

The Agent and AI Disconnect: A Blueprint for Futuristic CX



Executive Summary

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has promised a new era of efficiency for customer service agents – but reality on the floor tells a different story.

Instead of increased productivity and customer satisfaction, immature AI tools such as chatbots are leading to frustration and poor experiences. Agents are often tasked with cleaning up the mess of failed bot interactions and the stress that follows. Businesses aren't just testing AI on agents; they are forcing them to compensate for its limitations.

UJET surveyed 250 frontline agents at mid-market and enterprise organizations using AI solutions from various providers in the industry to bridge the gap between AI hype and actual AI usage. The results uncover a massive disconnect in current AI usage and the benefits for agents and customers.

While 100% of agents use AI daily, 78% report that these tools fail to deliver a transformative impact. Perhaps most damning for current legacy stacks: 93% of agents believe they could perform their jobs effectively without their current AI tools entirely.

UJET's report delves into this complex relationship between agents and AI and provides a blueprint for the next generation of AI-first customer service.



AI is Everywhere, but Impact is Lacking

Modern contact centers have reached a pivotal point: AI is no longer a future roadmap item –it is a daily reality. UJET’s research across financial services, retail, healthcare, travel, and technology industries confirms that 100% of frontline agents now interact with AI every single day.

THE DEPTH OF THIS INTEGRATION IS STAGGERING:

75% of agents leverage AI for more than three-quarters of their total customer interactions.

19% of agents report AI involvement in over 90% of their workload.

16% of agents have reached "total integration," using AI for 100% of their customer interactions.

But these numbers mask a troubling reality. While usage is universal, these tools are not yet mission-critical. They function as optional assistants rather than essential engines for success. This creates a massive gap between deployment and dependency.

The AI Dependency Myth

Every agent UJET surveyed uses AI, yet over half have already hit a utility ceiling. Fifty-four percent of agents report that AI helps with some issues but often lacks the context or depth agents need to do their jobs properly. An additional 21% feel neutral - that AI hasn't noticeably changed their ability to handle complex interactions.

There's a stark disconnect between technology deployment and operational necessity:

78% of agents believe the AI tools currently in place — from agent assist to automated coaching — are not transformative.

As a result, agents view these tools as nice-to-haves rather than essential engines for performance. The proof lies in their confidence without the tech:

93% of agents are confident they could perform their jobs without major issues if their AI tools were temporarily unavailable.

0% of agents — not a single respondent — consider AI critical to their daily success.

8% of agents believe they would actually struggle without AI assistance.

This lack of dependency signals that AI maturity remains low across the enterprise.

Contact Center AI Maturity is Low






Further Reading

[Benchmark Your Strategy: Read the AI Maturity Report](#) ▶

Where AI Delivers Immediate Value for Agents

UJET's [AI Maturity Benchmark Report](#) showed a broad range of AI investments that contact centers have made in the past year. The top investments include:

-  Simple chatbots for self service **(47%)**.
-  Performance and call analytics **(39%)**.
-  Routing of customer inquiries **(38%)**.

According to UJET's proprietary maturity scale, 55% of these AI investments are considered low maturity. High-maturity AI goes beyond routing calls or answering basic FAQs. It collaborates with agents to deliver the personalized, contextual experiences that customers now expect as a baseline - but it's not achieved by most.

Despite the current maturity gap, agents report AI makes a positive, yet moderate, impact in the following areas.

Sixty-nine percent of agents credit AI with reducing after-call work, such as note-taking and data verification. This efficiency directly correlates to faster resolution times for routine inquiries:

54% of agents report that AI makes routine interactions up to 25% faster.

37% of agents see an even greater boost, resolving issues 26–50% faster.





Overall, 100% of agents agree that AI saves them time. They are using it to:

- Handle more customer requests and interactions **(66%)**.
- Take on higher-value work such as upselling, customer retention, solving complex issues, etc. **(20%)**.

- Reduce agent stress and pressure **(14%)**.

These time savings are leading to real benefits like earning promotions **(78%)**, earning more money **(24%)** and better performance reviews **(18%)**.

By offloading mundane, repetitive tasks to automation, agents are reclaiming the "human" elements of their roles. Without the burden of manual data entry, agents report significant improvements in soft skills like:

-  Empathy and active listening **(25%)**.
-  Multitasking and time management **(22%)**.
-  Technical troubleshooting **(22%)**.
-  Creativity and judgment in unique situations **(21%)**.

While 94% of agents report AI's positive impact on their company's overall CX, a significant disconnect remains. While agents see the moderate internal benefits of automation, the customer-facing reality tells a much more volatile story.

93% of agents believe they could do their jobs without AI, yet 100% also say it saves them time. What gives?

We are potentially seeing a breakdown between what agents and their supervisors care about.

Agents are laser focused on being able to do their jobs. Supervisors care about the speed, quality and efficiency of interactions. Agents recognize they do not need AI to provide emotionally intelligent, empathetic support.

But their bosses impress the importance of AI to reduce mundane work and open agents up for more strategic work.

At the end of the day, both are right. The question is whether AI and agents are truly working together or is AI deflecting customers from the solution to their problem.

Customers and Agents Agree: AI Frustrates Them

Three main reasons why agents think AI is failing:

- 1 It makes customers frustrated
- 2 Agents don't trust the tools
- 3 AI tools don't work on legacy systems, and this adds complexity

Agents are clear - poorly executed AI tools are actively damaging customer relationships. In fact, 65% of customers express frustration to agents on most calls or every call about having to repeat information they already gave to a self-service AI agent or chatbot before speaking with a human.

The failure in continuity between AI tools and agents doesn't just waste time, but it changes the emotional temperature of interactions. Fourteen percent of agents say customers are more emotionally charged after failing to have their problem resolved by AI self-service. As a result of more emotionally charged customers, 13% of agents express more stress and burnout.

Secondly, agents don't trust their AI tools. In fact, 93% of agents feel the need to double-check or verify information provided by AI tools before using it with a customer. Fifteen percent of agents say real-time AI recommendations are unreliable or inaccurate.

The root of these issues lies with legacy, on-premise infrastructure, and/or siloed, disparate contact center tools and customer data sources. Rather than deploying native, integrated solutions, many organizations are bolting on AI features to aging, legacy systems. This creates a cluttered, inefficient desktop where 81% of agents are using more than 4 tools at any 1 time, and 19% are using more than 7 tools.

We have reached a point where bad CX is more damaging than no automation at all. When companies prioritize an AI strategy without the underlying data architecture to support it, they effectively outsource the frustration to their customers and the cleanup to their agents.

These negative outcomes have agents expressing mixed feelings about this career path going forward.

How AI is Redefining the Agent Career Path

While AI promises to elevate the role of the agent, it simultaneously creates a crisis of job security. As a result, **71% of agents are likely or somewhat likely to look for a new job because they are concerned AI will take their job.**

However, a deeper look reveals a more nuanced internal dialogue. When discussing the future of their roles with peers, agents exhibit a range of perspectives:

54% are cautiously optimistic, believing AI will change roles, not replace them.

13% are mostly excited, with agents seeing AI creating new opportunities and making work easier.

29% have a mixed opinion between optimism and concern.

This division exists because agents currently occupy the testing ground for immature technology. While organizations commit significant capital to AI, the lack of immediate ROI has left the workforce in a state of professional limbo.

The AI era is forcing a choice. Companies tethered to legacy mindsets will drive agents to look for an exit, while those that embrace AI as a co-pilot are positioning agents to thrive.

The future of CX will not be a choice between humans or machines; it will be defined by how effectively an organization integrates and seamlessly escalates customer interactions between the two.

Agents and AI: Building World-Class Experiences Together

Agents are on the ground floor for AI implementation in a highly impacted business unit. While some have gotten value from simple AI implementations, organizations have a long way to go before achieving transformative impact.

The brands that will dominate the next decade are those that master the agent-AI partnership. To turn AI from a liability into a competitive advantage, contact center and technology leaders should focus on these seven strategic pillars:

- 1. Eliminate the bolt-on mentality:** Legacy infrastructure is not nimble enough for the AI era. Prioritize cloud-native transformation and deeply integrated tools to ensure your agents can actually access and leverage the latest AI breakthroughs.
- 2. Audit AI for utility over novelty:** Stop deploying AI for the sake of AI. Evaluate every tool based on its ability to improve specific KPIs rather than its feature list, ensuring you aren't just accelerating negative experiences at scale.
- 3. Rethink contact center success metrics:** Implementing AI in your CX toolchain is not just about deflecting, containing, and optimizing interactions, it is about a fundamental shift in how we think about KPIs and the impact AI can have on the metrics that matter most to executives: revenue generation, churn reduction, and customer lifetime value.
- 4. Define the human-machine boundaries:** Map your customer journey to identify which interactions are best fit for automation and which higher-value interactions demand a human touch. Automate the routine so your agents can focus on high-stakes, high-empathy, and revenue-generating problem solving.
- 5. Prioritize three quick wins:** Start with virtual agents, knowledge assist, post-interaction summarization, and—crucially—deeper integration into customer data sources. These four steps will offer quick wins to justify further AI investment.
- 6. Shift from reactive service to proactive revenue generation:** Unleash your agents to become revenue generators. Use AI to predict customer needs—such as end-of-life cycles or personalized upsells—allowing agents to solve problems before the customer even picks up the phone.
- 7. Redesign AI for connection, not deflection:** Stop using AI as a barrier to keep customers away from your staff. Reconfigure your tools to connect customers to the right human at the right time, prioritizing resolution speed over call deflection.
- 8. Deploy AI tools with real-time context:** Equip frontline agents with contextual summaries, customer data, and knowledge data to help drive root cause analysis and next best action.

Agents should have the power to see the channels that failed the customer and what the solution is in real time.

The leaders who bridge the maturity gap by integrating AI as a mission-critical partner for their agents will do more than just improve efficiency—they will redefine the value of the contact center itself. By transforming the frontline from reactive problem-solvers into proactive brand ambassadors, leaders aren't just modernizing technology; they are future-proofing their business for the age of AI, meeting their customers where they are in the customer journey, and driving real business impact that helps convert legacy support centers into revenue-generating customer experience centers.

About this Survey

UJET surveyed 250 U.S. based front line call center/contact center agents, aged 18+. Respondents work in mid-market to enterprise sized companies (500–5,000 employees) and use a wide range of contact center and AI solutions from various providers in the industry. Respondents were in sectors with heavy reliance on customer contact centers such as financial services, retail/e-commerce, healthcare, travel/hospitality and technology.

About UJET

UJET leads the way in AI-powered contact center innovation, delivering a future-proof, cloud platform that redefines the customer experience with cutting-edge AI, true multimodality, and a mobile-first approach. We infuse AI across every aspect of your customer journey and contact center operations, to drive automation and efficiency. UJET's AI solutions empower agents, optimize customer journeys, and transform contact center operations for elevated experiences and actionable insights. Built on a cloud-native architecture with a unique CRM-first approach, UJET ensures unmatched security, scalability, and prioritized data insights (without storing PII). Designed for effortless use, UJET partners with businesses to deliver exceptional interactions, smarter decision-making, and accelerated growth in the AI-driven world.

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