Envision a new era of customer service with *generative AI*

Capgemini

Should after-sales service remain an afterthought?

Imagine dining at a restaurant where the food is impeccable – every bite, a culinary delight. But the waiter is unfriendly and inattentive to your needs. Would you return for the sumptuous food and tolerate the poor service, or let your taste buds lead you elsewhere next time?

Lousy restaurants that entice patrons with alluring aromas but disappoint them with slow, incompetent service are like businesses that strike a chord with customers initially but fall flat when it's time to support them.

Everyone knows it's impossible to run a successful business without customers, so it's only natural to spend time, money, and resources on acquiring them. But how far can a business go if most of their new customers end up being just one-time visitors?

Prioritizing customer service: A worthy investment?

If we acknowledge the marketing principle that winning over a new customer costs substantially more than retaining an old one, it makes sense to shift more than a few investment dollars to the service side.

This department is usually the face of the brand and can play a considerable role in building a strong customer base.

Loyal customers often spend more and make repeat purchases far surpassing the average spend of new customers, which means providing outstanding customer service should be every brand's first concern.

In fact, a Zendesk Trends Report has revealed that 73% of business leaders say there's a direct link between customer service and business performance.[1] Simply put, brands that take care of their customers will enjoy the benefits of their loyalty.

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1 https://www.zendesk.com/blog/customer-relations/
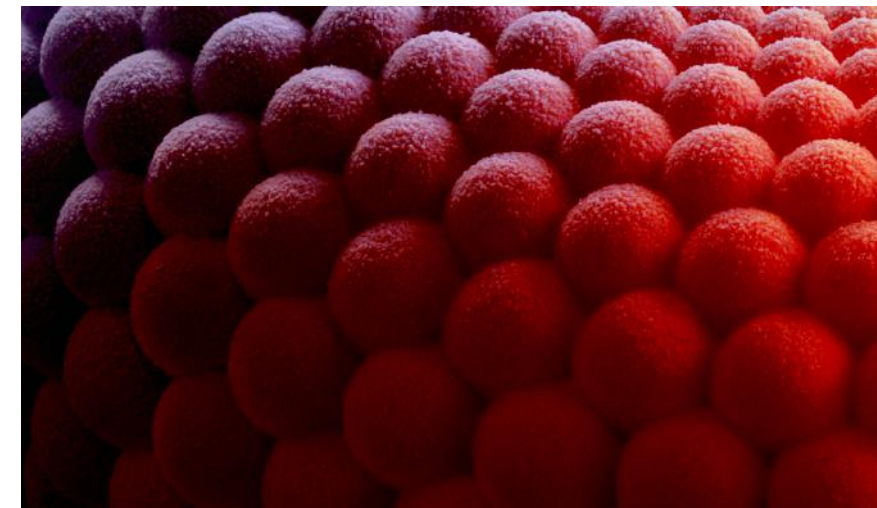
The IT barrier to great customer service

But how hard is it to provide a customer service that not only encourages customers to stay closer to a brand but also turns them into brand ambassadors?

Traditionally customer service agents have relied on information from multiple, disparate sources to address customer needs. The disjointed applications they use often require weeks of training. And even with these applications, agents still struggle to answer questions quickly or track full customer histories.

When it comes to IT, there is often slow innovation with high cost and long implementation times. Employees of an underinvested customer service department bear the brunt of customer frustration when they can't resolve queries fast enough. This contributes to their high stress levels causing some to leave and the company having to spend more on hiring and training new staff. According to a recent benchmark of over 100 customer service and support leaders, Gartner found there to be "a 25% median attrition among customer service reps."[2]

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[2] https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2023-02-14-gartner-says-customer-service-functions-that-implement-a-connected-rep-strategy-will-improve-contact-center-efficiency-by-30-percent-by-2026

Reimagine customer service as something more than just a problem-solver

Get more business value and engagement with a generative AI omnichannel customer service hub.

What if organizations didn't have to choose between acquisition and retention when it comes to deciding which side deserves more focus? What if they offered a type of service that easily handled increased volumes across multiple channels while also boosting sales, leaving more customers (and agents) happier – all with a lower cost of operations?

Technologies like generative AI (Gen AI) have now made this possible. Brands can make use of conversational user interfaces that provide personalized, intuitive, and efficient support experiences.

These interfaces, powered by AI-driven chatbots and virtual conversational agents, can understand natural language, respond to complex queries, and even proactively anticipate customer needs. They can help deflect routine inquiries, freeing up human agents for issues that require deeper empathy and understanding.

In addition to impacting how customers perceive a brand – which determines whether they'll return as repeat buyers – this unique customer service can directly contribute to increasing sales. Since Gen AI tools can provide more accurate, relevant, and timely data on each customer, agents can use this information to upsell and cross-sell targeted products and services, adding to the average order value. Agents can also identify which customers could be prime candidates for premium products and services, warranties, maintenance plans, and more.
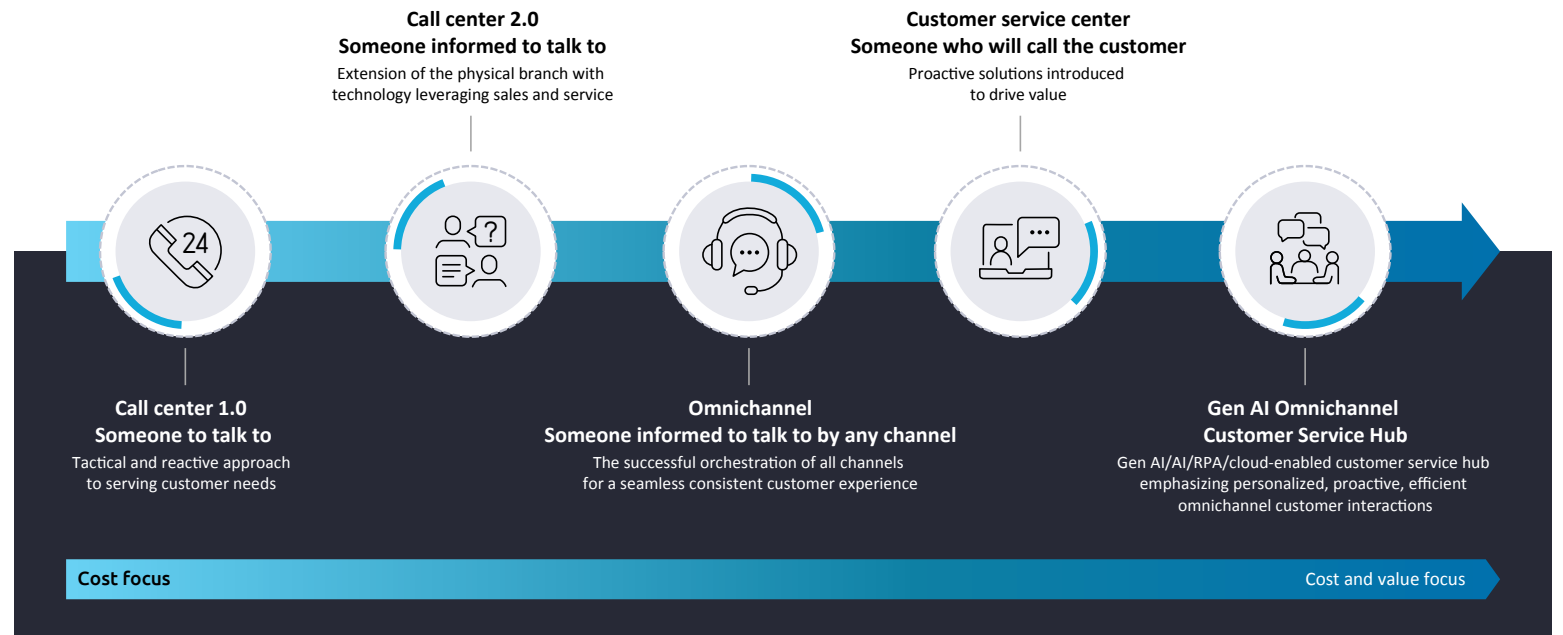
Gartner predicts that by 2028 digital customer service, conversational user interfaces, and Gen AI will transform customer service and support. By 2025, 80% of customer service and support organizations will be applying Gen AI in some form to improve agent productivity and customer experience (CX).[3] The customer service domain will be positioned front and center assuming the role of both brand influencer and sales generator.

The following diagram shows the evolution journey of how organizations are moving from a reactive traditional service center to a more proactive, technology-infused one that increases customers, loyalty, and business growth.

80%
of customer service and support organizations will be applying Gen AI in some form to improve agent productivity and customer experience (CX).[3]

Evolving toward a Gen AI omnichannel customer service hub to deliver higher service value

Call center 2.0
Someone informed to talk to
Extension of the physical branch with technology leveraging sales and service

Customer service center
Someone who will call the customer
Proactive solutions introduced to drive value

Call center 1.0
Someone to talk to
Tactical and reactive approach to serving customer needs

Omnichannel
Someone informed to talk to by any channel
The successful orchestration of all channels for a seamless consistent customer experience

Gen AI Omnichannel Customer Service Hub
Gen AI/AI/RPA/cloud-enabled customer service hub emphasizing personalized, proactive, efficient omnichannel customer interactions

Cost focus

Cost and value focus

Seven game-changing levers to transform customer service

Before any transformation decisions can be made about what can be done to reimagine customer service, organizations should do an overview of their customer centricity priorities and the supporting IT architecture.

• Assess the customer journey and identify all the possible brand touchpoints. How is the customer interacting with the brand?

• Assess the IT landscape. Does it reside in the cloud? Where is the data stored? Does it freely flow between different tools – from the customer data platform (CDP) to the customer relationship management (CRM) system to customer service systems? Are there any data silos and integration challenges that need to be addressed?

This is the starting point, after which brands can create a vision to build a roadmap that considers their data, technology landscape, strategy, workforce optimization, and target operating model.

The following levers can be key landmark points on the road to aligning investments with business goals, whether they're to cut costs, upgrade IT systems, or integrate Gen AI capabilities.

1 - Provide a personalized, omnichannel customer journey	2 - Deploy a Gen AI omnichannel customer service hub
• Plan customer service journeys to transcend all channels (web customer service portal, app, email, social networks, e-commerce website, marketplaces, etc.) and be an integral part of the overall CX strategy. • Co-create, measure, and test the journeys with customers and agents/sales teams. • Determine the right key performance indicators (KPIs) and identify opportunities where customer value and business value align. (If customers see value in using a channel, then there's value for the brand too.) • Start with quick win journey optimizations to generate immediate benefits, e.g., focus on self-service using Gen AI virtual agents. • The goal is to identify customers' preferred channels to learn how they would like to be contacted.	• Integrate the hub with a CX platform for service, a data platform, and a set of AI tools and generative AI assistants. • Advanced pre-built features could include conversational interactive voice response, skills-based contact routing (relay customers to the "best" agent), task management based on intent decisions, call recording and automated transcriptions, detailed analytics and sentiment analysis, on-screen customer purchase histories, and recommended next-best actions.

3 - Integrate Gen AI virtual agents and empower humans with Gen AI capabilities	4 - Optimize the workforce	5 - Ensure the in/outsourcing strategy is sustainable and successful

3 - Integrate Gen AI virtual agents and empower humans with Gen AI capabilities

• A Gen AI virtual agent, armed with knowledge about the customer, the brand's offerings, business strategy, and policies, can automatically create summaries after contact with a customer, send outbound texts/emails, and monitor analytics for supervisors. Their efficient, round-the-clock service helps reduce the number of cases human agents must resolve.

• Agents with Gen AI capabilities can serve customers faster, e.g. offer the best recommendations in the moment, decipher customer purchase patterns and histories across channels to learn what they genuinely need.

4 - Optimize the workforce

Position the right competency for the right activity at the right time by:

• Forecasting: estimate the number of contacts required per channel based on seasonality, traffic peaks, marketing campaigns, new product launches, special events, and more.

• Planning: determine the ideal resource allocation in intraday increments per agent to meet customer demand and service-level agreements.

• Reallocating: adjust in real time according to unplanned traffic peaks, email accumulations, absenteeism, etc.

• Reporting: monitor the quality of service provided by each agent (first-call resolution, handling time, customer satisfaction, etc.) and the forecast difference to make further adjustments.

5 - Ensure the in/outsourcing strategy is sustainable and successful

• Determine the key in/outsourcing criteria based on customer segmentation, case complexity, the provider's specialism, location, desired outcome, and business competencies to ensure a consistent brand experience.

• Define the contractualization model and the SLAs to learn about both the company's and the outsourcer's objectives and requirements.

• Specify the agent skillsets required and provide effective training and awareness sessions for both the providers' workforce and company employees.

• Establish a dedicated, centralized governance coordinated with workflow forecasting/monitoring teams and a manageable number of partners.

• Standardize platforms, tools, and data models across in-house contact centers and outsourced partners to enable seamless case collaboration and data exchange.

• Monitor aligned KPIs within a comprehensive quality management framework to ensure consistent, sustainable quality of service and brand experience across the in-house and outsourced contact centers.

6 - Industrialize intelligent proactive outbound interactions	7 - Monitor business performance and ensure value tracking

• Determine the adequate balance between engagement and transaction according to the customer's profile and other interactions with the company using automation, data, and AI.

• Customer care: proactively contact customers to resolve their previous issues and inform them of the progress of their requests.

• Business opportunities: align the most appropriately trained and skilled agents to boost revenue through cross-sell and upsell initiatives.

Measure progress across four areas to continually improve:

• Efficiency: average handling time, volumes (number of interactions/agents, number of interactions/resolutions), agent utilization rate, first-call resolution, average wait time, etc.

• Customer experience: abandonment rate, average speed to answer, number of repeat calls, etc.

• Cost: agent retention rate, cost to train agents, license/vendor costs, cost per interaction, etc.

• Revenues: number and value of upsell and cross-sell opportunities, revenue per interaction, brand value and reputation, etc.
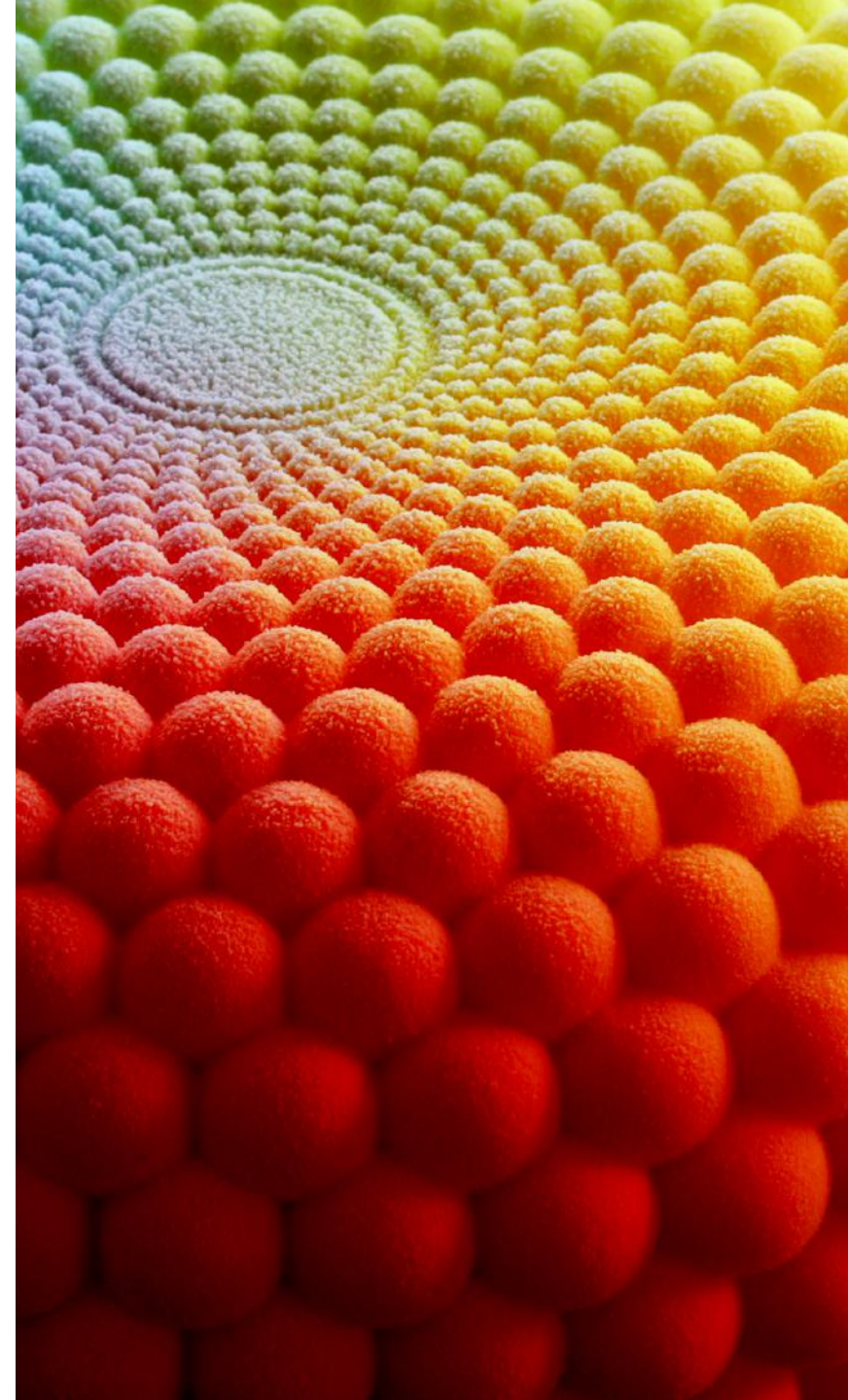
Building a better service with 24/7 AI reliability

Fortive, a technology provider and leader in facility and construction cost data software, works with many cities, schools, and construction procurement businesses that depend on its tools and services. These businesses often have technical questions that customer service reps can't answer fast enough.

Capgemini set out to build a chatbot that would take a load off Fortive's human agents. Using a RAG (retrieval-augmented generation) AI framework, we developed features for Fortive's data pipeline to move data from source to backend, enabling faster search functionality. We also added features to the backend, including prompt engineering, to enhance the chatbot's capabilities.

Now that this advanced chatbot can handle routine questions, customers enjoy quicker response times at any hour of the day while Fortive agents have more time to focus on complex customer queries.

Fortive has seen a significant reduction in response times with more satisfied, happier customers and agents.

Supercharging Eneco eMobility's customer support

Eneco eMobility is a service provider of smart charge points for electric vehicles (EVs). Due to the company's recent expansion, the number of EV customers to support grew substantially, putting increasing pressure on customer service and prompting them to look for better tools for their customer service agents.

The project started with a small group of the most knowledgeable agents, who tested and validated different portions of Microsoft Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Service. Just five weeks later, Capgemini and Eneco eMobility rolled out the software to the first pilot groups. Since then, the solution has transformed the employee experience.

Copilot provides relevant CRM information to help coach agents through calls. It also enables live summaries that make it easier and faster to conclude or hand off a case to another team. There's even a chat service that answers particularly challenging questions based on previous solutions.

The solution has given agents more time to focus on customers rather than the tasks they used to do while listening and responding to them.

Watch the **video.**

Read **more.**

Benefits include:

• Improved agent productivity, reducing the average wrap-up time by 50%

• Faster and better responses to customer requests based on relevant knowledge base articles

• Higher overall customer and employee satisfaction

• Reduced training time from four hours to just one hour to master the copilot-assisted functionality

• Lower licensing costs by a factor of two

Ensure customer service sits at the heart of the organization

Customer service is the main point of contact, so whatever customers experience here will have a ripple effect on other areas of the business, including marketing, pre-sales, sales, and the supply chain.

That's why it's important to have a single source of data to draw on and for that data to flow freely across the business to project a consistent brand experience.

Thanks to technological advancements, cloud service providers and specialist software vendors now offer cloud-based CCaaS (contact center as a service) solutions. CCaaS software can turn each customer interaction into an opportunity to resolve issues faster, solidify brand affinity, and boost sales.

As customer expectations rise and competition gets fiercer, businesses can't afford to keep overlooking the role service plays in creating lasting impressions. Doing so would be a missed opportunity for higher sales and better customer and employee experiences.

If a restaurant can't survive on the patronage of one-time visitors, what makes other businesses so sure they can fare better?

Putting customers first with Capgemini

Capgemini can help you re-invent your customer service so you can provide better service and increase business growth.

Our global collective of 60,000+ customer experience, strategy, design, data, AI, and cybersecurity consultants and engineers worldwide have allowed us to complete over 1,000 customer service projects for the public sector, consumer goods and retail, financial services, automotive, and many other industries.

We are recognized by Forrester as one of only two leaders in The Forrester Wave™: AI Services (Q2 2024).

Capgemini RAISE (reliable AI solution engineering) accelerator can help fast-track custom generative AI projects with trusted controls over cost, scale, and delivery. With our exceptional industry experts and strong ecosystem of partners all along the generative AI value chain, we deliver projects at scale, bringing to life our clients' most relevant use cases for substantial business impact every time.

To learn how to jump start your customer service transformation and increase your brand's value, contact our experts:

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About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market-leading capabilities in AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2023 global revenues of €22.5 billion.

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