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# 2025 - 2026 Customer Contact Benchmarking Report

by CMP Research Team

10-Minute Read

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## Introduction

The customer contact and CX landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by evolving customer expectations, technological advancements, and the need for operational efficiency. To stay ahead, organizations must prioritize automation, self-service adoption, customer analytics, and AI-driven solutions.

To gain deeper insights into the most pressing challenges and strategic investments, CMP Research conducted its annual **2025 - 2026 Customer Contact Executive Benchmarking Report**. This report captures executive priorities, investment trends, and operational challenges that are shaping the future of customer experience (CX) and customer contact across various industries.

## Automation and Customer Self-Service are Most Urgent

As customer expectations continue to evolve, organizations are accelerating their investment in automation and self-service technologies to enhance efficiency, improve customer experiences, and reduce operational costs. AI-driven solutions are increasingly being deployed to handle routine interactions, allowing agents to focus on more complex issues. The following insights highlight the key areas where automation and self-service are taking precedence:

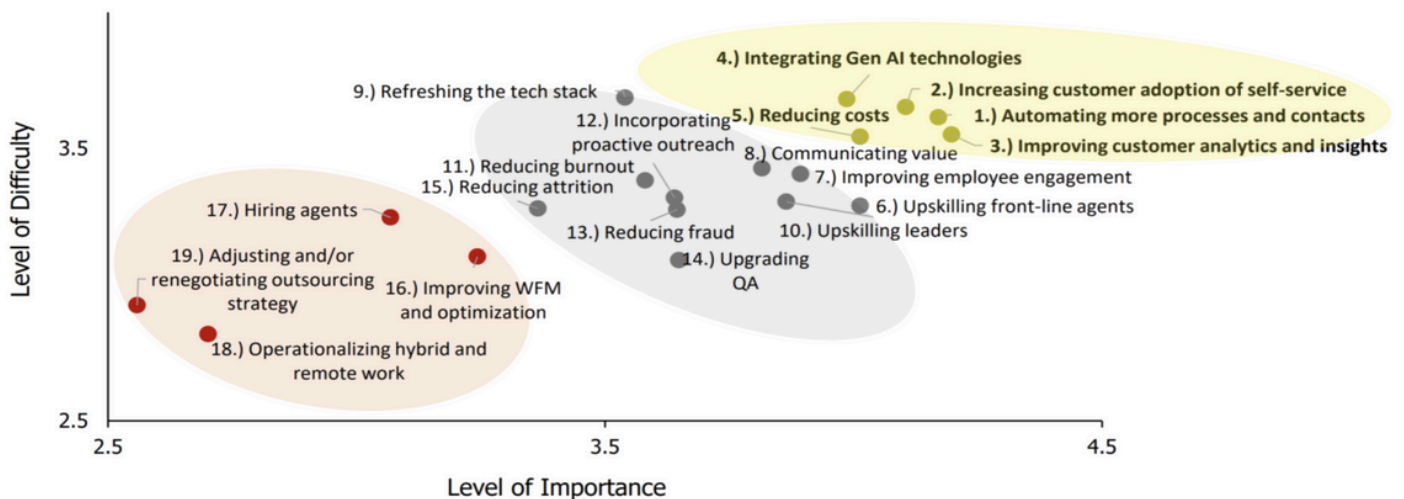
- **74% of leaders** plan to invest in **automation using AI**.
- More than **half** of respondents are prioritizing AI-driven **self-service chatbots, real-time agent assist tools, and customer analytics solutions**.
- **Omnichannel engagement, self-service conversational IVR, and knowledge management systems** are among top investments in the customer contact and CX technology stack.

## Strategic Priorities for 2025-2026

In response to ongoing industry shifts, customer contact leaders are concentrating on strategies that enhance efficiency, elevate customer interactions, and strengthen workforce capabilities. The 2025-2026 priorities emphasize a data-driven approach, with automation, AI integration, and self-service adoption playing pivotal roles in shaping the future of customer contact. Below are the key strategic priorities shaping the future of customer contact:

- **Automating more processes** has emerged as a top priority for 2025-2026, reflecting a shift toward greater efficiency and scalability in customer contact operations.
- Leaders are also focused on **increasing customer adoption of self-service, improving customer analytics and insights, integrating Gen AI technologies, and reducing costs.**
- **Upskilling front-line agents, improving employee engagement, and communicating value** are also important areas of focus.

**Level of Importance vs. Difficulty to Solve**  
Average Scores



n = 67-76 customer contact leaders  
Source: CMP Research, 2025 Priorities in Customer Contact Survey

## Prioritization Given Limited Resources

While some strategic initiatives are recognized as high-priority, they often come with significant execution challenges. Customer contact leaders must navigate the trade-off between investing in high-impact areas and overcoming operational complexities. The following insights highlight the most critical priorities that executives consider both essential and difficult to implement.

- While automation and AI integration rank high in **importance**, they also present significant **implementation challenges**.
- **Refreshing the tech stack, integrating Gen AI technologies, and increasing customer adoption of self-service** have the highest difficulty rating among executive priorities.

## Shifting Priorities from 2024 to 2025-2026

The rankings of key priorities have shifted slightly from the previous year, reflecting changes in business needs and the evolution of technology adoption. While some priorities have remained consistent, others have risen or fallen in importance based on executive focus. Below are the specific shifts observed from 2024 to the next two years:

- **Increasing customer adoption of self-service remained a consistent priority:** As in 2024, executives continue to focus on driving higher adoption rates of self-service tools, recognizing their role in enhancing efficiency and customer experience.
- **Integrating Gen AI technologies dropped in ranking:** While still a priority, the urgency around implementing Generative AI has declined slightly as organizations shift their attention toward more immediate automation and optimization efforts.
- **Reducing costs moved up in priority:** Cost reduction has gained more executive attention, reflecting the growing need to balance investment in new technology with financial sustainability.
- **Refreshing the tech stack and workforce optimization gained focus:** As companies seek to modernize their contact centers, upgrading technology infrastructure and refining workforce strategies have become more pressing concerns. In 2025-2026, the emphasis has shifted to integrating AI solutions into workflows and ensuring measurable business impact.

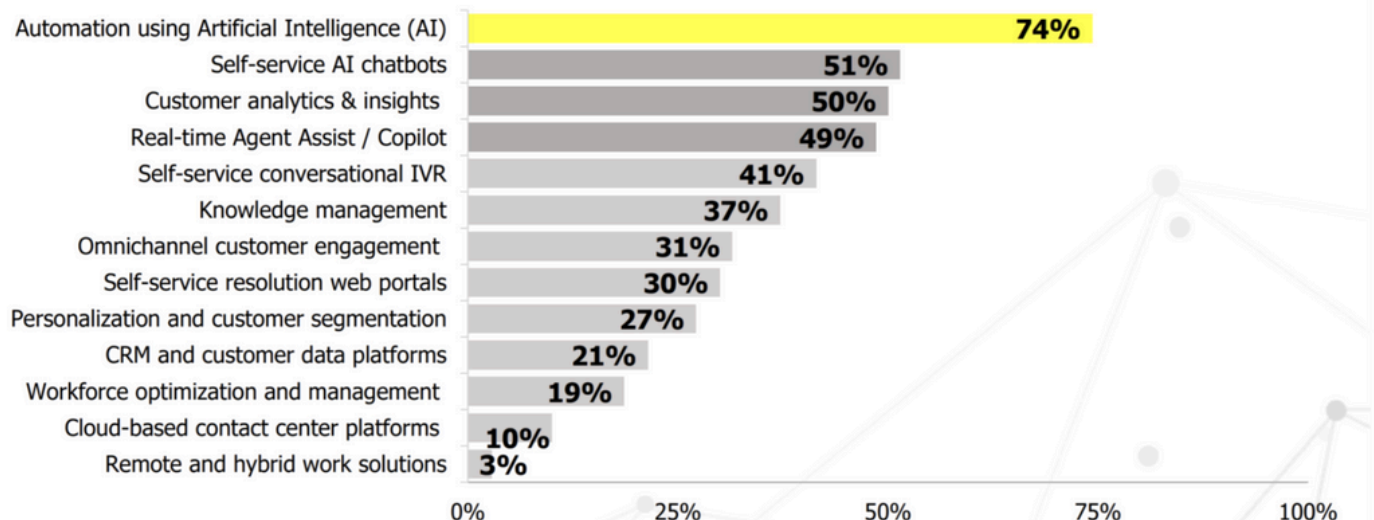
## Technology Investment Trends for 2025-2026

As organizations refine their customer contact strategies, investment trends reflect a strong emphasis on automation, AI integration, and operational efficiency. The following insights highlight where executives are allocating resources to drive transformation, with percentages indicating the scale of investment:

- **Automation remains the top investment area**, with **74% of leaders** prioritizing AI-driven solutions to enhance efficiency and reduce manual workloads.
- **Self-service AI chatbots and real-time agent assist tools continue to gain traction**, with **51%** of customer contact leaders investing in self-service chatbots and **49%** in real-time agent assist tools to improve customer interactions and reduce agent strain.
- **Customer analytics and insights have become a core focus**, with **50%** of executives prioritizing investment in these areas to enhance personalization and service quality.

### Top Investment Priorities for Technology in 2025-2026.

*Percentage of Leaders*



n = 70 customer contact leaders  
Source: CMP Research, 2025 Priorities in Customer Contact Survey

## Summary

As the customer contact and CX industry continues to evolve, organizations must remain agile in adopting new technologies and refining their operational strategies. While AI and automation remain at the forefront, the ability to balance technology with human expertise will be key to achieving long-term success. Leaders must navigate the challenges of implementation while keeping customer experience, workforce engagement, and cost efficiency at the center of their transformation efforts.

## About CMP Research

Access unlimited advisory support, diagnostic tools, independent quantitative and qualitative research, data-driven analysis, and executive networking from the organization that powers Customer Contact Week (CCW).

To learn more about how CMP Research can support your organization's customer contact strategy, [view our service overview](#).

