ResultsCX

SupportPredict

Brands Without Effective Digital CX Risk Irrelevance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Is Driving CX Transformation Across Industries

The world has changed its customer experience expectations

The way consumers shop, buy, and engage with brands changed irreversibly in 2020. As businesses around the world navigated the global COVID-19 pandemic, some saw operations grind to a halt, while those connected to healthcare and other essential services accommodated drastic changes. As recovery occurred in unequal waves across global regions and industry verticals, changes in market-driving consumer behavior became apparent.

In the United States, pent-up consumer demand, ongoing federal stimulus measures, and a rise in vaccinations led many businesses to accelerate in-person reopening through 2021. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)[1], the U.S. economy was expected to grow 6.9% in 2021, an impressive increase compared to the 3.5% contraction of 2020. The upward trend has savvy organizations upgrading operations to handle increased demand from business partners and customers.

More spending means customers once again need support for new products and services being purchased—whether in retail, technology, media and entertainment, travel, financial services, or even utilities. Customer experience (CX) operations are again in full force, but not only to deliver support for purchased items and services. For example, even with increased mitigation measures for COVID-19 in place, millions of people remain focused on health issues, which means customer service teams are mobilizing to get their customers the answers they need to all sorts of healthcare-related questions.

CX management strategy entered uncharted territory during COVID-19. Until the on-again, off-again disruptions finally end, consumer sophistication will continue to evolve at a historic speed. Two certainties brands can bank on, however, are the importance of consumer access and how brand reputation hinges more than ever on meeting high customer experience expectations.

This paper examines the rapidly evolving world of customer support and CX and explains how advanced and sophisticated technologies, such as AI and chatbots, are helping to reshape digital CX strategies for many brands.

## The changing landscape of CX includes more remote operations

Companies across all verticals were advancing their digital CX strategies before COVID-19, but the pandemic has reinforced the need to rethink customer service. Almost overnight, an intensified scrutiny of the customer journey, guided by satisfaction metrics to uncover exactly what customers want, has helped brands to identify how best to serve customers.

In addition to their efforts to match overall customer expectations, brands are amplifying their digital CX capabilities for agents fielding calls from work-at-home locations. The pandemic led many brands to adopt or expedite work-at-home plans for agents. According to data from the Everest Group, approximately 58% of executives say they will continue work-from-home options for their CX agents. Likewise, nearly 75% of executives believe more automation is the key to accomplishing better customer experience.[2]
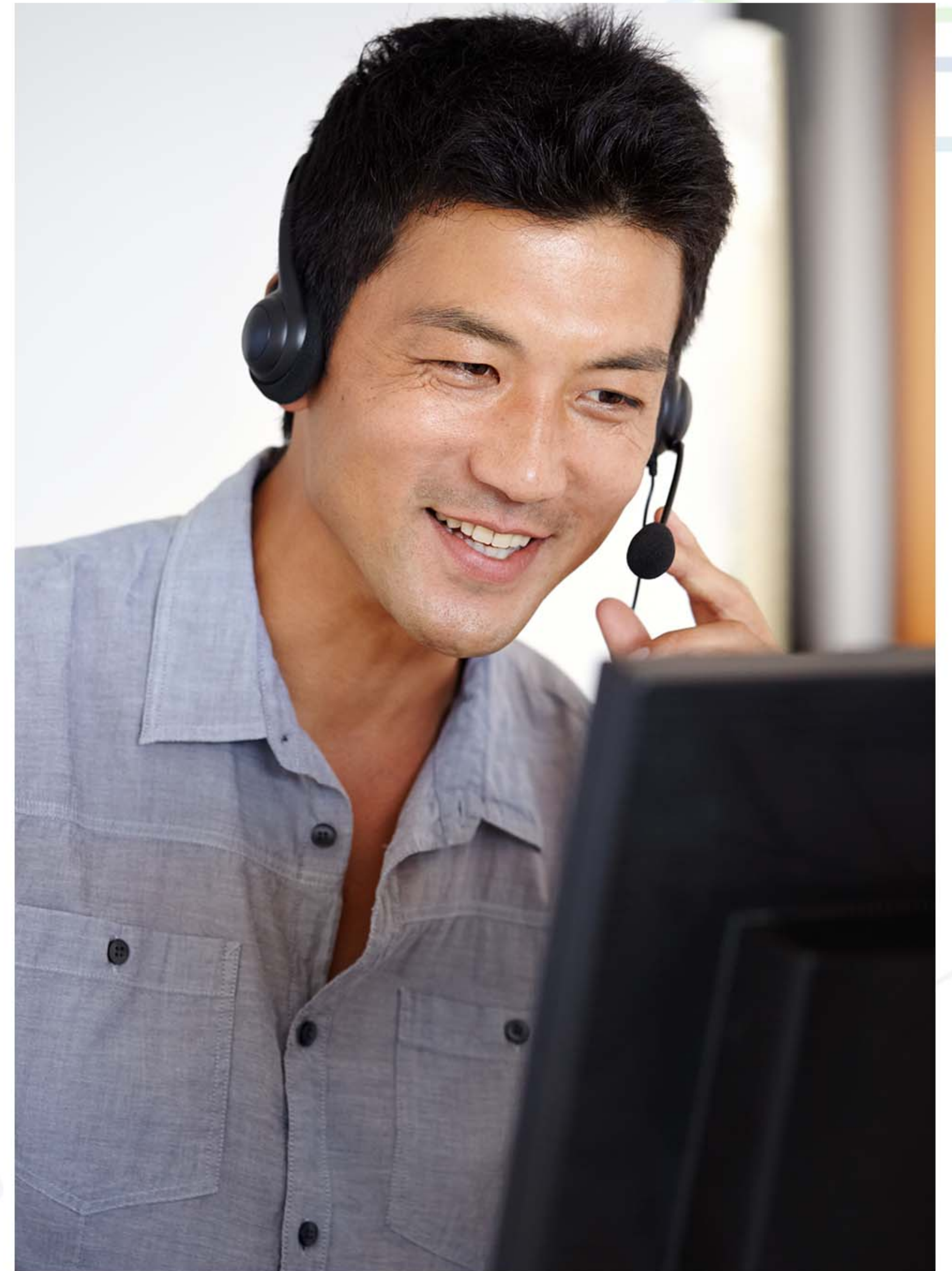
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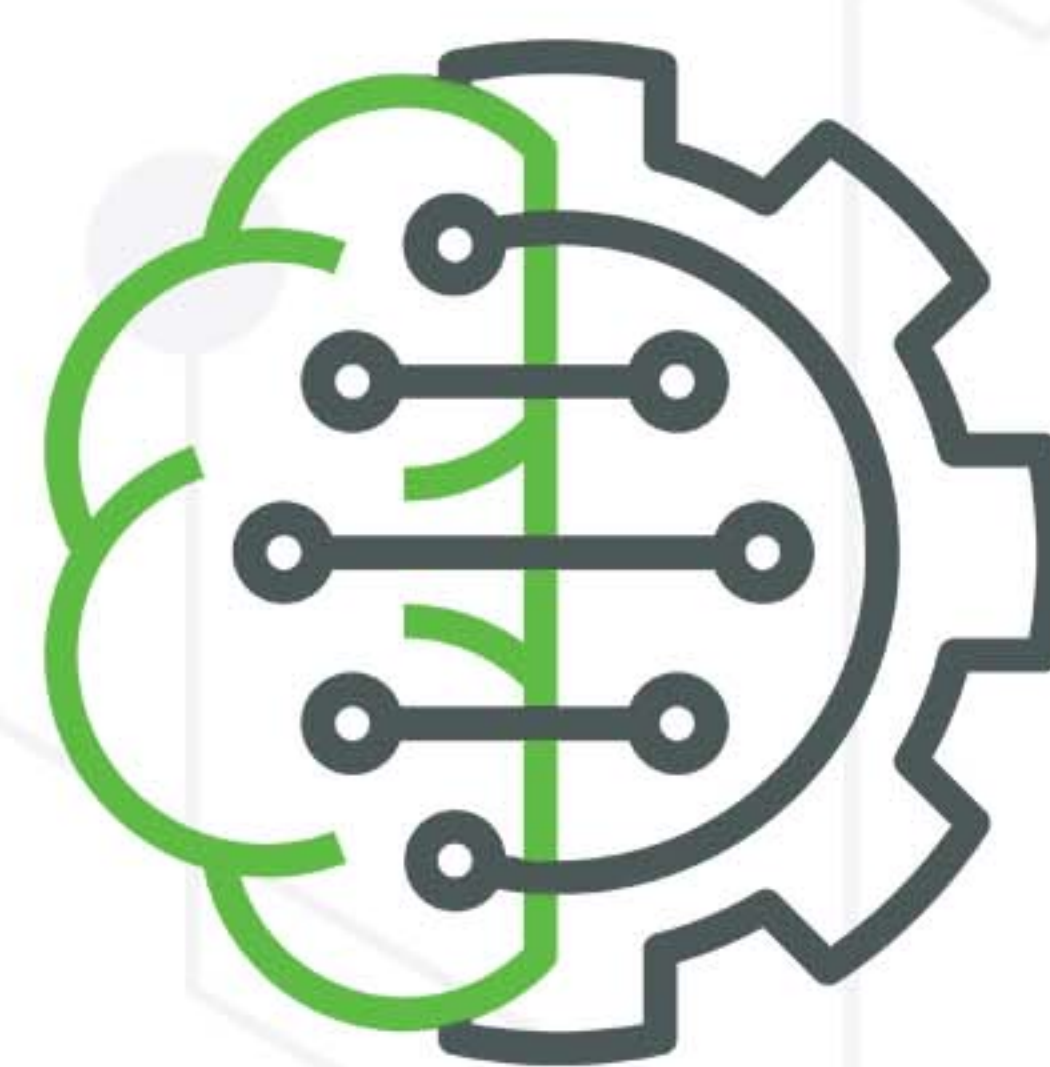
75%
of executives believe more automation is the key to better CX

Especially highlighted during this time of crisis is the way brands interact with customers and inspire trust and loyalty. Brands recognize that digital CX strategies must accommodate and anticipate changing shifts in consumer behavior. Understanding the factors behind updated customer preferences and offering redesigned customer journeys have become critical to the success of every brand.

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AI is Playing a Larger Role in CX

For several years, virtually all industries, from retail and telecommunications to mobile and healthcare, have leveraged AI-based technology to enhance customer care delivery and outcomes. AI-powered support solutions help brands engage with customers, whether by using chatbots that can pivot seamlessly to live agents or through agent support enhanced by AI-delivery of curated information to the agent's monitor.

Shoring up digital CX to meet new consumer benchmarks requires brands to go beyond simple measures such as adding out-of-the-box chatbot systems. Today's demanding CX environment must leverage advanced AI technology to connect agents with the knowledge they need to answer technical or sensitive inquiries that cannot always be solved in a self-service environment. A strategy including customer care teams equipped with time-saving tools and resources streamlines the customer journey and increases brand loyalty, providing customers with the information they need for faster, more accurate resolutions.
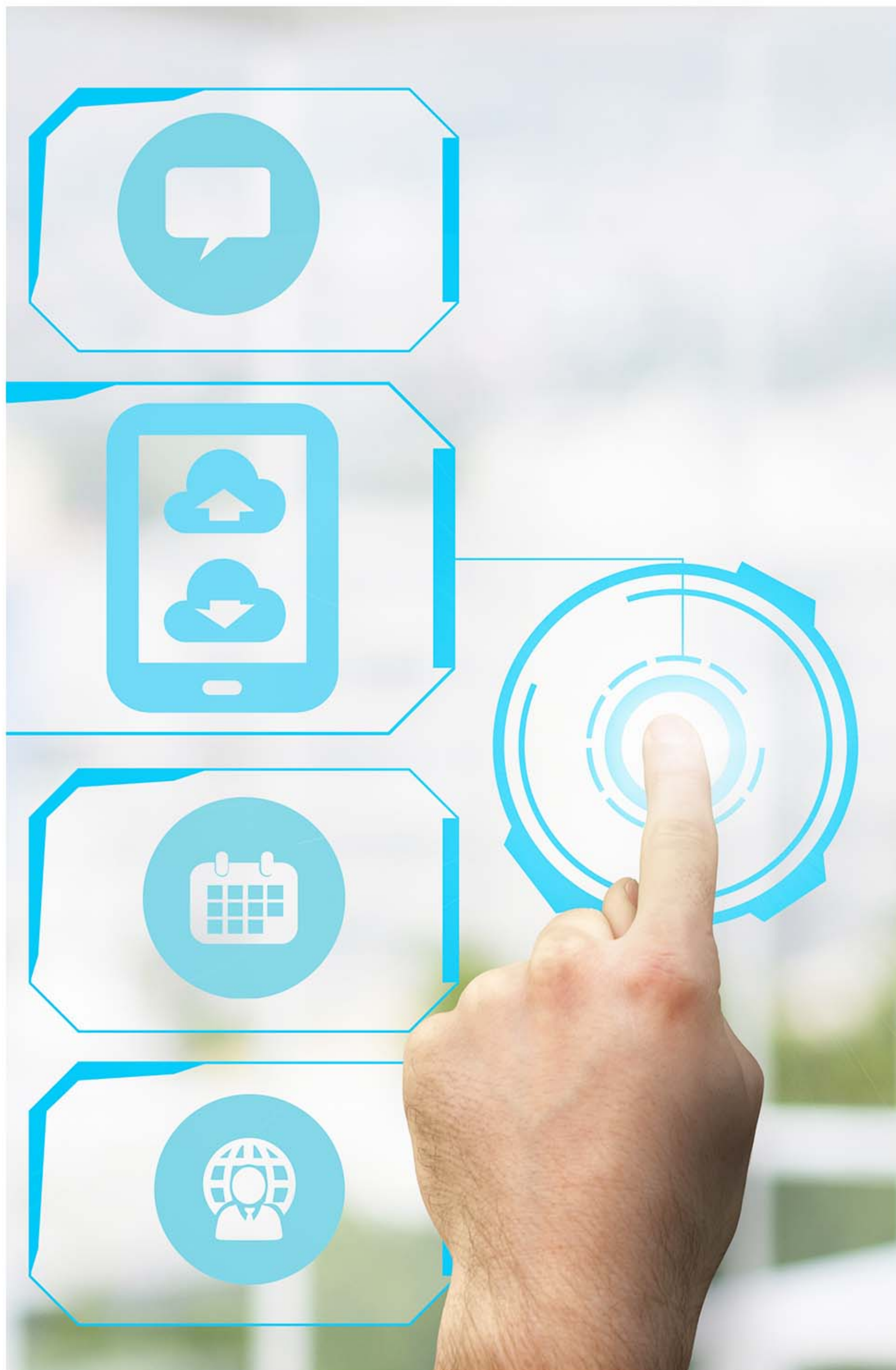
AI-Driven Self-Service Can Speed Resolution

With increasingly sophisticated technology available, tools that facilitate customer self-service are more important than ever and will likely be embraced long-term. Expanding online information options can help alleviate high call volumes. Self-service is a rapidly growing customer care pathway that can make a significant impact on workforce load for organizations straining to meet support demands.

Self-discovery tools like interactive tutorials, adaptive FAQs, interactive guides, and videos that contain simple DIY answers can reduce contact center volumes, reserving agents to address more complex customer inquiries. These tools allow customers to solve many of their needs themselves, putting power back into their own hands. Multimedia support materials for productive learning can mimic the experience of chatting with a live agent. An important additional benefit of self-service support is its potential for reducing the cost of providing customer service.
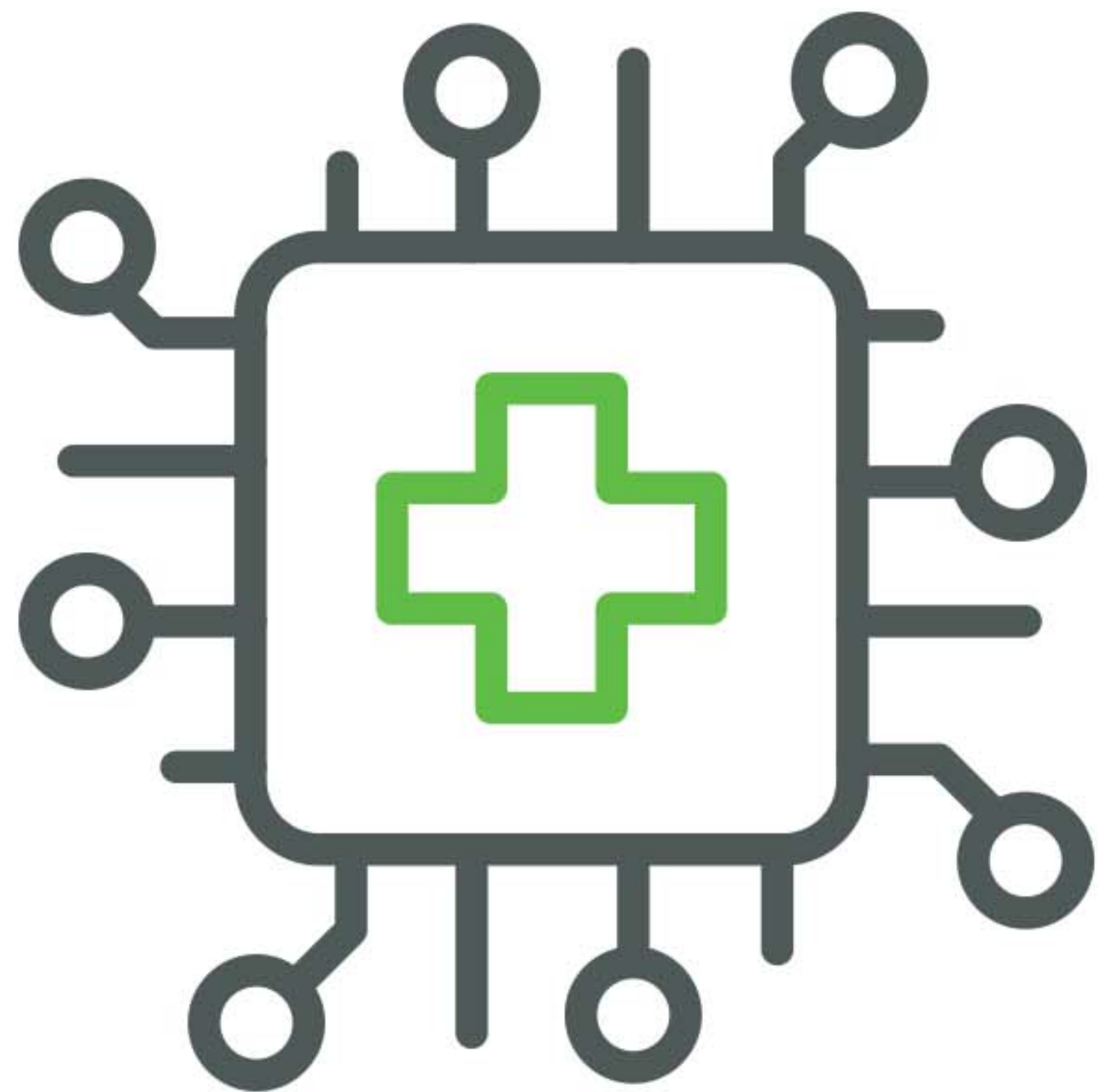
Industry Close-Up: Healthcare Support Transformation Through AI

In the healthcare industry, the benefits of AI can span from patient care, physician charting, and care documentation, to medical technology, procedures, and especially managing facility amenities. Resolving inquiries faster and helping patients and their families connect to important information quickly are just a few areas where technology has already been playing a larger role in this industry.

For years, patients have encountered technology to a growing degree during their medical experiences, either at home or in a medical facility, and for a wide range of purposes, including support and communication. These interactions have not always been smooth, at times creating more problems and confusion instead of helping.

Resolutions to patient support issues are a critical and necessary part of healthcare, and it is vital for care organizations and insurers to leverage technology to reach resolutions faster and more accurately. Demographic changes and the aging of the U.S. population, as well as the labor-intensive demands of COVID-19 care, mean that more patients than ever are seeking care, while healthcare is experiencing the same worker shortages as other industries. Timely support and swift responses are a necessity for a healthcare sector operating under strain and duress.
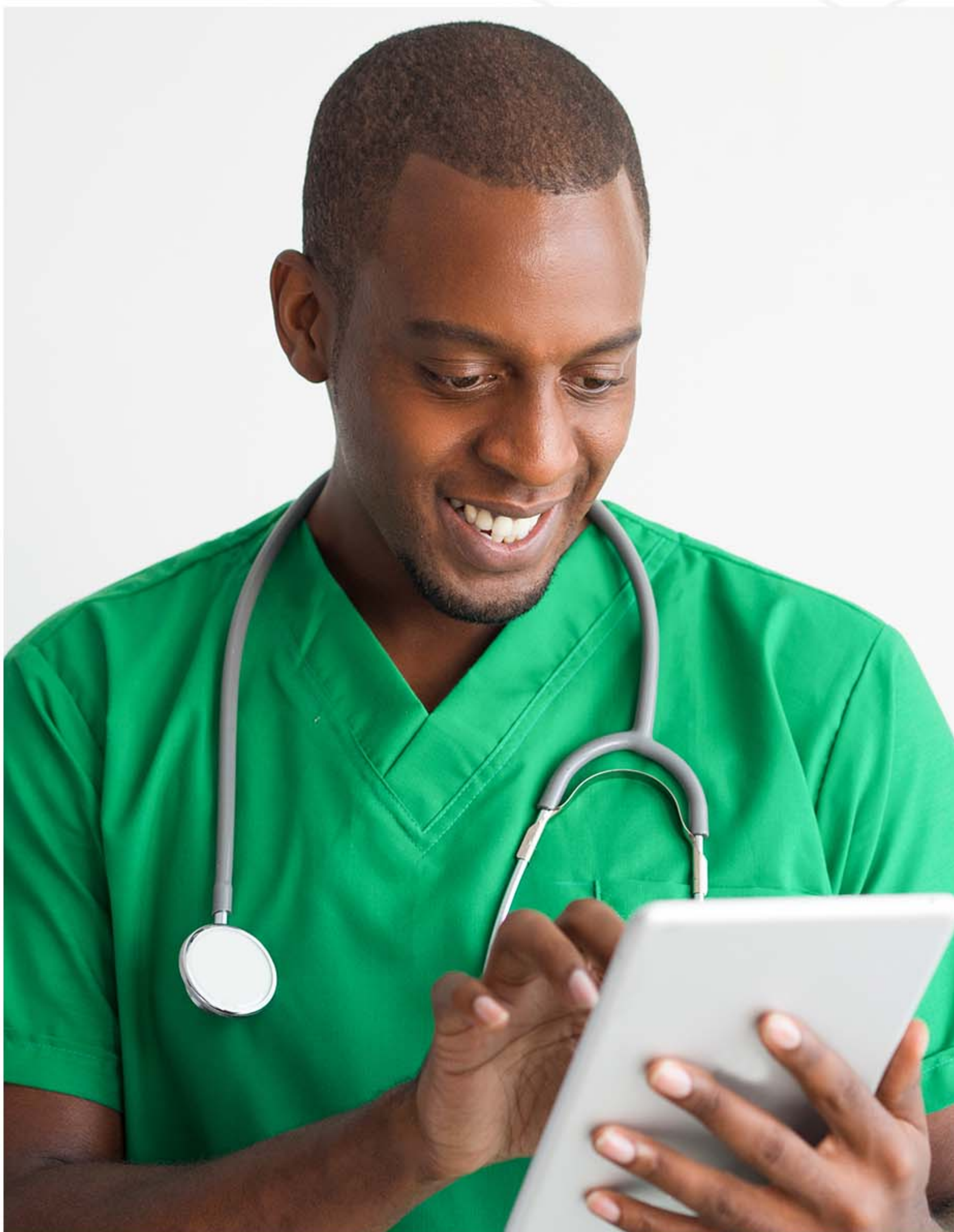
At the same time, each patient population segment in the healthcare industry has different expectations. Patients view customer service representatives to be an extension of their medical providers' offices, able to meet their unique needs and provide them with answers. Patients and their families want reliable and immediate assistance every time they raise a question. In response, healthcare providers are leveraging highly sophisticated CX technologies, such as AI, self-service, and advanced chatbots to provide a resolution-centered, stress-free solution.

In a fully AI-enabled support environment, not only are patients relying on self-service and FAQ tutorials themselves, but contact center agents can also retrieve AI-curated content from the same source materials, creating a fast and personal experience for each contact. What's more, an AI-powered information hub often allows agents to be faster and more accurate in resolving patient issues.

AI is also helping healthcare organizations expedite the time it takes to onboard a new support agent. Contact centers equipped with agent-supporting AI technologies are now reaching new-hire speed to proficiency 31-50 percent[3] faster than those without. That translates to more effective agents on more patient calls, earlier in the on-boarding process. When applied with a correct complement of human intelligence, the same technology seamlessly redirects patients from a chatbot to a live agent on more technical issues where a higher skillset and level of expertise is required to resolve patient or member needs.

Contact centers supporting healthcare organizations with innovative AI tools can play an important role in improved healthcare delivery, stronger operational management, and ensuring timely payments. Healthcare organizations that embrace and accelerate their digital AI investments can improve patient outcomes, reduce costs, scale appropriately, and deliver quicker customer resolutions.

Improving CX with AI - Three ResultsCX Examples

The adoption of AI-powered tools is widespread across the customer care landscape, with many industries discovering the ability of digital experience platforms to match customers' individual support preferences. Likewise, AI can be a source of enhanced customer satisfaction and operational cost savings, as they enable brands to meet consumers where they want to be and reduce costly talk time.

For Retailers, AI Can Shorten Time to Proficiency for CX

For many retail brands, preparing for the holiday shopping rush and its expanded support needs is an annual challenge. While the cost of hiring people for a time-limited surge in customer service demand is significant, few retailers can afford risking the damage to their brand reputation caused by inadequate support. Putting AI to work in the support environment is an ideal way to speed customer resolutions, whether by incorporating chatbots or providing customer care that is purely agent-based.

Agents equipped with an AI-driven knowledgebase can benefit from automated support paths and proactive dialogue prompts. The power of this solution is that every agent-customer interaction feeds into a machine learning algorithm to make the system even smarter and more effective over time at resolving issues.

An AI-driven toolkit can also improve the efficiency of every customer contact. With the goal of improving new agents' speed to proficiency, AI enables brands to build user-friendly agent knowledgebases that facilitate first-call resolution and make it far easier to provide timely, correct resolution to customer inquiries. A primary goal is to help agents excel at identifying and solving issues that can affect the customer experience before they even occur.

### ResultsCX Case Study: Retail[4]

Including SupportPredict Agent AI in the agent support model for a global retailing client enabled newly hired ResultsCX agents to improve speed to proficiency to an unexpected degree. Within four weeks, the reduction in their Average Handle Time (AHT), two- to three minutes, matched and even surpassed those of tenured agents. Likewise, these new teams produced Net Promoter Scores 28-30 percent higher than the year before and achieved customer satisfaction scores 17% higher than in the previous year.

Lowered AHT by 2-3 minutes

Improved Overall Customer Satisfaction by 17%
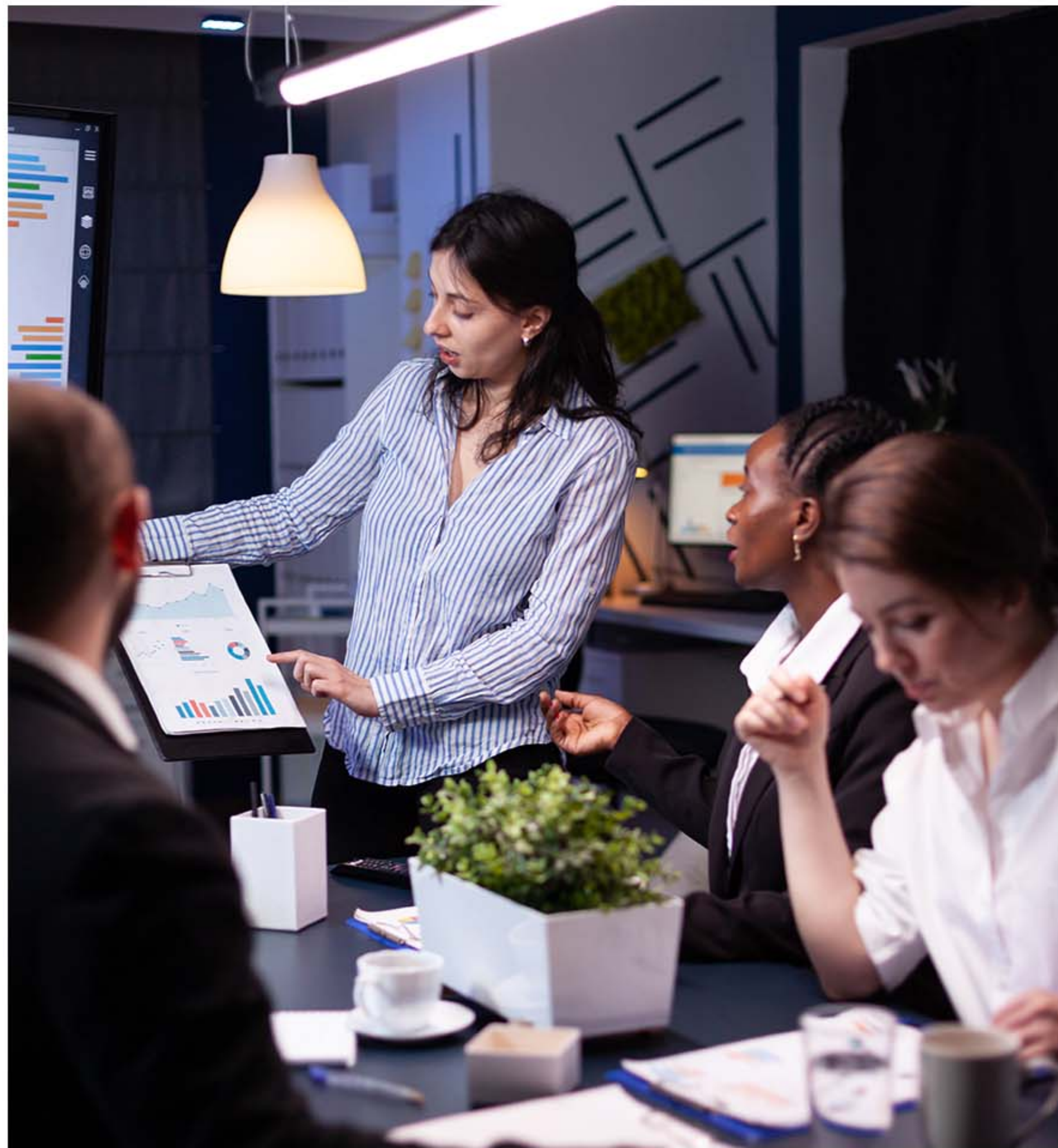
For Financial Services, AI Can Improve Support Metrics and Optimize Training

AI also can transform financial industry customer support processes, making it far easier for agents to locate the specific answers to speed customer resolution. These improvements can play a powerful role in improving customer retention, increasing customer satisfaction, and cutting the cost of customer care operations. If the goal of a system is to get the right knowledge in front of support agents at the right time, training costs can also be reduced as agents are taught to rely on advanced machine learning for the best answers to customer problems. In many cases, cost reductions achieved by AI-enhanced solutions are matched by quality metric improvements.

ResultsCX Case Study: Financial Services[5]

When introducing a new client knowledgebase, ResultsCX also implemented SupportPredict Agent AI to deliver faster, better curated answers to agents. The cloud-based platform learns from every customer interaction to transform digital and voice support. After nine months, this client's quality scores increased from 92.5% to 96.4%, and Average Handle Time (AHT) was cut by more than two minutes, while agents' time to proficiency was reduced by 27%.

Client app usage increased by 5%

Agent speed to proficiency decreased from 110 days to 80 days

Quality scores increased from 92.5% to 96.4% in nine months

AHT improved by more than 95 seconds within three months of launching SupportPredict. At the six-month mark, AHT improved by 46 more seconds, and by nine-month mark, dropped by 21 more seconds, landing at more than 122 seconds below target.

Healthcare Insurers Can Enhance CX with AI-Driven Bot Support

The support demands for healthcare insurers can spike significantly during plans' annual enrollment periods, necessitating aggressive hiring ramps and steep agent learning curves. Bots can supplement traditional agent support to streamline agent workflows and guide agents through their calls with real-time, relevant, and specific information. Not only does this enhancement lessen the time agents spend hunting for answers, but it also frees agents to focus on building rapport with members and creating an effortless, enjoyable customer experience.

ResultsCX Case Study: Healthcare Insurance[6]

ResultsCX compared the outcomes of Agent AI incorporating SupportPredict Bots against those at the same experience and training levels who were on their own. The agent teams assisted by Bots scored higher on quality and customer satisfaction during their first month and maintained this lead over the subsequent two months. In month one, AHT was significantly reduced for those using Bots, and the reduction trajectory continued through months two and three. ResultsCX concluded that use of SupportPredict Bots reduced the number of steps and time required to resolve members' needs. The Bot-assisted group's lower handle times were also affected by shorter after-call work time and reduced hold times. Additionally, the information provided by members of this group was more accurate, timely, and complete overall than that provided without the benefit of Bots.

Legend: ■ Control ■ Pilot

SupportPredict **BOTS**

Quality Score

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Control	51.15	66.06	84.62
Pilot	66.54	76.37	85.57

CSAT Score

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Control	57.05	73.88	86.00
Pilot	69.66	76.25	87.84

AHT in Seconds

	Month 1	Month2	Month 3
Control	502	478	420
Pilot	440	367	333

Conclusion

Brands must focus on building and deploying solutions that will continue to fulfill consumer needs in a post-pandemic economy. Demographic changes and the aging of the population ensure that people's demand for healthcare and related support will continue to grow. Likewise, as economies reopen and consumers begin to fill their online and physical store checkout carts, they will need the right level of digital customer support for inquiries and requests that go hand-in-hand with store sales. This means accelerating the engineering of new customer experiences and rapidly prototyping resolution-centered innovations. Agility in CX delivery is mandatory, and support operations must keep up with customer expectations. Now, more than ever, CX innovation has become imperative for maintaining brand relevance and is key to long-lasting customer satisfaction and loyalty.

About ResultsCX

For three decades, ResultsCX has been a premier customer experience partner to Fortune 100 and 500 companies. We design, build, and deliver digitally-influenced customer journeys that achieve the satisfaction and loyalty levels brands need to thrive and grow while improving efficiency and reducing costs.

ResultsCX's track record for reimagining the customer experience to meet consumers' evolving expectations has driven growth to more than 25 locations and approximately 20,000 colleagues worldwide. Our core expertise extends to actionable analytics, contact center as a service (CCaaS), process automation, and our own SupportPredict digital engagement software as a service (SaaS).

For more information about how ResultsCX can help you create an exceptional customer experience, please contact us at bettercx@results-cx.com.

1: https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/forecast-global-economy-rebounding-faces-multiple-threats-77997749%202

2: "There's No Better Time Than Now to Accelerate Digital Adoption in CXM"; Everest Group; May 6, 2021

3: ResultsCX Agent AI analytics; June 2021

4: https://results-cx.com/case-study/retailer-to-gamers-adopts-digital-cx-strategy-in-time-for-holiday-rush

5: http://e43571abe9b9283a6f11-8d34a28c59a12d896fcb2aad6e8a531a.r38.cf2.rackcdn.com/resultscx-case-study-ai-bots-improve-key-performance-metrics.pdf

6: https://results-cx.com/case-study/supportpredict-bots-drive-quality-csat-and-aht-improvements-for-fortune-500-healthcare-payer