



WINNING STRATEGIES TO DRIVE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

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Overview

Managing customer expectations is increasingly becoming more challenging due to the significant shift in their behaviour and the complexity of multiple customer journeys. While organisations recognise that customer engagement is crucial to ensure loyalty and retention, they face rising cost pressures. They also have to deal with increasing agent expectations and difficulty in hiring and retaining agents.

To succeed in today's fast-changing world, customer experience (CX) leaders must rethink their strategies and implement new processes and technologies to support these strategies.

This eBook discusses the immediate challenges for CX leaders and the 5 actions that will make them winners in driving customer engagement.



Ecosystem research reveals that 43% of companies prioritise improving customer experience and retention, while 46% are undergoing CX transformation to respond faster to market threats and stay ahead of the competition.



Action 1: Make Omnichannel Orchestration a Priority

Contact centres continue to face challenges in orchestrating all their channels seamlessly. Today's customers have distinct preferences regarding communication channels, and they expect a smooth and consistent experience across all of them. To answer customer expectations, organisations have added channels along the way and deployed point solutions. This has resulted in silos where agents are unable to access the context from previous interactions on other channels.

A comprehensive platform has become imperative. Driving an omnichannel experience requires supporting and integrating multiple communication channels to ensure seamless conversations without losing context, regardless of the customer's chosen channel.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING OMNICHANNEL INTEGRATION



20%

Ensuring real-time content updates across all channels



19%

Offering similar experiences across the channels



15%

Securing customer data across all channels



15%

Personalising CX from insights across all channels



12%

Integrating physical and digital experiences

Source: Ecosystem Future of CX Study, 2023
N=364



What an Omnichannel Strategy Will Achieve



Provide channels of choice to customers

This requires an understanding of the channels that customers want to interact on – and exploring beyond traditional channels to give customers more ownership over their customer journeys.



Provide a unified customer context

Context is extremely important, especially for complex customer queries. It provides the missing links to understand customers better.



Create an uninterrupted experience for agents

When all the channels are tightly aligned, the agent can see the continuous flow of conversation from one channel to the next. This leads to faster first call resolution (FCR) and average handle time (AHT). This, in turn, will have a positive impact on Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) scores.



Deliver a proactive customer engagement

An omnichannel contact centre solution that is well integrated with other business applications through APIs will allow agents to track interactions that have taken place before the customer call.

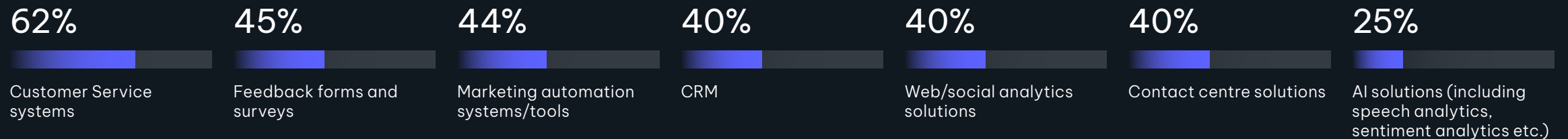


Action 2: Build a Data Driven Culture to Drive Proactive CX

Organisations often struggle to extract valuable insights from the vast data sets stored in multiple data marts. Without trust in the accuracy and completeness of the data, CX employees may hesitate to reach out to customers using what the systems churn out as “real-time” information.

Unfortunately, many organisations still collect and analyse data in silos. There is no single source of truth for all customer data, as different departments manage it differently. Multiple data marts create further confusion, especially when they are not updated in real time or interconnected.

CX TEAMS ACCESS CUSTOMER INFORMATION FROM MULTIPLE REPOSITORIES



Source: Ecosystem Future of CX Study, 2023

N=364



Lack of a Data-driven Culture Challenges Organisations



Some of the challenges companies face are:

- Lack of actionable insights on next best actions to improve CX
- Different CX KPIs for Digital, Contact Centre, Sales, and Marketing teams
- Resolving the debate on who owns customer data
- Inability to listen in on customer interactions across different team interactions
- Aggregating and cleansing data consistently across all data marts
- Eliminating departmental silos to map the customer journey holistically
- Integrating multiple systems to gain the insights that can deepen customer engagement



How to Build a “Data First” CX Organisation

Some of the steps companies can take to ensure a “data-first” CX approach are:



Appointing a Chief Customer Experience Officer in charge of all aspects of CX, including identifying gaps and overseeing the entire customer lifecycle



Setting common organisation-wide CX KPIs for all teams to follow



Making data the crux of all CX transformation efforts and ensuring that the data collected is meaningful



Analysing all customer interactions – across every department



Developing a better understanding of customer journeys to identifying gaps and pushing the company to innovate



Empowering agents with an understanding of the business impacts of their actions and promoting agent self-assessment

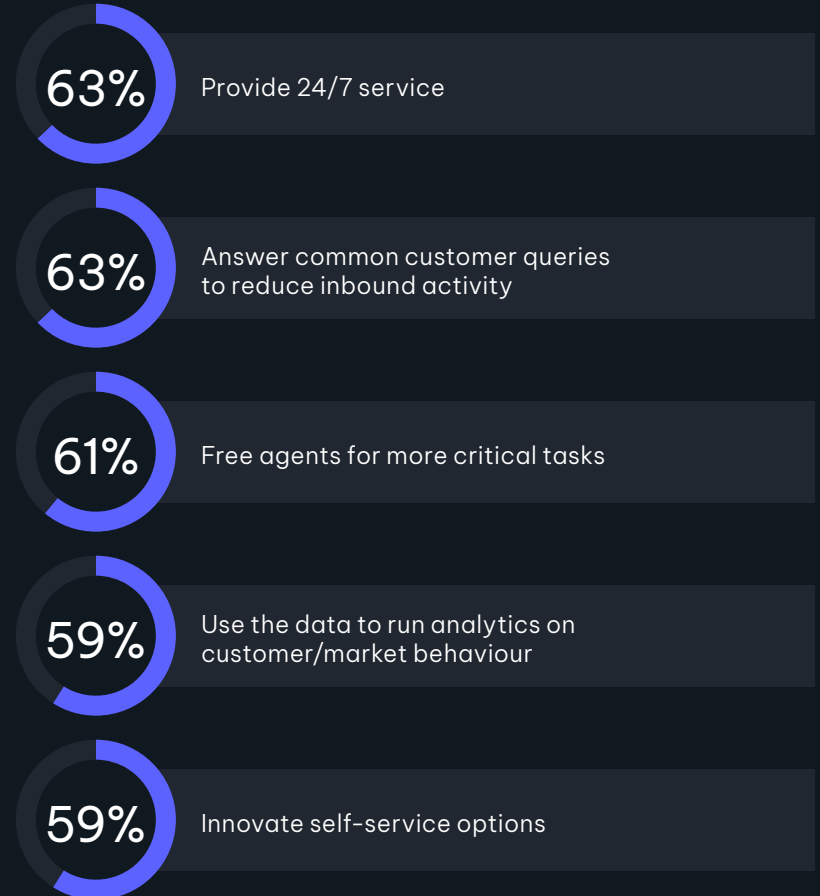


Action 3: Make AI a Key Pillar of Your CX Strategy

AI is a true enabler in decision-making today and has an immense role to play in improving customer outcomes. An effective AI strategy for CX considers the needs of all stakeholders – agents, other CX employees, and most importantly, the customers. It should also link back to the outcomes expected for each department, for example, lesser call volumes to the contact centre, faster resolution to customer challenges, more upsell opportunities and so on.

Increasingly AI empowered by Large Language Models enables the automation of time-consuming and subjective processes. AI also improves business outcomes by identifying opportunities for improvements and sales. But as organisations continue to explore these options, they are definitely looking at AI to empower customers with self-service options.

TOP REASONS WHY ORGANISATIONS IMPLEMENT CONVERSATIONAL AI



Source: Ecosystem Future of CX Study, 2023
N=364



An Integrated and Complete AI Strategy



Organisations can have an AI strategy that improves the experiences they deliver to their customers and employees by:

- Deploying Conversational AI to gain insights that can minimise customer and agent effort, reduce AHT, and automate FAQs
- Modernising outdated IVRs to enhance user experience by eliminating confusing menus and reducing time taken to navigate through complex options
- Leveraging Agent Assist solutions that blend well with CRM knowledge systems, and other dashboard applications for agents who need help
- Using AI to listen to and understand customers for more proactive engagement and insights
- Mining historical transactions to identify best performing agents and ideal conversation flows to achieve customer interaction outcomes
- Structuring the data available to power leverage AI models



Action 4: Build a Smart Self-Service Strategy

With the rise of digital and self-service channels, contact centres are under immense pressure to not just offer the channels their customers are gravitating towards but to also ensure that the self-service channels are solving the customer problem with the right data, context, and engagement. Customer expectations continue to rise with emerging technology such as Generative AI and they now expect intent recognition and human-like discussion, from their self-service channels.

Organisations that are struggling to build an effective self-service strategy will see customers get frustrated, lose their way when looking for answers and eventually stop relying on the self-service channels.



Ecosystem research finds that today nearly 70% of interactions in a contact centre come through digital channels such as apps, social media, websites and self-service channels. 54% of organisations look at improving self-service a key component of the CX transformation.



Maximising CX through AI-Powered Self-Service Strategy

Put AI at the core of the smart self-service strategy

It is important to analyse customer thoughts, intent, and behaviour when they communicate through self-service channels. This provides rich insights to identify and address gaps in the self-service process to deliver outstanding experiences.

Ensure self-service channels are well orchestrated

A seamless context and dialogue transfer from one channel to another, when customers transition between them, is critical for providing an optimal customer experience. Similarly, give customers the option of connecting with a live agent if they cannot resolve their queries through self-service.

Focus on the user experience of the self-service channels

Poor user experience forces customers to fall back on a contact centre call. They will do the same if the data and information provided on these channels are basic and inadequate.

Leverage data to deliver human-like experiences

Mine historical interactions and identify best practices from your best agents to improve your Conversational AI solutions.



Action 5: Plan for the Future of Customer Engagement

Customer engagement practices need to be evolved constantly for organisations to be ahead of the curve. Planning for the future of customer engagement is crucial to avoid customer churn resulting from poor brand engagement or ineffective sales tactics. To create memorable experiences, brands must continuously experiment and embrace data-driven practices.

Reimagine:

- **What CX means to the organisation**
Offer your customer a SINGLE brand experience regardless of the channel they use or department they deal with, so that they keep coming back because of the proactive outreach.
- **The role of the agent**
Empower your agents to be “intelligent” brand ambassadors armed with data-led customer insights, capable of evolving from basic support staff to dynamic experts who can resolve any customer issue.
- **The channel experience**
Identify the increasing popularity of self-service channels; integrate innovative technologies like video; and aim for seamless channel orchestration through AI to building a successful channel experience.
- **The role of the contact centre**
Transform your contact centre from a mere inbound call management system into a revenue generating department by leveraging proactive engagement and AI for sales effectiveness to increase leads and maximise conversion.

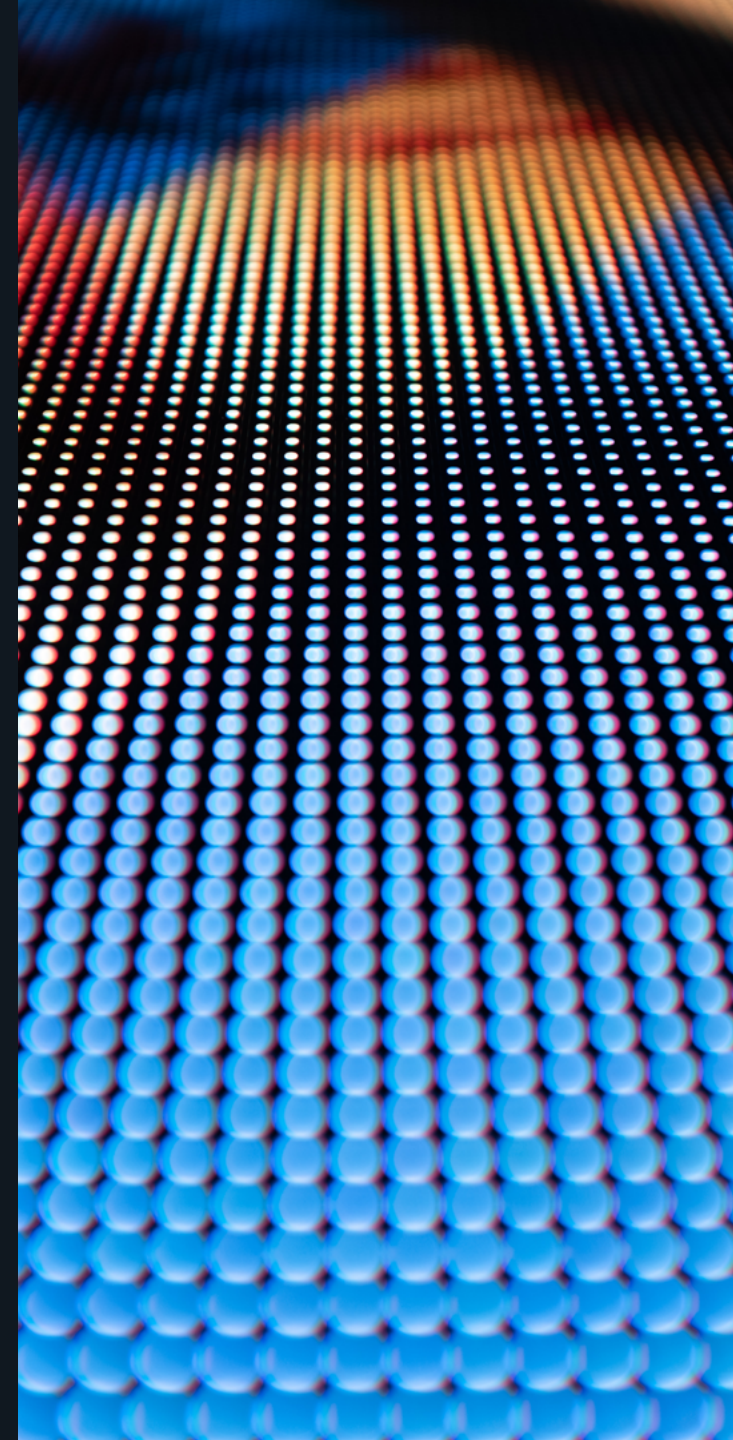


Ecosystem Opinion

“To stay ahead of the game in customer engagement, it’s crucial to anticipate problems before they occur by gaining a thorough understanding of customer needs and behaviours through data. Arming yourself with insights such as the reasons for customer dissatisfaction with self-service channels, their preference for competitors’ products, or why they are spending lesser on your brand, is necessary to challenge the status quo. This reinvention includes investing in cutting-edge technologies to deliver innovative service and enhancing your brand for customers, partners, and agents.”

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About the Author



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One of the foremost multi-disciplinary analysts in the APAC region, Audrey boasts an eclectic set of expertise, in segments as diverse as enterprise collaboration, unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS), video, contact centre, CX, outsourcing as well as artificial intelligence, enterprise mobility and digital transformation. Audrey has a proven track record both as an analyst and a business leader, having spent close to two decades in various analyst roles at Frost & Sullivan, providing counsel to C-level executives on go-to-market strategies – most recently as Head of Research and Senior Fellow at the firm’s ICT practice in Australia and New Zealand. As one of the pioneers of the firm in the region, Audrey played a pivotal role in its regional expansion, including building and mentoring a team of analysts across various markets in Asia-Pacific, including Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. Beyond her involvement as an analyst, Audrey is also a prominent keynote speaker, having delivered over 150 speaking engagements addressing various technology segments. She is regularly quoted in the media for her insights into ongoing technology trends and news.

About Ecosystem

Ecosystem is a Digital Research and Advisory Company with its global headquarters in Singapore. We bring together tech buyers, tech vendors and analysts onto one integrated platform to enable the best decision-making in the evolving digital economy. Ecosystem has moved away from the highly inefficient business models of traditional research firms and instead focuses on research democratisation, with an emphasis on accessibility, transparency, and autonomy. Ecosystem’s broad portfolio of advisory services is provided by a team of Analysts from a variety of backgrounds that include career analysts, CIOs and business leaders, and domain experts with decades of experience in their field. Visit ecosystem.io



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