

How AI built for CX controls costs and keeps customers happy

There is a lot to be excited about in the world of AI, with new tools and technology changing the way companies can conduct business. At the same time, economic uncertainty is resulting in smaller budgets, reduced headcount and the desire to save money while trying to scale.

According to the 2023 [CX Trends Report](#), two-thirds of industry experts believe AI and bots will drive major cost savings over the next few years.

New AI tools that are available for customer service have the potential to drive these savings – but it's not a quick fix, especially when deployed in an organisation troubled by silos.

When companies use the right AI strategically to improve customer experience, it's a powerful tool for controlling costs and maintaining a customer connection.





“The ‘right’ AI is the issue. Many AI solutions on the market are expensive and take ages to set up, requiring heavy IT spending, lengthy implementation and specialised resources. Combine that with a hastily selected solution, it’s no wonder CX leaders and C-Suite executives want to see a greater impact from their investment.”

Caitlin Keohane

Senior Vice President, Global Customer Advocacy, Zendesk

Choosing the right AI

Where AI can go wrong	AI built for CX
<p>Deployed in silos</p> <p>Siloed solutions are disruptive. It reduces productivity and results in lost data. Without the involvement of the entire customer service operation, siloed AI is more trouble than it's worth.</p>	<p>Reduces ticket volume while still providing excellent service</p> <p>AI-powered bots help deflect low-value enquiries from agents, enabling them to focus on high-priority tasks. AI-driven knowledge management drives self-service while saving your team time, ultimately resulting in reduced ticket volume.</p>
<p>The burden is in the wrong place</p> <p>When the burden of effective AI is on the business's plate rather than the provider's, it increases time to deployment and the overall cost, requiring heavy IT spending and specialised resources.</p>	<p>Increases agent productivity without additional headcount</p> <p>Automated workflows – like triaging, macros and sentiment analysis – cut repetitive, time-consuming tasks for agents, enabling better knowledge transfer and more personalised CX.</p>
<p>Not built for CX</p> <p>AI built on large language models might be great at generating a conversational response, but it lacks the context to answer specific questions about your business, leading customers astray.</p>	<p>Helps businesses stay agile and reduce costs even as business needs shift</p> <p>Businesses of all sizes and growth phases can start taking immediate advantage of AI tools – which improve continuously and get smarter over time – without taking on the additional burden.</p>

Read on to learn how to deploy AI tools to better serve your customers and boost your support team while keeping your budget under control.





01 Reduce inbound support enquiries while still providing excellent service

Tighter budgets and lower headcount mean that customer service teams can be easily overwhelmed by an influx of tickets. It's not an easy job and ineffective tools can make it harder. That can lead to repercussions that extend throughout an organisation.

These poor tools trickle down into bad customer experiences. Most people, for example, are familiar with bots in their service conversations, but many report being unhappy with the level of service. Bad bots result in worse outcomes for your customers and your business, and in a highly

competitive CX landscape where great bots are widely available, most businesses can't afford to choose the wrong tool.

Here's where AI reduces ticket volume without sacrificing the quality of service:

Bots. As mentioned previously, bad bots result in bad customer experiences.

What makes a bad bot? It's usually a mixture of poor responses, incorrect information and the inability to seamlessly escalate to a human agent.

“It’s critical for brands to provide accurate responses and know when to escalate to an agent for more nuanced one-to-one conversations. ChatGPT is great at finding general responses that are highly conversational, but it doesn’t have the context to answer questions about your business – this is a problem, especially for customers looking for correct information.”

Cristina Fonseca, Vice President, Product, Zendesk

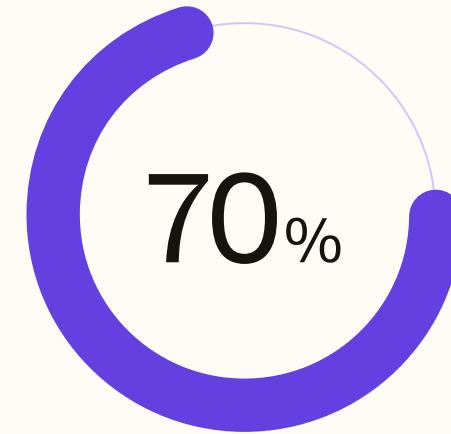
Good bots handle low-value, low-complexity interactions but also allow for seamless escalation to an agent when needed. That frees up agents to handle high-value and complex interactions that directly impact revenue or retention, which drives better outcomes.

Bots should also be able to connect to other business systems (like your knowledge base, e-commerce platform or scheduling platform). They should work on your high-value channels, like messaging or email, whether they’re a social channel like WhatsApp or your own homegrown web and mobile messaging.



These bots can be built out-of-the-box, with click-to-configure responses that don't require coding. But they can also be as sophisticated as you need them to be by integrating data from across your organisation for a bespoke, automated experience.

Knowledge management. A healthy cycle of content creation, usage and integration combined with AI tools can significantly reduce inbound support enquiries. AI can help surface gaps in knowledge base articles and make recommendations about which content to create and which content should be updated. Keeping a human in the loop – with their own expertise – to supervise the AI helps mitigate risks while assisting in content creation. These articles can help customers self-serve or be shown to customers when they engage with bots.



of support-seeking consumers believe and want AI to create more personalised and effective customer support experiences.

Proactive messaging. Providing excellent service is more than responding to inbound requests – it's also getting ahead of customer needs in a timely and personalised manner. Engaging with customers proactively and using automated triggers to personalise the experience can deflect inbound requests away from more costly channels by addressing issues head-on and providing the opportunity for customers to serve themselves or engage with bots.

Spotlight

German energy supplier, Enercity, uses a combination of 126 triggers and Zendesk's Answer Bot to offer uncomplicated, smooth and fast contact, no matter when or where, **and to keep first reply times under 18 hours.**

enercity

To handle a 3250% increase in the number of app users, NHS Digital have harnessed the power of bots and self-serve via the help centre to cut handling times and improve CSAT. **Answer bots now resolve 3.5% of their 70k monthly tickets.**

NHS
Digital

Social platform Discord combined AI with self-service and internal workflows to **deflect 10% of tickets.**

 **DISCORD**



02 Increase agent productivity without additional headcount

When you need to scale your customer support operation without adding headcount, AI can fill the necessary gaps. Much like a knowledge base, AI is only as helpful as the material and data that goes into it. Rather than try to construct an AI solution by building your own language model, an out-of-the-box solution that has taken care of the heavy lifting will save you time and money.

According to Cristina Fonseca, AI expert and VP of Product at Zendesk, “our solutions uniquely combine the power of our entire

support suite, LLMs trained against conversational service tickets and intents, and soon the power of OpenAI and ChatGPT”. “Combinations like these allow companies to focus less on the technical aspects of the rapidly changing AI spaces and instead focus deeply on the customer experience.”

AI is a critical strategy for controlling costs for companies of any size

Number of employees	1-250	250+
AI best practice	<p>For leaner customer service teams, a solution that rolls straight out-of-the-box equals faster savings with reduced complexity thanks to the ease of set up.</p> <p>Building a foundation of knowledge management optimised with AI keeps customers from opening unnecessary tickets to ask common questions.</p> <p>Bots can be used to help deflect queries, triage questions by collecting data and escalate the ticket seamlessly to an agent on request.</p>	<p>Larger organisations have a wealth of customer data, but silos can make it hard to share that information. That can lead to negative impacts on the customer and agent experiences.</p> <p>A unified agent workspace, powered by AI and connected across the architecture of your business, allows for customer data to be aggregated and acted upon.</p> <p>The key is to use the right tools like intelligent omnichannel routing and relevant macros to solve issues faster, while continuing to train the AI to improve over time. That enables collaboration while reducing context-switching, which could lead to lost productivity.</p>



Spotlight

Italian BNPL company, Scalapay, have seen their business customers enjoy an **11% increase in conversions at checkout and a 20% reduction in contact levels** whilst end users enjoy 24/7 self-serve and automatic handling.

♥ scalapay

Blender company Blendjet saw a **30% increase in productivity** when it integrated Zendesk with AI partner TypeGenie, helping automate agent replies while retaining the brand's voice and tone.

@ **blendjet**®

Online learning platform Udacity leveraged Zendesk bot partner Ada to create a bespoke AI-powered bot, increasing CSAT without adding to headcount despite doubled traffic. Udacity also saw a **75% drop in first response time and a 60% increase in tickets resolved within 24 hours**. In total, efficiency gains as a result of implementing AI saved Udacity \$240K in annual headcount.

 UDACITY



03 Remain agile amidst the changing needs of the business

As digital and physical customer experiences merge and technology quickly evolves, being able to stay on top is a major advantage for companies. Data shows that 73% of customers will seek services elsewhere after multiple poor interactions with a business and those unsatisfactory experiences can be compounded by the wrong CX solution.

But business stability, whether it's maintaining the cost to stay afloat or to reduce costs across the organisation, can be a major burden. With shrinking budgets, it's not realistic to invest in every fresh piece of technology that emerges on the market,

no matter how promising it might seem. And even then, complex lead times and adjustments to processes and workflows can slow your business down at a time when doing more with less is on everybody's minds.

The solution isn't to add more tools to an already complex set of products, but to find a highly flexible solution that is scalable with the best AI for CX built right in.

What does that look like? To start, an AI-powered CX tool should be ready to go in minutes rather than weeks. It needs to be flexible, adaptable and customisable to

your business's unique needs. It must use intelligent triage and routing to establish immediate automated workflows, which will help manage a changing, distributed workforce. Finally, it has to offer deep, accessible insights and analytics that enable your administrators to optimise the service experience, in turn enabling agility amidst high pressure, change and attempts to scale.

Real flexibility

With apps and integrations, businesses of all sizes can customise their customer experience, tied together with AI.

For enterprise and commercial businesses especially, our agile CX platform allows developers to customise Zendesk and build out totally unique workflows and processes.



Spotlight

Digitec Galaxus ≈ **1.5 million tickets per year**, self-service used to avoid growing the CX team further (cost saving implied), **94% CSAT**, automation in help centre leading to more complex personal experiences IRL.

Digitec Galaxus AG

Video game developer platform Unity leveraged Zendesk AI tools to quickly diagnose and adapt to dramatic growth. Built-in automation and a winning self-service strategy on the customer-facing side resulted in **\$1.3 million in cost savings**.



Businesses rely on Zendesk AI for better service and cost savings

Caitlin Keohane, Senior Vice President,
Global Customer Advocacy, Zendesk

While AI dominates news cycles, businesses have real-world concerns about keeping costs down amidst economic uncertainty. They want to know what it has to do with them, and whether it can actually help the bottom line.

The answer, of course, is yes. When deployed thoughtfully and strategically, AI has the potential to transform the customer service experience for the better. It can automate workflows that bog agents down and create better conversations that customers will remember positively.

And while AI isn't a magic wand that can make everything better, deploying a CX solution with AI baked in might be the next best thing. It doesn't need to be trained on new models – Zendesk offers a complex, pre-trained model for your particular industry. It comes together in minutes and saves time and money. Zendesk AI is a powerful tool that is helping businesses uplevel their customer service operations today, with real solutions that go beyond the hype cycle. We're excited to share it with you.



At a time of sky-high customer expectations, staffing shortages and economic uncertainty, AI helps customer service teams scale – and stay nimble.

Click [here](#) to view more in-depth information about how AI is helping companies save time and cut costs.

