

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

The CX Shift

A study of customer
expectations in the AI era





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Transform CX. Accelerate Growth.

Everywhere I look across Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), the message from consumers is consistent: after decades of frustration, they want their service issues resolved immediately. The good news is they are starting to see technology deliver that expectation and AI is making it possible. It's lifting the standard for everyone and turning customer experience from an area of potential loss into a significant growth lever.

Paul Fipps, President, Global Customer Operations, ServiceNow calls, CX "the growth opportunity of this moment". But capturing it is not about layering more tools on top of old systems. Too many organisations are still operating with disconnected platforms and fragmented data, creating friction for customers and burnout for service teams. When customers must repeat themselves, or when customer service representatives are forced to jump between multiple systems, their ability to actually resolve issues quickly falters.

AI is changing that, allowing organisations to reimagine customer relationships. They are treating CRM as an experience platform, the connective tissue that orchestrates every interaction across the business, built on unified data and powered by AI. That foundation is what enables faster resolution, more consistent service, and experiences that feel personal, not scripted.

At ServiceNow, we believe that the future is human and AI, and our research backs this up. Already, 55% of customer service representatives say AI is essential for delivering superior service, and customers agree. When they choose not to self-serve, they expect customer service representatives equipped with AI to get the job done.

The key: design an AI-led experience with emotional intelligence (EQ) built in, and keep humans in the loop, ready to step in when the customer expects it.

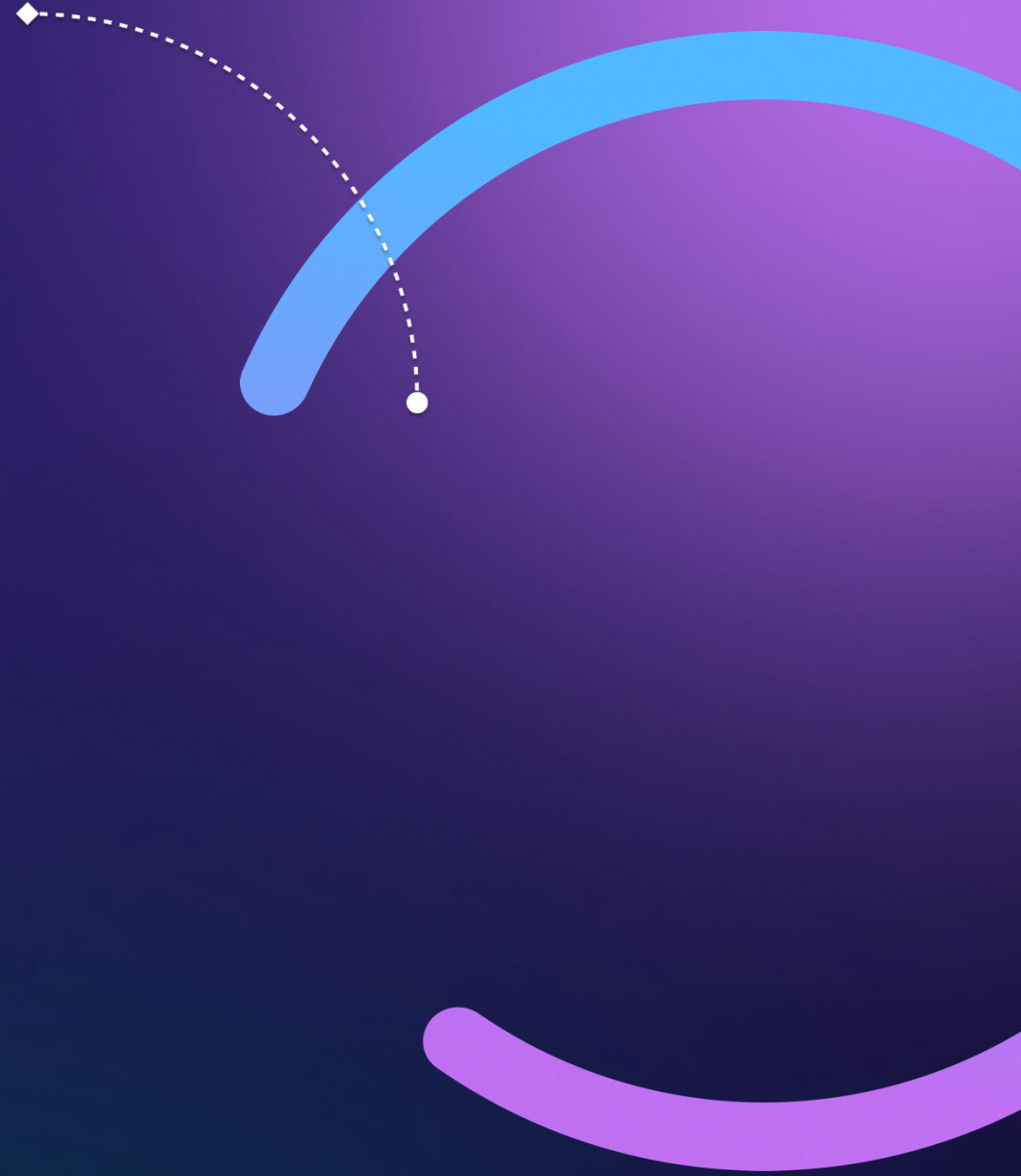
The new expectation is practicality. AI should remove the busywork and accelerate resolution, while people focus on the moments that require judgement, empathy and trust.

The question for organisations across ANZ is not whether expectations will keep rising. They will. The question is whether you are building the connected foundation that makes speedy resolution, personalisation and trust possible for customers.



Adrian Johnston
President, APAC Sales
ServiceNow

The CX shift



The changing CX landscape and what's at stake

What 34,000+ voices revealed about the future of CX

To understand how AI is reshaping CX, ServiceNow partnered with research firm ThoughtLab to conduct an extensive global study across 17 countries and eight industries, including:

- 2,000 customers from Australia and New Zealand
- 425 customer service representatives from Australia and New Zealand
- 270 Australian executives

Three critical tension points were uncovered

- What customers expect versus their lived experiences
- What service reps need and what holds them back
- Where executives invest versus what customers value

Getting CX right is non-negotiable

Organisations that excel at it capture market share from those that don't. Our research proves it: Customers walk away from poor service, and organisations that deploy AI effectively see concrete improvements in both revenue and retention.

The promise of AI has raised the bar for customer expectations and there's no going back

Customers expect speed: instant responses, 24/7 availability, and transactions completed in seconds. They are starting to experience hyper-personalisation and recommendations that anticipate their needs, content tailored to their preferences, and service that remembers their history. But is that enough?

Organisations must treat AI as a multiplier of human potential, not a replacement

They're using it to do more with less, when they should be using it to enable service reps to do what only humans can do: Build trust, demonstrate empathy, and create emotional connections that drive lasting loyalty.

A widening gap has emerged between what customers want and what they get

While customers say AI has improved their experiences, they're simultaneously frustrated by systems that feel faster yet less understanding, more responsive yet less empathetic.

As organisations race to deliver on AI-enabled capabilities, they're solving only half the equation. Out-of-balance solutions are optimising for efficiency at the expense of human empathy and emotional connection. And frontline service reps, caught in the middle, are being asked to deliver human connection while trapped in systems that make genuine customer engagement challenging.

The gaps



WHAT CUSTOMERS WANT

Customers want both speed and empathy

Customers expect both efficient solutions and genuine understanding, yet most organisations struggle to deliver on both fronts.

Over half (55%) of ANZ customers expect improved speed and efficiency as the top benefit of AI in the future.

Their top frustration? Lack of empathy (also cited by 55% of customers).

WHAT SERVICE REPS NEED

Service reps want to help, but they're trapped in systems that hinder them

While service reps are responsible for building customer relationships, efforts are often hampered by their own technology.

Only 44% of their time is spent addressing customer issues and follow-ups. The rest is consumed by administrative tasks (16%) or navigating system complexity, with 77% of reps working across three to five different systems. Additionally, just 44% agree their organization has provided the tools and training needed to deliver superior experiences.

WHAT EXECUTIVES MISS

Executives are investing in AI, but they're missing what matters most to customers

Executives are solving for efficiency while customers are demanding empathy. They're prioritising advanced digital channels while customers prefer familiar ones with human support.

Organisations are lagging in the area customers value above all else: emotional connection. Only 10% of organisations report meaningful AI progress in building emotional connections with customers. This is a high customer priority, but it's the lowest area of organisational investment.

The CX imperative

Win loyalty in an AI-driven world

CX disconnects are costly. Almost half (47%) of Australian executives report high churn from poor customer experiences, and the same percentage (47%) of Australian and NZ customers say they would switch to a competitor because of slow or inadequate service. The issue isn't AI itself; it's how it's deployed. The critical question is simple: Are you using AI to replace human connection or enable it?

While many organisations race toward automation, our research shows customers want more than speed. They want to feel understood. Service reps don't need replacing; they need empowering. And executives who invest in efficiency alone miss the bigger opportunity: loyalty.

Winning organisations use AI to handle what machines do best (speed, accuracy, and administrative task) while freeing humans to do what only humans can: build trust and create emotional connections.

Put AI to work for people

Success begins with measuring what truly matters, things such as empathy, trust, and emotional connection alongside speed and efficiency. It means deploying AI not as a substitute for human interaction, but as an enabler that automates routine tasks and surfaces insights so teams can focus on relationships.

Organisations must also invest in autonomous AI that resolves issues through self-service, while preparing their workforce with the training, tools, and interpersonal skills needed to thrive. Additionally, CRM should evolve into an experience platform that orchestrates seamless workflows across every function, powered by unified data that treats each customer as an individual.

By taking these steps, organisations can eliminate the disconnect between customer expectations, service capabilities, and executive priorities, delivering experiences that are more efficient and more human.



What customers want

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What makes me feel valued is that [customer service representatives] actually understand the problem from my perspective, which I think takes empathy.

Consumer, Australia.

My take: Putting the ‘wow’ in CX

Driving enterprise outcomes with AI

We’ve all been enticed by large language models and the conversational nature of AI, but we’re missing AI’s true potential: driving actual enterprise outcomes.

Everyone talks about contact center call deflections and answering simple questions. Those are valuable, but in two years we’ll see them as relatively immature. To achieve AI’s real potential, you need an underlying system of action where AI can do things on behalf of the enterprise, the way humans do today.

At Bell Canada, we started by asking: what’s the size of an AI agent? Think about a backup camera in your car. That microchip is mission-specific but does one thing brilliantly. Should you have one dispute resolution agent, or one for cell phone bills in Ontario?

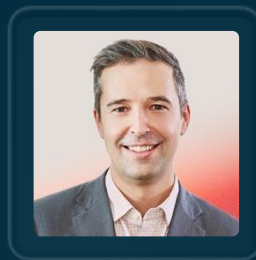
We’ve built agents that do exactly that. One handles loyalty points disputes, validating transactions to resolve issues almost instantly. Another handles complex disputes, surfacing missing data to pull signal out of the noise and trigger the right workflows.

Crucially, we’ve embraced a human in the loop paradigm—one that remains deeply human but is AI assisted. We transcribe every call in real time. While the human agent

focuses on empathy, AI prompts reps and digs through transactions in the background. No more frustrating “give me a moment” pauses.

None of this works without the right foundation. We’re increasingly handing off to specialized agents on an integrated platform. AI doesn’t achieve its full potential if you’re federating disparate systems. You need consistent data models and unified systems of action.

My advice? Start small and stay focused on business outcomes you’re trying to achieve. Focus on use cases where you have data and workflows. Think in continuous iterations, not perfect end states. And listen—I’m constantly surprised by people saying “we could do this.” Let people pick up the rocks and see what’s underneath. That’s where real innovation happens.



Lukas Lhotsky

President
Ateko, Bell Canada

Customers want speed and empathy

Speed is table stakes, but empathy wins

Customers expect responsive service, but they value being treated as humans, not transactions. For many organisations, the balance between speed and empathy is off. While 39% of customers report experiencing improved speed and efficiency from AI in customer service, their No. 1 frustration is clear: lack of empathy.

Simultaneously, AI is raising the bar for resolution speed. Over half (55%) of customers say improved speed, efficiency and convenience is the top benefit of AI they expect in the future.



If it's a simple issue...I'm totally fine with using AI, because it's actually quicker and it'll be more efficient.

Consumer, U.S.



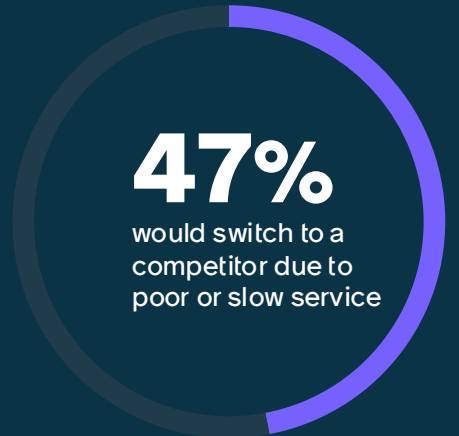
Because humans have immersion, they...can tell when you're frustrated. ...I just don't think AI would have the same amount of empathy.

Consumer, Australia

Emotional connection matters



Getting it wrong is costly



Customers want tech and humans

Blend high tech with high touch

Most customers prefer self-service for simple tasks such as making a purchase, but they demand seamless escalation to a human for complex interactions.

When customers prefer a human

- Engaging in a client relationship
- Obtaining advice and recommendations
- Making an inquiry

When customers prefer technology

- Making purchases or payments
- Receiving loyalty and reward offer
- Getting offers for products and service

Customer preferences must drive channel strategy, not the other way around

There is a clear mismatch between customers' communication preferences and organisations' priorities. Customers prefer familiar channels often with human support—phone calls, mobile apps, live chats, basic chatbots, and email messages—while executives are prioritising more advanced digital channels, such as social media, self-service tools, rich communications, and intelligent chatbots.

Customers want AI that anticipates their needs and people who truly understand them.

Around a third (32%) expect a high level of personalisation from organisations that use AI for customer service, helping every interaction feel faster, smarter, and more personal.



If it's a more complex and multi-step question or something very personalised to me...then I'd want to talk to a person [to whom] I can... ask questions backwards and forwards to clarify my understanding.

Consumer, Singapore

Customers are willing to use self-service tools when they work.

But they still want human connection.

Preferences are nuanced

While phone calls are a top customer preference, our research also shows that 75% of customers prefer to use self-service first before calling a service rep.

And only 30% prefer receiving service from a human rather than a machine. But at the same time, 51% say that current chatbots don't understand their questions and concerns.

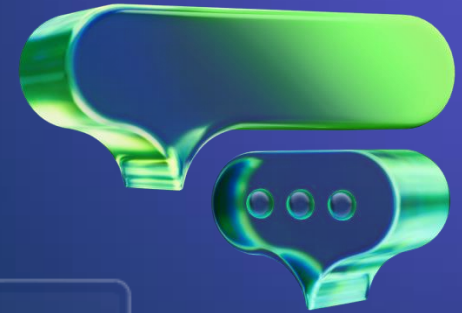
The problem is clear

Organisations need to strike the right balance between humans and technology. Customers have not fully embraced leveraging self-service driven by AI, but as these technologies improve, customers may be more willing to use self-service for complex issues.

A customer in India underscores this sentiment, sharing, "I think AI will be more intelligent and actually try to understand the uniqueness and complexity of different situations and maybe help just like a human does."



Customers want the right help, right now



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If I'm in a rush, I would prefer to speak to AI [agents] because they're faster and more efficient.

Consumer, Australia

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The AI chatbot could not help me with my query, and there was no option to be referred to a human. So I didn't have a good experience with it.

Consumer, Singapore

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The AI clearly acknowledged my issue and responded in a natural, humanlike tone. The small movement of understanding made the interaction feel smoother and more personal

Consumer, India

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My problem was efficiently handed off to a human assistant...I didn't have to do any other digging...it was a really smooth and seamless experience.

Consumer, Australia

What service reps need



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When you're speaking to an actual person, and there's a genuine comfort... you can connect with the representative... and hopefully get the resolution that you need

Consumer, Australia



Service reps need time and training

Reps aren't spending time where it matters most

High call volume is the top challenge for service reps, hindering their ability to provide the personalised, human connection that customers demand.

Furthermore, less than half of their time is spent addressing customer questions and issues. Instead, reps are focusing on handling administrative tasks, summarising call notes, and chasing teams for information, taking time away from what customers want most: building human connections.



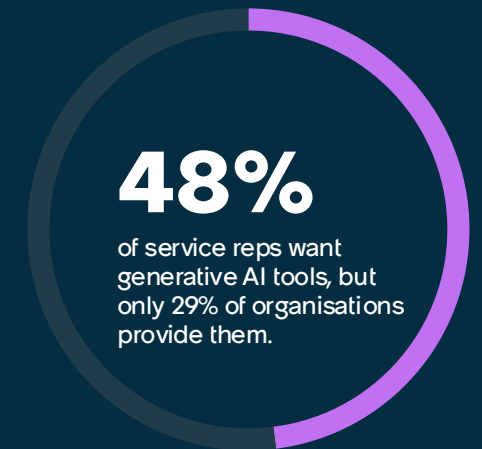
Training and tools are lacking

Service reps don't feel prepared for the AI era. Better training emerged as the most critical improvement area, with 54% of service reps identifying it as necessary for superior CX. Additionally, 43% report that customer requests require escalation due to needing specialised knowledge or expertise, suggesting skill gaps that training could address.



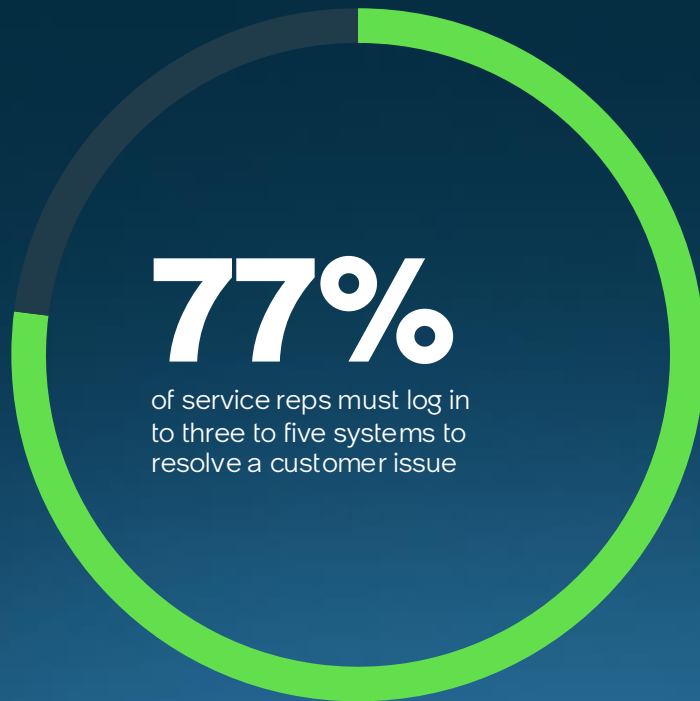
ANZ service reps are clear that AI is part of the solution

- 54% say AI is important for delivering superior service
- 64% trust new AI tools
- 62% believe organisations need to improve their use of AI to better serve customers



Service reps need connected systems

Customer service reps face fragmented systems that cause friction and data inconsistency. It prevents them from efficiently and effectively helping customers. But executives often underestimate the challenges their teams face.



My take: Transforming CRM into a system of action

I've spent a significant part of my career in CRM, watching systems evolve from sales contact databases into sprawling platforms. Throughout the journey, I've recognised that CRM systems could genuinely deliver better customer relationships and experiences. But the truth is, they have fallen short. The failure wasn't just about execution either. It was solving the wrong problem from the start, as the systems were designed to drive sales productivity and track deals, not deliver superior customer outcomes.

In recent years, we were told that CRM would transform customer experience. But, as it expanded into customer service and added channels and data, it brought the same DNA with it – optimising for internal metrics, not customer value. The result? It left us with long wait times, bad chatbots, and burned-out service reps trying to navigate systems that were never built with the customer in mind. They were now just sophisticated systems of record, not systems of action.

Now with AI, there is a unique opportunity to right this wrong. But to be clear: AI isn't solving the problem yet, as having the capability and applying it are two different things altogether. Today's conversational chatbots and AI agents can do more than talk—they can act, automating the tedious workflows behind every request: qualifying claims, checking policies, gathering data. Work that took hours can now be finished in seconds.

But transforming your CRM system will not happen overnight. To realise the full potential, CRM must evolve. It requires a solid data foundation and the right leadership and AI tools. Organisations need to layer intelligent workflows and AI on top of that data to create a true system of action. This requires deliberate leadership, the right tools, and a clear strategy.

Start by identifying your top five high-frequency workflows that don't require a human touch. Build those first. But here's the part many miss: while you're automating, work with your team to identify where they can add rich human connection. Where does judgment matter? How can they build real relationships? When you get this balance right—AI handling high-volume, mundane work while freeing people for complex cases that demand human judgment and empathy—only then will your CRM deliver resolution, speed, and humanity at scale.



Eric Bensley

Global Product Marketing Leader, CRM
ServiceNow

Human connection makes all the difference



I think what makes an interaction truly human is when a person goes kind of above and beyond for you. And when you can tell that they are truly doing it, not for the money, but to actually serve you as a customer or as a person....

Consumer, Australia



When I'm trying to solve an issue, speaking to a human just gives me that affirmation, that human touch that you're talking to somebody who's actively thinking the same way you are and is on the same level with you as far as having feelings and understanding your situation.

Consumer, U.S.



I prefer speaking to a human, as it tends to always lead to a solution. The human will always try and find workarounds and will even sometimes ask their upper management to find a workaround for me, so I will almost always be leaving with a solution.

Consumer, Australia



What executives are missing



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I was expecting either a resolution or to be put through to a human, and neither of those happened.

Consumer, Australia

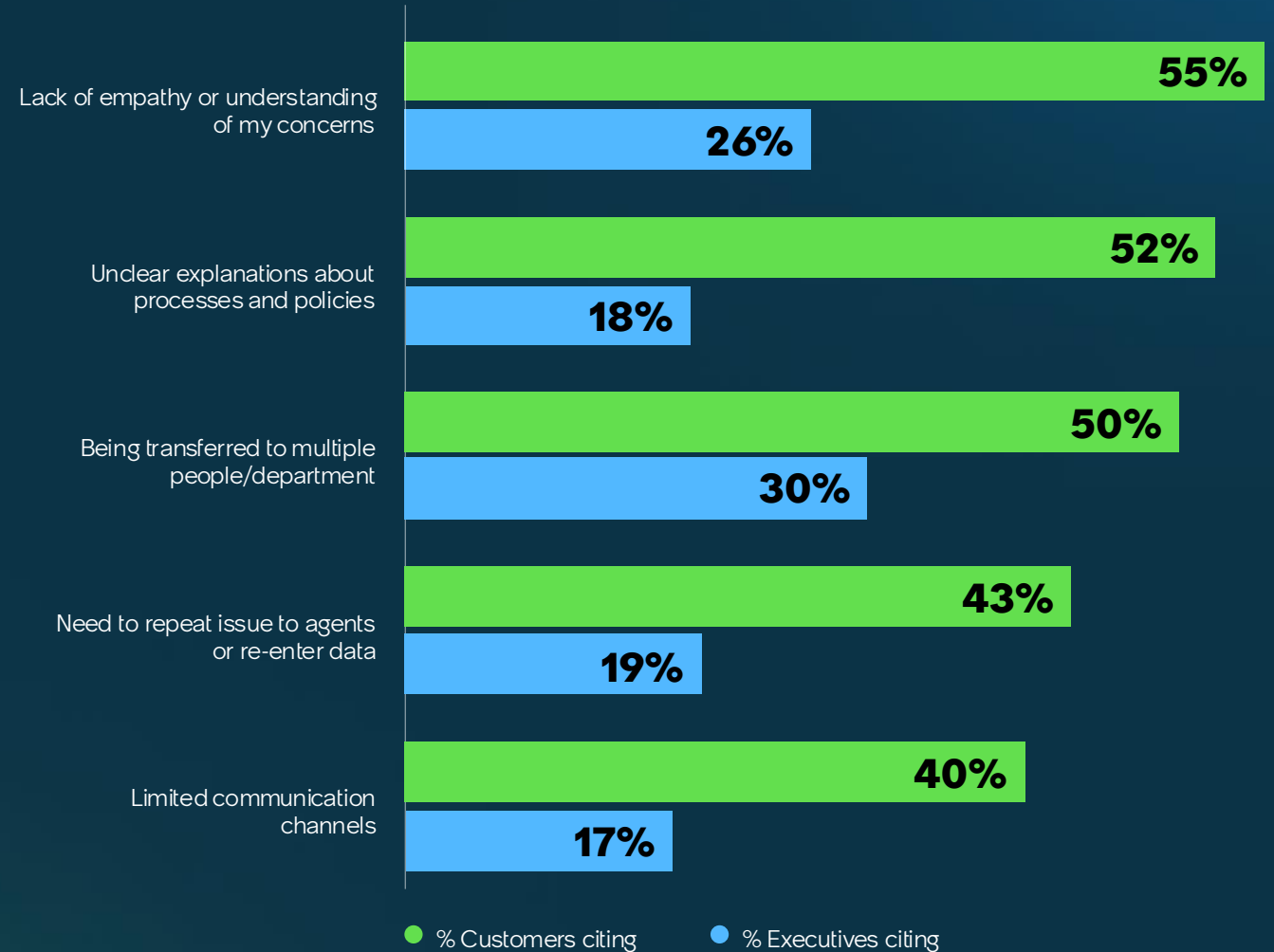


Australian Executives aren't moving the needle where it matters most

Executives often misjudge or overlook the challenges their customers face. The consequences can be serious.

While lack of empathy and understanding is the number one frustration of customers (cited by 55%), only 26% of executives see it that way. Executive and customer views are even more divided on challenges such as unclear explanations about processes and policies and the need to repeat issues to service reps. These perception gaps can cause organisations to implement solutions for the wrong problems and fail to address customers' biggest pain points.

Execs think they know top challenges. Customers disagree.



Executives must do more to align AI strategy with customer priorities

Many executives in Australia lack understanding of how AI can be applied to solve human problems. To make their AI investments count, organisations need to align their CX strategies with their customers' needs. Currently, only a minority of organisations have made material progress applying AI to areas their customers value most, particularly emotional connection.

Top four customer values in CX

01 Responsiveness

30%

02 Trustworthiness

29%

03 Security and privacy

32%

04 Emotional connection

10%

Organisations' progress improving each area through AI*

* Midway or advanced in AI implementation

Executives grapple with siloed enterprises

Fragmentation blocks AI's true value

AI progress is slow. Customers value responsiveness, trustworthiness, security, and emotional connections most, but less than a third of organisations have made significant progress improving these areas through AI.

The problem is siloed customer data, systems, and islands of AI that prevent teams from working in sync to resolve customer issues and deliver great experiences. Only 45% of organisations have integrated data across silos into a single source of truth. Just 26% are breaking down silos to enable seamless integration of AI strategies across departments.

This fragmentation doesn't just limit AI's impact; it actively undermines CX. Half of ANZ customers (50%) feel frustrated when transferred between multiple people or departments, while 43% are frustrated by having to repeat or re-enter information.

CRM has untapped potential

CRM is often considered the bedrock of customer service. Yet few executives have optimised their CRM platform to hardwire the voice of the customer into every decision and action. This requires more than just a system of record; it demands a system of action powered by AI and workflows that unite the entire customer lifecycle.

Only half (54%) of Australian executives say their organisation has deployed an end-to-end CRM platform that provides support across the entire customer lifecycle.

Even fewer are optimising their CRM platform to deliver next-level customer experiences: Just 42% are deploying AI agents, 42% are integrating data across systems, 32% are unifying issue resolution, and 29% are enabling cross-functional collaboration across the lifecycle.

only

35%

of Australian execs have made significant progress connecting people, data, and processes via AI-enabled workflows running on a unified platform.

Solving customer issues means delivering human + AI experiences

CUSTOMERS LOVE AI WHEN IT WORKS



I was pleased that [the AI] accurately grasped my request and responded in a short time, without any human intervention required.

Consumer, Japan

The bot didn't just give me three random options. It actually pulled up my profile details, which must have had my travel preferences stored, and replied with two filtered options that were explicitly shortest total travel time and minimal change of gates.

Consumer, U.S.

CUSTOMERS ALSO WANT EASY ACCESS TO HUMANS



If it's a more complex and multistep question or something very personalised to me...then I'd want to talk to a person [to whom] I can...ask questions backwards and forwards to maybe clarify my understanding.

Consumer, Australia

The moment [the AI chatbot] automatically shifted to a human without me asking really stood out because it felt like the system understood my frustration instantly.

Consumer, India

The building blocks for AI-powered CX



Six strategies for a human + AI era

Delivering exceptional customer experiences in the AI era requires more than adopting new technologies. It demands a strategic, holistic approach that transforms every aspect of service.

To close the gap between rising customer expectations and actual experiences, there are six best practices organisations can embrace. These strategies show how to harness AI, empower teams, and build connected, responsive service at every step of the customer journey.



01 Rethink how you measure CX success.

02 Go beyond AI copilots.

03 Tap into autonomous AI for self-service.

04 Prepare CX teams for the agentic AI era.

05 Deploy strategic CRM as an experience platform.

06 Unite data to fuel AI-driven experiences.

My take: Earn autonomy in stages



AI is transforming customer experience from isolated fixes into “total experience”—unifying platforms, people, and AI agents across the full customer journey. To succeed, organisations have to stop treating platforms, AI and human agents, and last-mile execution as separate blocks. Design one seamless 360-degree experience for the customer.

View agentification as a staged journey. Start with assisted AI, where agents capture and summarise issues for humans who provide resolution. Then move to augmented AI, where human and AI agents work together to resolve issues. Finally, graduate to autonomous AI, where AI agents handle most tasks and humans review and refine.

These stages must be sequential. You cannot jump to autonomous without getting assisted and augmented right, because each phase teaches the organisation how to design, govern, and trust AI. Develop a strong learning culture to recalibrate the roles of human and AI agents as technology evolves. Treat continuous learning as a core job requirement, redesigning frontline agent roles from transaction handlers to learners and improvers.

As agentic AI grows, organisations will start managing AI agents as part of the workforce —defining their roles, identifying their skills, providing incentives and governance to ensure success. At Cognizant, HR has augmented human agents with AI agents for internal services, and the CHRO is accountable for adoption, experience design, and performance across both.

Don't treat AI as a shortcut or quick fix. Map your journeys, build agents across the lifecycle, and create a culture that keeps learning.



Sriram Kumaresan

SVP and Global Head of Cloud
Infrastructure and Security,
Cognizant

01 Rethink how you measure CX success

Focus on the empathy and experience gaps that matter most

Use AI to transform how the organisation measures CX by generating richer analysis than traditional metrics such as NPS and CSA.

AI models can analyse every call, chat, email, and review to produce measurements more attuned to customer needs, such as empathy and responsiveness scores, effort scores in resolving an issue, and sentiment indices that track trust, frustration, or satisfaction. Organisations can also use AI to analyse voice-of-customer data, revealing which factors—such as billing clarity, speed, or frontline empathy—have the greatest impact on CX scores and churn.

Leading companies are already acting on these ideas. Key hospitality groups, for example, use AI-based sentiment analysis on guest reviews and feedback to detect emotions such as disappointment or delight and adjust staffing, room standards, or digital experiences. Retailers and banks mine contact-center transcripts and chat logs to pinpoint friction points, such as confusing authentication flows or slow dispute handling, and then prioritise fixes with the biggest upside.

Just leveraging AI is not enough, though. To turn this intelligence into action, organisations should centralise CX metrics and reporting. A centralised governance framework standardises definitions, aligns AI and human-reported KPIs, and enables organisations to compare performance consistently by channel, segment, and journey stage.



Build a KPI framework for measuring AI impact

As AI reshapes CX, traditional KPIs no longer tell the whole story. Unfortunately, only 26% of organisations have figured out how to measure the impact of AI on CX.

To fill this gap, organisations should consider building measurement frameworks that link AI use cases to business outcomes across four dimensions:

1. **Empathy and trust**, such as AI sentiment scores relating to trust or frustration
2. **Operational efficiency**, such as the impact of AI on deflection rates in self-service portals and average handle time
3. **CX outcomes**, such as the impact of AI in improving NPS, CSAT, or customer churn and lifetime value
4. **Financial impact**, including the impact of AI on profit margins, costs, and incremental revenue



02 Go beyond AI copilots

Give reps the tools to deliver empathy and responsiveness at scale

AI tools do more than free up service reps to interact with customers. They heighten their ability to respond to individual customers with empathy, understanding, and personalised service.



Use AI solutions to help build emotional connection

- **Generative AI** provides service reps real-time context awareness for customer interactions and helps them communicate in a more natural and authentic way.
- **Sentiment analysis** can help service reps better understand customer emotions and provide personalised support that elevates empathy and trust.
- **Predictive analysis** can help service reps anticipate and proactively address customer problems before they escalate by analysing historical data and behavioral signals, predictive models.
- **Agentic AI** supports service reps by dynamically interpreting customer intent and assisting with real-time automation and knowledge retrieval. This collaboration helps reps quickly and accurately resolve complex cases.
- **Recommendation engines** can provide real-time suggestions for customer responses and next actions that fit an individual's preferences and circumstances.

Free time for service reps to focus on customers...

% of ANZ service reps that say AI has decreased time spent on key activities



...and make service reps more engaged and effective

% of ANZ service reps that say AI has impacted areas of their work



03 Tap into autonomous AI for self-service

Resolve self-service cases faster with agentic AI

Build hybrid CX approaches that go beyond using AI to augment human work to give customers what they want. This means harnessing generative and agentic AI to create self-service solutions with a greater ability to understand and respond to customer needs.

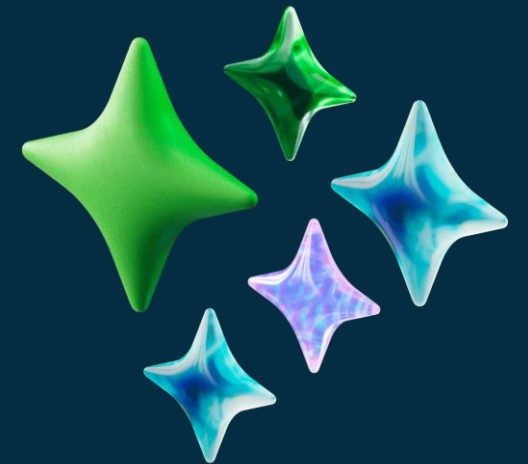
Over the next three years, over eight out of 10 Australian executives will be using technology alone—or together with a human service rep - to offer advice to customers (85%), manage purchasing and onboarding processes (82%), handle complaints (95%), and respond to inquiries (93%). This transition will require effective self-service.

AI agents will become the key—enabling organisations to automate complex processes, uncover bottlenecks, surface customer context and intelligence, and speed up work between departments and systems, thereby reducing response time, and streamlining escalations.



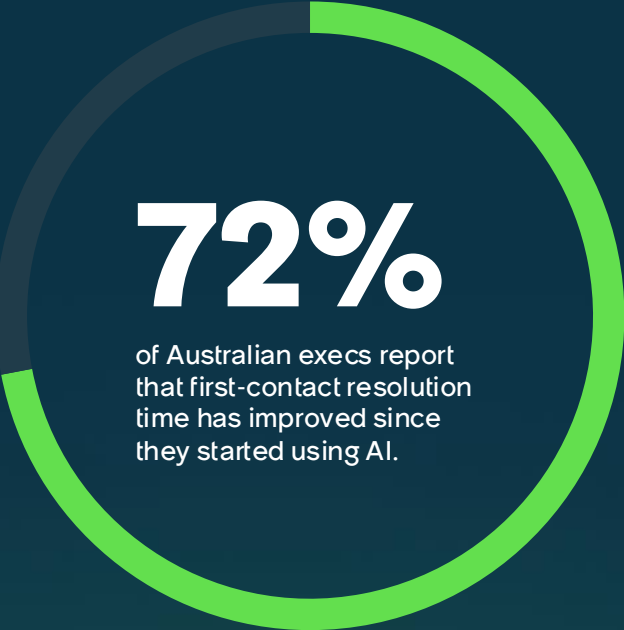
With Now Assist quickly identifying customer intent and finding the right answers, customers can self-serve common issues rather than wait for a live agent, It's a far richer experience than before.

IT Director, Technology Company, APAC



Reduce call burdens on service reps

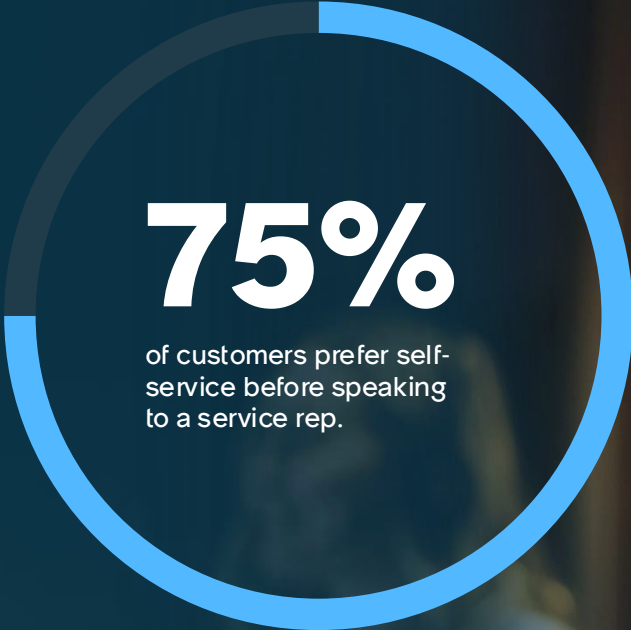
High call volume is the top challenge for service reps. Intuitive self-service portals can deliver first-call resolution and intelligent routing to reduce this burden.



72%

of Australian execs report that first-contact resolution time has improved since they started using AI.

Be responsive to customer preferences



75%

of customers prefer self-service before speaking to a service rep.



04 Prepare CX team for the agentic AI era

Equip teams for AI-powered work

Start by assessing and filling the AI skill gaps among CX teams and integrating AI tools into service reps' daily workflows. Provide ongoing AI training programs and get input from service reps on the AI tools they need.

Prepare your workforce for the future

With AI reshaping the future of work, executives will need to redefine the role of service reps, focusing on blending digital and interpersonal skills to stay on top.

Collaboration and communication skills will become critical as service reps collaborate across teams and take on more customer-relationship-building roles. Other priority skills include a continuous learning attitude alongside knowledge of AI and tech, which will be essential for keeping pace with AI innovation and growing customer expectations.



We deployed an AI coaching engine to upskill over 8,000 field and call centre agents [service reps], improving consistency, performance, and customer satisfaction across service teams.

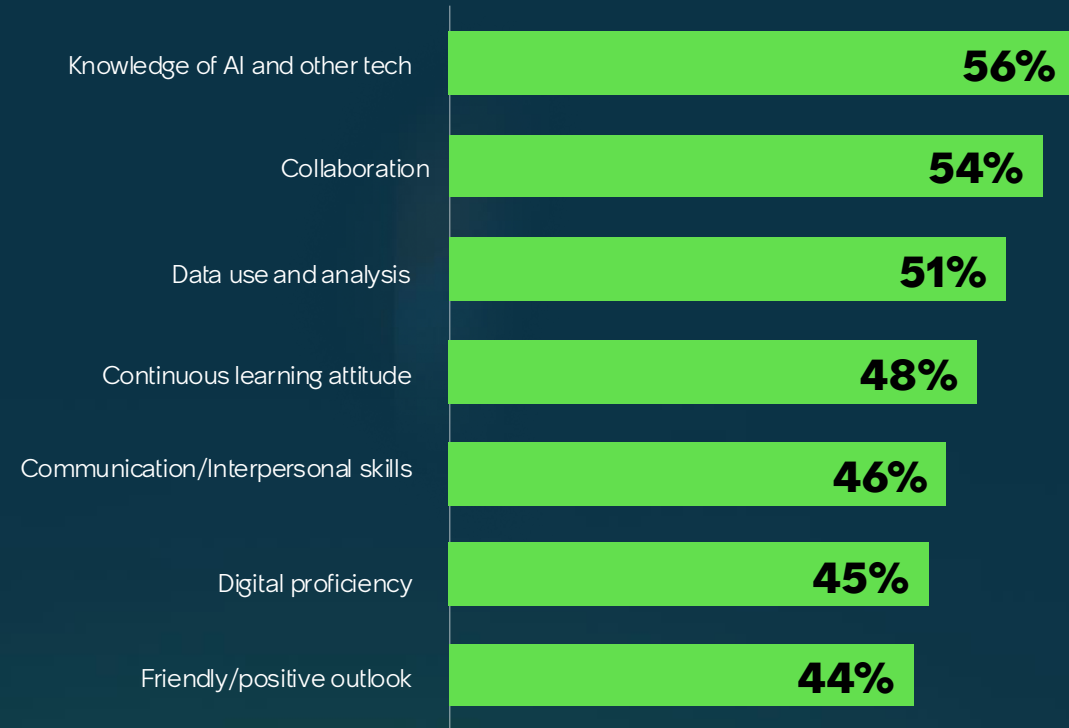
COO, Austrian telecoms firm



AI-powered training gives agents [service reps] personal guidance so they can develop skills continuously. The tools are designed to help agents improve their performance over time.

COO, U.S. retailer

Service rep skills prioritised by executives in the next three years



The evolving role of a service rep in the AI era

From: The reactive rep

Managing chaos, not relationships



The service rep's world

- Firefighting mode, overwhelmed by high call volumes
- Constantly switching between disconnected systems
- More time spent on admin than actual customer care
- Frequent escalations due to missing information

Skills that are valued

- Speed over quality
- Script adherence over critical thinking
- Multitasking
- Volume handling over relationship-building

Metrics that matter

- ⊗ Cases closed per hour
- ⊗ Queue clearance rate
- ⊗ Average handle time
- ⊗ Schedule adherence

To: The customer advocate

Connected systems = empathy at scale



The service rep's world

- One unified view of the customer; full context, instant access
- Focused on high-quality, empathetic conversations
- Proactive problem-solving before issues escalate
- AI handles routine tasks; reps build emotional connections

Skills that are valued

- Collaboration and communication
- Emotional intelligence and complex judgment
- Continuous learning and AI fluency
- Knowing when to trust AI versus overriding it

Metrics that matter

- ✓ First-contact resolution quality
- ✓ Customer lifetime value
- ✓ Issue prevention rate
- ✓ Service rep retention
- ✓ Empathy, trust, and emotional connection

05 Deploy strategic CRM as an experience platform

Combine end-to-end CRM systems with agentic AI to run workflows across the front, middle, and back office

Your CRM should be a real-time experience platform, not a customer database. Whether the task is mitigating a banking dispute or addressing a warranty claim, AI workflows can solve customer issues faster. Modern CRM needs to integrate data, deploy AI agents, unify omnichannel engagement, embed predictive analysis, and enable cross-functional collaboration. The result: Every interaction feels tailored and consistent across all channels, whether the customer is on the web, in-app, in-store, or talking to a human agent.

Turn your CRM into the infrastructure for human and AI collaboration at scale. As agentic AI is deployed more in CRM systems, service reps will shift from operators to supervisors who oversee the day-to-day CRM activities of AI agents. The result: more time to provide customers with the personal support they want.

Integrate workflows across functions

Connecting key CX workflows in a single platform is essential for fostering cross-functional collaboration and a seamless experience. Integrating marketing, customer service, sales, fulfillment and delivery, and IT workflows onto a single platform will be fundamental to delivering great customer experience.



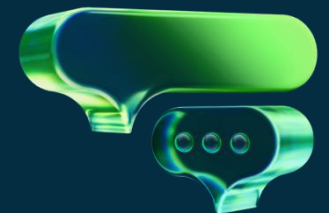
With CRM and support platforms connected, our agents [service reps] can offer more personalised service using real-time data and AI insights.

CSO, U.S. technology firm



AI tools were integrated into our support workflows, allowing agents [service reps] to deliver faster and more relevant responses based on real-time customer information.

CSO, India technology firm



06 Unite data to fuel AI-driven experiences

Transform rich customer data into rocket fuel for exceptional experiences

Organisations should integrate customer information into a single source of truth, whether it comes from an ERP, billing system, data lake, or legacy CRM. This means deploying tools that instantly gather, cleanse, and harmonise data, ensuring quality and accuracy. This data can't just be a patchwork. It needs to be formatted into a single data architecture providing information service reps can trust.

By integrating all their customer data, organisations can treat each customer as a "demographic of one." Every customer gets tailored offers, service models, and experience designs. Every interaction triggers workflows that solve the specific issue based on what products the customer has.

Embed that intelligence into frontline workflows, arming service reps and digital channels with next-best actions for each customer. The result is faster responses, more relevant interactions, and consistently elevated experiences that deepen customer loyalty and growth.



Our bank harnessed AI-powered customer intelligence and conversational assistants to deliver tailored financial guidance, anticipate client needs, and optimise agent workflows.

CTO, French bank



How execs plan to leverage data for next-level CX

Actions executives will take over the next three years



The C-suite guide to next-level CX

CEOS AND COOS: BRIDGE THE DISCONNECT

Close the executive disconnect by putting CX at the heart of your business strategy:

Develop an AI-enabled CX approach that gives customers the responsive, efficient, and empathetic service they want, and equips teams with the resources to deliver it.

Align the operating model around CX pillars of excellence:

These pillars include customer-centric culture, empowered agents, effective data, advanced AI, full-lifecycle CRM, and connected enterprise workflows. Rethink organisational structures, resources, and incentives so cross-functional teams own the end-to-end customer journeys with clear accountability.

Transform your CRM by integrating workflows across the front, middle, and back offices:

Centralise CX activities so your customers receive the same high-quality experience wherever they are in their journeys. Think beyond traditional metrics to succeed in a market that values high touch and high speed.

CIOS AND CTOS: BUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Rally your organisation around a single platform as the foundation for CX:

Consolidate architectures and data models so every function works from the same real-time customer picture. Move from fragmented systems to one unified system of action that orchestrates end-to-end workflows, with CRM as the connective tissue for every experience.

Integrate data across the organisation to build a unified view of the customer:

Implement a data fabric that allows data to flow seamlessly and securely across departments so that service reps have one place to see history, context, what products the customer owns, and next steps.

Invest in latest AI technologies to elevate CX excellence:

Use AI to transform self-service and help service reps deliver the human support that customers want. Draw on agentic AI, sentiment analysis, and other tools that enable technology to better understand and act on customer needs.

CX LEADERS: EMPOWER YOUR SERVICE REPS

Audit and simplify CX systems:

Expose where service reps lose time jumping between tools and channels. Use journey maps, shadowing, and feedback to pinpoint friction, then prioritise unifying systems so service reps can see the full customer story and next steps in a single view.

Build a compelling business case that links service rep experience, customer outcomes, and financial impact:

Quantify how a unified platform, CRM, and workflow approach can unlock service rep productivity and loyalty and drive customer growth and revenue gains.

Tap into autonomous AI so service reps can focus on building human connection:

Focus on tools that summarise context, suggest next-best actions, guide workflows, and automate routine work. Back this up with the training they need to develop the skills required to succeed in the AI era.

Humanity scaled

One thing is clear from our research: AI delivers maximum value when it works for people. When routine work is automated, service reps gain the time, context, and confidence to do what only humans can: listen, adapt, and build lasting relationships. Customers notice. Loyalty increases. Growth follows.

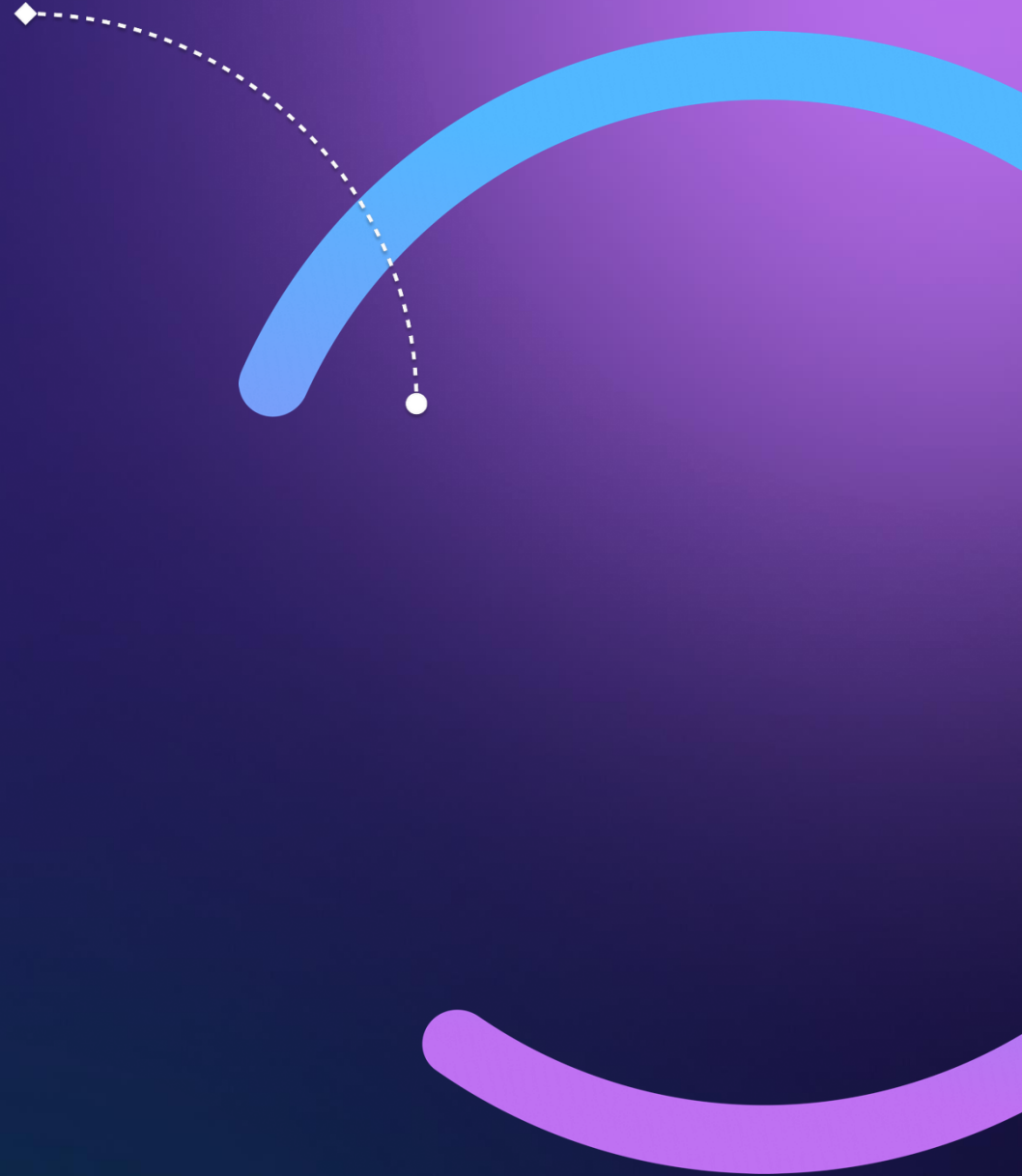
Leaders who optimise only for efficiency will struggle to keep pace with rising customer expectations. Those who reimagine CX around connected workflows, empowered teams, and human-centered AI will define the next generation of CX.

The opportunity is clear—and so is the mandate. Build experiences that are fast and human. Use AI to unlock empathy at scale. Make every interaction a moment that generates trust, loyalty, and long-term value.

That's how leaders will pull ahead in the AI era.



Appendix



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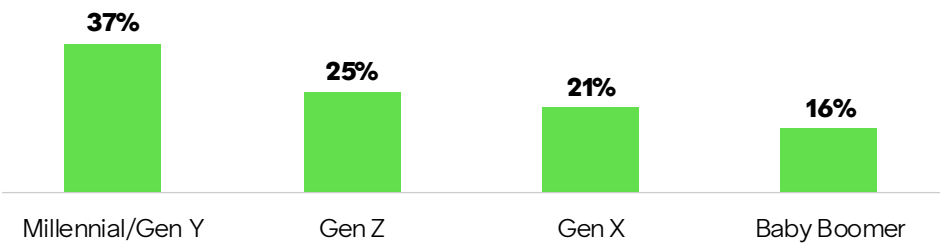
A special thanks to Jessica Buckley, head of brand content, Sheila Dowd, director of thought leadership editorial, Marissa Amendolia Finn, director of brand content experience, and Emma Kieckhafer, director of social media.

Thank you to all the ServiceNow colleagues who helped bring this research to life, especially Tim Catts, Ryan Breen, Laura LeBleu, Abi Hobson, Angela Chen, Ina Chu, Sheryl Domingue, Zoe Gaylard, Mary Silverstein, and Jingsi Chen.

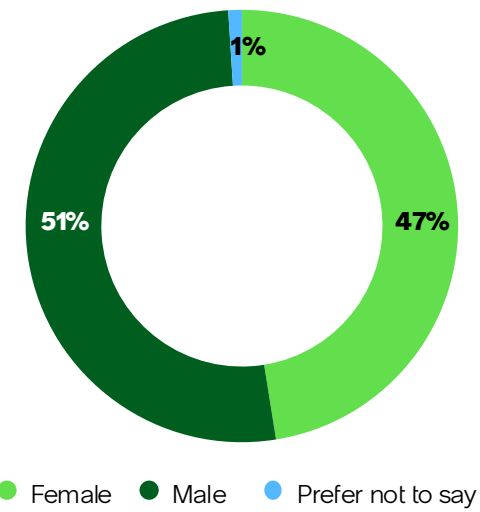
Customer survey demographics

27,250 customers

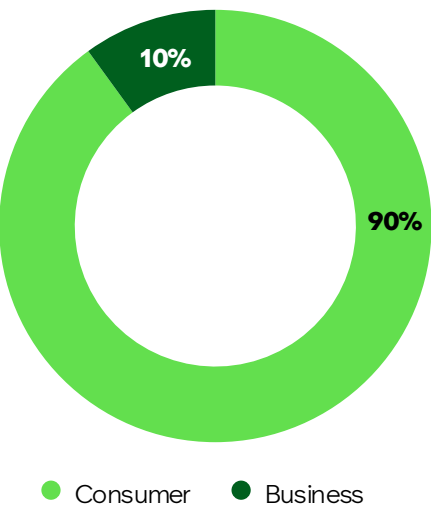
Age



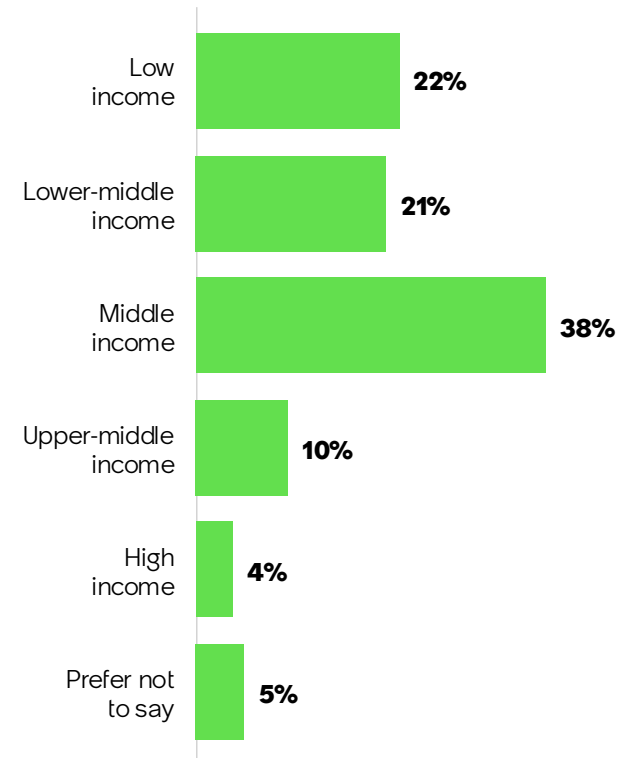
Gender



Type



Income level



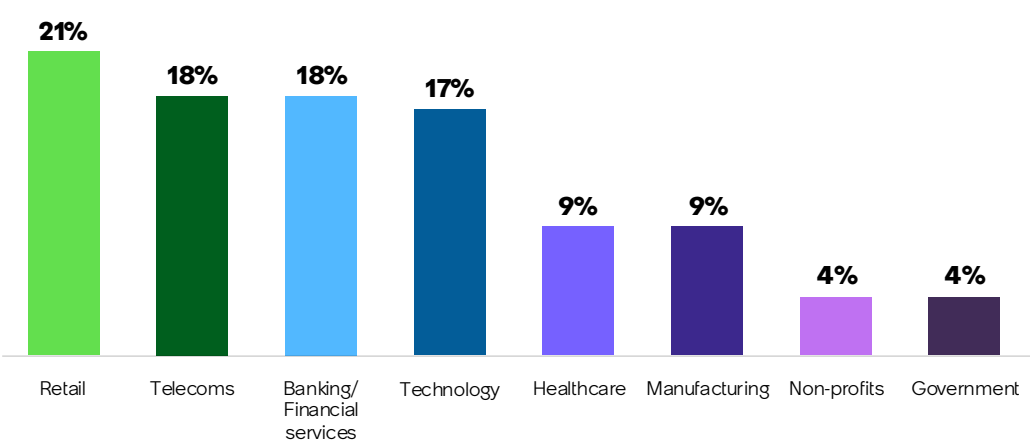
Regions and countries

APAC and Japan	10,000
Australia	1,000
India	5,000
Japan	2,000
New Zealand	1,000
Singapore	1,000
EMEA	14,000
Austria	1,000
France	2,000
Germany	2,000
Ireland	1,000
Italy	1,000
KSA	1,000
Netherlands	1,000
Spain	1,000
Sweden	1,000
UAE	1,000
United Kingdom	2,000
North America	3,250
Canada	1,350
United States	1,900

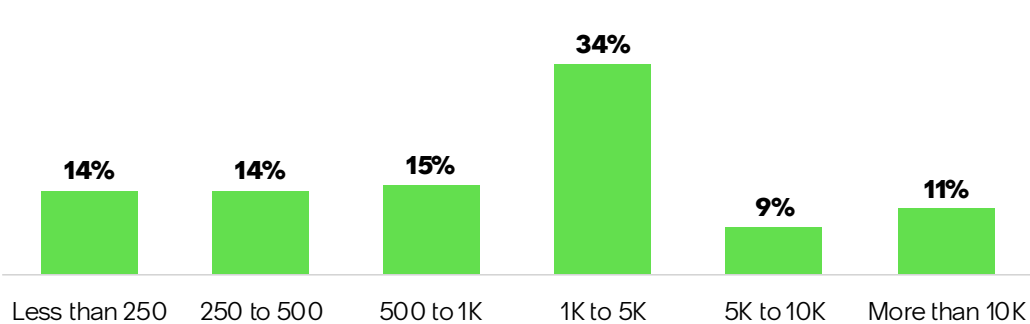
Service rep survey demographics

3,515 service reps

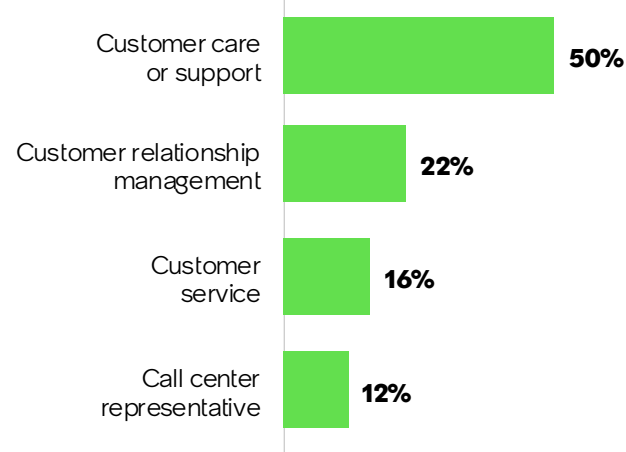
Industry



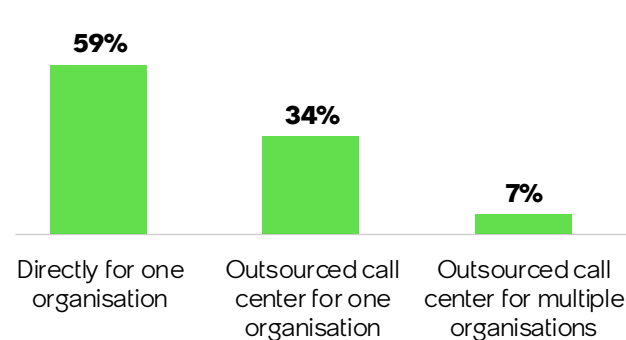
organisation size (number of employees)



Title



organisational affiliation



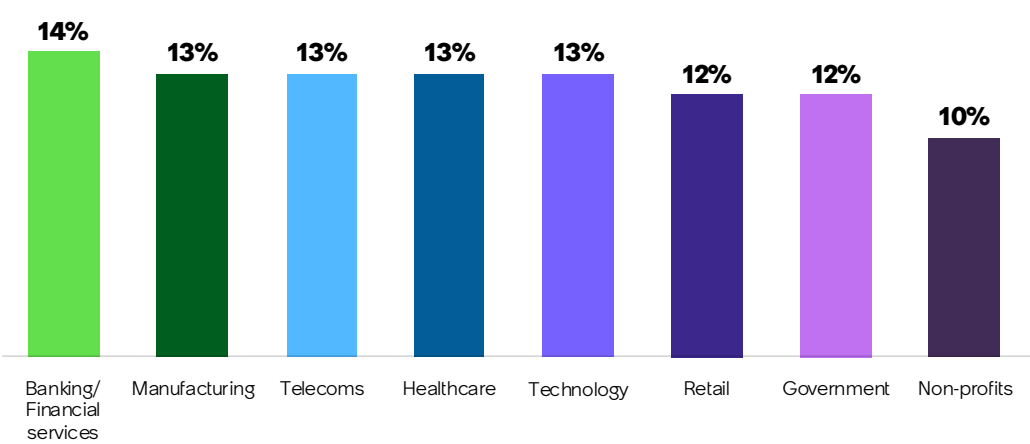
Regions and countries

APAC and Japan	1,350
Australia	300
India	425
Japan	300
New Zealand	125
Singapore	200
EMEA	1,565
Austria	100
France	200
Germany	215
Ireland	100
Italy	200
KSA	125
Netherlands	100
Spain	100
Sweden	100
UAE	125
United Kingdom	200
North America	600
Canada	300
United States	300

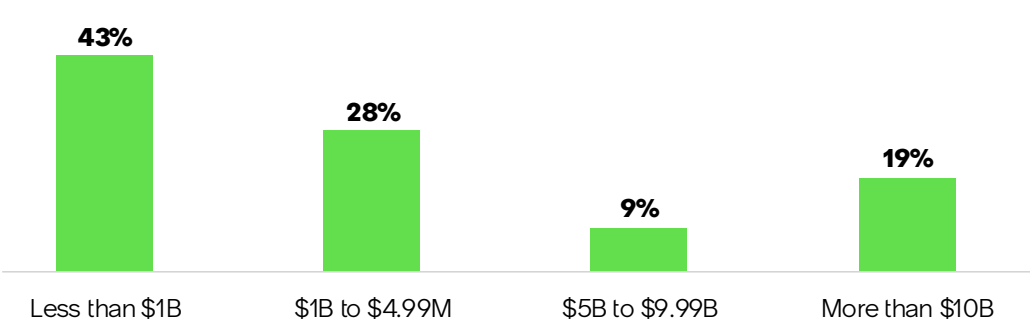
Executive demographics

3,900 executives

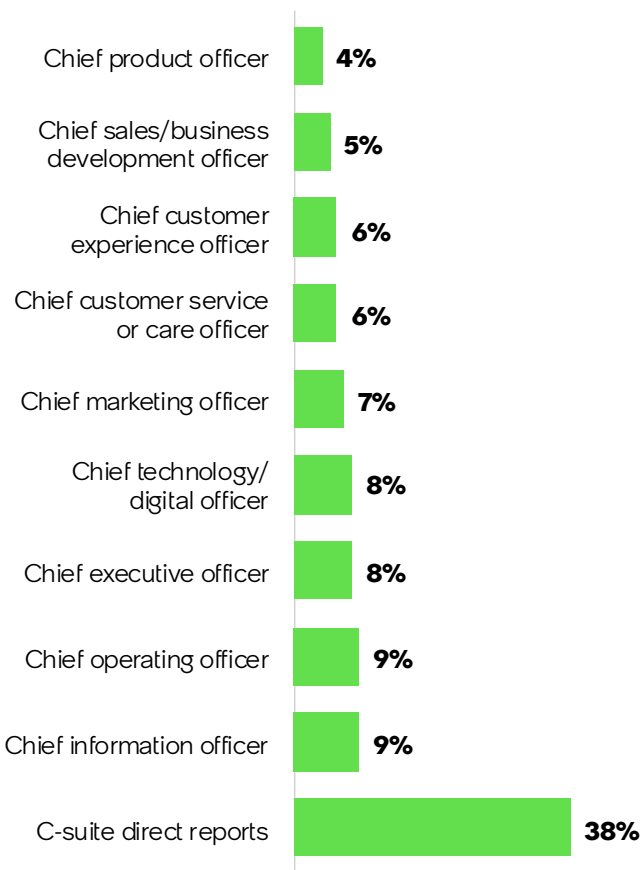
Industry



Executives by organisation revenue/budget size



Title (plus direct reports)



Regions and countries

APAC and Japan	1,130
Australia	270
India	280
Japan	295
New Zealand	0
Singapore	285
EMEA	1,770
Austria	110
France	230
Germany	245
Ireland	110
Italy	110
KSA	110
Netherlands	115
Spain	155
Sweden	110
UAE	210
United Kingdom	265
North America	1,000
Canada	195
United States	805



ServiceNow (NYSE: NOW) is the AI control tower for business reinvention. The ServiceNow AI Platform integrates with any cloud, any model, and any data source to orchestrate how work flows across the enterprise. By unifying legacy systems, departmental tools, cloud applications, and AI agents, ServiceNow provides a single pane of glass that connects intelligence to execution across every corner of business. With more than 75 billion workflows running on the platform each year, ServiceNow helps organisations turn fragmented operations into coordinated, autonomous workflows that deliver measurable results.

Learn how ServiceNow puts AI to work for people at servicenow.com.

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