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The Leading Marketing and CX Technology Magazine

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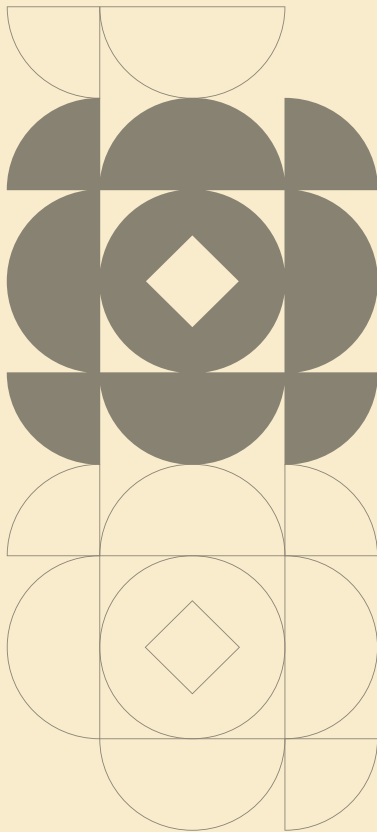
THE ROLE OF **AI** IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

How are attitudes and expectations towards AI in the Middle East impacting business decisions?





EDITOR'S NOTE



Customer service is at an inflection point. Every conversation touches upon customer experience (CX). It's a differentiator, a brand priority and the cornerstone of customer loyalty. As such, understanding the role of customer service in this evolving landscape is paramount for businesses aiming to thrive in today's competitive market.

Customer service, whether exceptional or poor, can make or break a brand. Between digital transformation and the rise of AI, it's time we talk about customer service.

As business leaders plot their next steps for AI investment towards the customer service function, the need for emotional quotient is highlighted across the board. There is a need for empathy from leaders in change management to increase technology adoption among employees and add humanness to machine interactions to make customer adoption seamless. Implementing new technology is no simple task, especially since the main grunt work involves non-technical details:

training, access, governance, and accountability. The technology must be aligned with people and processes, not the other way around.

Mindset cannot be underestimated when considering AI adoption—it may be intangible, but many brands have wasted millions of dollars on tech that never did a day's work.

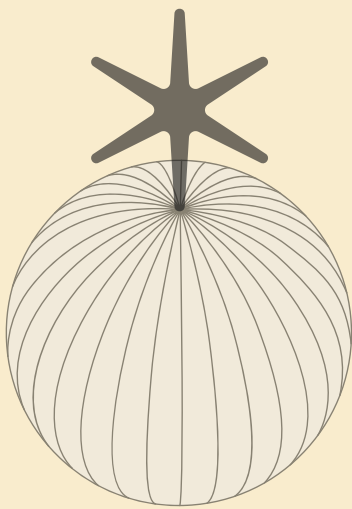
As this technology grows, business leaders in the Middle East are on the right track. They are working to deploy it ethically, inclusively, and transparently to ensure that it works for everyone—customers, employees, and everyone in between.



Yolande D'Mello
Senior Editor
Martechvibe



METHODOLOGY



Martechvibe, in partnership with CEQUENS, offers a comprehensive exploration of customer service teams' evolving attitudes towards using artificial intelligence to fuel service functions.

To gather real data-led insights, a survey was conducted with over 200 customer service representatives holding various positions, such as Directors, C-suite, Heads of departments, Senior Managers, and Managers. Most respondents have a customer base of over 1,000,000 customers. They were chosen from several industries, including BFSI, retail, hospitality

and healthcare across UAE, KSA, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Egypt, and Bahrain. The study also incorporates viewpoints from several senior customer service leaders, customer experience leaders, and technology leaders from the same industries and regions via in-depth interviews.

The report offers an insider view into attitudes and plans regarding readiness for AI adoption, rate of impact and benefits from its implementations, as well as how AI is being approached on a practical level.

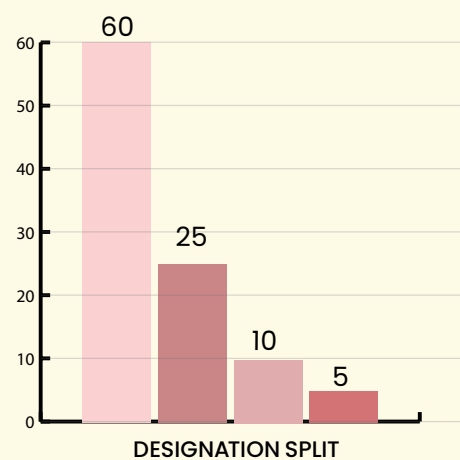
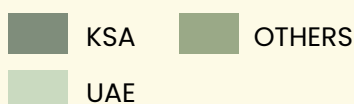
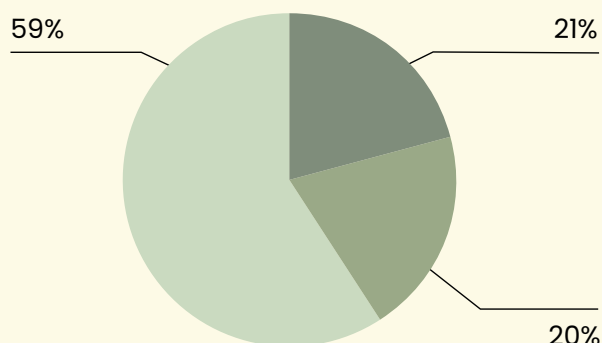


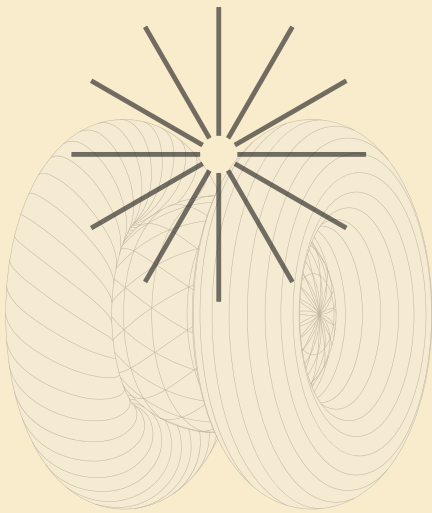


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INTRODUCTION



Embracing AI isn't just the future of customer service (CS) in the Middle East—it's the **present**, setting a benchmark for innovation and excellence.

CS teams stand at the forefront of AI adoption, demonstrating a remarkably positive attitude towards the technology.

Despite this impressive progress, the journey is far from complete. The industry is now on the brink of entering its second phase of AI adoption. It is expected to be more complex and ambitious, focusing on sophisticated use cases such as advanced data analytics that reads into customer emotions and the development of a seamless, AI-driven omnichannel strategy.

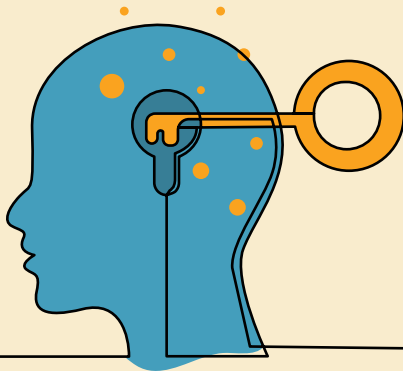
The second phase would significantly depend on analytics for decision-making, but the industry still struggles to uncover rich and deep data insights.

The true litmus test of success lies in the industry's ability to ensure these technologies' effective, secure, and efficient integration into customer service operations. This approach will guarantee sustainable cross-functional growth and reinforce trust and reliability in AI-driven solutions while aligning with the evolving needs and expectations of modern customer service landscapes.





KEY INSIGHTS



AI READINESS



High Investment in GenAI Tools

82% are looking to invest in genAI tools, indicating a strong willingness to adopt advanced AI technologies to enhance customer interactions and service efficiency.



Voice Recognition Implementation

88% aim to add voice recognition for customer interactions, highlighting readiness to integrate sophisticated AI functionalities that can streamline communication.



Scaling Up AI Integration

77% of respondents indicate they are in the scaling-up phase of their AI journey. It shows that most are beyond the initial adoption phase and are working on expanding AI capabilities within their customer service operations.



Predictive Analytics Investment

66% are looking to invest in predictive analytics tools, suggesting a proactive approach to using AI for anticipating customer needs and behaviours, thus improving service strategies and outcomes. customer service operations.



KEY INSIGHTS

THE CHALLENGES



Limited Decision-Making Authority

77% of customer service leaders state that a notable hurdle is limited decision-making authority for customer service agents. This indicates structural issues that may hinder the use of AI tools that require agent autonomy to fully leverage their capabilities.



Emotional Intelligence

Close to **50%** of support agents deal with extreme customer emotions, but only 37% of brands aim to add emotion analytical tools, and just 49% plan to invest in Emotion AI technology.



Technology Adoption

70% of agents struggle with technology adoption, signifying a need for ongoing training to ensure staff proficiency in using new AI tools and technologies.



Lack of Customer Data Analytics

Respondents do not yet prioritise customer data analytics capabilities in their customer service vertical. It reveals a gap that challenges their ability to gain deep insights from AI-driven data analysis and personalise customer interactions effectively.

CHAPTER 01

GENAI RANKS #1

It is considered a quantum leap in the world of artificial intelligence.

The excitement around genAI as the answer to all our problems is unanimous at the executive management level. Customer service is at the forefront.

comes from the IT function, followed by research and product development teams.

GenAI, with its particular focus on language reinforcement models, marks a moment for customer service adoption, promising exponential impact.

AI tools are not new. So far, the most widely reported adoption

Almost 100% of respondents said they plan to use genAI in their customer service operations.

As customer expectations surge to new heights, business leaders should look to advancing technologies to offer solutions. This attitude is visible top-down across industries.

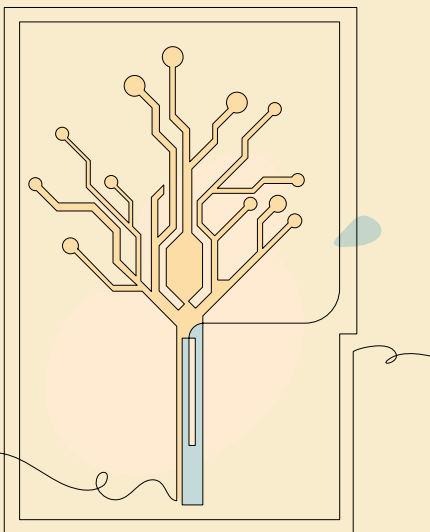
How are customer service leaders planning to use genAI?

► **42%** plan to use AI to support human agents with real-time information and sentiment scores.

► **27%** plan to use AI to process natural language and understanding during communications.

► **16%** plan to use AI to create more personalised experiences.

► **15%** plan to use AI to automate processes like triage in cases of medical emergency.



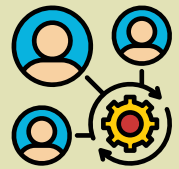
But customer service practitioners are still sceptical.

While customer service leaders are optimistic about the potential of generative AI (genAI), customer service executives and practitioners remain sceptical. The doubt arises from a lack of clarity about what this transformation

will entail. There's a palpable concern about job security—will genAI replace human agents, putting their jobs at risk? Business leaders must address this underlying challenge and provide reassurance and a clear vision of how genAI will augment rather than replace human roles.

There is a need for value-capturing change management.

It is advisable to address new skill development on an individual, team, and organisational level. This is a multi-level, cross-functional conversation.



Will genAI help close challenges associated with work proficiency that are already prevalent within the customer service function?

✓ YES.

Will onboarding new, emerging technologies give rise to more skill gaps?

✓ ALSO, YES.

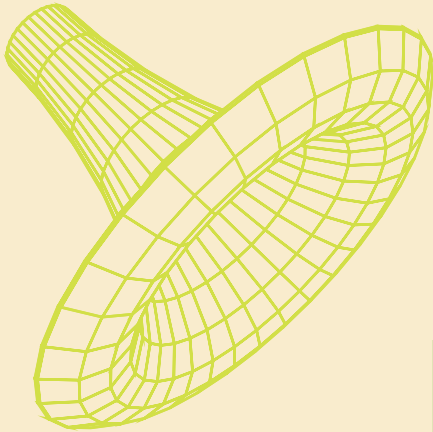
The most important AI capability for business is the mindset. Employees should acknowledge that AI applications make their work life easier.

Companies should place more effort in ensuring that AI enables their business strategy and removes ambiguity from terms like machine learning, reinforced learning, etc.

On a grassroots level – it begins by giving agents the full context. On a functional level – it helps set benchmarks to define the service rank.

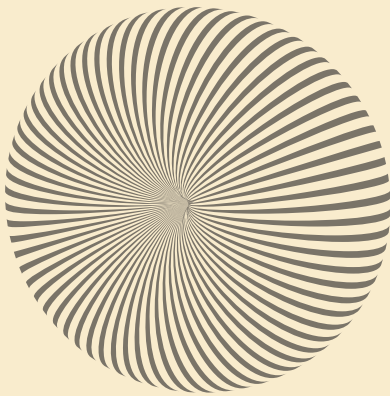
On a strategic level – it informs on costs for the contact centre, employee satisfaction and revenue.

Securing the buy-in of your employees is critical to ensure higher adoption of AI-enabled tools, which guarantees that ROI on technology is realised.



Here are some strategies that boost adoption and reduce potential hiccups.

- ◆ Comprehensive training for agents
- ◆ Culture of open communication
- ◆ Continuous support and resources
- ◆ Conveying tangible success



“

If investments in genAI stem from a genuine need to alleviate customers' or partners' pain points or create more sustainable revenue streams or improve service and experience levels, this interest and investment is justified, but if these investments have their origins in the fear of missing out, there could be fatigue from chasing every shiny new object, and not realising business benefits post significant investments may lead to the team running out of executive backing, funding and probably the worst – enthusiasm.



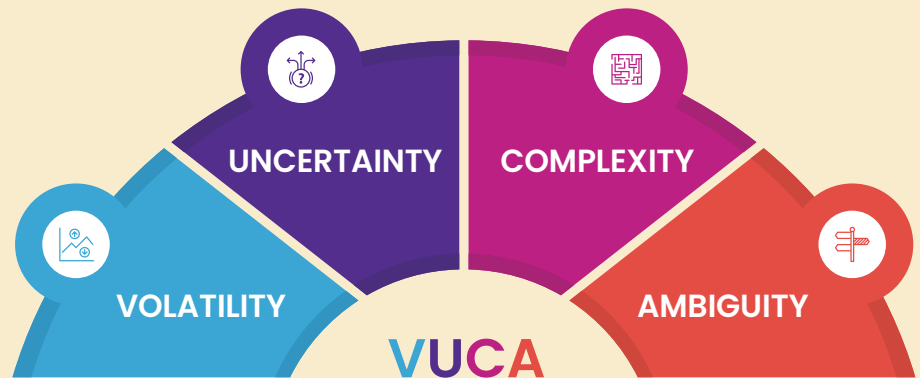
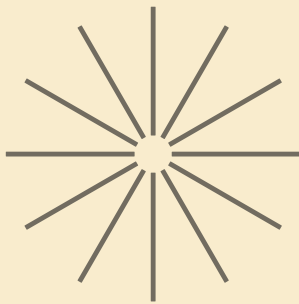
Anuja Shah
Head of Strategy & IT
Middle East at Zurich
International Life

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CHAPTER 02

BRANDS PREPARE FOR THE VUCA WORLD



The business world is caught in an infinite loop. The more stakeholders strategise to combat complexity, the more complex these strategies need to be. This paradox can potentially create a volatile and ambiguous environment for customer service teams.

Within the whirlpool of global conversations about customer experience acting as a key brand differentiator, customer service is leading the charge. We are looking at “care” as the variable

which could reverse the customer satisfaction curve.

On the flip side, customer dissatisfaction means a hit to business and brand equity.

On a granular level, old challenges like high call volumes, higher levels of employee attrition, increasing operational costs, and rising customer expectations that demand more omnichannel communication and personalisation continue to plague the industry.

“

Customers are incredibly savvy. They know what they want, and they want the message to get through to them. Brands need to really understand their needs and personalise as much as they can.



Roberta Cianetti
Expert Social Media Strategist

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Can new technologies solve old problems?

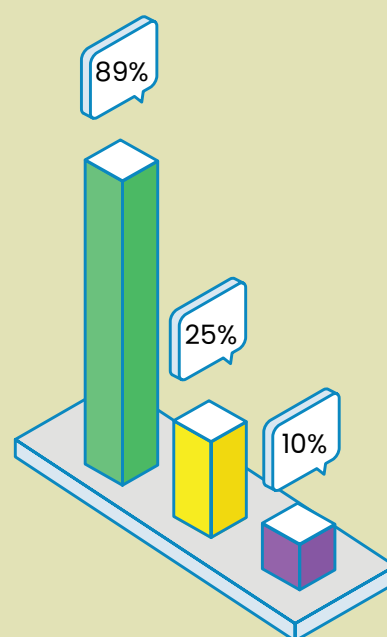
Customer service and support leaders share their immediate priorities: automating time-consuming, routine customer service tasks like support ticket assignments and troubleshooting common customer issues with canned responses. This further helps minimise the risk of losing the request in poor handoffs between functions, another common challenge.

Leaders are proactive in trying to remedy the situation.

89% prioritise increasing first-contact resolution rates.

However, only **25%** identify re-evaluating their tech stack as a top-three priority.

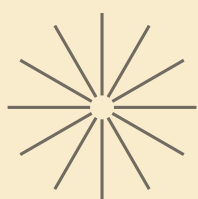
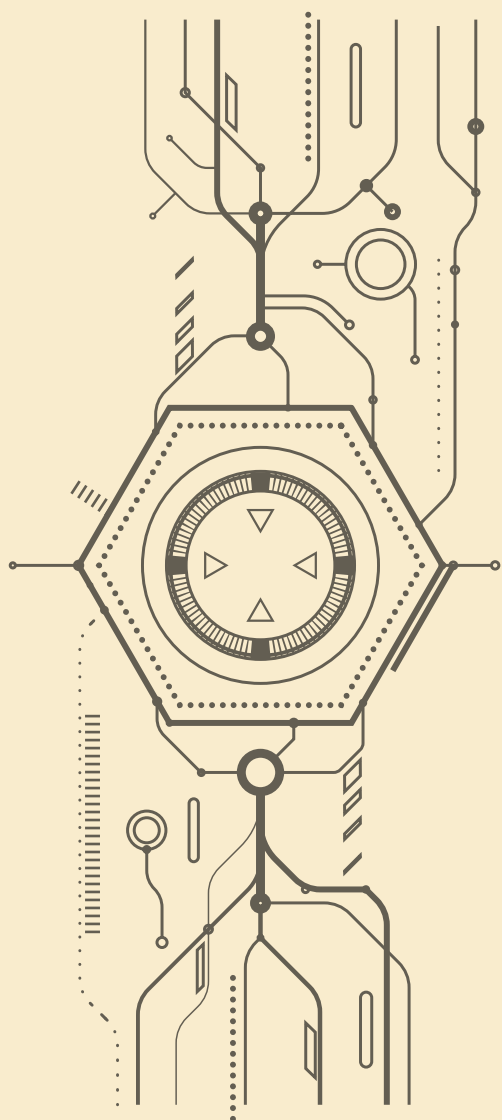
10% say increasing operational efficiency is their primary goal.



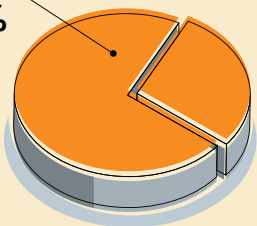
The research suggests that many leaders may already have their tech priorities well-aligned and ready to implement. This implies a strategic readiness to activate and set plans in motion, indicating confidence in their current technological infrastructure.

On the other hand, supporting service representatives remains a priority in technology

investment. Tools to deliver performance and development for the customer support function include workforce management, case management, consolidated desktop agents, internal collaboration tools, and unified communications.



74%



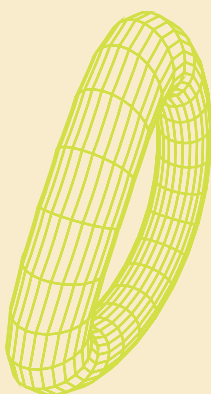
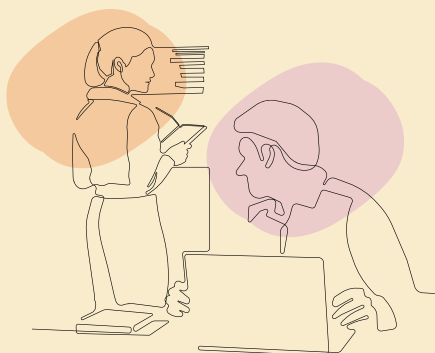
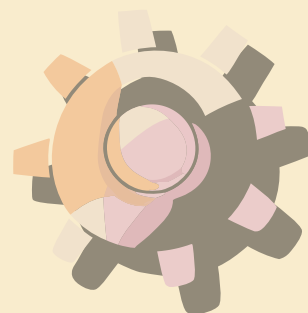
74% of respondents have workforce management and productivity tools in their current tech stack for customer service

Three main challenges that keep customer service leaders up at night:

- ◆ Inability to offer high first-call resolution rates
- ◆ High operational costs
- ◆ Integration of multiple internal tools

AI capabilities are seen as an answer to current customer service challenges through:

- ◆ Triage and routing of queries
- ◆ Determining customer intent
- ◆ Real-time agent assistance
- ◆ Automating repetitive tasks
- ◆ Forecasting workforce management
- ◆ Automating reports and analytics
- ◆ Self-service resolution
- ◆ Transcription and sentiment scores



What Does It Take to Lead an AI Transformation?

According to business stakeholders, leaders need to articulate a vision, set goals, secure broad buy-in across the organisation, and measure results at every stage. Customer service representatives say the emotion quotient will determine practical, real-world success.

“

Containing customers in their channel of choice is crucial. Whilst there is always an element of risk associated with 'non-conventional' channels, as an organisation, we have to solve this and eliminate the risk by upgrading our infrastructure rather than put our customer through inconveniences and hurdles.



Asma Beljafrah
Head of Emirates Islamic Contact
Centre at Tanfeeth

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Where is The Gap in Using AI for Customer Service Teams?



Gaps in Multichannel and Analytics Capabilities

The low priority of multichannel, omnichannel, and customer data analytics capabilities (near 0) highlights significant gaps in providing seamless customer experiences and leveraging data to drive service improvements.



Emphasis on Digital Channels

Digital channel effectiveness is reported at 58%, showing a moderate focus on enhancing online and digital customer interactions. However, there is room for improvement to fully optimise these channels.



Underutilised Self-Service Options

With only 43% adoption of self-service technologies, there is a clear opportunity for businesses to empower customers to resolve issues independently, reducing the load on customer service agents.

“

Businesses overlook the silent detriment of self-service—the erosion of customer trust. Every time a customer encounters a self-service dead-end, it's not just a moment of frustration; it's a micro-fracture in the relationship. This isn't just about solving problems; it's about how customers feel during the process. People don't just want solutions; they want to be heard and valued.



Dennis Wakabayshi
Global Voice of CX

”





Customer service leaders are focused on solving core business challenges. They aim to use AI to unlock short and medium-term benefits.

Four Key Challenges GenAI Can Solve

- ◆ Instant data retrieval, processing, and management
- ◆ Optimised agent productivity through advanced automation
- ◆ Deep customer insights by analysing sentiments and identifying trends
- ◆ Accelerated issue resolution through knowledge base access and personalised interactions

“

How Do You Innovate?

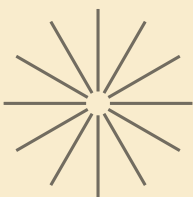
You've got to be really specific on what's the problem you're trying to solve, so make sure you're doing this using a human-centric approach. You also have to build upon your brand strength and reputation. How do you turn all of those transactions into relationships and lifelong customers? You need to make sure you focus on your customers and understand what they want and where they are — to respond as time moves on in the world that we are living in today.



Tarv Nijjar

Global Head Product and Platform
Transformation – Enterprise Data Analytics and AI
at McDonald's

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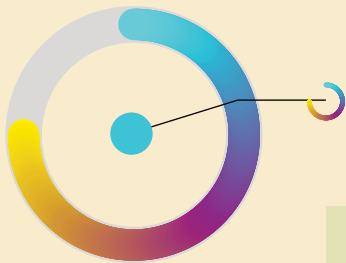


CHAPTER 03

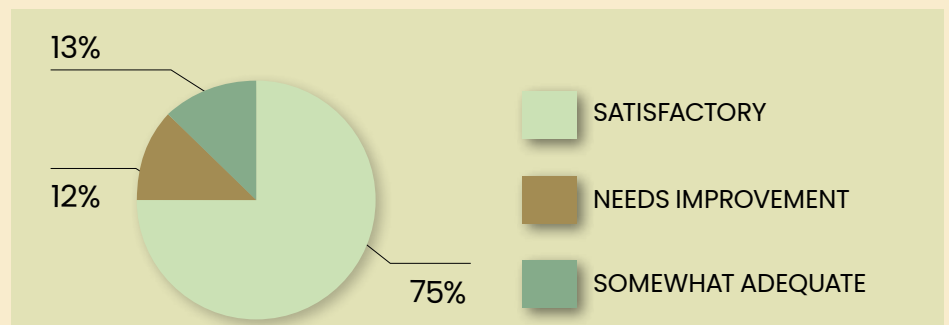
THE PEOPLE-FIRST PERFORMANCE APPROACH

Agents are the main actors in creating “moments that matter” for your brand.

When customer service reps understand how their performance impacts CX and business objectives, they’re more likely to repeat positive behaviours



75% of respondents say the overall employee experience of their customer agents is satisfactory



Frontline employees are the first to face customers’ frustration. Organisations must shift their focus upstream and proactively tackle the root causes of customer and employee frustration.

Could demotivated and untrained customer support agents be standing in the way of delivering exceptional customer service?



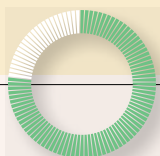
70% of respondents say limited decision-making authority is stopping agents from providing their best service



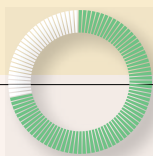
71% of respondents say keeping up with technology adoption is a current challenge

This contradiction raises important questions about the disconnect between perceived satisfaction and operational challenges that could affect morale and efficiency.

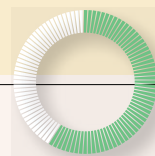
What are The Key Challenges That Customer Support Agents Face Today?

77%

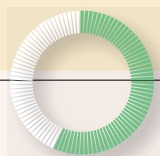
reported that limited decision-making authority is a key challenge for customer support agents today.

71%

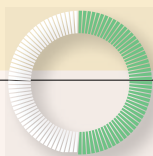
indicated that keeping up with technology adoption is a major challenge for customer support agents.

59%

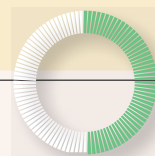
identified outdated technological tools as a significant challenge faced by customer support agents.

57%

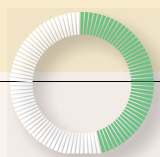
pointed out that ensuring timely responses to customer issues is a significant challenge for customer support agents.

51%

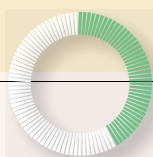
noted that balancing multiple communication channels is a key challenge for customer support agents.

50%

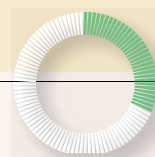
stated that complex operational processes are a major challenge for customer support agents.

46%

mentioned handling customers' extreme emotions is a considerable challenge for customer support agents.

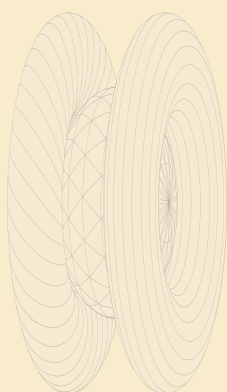
42%

indicated that dealing with a high volume of inquiries is a challenge for customer support agents.

32%

said that lacking access to real-time customer information is a challenge for customer support agents.





Address The Internal Capability Gap

Poor implementation of customer service technologies can result in negative customer experiences. While the aim is to use solutions to build capacity and solve conventional obstacles, the misalignment of technology with people and processes can add to the complexity of processes and compound challenges.

“

Improving Employee Technology Adoption Hinges on Two Primary Factors

- **Awareness & Education**

It entails educating employees about how technology can enhance their work, contribute value, and the feasibility of its integration. This encompasses reducing cycle times, eliminating redundant tasks, improving accuracy, deriving new insights, enhancing controls, and minimising errors.

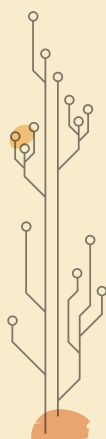
- **Change Management**

It involves assessing and overseeing the changes necessary for successful technology integration. This encompasses understanding how the new technology will interact with or supplant existing systems, gauging its impact on current processes, and determining the required adjustments in roles and skills for effective interaction.



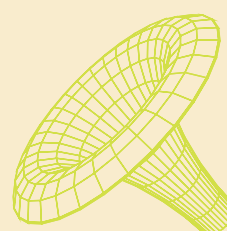
Ayman Sieny
Data Analytics General Manager
at Zain KSA

”



What's Holding Back Businesses?

- ➔ The wrong metrics create flawed incentives.
- ➔ You cannot manage what you cannot measure.



Measuring Customer Service Efforts

86% of respondents said they conduct customer satisfaction surveys

85% said they monitor repeat purchase rates

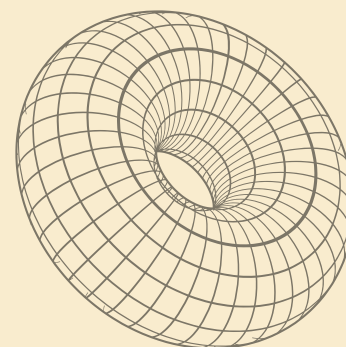
82% said they calculate the Net Promoter Score

81% said they monitor resolution rates with service chatbots

72% said they monitor and analyse social media sentiments

64% said they calculate response time metrics

62% said they gather customer service agents' feedback

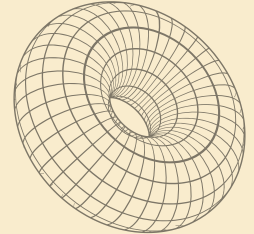


While surveys, repeat purchase rates, Net Promoter Score (NPS), and chatbot resolution rates are effective ways to measure efficiency, the least utilised method, gathering service agents' feedback, may actually be the most impactful step for enhancing customer service efforts and, consequently, customer satisfaction.

Agent attrition leads to performance variability.

Empowering service teams benefits business and morale.

Gathering feedback directly from customer service agents signifies a growing recognition of the value that frontline employee insights bring to shaping service strategies. This approach acknowledges that those on the front lines possess critical perspectives that can drive improvements and innovations in customer service.



“

It's crucial to evolve how we measure satisfaction levels to enhance the experience; we can add to that factors like deeper data analysis to better understand customers' preferences and offer tailored services based on their needs.



Mai Momani

Head of Client Experiences at Invest Bank

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“

Are Customer Surveys Always Reliable?

Research shows rewards are extremely damaging to a service culture. The reason is employees focus on winning the prize rather than providing great service. A classic example is survey begging. Employees are incentivised for great survey scores, so they beg customers to give them a top score on the survey. Some employees even manipulate surveys by prompting happy customers to leave a review while manually stopping upset customers from receiving a survey request. Customer service becomes an afterthought because employees just want the reward.



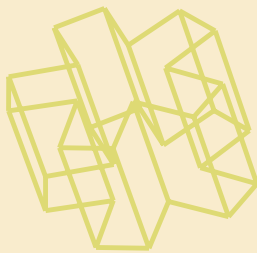
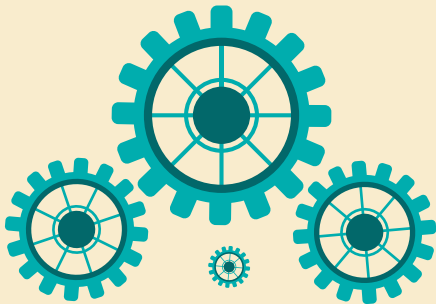
Jeff Toister

Author of The Service Culture Handbook

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CHAPTER 04

TRANSFORMING INTO A VALUE CENTRE



Customer service teams sit on a treasure trove of data.

By tapping into this wealth of first-hand feedback, cross-functional teams stand to gain a deeper understanding of customer needs, identify areas for improvement, and drive innovation.

However, end-to-end process improvement requires a business-wide commitment to change.

How Leaders Can Approach Organisational Realignment

- ◆ Specialised teams
- ◆ Tiered support
- ◆ Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- ◆ Continuous learning and development

“

Our support centre is well connected to the teams on the ground, as well as all other departments. Based on customer-driven insights, each team defines priorities and works together to elevate our customers' experience.



Usama Nabil
Sr Director of Customer Service at Talabat

”

Red flag

While customer data analytics make it to the stack, it is seen as more of a marketing priority with limited visibility from customer service teams.

“

To ensure genuine insights are not influenced, keep the data and insights independent, and then the subsequent analysis will come in. Each component should be treated separately. Otherwise, we fall into the trap of bias, trying to find what we want in the data rather than really looking at the data and the insights as they stand.



Jacqueline El Boghdadi
CMO at ADNOC Distribution

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Data and analytics technicians need to align with customer service KPIs. It is important that data specialists work in tandem with customer service teams who have a better understanding of the context.

Data gatekeeping needs stakeholder buy-in, so it's best to keep business leaders informed about the changing privacy landscape, and organisation-wide learnings from the customer service data.

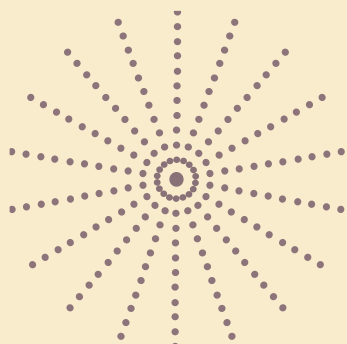
Customer service and support leaders need to ask themselves

What are our shared goals with marketing and sales verticals?

How can the customer service function work in parallel?

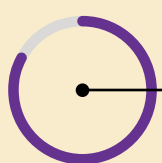
What are the shared solutions and who is the owner?



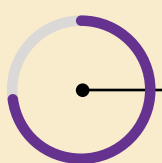


Customers appear to be in control, prompting organisations to shift their focus towards creating a more beneficial customer care system. This shift has led to a reimagination of service functions within organisations.

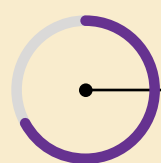
Can AI Make This Reimagined Customer Service Expectation A Reality?



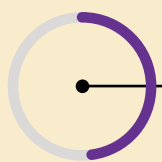
86% of respondents said they conduct customer satisfaction surveys



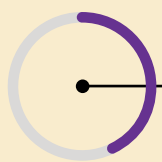
73% said AI can provide 24/7 support availability



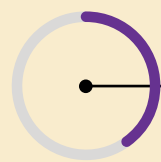
67% said AI can facilitate self-service options



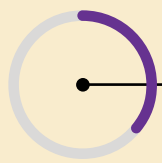
48% said AI can improve the accuracy of responses to customer queries



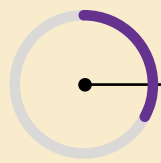
43% said AI can enable proactive outreach for customer feedback



40% said AI can provide consistent service across channels

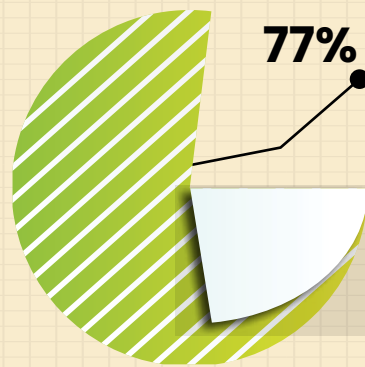


36% said AI can personalise customer interactions

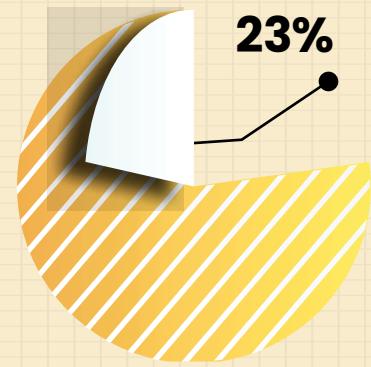


33% said AI can predict customer needs before they arise

Where Have Middle East Customer Service Teams Reached in Their AI Journey?



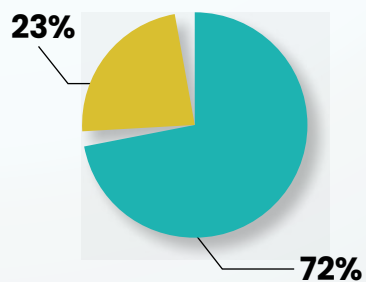
77% of respondents said they are scaling up in their AI journey.



23% of respondents said they are an AI-transformed enterprise.

REGIONAL SPLIT

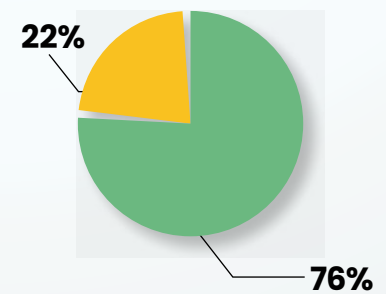
UAE



Scaling up in their AI journey

AI-transformed enterprise

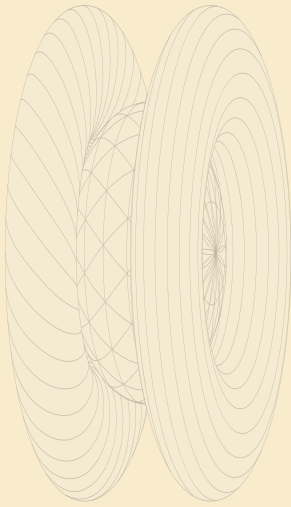
KSA



Scaling up in their AI journey

AI-transformed enterprise

However, the path to realising these benefits is tempered by significant concerns among industry leaders. The journey towards service optimisation is ongoing.



On the positive side, AI-driven personalisation, convenience, and human-like interactions can significantly enhance customer satisfaction. However, issues such as **technology anxiety, privacy concerns, diminished human interaction, and loss of control** can undermine these benefits.

Thus, creating a customer-centric service ecosystem requires skilful management. It's crucial to strive for enhanced customer service while actively addressing and mitigating potential drawbacks.

The role of humans in customer service is evolving, not diminishing. Businesses need to find the optimal machine-human interaction.

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Cognitive mechanisms such as memory formation and retrieval play a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions of brands and their likelihood to make repeat purchases. Positive experiences with a brand can lead to strong associative memories, which influence future purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Conversely, negative experiences can lead to brand avoidance and negative word-of-mouth.



Dr. Raul Villamarin Rodriguez
Vice President of Woxsen University

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A Guide to Calculating The AI Advantage in Your Business

Automated Query Resolution

The role of humans in customer service is evolving, not diminishing. Businesses need to find the optimal machine-human interaction.

Response Accuracy and Quality

Evaluate the accuracy and quality of AI-generated responses compared to human responses. It can highlight the efficiency and reliability of AI tools.

Response Time Reduction

Track the reduction in average response time for customer queries when using AI-powered tools versus traditional methods.

Customer Satisfaction Scores

Monitor changes in customer satisfaction scores before and after implementing AI solutions.

Reduction in Repetitive Tasks

Calculate the time saved by automating repetitive tasks such as updating customer information, scheduling follow-ups, or processing routine transactions.

First Contact Resolution Rates

Compare first contact resolution rates before and after the implementation of AI to determine the impact on efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Customer Retention Rates

Track improvements in customer retention rates due to enhanced service quality and faster resolution times facilitated by AI.

Volume of Customer Interactions

Measure the total volume of customer interactions managed by AI and the percentage of these interactions that result in successful resolutions.

Employee Workload and Stress Levels

Assess the impact of AI on employee workload and stress levels by tracking changes in the number of queries handled per employee and overall job satisfaction.

■ Training and Onboarding Time

Calculate the reduction in training and onboarding time for new employees due to the support provided by AI tools.

■ AI Maintenance and Upgrade Costs

Consider the costs associated with maintaining and upgrading AI systems versus the ongoing operational savings they provide.

■ Error Reduction

Measure the decrease in errors and inaccuracies in customer service interactions due to the precision of AI tools.

■ Customer Feedback Analysis

Track the efficiency and insights gained from AI-powered sentiment analysis and feedback categorisation tools.

■ First Contact Resolution Rates

Compare first contact resolution rates before and after the implementation of AI to determine the impact on efficiency and customer satisfaction.

■ Scalability and Peak Load Management

Evaluate the ability of AI tools to handle peak loads and scale operations without the need for proportional increases in staffing.

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Engaging in an external auditing process and assessment can provide validation that helps build trust with customers, employees and the broader community. A third-party organisation should conduct this auditing independently, and they should certify the AI system to be non-biased or discriminatory.

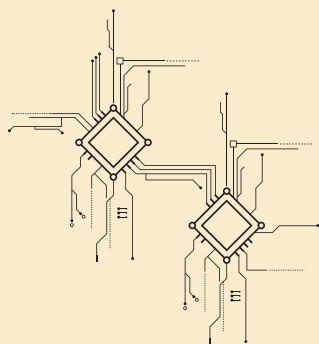


Dr. Jassim Haji
President of the Artificial Intelligence Society

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CHAPTER 05

MAPPING OUT THE AI JOURNEY

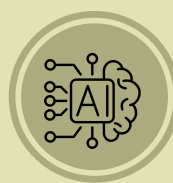


AI initiatives tend to originate within IT environments, where technical skills and interests are most prevalent.

When service transformations occur in silos – it can be a trap resulting in worsening experiences and rising costs. This is compounded by issues such as accumulating tech debt, excessive hours spent on inefficient processes, reliance on ineffective metrics, and the overuse of tech features without meaningful impact.

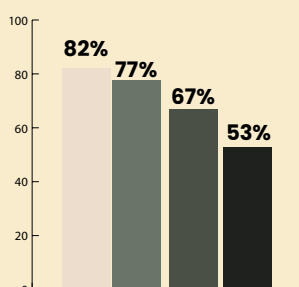


In customer service, automation is used to perform repetitive tasks, such as routing rules and automated responses through an 'if this, then that' approach.



Artificial intelligence in customer service can interpret more sophisticated queries and generate contextual responses based on advanced ML and NLP.

Where Do Customer Service Leaders Plan to Invest?



82% of respondents said they are looking to invest in genAI tools

67% of respondents said they are looking to invest in predictive analytics tools

77% of respondents said they are looking to invest in social media monitoring tools

53% of respondents said they are looking to invest in voice recognition tools

GenAI boasts use cases that are both ubiquitous and clearly recognisable as machine-driven intelligence, signalling a high investment priority for service functions.

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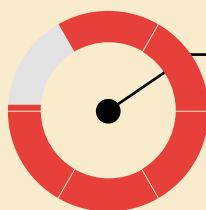
What are the biggest gaps between your self-perception as a business and customer perception of yourself in terms of how you execute your customer value proposition?



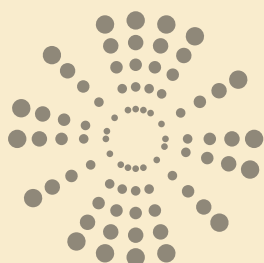
Arthur Zhuravsky
Director of Customer Experience at Tabby

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What Features are Businesses Looking to Add?

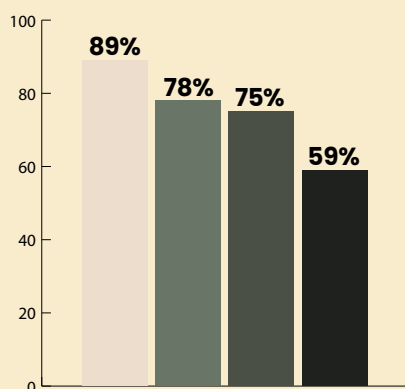


91% are seeking automated language translation for global support



Indicating a strong emphasis on providing inclusive and accessible customer service to a diverse, global customer base, the Middle East customer service industry is on the brink of breaking language barriers. It reflects a mature understanding of global market needs and a commitment to customer satisfaction across different languages and regions.

Other Functionalities in the Pipeline



89% of respondents are looking to implement voice recognition for interactions

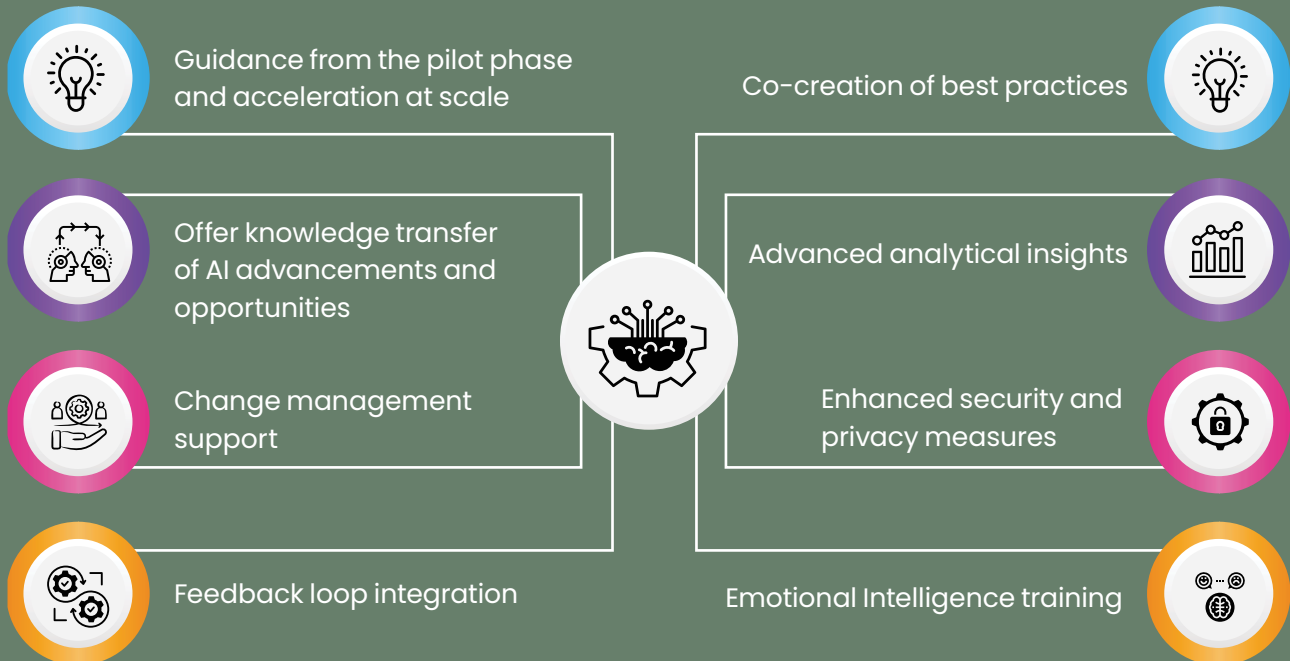
78% of respondents want predictive maintenance features for servicing

75% of respondents plan to use genAI in chatbot-customer interaction tools

59% of respondents are interested in predictive analytics for proactive resolution

This proactive stance signifies a robust and forward-thinking approach, positioning the industry to effectively address current challenges and future opportunities in the global market.

HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS HELP?



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What Do Customer Service Teams Want from Their Tech Partners?

Reliability with minimal downtime and scalability to handle increasing customer interactions without performance issues are crucial. Additionally, user-friendly interfaces with robust features, regular updates for industry leadership, performance metrics, and maintaining security, compliance, and transparent pricing are essential.



Majdouline Al Hamrouni

Head of Customer Satisfaction & communications at PureGym Middle East

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Metrics to Track Successful Tech Investments

- ➔ Resolution rates
- ➔ Agent efficiency
- ➔ Time-saving strategies
- ➔ Productivity
- ➔ Customer service experience
- ➔ Employee adoption rate
- ➔ Employee error rates
- ➔ High Return on Investment (ROI)

“

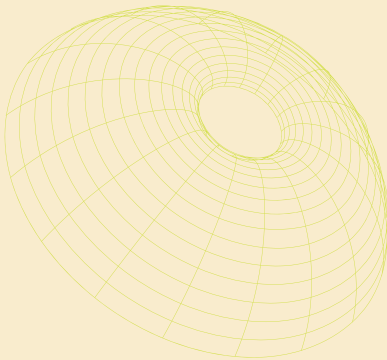
I would love to see a customer sacrifice score – one that indicates to what degree a customer (who is free to switch) is willing to sacrifice to continue interacting with a business, taking price sensitivity into account.



Qaalfa Dibeethi

Managing Partner at Human2outcome

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The majority of the Middle East service industry has already heartily embraced AI, with 77% of respondents indicating that they are in the scaling-up phase and 23% identifying as AI-transformed enterprises.

Remarkably, less than 10% of respondents are in the pilot phase, and 0% are in the planning phase, highlighting a strong commitment to leveraging AI immediately and aggressively. This rapid adoption underscores that industry leaders are not only aware of the competitive edge AI can provide but are also eager to maintain their lead in the race.

The paradox of service innovation is that while all businesses have access to the same technology, innovation often lies in the non-technological areas – how to grow acceptance and find unique solutions to common challenges.

When workplaces create a culture of learning and development, they encourage more engagement with significantly higher productivity levels.

With challenges on all fronts, the question now confronting leaders is how best to prioritise investment across people, operations, and technology aspects of their customer care strategies.



CONCLUSION



The integration of AI in customer service is rapidly transforming the landscape, with a significant majority of businesses already scaling up their AI capabilities. The driving force behind this shift is the realisation of the impact customer experience has on business performance, hence the need to enhance customer interactions, improve efficiency, and maintain a competitive edge.

However, the journey is not without challenges. Concerns about customer privacy, the cost of AI implementation, and the skill gap in resources are significant hurdles that need to be addressed.

To successfully navigate this transformation, businesses must focus on creating a balanced approach that combines technological advancements with human-centric strategies. This includes investing in continuous learning and development for customer service agents, granting them more autonomy and decision-making power, and ensuring that AI tools are aligned with customer service KPIs.

Moreover, the role of humans in customer service is evolving. While AI can handle repetitive tasks and provide quick resolutions, human agents are essential for managing complex queries and providing empathetic support. Therefore, finding the optimal balance between machine and human interactions is crucial for delivering exceptional customer service.

The future of customer service lies in the seamless integration of AI and human efforts. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the benefits of AI, businesses can create a customer-centric service ecosystem that enhances satisfaction, loyalty, and overall performance.



Ahmed Shabrawy
Chief Research and
Innovation Officer

CEQUENS●

Martechvibe
The Leading Marketing and CX Technology Magazine

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THE ROLE OF **AI** IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

