

Human-Centered AI

The Key to Responsible Customer Experience



The Mandate for Human-Centered AI

As AI enters the “trough of disillusionment,” according to Gartner¹, business leaders tasked with bringing AI efficiency and intelligence into their organizations amid a climate of distrust are being put in a difficult position.

Half (51%) of consumers polled by Pew say they are more concerned than excited about AI, while 38% express both concern and excitement. It’s unsurprising that 59% of consumers also are skeptical that U.S. companies are developing and using AI responsibly. Notably, 55% of AI experts say the same thing.² Meanwhile, bad actors are exploiting AI for new schemes that were unimaginable or unrealistic just a decade ago, and legislators worldwide are scrambling to regulate its growing use.

Thus, while pursuing the opportunities afforded by AI, organizations must also grapple with several risks: those inherent to generative AI (hallucinations, errors, novel attacks like prompt injections), potential distrust from customers and employees, and the investment costs.

The way forward is developing a cautious AI approach that focuses on people, rather than hastily adopting AI to check off a box. AI is a massive paradigm shift; consumers are rightfully leery, as are your risk and finance officers. A people-first approach keeps priorities straight; it enables you to evaluate use cases and risks in terms of how you protect your customers and employees while improving their experiences. It demonstrates that you care about people, not just efficiency.

Ultimately, people just want technology that works and isn’t exploitative. As more consumers encounter ethical AI that’s both thoughtfully implemented and improves their lives, even in small ways like saving time on a service call, trust will grow.



While 63% of people find AI useful, just 19% trust it.³

¹ Gartner, “[The 2025 Hype Cycle for Artificial Intelligence Goes Beyond AI](#),” July 8, 2025

² Pew Research Center, “[How the U.S. Public and AI Experts View Artificial Intelligence](#),” April 3, 2025

³ Kearney, “[The Overlooked Consumer](#),” August 25, 2025



When Technology Forgets the Human

REBUILDING CUSTOMER CARE AROUND EMPATHY, EASE, AND TRUST

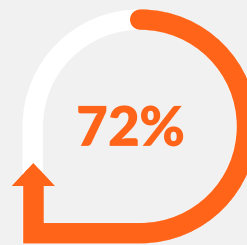
Automated customer service can trigger frustration in consumers who've grown weary of poor experiences with menu trees and low-quality chatbots and virtual assistants. Customers resent spending time over-enunciating and repeating requests or re-typing chats only to receive unhelpful FAQ links or a long live agent queue. The moment they realize they're talking to a "robot," their trust starts to fade.

When automation fails to meet people where they are, whether in language, tone, or communication style, the experience feels anything but human. Older consumers may struggle with concisely describing their issue; younger consumers may use slang the system doesn't understand. Some customers live in markets that companies haven't prioritized for customer care technology improvements and so experiences may lag behind other regions. Omnichannel experiences can be another friction: Customers may notice stark differences in the level of service they receive on a channel they prefer or need for accommodation reasons, such as when an online chatbot is less helpful than calling a customer service line.

To make customers feel seen as people, not numbers, data use and protection are also key. Consumers question if their data is safe, if they're experiencing real value in exchange for their data, and if they're receiving accurate information.

All of these concerns — systems that don't understand you, take up more time, risk your data, or provide unhelpful information — have turned what should have been a transformative technology into a burden. When used poorly, AI adds stress instead of simplicity, eroding trust and increasing frustration with brands that seem to forget the human on the other side.

The problem here isn't the technology; rather, it's that many organizations, in a rush to gain efficiency and cost savings, have pushed the burden of new technology onto consumers. Rather than taking a human-first approach by ensuring their contact center automation works seamlessly, they implement disconnected, poorly performing systems that consumers feel they need to learn or that seem to waste more time and effort than they save.



of consumers will dump a brand after rude or unhelpful service. After loyalty is lost, 86% stop purchasing from that company and 73% seek competitive brands.⁴



⁴Adobe, "[Winning Customer Loyalty in 2025](#)," September 16, 2025

THE FIX EXISTS: EMPLOYING TECHNOLOGY FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES, NOT JUST EFFICIENCY

Today's AI-powered CX solutions are far more advanced than the outdated systems that came before them. With greater conversational understanding and response capabilities, personalization, omnichannel fluidity, agent assists, and task completion, AI systems can smooth out clunky and inconsistent service offerings. Platforms with secure-by-design features protect both proprietary data from model misuse or leaks, as well as the client data that goes into the contact center system.



“Every business and brand is expected to be using AI. Every leader has been tasked with implementing it. The goal should be to find proven, trustworthy use cases” says Lindsay Semas, SVP, Strategy, Corporate Development & Marketing, at Interactions. “Customer care is ideal. But your approach matters.”



A platform that truly offers effortless service will build loyalty, embed trust in both your company and AI generally, and fulfill your ethical obligation to provide excellent service to every customer.

Of course there are business benefits as well: The more customers you can properly serve with AI-driven automation, the easier it is to scale your contact center. Implementing a system that can accommodate every customer future-proofs customer care as you expand into new markets or demographics. And you can head into your board or leadership meetings confident that you've met the imperative for AI innovation after conducting due diligence, considering the human impact, and making the right choice.



What Ethical AI in the Contact Center Looks Like

Even when automated CX systems rise above the capabilities of older, friction-filled platforms, customers may have a knee-jerk response to AI. What will change their minds? When they don't even notice the technology. Rather than burdening them with a system they have to learn to navigate with unnatural speech or they don't trust to give them accurate information, your solution needs to just work — and work really well.

To strengthen trust between your business and customers, your platform choice should care as much about humans as it does AI, just like your organization. Effortless interactions are the north star, not just efficiencies. (Though those will happen, too.) Your AI partner should also be able to prove their trustworthiness behind the scenes in how they handle your and your customers' data, how they optimize your solution, and how they demonstrate accuracy and lack of bias in AI results.

When seeking AI solutions that put people first, these elements should be at the top of your list.



SUPERIOR AI UNDERSTANDING AUGMENTED AND OVERSEEN BY HUMANS

Human-in-the-loop technology remains essential for AI platforms to deliver accurate, fair and empathetic service, ensuring that every customer is understood and supported. When AI understanding can't meet a predetermined threshold — due to all of the reasons we've outlined previously, like accents, background noise, or complex wording — a human in the background can seamlessly interpret what was said and help the system keep the call moving and contained.



VALUABLE PERSONALIZATION

Simplifying identity verification or proactively asking about a recent purchase or upcoming appointment shows customers that you've invested to save them time and ease service. At a basic human level, it makes them feel seen as people.



EASE IN EVERY MOMENT

When a hiccup occurs, whether real or perceived, customers will offer grace if everything else has gone smoothly. Thus, ease in every moment is critical. Take, for example, a call that must be transferred to an agent. With good AI automation, the queue will be shorter (most other customers are managed by automation), the customer won't have to repeat their issue or go through

identity verification again (the system provides a warm handoff), and they'll reach the right agent the first time (the system, having already identified intent, improves call routing accuracy).



SEAMLESS OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCES

Enabling service on customers' platform of choice enhances accessibility and demonstrates respect for their time. But it must be connected and seamless, or it becomes another burden. With chat, SMS, and voice all working together on the same AI platform, service quality never wavers just because someone wanted to chat instead of call. Customers can switch between them seamlessly, even when managing a single request.



PLATFORM CUSTOMIZATION

Your customers aren't generic, and neither is your business. To implement AI CX that delivers accuracy, intelligence, and ease, it must be customized to your business needs. That means training models safely on your data, aligning tone and language with your brand voice, and integrating with your existing CX systems so experiences stay connected and consistent.





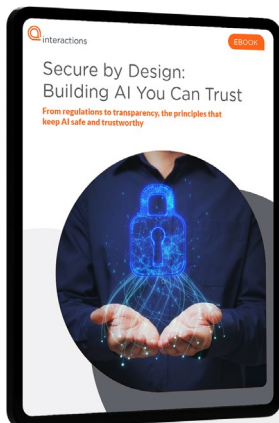
A CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

Any AI-powered platform won't be perfect out of the gate. Companies are complex with potentially dozens upon dozens of interactions that can be automated. And humans are unpredictable. Your customers may state things in ways that you don't expect. An ethical AI partner will never "set it and forget it." They know there's constant room for improvement, and will employ analytics, machine learning, and human experts to keep your AI platform running optimally as business requirements, regulations, and customer expectations evolve.



TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI partners need to be as trustworthy as your business is. They should be able to demonstrate how models are trained and with what data, any third-party model usage, how PII is redacted and protected, and how model performance, accuracy, and bias are being tracked and improved. The company should also commit to the highest regulatory standards, which protects your company and your consumers, while offering future-proofing as new laws arise or you expand into new regions.



From regulations to transparency, there are a number of principles that keep AI safer and more trustworthy. Learn more in our guide, [Secure by Design](#).





The Importance of Like-Minded AI Partners

The future of AI hinges on our collective commitment to placing human well-being and empowerment at the forefront of its development and deployment. This is especially imperative to providing customers with equitably excellent and effortless service. Yet, with the hype surrounding AI, it can be difficult to slow down to properly assess AI opportunities and the fortitude to ask the tough questions.

But rash investments and poorly thought out use cases can lead to low adoption, disappointing results, and the CX problems we outlined above. Companies must consider if AI solutions align with company goals and tenets, if efficiency is being prioritized above experience, how value will be measured, what criteria to use for risk and vendor assessment, and how AI platforms can integrate smoothly with data, workflows, and other systems.

Balancing this complexity amid demand for AI transformation is challenging. It's unsurprising that MIT recently grabbed headlines with a report showing that 95% of organizations investing in generative AI pilots have yet to realize bottom-line impact.⁵ But rather than dampen enthusiasm, the report identifies a way forward that aligns with a human-first strategy.

The 5% of companies that have successfully crossed the “GenAI Divide....demand deep customization, drive adoption from the front lines, and hold vendors accountable to business metrics. The most successful buyers understand that crossing the divide requires partnership, not just purchase.”

The tenets that MIT recognizes as success levers — partnership, accountability, integrity — are exactly what you should be providing your customers. Whether these AI partners call it a human-first approach, that's ultimately what it is. They differentiate and bring success to their customers by leading with human values. By establishing internal processes to rigorously vet AI partners, you can ensure that the AI you deploy upholds your commitment to fair treatment of all customers.



Need to separate AI hype from AI you can trust? Learn how to evaluate potential AI partners' integrity, responsibility, and readiness across seven critical areas with our [AI Vendor Trust Scorecard](#).

⁵ MIT, [The GenAI Divide: State of AI in Business 2025](#)

We All Have a Role in Shaping AI's Future

Ultimately, the future of AI will be written not just by the organizations that develop models and build AI applications, but the companies that invest in these solutions. We weigh consumer preferences heavily; for example, we've seen movements and boycotts that led businesses to ethical shifts in sustainability and labor practices.

"Businesses are consumers, too," says Semas. "Your demand for trustworthy AI that will enhance your customer experience and provide more equitable service — and your willingness to invest in these solutions — will be as powerful as regulatory actions and end-user expectations."

Therefore, the path forward for ethical AI isn't merely about technological advancement or quick adoption. Rather, it should entail a collective commitment to ensuring that AI serves humans, increases equitable experiences, and builds lasting trust.

Interactions believes that trust in AI begins with trust in people. We created our [**AI Trust Council**](#) to demystify what trustworthy, ethical AI should look like and provide clear guidance and advice for building and implementing AI with a human-first approach. Visit [interactions.com](#) to learn more or to connect with one of our AI experts.





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ABOUT INTERACTIONS

Interactions provides Intelligent Virtual Assistants that seamlessly assimilate Conversational AI and human understanding to enable businesses to engage with their customers in highly productive and satisfying conversations. With flexible products and solutions designed to meet the growing demand for unified, omnichannel customer care, Interactions is delivering unprecedented improvements in the customer experience and significant cost savings for some of the largest brands in the world. Founded in 2004, Interactions is headquartered in Franklin, Massachusetts with additional offices worldwide.

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