



AI and the next generation of customer experiences

A 2025 REPORT

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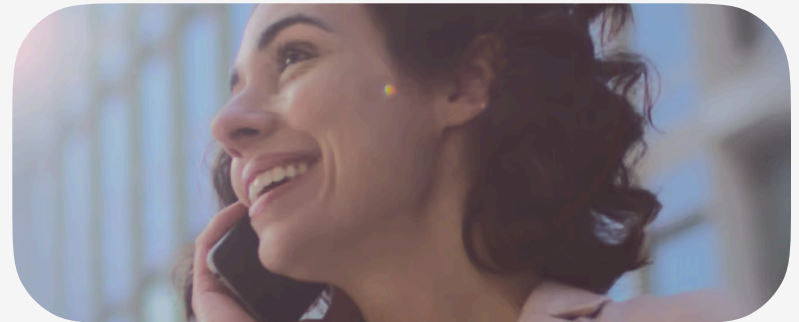
Background & methodology

Customer experience is now one of the most critical drivers of revenue and brand loyalty.

In an era where a single poor interaction can push over half of customers to abandon a brand entirely, the stakes have never been higher. While 70% of consumers say they would pay more for products from companies known for exceptional customer support, the reverse is also true: 58% say a single bad interaction can erode trust instantly and shape long-term buying behavior.

To understand today's shifting expectations, Decagon commissioned a survey conducted by The Harris Poll to examine how consumers view customer support, the role of AI in delivering it, and the generational divides shaping the future of customer experience.

This report shares the key findings and their implications for businesses seeking to build stronger, more resilient customer relationships.



Methodology

This research is based on an online survey conducted within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Decagon from July 29–31, 2025, among 2,077 U.S. adults ages 18 and older.

Sampling precision is measured using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. The credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population.

For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact press@decagon.ai.

Executive summary



A sharp generational divide is reshaping customer expectations.

Adults aged 18-44 consistently rate their interactions by industry lower than older consumers, with the widest gaps in sectors where trust, speed, and accuracy are critical, such as finance, travel & hospitality, and healthcare. As these younger consumers enter their peak spending years, their expectations will increasingly set the standard for competitive differentiation.

This same group is also the most open to new approaches in customer service. Younger consumers are 2.1x more likely than those aged 45+ to prefer AI agents over human representatives for most support interactions. Many describe AI as emotionally intelligent, a safe space for sharing personal details, and even more attentive than a partner or spouse. Around-the-clock availability, faster resolution, and ease of use make AI especially appealing.



For businesses, the takeaway is clear:

Future leaders in customer experience will not only adopt AI for operational efficiency, but will use it to deliver personalized, trustworthy, and human-feeling interactions at scale and meet the demands of a new generation of customers.

Key analyses

The following pages explore the most important trends shaping the future of customer experience, from shifting generational expectations to the growing role of AI in service delivery. Each finding offers insight into where opportunities lie and how brands can stay ahead.



01 The cost of bad support

Each touchpoint leaves an impression that shapes how customers perceive a business.

The majority of consumers say that bad customer service changes their buying behavior and erodes their loyalty. Even one negative experience can have lasting consequences for trust and retention.

Businesses that respond quickly and consistently to customer issues are best positioned to protect relationships and sustain loyalty over time.

70%

Would pay more for a product if they knew the brand offered exceptional customer support

Customer engagement can make or break a brand in a single interaction, influencing where customers choose to spend.



58%

Agree that one negative customer support experience would stop them from buying from that brand again.



56%

Agree that brands that use AI agents for customer support are more modern and innovative than brands that do not.



31%

Would rather go to the dentist than deal with exceptionally frustrating customer support.

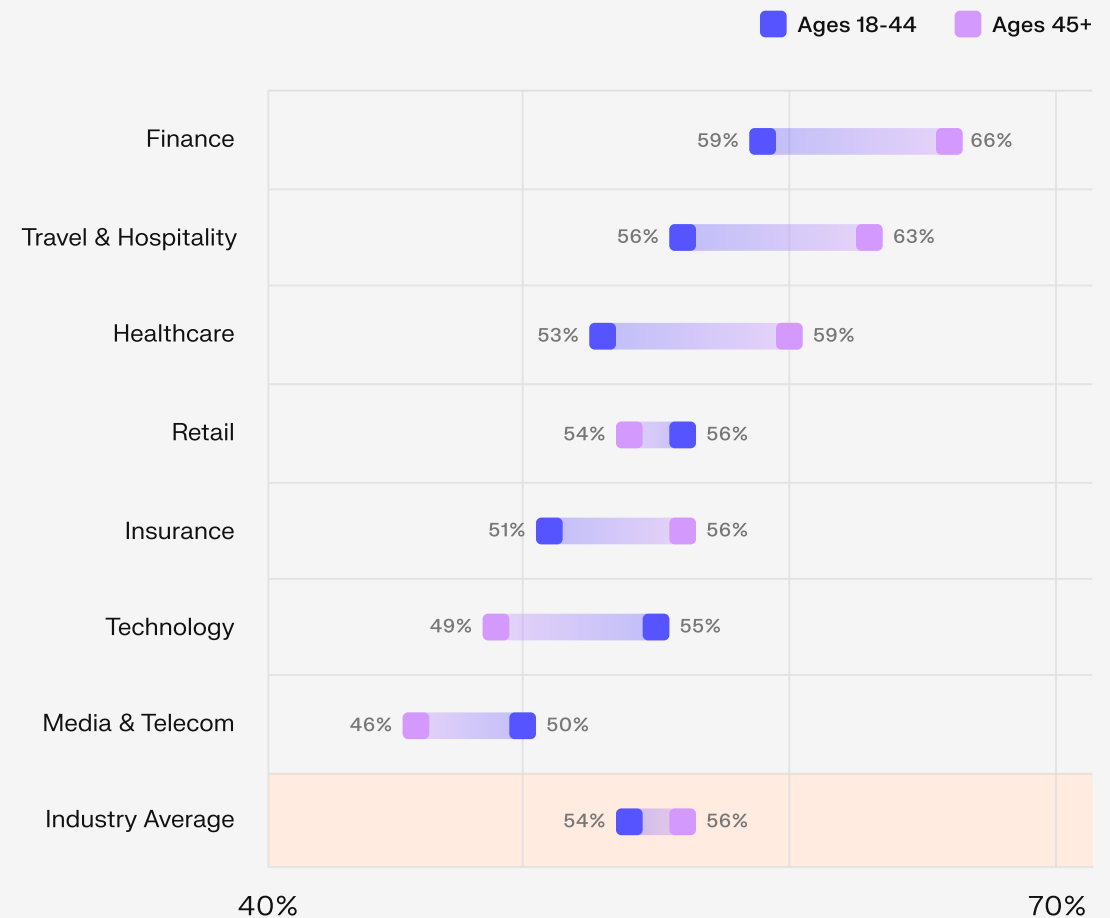
02 Where industries rank on CX

Customer support ratings vary across industries, with finance and travel & hospitality earning the highest marks (63% and 60%, respectively), while technology (52%) and media & telecom (48%) trail behind. These differences reveal where brands are meeting or missing expectations and point to clear opportunities for improvement.

Satisfaction also shifts sharply by age. Younger consumers consistently rate their experiences lower across most sectors, setting a higher bar for speed, personalization, and trust. For brands already struggling with lower satisfaction, this generational gap represents a competitive risk.

Those able to close the gap now will be best positioned to earn loyalty from the next set of purchasers.

Percentage of consumers who rate the customer support provided by the following industries as good or excellent.



03 The new standards for service

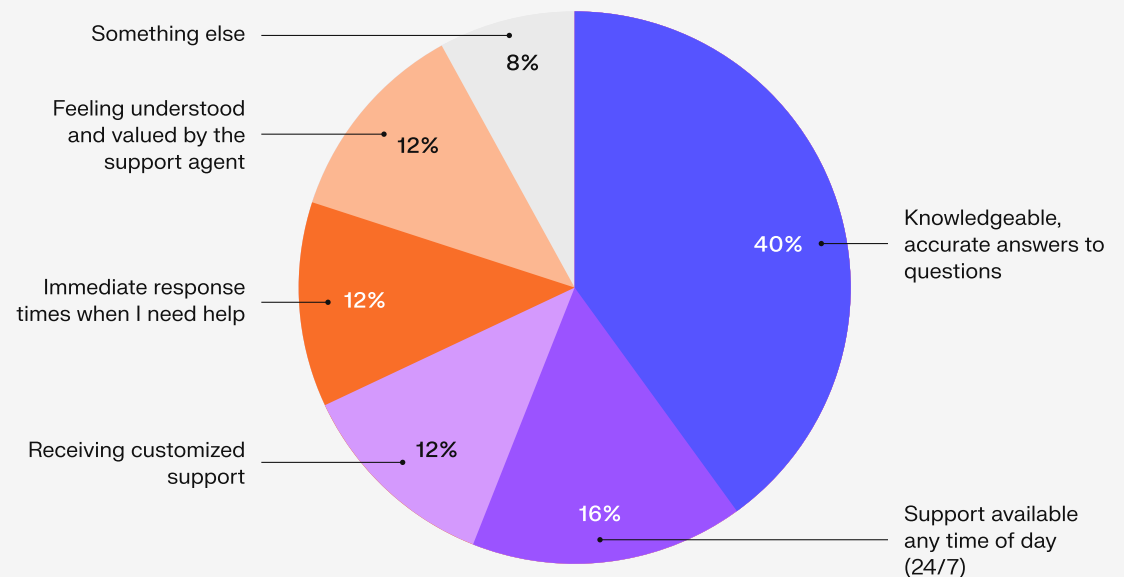
When engaging with an AI agent for customer support, one priority rises above all others: knowledgeable, accurate answers. Consumers select this factor 2.5x more often than the next most important consideration.

Availability, personalization, and speed may be less frequently cited as the top priority, but the majority still consider them very important or absolutely essential parts of customer support in general (62%, 65%, and 73%, respectively). The most effective AI agents will deliver on all of these factors.

84%

Consider knowledgeable, accurate answers as either very important or absolutely essential

Which of the following factors is most important when interacting with an AI agent for customer support?



04 Rising consumer trust in AI

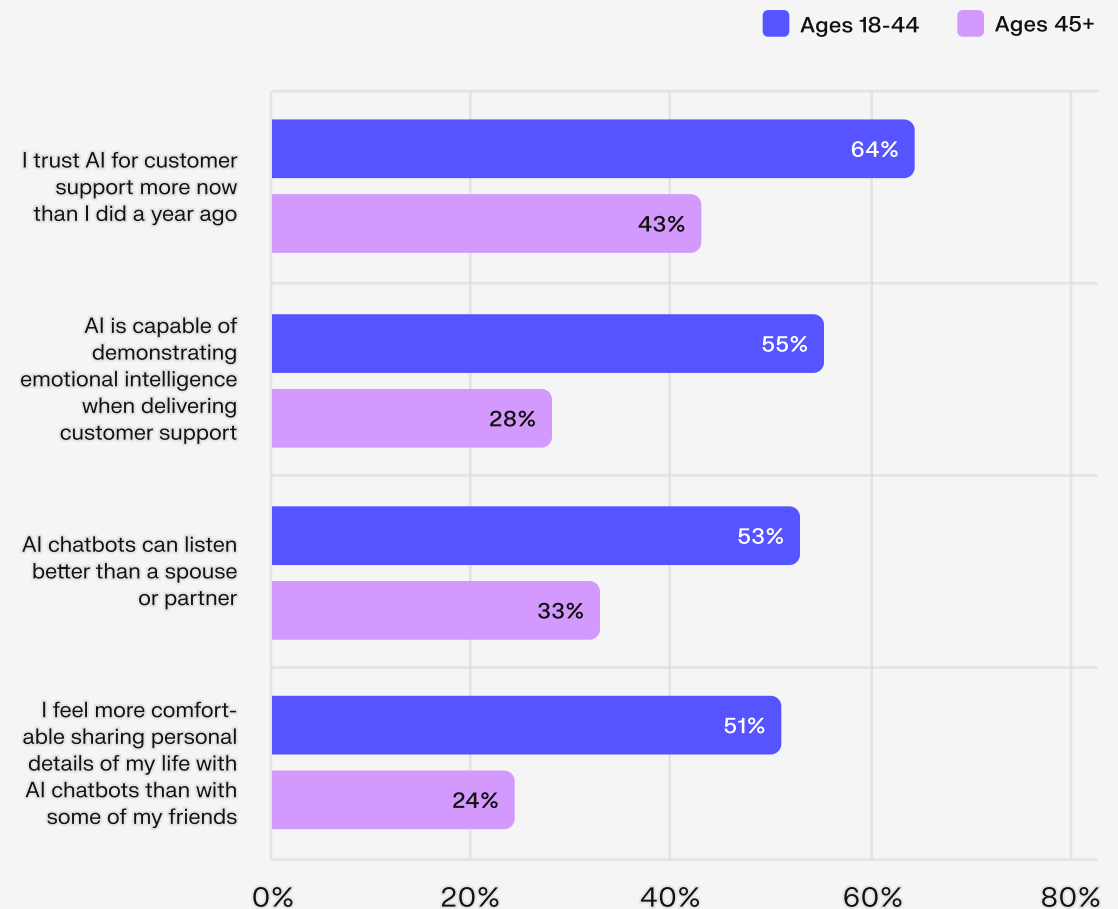
Younger consumers are embracing AI for customer support at a faster pace, with trust rising sharply over the past year. This shift positions them as early adopters who could shape the norms for AI agents.

However, their perceptions go beyond efficiency. Many view AI as attentive, understanding, and even a safe place to share personal details. For brands, this is a chance to design AI-powered experiences that build lasting loyalty.

2x

Consumers aged 18-44 are 2x more likely to agree AI agents are capable of demonstrating emotional intelligence when delivering customer support

Percentage of consumers that either strongly agree or somewhat agree to the following statements about AI.



05 Why AI agents are preferred

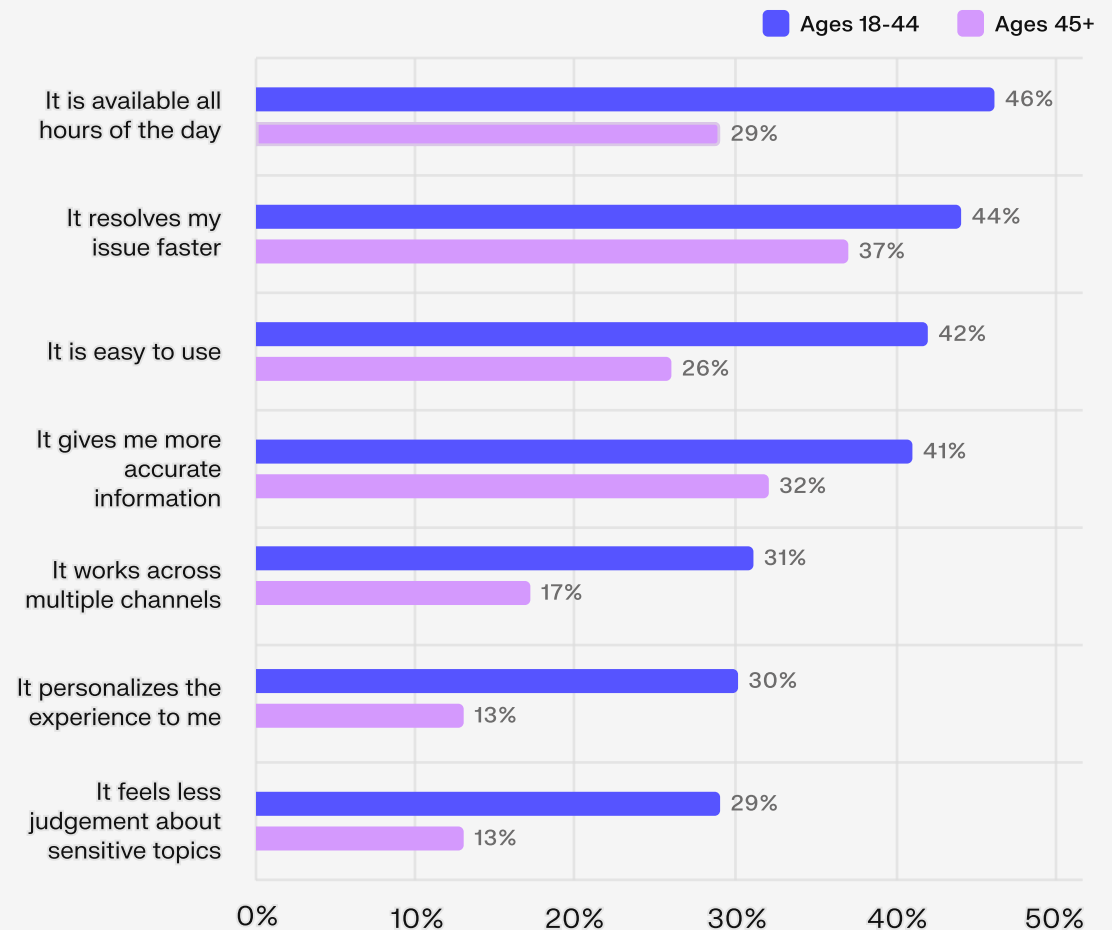
Younger consumers are far more likely to prefer AI agents over human agents when engaging with brands for customer support. They see AI as delivering exceptional availability, speed, and ease of use, paired with the benefit of providing reliably accurate answers.

For businesses, leaning into these strengths can help meet rising expectations while creating consistent, scalable experiences that resonate with the next generation of customers.

86%

Of consumers aged 18-44 said they would prefer an AI agent over a human agent if it met certain criteria (vs. 61% aged 45+)

Which of the following are reasons why you would prefer an AI agent over a human agent for customer support?



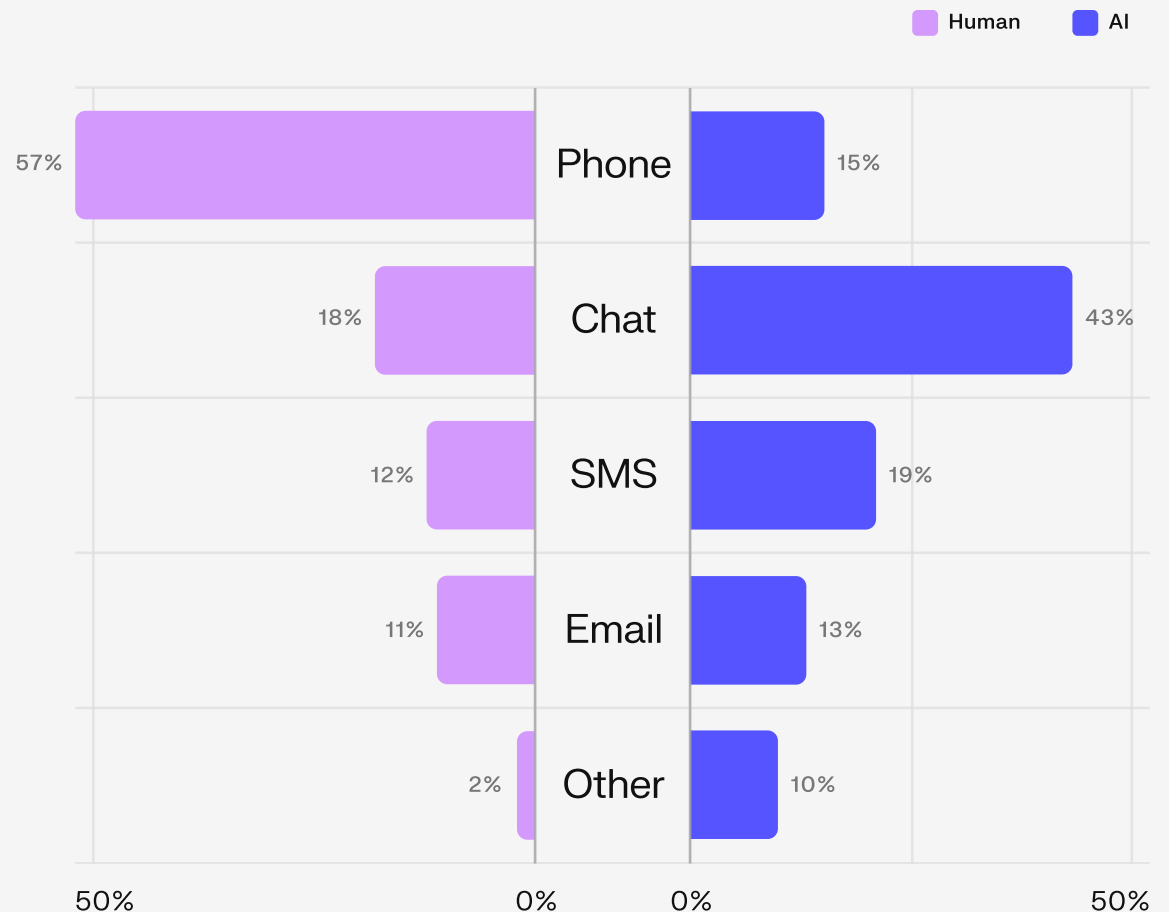
06 Choosing the right channel

When engaging with AI agents, consumers are more likely to prefer chat, presumably valuing the speed and ease of use. By contrast, phone is the top choice for human-led support, where customers often seek help navigating more complex issues.

However, no single channel can meet every customer's needs. Preferences vary not only by the type of support but also by individual expectations and comfort levels. And while chat currently dominates AI interactions, advances in voice technology are likely to make it an increasingly important channel in the future.

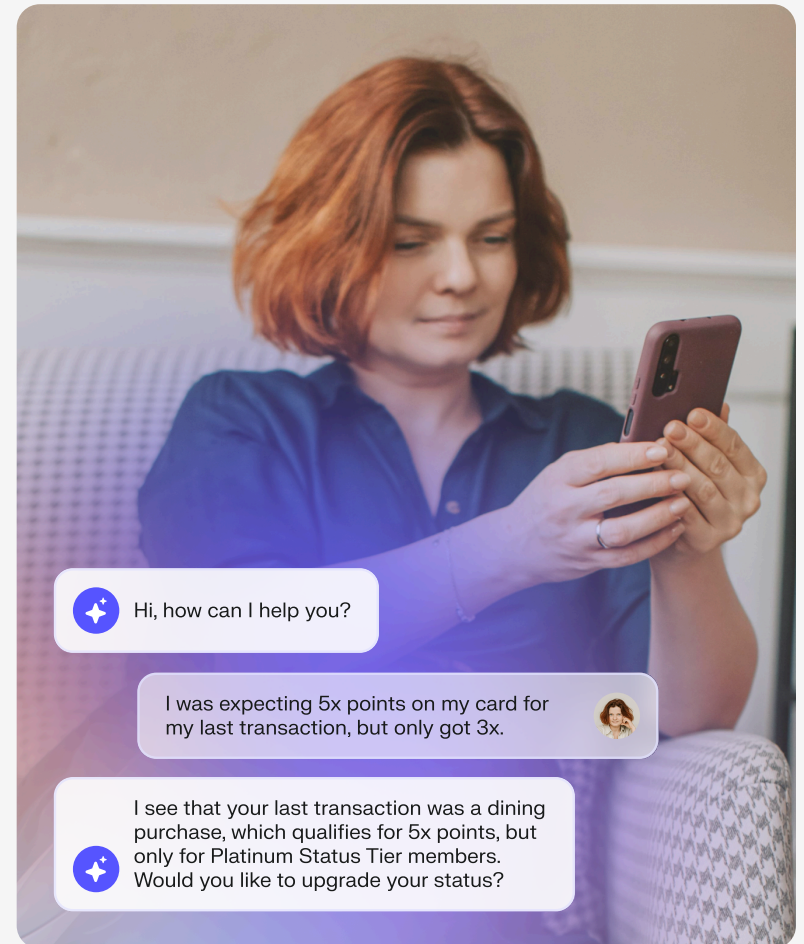
An effective omni-channel strategy ensures customers can connect in the way that feels most natural to them, whether that's the immediacy of chat, the personal touch of a phone call, or another channel entirely.

How would you prefer to interact with each of the following types of customer support agents?



Decagon and the future of CX

The findings in this report highlight a clear opportunity: businesses that meet rising expectations today will lead their industries tomorrow. Here's how Decagon helps make that possible.



AI agents for concierge customer experience

The rapid rise of AI has created pressure from the top, but also a rare opportunity to reimagine customer experience as a true growth driver for the business. At Decagon, we help brands build, optimize, and scale AI agents to seize that moment.

Our conversational AI platform is built around Agent Operating Procedures (AOPs). AOPs are natural language instructions that compile into code to handle real-world scenarios with reliability and precision. This approach gives teams direct control over agent behavior, enabling them to quickly build, test, and refine AI agents just like onboarding a new teammate with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The result is accelerated time to value, full transparency into agent decision-making, and quality that scales with your business.

With Decagon, enterprises can redefine their customer experience, moving from reactive support to proactive engagement and ultimately to concierge-level service that combines human-like empathy with 24/7, omnichannel availability. Whether it's processing a return, securing the last window seat, or confirming a payment in real time, our AI agents deliver experiences that are intuitive, personalized, and truly satisfying.

**The future of customer experience is here.
Let's build it together.**

World-class teams
choose Decagon



Hertz

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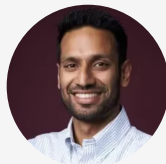
BILT 

Curology

Why industry leaders trust Decagon



Rippling has a very broad surface area with distinct products that require unique treatments — **we brought this problem statement to Decagon and they delivered.** We are able to tailor the experience and responses to customers to not only **deliver strong deflection results**, but also enhance the customer experience along the way. We are very happy with our results and are **looking forward to partnering further with Decagon.**



Husam Najib
VP, Customer Support

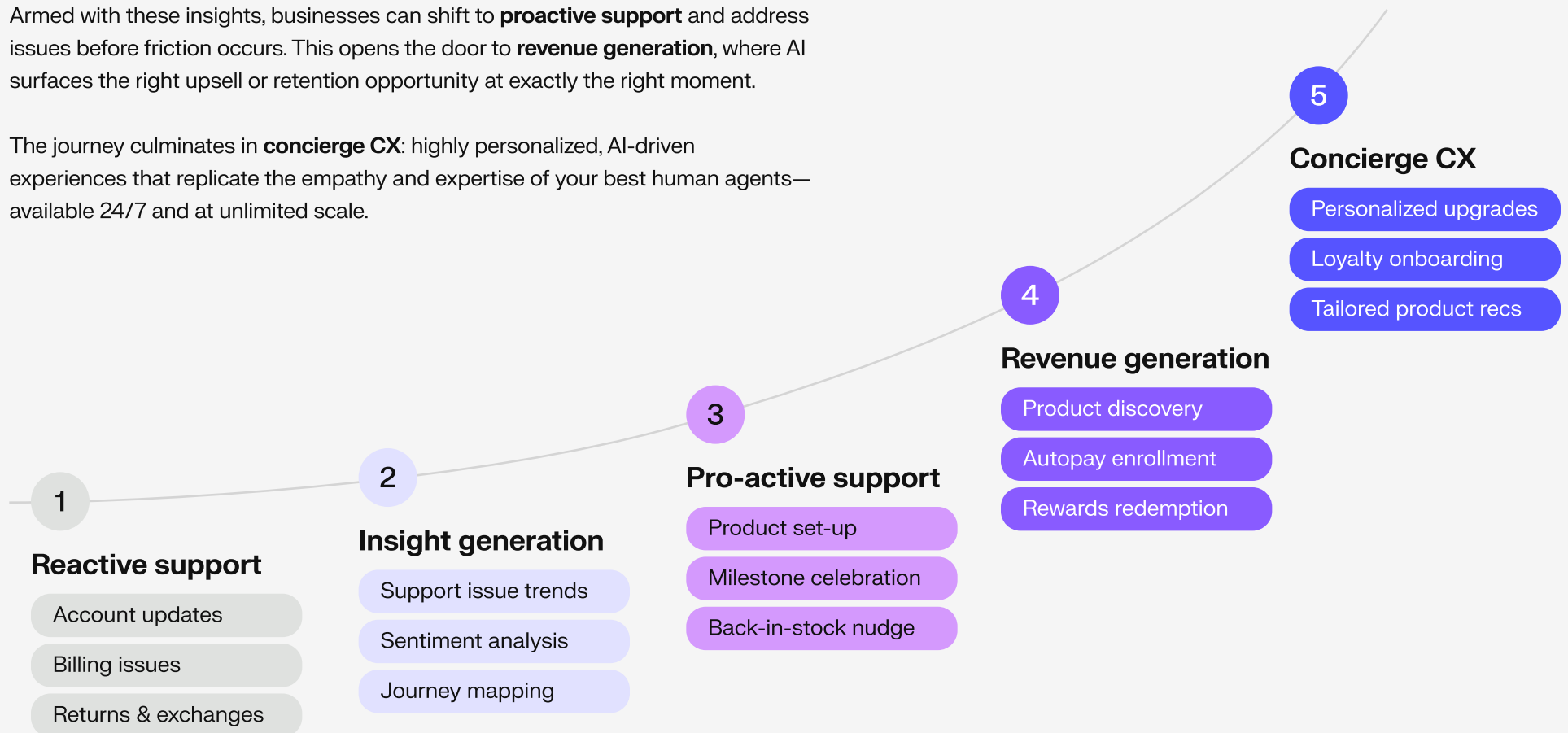


Where to start with AI agents

Transforming customer experience begins with **reactive support**, where AI manages complex tickets, reduces costs, and frees human agents to focus on high-value interactions. From there, it evolves into **insight generation**, using the wealth of customer conversations to unlock your Voice of Customer.

Armed with these insights, businesses can shift to **proactive support** and address issues before friction occurs. This opens the door to **revenue generation**, where AI surfaces the right upsell or retention opportunity at exactly the right moment.

The journey culminates in **concierge CX**: highly personalized, AI-driven experiences that replicate the empathy and expertise of your best human agents—available 24/7 and at unlimited scale.



The future of customer experience is here.

[Sign up for a demo](#)