

How Conversation Intelligence Platforms Can Drive Better Business Outcomes

Maximizing Profitability Through The Power
Of The Contact Center

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Executive Summary

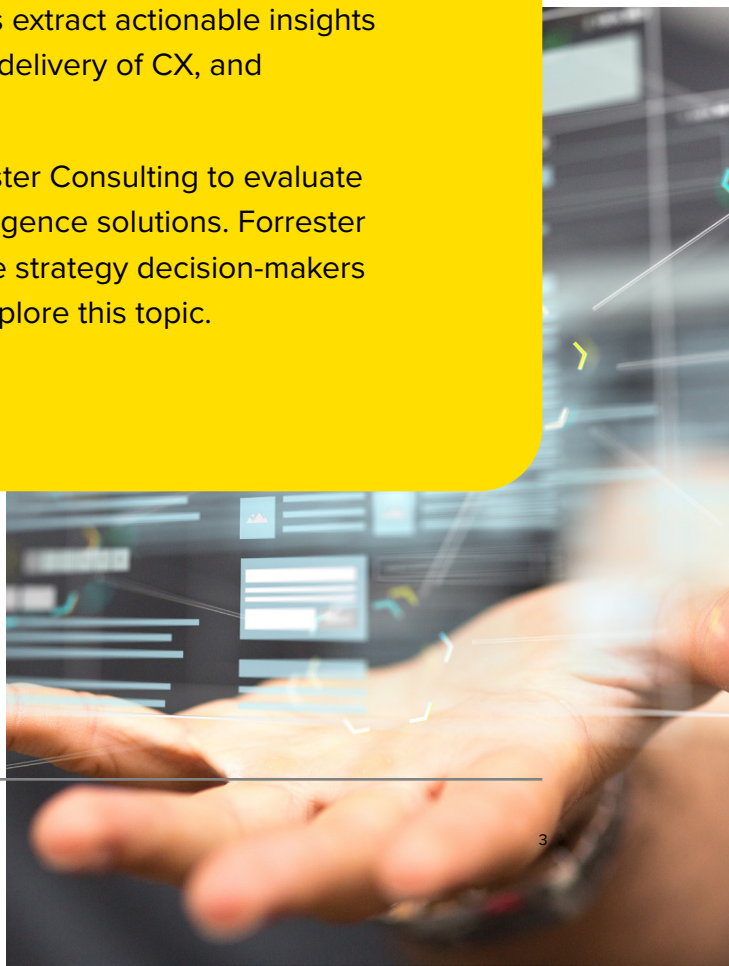
Kira is stuck. As the executive leading customer service at a Fortune 100 company, the current economic instability is the biggest challenge she has faced in her career. Her company's CEO and board keep harping on lowering costs, but she knows indiscriminately slashing costs in the contact center will ultimately hurt customer satisfaction and negatively impact the bottom line.

She knows the contact center is far more than a cost center — good customer service can unlock significant revenue gains. Contact centers with agents who can quickly and correctly address customer questions actually bring in meaningful top-line revenue.¹ For example, by ensuring that their agents can quickly answer customer questions, retailers stand to gain \$1.1 billion in incremental revenue.²

But Kira's executive leadership is too focused on short-term cost savings via automation and cost containment. She knows it's time to evolve past this “automation first, automation only” strategy, which has created islands of automation through myopic, siloed deployments of various point solutions.³ These costly disconnects negate the positive impact great customer service can have on revenue, risking organizations' long-term profitability.

In her search for a solution that will manage costs while increasing revenue, Kira finds hope. Conversation intelligence platforms extract actionable insights from customer conversations, improve employees' delivery of CX, and accelerate firms' revenue engine.⁴

In December 2022, Uniphore commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate the transformational potential of conversation intelligence solutions. Forrester conducted an online survey of 317 customer service strategy decision-makers at organizations in North America and Europe to explore this topic.



Key Findings

Automation silos blockade customer experience (CX) wins. With efforts to better support agents and customers while maintaining low costs, organizations have focused on adopting point solutions, creating islands of automation, and impeding their ability to accurately understand their customers.



The impact of CX fails is felt throughout the organization. While organizations seek customer-centric outcomes, challenges in capturing insights from customer conversations and unifying contact center and enterprise systems impede them. The top reported consequence of these challenges? High costs. Revenue loss is a close second.



Conversation intelligence platforms enable great CX at scale. By implementing an integrated conversation intelligence platform, customer service leaders open the door to overcoming top contact center pain points and achieving their top objectives, including increased revenue performance, stronger CX, and greater agent enablement/employee experience (EX).



Islands Of Automation Fail To Deliver Better CX And Impede Business Results

To increase bottom-line business performance, executives must focus on and enable great customer service.⁵ But, as customers increasingly expect to have great interactions with companies (and will quickly leave to work with a competitor), they rarely get that experience. Why?

Since the advent of automation, companies have prioritized automation over taking a more holistic, strategic approach. By enabling islands of automation, leaders have missed the opportunities that a unified conversation intelligence platform could deliver.

These islands of automation have led to siloed workflows, where delivering a common context is extremely difficult, making the delivery of an omnichannel customer experience based on a well-informed holistic view of the customer impossible.

In surveying 317 customer service strategy decision-makers, we found that:

- **Customer expectations are not being met.** Four in five respondents understand that their customers will leave if they do not deliver a seamless and frictionless omnichannel experience, and 74% realize that poor customer service has a negative impact on company revenue. But avoiding those impacts is a challenge, as companies have myopically focused their customer service strategies on cost reduction, rather than on providing amazing CX.⁶
- **Point solutions and low maturity impede progress.** Implementation has been focused on agent assist, chatbots, and robotic process automation (RPA), while more mature practices that truly understand the customer speech, tone, and sentiment lag (see Figure 1).



65%

of respondents
noted their firm has
automated most CX
touchpoints.



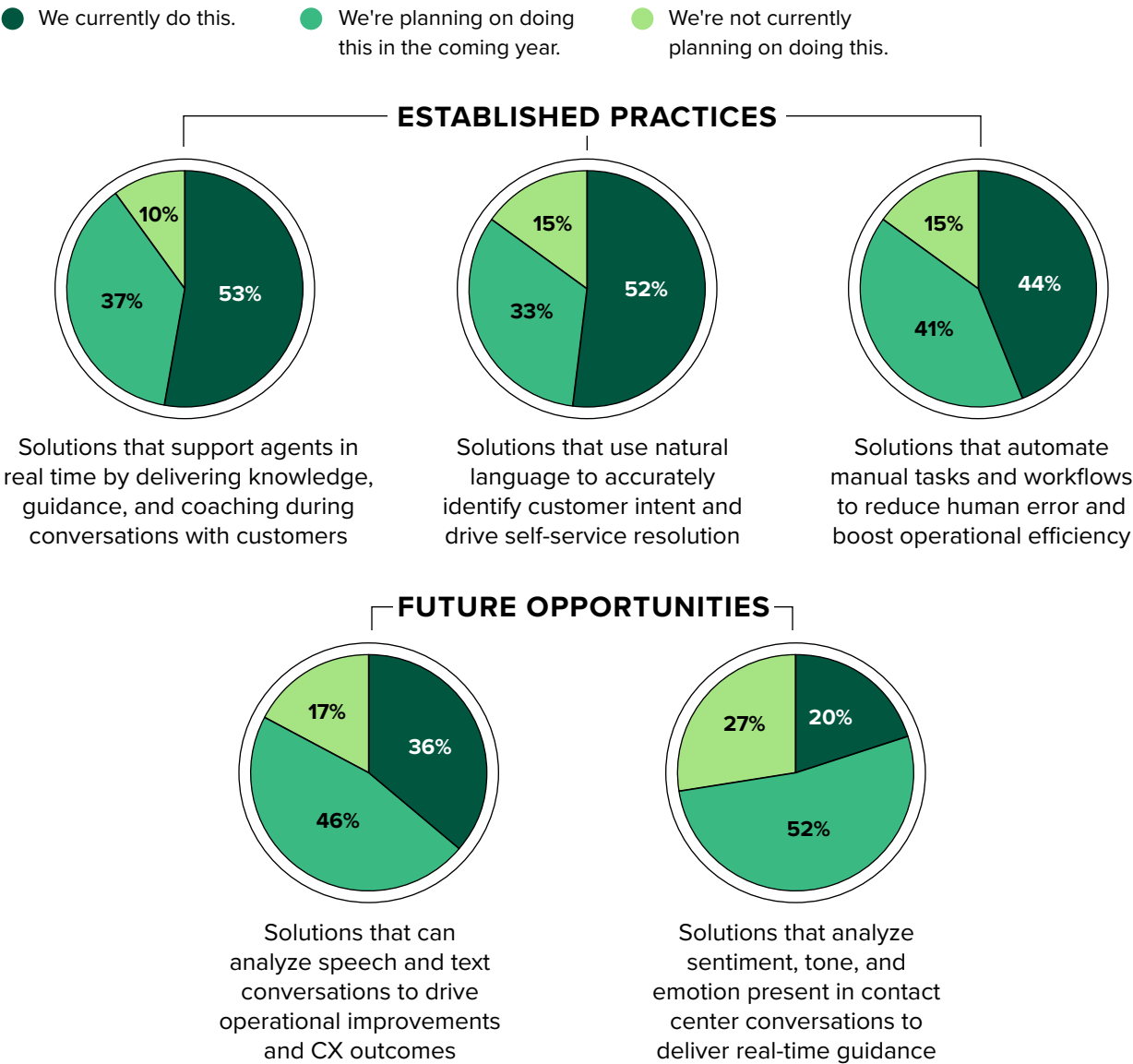
3 in 5

of respondents' firms
have automated most
agent workflows.

Accentuating the obstacles that organizations face, a majority of adopters have opted for point solutions when implementing, which fragments their efforts and renders a holistic view of the customer impossible (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

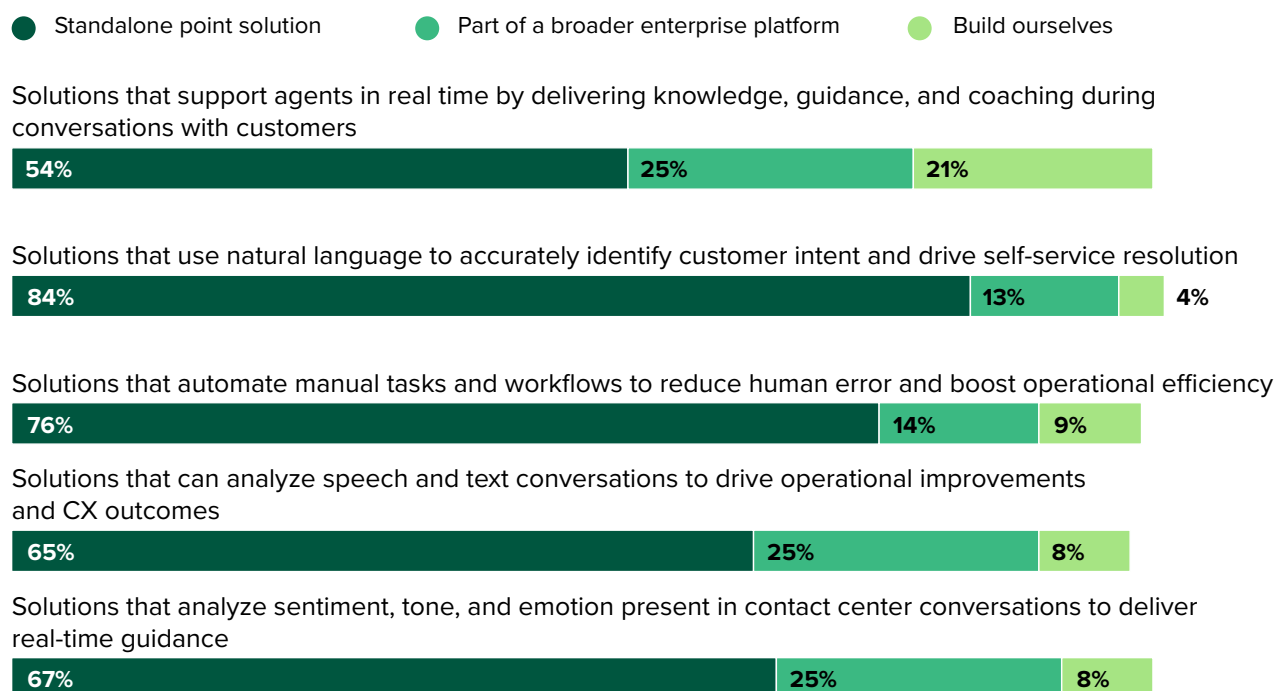
“What is your organization's level of implementation of each of the following contact center solutions?”



Base: 317 global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

Figure 2

“For each of the contact center tools and solutions which you currently have, what best describes your approach?”



Base: Variable global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy

Note: Total percentages may not equal separate values due to rounding.

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

With the reliance on point solutions over a holistic approach, leaders report performance frustration — few are truly satisfied with their contact center tech stacks' ability to deliver. This is unsurprising, as the variety of devices, platforms, and channels — which consumers can use when connecting with companies — has created complex technology ecosystems for organizations to navigate.⁷

Three-quarters of respondents know their current tech solutions fail to deliver a consistent customer experience across channels. Further, over 80% are not fully satisfied with their ability to support their agents when handling more complex customer interactions.

Moving forward, leaders need to understand that, when their agents successfully resolve customers' problems during the first contact, their organization can realize significant revenue gains.⁸

Disparate Automation Of Self-Service And Chatbots Harms CX And Profitability

In the wake of their disparate approach to customer service, leaders are realizing that the lack of integration and coordination of their solutions makes it challenging to gain an accurate and holistic picture of their customers. And they've seen their challenges erode profitability by causing increased costs and revenue loss.

Simultaneously, as organizations have focused on automation first (adopting chatbot and self-service solutions), the critical role that agents play has become more important than ever before. Counter to previous expectations, as the complexity of automation has increased, agents are left to handle the most complex and emotionally charged conversations as chatbots manage all the simple inquiries.⁹ But — at this time — agents are left unsupported by their organizations' practices (see Figure 3).

While agents are a core element of improving CX, 60% of respondents noted their organizations struggle to implement real-time knowledge support for agents. Leaders consequently grapple with managing costs associated with agent inefficiency, decreased agent engagement, and amplified agent attrition.



7 in 10

respondents' firms struggle to unify various investments in AI and automation point solutions.

66%

find it challenging to provide agents with real-time guidance that resolves customer issues quickly.

Figure 3

Top Contact Center Strategy Pain Points



Base: 317 global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy

Note: Showing top 5; percentage represents sum of Rank 1 to Rank 3.

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

These challenges severely impact businesses in the following ways:

- **CX suffers.** One in two decision-makers say their organization faces poor CX due to their challenges, and one in three say their brand reach and influence in the market is hampered. Leaders additionally struggle with low customer satisfaction (CSAT) or Net Promoter ScoreSM (NPS) scores (44%), channel abandonment (43%), customer churn (39%), and exposure to human error (33%) due to challenges.
- **Financial performance declines.** Poor customer service and agent enablement puts organizational revenue at risk.¹⁰ Decision-makers report increased costs are the top business impact of their customer center strategy challenges (54%), closely followed by revenue loss (51%).

DO LEADERS KNOW WHAT IT TAKES TO SUPPORT CUSTOMERS AT SCALE?

While acknowledging their financial struggles and the CX impact of disparate contact center strategy solutions, over half of leaders nevertheless remain optimistic about their ability to deliver customer-centric outcomes at scale. Yet only one in four decision-makers report they would be extremely satisfied with the CX received as a customer of their own company.

There is a clear and significant gap between current practices and what is needed to truly meet every opportunity to serve their customers when and where they need it. Surveyed customer service leaders have a vision of the outcomes they're after, but struggle to connect the dots between their goals and the specific actions needed to achieve them. Vision without action is just a dream — customer service leaders must address this.

As customer service leaders look toward the coming year, they need to understand the breakage points in customer experiences and translate those to suggested actions (see Figure 4).

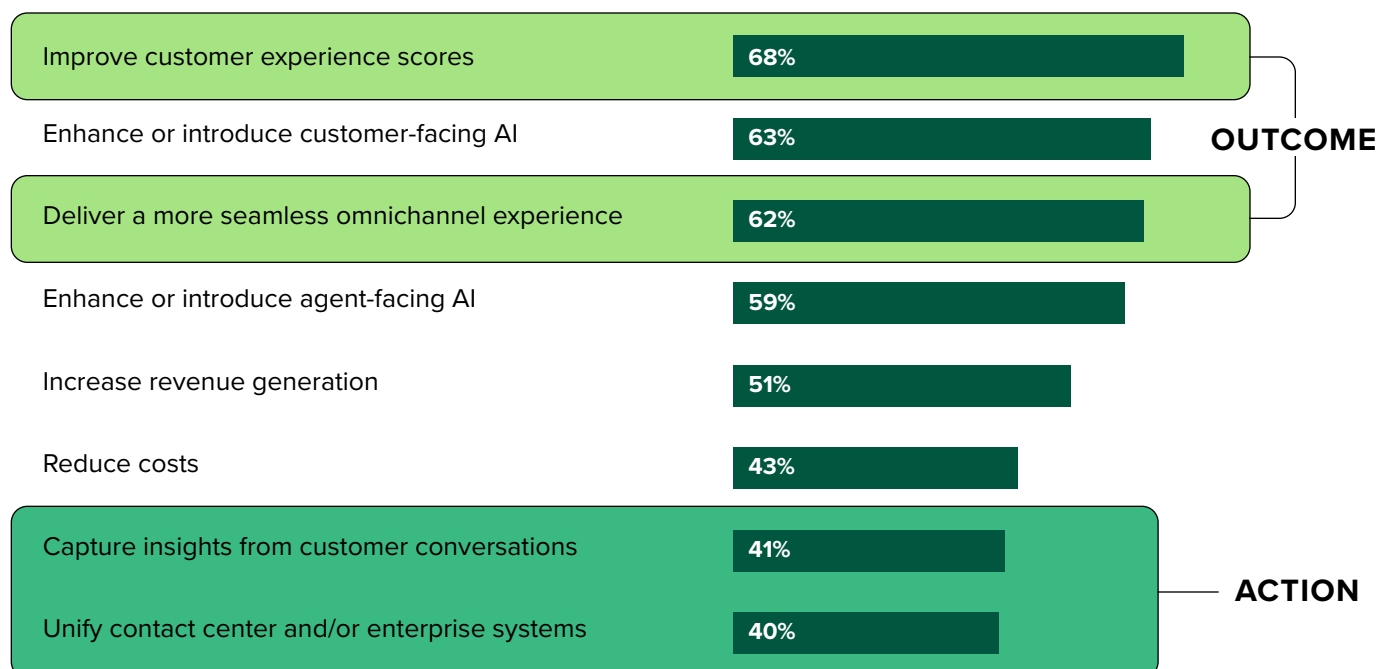


Only 1 in 4

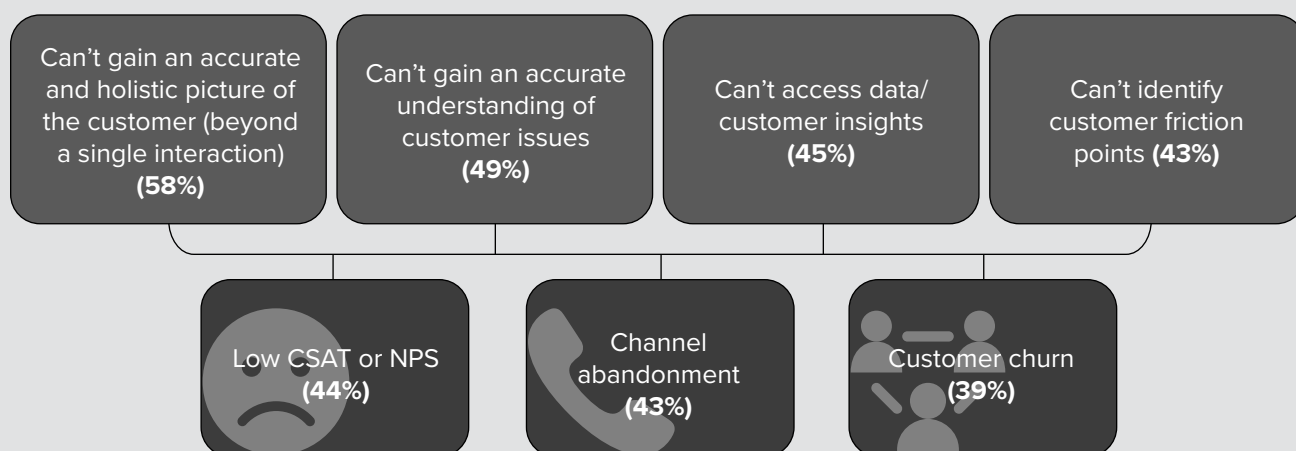
decision-makers report they would be extremely satisfied with the CX received as a customer of their own company.

Figure 4

Top 8 Contact Center Strategies For The Coming Year Focus On Outcomes Over Necessary Action



The Lack Of Action-Based Priorities Will Perpetuate Top Challenges Which Directly Interfere With CX Improvements



Base: 317 global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy
 Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

A Conversation Intelligence Platform Delivers Customer-Centric Outcomes At Scale

Leaders who succeed in protecting their contact center from indiscriminate cost cutting and prioritize delivering quality customer service will realize massive revenue gains.¹¹ Looking towards the coming year of economic instability, surveyed leaders advancing their implementation of contact center tools and solutions are strategically pursuing integrated capabilities over the siloed point solutions of the past (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Planned Technology Investments Are More Likely To Take A Platform Approach This Year

4.8x Solutions that use natural language to accurately identify customer intent and drive self-service resolution (e.g., chatbots, virtual assistants, interactive voice response)

2x Solutions that analyze sentiment, tone, and emotion present in contact center conversations to deliver real-time guidance (e.g., emotion AI)

2.2x Solutions that can analyze speech and text conversations to drive operational improvements and CX outcomes (e.g., capture customer insights, drive agent performance improvements)

3.2x Solutions that automate manual tasks and workflows to reduce human error and boost operational efficiency (e.g., robotic process automation)

2x Solutions that support agents in real time by delivering knowledge, guidance, and coaching during conversations with customers (e.g., agent assist)

Base: Variable global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy who have or plan to have solution

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

Enter conversation intelligence platforms. These platforms empower service teams to deliver customer-centric outcomes at scale through a more complete understanding of their customers (factoring in past engagements, tonal emotion, intent detection, etc.); improved customer service/contact center performance and efficiency (including leveraging capabilities such as knowledge AI, RPA, generative AI, emotion AI, etc.); and improved agent performance via coaching and augmentation of human capabilities.

Eighty-three percent of respondents agree a conversation intelligence platform would provide their agents with the right tools to meet customer engagements.

As of today, only 17% have conversational analytics, conversational AI, and intelligent automation — three beneficial capabilities conversation intelligence platforms can provide. But, if implementation plans succeed, 76% will have all three elements by next year. Every surveyed leader expected a conversation intelligence platform to deliver valuable benefits, anticipating their ability to:

- **Conquer challenges and improve business outcomes.** The top benefits expected from a conversation intelligence platform include 1) higher CX scores (55%), 2) increased revenue (51%), and 3) cost savings/lower total cost of ownership (50%). These expected benefits dismantle top contact center strategy challenges of increased costs, lower revenue, and low CX scores.
- **Unlock technical capabilities to drive performance.** A conversation intelligence platform enhances an organization's ability to leverage natural language processing models across multiple use cases, delivering stronger and more actionable insights, enabling the organization to better deliver on customer expectations.



80%

of respondents agree
their organization would
find a conversation
intelligence platform
highly valuable.

- **Elevate both employee and customer experiences.** Nearly one-third of respondents expected a conversation intelligence platform to significantly increase their organization's CSAT, NPS, and first contact resolution (FCR) scores. EX metrics of employee productivity, employee satisfaction (ESAT), and employee retention are also expected to significantly increase according to one-quarter of respondents.

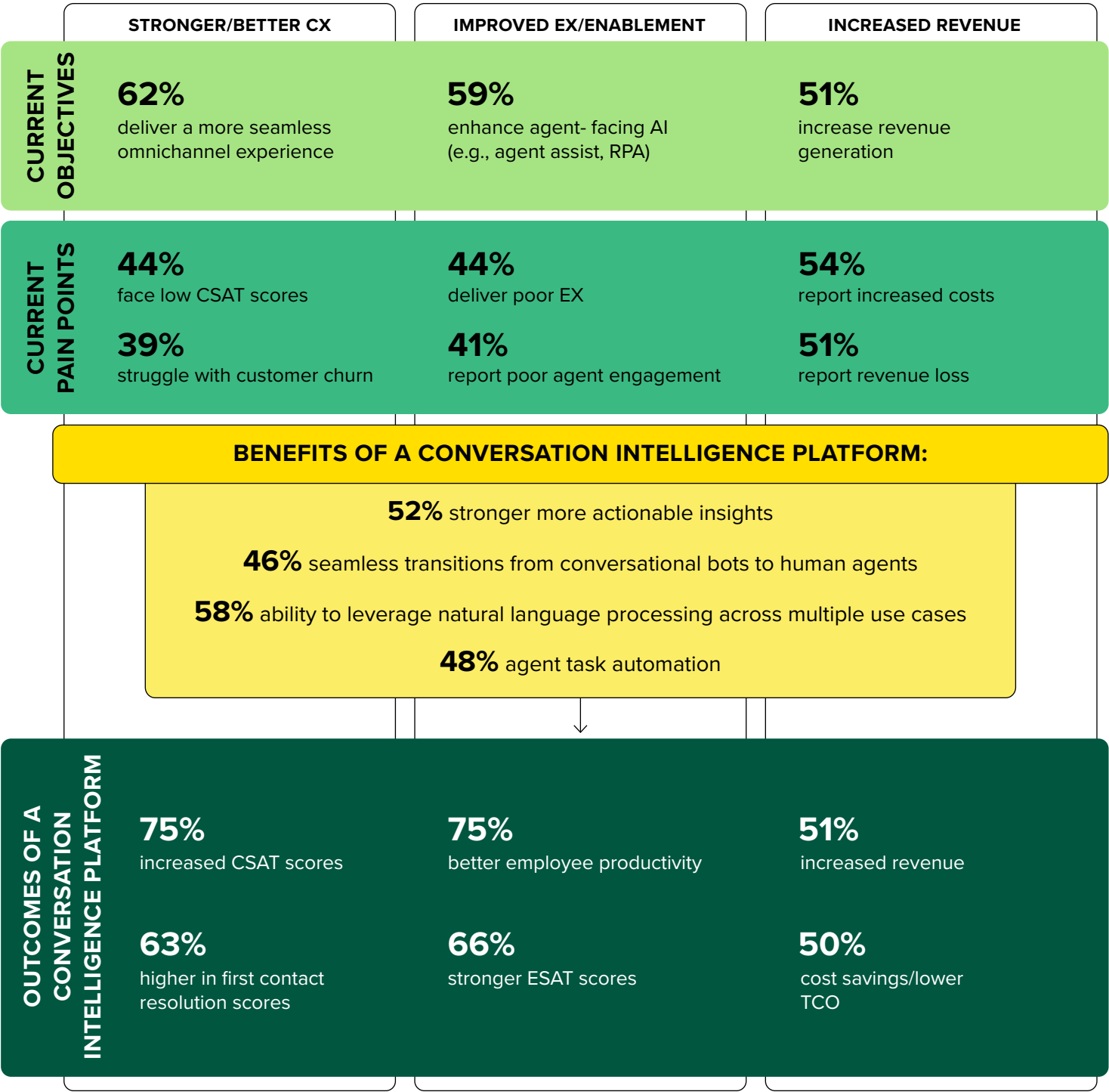
Maximize your firm's CX impact, supercharge your firm's agents, and drive revenue growth with conversation intelligence.



By adopting an integrated conversation intelligence platform, customer service leaders position themselves to move from ideals to actions. Their organization can overcome their contact center challenges and achieve top business objectives like greater customer experience, improved employee experience and agent enablement, and increased revenue through data-driven insights and seamless collaboration between agents and technology (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Implementing An Integrated Intelligence Platform Opens The Door To Overcome Challenges And Achieve Objectives



Base: 317 global decision-makers at the director level and above responsible for their organization's customer service strategy
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Uniphore, January 2023

Key Recommendations

A conversation intelligence platform positions organizations to overcome top challenges, achieve customer-centric outcomes, advance organizational performance through technical capabilities, and empower agents.

Forrester's in-depth survey of 317 customer service strategy decision-makers about their contact center strategies and opportunities yielded several important recommendations:

Seek augmentation over automation.

Contact centers have historically overinvested in containment strategies, and further investments there can yield diminishing returns. To prepare for what's next, look for solutions that augment contact center employees to drive cost savings beyond containment.

Treat customer service as a CX differentiator — because it is.

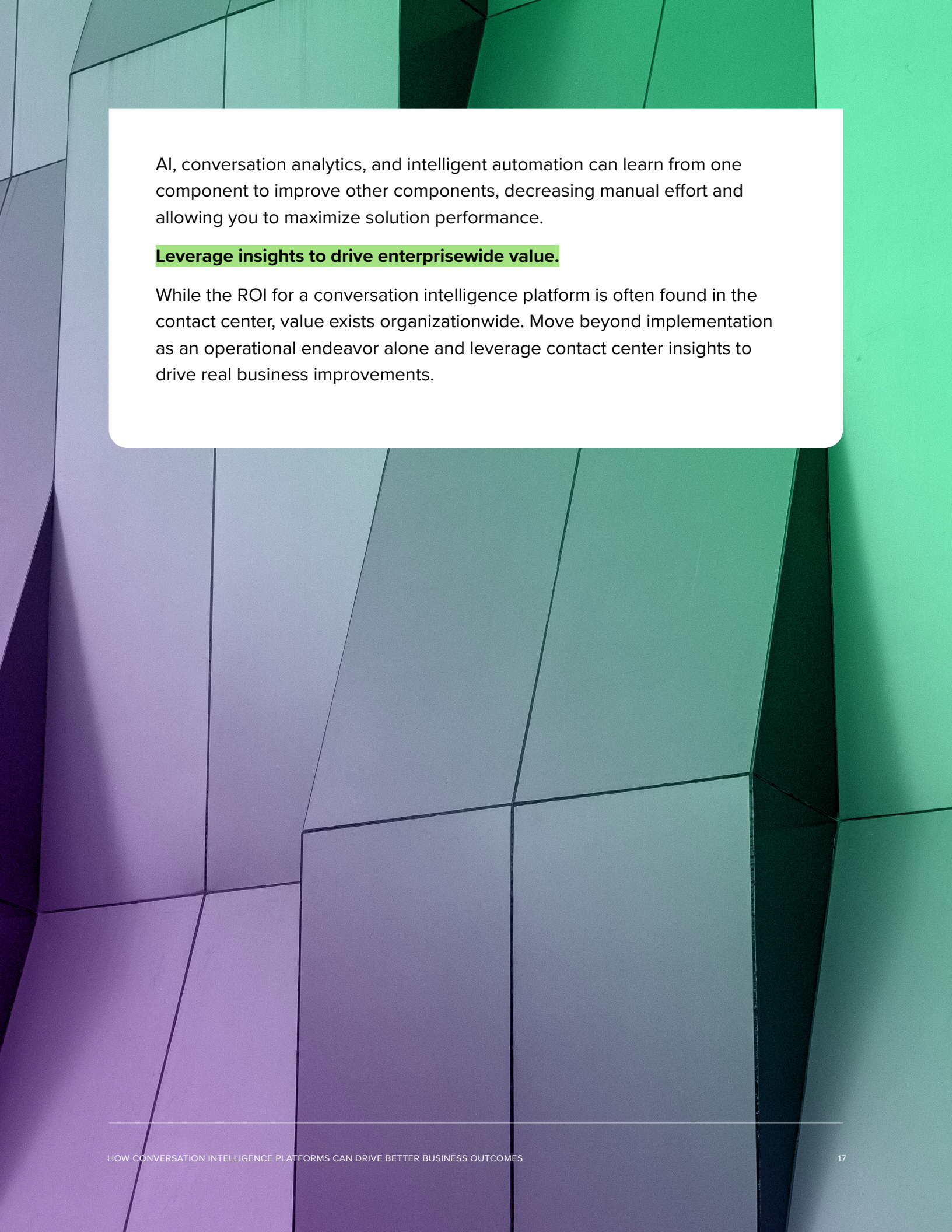
We know that the agent-customer touchpoint is critical to driving CX improvements. Leverage a conversation intelligence platform to unlock the insights required to tap into that value stream.

Dig deeper and then dig a bit more.

Without a clear view into your customers' conversations, it can be difficult (or impossible) to understand what will move the needle on top business priorities. Conversation intelligence solutions can connect the dots between the customer service actions that drive customer-centric outcomes.

Leverage the full power of platforms to improve customer understanding and service.

Use a platform approach to ensure you are getting a full understanding of your firm's customers and can act on those insights. Brands that deploy point solutions tend to struggle to extract the appropriate value from their investments. A conversation intelligence platform that includes conversational



AI, conversation analytics, and intelligent automation can learn from one component to improve other components, decreasing manual effort and allowing you to maximize solution performance.

Leverage insights to drive enterprisewide value.

While the ROI for a conversation intelligence platform is often found in the contact center, value exists organizationwide. Move beyond implementation as an operational endeavor alone and leverage contact center insights to drive real business improvements.

Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online survey of 317 customer service strategy decision-makers at organizations in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom to evaluate contact center strategies and challenges with tools, solutions, customer experience, and employee experience. Respondents were offered a small incentive as a thank-you for time spent on the survey. The study began in December 2022 and was completed in January 2023.

Appendix B: Demographics/Data

COUNTRIES		INDUSTRIES		TITLE	
United States	48%	Retail	17%	Director	70%
Canada	19%	Tech and/or tech services	17%	Vice president	23%
United Kingdom	9%	Telecommunication services	17%	C-level	6%
France	8%	Travel and hospitality	16%	DEPARTMENT	
Germany	8%	Financial services and/or insurance	16%	Customer experience	38%
Spain	8%	Healthcare	16%	IT	37%
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES		NUMBER OF AGENTS IN CALL CENTER		Customer service/contact center	25%
500 to 999 employees	15%	250 to 299 agents	32%	ANNUAL REVENUE	
1,000 to 4,999 employees	36%	300 to 349 agents	24%	\$1M to \$99M	2%
5,000 to 19,999 employees	31%	350 to 499 agents	13%	\$100M to \$199M	6%
20,000 or more employees	19%	500 or more agents	31%	\$200M to \$299M	12%
CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY		BUSINESS MODEL		\$300M to \$399M	12%
Final decision-maker	6%	B2B and B2C	70%	\$400M to \$499M	20%
Part of a team making decisions	61%	B2C only	30%	\$500M to \$1B	17%
Influence decisions	33%			\$1B to \$5B	19%
				>\$5B	12%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Appendix C: Supplemental Material

RELATED FORRESTER RESEARCH

[“Money On The Table: Proof That Customer Service Drives Revenue,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., January 30, 2023.

Appendix D: Endnotes

¹ Source: [“Money On The Table: Proof That Customer Service Drives Revenue,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., January 30, 2023.

² Ibid.

³ Source: [“Executive Guide: Automation,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., April 20, 2022.

⁴ Source: [“Now Tech: Conversation Intelligence, Q2 2021,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., June 3, 2021.

⁵ Source: [“Money On The Table: Proof That Customer Service Drives Revenue,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., January 30, 2023.

⁶ Source: [“The Three Customer Service Megatrends In 2022,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., March 15, 2022.

⁷ Source: [“The 3D Connected Consumer In 2022: US,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., October 28, 2022.

⁸ Source: [“Money On The Table: Proof That Customer Service Drives Revenue,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., January 30, 2023.

⁹ Source: Christina McAllister, [“Cure The Automation Hangover In Customer Service,”](#) Forrester Blogs.

¹⁰ Source: [“Money On The Table: Proof That Customer Service Drives Revenue,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., January 30, 2023.

¹¹ Ibid.



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