EX 2025 TRENDS

2025

PLANNING ESSENTIALS
2025 STRATEGY

Plus expert insights & recommendations

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10 Trends to Guide Your CX Strategy

Essential insights and planning priorities

The customer experience (CX) landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. The convergence of cloud, digital, and AI technologies is not just enhancing CX—it's redefining it entirely. This era of exponential change demands a fresh perspective on how businesses engage with customers and optimize their operations.

Conventional wisdom often confines the potential of these technologies to their most obvious applications. However, by adopting a broader perspective—one that looks beyond the surface—we uncover deeper opportunities. This forward-thinking approach enables organizations to foresee changes in the market, fully leverage the capabilities of these transformative forces, and lead their industries with confidence.

As you prepare your 2025 CX strategy, this eBook offers essential insights and recommendations to navigate these transformative times. By embracing the power of cloud, digital, and AI technologies and aligning your CX initiatives with your customers' evolving needs, you can ensure your business is not just keeping pace but leading the way in delivering exceptional experiences.

"Leaders are often defined by their ability to elevate their perspective. Those that do navigate with strategic foresight, anticipate market shifts, and spot hidden opportunities."

Einat Weiss
Chief Marketing Officer of NICE

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Trend #1:
CX is no longer just part of the business; it is the business

Customer experience has evolved from a departmental concern to a core business strategy. Recent NICE research[1] reveals a strong positive correlation between stock gains and customer sentiment, underscoring CX's impact on business success.

As customer expectations continue to rise, organizations that prioritize CX across all touchpoints are seeing significant returns on their investments. In fact, companies that lead in customer experience outperform laggards by nearly 3.5X in stock performance over the last year.

Take Action: Elevate CX to a C-suite priority and align all departments

By positioning CX at the forefront of business strategy and ensuring all departments are aligned, organizations can create a unified approach to customer-centricity. This shift enables more cohesive decision-making, fosters innovation, and drives operational efficiencies. Expect improved customer loyalty, increased market share, and enhanced financial performance as CX becomes the cornerstone of your business model.

- Champion CX-driven corporate strategy across the organization.

- Establish cross-functional CX metrics, KPIs, and incentives.

- Unite all departments around a single CX platform.

- Foster cross-functional collaboration to improve the entire experience.

- Drive cultural change to prioritize customer-centric decision making.

> "Strong alignment leads to better outcomes. Those whose marketing, digital, and CX teams are highly aligned report 1.6 times faster revenue growth than their peers and 1.4 times better customer retention."
>
> **– Forrester** [2]

"Brands excelling in customer sentiment outperform their peers by an impressive 43 percentage points in stock returns over five years.
This competitive advantage is accelerating with a remarkable 15 percentage point gap emerging in just the last year." [1]

[1] State of CX: Real insights from the largest CX dataset (NICE 2024)
[2] Pasto, Riccardo. Cobain, Katy. Et al. (2024). Budget Planning Guide 2025: Customer Experience. Forrester.

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Trend #2:
AI will enhance 100% of CX roles by 2026

AI is fundamentally changing how work gets done, empowering employees at all levels to perform more efficiently and effectively. From agents to supervisors and CX leaders, AI-powered copilots are enhancing capabilities across the entire customer experience ecosystem. This technological shift is setting a new standard where every CX professional gains enhanced abilities in communication, analysis, and problem-solving. AI copilots are not just improving personal productivity; they're elevating the entire organization's capability. By amplifying expertise and taking work from good to exceptional, these AI assistants are paving the way for unprecedented improvements in customer service quality and operational efficiency.

Take Action: Deploy AI copilots purpose-built for each CX role

As customer interactions grow more complex and emotionally charged, real-time AI assistance becomes crucial. Invest in AI copilots purpose-built for CX, trained on industry-specific data rather than the open internet. Unlike generic DIY AI tools, these specialized copilots integrate seamlessly into your existing applications, providing contextual support tailored to CX roles. By adopting these solutions, you'll equip your team to handle intricate customer needs more effectively, leading to improved resolution times, higher customer satisfaction, and enhanced employee performance.

> "Our research validates NICE's approach with Enlighten Copilot: Business leaders find significant value in leveraging CX-specific AI to both automate manual functions and augment mission-critical work of employees.
>
> Among those already using AI for CX, 66% rely on AI for quality management and 55% to review open-ended feedback from customers. I can't stress enough the competitive advantage companies will realize by using AI to automate analysis of customer feedback and workflows, as well as elevating supervisors from tactical to strategic roles."[1]
>
> **Robin Gareiss**
> Metrigy CEO & Principal Analyst

[1] NICE Launches Next Generation of Enlighten Copilot, Delivering AI-Driven Augmentation to The Entire CX Workforce

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Trend #3: Outbound will become the dominant CX strategy

As customer expectations evolve, the convergence of digital, AI, and customer insights is shifting the focus from reactive customer service to proactive customer engagement. Organizations are moving beyond traditional inbound strategies, recognizing the importance of reaching out to customers before issues arise. Organizations are now harnessing predictive analytics and deep customer understanding to anticipate needs, preemptively resolve issues, and engage customers through their preferred channels. This proactive strategy not only elevates customer satisfaction but also optimizes operational efficiency by reducing inbound call volume and improving first-contact resolution rates.

Take Action: Unify inbound and outbound engagement on a single platform

By consolidating both inbound and outbound interactions within a single platform, organizations can deliver a more cohesive and personalized customer experience. Expect improved customer satisfaction, higher conversion rates, and enhanced operational efficiency as you manage all customer interactions under one roof.

- Engage prospects on their preferred channels for higher conversion rates.
- Equip agents with unified CRM insights to personalize every interaction.
- Streamline agent workflows with omnichannel capabilities for seamless communication.
- Automate outbound campaigns to reach customers across multiple channels.
- Optimize proactive strategies with analytics and real-time insights.

LIVEVOX by **NICE**

"NICE LiveVox's customer engagement and analytics capabilities have been a game changer for Arrivia, and the technology has helped transform our contact center operations, including productivity improvements of up to 20% for our sales operations."

Travis Markel
COO Arrivia

Get Proactive Now

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Trend #4: The gap between CX leaders and laggards grows

The concept of 'expectation transfer' is accelerating the divide between CX leaders and laggards. As consumers experience exceptional service from one brand, they set that as the new standard for the entire industry. This widening gap is driven by the ability of leading organizations to consistently meet and exceed these rising expectations, while others struggle to keep pace. The new CX battleground is no longer within industry segments, but against the best experiences consumers encounter anywhere.

Take Action: Improve customer sentiment before, during, and after every interaction.

Transform your CX strategy by prioritizing sentiment across the entire customer journey. Utilize AI-driven insights to predict and proactively address customer needs, empower agents with real-time assistance, and implement continuous feedback loops. This holistic approach ensures consistent, positive experiences that meet evolving customer expectations and drive loyalty.

- Predict sentiment on 100% of customer interactions.
- Optimize agent-customer pairings with AI routing.
- Empower agents with real-time sentiment analysis to steer conversations to success.
- Drive cross-functional improvements by adopting sentiment as a north-star metric.
- Reduce performance variability with sentiment as a core quality KPI

"We wanted to understand the full scope of the customer journey, it was the ease of the tool itself, we also really enjoyed the Enlighten behaviors, that was a differentiator for us – understanding not just the overall sentiment of the call, but what are some of the things we could do as an agent to actually help drive a better customer experience.""

Michelle Grimm
Sr. Director of Conversational AI
Fifth Third Bank

> See how leaders approach AI

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Trend #5: Knowledge Management and AI Management Converge

Generative AI's potential is immense, but without proper guardrails, it can produce "hallucinations"—inaccurate or misleading information. According to Forrester Research[1], organizations like the City of New York and Air Canada have faced significant issues due to erroneous answers from AI-powered chatbots, resulting in confusion and distrust. This growing skepticism is evident, with only 28% of US online adults reporting that they trust information provided by AI.[1]

To prevent these issues, knowledge management is converging with AI management. By vectorizing knowledge bases, organizations can restrict AI to vetted information, dramatically reducing hallucination risks. Technologies like Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) further enhance accuracy by incorporating real-time, verified data. This evolution is crucial for maintaining brand integrity and customer trust in AI-driven interactions.

Take Action: Increase interaction accuracy by using AI management strategies with your knowledge bases.

Shift from traditional knowledge management to AI management by vectorizing your knowledge base, ensuring AI systems are restricted to verified, relevant content. Integrate RAG technology to enhance real-time accuracy, and establish strong governance to maintain trust. This approach will safeguard your brand reputation and improve customer satisfaction.

- Vectorize knowledge bases to control AI's scope of information.
- Integrate RAG technology for real-time, accurate AI responses.
- Implement guardrails to prevent AI from generating misleading information.
- Monitor AI outputs continuously to detect and correct errors.

> "We will see companies make significant investments in underserved areas like elevating knowledge management, revolutionizing the agent workspace, and empowering agents with new skills to coexist with AI."
>
> **Forrester**[2]

SONY

"From zero to 16% of all interactions resolved via self-service in 8 months."

→ Get the Details

[1] Pasto, Riccardo. Cobain, Katy. Et al. (2024). Budget Planning Guide 2025: Customer Experience. Forrester.

[2] McAllister, Christina. Et al. "Generative AI Marks a New Dawn for Contact Centers." Forrester.com 25 June 2024.

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Trend #6:
The Rise of AI Agents and Autonomous Work

AI agents are evolving from simple task executors into fully autonomous entities capable of complex work. These agents combine large language models with tools, memory, and self-optimization capabilities, enabling them to perform tasks traditionally reserved for human knowledge workers.

As they progress, AI agents will collaborate, distribute tasks, and reshape entire workflows, ushering in a new era of intelligent automation.

Take Action: Build a New 24/7 AI-Powered Workforce

AI agents are redefining how work gets done by leveraging advanced capabilities like tool access, memory functions, and self-optimization. Integrating autonomous agents into your operations can extend your workforce's capacity, maintain continuous operations, and enhance efficiency without the need for human intervention.

- Equip AI agents with access to specialized tools to autonomously complete tasks across multiple systems.

- Leverage AI agents' memory to personalize interactions by remembering preferences, past interactions, and tailoring responses for more effective customer service.

- Deploy agents that signal and collaborate with other AI or human workers for optimal task execution.

- Leverage self-optimizing agents that continuously improve performance and outcomes with minimal oversight.

> "By moving from information to action—think virtual coworkers able to complete complex workflows—the technology promises a new wave of productivity and innovation."[1]
> **McKinsey**[1]

ONE
OPEN NETWORK EXCHANGE

"Open Network Exchange's comprehensive approach to leveraging AI-driven insights has yielded impressive results, including a 30% decrease in call volume, a 20% reduction in escalations, and a 15% increase in revenue per call."

▶ Hear their story

[1] Yee, Lareina. Et al. (2024). "Why agents are the next frontier of generative AI." McKinsey.com 24 July 2024.

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Trend #7:
Successful CX Strategies are Digital-First, but NOT Digital-only

In today's rapidly evolving CX landscape, a digital-first approach is essential, but relying solely on digital channels can leave gaps in the customer experience. Customers value the convenience of digital interactions, but there are moments when a human touch, warm voice, or a blended approach is necessary to resolve complex issues or provide personalized care. As customers' expectations continue to rise, successful organizations are those that blend the efficiency of digital with the empathy and adaptability of human interaction, ensuring a seamless and comprehensive experience across all touchpoints.

Take Action: Manage every interaction across your organization on a single platform

Adopt an interaction-centric platform that unifies voice, digital, human, and virtual agent channels, along with both synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication. By managing all touchpoints on a single platform, you ensure that every customer experience flows seamlessly, regardless of the channel or mode of interaction.

- Unify 100% of interactions—voice, digital, human and virtual agent—on one platform.

- Support seamless transitions between virtual and human agents for complex issues.

- Break down siloes between channels to reduce customer effort.

- Support both synchronous and asynchronous interactions for customer convenience. Don't forget change management for customer service teams new to AI.

> "Leaders are acknowledging the need to reshape their digital customer interaction strategy to offer a unified brand experience."
>
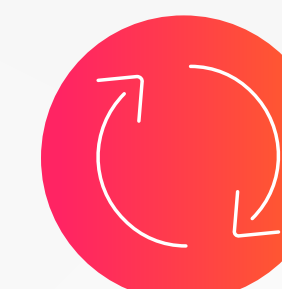> **Forrester** [1]
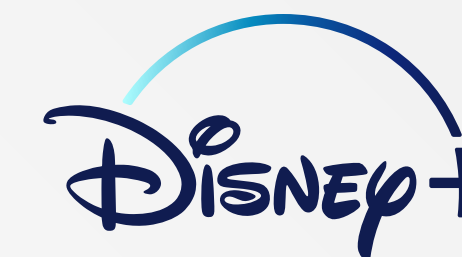
Disney+

Disney Streaming brings four major brands together with NICE CXone

10,000 AGENTS
Using NICE CXone Worldwide

NICE SOLUTIONS
Deployed in Over 100 Countries

4 MAJOR BRANDS
(Disney+. HULU, ESPN+ and Star+)
now in a consistent workflow

"As a global organization, if you're wanting to expand quickly, definitely choose NICE CXone."

Ryan Schweers
Director of Support & Operations

[1] McAllister, Christina. "Introducing Forrester's Digital Customer Interaction Solutions Landscape." Forrester.com, 26 March 2024

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Trend #8:
AI's value will be quantified in profits not promises, in 2025

As the AI hype cycle matures, forward-thinking organizations are realizing tangible returns on their CX AI investments. These innovators are reinvesting their gains into expanded AI initiatives, creating a virtuous cycle of improvement. The key accelerator is a unified platform that centralizes data and connects AI applications across the CX ecosystem. This integration allows for rapid iteration, cross-functional insights, and exponential performance gains. The result is a powerful flywheel effect, where each AI success fuels the next, driving continuous CX enhancement and business growth.

Take Action: Start with high-impact, low-risk AI Initiatives to Fuel Continuous Investment

Kick off your AI journey with a high-impact, low-risk project like Auto-Summarizing Agent Notes. It's easy to measure success and understand the benefits. While not customer-facing, this initiative enhances agent efficiency and generates structured data for personalizing future interactions. Leverage this initial success as a springboard for more ambitious AI projects, laying the groundwork for compounding benefits across your CX operations.

- Start with Auto-Summarizing Notes to drive immediate, measurable results.

- Enhance agent efficiency by reducing manual tasks and improving accuracy.

- Generate structured data to personalize future customer interactions.

- Leverage early success to scale AI initiatives across your CX operations.

> "While it's wise to maintain a realistic perspective, it's equally important to avoid becoming a naysayer. Embracing generative AI and leveraging its capabilities can provide a significant competitive edge and drive your brand forward in this new technological era."
>
> **Opus Research**[1]

[1] Stapleton, Amy. "GenAI Hype Fatigue: Don't Fall for It." OpusResearch.net, 11 July 2024

maps CREDIT UNION

Maps Credit Union boosts efficiency with Enlighten AutoSummary

21.6%
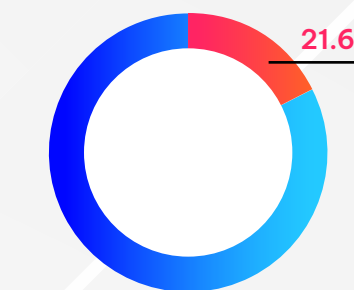
21.6% Increase
In handled calls per agent per hour

35 SECONDS
Reductions in average handle time

90% REDUCTION
In after call work

2,500+
2,500+ Monthly calls diverted from voice to chat

4,000+
Monthly calls resolved in IVR or other self-service models

Read the Story

Trend #9:
SMBs Thrive with UCaaS and CCaaS Convergence

Small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) are increasingly adopting the integration of UCaaS (Unified Communications as a Service) and CCaaS (Contact Center as a Service) to enhance their customer service capabilities. This convergence, years in the making, is now becoming mainstream and accessible to organizations of all sizes. The trend is driven by the ability to seamlessly connect customer-facing and internal communications, enabling better collaboration and faster issue resolution.

Take Action: Stop Overpaying for Collaboration

Communication and collaboration should be efficient and cost-effective. With solutions like NICE's 1CX, organizations can access a fully integrated UCaaS and CCaaS platform for just $5 per user per month. This affordable solution allows your business to enhance both customer service and internal collaboration without overspending. By adopting a cost-effective communication strategy, you can ensure high-quality interactions and seamless teamwork while staying within budget.

- Unify communication channels under a single, budget-friendly platform.

- Boost collaboration and customer service without breaking the bank.

- Reduce unnecessary expenses while maximizing efficiency.

- Empower your team with enterprise-grade solutions at a competitive price.

- Stay competitive with a cost-effective, high-quality communication solution.

"Looking ahead, I expect to see more use cases and applications taking advantage of these integrated capabilities, enabling organizations to broaden their perspective on customer service and the customer experience (CX) to include "CX for everyone.""

Blair Pleasant
President & Principal Analyst, COMMfusion[1]

[1]Pleasant, Blair. "Coming in 2022: A Better Customer Experience for the Masses." NoJitter.com, 5 January 2022

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Trend #10:
New AI-centric CX benchmarks will emerge in 2025

As AI becomes integral to customer experience (CX), traditional KPIs are evolving. Businesses are beginning to prioritize metrics that reflect the performance and impact of AI-driven interactions. These new KPIs go beyond simple efficiency measures, focusing on the quality of AI-human collaboration, customer satisfaction with AI responses, and the effectiveness of AI in resolving complex issues. The shift towards AI-centric metrics highlights the need for businesses to adapt their measurement strategies to capture the value AI brings to CX fully.

Embrace AI Observability to Measure the ROI of AI

In the era of AI-driven CX, it's crucial to rethink how success is measured. Traditional metrics may no longer fully capture AI's impact on customer interactions. Implementing AI observability is key to tracking new KPIs that reflect AI effectiveness, such as AI-assisted resolution rates, customer satisfaction with AI interactions, and the types of intents AI escalates to human agents. By focusing on these emerging metrics, you can better understand and optimize AI's role in enhancing the overall customer experience.

- Track agent acceptance rates of AI-generated recommendations.

- Evaluate AI's impact on complex issue resolution.

- Test the performance of AI routing versus traditional routing methods.

- Assess customer satisfaction with AI-driven interactions.

- Identify patterns in intents escalated from AI to human agents.

"AI observability offers a path forward for organizations to realize AI's transformative potential and drive business value while minimizing risk."

Forbes[1]

[1] Saha, Debanjan. Forbes Technology Council. "Effective AI Decision Making Starts with Visibility and Trust." Forbes.com 08 August 2024
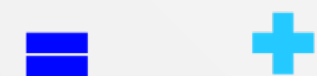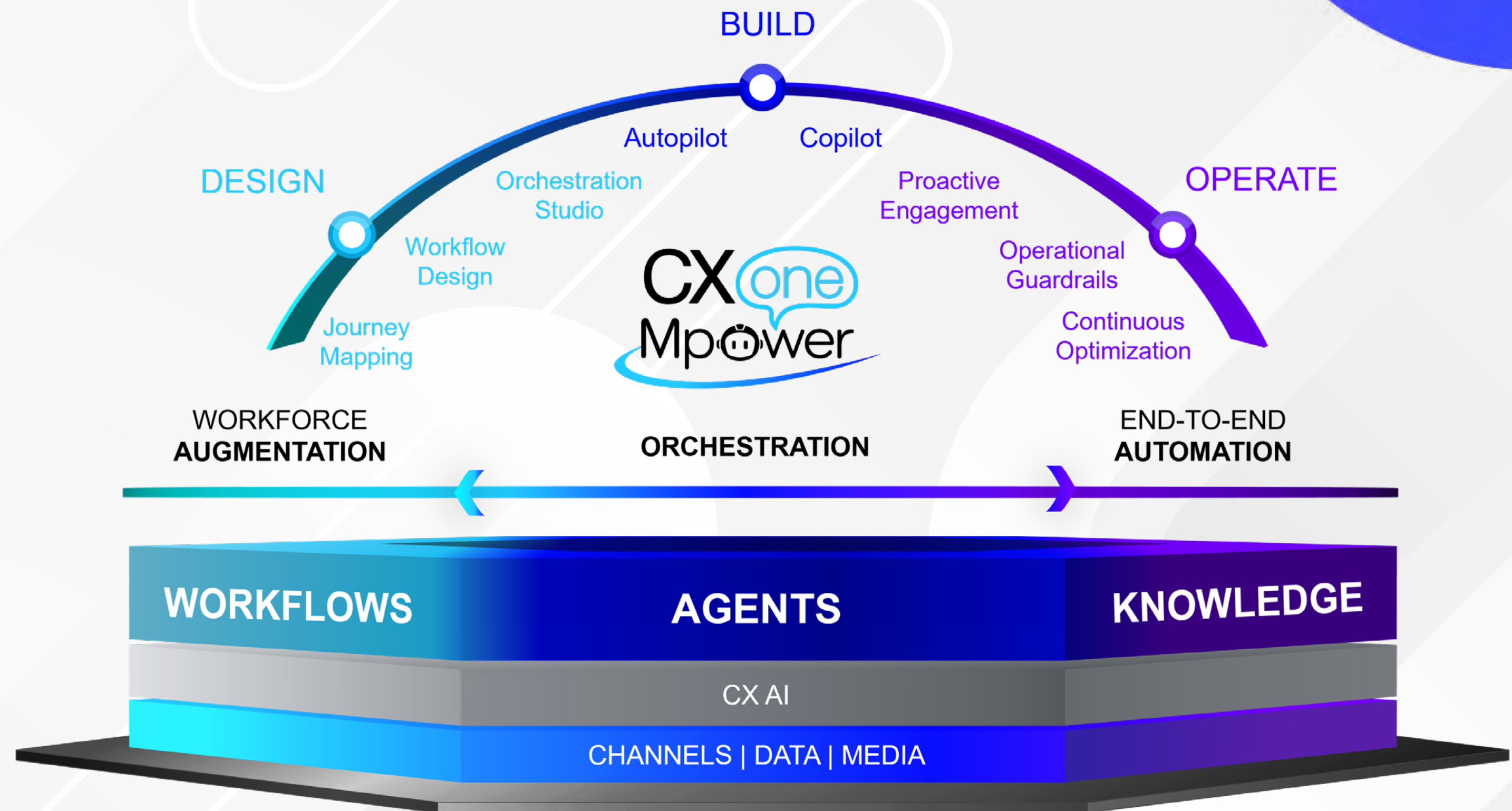
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How CXone Mpower can help.

CXone Mpower delivers a complete, connected, and intelligent CX AI hyper platform that equips organizations with everything needed to provide extraordinary service. Designed to help businesses of all sizes deliver exceptional customer experiences, CXone Mpower delivers end-to-end automation across the entire customer service journey. By unifying workflows, agents, and knowledge all on one platform, CXone Mpower transforms traditional customer service into a proactive AI-powered experience at unmatched scale.

CXone Mpower breaks down silos between customer facing and back-office operations, ensuring faster resolutions and greater continuity across all touchpoints. This unified approach meets the ultimate priority of efficiency and elevated customer satisfaction.

As the leader in cloud contact center solutions, CXone Mpower is the platform of choice for organizations looking to make CX AI a reality and achieve measurable results fast. Whether you're just starting your CX transformation or looking to take your customer experience to the next level, CXone Mpower provides the complete, connected, intelligent platform you need to succeed.

Explore success stories from top brands and learn how they are achieving results with NICE CX AI.

> See success in action

BUILD

Autopilot   Copilot

DESIGN

Orchestration Studio

Workflow Design

Proactive Engagement

OPERATE

Operational Guardrails

Journey Mapping

Continuous Optimization

CXone Mpower

WORKFORCE **AUGMENTATION**

ORCHESTRATION

END-TO-END **AUTOMATION**

WORKFLOWS   **AGENTS**   **KNOWLEDGE**

CX AI

CHANNELS | DATA | MEDIA

Ready to get started?

Are you ready to take advantage of cloud, AI, and advanced CX applications? NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center –and beyond. Imagine the possibilities when your customers are effortlessly guided to quickly resolve their needs directly on your digital properties or matched with a well-prepared agent—every time and on every channel. Plus, with predictive analytics and embedded artificial intelligence (AI), your team can resolve issues faster, personalize each experience – and forge deeper loyalty with each customer.

> **Speak to an Expert**

About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center – and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform – and elevate – every customer interaction.

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