EBOOK

AI, Humans, and Customer Experience: 2024 Trends in Guided CX

glance

AI, Humans, and Customer Experience: 2024 Trends in Guided CX

In the age of hyper-connectivity, consumers seek out flawless, tailor-made interactions — which is why customer experience (CX) has become a priority for organizations across every industry. In 2024, a brand's success depends on the ability to meet and exceed these heightened expectations. The very future of customer experience hinges on our ability to proactively outpace these demands, which is why it's more essential than ever to stay in the know on changing trends and technologies.

As we delve into 2024, it's crucial for CX leaders to reflect on the AI-driven changes that marked 2023 and anticipate the evolving landscape of Guided CX. In this comprehensive report, we'll explore the impact of AI on omnichannel CX, the promises made in 2023, actual outcomes, and why good ol' fashioned human connection still reigns supreme. We'll also unveil the top trends shaping Guided CX in 2024. Use this report to gain insights that can help shape your 2024 CX strategies and position yourself for success.

Contents

2024 Trends in Guided CX

Intro

- The AI wave
- Why people still want human interaction in the age of AI

01

The line between AI success and failure will be clear

02

Aligning human + digital channels

03

The pursuit of truly connected customer journeys

04

Enhanced interactions before there's a CX "problem"

05

Leaps and bounds for agent/ representative experience

The AI wave

In 2023, Artificial Intelligence (AI) transcended the realm of novelty to become an integral part of our daily lives.

Businesses across industries recognized the potential of AI to transform CX, and many jumped on the bandwagon. Deloitte research **finds that nearly 80% of customer service leaders plan to invest in more AI capabilities over the next two years.** AI-powered chatbots, virtual assistants, and predictive analytics have become the norm rather than the exception.

Applications of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, are especially alluring due to their capacity to produce a diverse range of new content, encompassing text, audio, video, and even coding. And these applications have ignited new fears in the workplace. According to Goldman Sachs, approximately **300 million jobs** across the globe might face the prospect of automation, with one-quarter of all labor potentially susceptible to displacement by generative AI.

But is AI living up to its promise? Let's take a look.

The AI dream of 2023: soaring success or just a mirage?

In 2023, AI continued to reshape the landscape of customer experience (CX) in numerous ways. 2023 marked a tipping point where the benefits of AI became too compelling for businesses to ignore. AI matured, proved its worth, and aligned with the changing landscape of customer expectations, data availability, and competitive dynamics, prompting a significant increase in its adoption across various sectors.

The big promise of AI to the customer experience? Unparalleled levels of personalization, gamechanging efficiency, and high customer satisfaction. Did it deliver? Let's see.

Chatbot Revolution

AI-powered chatbots became ubiquitous, providing instant and efficient responses to customer inquiries on websites and messaging platforms. For instance, airline companies like **Delta** used AI chatbots to assist passengers with booking, flight information, and even travel recommendations, streamlining the booking process and enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

Personalized Recommendations

AI algorithms analyzed vast amounts of customer data to offer hyper-personalized product recommendations. E-commerce giants like **Amazon** leveraged AI to suggest products based on past purchases, browsing history, and user preferences, thereby increasing cross-selling and upselling opportunities.

Voice Assistants and Smart Devices

Voice-activated AI assistants such as Google Assistant and smart devices like smart thermostats transformed daily routines. Customers could control their homes, access information, and even make purchases using voice commands, significantly enhancing convenience.

Emotion Analysis

AI tools analyzed customer sentiment in real-time, allowing businesses to gauge customer emotions during interactions. For instance, in the hospitality industry, hotels used AI to assess guest feedback and take immediate action to address concerns, enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Fraud Prevention

AI algorithms detected fraudulent activities by analyzing transaction patterns, enhancing security for customers. Financial institutions like **Mastercard** employed AI to identify potentially fraudulent transactions, protecting customers from unauthorized card usage.

Automated Language Translation

AI-powered language translation services bridged language barriers for global customers. Online marketplaces like **eBay** integrated realtime translation chatbots that facilitated communication between buyers and sellers from different linguistic backgrounds.

Predictive Inventory Management

Retailers optimized inventory levels with AI algorithms that predicted demand. Companies like **Walmart** employed AI to forecast product demand and ensure that popular items remained in stock, reducing customer frustration caused by out-of-stock items.

Dynamic Pricing

AI-driven dynamic pricing models adjusted product prices in real-time based on factors like demand, competitor pricing, and inventory levels. Airlines like **Southwest Airlines** utilized AI to offer more competitive fares, providing cost-conscious travelers with better deals.

Let’s talk impacts so far

So, did AI deliver on its promise? Here’s a look at some of the actual impacts of the shift to AI driven technology.

AI helped CX teams gain efficiencies. AI-powered chatbots and automation streamlined routinecustomer interactions, freeing up human agents for more complex issues. This efficiency translated into cost savings and faster response times.

For example, **Bank of America’s** AI-powered virtual assistant, “Erica,” assists customers with basic banking tasks in their mobile app, such as checking account balances, transferring funds,and paying bills. **Amtrak** implemented an AI-powered chatbot on their website and mobile app to assist customers with common inquiries such as booking tickets, checking train schedules, and providing travel information. And global fashion retailer **H&M** introduced an AI chatbot on their website and social media channels to help customers with common queries related to products, sizes, and returns.

Beyond chatbots and automation, generative AI has added more efficiency gains by providing contact centers with the power of the first draft. A recent study of over 5,000 chat agents found that access to generative AI tools increased their productivity by 14%. Although Generative AI can’t generate new knowledge, it can transform existing content into new formats — which can save agents time while maintaining a human “checkpoint” before anything is customer-facing.

Impacts of the shift to AI driven technology

- AI helped CX teams gain efficiencies
- AI pushed personalization
- AI improved insights
- AI didn’t come without risk
- AI didn’t remain unbiased
- AI didn’t replace humans

AI pushed personalization.

Through the power of AI-driven algorithms and generative models, companies can now analyze vast troves of customer data, discern individual preferences, and tailor their offerings with unparalleled precision. This technology enables the creation of hyperpersonalized recommendations, content, and support, ensuring that each interaction feels tailored specifically to the customer's needs and desires. work to create more personalized experiences.

For example, **Amazon** uses AI to provide highly personalized product recommendations to customers. Through their recommendation system, Amazon suggests products based on browsing history, purchase patterns, and similar items purchased by other customers, creating a tailored shopping experience. Similarly, **Spotify** employs AI and machine learning to curate personalized playlists and recommendations for its users. The platform uses algorithms to understand music preferences, genre interests, and listening habits, delivering custom playlists like "Discover Weekly" and "Release Radar."

AI improved insights.

Predictive analytics harnessed the power of AI to provide valuable insights into customer behavior, enabling businesses to make data-driven decisions and anticipate market trends. Most CX data is conversational — which makes it a particularly good fit for Large Language Models (LLMs).

We're just at the tip of the iceberg when it comes to harnessing LLMs to glean deeper conversational insights, but some organizations are already leveraging this technology effectively and greatly reducing their upfront level of effort. Clearly, AI has already made a positive mark on CX. But it's not a cure-all. Let's look at what AI *didn't do*.

AI didn't come without risk.

AI presents security and privacy concerns, especially with sensitive customer data. Clearly, AI has already made a positive mark on CX. But it's not a cure-all. Let's look at what AI didn't do.

AI didn't remain unbiased.

This is where part of the risk comes from. Generative AI must be trained, opening up the potential — even unintentionally — to introduce biases and skewing data points. When AI goes unchecked, there's potential for harm. didn't do.

AI didn't replace humans.

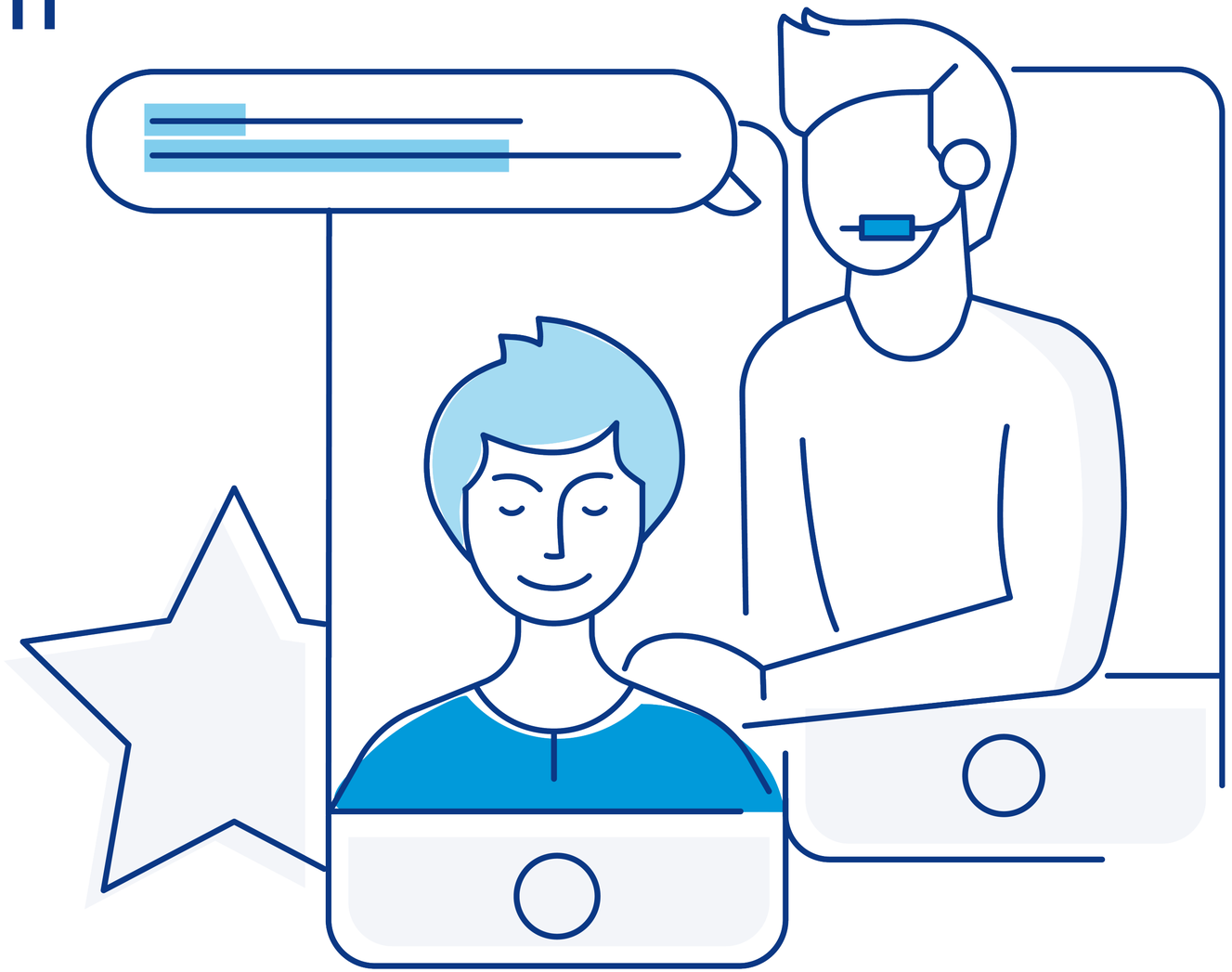
Read that again. It's become increasingly clear that the true value of AI is in empowering humans to do their jobs better. By taking care of tasks that are repetitive or time-consuming, McKinsey research indicates that generative AI and other technologies have the potential to automate work activities that absorb 60-70% of employees' time today. Yet McKinsey research also found that approximately 60% of customer care leaders have reported a growth in total calls—and they all expect continued growth.

Why people still want human interaction in the age of AI

Video may have killed the radio star, but AI didn't squash the importance of human interaction. If anything, it's put a spotlight on it.

Here are a few reasons the need for human interaction persists.

> 75% of customers want to interact with a real person more often as technology improves, according to PWC.



Complex situations require human expertise. AI, while powerful, struggles to handle complex, nuanced queries that require empathy, creativity, or deep domain knowledge. The customer experience is getting more complex, which makes customer needs more complex. It's the reason contact centers are still overwhelmed, even though they have more technology at their disposal than ever before.

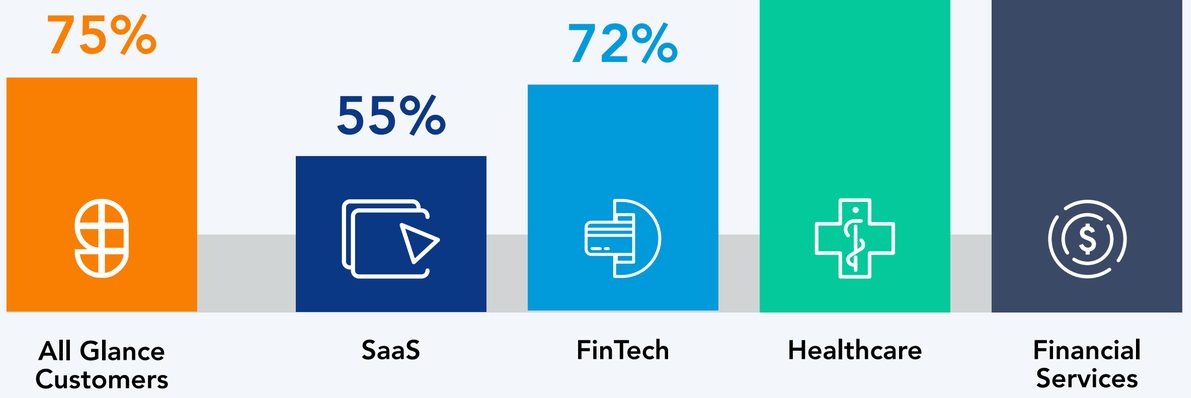
In fact, as technology has improved, we've seen an increase in Guided CX sessions that connect customers to human agents. In 2022-2023, Glance sessions increased by 75% compared to 2020-21. Even post-pandemic, as consumers have gotten more comfortable with using digital channels, we saw in increase in desire for human interaction. The increases were even more stark in specific industries where investment in digital CX channels has been a focus over the last few years, with substantial increases in human-guided sessions in healthcare (135%) and financial services (136%).

Guided CX is especially important in situations that are highly complex, personal, and/or expensive, like applying for a home loan, shopping for a high-dollar appliance, or navigating healthcare insurance. In each of these cases, the human touch, expertise, and empathy offered through Guided CX play a pivotal role in ensuring that individuals make well-informed choices and receive the support they need during significant moments.

Guided CX transforms complex, frustrating, and disconnected digital journeys into high-value, face to face interactions, infused with effortless, empathetic, and expert human connection.

It is what it sounds like: an actual person, at the exact right moment, picking up exactly what's going wrong and taking you through your digital journey to the right solution.

Last year, we saw an increase in Glance Guided CX sessions 2022-23 vs 2020-21



Even post-pandemic, with consumers more used to using digital channels, the desire for human CX increased dramatically.

Only humans can provide an emotional connection.

While automation and algorithms can efficiently handle routine tasks and provide data-driven insights, they often fall short in understanding and addressing the complex, nuanced emotions of customers. Human interactions bring empathy, compassion, and the ability to connect on a deeper, emotional level. These human touches play an irreplaceable role in building trust, resolving sensitive issues, and fostering genuine, lasting relationships with customers. **Zendesk** found that two-thirds of consumers who believe a business cares about their emotional state will likely become repeat customers. In an increasingly digital world, the human touch continues to be a fundamental pillar of customer experience, providing the warmth and understanding that technology alone cannot replicate.

Customers seek trust and accountability.

One significant challenge brought about by the adoption of AI in customer experiences is its "black box" nature, which often raises concerns among consumers. AI algorithms, especially complex deep learning models, can make decisions that are difficult to interpret or explain. This lack of transparency can leave customers feeling uncertain about why certain decisions were made, leading to frustration and mistrust.

In these situations, human agents play a crucial role in bridging this gap. **People want to do business with people they trust.** Human agents can offer transparency by explaining the rationale behind AI-driven decisions in a clear and comprehensible manner. They can take responsibility for any mistakes or issues that arise, providing a level of accountability that AI systems may struggle to match. This ability to communicate and empathize helps rebuild trust and reassure customers that their concerns are heard and addressed.

Humans are flexible.

They can understand nuances and adjust their approach accordingly. In many industries and scenarios, the ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and provide customized solutions can make all the difference in delivering a superior customer experience.

For example, when disputes or conflicts arise, human agents possess the negotiation skills and judgment to find mutually beneficial solutions. This adaptability is essential for maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Two-thirds of consumers who believe a business cares about their emotional state will likely become repeat customers.

2024 Trends in Guided CX

As we look ahead to 2024, CX leaders must navigate the evolving landscape, balancing AI advancements with the importance of human interaction. Here are the top trends that will shape guided CX in the coming year.

CHAPTER 1

The line between AI success and failure will be clear

AI is here to stay. However, AI's effectiveness is far from uniform. Businesses will encounter a proliferation of AI solutions, spanning the spectrum from highly efficient, user-friendly chatbots to those that, unfortunately, miss the mark and leave customers frustrated.

On one hand, highly effective AI-powered chatbots and tools represent indispensable assets. They excel at streamlining routine tasks and offer lightning-fast responses to customer queries, effectively elevating operational efficiency and customer service quality. These AI solutions make it possible to serve customers around the clock, offering rapid assistance and freeing up human agents to tackle more complex issues.

However, on the other side of the coin, there will be instances where AI implementations fall short of customer expectations. These subpar experiences can manifest as clunky and frustrating interactions, potentially alienating customers and eroding brand trust. In such cases, businesses may find themselves facing not only customer dissatisfaction but also potential reputational damage.

The critical challenge for businesses in 2024 is to discern which AI technologies align best with their specific CX objectives and, more importantly, with the preferences and needs of their customers.

Merely adding the latest AI technology to your CX toolkit is beneficial only if it genuinely enhances the customer experience. In this context, **adopting a customer-first approach is paramount.** It's not just about embracing AI for its novelty; it's about deploying AI in ways that truly benefit your customers.

The ultimate key to success in this dynamic landscape lies in continuous improvement and refining the AI-human blend. Recognizing the iterative nature of AI enhancement is pivotal. Businesses should prioritize learning from their AI-related failures and actively seek opportunities for improvement.

In 2024, the ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain an unwavering focus on creating positive AI-driven customer experiences will be a defining characteristic of businesses that thrive in the increasingly competitive realm of CX. It's a journey where technology and humanity work in harmony, guided by a resolute commitment to delivering exceptional customer experiences.

CHAPTER 2

Aligning human + digital channels

The quest for a frictionless customer experience in 2024 will be marked by the seamless integration of human and digital channels, driven by the growing sophistication of AI. While standalone chatbots and virtual assistants have made significant strides in simplifying customer interactions, the next stage of AI development will focus on orchestrating a harmonious fusion of digital and human engagement — eliminating the boundaries that traditionally separate these realms.

> The next stage of AI development will focus on orchestrating a harmonious fusion of digital and human engagement.

AI's role in this endeavor goes beyond merely answering customer queries or automating tasks. It will act as a conductor, skillfully guiding customers through their journeys. AI will excel in orchestrating the handoff between digital self-service and human interactions, making these transitions feel natural and unobtrusive. For instance, a customer who starts a conversation with a chatbot can seamlessly transition to a live human agent when the situation warrants it, without the typical abrupt shift in tone or service quality.

Looking ahead, predictive AI will emerge as a linchpin in this orchestration. Rather than relying solely on users to select the option for human assistance, AI algorithms will evolve to anticipate when customers may require consultation or expertise.

This predictive capability will be based on an intricate analysis of customer behavior, past interactions, and contextual cues. By accurately gauging the customer's readiness for human intervention, AI will ensure a smoother and more efficient transition from self-service to human-guided CX.

Traditional Handoff	Better Alignment
1 Self-service	1 Self-service
2 Can't find solution	2 AI anticipates when human intervention is needed
3 Seek out human support	3 Customer
4 Connect to agent	4 Seamlessly connects to agent
5 Start over by sharing what the issue is	5 Agent already has all the information and context
6 Resolution	6 Speedier resolution

CHAPTER 3

The pursuit of truly connected customer journeys

While the complexity of CX orchestration remains, in 2024 we'll see more effort toward crafting truly connected and purposeful customer journeys, shifting the focus from the appearance of connection to intentional coordination between channels. This transformation promises to yield more cohesive and ultimately more satisfying experiences for customers.

What does this mean? For starters, it means the heightened seamlessness between in-store and online experiences. Customers can anticipate a convergence of these traditionally distinct realms. The line between "order online, pick up in-store" and "get connected with your local store expert online" will blur. Customers will seamlessly transition between digital and physical interactions with a brand — in fact, **62% of customers** expect this effortless handoff — enabling them to enjoy a unified and consistent brand experience regardless of the channel they choose.

> **62% of customers expect an effortless handoff, enabling them to enjoy a unified and consistent brand experience regardless of the channel they choose.**

CX leaders like **Apple** are leading the charge. The Apple Shop introduced a "Shop with a Specialist" video experience that connects customers with a retail team member to browse the latest phone models and explore new features. This secure channel also helps them through complexities like Apple Trade In offers, carrier deals, switching to iOS, and various financing options — topics that can be trickier to navigate through self service.

This shift isn't just about offering customers multiple options; it's about ensuring that each touchpoint complements the others. Customers can begin their journey online, exploring products and seeking advice from experts virtually, and then seamlessly transition to an in-store experience to finalize their purchase. But it's important to highlight that this "start online, finish in-store" scenario isn't everyone's preference, and we'll see businesses adapt accordingly. Customers can initiate their interaction in a brick-and-mortar store and continue their journey online, perhaps connecting to an online consultant to provide personalized assistance, or accessing personalized post-purchase support.

There are no longer clear channel lines distinguishing pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases. Brands that successfully serve their prospects and customers in each stage, in their preferred channel, and provide a unified, cohesive experience — regardless of what the customer's specific journey looks like — will be poised for success.

The goal isn't to drive them in-store.

The goal isn't to drive them to your website.

The goal is to support them. Where they are.

On their individual customer journey. And providea cohesive brand experience at every stage, and in every channel they choose.

By integrating experiences, businesses can foster stronger connections with customers, deepen brand loyalty, and increase overall satisfaction. In 2024, this emphasis on the actual connectivity of customer journeys marks a giant step towards realizing the vision of holistic and consistent.

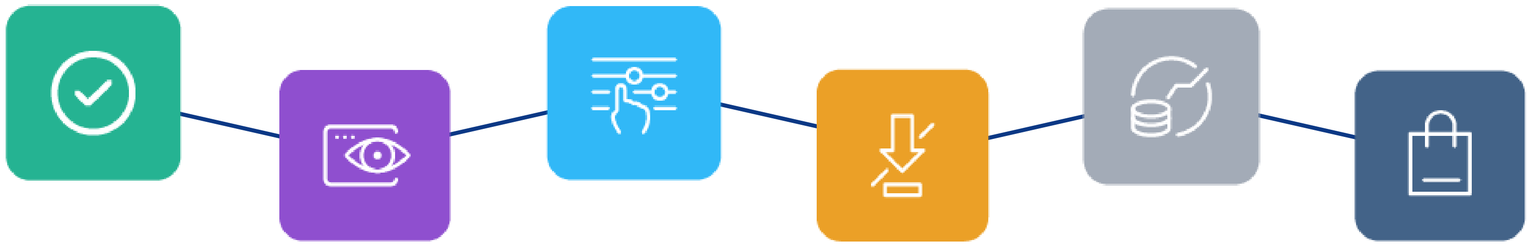
This shift is significant and requires a heavy lift of technology. It's not going to happen overnight, but in 2024, we'll see strides toward this more holistic and customer-empowered future.

700% ROI over 12 years

Investing in a customer-first operation can yield up to a 700% ROI over 12 years (Forrester)

35% plan to invest more

35% of companies plan to invest more in adding service across channels (Zendesk)



CHAPTER 4

Enhanced interactions before there's a CX "problem"

Predictive AI technology is poised to take center stage in 2024, revolutionizing how businesses anticipate and address customer needs.

Instead of merely reacting to customer issues as they arise, AI algorithms will proactively identify potential problems and resolve them in real-time. This shift aligns with the sentiments of digital executives, as highlighted by Forrester's research, where 100% of those surveyed believe that anticipating customer needs and delivering proactive solutions will be a pivotal source of competitive advantage.

As consumer experiences evolve to become more immersive and seamless, interactions with brand representatives will become increasingly complex and nuanced. In response to this trend, contact centers are expected to evolve and elevate their role. Equipping agents with Guided CX tools will transition from being a "nice-to-have" to a "must-have" component of providing exceptional customer service. These tools will empower agents with the knowledge and capabilities needed to deliver personalized and value-added interactions, ensuring that customer experiences remain at the forefront of brand strategies in 2024.

> Among digital executives interviewed by Forrester, 100% believe that "anticipating the needs of our customers and serving them proactively will create a competitive advantage."

In retail, this proactive approach could manifest in the use of computer vision and edge intelligence to ensure customers make the right product choices from the outset, reducing the need for returns and exchanges.

In financial services, real-time analysis by predictive AI might involve understanding how external factors are impacting specific customer segments and tailoring recommendations accordingly, enhancing financial decision-making.

In health insurance, predictive AI could play a pivotal role in identifying potential healthcare fraud early on, saving billions of dollars that would otherwise be lost to fraudulent claims and protecting the integrity of the industry.

CHAPTER 5

Leaps and bounds for agent/ representative experience

Investing in agent and representative experience will become a strategic priority in 2024. Roughly 60% of customer service agents say a lack of consumer data often causes negative experiences, according to Zendesk. The synergy between human interaction and predictive AI will boost agent morale and empower them to build more positive interactions and relationships with customers. choices and receive the support they need during significant moments.

One of the most remarkable transformations brought about by this synergy is agent empowerment. Predictive AI tools will arm agents with invaluable insights and recommendations, transforming them into highly skilled problem solvers and relationship builders. These tools will provide agents with real-time data, customer histories, and tailored suggestions, enabling them to offer more personalized and effective support. As agents witness the tangible impact of these tools in resolving customer issues swiftly and efficiently, their job satisfaction will soar. The newfound ability to provide exceptional service and meaningful assistance will not only boost morale but also drive higher agent retention rates, as employees feel more valued and engaged in their roles.

Furthermore, as AI systems handle routine and transactional tasks, human agents will have the bandwidth to focus on more complex customer issues and, critically, on relationship-building. These interactions will transcend mere transactions, evolving into meaningful engagements that foster trust and loyalty. Customers will appreciate the personalized attention and expert guidance provided by human agents who are no longer bogged down by repetitive tasks. Instead, agents will be empowered to connect with customers on a deeper level, cultivating enduring relationships that extend beyond single interactions.

2024 will usher in a new era where businesses prioritize the well-being and capabilities of their agents and representatives. The integration of predictive AI not only enhances agent morale but also amplifies their capacity to deliver top-notch support and cultivate lasting customer loyalty. This strategic focus on agent experience ensures that customers receive the best of both worlds — a blend of AI-driven efficiency and the human touch, resulting in exceptional customer interactions and a brighter future for customer service.

Final thoughts

As we embrace 2024, the CX landscape is set to evolve further, with AI at the forefront. Businesses must navigate the proliferation of AI technologies, leveraging them to enhance efficiency and personalization while never losing sight of the enduring value of human interaction. By aligning AI with customer needs and orchestrating seamless journeys, businesses can achieve the ultimate goal of Guided CX: delivering exceptional experiences that delight customers and drive loyalty.

Want to learn more?

Gain knowledge and strategies needed to navigate the future of CX successfully. Explore **glance.cx** to access tools and insights that will help you deliver exceptional customer experiences that not only meet but exceed customer expectations.

GET STARTED

Why Glance is different...

A frictionless experience for your customer

Provides a seamless, branded Guided Customer Experience that requires no downloads and launches in under 5 seconds.

And frictionless for your subject matter expert, too

Glance easily integrates with any CRM, agent desktop or contact center tech. Sharing sessions are automatically logged in your CRM for measuring impact on KPIs.

Protected by state of the art security for customer trust (and regulator reassurance)

Sensitive information is automatically masked, so your experts never see what they're not supposed to. Glance passes every InfoSec audit.

GET IN TOUCH

www.glance.cx

1 888 945 2623
+1 781 316 2596 (International)
hello@glance.cx