

zendesk

CX Trends 2024

Future of AI-powered CX



Future-proof: planning for AI-powered CX

In the world of CX, AI has sparked a transformative era that will leave no area untouched – and the leaders charged with implementing this game-changing technology stand ready to capitalise on its immense promise.

However, reaping the benefits of AI – being able to operate leaner organisations, boost customer satisfaction and loyalty and tap into new revenue streams – comes with significant challenges and uncertainty.

In our in-depth [CX Trends 2024](#) report, we explored the forces driving AI's impact on support organisations. To augment that big picture, we asked more than 1,300 senior CX leaders (vice president and above) based in Australia, Brazil, India, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States to share their thoughts and plans. This report condenses their insights and will serve as your essential blueprint for implementing AI effectively, overcoming potential roadblocks and setting your organisation up for success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 AI: big changes and new challenges**
- 2 How AI will transform CX**
- 3 Overcoming potential barriers**
- 4 Take control of your future**

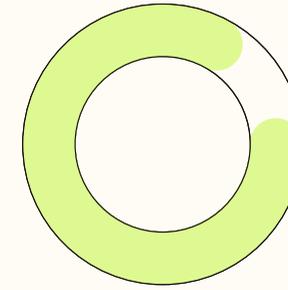
AI: big changes and new challenges

1

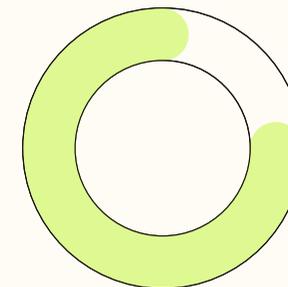
The AI-powered future of CX means leaner, more impactful organisations charged with boosting customer satisfaction while managing a projected five-fold increase in interactions. When CX leaders take stock, they envision CX being completely transformed by AI.

CX leaders harbour no illusions about this transformation – they clearly understand that it won't be easy, and setbacks will happen. Yet they're also facing these turbulent times with optimism: a whopping 81% say that AI will change CX for the better.

CX leaders also see AI as a streamlining tool that can help them overcome both customer support and other business challenges. As they integrate AI into every aspect of their business, leaders believe it will improve day-to-day customer satisfaction, open up quality 24/7 support, reduce operational costs and boost customer engagement. Finally, AI will result in greatly enhanced self-service options in the form of richer, more accurate knowledge bases and AI agents that perform at much higher levels.



86%
of CX leaders believe CX will be utterly transformed over the next three years.



77%
of CX leaders think traditional CX will give way to radically different industry dynamics.

CX leaders' top priorities over the next three years



Improving data security or cybersecurity



Investing in new customer experience technology



Adding/expanding AI and automation in service delivery



Adding/expanding generative AI into the customer experience



Enhancing/optimising self-service support

“Looking ahead, customers will build entirely new categories of generative AI-powered applications and experiences with the latest generation of models. We’ve only begun to tap generative AI’s potential to automate complex processes, augment human expertise and reshape digital experiences.”

Swami Sivasubramanian
VP of data and machine learning at



How AI will transform CX

2

In just three more years, the customer experience and the organisations dedicated to delivering it will change in ways that would have been unimaginable just a decade ago. By 2027, AI's transformative effects will be felt widely. Human agents, admins and their leaders will all work very differently from before, with roles and responsibilities shifting greatly.

The new CX organisation: lean, fast and effective

Leaner, more efficient teams. Enhanced strategic decision making. Supercharged competitiveness. These shifts will come quickly. In fact, they're already well underway – evidence that CX organisations will be operating on a whole new level, all thanks to the integration of AI.

And the result of those organisational changes will be felt downstream by customers, who'll experience greatly improved service quality. That improvement will be driven by organisations using AI to monitor all customer service channels and provide first-touch

interaction (all of which will involve AI).

Meanwhile, AI will manage agents and teams while tracking quality and effectiveness (making it far easier for CX leaders to understand how agents and their teams perform as a whole). Because 80% of all interactions will be resolved by AI, human agents will be free to focus on more complex issues.

We'll also see greater levels of personalisation, with CX organisations empowered to create tailored, engaging experiences. All of this will unfold without needing to increase agent staffing – even as overall support volumes rise.

The new normal: higher-skilled, tech-savvy agents

Over the next three years, you'll see the role of human agents evolve significantly.

Human agents will be able to seamlessly pick up a conversation from an AI agent and know precisely who the customer is and the details surrounding their issue – with no need for customers to repeat themselves. Suggested answers and information will be readily available, accelerating resolution time and boosting satisfaction, while everything a human agent needs will be available in a single workspace.

These developments will push human agents toward expertise-based work, away from routine tasks. They'll focus on handling complex queries, often serving in an advisory capacity for their trusty AI copilots. As a result, training plans will become more targeted and feature AI-supported scenarios to refine human capabilities.

Here's how the role of human agents will change:

- **Human agents will have to become more comfortable with leveraging AI.** Over the next three years, human agents will need to embrace the use of AI in their daily tasks.
- **Agents will need to hone their soft skills.** With AI handling large volumes of requests, agents will focus on issues that require deep empathy.
- **Agents will develop deep, specialised knowledge.** Human agents will thrive as business experts and build cross-functional knowledge that expands their roles to include service, sales and support motions.
- **Work will become streamlined.** A simple unified workspace will replace multi-tab ticket management, helping agents pivot quickly to effectively meet business needs.

Admins: proactive guardians of your business

Admins have long faced cumbersome manual processes for developing staffing plans and managing knowledge bases, as well as having limited visibility into how agents are truly performing. They've also been forced to rely on partners in IT to implement new workflows in their CX tools, which introduces delays when agility is paramount. With the advent of AI, that's all going to change.

Admins will now assume a more strategic role over the next three years, boosted by AI copilots and powerful workforce management tools. These empowered admins will manage staffing and workflow implementation via AI-driven recommendations, which will also help them to make sounder decisions about data policies.

Here's how admins will see their roles shift:

- **Admins will partner with AI copilots.** These indispensable assistants will help admins respond faster to business challenges and work far more effectively.
- **They'll constantly leverage AI and strategic management tools.** This will open up huge gains in team optimisation, ensuring effective coverage and operational efficiency.
- **Admins will quickly design, manage and refine automated interactions.** By using low-code/no-code tools – supported by an AI copilot – admins will be able to tweak automated interactions in mere moments.
- **They'll approve AI-suggested optimisations and workflows.** Admins will transition into a supervisory role here, enabling them to focus on other important tasks.
- **Admins will have richer, easier-to-understand data available.** A well-informed admin is an effective admin. With AI providing actionable data, admins will make better decisions, which will boost customer satisfaction, team efficiency and your business's ability to scale.

CX leaders will gain new skills and assume new responsibilities

CX leaders will take on the enormous responsibility of guiding the transformation of the customer experience by strategically implementing AI, leaning into data-driven decision making and managing human talent in new, innovative ways.

It's a massive undertaking, but CX leaders who rise to the challenge will reap rich rewards: elevated customer satisfaction levels, more efficient teams and CX organisations transformed into revenue generators.

CX organisations will soon embrace a proactive, predictive and personalised customer engagement model, with AI offering real-time insights into customer behaviour and market trends.

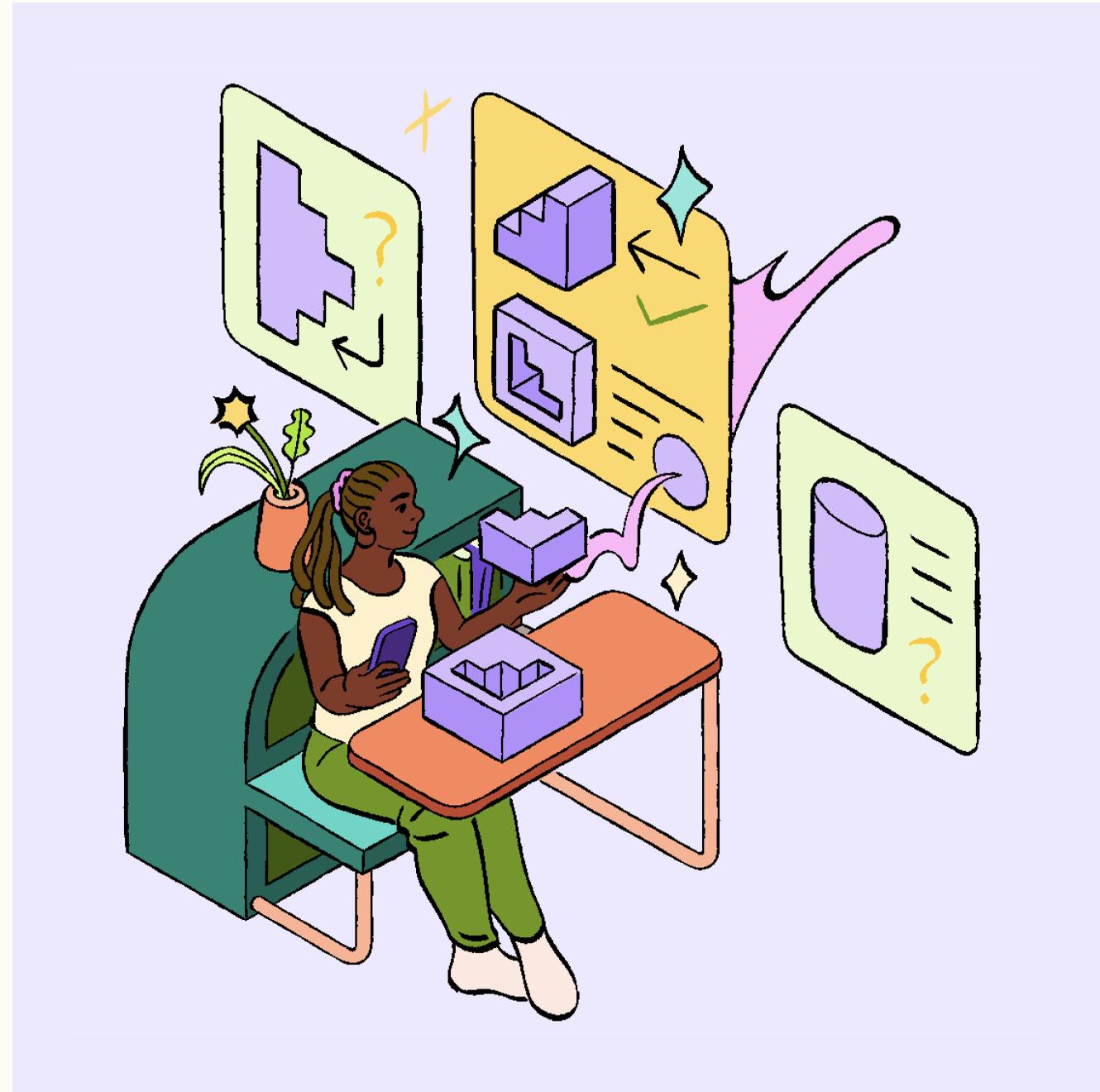
In turn, CX leaders will assume a more elevated and strategic role, focusing on:

- **Mastery in strategic planning and decision making.** CX leaders will need to navigate complex challenges while maintaining a keen sensitivity to both customer and team needs.
derive actionable insights, enabling them to predict customer behaviours and market trends accurately.
- **A deep understanding of AI capabilities and the ethical implications of technology use will be required.** CX leaders must be adept at integrating advanced technologies to enhance customer experiences while ensuring ethical standards are upheld.
- **Developing and expanding skills in data analytics will be paramount.** CX leaders must become proficient in using big data to
- **CX leaders will harness data in innovative ways to support strategic initiatives.** This involves not just collecting and analysing data, but also applying insights to drive business decisions and improve customer interactions.
- **CX leaders will play a crucial role in bridging IT, marketing and operations.** They'll foster the collaborative environments needed for digital transformation initiatives.

The impact of AI on customers' experiences

While CX organisations will experience sizeable changes over the next three years, it's customers who'll really profit from the power of AI. A new golden age in customer experience is just around the corner, one in which consumers receive instant, personalised service across channels. Advanced security and transparency will be the rule, and customers will reward businesses with exponentially greater levels of trust and loyalty.

That will mark a significant transition from the status quo, where customers often feel frustrated and unappreciated. Getting caught in endless loops with old-school chatbots or searching fruitlessly for an answer in a disorganised and limited knowledge base will be a thing of the past, as will the interminable delays when dealing with human agents.



Soon customers will be able to have multiple questions answered in a detailed, conversational self-service experience. They'll receive lightning-fast tailored content that directly answers their questions and even compares products. And when it's time to speak with a human agent, the hardest questions will be resolved in real time – not three days later.



While the customer experience will shift in profound ways, so will customer needs and behaviours. Zendesk predicts that three major shifts will come to pass:

- **Customers will rely on their very own AI personal assistants.** Acting on behalf of consumers, these assistants will streamline experiences, ensuring efficient and personalised engagement to precisely meet unique customer needs.
- **Customers will expect to receive and consume content in multiple formats.** Consumers will experience an expanded array of interaction options with AI agents, including being able to text and send photos and videos.
- **Customers will demand greater transparency and control over their data.** AI will provide clear explanations as to why recommendations were made by analysing previous purchase and usage data, as well as other customer information.

Start overcoming potential barriers now

3

No transformation comes without first overcoming obstacles. CX leaders are well aware of the importance of incorporating AI into their operations, seeing it as critical to future success. Yet most don't see themselves as being far enough along in the journey – just a quarter of leaders Zendesk spoke with describe their AI adoption path as being advanced.

Here are the top areas of concern keeping CX leaders up at night:

Maintaining the human touch so customers aren't alienated

A robotic interaction can put customers off your brand. Here's where AI agents will prove to be a crucial solution for CX organisations. Powered by generative AI, these agents respond to customers in a warm, conversational tone, providing answers that adapt dynamically to queries. Paired with a robust knowledge base, AI agents are the strategic link that brings the best of both worlds: fast, personalised support that feels comfortably human.

Zendesk AI agents, for example, can be customised extensively, enabling admins to determine which enquiries receive generative responses and which ones get routed to human agents or self-service articles. And because these agents can be customised to adopt your company's brand voice, the end result is a seamless customer experience that feels human from start to finish.

Finding the balance between leveraging data and protecting it

CX leaders are now the new drivers of data privacy as AI and personalisation become central to the customer experience. Faced with striking a balance between leveraging customer data and protecting it, these leaders are ready to make significant investments in evolving their data privacy practices. And those investments will be absolutely essential, since playing fast-and-loose with customer data can have catastrophic consequences for both consumers and your business.

Here's where Zendesk shines, making it easy for CX leaders to enact sound data privacy policies and thus build trust with customers.

- Evaluate all your data regularly and only keep the data needed to deliver great CX.
- Security certifications ensure your staff are trained and confident in maintaining data security.
- Easily identify and track relevant data within your CX system, including setting a schedule for retention and deletion.
- Safeguard your data even further by only giving agents access to the data they need, when they need it – and nothing more.

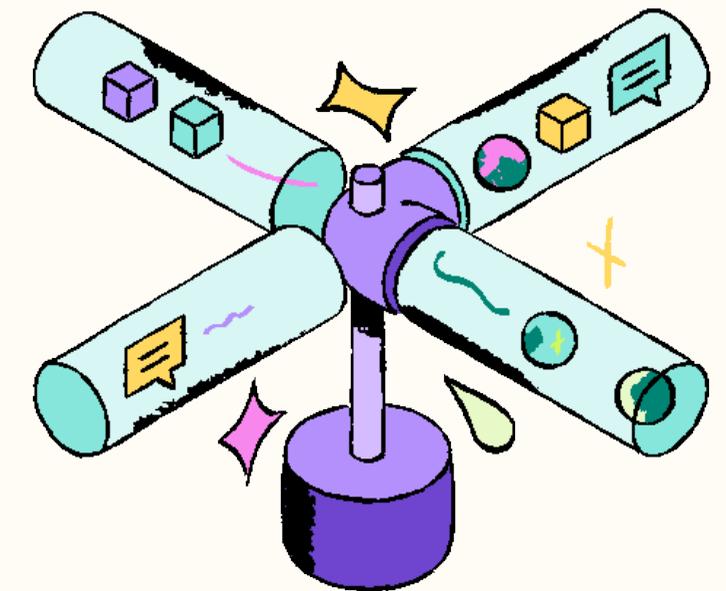
Zendesk: your essential AI partner

Over the past several years, we've been combining AI with our deep CX expertise to deliver a complete service solution for the AI era. Zendesk AI agents will eclipse chatbots of old, and our technology helps human agents work faster and more efficiently as managers and admins assume new strategic duties.

AI powered customer experience. AI agents automate resolutions and understand customer needs and intent. Meanwhile, AI copilots provide invaluable assistance to human agents by merging suggestions and similar tickets, while also managing intelligent ticket routing.

Intelligent service operations. Zendesk helps you boost performance and augment operational insights, all while delivering exceptional customer service with AI-powered quality assurance.

Deliver a flexible and trusted platform. Thanks to Zendesk, you can create personalised experiences with customised data, deliver seamless CX by unifying data across systems, support advanced security and compliance obligations and enhance security with granular permission and access controls.



Take control of your future with Zendesk

The path ahead is clear. As a CX leader, plan and act now so your organisation – and the customers it serves – will thrive in this era of AI-powered CX. It's an opportunity that, if seized, will transform your business in incredibly powerful ways.

When facing transformative times like these, having the right partner is invaluable. Zendesk stands at the forefront of this evolution, offering the expertise, tools and vision to help you adapt, innovate and excel. We're leading the charge in customer experience innovation, and we can help you craft the future of your customer engagement strategies. With the Zendesk suite of solutions at the ready, you'll be able to meet the future on your terms.

Ready to begin your AI-powered CX journey? Discover how Zendesk can help.

