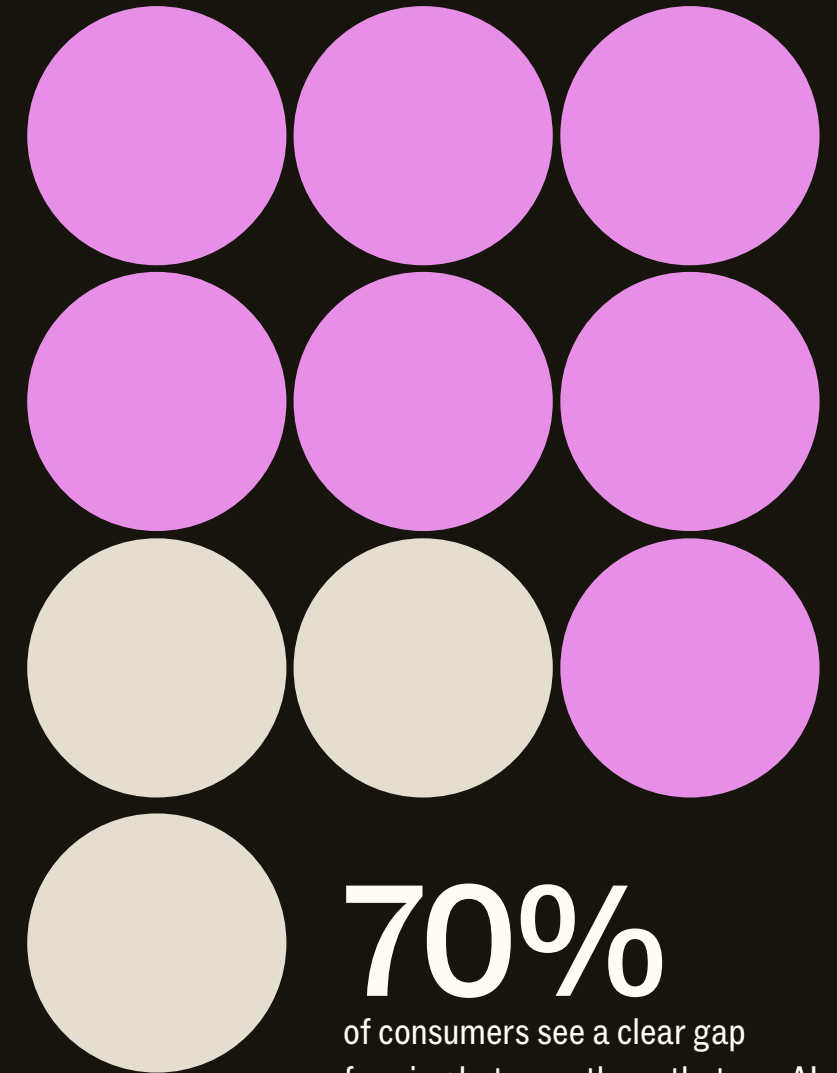


zendesk

CX Trends 2025

CX Trendsetters surge ahead of peers with human-centric AI as their advantage



70%

of consumers see a clear gap forming between those that use AI well and those that don't

AI has ushered in the greatest customer experience revolution of our lifetime. In this new era, companies that are moving swiftly to adopt AI and integrate it deeply into their CX strategies are pulling ahead—realizing tremendous value from AI-based solutions. Indeed, early adopters are **128% more likely to report high ROI** from their AI tools in CX.

But not every customer—or employee—experience has been transformed by these tools.

Consumers, now familiar with and expecting advanced AI-powered interactions, can't help but notice the difference in their brand experiences. Nearly three-quarters (70%) of consumers told us there is a clear gap forming between companies that leverage AI effectively in customer service and those that don't.

The same is true for customer service agents: almost half are turning to shadow AI (unapproved, external AI tools) in order to satisfy their needs in the workplace.

In some industries, shadow AI usage has surged 250% year over year—exposing companies to significant security risk.

As we pored over the survey data, we discovered a growing chasm between CX Trendsetters—CX leaders who've fully embraced AI—and CX Traditionalists. The latter have lagged behind their peers, often delaying the deployment of AI solutions due to a lack of budget, knowledge, or internal support.

In fact, CX Trendsetters outpace Traditionalists in adopting every key AI tool.

Zendesk research methodology

We surveyed more than 5,000 consumers and 5,500 business respondents across 22 countries to understand what's top of mind and keeping them up at night—and how we can help.

We've gathered these insights into our 7th annual Zendesk CX Trends report, identifying five emerging trends that map out a clear path for CX leaders and organizations to harness the full potential of AI to transform their customer experience and drive impactful results—in 2025 and beyond.

CX Trendsetters put AI at the forefront

Traits of CX Trendsetters

Embraced AI as early adopters

Prioritize tech that enhance human connection

Integrate AI deeply into their CX strategies

Actively work to stay ahead of changing demands

Traits of CX Traditionalists

Aspire to move beyond legacy practices, yet not fully embracing AI

Have concerns about maintaining a human touch with AI

Struggle with uncertainty around how to integrate AI

Experience challenges in training team to effectively use AI tools

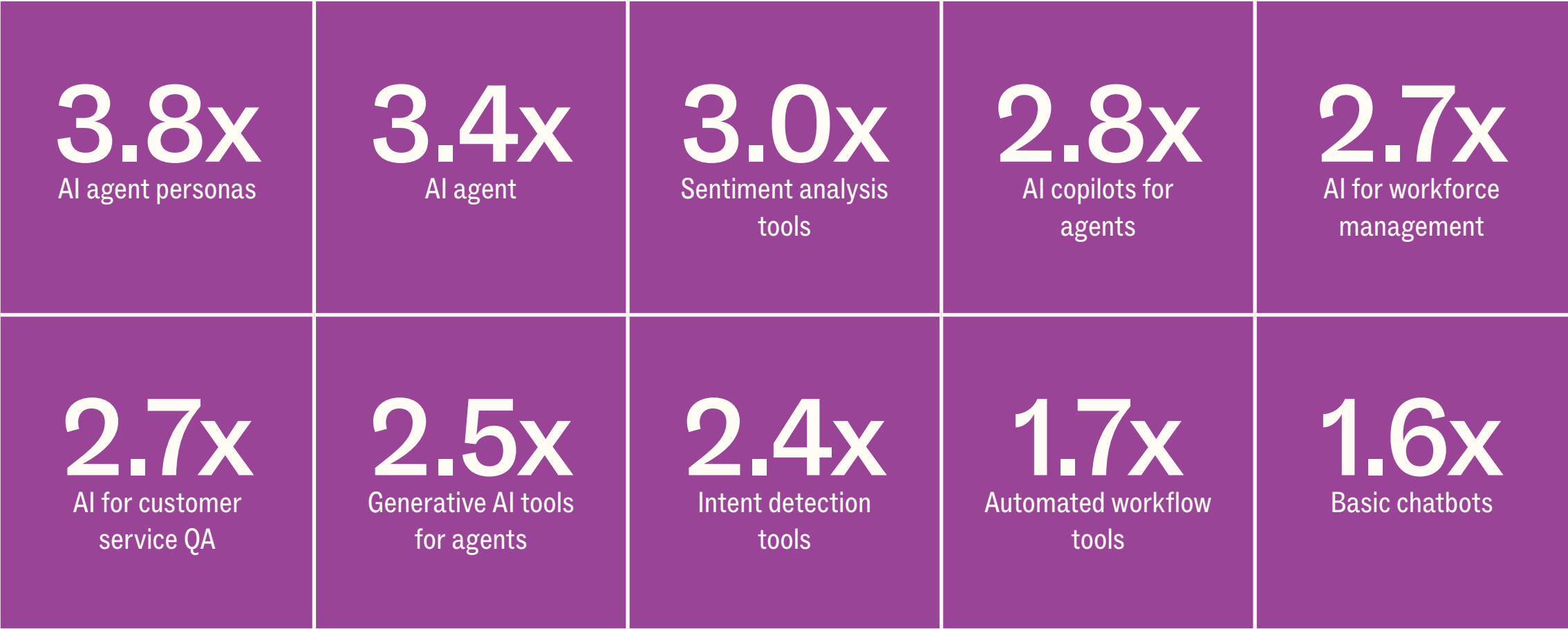
59%

of CX Traditionalists want to become more AI-driven in the next year, indicating a shared appetite to embrace AI alongside future-looking Trendsetters

* Note: CX Trendsetters & Traditionalists were identified through survey responses that indicated their progress in adopting AI and integrating it into their CX strategy.

CX Trendsetters adopt key AI tools at nearly 4x higher rate than Traditionalists

How much more likely CX Trendsetters are to have key AI tools compared to CX Traditionalists





Meanwhile, customers like Lush show how an organization led by CX Trendsetters realizes unprecedented efficiencies, such as a 60% first contact resolution (FCR) rate with their custom AI agent.

Given all that consumers and leaders have told us, the data is clear: human-centric AI is the path forward for CX. Here are the five trends you need to know to take this approach.

CX TRENDSETTER SPOTLIGHT

LUSH

Lush embraces human-centric AI, achieves 82% one-touch resolution rate

Lush, a leader in ethical retail, uses Zendesk AI to gain automated efficiencies without losing its personal connection with customers. By integrating AI to enhance their service, Lush exemplifies the CX Trendsetter who embraces AI to free up agents so they can dedicate more time and energy to meaningful customer interactions.

[Learn from Lush](#)

Trends overview

TREND 1

Driven by AI copilot success, companies are racing to adopt autonomous service for next-level interactions.

Agents and customers alike have learned to trust AI copilots, thanks to their improved performance and efficiency. Nearly all CX Trendsetters are seeing the benefit, too: 90% report positive ROI on AI tools for agents. As such, these early adopters are positioning their companies to utilize autonomous service models that require minimal to no human intervention.

TREND 2

Consumer confidence in AI agents hinges on how engaging, friendly, and human-like these agents become.

Traits like accuracy and efficiency are now table stakes for any interaction. Consumer confidence hinges on creating a sense of connection. AI agents that are friendly, engaging, and embody human-like traits are quickly becoming the new expectation: 64% of consumers say these traits make them more trusting of AI.

TREND 3

Personal AI assistant popularity prompts companies to prepare for a future where assistants take the lead.

Consumers are ready to reclaim their time and relinquish their to-do lists to Personal AI assistants. Rapid technological advancements are ushering in an assistant-first world: 67% of consumers say they're eager to offload tasks like handling customer service issues to a personal AI assistant.

TREND 4

Voice AI, with its natural language capabilities, helps consumers feel heard across all touchpoints.

Allowing for more nuanced and human-like interactions, Voice AI is setting a higher bar for customer communication: 90% of Trendsetters believe that Voice AI is ushering in the next era of voice-driven customer service interactions.

TREND 5

In a world of AI-driven experiences, personalization yields customer loyalty like never before.

Not only do consumers want interactions that feel tailored to them, AI is upping the ante in the battle for their loyalty: 61% of consumers say they expect more personalized service with AI. Attuned to these expectations, CX Trendsetters are shifting their focus to new customer loyalty metrics and embracing AI to deliver one-of-a-kind experiences.

TREND 1

Driven by AI copilot success, companies are racing to adopt autonomous service for next-level interactions

AI copilots? They're a win-win. Agents love them—and the time they free up to focus on more complex, meaningful work. Plus, they're a boon to the bottom line. Companies leveraging AI copilot technology are reaping the benefits of streamlined processes and strong returns.

No one is realizing these returns like CX Trendsetters, who are implementing AI copilot tools at a rate nearly three times higher than CX Traditionalists. They also nearly unanimously report positive ROI on AI tools for agents.

93%

of CX Trendsetters believe copiloting is a great way to get customers and agents comfortable with AI, and introduce them to more advanced use

90%

of CX Trendsetters think that 80% of issues will be resolved without a human within the next few years

CX Trendsetters embrace key advantages of AI copilots

Top benefits include:

Generative AI for personalized customer responses

Real-time decision support for interactions of any complexity

Improved clarity for streamlined communications

Helps agents retrieve information efficiently across systems

By implementing AI copilot tools, Trendsetters are also meeting agent expectations: Agents who have AI copilots are 20% more likely to feel empowered to do their job well. CX Trendsetters like NEXT are leveraging these AI tools to free up agents’ time to focus on more meaningful work.

Consumers are also seeing the impact of these tools in action: 75% are now in favor of agents using AI to help draft responses, an increase of 10 percentage points from last year.

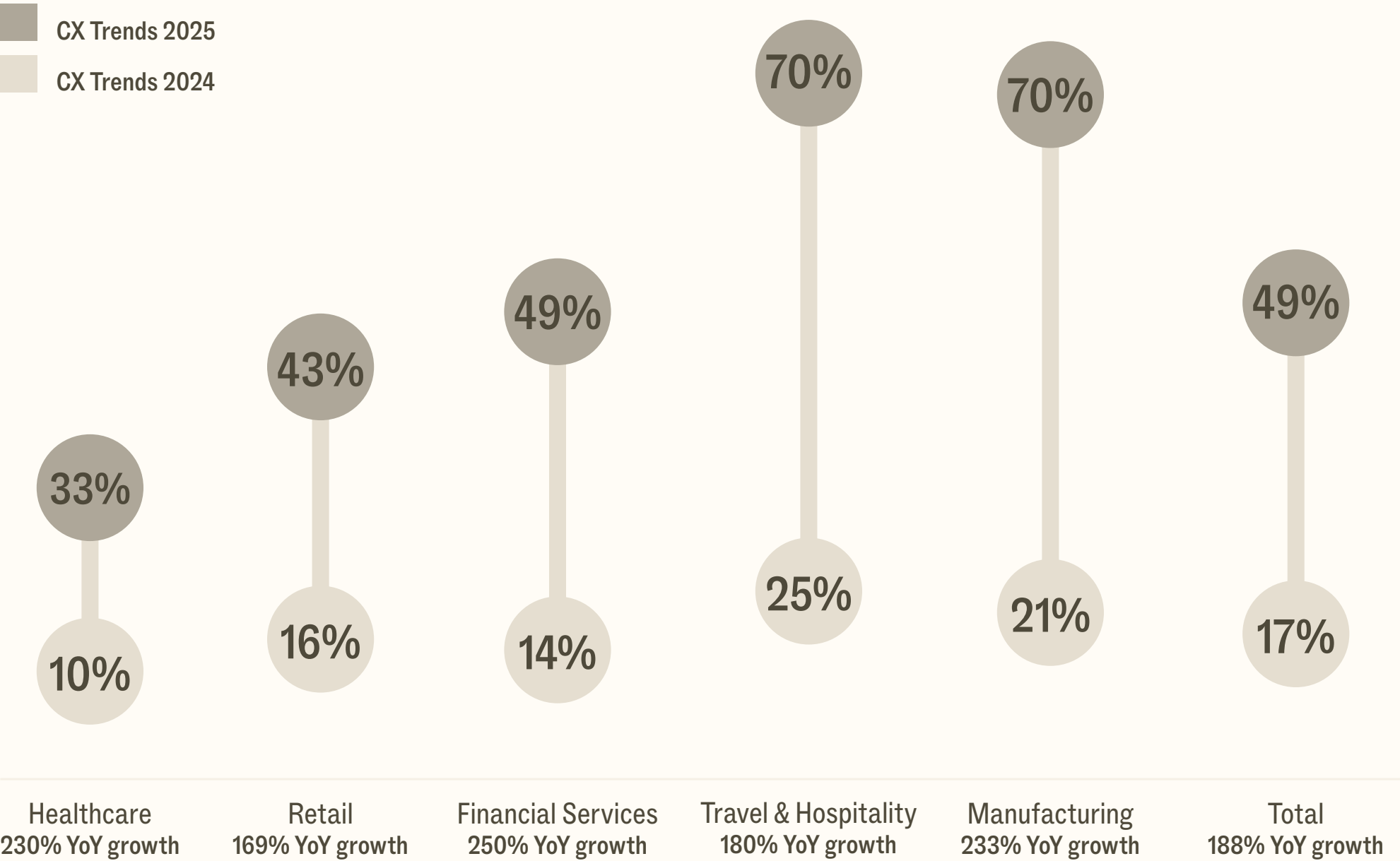
By building trust and familiarity with AI among agents, customers, and leaders, AI copilots are positioning companies to advance confidently toward autonomous service models (more on this topic a bit further down).

Meanwhile, leaders who are reluctant to adopt AI copilots are compounding an avoidable, yet rampant issue: shadow AI. To lessen the risk of

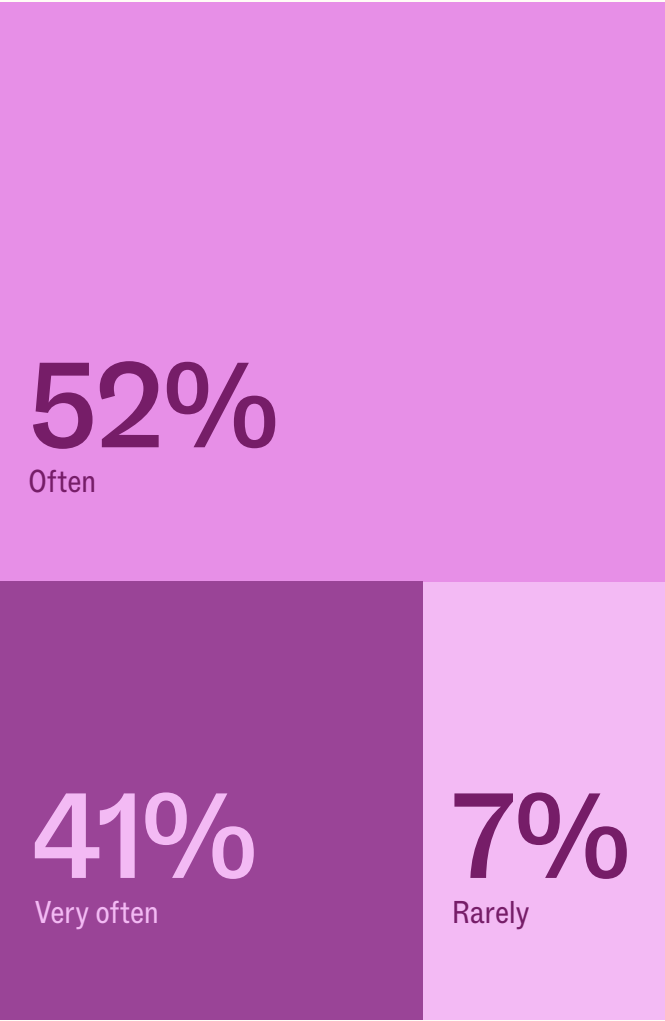
agents using external tools (in the absence of internal solutions), companies must prioritize AI copilot integration, empowering agents with the tools they need—and expect. Doing so will ensure that agents maintain privacy, security, and service quality, and prepare them for a fully autonomous future.

Use of shadow AI skyrockets up to 250%

Percent of agents using generative AI tools outside of what their company has provided or approved



How often shadow AI tools are being used by these agents



NEXT

NEXT accelerates its CX transformation, reduces email handling times by 11%

Global retailer NEXT sees AI as a powerful copilot enabling its agents to deliver high-quality service, while increasing agility and efficiency. By leveraging Zendesk AI, NEXT improved service quality and created bespoke applications, which allows them to present customized data and key business information to their global customer service team.

[Learn from Next](#)

The future of CX is autonomous

CX leaders who have found success with AI copilot tools are now racing to implement the next era of AI-driven solutions: fully autonomous service models. This includes technologies such as AI agents, advanced workflows and routing, and enhanced self-service platforms with generative search capabilities (as well as others).

These solutions require minimal to no human intervention in customer interactions, leveraging advanced AI to handle both routine and complex queries, provide personalized responses, and continually improve from each interaction. And they operate at scale.

This movement is setting the stage for fully autonomous service environments, where efficiency and advanced customer interactions are the norm. By 2027, twice as

many CX Trendsetters will have moved towards a more autonomous service model compared to CX Traditionalists—another gap Traditionalists must close if they want to stay competitive.

Keys to staying ahead

- Start by leveraging AI copilots—this is a critical first step.
- Integrate advanced AI tools across your CX ecosystem, including AI agents, enhanced workflows, and generative search capabilities.
- Plan for the evolving roles of agents and admins as they transition into supervisors of AI. By strategically expanding AI’s role and preparing your team for this shift, you’ll be well-positioned to lead in the era of autonomous service.

TREND 2

Consumer confidence in AI agents hinges on how engaging, friendly, and human-like these agents become

Year after year, AI agents—powered by generative AI—are becoming more effective and efficient, demonstrating significant improvements in understanding and resolving complex issues, and driving positive business results. At the forefront, CX Trendsetters are readily adopting AI agents—at a rate more than four times higher than CX Traditionalists.

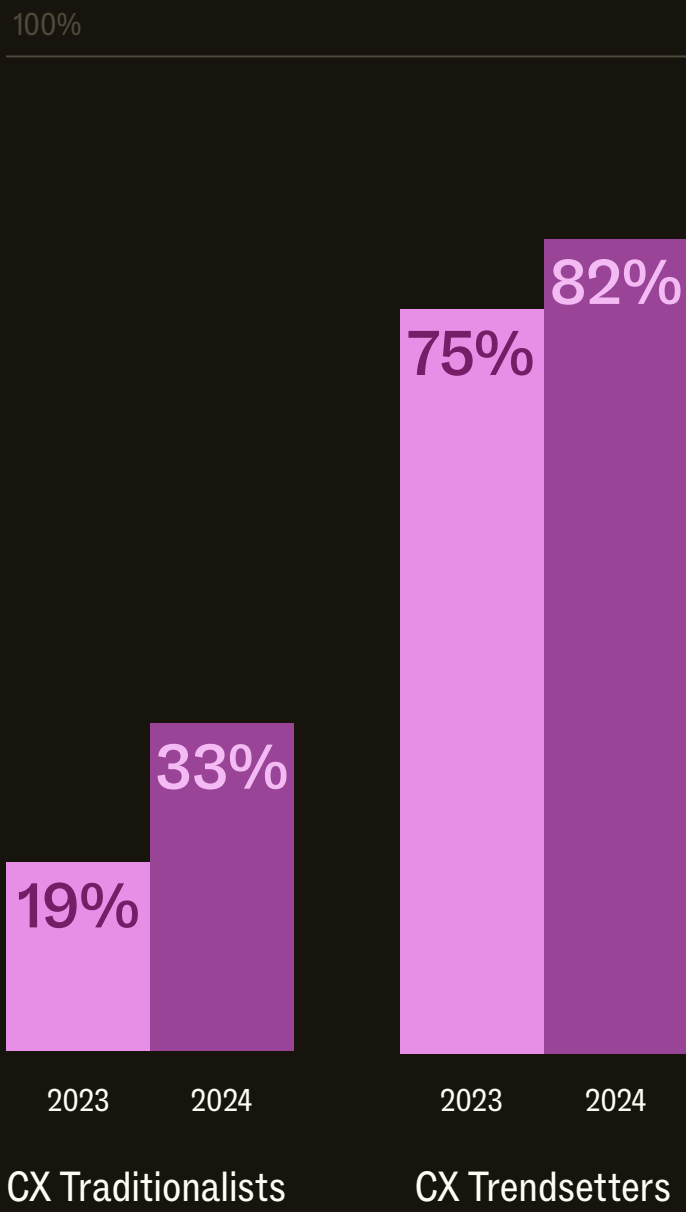
Unsurprisingly, CX Trendsetters lead in AI agent effectiveness, too. Our research shows that while both Trendsetters’ and Traditionalists’ AI agents have grown more effective year over year, the latter lags behind the former by a wide margin—49 percentage points.

Meanwhile, CX Trendsetters’ AI agent effectiveness continues to achieve new heights.

Not only are CX Trendsetters leading the way in adopting and improving the effectiveness of AI agents, they’re also more focused on infusing them with the human-like traits customers desire most: friendliness, empathy, and creativity. Our research shows that CX Trendsetters are nearly two times more likely to prioritize human-like traits in AI agents versus Traditionalists.

And they’re reaping the benefits. Prioritizing human-like AI traits helps Trendsetters enhance customer interactions (think: personalized product recommendations), deliver on customer expectations, and further differentiate themselves from competitors.

CX Trendsetters continue to reach new highs in AI agent effectiveness YoY



SIEMENS

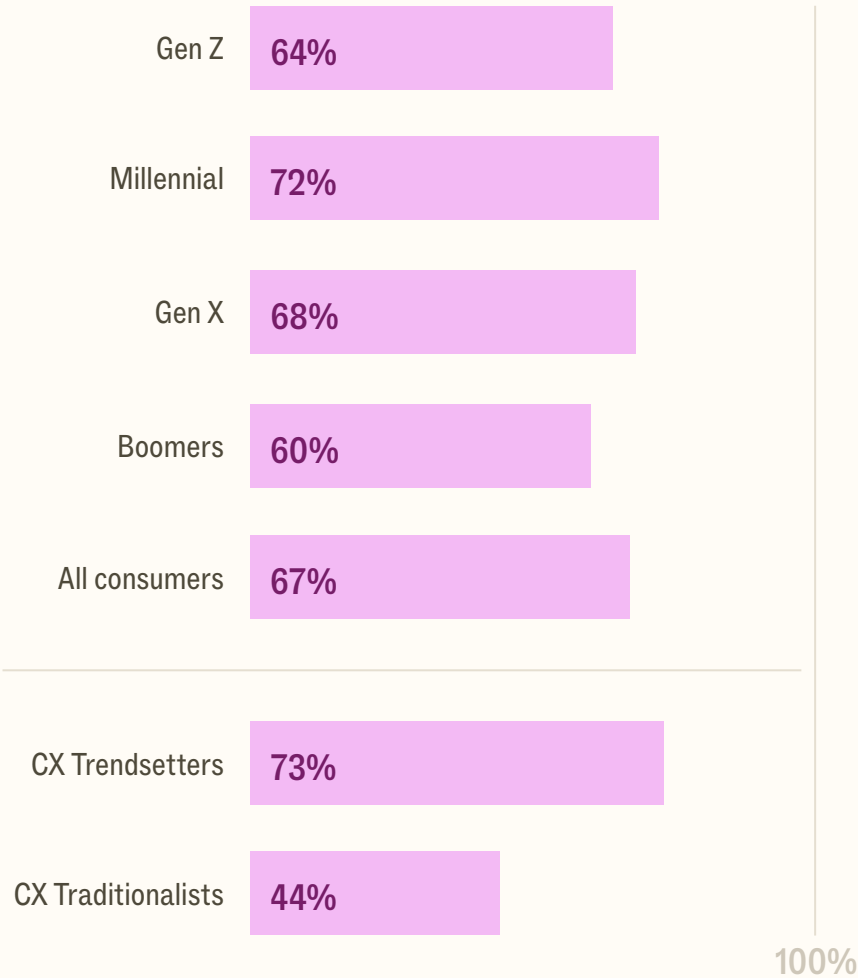
AI agents build consumer confidence, boost productivity by nearly 2X

The financial division of Siemens, Europe’s largest manufacturing company, leverages AI agents to not only respond instantly to customer requests, such as sending invoices, but also anticipate consumer needs.

Learn from Siemens

CX Trendsetters deliver on consumer demands for human-like AI

Percent of consumers and CX leaders that value human-centric AI agents



Why does this matter to CX leaders? More than two-thirds (68%) of consumers say they’re more likely to engage with and trust AI agents that exhibit these human-like traits—behaviors that, ultimately, lead to improved CX metrics like customer sentiment, retention, and loyalty.

Keys to staying ahead

- Prioritize and focus on evolving your bots to AI agents that can engage in personable interactions.
- Choose AI agents that possess human-like traits, such as friendliness, empathy, and creativity, which are highly valued by consumers—and a non-negotiable for staying competitive in the evolving CX landscape.

Personal AI assistant popularity prompts companies to prepare for a future where assistants take the lead

Personal AI assistants (think: Siri and Alexa) are rapidly advancing—rising to meet consumers’ growing interest in tools that automate their lives. Significant investments from tech giants will result in major advancements, evolving these assistants even further.

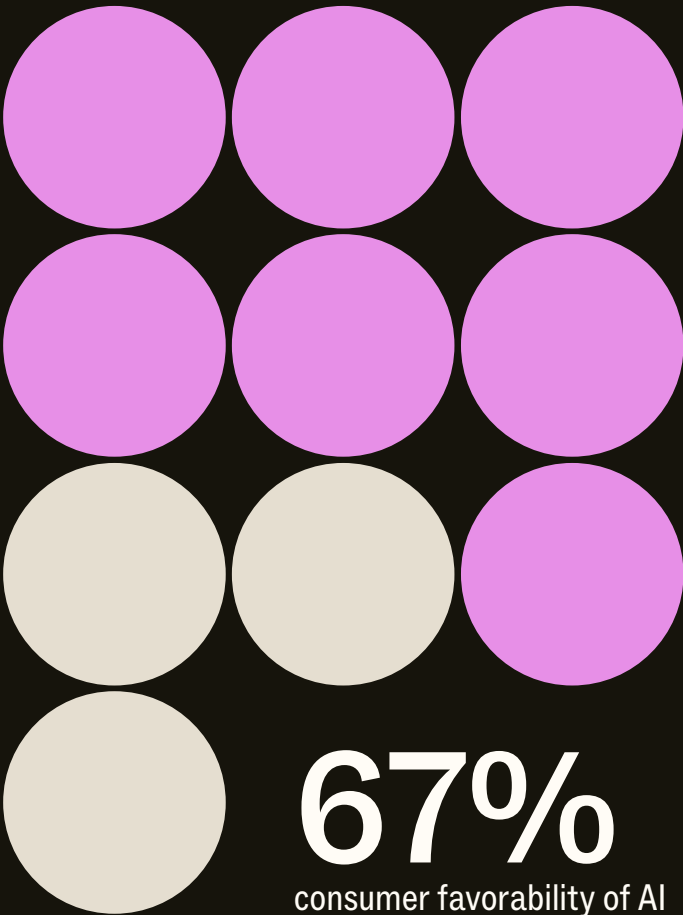
That’s good news for consumers who have come to rely on their assistants to orchestrate their day to day.

But expectations go beyond personal admin tasks. As consumers continue to embrace AI assistants, they expect many of their interactions with companies to be assistant-first, too. This is true whether the interaction happens via their personal AI assistant or one provided by a company.

It’s also true across every generation of consumer.

Naturally, there are some differences. Gen Zers, having grown up with the most advanced tools, are actually the least likely to rely on AI for product or service information. Millennials—the first generation to come of age with smartphones and social media—most appreciate AI support with personalized recommendations. Despite their preferences, every generation agrees that AI assistance is more helpful than not.

In fact, consumer favorability of AI in CX has skyrocketed to 67%—up 10 percentage points year over year. And 81% of consumers believe AI has become part of modern customer service, up 11 points from last year.

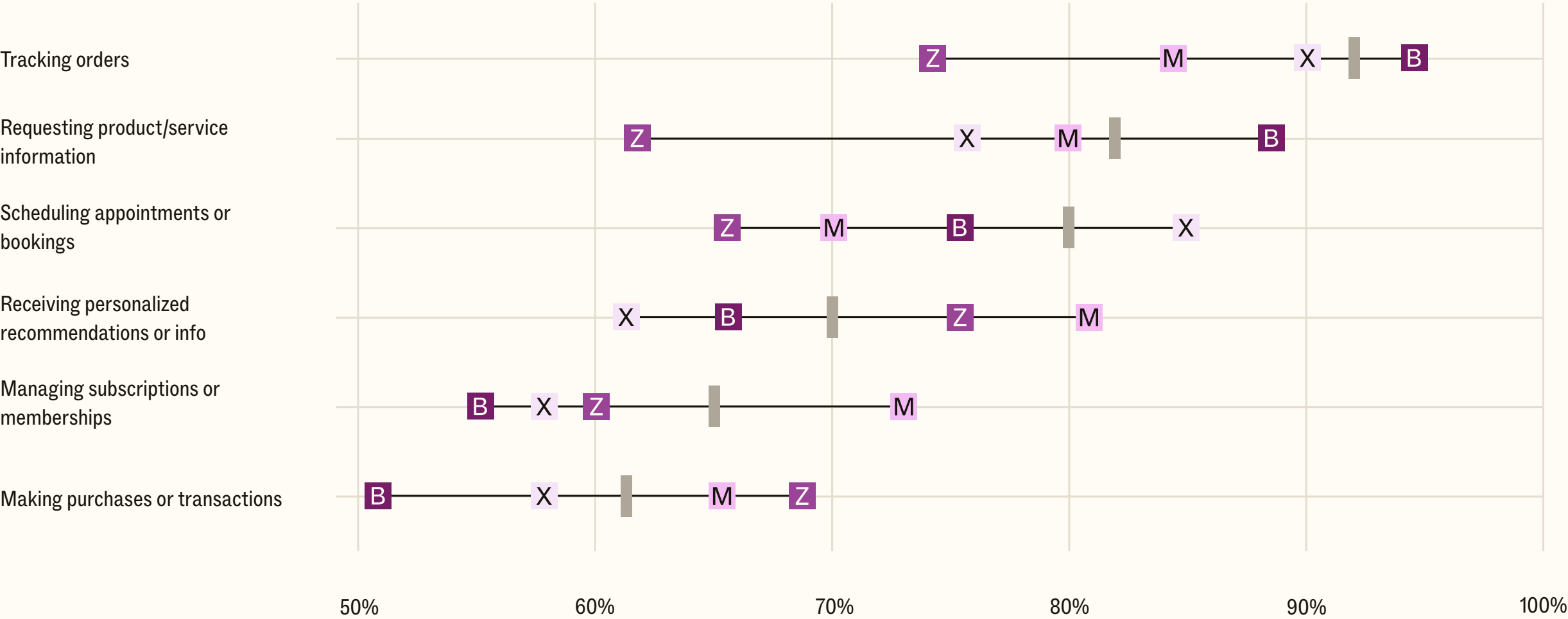


67%
consumer favorability of AI in CX has skyrocketed to 67%—up 10 percentage points year over year.

Generations divvy up AI assistants' everyday tasks differently

Percent of consumers who believe personal AI assistants would be helpful – by task and generation

Z Gen Z X Gen X M Millennial B Boomer Total



Building a seamless, assistant-first experience

As consumer confidence—and reliance—continue to grow, companies must adapt to an assistant-first landscape.

At first, assistant-led interactions may still involve responding to emails or messages within apps, handled by either human or AI agents. But in the longer term, this shift will require reimagining customer service channels to ensure seamless integration with AI tools, including allowing AI assistants to communicate directly with company systems, reducing friction and minimizing the need for live human agents.

Some companies are more up to the task than others. By 2027, nearly all (87%) CX Trendsetters will design an experience for consumers to use AI assistants across the customer journey. Less than half (47%) of CX Traditionalists report such forward-looking plans.

For consumers, the benefit is clear: a smooth, convenient, frictionless experience where tasks are handled effortlessly. As for companies? Those that embrace this change will lead in delivering the effortless experiences consumers demand, while those that don’t risk being left behind.

Keys to staying ahead

- As personal AI assistants become more integrated into daily life, closely monitor how consumers are beginning to use these assistants for customer service interactions, particularly through traditional channels like email and messaging.
- Begin planning for and thinking about how your systems can seamlessly integrate with these personal AI assistants, enabling them to complete tasks on behalf of customers.
- Position your company to lead as assistant-first interactions become the norm by planning for direct system integration and staying informed on industry developments.

TREND 4

Voice AI, with its natural language capabilities, helps consumers feel heard across all touchpoints

Voice AI is having its moment. Thanks to tremendous advancements—and its generative capabilities—Voice AI now allows for more nuanced and human-like interactions, setting a new standard for effortless, natural customer communication.

Advanced AI voice assistants, such as the voice messaging feature within the ChatGPT mobile app, have whetted consumers' appetites. More than half of consumers say they have interacted with advanced Voice AI—and they're eager for companies to adopt these technologies.

One reason why? Many consumers find it easier to express problems and unpack situations through voice assistants, making interactions more natural and effective. This growing demand indicates that Voice AI can be a game-changer in enhancing customer service experiences.

51%

of consumers have interacted with advanced Voice AI

60%

of consumers want companies to adopt Voice AI

Consumers prefer natural-sounding Voice AI

So, what do those experiences look like?

For starters, consumers are craving more human-like interactions: 67% believe that more natural-sounding AI via phone would enhance their experience.

Beyond phone communication, Voice AI can also be integrated into various customer touchpoints, including messaging and apps, offering seamless and natural voice interactions across multiple platforms. In particular, consumers are keen for AI agents to understand and respond to their voice—74% of consumers said this would highly improve their experience when interacting with AI.

Part of feeling truly heard is the ability to communicate in the language of your choosing. As Voice AI evolves, it's expected to upend traditional staffing models by offering multilingual capabilities that allow businesses to communicate with customers in their preferred language.

Finally reaching a point where it can address current gaps and frustrations, Voice AI is now an essential component of customer service strategies. And while both CX Trendsetters and Traditionalists stand to benefit from these advancements, it's the latter who currently rely heavily on phone support and, thus, must work to close the gap—unleashing Voice AI's potential to significantly improve the customer experience.

Keys to staying ahead

- Test drive your company's phone experience, especially if you're using an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, and note places where you could leverage Voice AI—which allows for more than just basic phrase recognition—to improve the experience.
- Consider other touchpoints where Voice AI might be more convenient than typing to enhance the overall customer experience.

TREND 5

In a world of AI-driven experiences, personalization yields customer loyalty like never before

So, what do consumers expect from the future of AI-driven customer experience? In a word, personalization. Indeed, nearly two-thirds (61%) of consumers say they expect more personalized service with AI.

But, not only do consumers want interactions that feel uniquely tailored to them, they view them as critical to their brand loyalty. Attuned to these heightened expectations, CX Trendsetters are fully—and confidently—embracing AI to deliver on them: 91% of Trendsetters believe AI can effectively personalize experiences.

CX Trendsetters and CX Traditionalists agree measuring loyalty is a top priority

What CX Trendsetters say are the most critical metrics in the next year

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Retention Rate |
| 2 | Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) |
| 3 | First Contact Resolution (FCR) |
| 4 | Internal Quality Score (IQS) |
| 5 | First Contact Resolution (FCR) |

*CX Traditionalists also ranked Retention Rate as the most critical metric in the next year

Loyalty leads in the new normal

With personalization now the baseline in customer experience, traditional metrics are no longer sufficient. As such, CX Trendsetters are shifting their focus to customer loyalty—the new definitive measure of strong customer relationships in an AI-driven world.

And while both Trendsetters and Traditionalists align on loyalty being the most critical metric in the year ahead, Trendsetters are two times more likely to be taking action, introducing new metrics for measuring performance.

Further strengthening their competitive edge, CX Trendsetters are also investing heavily in AI-driven personalization: 56% of CX Trendsetters will prioritize using AI to personalize the experience—such tailored product recommendations, specialized support responses, and custom escalation paths—and build stronger customer relationships and loyalty in the year ahead. Just 22% of CX Traditionalists plan to do the same.

Trendsetters’ strategic focus not only meets consumer expectations, but also solidifies loyalty as a core metric—ensuring long-term success in an increasingly personalized customer experience landscape.

Keys to staying ahead

- Evaluate your AI systems to optimize tailored customer interactions across all touchpoints.
- Prioritize loyalty metrics like retention rates and customer lifetime value, and integrate AI efficiency metrics, such as response time improvements and personalized offer acceptance rates.
- Regularly update these metrics to align with evolving consumer expectations, ensuring that personalized experiences translate into stronger customer loyalty and sustained success.

Lead the way into the future of CX with Zendesk

The gap between CX Trendsetters and Traditionalists is widening—and businesses cannot afford to wait. To stay ahead, your organization must align with the leaders in this space.

As you navigate these crucial times, having the right partner is invaluable. Only Zendesk has the CX expertise to help your organization become a CX Trendsetter and equip you with the right products and support on your journey. Together, we will help you adapt, innovate, and lead the pack in this rapidly evolving landscape.

Ready to become a CX Trendsetter and lead the future?

Discover how Zendesk can help



zendesk

Advanced methodology

Data from CX Trends comes from two survey sources: one global survey (22 countries) of 5,082 consumers and another global survey (22 countries) of 5,504 customer service and experience leaders, agents, and technology buyers from organizations ranging from small business to enterprise. Surveys were conducted during June and July 2024. Results from each survey were weighted to remove bias from the survey samples.

Business survey countries:

Australia (4.6%)	Malaysia (1.2%)
Brazil (4.7%)	Mexico (4.4%)
Canada (4.4%)	Netherlands (3.6%)
Chile (4.6%)	Philippines (1.1%)
Colombia (4.7%)	Singapore (2.5%)
Denmark (3.4%)	South Korea (4.4%)
France (4.7%)	Spain (4.4%)
Germany (4.4%)	Sweden (3.5%)
India (4.5%)	Thailand (1.1%)
Italy (4.5%)	United Kingdom (10.6%)
Japan (4.4%)	United States (14.4%)

Consumer survey countries:

Australia (3.9%)	Malaysia (0.6%)
Brazil (5.4%)	Mexico (5.2%)
Canada (5.2%)	Netherlands (2.9%)
Chile (5.2%)	Philippines (1.1%)
Colombia (5.2%)	Singapore (2.9%)
Denmark (2.8%)	South Korea (5.2%)
France (5.2%)	Spain (5.2%)
Germany (5.2%)	Sweden (2.9%)
India (5.6%)	Thailand (1%)
Italy (5.2%)	United Kingdom (9.5%)
Japan (3%)	United States (11.6%)

Business survey roles:

Agents (20.7%)
Business leaders (70.3%)

Trendsetter/Traditionalist segment:

CX Trendsetters (54.7%)
CX Traditionalists (25.8%)

Consumer survey age groups:

18-24 (19.8%)
25-39 (27.2%)
40-54 (27.1%)
55+ (25.9%)