communities in the regions where we operate around the world. Guided by our Humanity-in-the-loop principles, we take a responsible approach to the transformational technologies we develop and deploy by proactively considering and addressing the broader impacts of our work.

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