Gartner

Top Priorities for Customer Service Leaders in 2024

Future-forward insights to meet challenges and drive success

Top priorities for customer service leaders in 2024

We interviewed and surveyed more than 250 customer service leaders across all major industries to identify their most pressing priorities and key challenges for 2024. Improving the customer experience was the most commonly cited priority, followed by employing analytics for voice of the customer (VoC) and improving operations.

01
Improve customer experience
86%*

02
Employ analytics to understand VoC
70%*

03
Improve operations
69%*

04
Improve customer retention
65%

05
Employ analytics to support operations efficiency
64%

06
Improve customer loyalty
64%

07
Improve self-service adoption
64%

08
Improve self-service success/ containment
64%

09
Enable employees with technology
62%

10
Improve employee productivity
61%

*Percentage of respondents who indicated this was a significant priority
Source: Gartner

Achieving priorities: 3 key areas of focus for 2024

Customer service and support leaders' priorities for 2024 reflect their role in guiding what needs to be accomplished using technology and how to accomplish it. They describe 2024 as a year to make progress in three key areas:

Self-service

Given how many younger customers will simply give up if they can't resolve an issue on their own, forward-looking leaders are evolving self-service strategy to provide more engagement and problem-solving resources.

GenAI

Despite concerns about limited impact and unknown risks, organizations will adopt an incremental approach to implementing employee-facing GenAI use cases, particularly GenAI chatbots that assist representatives.

Customer journey analytics (CJA)

Organizations will gain a comprehensive understanding of customer needs through end-to-end customer journeys, including by investing in the CJA market.

Common challenge for service leaders

Self-service

Twenty-eight percent of all customers reported they are most likely to quit trying to solve a problem with a product or service, rather than reach out to an agent for help, if they cannot find a solution themselves online.

Thirty-eight percent of millennial and Gen Z customers responding to our survey expressed a "self-service or no service" mindset. As the younger generations make up an increasingly larger proportion of the customer base, this trend is becoming a more significant challenge for organizations that are not actively building up their self-service capabilities.

Generational differences in customer service abandonment

	If can't find the answer myself online	If I call and have to wait on hold for too long	If I can't find an answer from the first person I reach	If I can't find an answer after contacting multiple people
Gen Z (n = 677)	39%	24%	6%	31%
Millennials (n = 2,129)	38%	26%	6%	30%
Gen X (n = 1,676)	28%	28%	5%	39%
Baby Boomers (n = 1,453)	11%	28%	6%	55%

n = varies
Q. When are you most likely to give up solving a problem you have with a product or service?
Source: 2023 Gartner State of the Customer Survey

Recommended action

Tool to get started:
Self-Service Experience Assessment

Self-service

Identify common issues that customers don't want to contact an agent about and create resources to help customers resolve those issues in self-service by:

- Building self-service options to promote engagement, not just deflect calls

- Proactively connecting customers to agents for key issue types

- Creating a seamless transition from self-service to assisted service

Customer self-service foundational capabilities

Source: Gartner

Common challenge for service leaders

GenAI

Among those who reported having familiarity with their enterprise's GenAI strategy, 83% say that their enterprises either have plans to invest in GenAI or have done so already.

Moreover, 61% of these service and support leaders feel some or a lot of pressure from executives in their enterprise to adopt GenAI specifically within their function, yet they are unsure of the impact of GenAI use cases.

Percentage of service leaders who expect each GenAI use case will have a high impact on their organization over the next 12-18 months

Use case	Percentage
Virtual customer assistant	48%
Virtual agent assistant	36%
Content generation	28%
Call summarization	28%
Virtual channel assistant	24%
Real-time speech/text translation	24%
Content analytics	21%
Content utility	8%
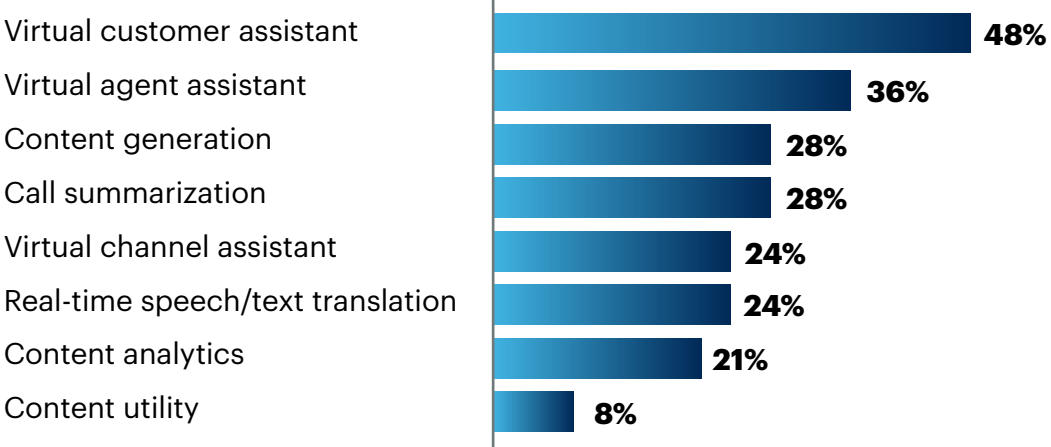
n = 90-129
Q. Considering potential revenue, cost savings, or productivity improvements overall, how much impact do you believe the following generative AI applications will have on your organization over the next 12-18 months?
Source: 2024 Gartner Customer Service and Support Priorities Survey

Recommended action

GenAI

Customer service and support leaders should develop an incremental GenAI strategy by:

- Prioritizing GenAI use cases in the short to midterm to help agents be more efficient, rather than pursuing customer-facing use cases

- Relying on vendors to shoulder the bulk of risk associated with developing the technology

- Building a strategic roadmap that progresses from internal use cases to customer-facing ones

Example GenAI roadmap for service and support

Now	Soon	Future
Public models	Pretrained models Primarily internal use cases	Custom models Primarily external use cases

Soon: Generate content, Categorize Cases, Summarize Cases, Recommend solutions to agent, Draft articles

Future: Service chatbot, Success chatbot, Technical chatbot, Generate training, ?

Now: Experimentation
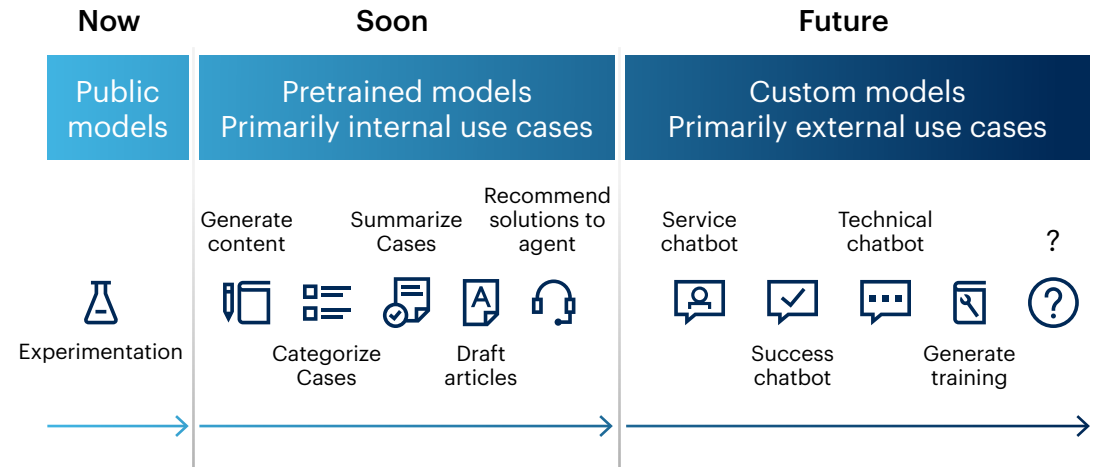
Source: Gartner

Common challenge for service leaders

Customer journey analytics

Service organizations struggle to gain a comprehensive understanding of customer needs throughout the full customer journey, hindering their ability to improve the customer experience.

Fifty-six percent of service leaders indicate that they plan to invest in the CJA market in the next 12 to 18 months. Of those who say they'll be investing, a full 45% indicate that they will be investing in this market for the first time.

CJA sees high number of new investments, outpaced only by conversational AI
Percentage of respondents

■ New Investment   ■ Ongoing Investment

	New Investment	Ongoing Investment
Conversational AI	69%	27%
Customer journey analytics	45%	50%
Digital customer service	31%	67%
Workforce engagement management	29%	67%
Contact center as a service	28%	70%
Knowledge management for customer service	28%	68%
CRM customer engagement center	26%	70%
Voice of the customer	24%	72%
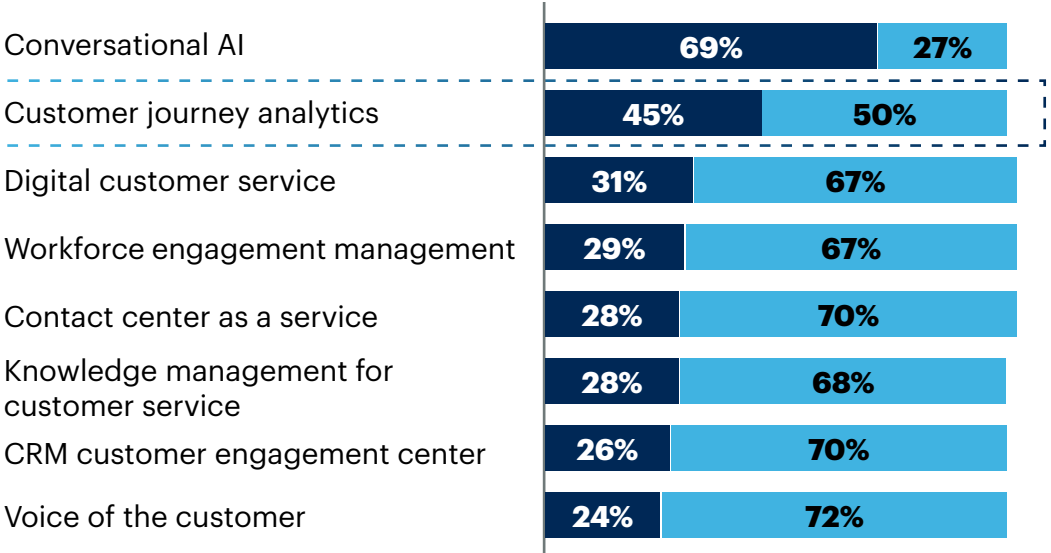
n = 76-154
Q. For each of the markets in which you plan to have investments, will those investments be new or will you be continuing ongoing investments?
Source: 2024 Gartner Customer Service and Support Priorities Survey
Note: Respondents were only asked to specify whether their investment would be new or ongoing if they had previously indicated that they would have an investment in that market within the next 12-18 months. "Don't know" responses not shown.

Recommended action

Customer journey analytics

Collaborate with people across your enterprise to use CJA to gain a more holistic understanding of what customers need and create a seamless customer journey by:

- Capturing the customer's intent and actions in self-service and other channels

- Providing clear directions about where they should go next for more support

- Actively guiding the transition between self-service and assisted service and making seamless transitions part of your messaging to customers

5 steps to create horizontal customer experiences

Web Chatbot Live chat IVR Agent

1. Build a cross-functional team
2. Create shared priorities and performance metrics
3. Implement shared technology
4. Create rep engagement
5. Align on shared budget
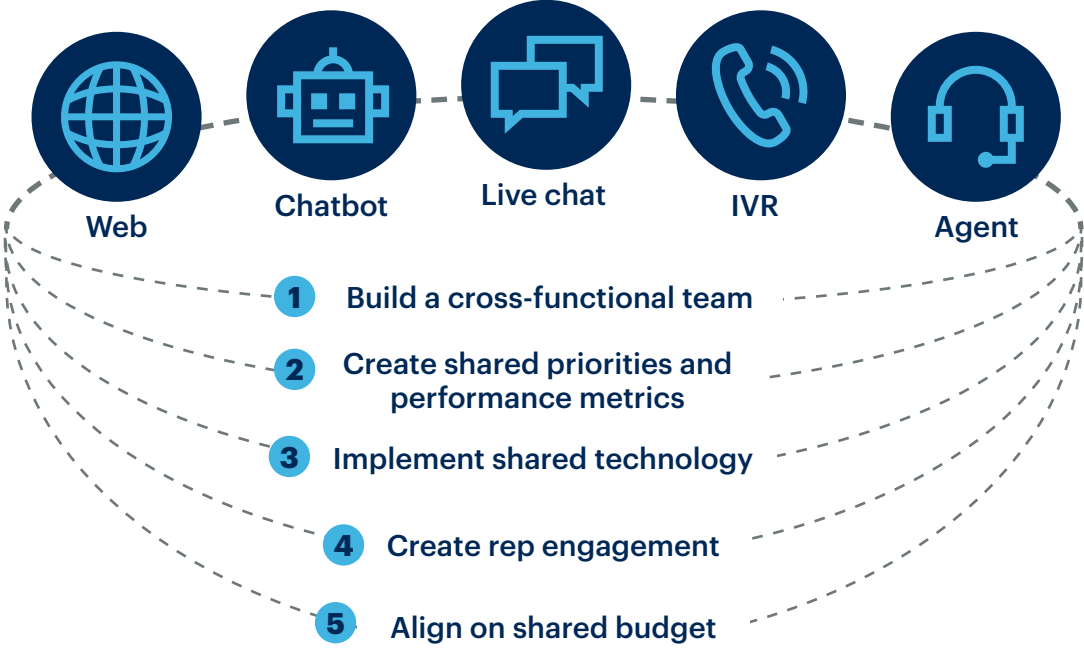
Source: Gartner

How Gartner helps customer service leaders adapt and stay ahead

As customer preferences and technology evolves, service and support leaders need to understand how to think about the future. Gartner can help service and support leaders understand what problems self-service will solve, what impact GenAI will have and what role they'll play in fostering holistic customer journeys.

- Diagnostics and benchmarks
- Guides and toolkits
- Expert inquiry
- Expert research
- Live events
- Peer connections
- Case studies and best practices
- Webinars and online learning events
- Document reviews

How Gartner supports you as a client

Diagnose current state

Assess the current state of your service function against objective, peer-based performance standards using Gartner Customer Service and Support Score.

Deploy The Self-Service Experience Assessment to benchmark your organization's self-service experience.

Develop your plan

Learn how to **Evolve Self-Service for the Next Generation of Customers.**

Prepare for AI by **Overcoming 3 Pitfalls When Implementing GenAI in Customer Service.**

Realize the benefits of **Customer Journey Analytics and Orchestration.**

Execute and drive change

Schedule an inquiry with a Gartner expert to discuss:

- How can I overcome the obstacles standing in the way of my organization's self-service success?
- What should be my first GenAI use case?
- How can we secure funding for much-needed technology investments?

*Bolded resources are available for clients only.

Actionable, objective insight

Explore these additional complimentary resources and tools for customer service & support leaders:

Tool

Gartner Customer Service & Support Score

Evaluate the effectiveness of your customer service and support function using objective, peer-based performance standards.

Learn More

Report

The 2024 Customer Service Leadership Vision

Discover how to overcome three major challenges and drive customer engagement and growth in 2024 and beyond.

Download Now

eBook

Transform Your Customer Service Experience With Channel Alignment

Learn how to create horizontal customer journeys that will help you improve your customer service experience.

Download eBook

Webinar

The Gartner 2024 Top Strategic Priorities for Customer Service Leaders

Gain valuable insights into key challenges and priorities for service and support leaders in the upcoming year.

Watch Now

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