

**VERINT.**

# **THE STATE OF AGENT EXPERIENCE**

**2026**

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Key trends shaping the future of contact centers,  
agent experience, and AI deployment

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# Human Agents + Their AI Colleagues

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The acceleration of artificial intelligence (AI) is changing how contact centers operate, enable their agents, and power customer service in ways we wouldn't have thought possible just a few years ago. What's more, this pace of change shows no sign of slowing.

Throughout all this change, one thing remains constant: the need for human agents to bring empathy and emotional intelligence to customer interactions. Solving problems requires creative thinking; navigating customer demands requires sound judgement; and building customer relationships requires empathy. This falls to your human agents exclusively.

However, as you'll see from this year's findings, agents still spend a significant amount of time on repetitive tasks. This is where AI can help. By augmenting agent workflows with AI, you can enable agents to:

- Focus on the customer conversations that matter most.
- Solve issues quicker, delivering rapid customer resolutions.
- Do less "busy work," focusing on helping resolve actual customer issues.

The future of the contact center is not about choosing between human agents or AI – it's about human agents and AI working together in harmony. As AI handles more agent tasks – and elements of customer interactions – agents are empowered to work smarter, resolve issues faster, and focus on building lasting customer relationships.

Your opportunity in 2026 is applying AI to workflows, helping agents work more efficiently and deliver better customer experiences. The findings that follow are intended to sharpen your priorities for 2026 and beyond, providing a roadmap for deploying AI in ways that drive measurable outcomes.

Happy reading!



**Anna Convery**  
CMO, Verint



# Key Findings

## TREND 1

### The Hidden Tax on Every Interaction

Your agents are spending hours on tasks that AI can automate.

**45%**

of calls into contact centers require agents to search for answers to customer questions.

## TREND 2

### The Cost of Inertia

If you're still running AI pilots, you're already behind.

**3 mins per call**

on average, is spent on after-call work that can now be automated with AI.

## TREND 3

### Equipping the Next-Generation Agent

Agents manage increasingly complex issues across multiple channels.

**61%**

of agents expect their roles to become more complex or technical because of AI in the next 3 years.

## TREND 4

### Fix EX – or Pay Through Churn

AI-powered workforce management becomes a retention tool, not just an operational afterthought.

**9 out of 10**

agents say schedule flexibility is important when choosing a job, confirming its critical role in agent retention.

TREND 1

# The Hidden Tax on Every Interaction



## Four Workflows Agents Handle on Customer Service Calls

### Gathering Interaction Context

57% of calls

### Searching for Knowledge

45% of calls

### Completing a Task

67% of calls

### Finishing After-Call Work

54% of calls

When asking agents where and how they spend their time – and the frequency of carrying out tasks that can be automated – the findings present huge opportunities for enterprises looking to increase contact center capacity. Agents say they typically spend a significant amount of time on tasks that AI can automate. For example, just under half of incoming contact center calls (**45%**) require agents to search for knowledge to answer a customer’s question. This is valuable time spent on a task that can be augmented with AI.

Multiply these administrative minutes across thousands of daily interactions and the opportunity cost becomes staggering. Your customers are too important for this to be the norm. Instead, AI-powered workflows can augment agents’ productivity, helping to reduce the time spent on repetitive tasks and freeing them to focus on what they do best: solving complex customer problems and building lasting customer relationships.

# Here's how implementing AI can help solve four common challenges:



**1** "Our agents spend too much time gathering context (previous customer service issues, etc.) at the beginning of customer interactions."

**2** "Our agents spend too much time searching for knowledge to answer customer questions."

**3** "Our agents spend too much time completing routine tasks – like issuing a refund, resetting a password, or rebooking an appointment – on the behalf of customers."

**4** "Our agents spend too much time completing after-call work or interaction summarization."



Modern virtual assistants gather prior engagement context before seamlessly handing off to a live agent, reducing time needed to get up to speed.

Embed knowledge automation directly in the agent desktop, making it easier to find the right information quickly, lowering average handle time, accelerating resolutions, and improving the agent experience.

An agent virtual assistant – powered by agentic AI – can complete routine tasks on your agents' behalf, giving customers a smoother, faster path to resolutions.

Generative AI can automate interaction summarization at scale, reducing after-call work and freeing up agents to focus on higher-value customer interactions.

TREND 2

# The Cost of Inertia



# Average Time Agents Spend Handling Call Workflows

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When you think about the thousands of calls that reach contact centers each day, it's easy to see that the cost of inaction is real. Every minute saved through automation translates to real tangible ROI.

Automating after-call work alone could unlock significant agent capacity per call. Organizations need to move from AI experiments and pilots to AI deployment at scale.

**Every month spent in pilot mode is another month of unrealized benefits.**

## What agents can do when AI gives them more time:

- ✓ Handle and resolve more complex customer issues, building brand loyalty and deepening customer relationships.
- ✓ Focus on opportunities to up- or cross-sell, turning your contact center from a cost to a revenue center.
- ✓ Provide more time for AI training and upskilling, making them more engaged, effective, and efficient.

## Top tasks AI can help agents with, increasing contact center capacity

- 1 Personal assistance** Provide your agents with agentic AI that helps automate tasks on behalf of the customer.
- 2 Seamless handovers** Present summarized interaction context and history upon issue handover.
- 3 Less "busy work"** Enable agents to use generative AI for after-call summarizations, ensuring consistency and freeing up time.
- 4 Consistent answers** Automate in-call knowledge retrieval to help agents accurately answer even the trickiest customer questions.
- 5 Real-time guidance** Deliver in-the-moment coaching to ensure the next best action is achieved.

TREND 3

# Equipping the Next-Generation Agent





## Channels Agents Work Across

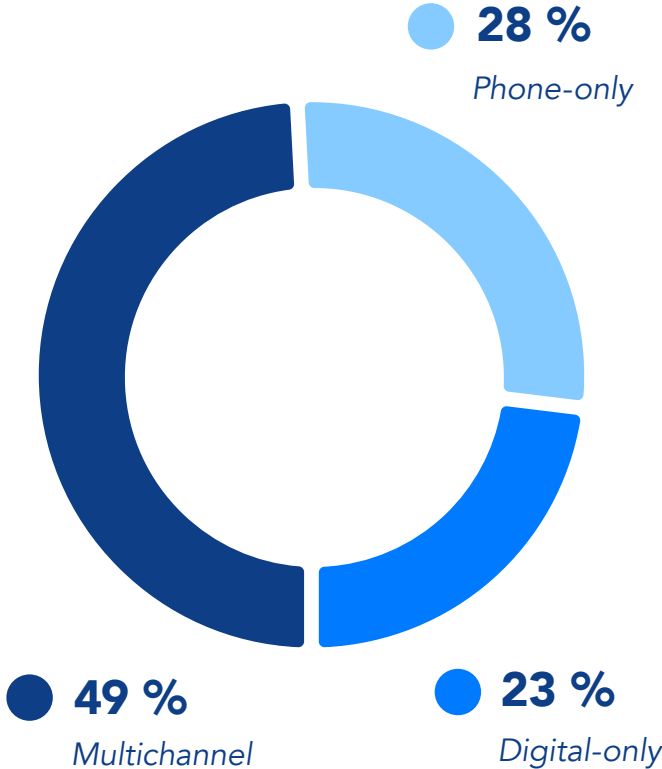
Your agents' biggest challenges in 2026:

- Multiple channels
- More complex issues
- Dispersed systems

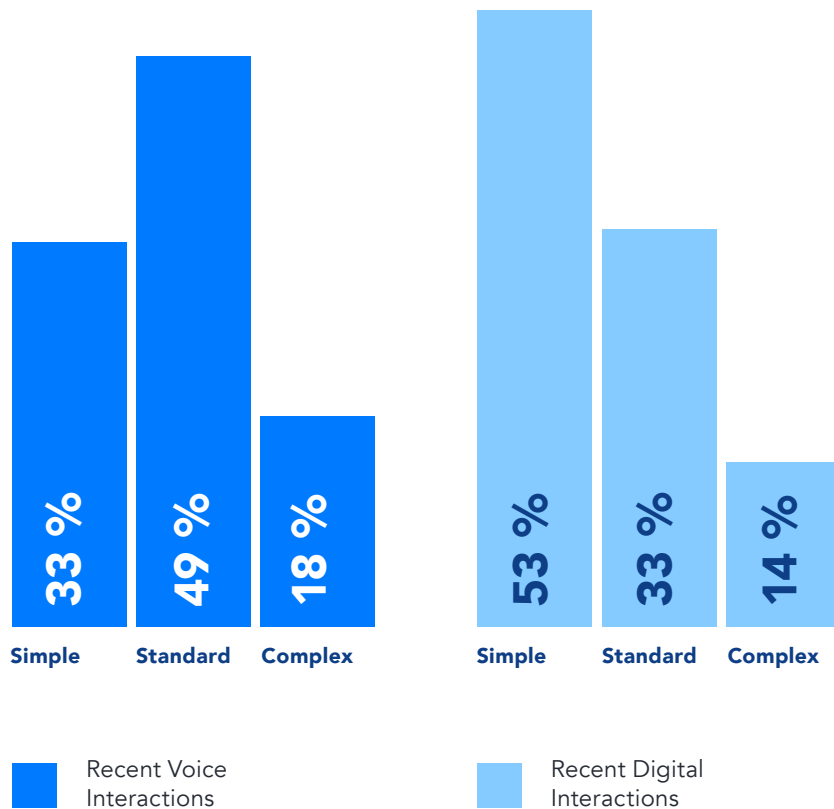
The next-generation agent won't be defined by tenure or channel, but by their ability to harness AI to overcome challenges – including those posed by multichannel customer service.

With nearly half (**49%**) of agents working across multiple channels, and **78% of customers** willing to switch to a competitor following a single poor experience, it's vital agents can resolve issues quickly and seamlessly, no matter the channel.

Meeting these demands requires a single, omnichannel desktop that unifies channels and streamlines agent workflows – making customers having to repeat themselves a thing of the past.



## Workload Distribution During Recent Interactions



Unsurprisingly, interaction complexity varies by channel. Voice interactions tend to be more involved, with higher percentages of standard (**49%**) and complex (**18%**) requests, whereas digital interactions are typically simpler (**53%**).

These monotonous, repetitive interactions can be automated entirely, as could tasks within more complex queries. This helps increase contact center capacity, affording agents more time to use their empathy, judgement, and creative thinking to resolve issues rapidly.

AI enables human agents to spend more time focusing on complex customer interactions. These interactions by nature are of a higher value to your business. This provides more scope for agents to use empathy to turn a customer from disgruntled to delighted, spot opportunities to up or cross-sell, and apply their expertise to resolve issues that require emotional intelligence and creative-problem solving. The next generation of agents is powered by AI.

**94%**

of agents expect AI to change their roles in the next three years

**61%**

of those agents expect their roles to become more complex or technical

The data reveals a workforce at an AI inflection point, with **94%** of agents expecting some form of impact on their roles within three years, and **61%** anticipating their roles will become more complex or technical.

This isn't about agents fearing replacement (only **8%** fear this in the next three years). It is about agents recognizing their jobs are evolving faster than the support systems designed to help them. Enterprises that are proactive and address this knowledge gap with real-time coaching and AI training are more likely to build a happier workforce that's equipped for the requirements of the AI-augmented contact center.

### Top tips for building an AI-educated workforce

- 1** Develop micro-learning modules (2–5 minutes) that fit directly into daily workflows and are delivered through real-time coaching.
- 2** Host “lunch-and-learns” where agents who have used AI-powered solutions demonstrate how it has improved their experience and productivity, also providing a forum for Q&A.
- 3** Factor AI adoption and proficiency into career advancement paths and technical skill development.
- 4** Work with your platform partner to offer co-managed AI training for specific deployments focusing on the desired outcome, not the AI.

## Here's how implementing AI can help solve three common challenges:



**1** *"We struggle to connect customer journeys across channels, resulting in customers repeating themselves."*

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**2** *"Our agents have to answer lots of simple – and very similar – questions."*

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**3** *"Our agents are fearful of the impact that AI will have on their role."*



→ AI can help unify interaction history, giving agents the context required to deliver seamless resolutions.

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→ Intelligent virtual assistants (IVAs) can automate high-volume inbound queries, freeing agents to focus on the complex, high-value issues that drive stronger customer relationships.

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→ AI-powered coaching – and AI-upskilling – can help give agents the confidence to navigate change and increase agent expertise.

TREND 4

# Fix EX – or Pay Through Churn



# 31%

of agents say they are likely to leave their current contact center role in the next six months

Agent attrition remains one of the most expensive challenges facing contact centers, draining resources through recruitment, training, and lost productivity. It not only brings disruption to “business as usual” but also has serious financial implications. For a 1,000 agent contact center with a **31%** attrition rate, the cost to replace agents could be roughly **\$6.2M**.

*“On average, it costs \$20,000 to replace an agent, but this depends heavily on the level of skills required. Costs will continue to rise due to the need for more professional agents and higher training costs, driven by new technology training and more complex calls.”*

– Alpa Shah, Associate Partner & Global VP, CX Practice, Frost & Sullivan

# 9 out of 10

agents rate schedule flexibility as important, confirming its critical role in how agents assess job opportunities

Providing agents with schedule flexibility is imperative to maintaining and improving agent experience. The traditional contact center model of fixed shifts and inflexible scheduling doesn’t align with the needs of your agents.

This is where AI-powered workforce management becomes a retention tool, not just an operational one. Intelligent forecasting enables accurate staffing level predications, creating the confidence to offer agents control with flexible shift scheduling without compromising service levels.

Agents gain control over their work-life balance, while supervisors are freed from constant schedule negotiations.

## Here's how implementing AI can help solve a common challenge:



*"We have high agent attrition, with agents citing poor work-life balance as a reason for leaving."*



AI-powered forecasting and scheduling – which enables your agents to control their work-life balance – helps lower attrition rates and improves the agent experience.

### Meet Verint TimeFlex Bot

Verint® TimeFlex Bot™ gives agents AI-powered schedule flexibility, transforming scheduling from a pain point to a retention driver. Agents can manage their work-life balance while AI forecasting maintains optimal coverage. This autonomy addresses one of the factors agents cite as most important while helping deliver the outcome of lower attrition.



# Conclusion

## You're Not Buying AI, You're Buying Outcomes

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AI deployment needs to move beyond experimental contact center pilots. Companies that successfully embed AI into agent workflows are seeing business outcomes and generating ROI without eroding customer trust or alienating agents.

You need to be prepared for this fundamental workforce realignment. AI is not going to replace your human agents, but can instead help them by increasing their efficiency and job satisfaction. This is your opportunity to embrace this shift, augmenting workflows to free-up agents to do what they do best: delivering speedy resolutions that build lasting customer relationships.

Verint's AI solutions are designed with this in mind. They empower your agents, creating measurable outcomes in agent experience, contact center capacity, and customer loyalty. They also deliver a win-win for your business: happier, more engaged agents delivering better customer experiences with greater efficiency.

**The future is efficiency and empathy working in unison. For that you need AI enabled agents...and for that you need Verint.**

*“As a contact center leader, you stand at the forefront of AI deployment. In 2026, you need to think, “What workflows can I scale through AI?” It is about targeted AI to help your front-line agents work smarter not harder, making the agent experience better. Even with small deployments you can see massive outcomes. It’s not about AI for the sake of AI. It’s about the outcome you wish to achieve.”*

**Anna Convery**

CMO, Verint



# Research Methodology

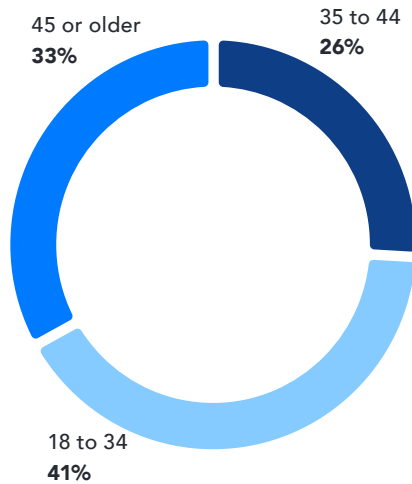
Data was collected from contact center agents via a customized online survey between November 18, 2025, and December 9, 2025.

A total of 1,000 agents from companies with 300 or more agents across five industries were surveyed. The overall margin of error is within  $\pm 3.1\%$  at a 95% confidence level.

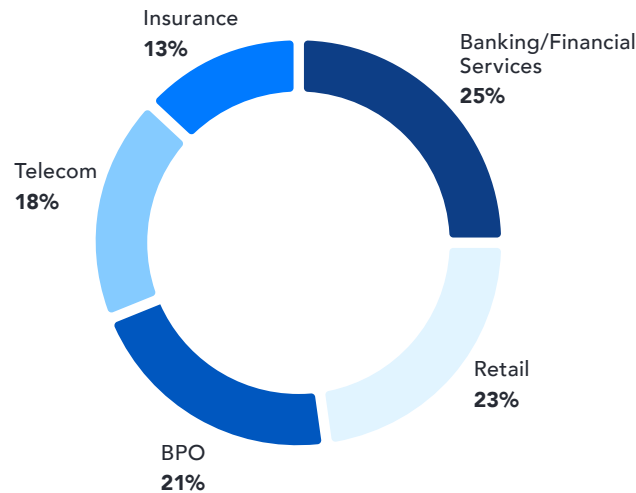
## Participant Profile

- Gender: 68% Female; 29% Male; 3% Other
- Contact Center Size: 41% work in centers with 300 to 999 agents; 59% work in centers with 1,000+ agents
- Age ranges: 41% age 18 to 34; 26% age 35 to 44; 33% age 45 and older.

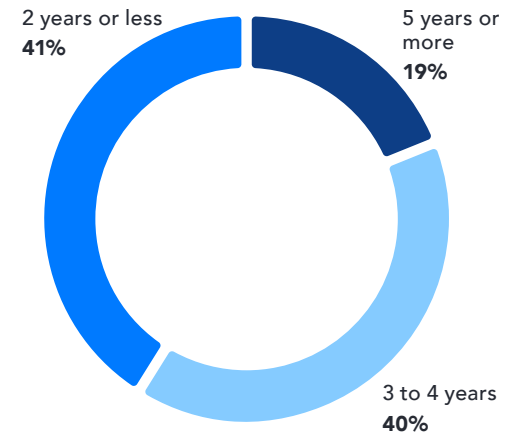
### Age Range



### Industry



### Experience Working as a Contact Center Agent



# About Verint

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Verint® is a leader in Customer Experience (CX) Automation, serving a customer base that includes more than 80 of the Fortune 100 companies. The world's most iconic brands use the Verint CX Automation Platform and our team of AI-powered bots to deliver tangible AI Business Outcomes, Now™ across the enterprise. Verint is uniquely positioned to help brands increase CX Automation with our differentiated, AI-powered platform; driving enhanced customer engagement, increased efficiency and reduced costs across contact centers, back offices and digital channels.

**VERINT**<sup>®</sup>  
**The CX Automation  
Company**<sup>™</sup>

Verint, The CX Automation Company<sup>™</sup>, is proud to be Certified<sup>™</sup> by Great Place To Work<sup>®</sup>.

Learn more at [Verint.com](https://www.verint.com).

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