CXaiS

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Inside the AI-enabled CX practice

What CX and contact centre leaders need to know about workflows, roles, vendors and value for 2027

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INTRODUCTION

The adoption question is settled. The value question is not.

Not long ago, most enterprise CX AI sat in pilots and proofs of concept. Today boards expect it live, and most contact centres have something in production. The question has moved from whether to deploy to how deep it goes and what it actually returns.

That is where the trouble starts. Deployment is wide. Commercial evidence is thin. The research is consistent on this point, and it is not flattering.

95%

of enterprise generative AI pilots delivered no measurable P&L impact

MIT Project NANDA, 2025

80%+

AI project failure rate, roughly twice that of non-AI IT projects

RAND Corporation, 2024

42%

of companies abandoned most AI initiatives in 2025, up from 17% the year before

S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2025

2x

more likely to report significant returns when workflows were redesigned before choosing a modelling approach

McKinsey, 2025

This paper is written for the people who have to close that gap: chief customer officers, heads of contact centre, CX and insights leaders, and the teams who run AI once the vendor has gone home. It covers what is changing in the work, who owns it, what each role needs, how the vendor market is moving, and what 2027 will ask of you.

How CX teams are using AI today

Most common

After-contact summarisation, agent assist and knowledge, QA auto-scoring, intent routing, and VoC and speech analytics. These are the easiest to buy and the quickest to switch on.

Growing fast

Virtual agents that handle end-to-end customer requests, agentic workflows that act across systems, next-best-action, and proactive outreach.

Where leaders draw the line

Complaints, vulnerable customers, retention saves, and anything where a person has to weigh several things at once and make a call.

> AI takes the volume. People own the judgement. That line runs through every section of this paper.

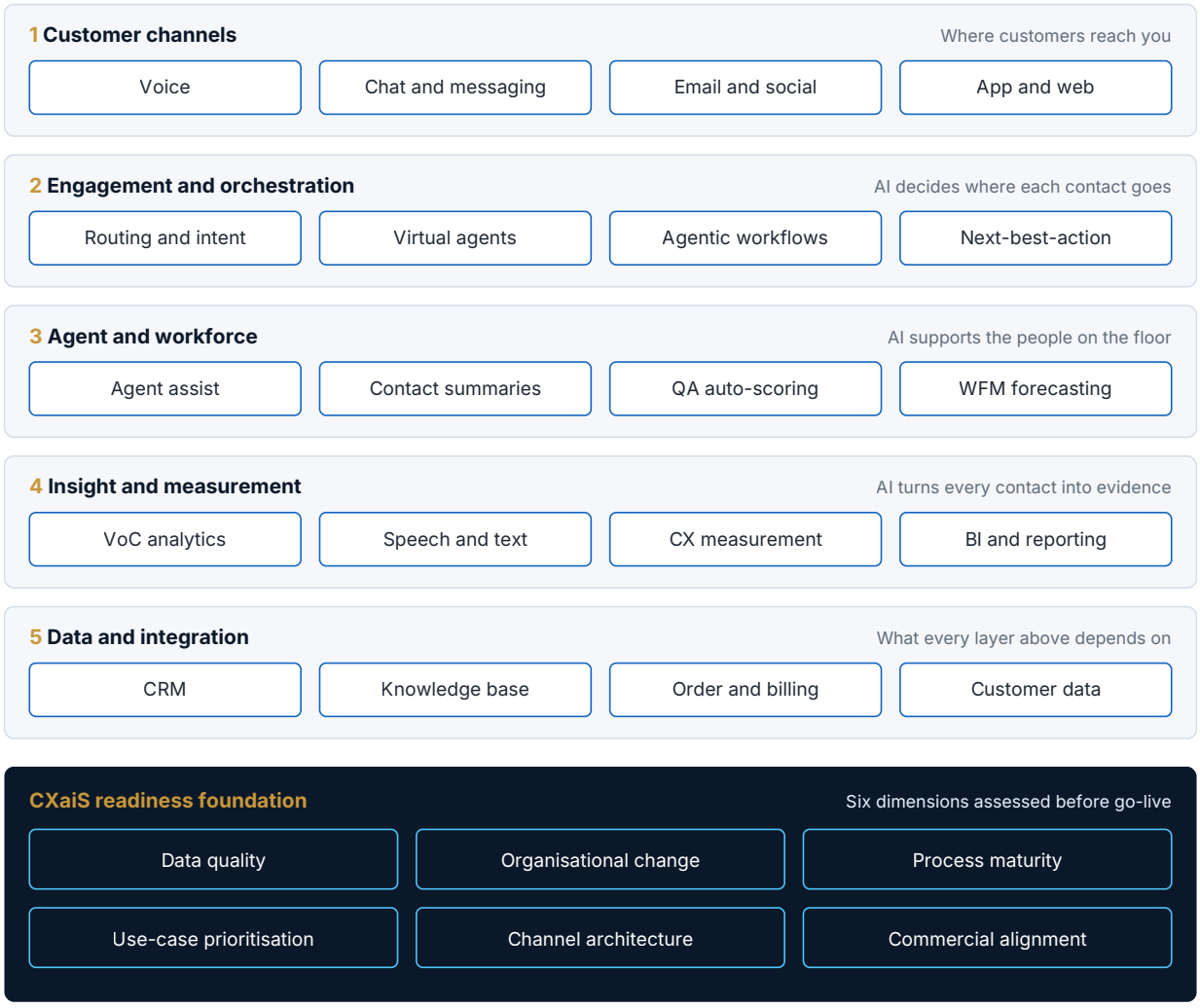
ABOUT THE EVIDENCE

This is a locked evidence paper, not a survey. Every figure comes from published research by MIT Project NANDA, RAND, S&P Global, McKinsey, Gartner or Forrester, each cited where it is used. Where we give a view of our own, it is labelled as a CXaiS practitioner observation or estimate, drawn from 15 years inside enterprise CX technology programs. Examples are industry-labelled; no client is named.

EXHIBIT 1

AI in CX only performs when the foundation under it is ready

The enterprise AI in CX architecture, from customer channel to readiness foundation.



Most CX AI investment goes into the three middle layers. Programs succeed or fail on the bottom two: the data the AI draws on, and the readiness foundation that decides whether it can perform. Plot your own AI estate against this map. The gaps usually show up in the bottom two layers first.

The vendor landscape for each layer is on pages 20 to 24.

SECTION 01

Go-live is not the finish line

Getting AI live is now the easy part. Getting it to pay is not.

From tool by tool to embedded in the work

The first wave of CX AI was bought one tool at a time: a summarisation feature here, a bot on a single queue there. The next wave is about AI sitting inside the workflow itself, so that a contact is routed, resolved, recorded and learned from without anyone stitching the pieces together by hand.

> FROM THE FIELD
>
> *In most contact centre programs I have been inside, AI went live first where it was easiest to buy: summaries and agent assist. The workflows that hold the money, complaints, retention and claims, are usually still waiting for someone to map them properly.*
>
> Rachel Lane, practitioner observation

Measure what AI produces, not how much it is used

Usage dashboards are easy. They tell you how many agents clicked a button. They do not tell you whether the business is better off. A useful measurement model has three layers.

Breadth	Depth	Outcomes
How many agents, queues and channels use AI at all	Whether use goes beyond summarisation into resolution, routing and decisions	Cost per resolved contact, repeat contact, containment that holds, CSAT and retention

Most teams measure the first, some the second, very few the third. That is the gap between activity and P&L that MIT Project NANDA describes: 95% of enterprise generative AI pilots delivered no measurable P&L impact. In CX, the board question is simple. What did it cost, what did it return, and how do we know?

Not all adoption is equal

Adoption varies by channel, by queue, by region, and between in-house and outsourced sites. One queue flies while the next stalls on the same platform. The difference is rarely the technology. It is whether the workflow underneath was understood and redesigned first, and whether the leader of that team wanted it to work.

The evidence backs this up. Organisations reporting significant returns were twice as likely to have redesigned workflows before selecting a modelling approach (McKinsey, 2025). This is why CXaiS starts with Workflow Cartography: mapping how work actually runs, decision by decision, before anyone decides where AI goes.

Four barriers to deeper adoption

01

Mindset

Agents and team leaders who see AI as a threat to their job, their targets or their judgement. Resistance is rarely loud. It shows up as workarounds.

02

Tolerance for imperfection

One bad bot conversation on social media can set a program back months. AI gives different answers to similar questions, and contact centres are built to punish inconsistency.

03

Customer and regulatory risk

Vulnerable customers, Consumer Duty, disclosure rules and the EU AI Act. In regulated sectors the question is not whether AI can answer, but whether it is allowed to.

04

Data readiness

Knowledge bases nobody owns. CRM data that disagrees with billing. A workflow is only as data-ready as its weakest required test: reachability, recency, identity, authority and permission.

The priorities for 2027

Upskilling, measuring outcomes, and moving from individual use cases to whole customer journeys. The cost of getting it wrong is already visible: 42% of companies abandoned most of their AI initiatives in 2025, up from 17% the year before (S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2025).

SECTION 02

Who actually owns AI in CX

AI in CX has many sponsors and very few owners. The gaps between them are where programs fail.

Ownership is split, and the handoffs are orphaned

AI strategy in CX can sit with the customer team, IT, digital, operations or a transformation office. Each owns a piece. The customer journey crosses all of them. A virtual agent built by digital hands over to a contact centre run by operations, using knowledge nobody owns, on data governed by IT. When the handover fails, every team can show its own part worked.

> FROM THE FIELD
>
> *The question I ask first is not which platform a team is using. It is who owns the moment the AI hands the customer to a person. In most organisations, nobody can answer it.*
>
> Rachel Lane, practitioner observation

Governance is becoming standard practice

A working AI governance structure in CX brings together the customer team, IT, risk and compliance. The more mature organisations are moving governance down a level, from one central committee to rules set journey by journey and queue by queue, because the risk on a password reset is not the risk on a bereavement call.

Every governance model has to draw one line clearly: where AI may act alone, where it must hand over, and what the customer is told when it does.

Process maturity comes before automation

Agentic AI follows procedures literally. Human agents never did: they worked around the gaps every day, and the procedures were never updated to match. Adoption, meanwhile, happens on the floor, through team leaders who show agents AI working on their own queue, not through launch emails.

~80%

of standard operating procedures need rewriting before agentic AI can sit on top of them.

CXAIS PRACTITIONER OBSERVATION

SECTION 03

The shape of the team is changing

AI is not simply removing work from the contact centre. It is changing which work is left, and who is equipped to do it.

What AI does to the work

As simple contacts are automated, the human queue gets harder. Contacts are longer, more emotional and more complex. Average handle time rises even as total volume falls, and that can look like a performance problem when it is a mix problem.

Work is shifting between roles too. QA analysts are becoming coaches. Team leaders are becoming workflow owners. Experienced agents are moving into knowledge and escalation roles. Gartner found 85% of service leaders are adding new tasks and responsibilities to frontline roles, and 75% are shifting agents into entirely new roles (Gartner, 2026).

The new-agent puzzle

Tier-one contacts were how agents learned the business. Password resets, address changes and delivery queries taught product, systems and customers at low risk. That is exactly the work AI now takes first.

> If AI takes the contacts people used to learn on, where does the next team leader come from?

Organisations will have to design how agents learn, instead of relying on volume to teach them. AI training simulators and synthetic customers are one answer. Structured rotation through knowledge and quality roles is another.

The concerns leaders raise

- **Agent development.** Fewer simple contacts means fewer chances to build skill safely.
- **Deskilling and judgement.** Agents who follow AI prompts without understanding why.
- **Quality and accuracy.** Confident answers that are wrong, at scale.
- **Burnout.** A day made entirely of difficult contacts is a different job.

Planning a blended workforce

Workforce management was built to forecast people. It now has to forecast people and AI agents together, knowing that every newly automated intent changes contact volume and contact mix. Forecasting that ignores AI capacity will overstaff the easy hours and understaff the hard ones.

AI fluency becomes a hiring criterion

AI fluency is moving into hiring criteria and performance reviews, in the same way system proficiency did a generation ago. Gartner reports that 84% of organisations plan to add new skills to frontline positions (Gartner, 2026). The question for CX leaders is what fluency actually means for each role, which is where the next section starts.

SECTION 04

AI by role

Most CX AI is bought for the contact centre floor. The leaders, analysts and planners who decide what the floor does are often the last to get AI built for their own work.

Each role needs a different toolkit, and AI will take a very different share of each role's work. This section sets out what every CX role should have, how much of its work AI is likely to absorb, and the new roles AI is creating.

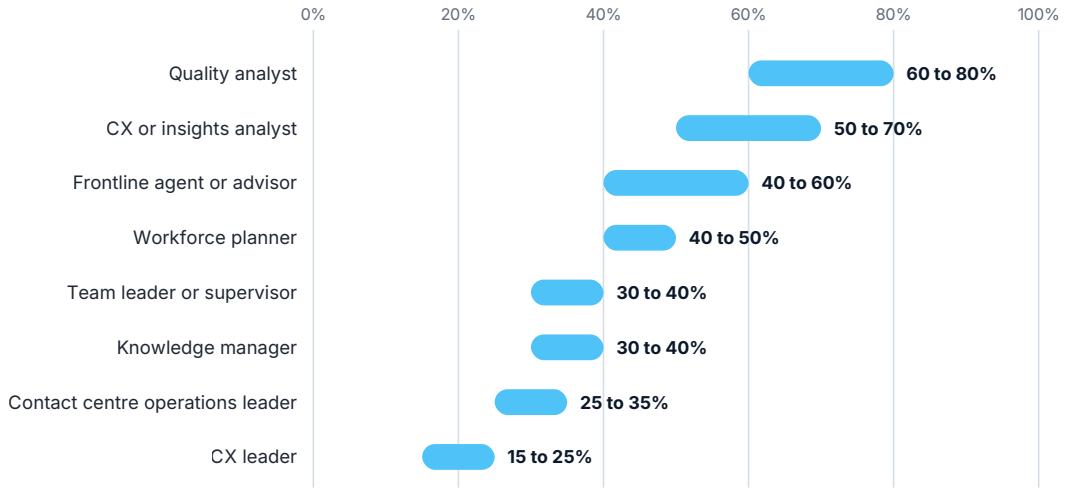
The AI toolkit by role

Role	AI they should have	Why it matters
CX leader CCO, SVP CX	A plain-English copilot over VoC, operational and financial data. AI value tracking that ties each deployment to cost per resolved contact, retention and revenue. Predictive alerts on churn and complaint spikes. Scenario modelling for investment and headcount.	Their job is the decision and the commercial case. AI should cut the time from signal to board answer from weeks to hours.
CX or insights analyst	Generative text and speech analytics across every interaction. Automated root-cause analysis. Natural-language querying of data. An AI research assistant that drafts insight reports.	Moves them from sampling to full coverage, and from producing reports to recommending action.
Contact centre operations leader	One real-time view of human and AI agents. AI agent performance monitoring: containment that holds, escalation reasons. Automation discovery to pick the next intents to automate. Simulation and testing before go-live.	They now run a blended workforce. If AI agent performance is not on their dashboard, nobody owns it.
Team leader or supervisor	Auto-QA on every contact. AI coaching recommendations per agent. Real-time alerts on at-risk contacts.	Coaching from every interaction, not a handful of sampled calls, and time back from admin to spend on people.
Frontline agent or advisor	Agent assist with next-best answer and knowledge surfacing. Automatic summaries and wrap-up. Real-time translation and compliance prompts. AI training simulators.	Removes after-contact work, shortens ramp time, and supports them on the harder contacts AI leaves behind.
Quality analyst	Automated scoring of every contact. Compliance and vulnerability detection. Tools to calibrate and audit AI scores.	Quality moves from checking a sample to governing a system.

Role	AI they should have	Why it matters
Workforce planner	AI forecasting that includes AI agent capacity. Intraday automation. Schedule optimisation.	Every automated intent changes volume and contact mix. Forecasting a blended workforce is a different job.
Knowledge manager	AI gap detection from unanswered questions. Auto-drafted articles from resolved cases. Content verification and governance workflows.	Knowledge is what AI agents answer from. It has become AI infrastructure.
Conversation designer or AI operations analyst New role	Agent-building studio. Simulation and regression testing. Monitoring of guardrails and conversation logs.	Someone has to design, test and tune AI agents after go-live. Most CX teams do not yet have this role.

How much work AI takes from each role

AI takes most from roles built on volume and sampling. It takes least from roles built on judgement.



Share of each role's current tasks AI could realistically absorb by 2029. CXaiS practitioner estimate, built from a task-by-task breakdown of each role. Read as direction and range, not forecast.

Role	By 2029	What AI takes	What stays human	Long-term view
Quality analyst	**60 to 80%**	Manual scoring of sampled contacts	Calibration, auditing AI scores, compliance judgement	Merges into AI quality governance and coaching. Fewer roles, more senior.
CX or insights analyst	**50 to 70%**	Data preparation, tagging, routine dashboards, first-draft insight	Framing the question, commercial interpretation, the story for executives	Fewer, more senior analysts who turn insight into action and model Value at Stake.

Role	By 2029	What AI takes	What stays human	Long-term view
Frontline agent or advisor	**40 to 60%**	Simple, repeatable contacts, note-taking, wrap-up	Complex, emotional and vulnerable-customer contacts, exceptions	Smaller teams of more skilled advisors who own cases end to end. A harder mix needs more support, not less.
Workforce planner	**40 to 50%**	Forecast builds, intraday adjustments	Scenario planning, blended capacity strategy	Plans human and AI capacity as one workforce.
Team leader or supervisor	**30 to 40%**	QA scoring, report compilation, scheduling admin	Coaching, wellbeing, complex escalations	Coaching becomes the job. Smaller teams, harder contacts.
Knowledge manager	**30 to 40%**	Drafting articles, spotting gaps	Governance, accuracy sign-off, ownership of the source of truth	Gains strategic weight, because AI is only as good as the knowledge behind it.
Contact centre operations leader	**25 to 35%**	Routine reporting, standard capacity decisions	Operating model, vendor management, escalation policy	Leads a blended human and AI workforce. AI agent performance becomes a core KPI.
CX leader	**15 to 25%**	Data pulls, report preparation, first-draft board packs	Strategy, investment calls, culture, accountability	Scope grows: owns the human and AI service model and its P&L.

A ninth role, conversation designer or AI operations analyst, does not yet exist in most CX teams. It is one of the fastest-growing roles in CX, often filled from QA, knowledge and team leader talent.

New roles AI is creating

AI is not only removing work. It is creating roles most CX teams do not have yet, and most will be filled by redeploying existing people. Gartner found 75% of service leaders are shifting agents into entirely new roles (Gartner, 2026).

New role	What it does	Likely talent source	Evidence
AI agent operations manager	Runs AI agents like a team: performance, handovers to humans, tuning, and accountability when something goes wrong	Team leaders, operations analysts	Practitioner observation: the most common ownership gap in live programs
Conversation or AI experience designer	Designs how AI agents talk, when they hand over, and how they recover when a conversation goes off track	Knowledge, QA and digital teams	Practitioner observation

New role	What it does	Likely talent source	Evidence
AI quality and governance analyst	Tests and audits AI outputs for accuracy, compliance and vulnerable-customer handling	QA analysts, risk and compliance	Practitioner observation
AI trainer or simulation lead	Builds test scenarios and synthetic customers so AI agents are proven before go-live and after every change	QA, training and L&D teams	Practitioner observation
Knowledge operations specialist	Owns and curates the content AI answers from, including reviewing AI-generated content	Experienced frontline agents, knowledge teams	58% of service leaders plan to upskill agents into knowledge management specialists (Gartner, 2026)
Human and AI workforce planner	Forecasts and plans human and AI capacity as one workforce	WFM teams	Practitioner observation
Complex case owner or escalation specialist	Handles the emotional, high-stakes and vulnerable-customer contacts AI hands over, and owns each case end to end	Senior frontline agents	84% plan to add new skills to frontline roles (Gartner, 2026)
Proactive retention or customer success advisor	Moves service talent into retention and revenue work AI cannot do	Frontline agents	Gartner advises redeploying human agents to drive growth rather than pursue complete automation (Gartner, 2025)
CX AI value lead	Measures what AI returns, using cost per resolved contact, retention and Value at Stake, and reports it to the board	CX analysts, finance business partners	Answers the gap behind MIT Project NANDA's 95% figure

The counterweight to the "AI takes jobs" story: Gartner predicts none of the Fortune 500 will have fully eliminated human customer service by 2028 (Gartner, 2025).

SECTION 05

Vendors, platforms and the independent view

The vendor market is consolidating fast. Buyers need a clearer view of what each kind of AI is for, and someone in the room with no platform to sell.

Specialist, general-purpose or platform-native

CX teams now meet AI from three directions. General-purpose assistants such as Copilot, ChatGPT and Claude are spreading through internal productivity work. Specialist CX AI vendors build agents and analytics for customer contact. And the CCaaS, CRM and CXM platforms already in place are building AI into the products customers own.

General-purpose AI is strongest for internal productivity: drafting, research and analysis behind the scenes. Specialist CX AI is strongest where AI talks to customers or coaches agents live. Platform-native AI is strongest where the data, routing and workflow already live and integration risk is lowest.

The market is also converging. Microsoft entered Gartner's 2026 contact centre ranking for the first time, Verint and Calabrio now operate as one company, and Qualtrics has absorbed Press Ganey Forsta and InMoment. Contracts signed today should assume the vendor will change. A neutral view of the vendors in each layer of Exhibit 1 starts on page 19.

What buyers should value in a technology partner

Five things separate a good technology partner from a great one: CX domain specialisation, responsiveness fast enough for live customer contact, an understanding of how your operation makes and loses money, a roadmap that matches where your program is going, and help with process, people and change as well as configuration.

Reliance is shifting inside the enterprise

As internal teams build expertise, they take the lead and use vendors for the complex work. That leaves a gap no vendor can fill: someone who holds the commercial case for AI and has no platform to sell.

> FROM THE FIELD
>
> *When we give a verdict on a workflow, it is based entirely on whether AI will perform there. Not on whether a vendor needs the deal. That independence is what lets a CX leader take the number to the board.*
>
> Rachel Lane, practitioner observation

SECTION 06

Customers, competition and the cost of a contact

AI is changing what customers expect, how service competes, and the economics of every contact.

Customer expectations are moving in two directions

Customers want faster resolution and service at any hour. They also want to trust the answer, to know when they are talking to AI, and to reach a person when it matters. In a Gartner survey of 5,801 US customers, 54% said they trust human agents more than AI for product or service recommendations, compared with 32% who trust AI more (Gartner, 2025). Speed wins the simple contacts. Trust wins the ones that matter.

AI is becoming a competitive differentiator

Smaller challenger brands can now offer service at a level that used to need scale, so large organisations compete on how well their AI and people work together. The risk runs both ways. Move too slowly and service looks dated. Move too fast and a public AI failure becomes the story. The answer is sequencing.

The commercial model is under pressure

Contact centre economics were built on cost per contact and FTE-based budgets. AI breaks both.

- **BPO contracts** priced per seat or per minute raise a hard question when AI takes the minutes.
- **Vendor pricing** is moving to per-resolution and outcome-based models. Some AI agent vendors now charge only when a conversation is resolved.
- **Budgets** are shifting from people to technology. Gartner predicts over 50% of customer service organisations will double their technology spend by 2028, and that the increase will not be offset by an equivalent reduction in talent (Gartner, 2026).

THE BOARD-LEVEL GAP

Where AI is improving unit economics, it is usually in specific, well-mapped journeys. The harder problem is proving it: the 95% of pilots with no measurable P&L impact is as much a measurement problem as a delivery one. Value at Stake answers it. CXaiS sizes the value of each workflow before anything is built, then measures against it after go-live. CX leaders who start that conversation with the CFO early hold the narrative. Those who wait end up defending a cost line.

SECTION 07

What 2027 looks like

There is good reason to be optimistic about AI in CX next year. There is equally good reason to be precise about the risks.

The case for optimism, and what tempers it

The tools are better than they were a year ago, the vendors are more experienced, and CX teams have learned from their first deployments. What tempers the optimism is everything in this paper so far: ownership gaps, unready data, processes written for humans, and measurement that stops at activity.

The changes to plan for

01

Agentic workflows across systems

AI that takes action across CRM, billing, order and knowledge systems, with the governance to match.

02

Platform consolidation

Fewer, larger vendors, and contracts that need to account for ownership changes mid-term.

03

Outcome-based pricing

Paying per resolution changes how AI is bought, measured and contracted, and who carries the risk.

04

AI inside WFM and QA

Planning and quality move from people-only to blended, and from sampling to full coverage.

Where the value will come from next

First from efficiency: faster resolution, less after-contact work, fewer unnecessary contacts. Then from capacity: handling more demand without growing headcount at the same rate. The biggest prize is retention and revenue, but only for the organisations that have mapped the journeys where it sits.

This paper builds on our 2027 AI in CX predictions report, published in November 2026, rather than repeating it.

CONCLUSION

Readiness times value

Most enterprise CX teams have deployed AI. Far fewer have built the foundation that makes it pay.

The next phase of AI in customer experience will not be decided by who has the best model. It will be decided by four things.

01

Workflows

Mapped as they actually run, and redesigned before AI goes in.

02

Team design

Roles, skills and learning paths built for a blended human and AI workforce.

03

The commercial model

Value sized before build and measured after, in numbers the board accepts.

04

Customer trust

Clear rules on when AI acts, when it hands over, and what the customer is told.

The leaders who pull ahead in 2027 will sequence their AI by two measures at once: how ready each workflow is, and how much value is at stake in it. High value and ready goes first. High value and not ready gets fixed. Low value waits, however good the demo looks.

Where does your organisation sit?

Start with a conversation about your AI estate, your readiness and the value at stake.

cxais.ai/contact · enquiries@cxais.ai

VENDOR LANDSCAPE

Who you will meet in each layer

A quick reference for practitioners, as of November 2026. It is a heads-up, not a review or a recommendation.

For each layer of Exhibit 1 we list three established vendors, chosen on analyst recognition and market scale, and two challenger brands now appearing on enterprise shortlists. Recognition is reported as published by the analyst firm or in public funding announcements. Where several vendors share a leader position, the others are named beneath the table so the list is not read as a ranking.

VENDOR LANDSCAPE · LAYER 1

Customer channels

The contact centre platforms that carry voice and digital channels. Gartner's 2026 contact centre as a service (CCaaS) Magic Quadrant kept the same five Leaders as 2025.

Vendor	Type	What it covers here	Recognition
Genesys	ESTABLISHED	Genesys Cloud CX	Gartner CCaaS Leader 2026, highest for Ability to Execute, 12th year as a Leader
NiCE	ESTABLISHED	CXone	Gartner CCaaS Leader 2026, furthest for Completeness of Vision
AWS	ESTABLISHED	Amazon Connect	Gartner CCaaS Leader 2026
Content Guru	CHALLENGER	Cloud contact centre, UK-headquartered	Gartner CCaaS Challenger 2026
Microsoft	CHALLENGER	Dynamics 365 Contact Center	First appearance in the Gartner CCaaS report in 2026, as the only Visionary

Also named Leaders in 2026: Five9 and Talkdesk.

Listed for practitioner awareness only. Not a review, ranking or recommendation.

VENDOR LANDSCAPE · LAYER 2

Engagement and orchestration

The conversational and agentic AI that handles or routes customer contacts. This is the most crowded and best-funded part of the stack.

Vendor	Type	What it covers here	Recognition
Google	ESTABLISHED	Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience	Gartner Conversational AI Platforms Leader 2026, second year running
Salesforce	ESTABLISHED	Agentforce	Gartner Conversational AI Platforms Leader 2026, first time in the Leaders quadrant
Kore.ai	ESTABLISHED	Agentic AI platform for customer and employee service	Gartner Conversational AI Platforms Leader in every edition since 2022
Sierra	CHALLENGER	AI customer service agents across chat and voice, priced on outcomes	Founded 2023; raised $950M at a $15.8B valuation in May 2026
Parloa	CHALLENGER	AI agent management platform, voice-led, Berlin-headquartered	Raised $350M at a $3B valuation in January 2026

Also named a Leader in 2026: SoundHound AI. Other challengers on shortlists include Decagon and PolyAI.

Listed for practitioner awareness only. Not a review, ranking or recommendation.

VENDOR LANDSCAPE · LAYER 3

Agent and workforce

Workforce engagement management (WFM, QA and coaching) and the AI that supports agents during live contacts. Verint and Calabrio, two of the three biggest WEM providers, now operate as one company.

Vendor	Type	What it covers here	Recognition
NiCE	ESTABLISHED	Workforce engagement, quality management and agent assist within CXone	Gartner CCaaS Leader 2026
Verint	ESTABLISHED	Verint CX Automation Platform, now including Calabrio	Combined with Calabrio after Thoma Bravo's $2B take-private closed in November 2025
Genesys	ESTABLISHED	Workforce engagement built into Genesys Cloud CX	Gartner CCaaS Leader 2026, highest for Ability to Execute
Cresta	CHALLENGER	Real-time agent assist, coaching, QA and AI agents	Reported $100M ARR in 2026
Observe.AI	CHALLENGER	Conversation intelligence, agent assist and QA automation	$213M raised to date

Other challengers on shortlists include Level AI and Balto.

Listed for practitioner awareness only. Not a review, ranking or recommendation.

VENDOR LANDSCAPE · LAYER 4

Insight and measurement

Voice of the customer, feedback and interaction analytics. Qualtrics has completed its acquisition of Press Ganey Forsta, which had already absorbed InMoment.

Vendor	Type	What it covers here	Recognition
Medallia	ESTABLISHED	Medallia Experience Cloud	Only Leader in the Forrester Wave for Customer Feedback Management and Analytics, Q3 2026; Gartner VoC Leader 2026
Qualtrics	ESTABLISHED	XM for Customer Experience, now including Press Ganey Forsta and InMoment	Gartner VoC Leader 2026, highest for Ability to Execute and furthest for Completeness of Vision
Sprinklr	ESTABLISHED	Unified CXM, including feedback and social listening	Gartner VoC Leader 2026
Alchemer	CHALLENGER	Feedback and survey platform	Gartner VoC Challenger 2026
Pisano	CHALLENGER	Experience management and feedback platform	Moved from Niche Player to Challenger in the Gartner VoC report, 2026

Listed for practitioner awareness only. Not a review, ranking or recommendation.

VENDOR LANDSCAPE · LAYER 5

Data and integration

The CRM, knowledge and customer data systems every AI layer above draws on. Knowledge management became its own Gartner category in July 2026.

Vendor	Type	What it covers here	Recognition
Salesforce	ESTABLISHED	Service Cloud, Data 360 and MuleSoft	Gartner CRM Customer Engagement Center Leader 2026
Microsoft	ESTABLISHED	Dynamics 365 Customer Service	Gartner CRM Customer Engagement Center Leader 2025
ServiceNow	ESTABLISHED	Customer Service Management	Gartner CRM Customer Engagement Center Leader 2025
eGain	CHALLENGER	AI Knowledge Hub for agents and self-service	Leader in Gartner's first Customer Service Knowledge Management report, July 2026
Twilio	CHALLENGER	Segment customer data platform, alongside its communications APIs	Gartner CPaaS Leader 2026, with Segment cited as a reason

Oracle, Pegasystems and Zendesk were also CRM Customer Engagement Center Leaders in 2025.

Listed for practitioner awareness only. Not a review, ranking or recommendation.

REFERENCE

The CXaiS vocabulary

The terms used in this paper, so readers can say them back.

Operational AI Readiness

The discipline of making an organisation's workflows, data, people and commercial model ready for AI to perform, before go-live.

Workflow Cartography

Mapping how work and decisions actually run, workflow by workflow, as opposed to how the process document says they run.

Five Tests of AI Data Readiness

Reachability, recency, identity, authority and permission. A workflow is only as data-ready as its weakest required test.

Value at Stake

The value of each workflow, sized before anything is built and measured against after go-live.

Readiness x Value

Sequencing AI by two measures at once: how ready each workflow is, and how much value is at stake in it.

The five maturity levels

Explore	Build	Operational	Optimised	Leading
No formal AI strategy, governance or readiness assessment				AI treated as a strategic competitive advantage

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Sources and notes

CXaiS practitioner observations and estimates are drawn from enterprise CX technology program experience and are labelled where they appear. They are not survey findings. Vendor recognition reflects published analyst reports and public announcements as of November 2026.

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ABOUT

About the author

> **Rachel Lane** is Founder and CEO of CXaiS.
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> Rachel has designed, led and managed CX programs and teams for some of the world's largest brands. With a track record of delivering ROI in very challenging environments, Rachel founded CXaiS specifically to ensure that business commitments in AI are underpinned by a solid foundation, are accurately benchmarked, and have a tailored approach to achieving return on investment.

About CXaiS

CXaiS is an independent AI in CX consultancy. We build the commercial foundation, ROI framework and implementation plan that makes AI investment in customer experience actually perform. We do not build AI agents and we do not sell platforms. Technology partners deliver. CXaiS gets organisations ready and holds the commercial case.

AI Quick Assessment	Readiness Snapshot	Foundation Readiness Audit	Value at Stake Assessment	Ongoing ROI Program
FREE	BOOKED CALL	4 WEEKS	10 WEEKS	MONTHLY



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