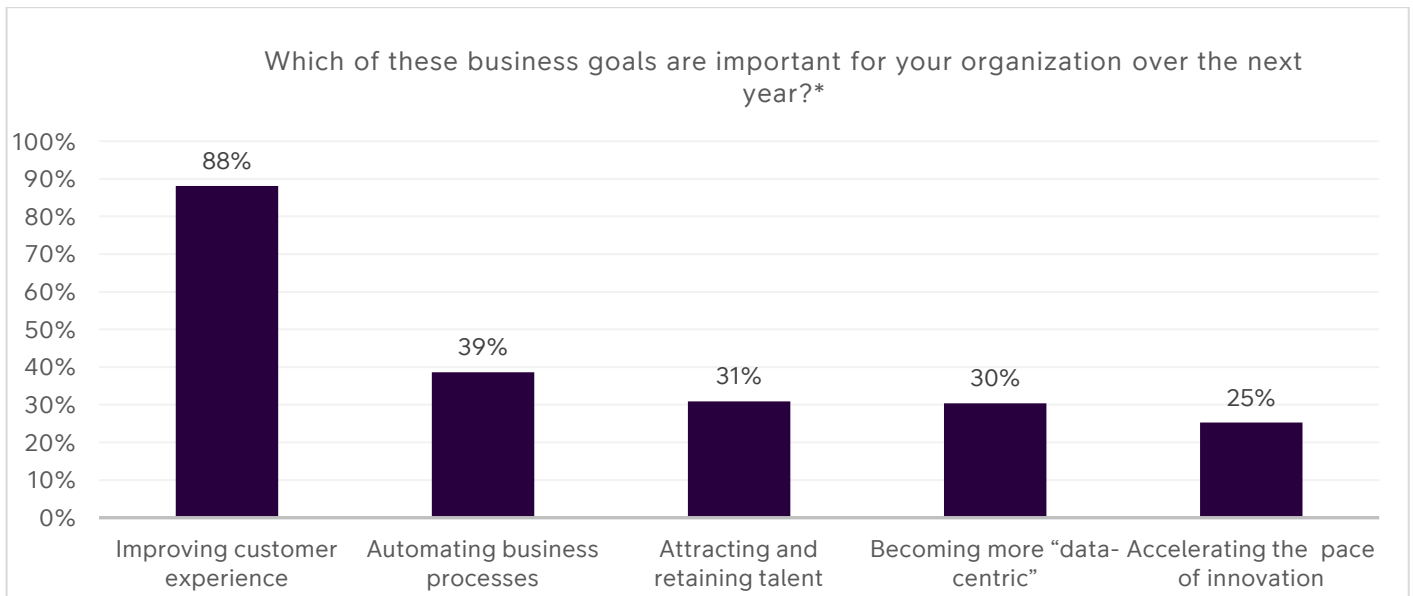# Customer Meeting Insights 2023

During Telia ACE Roadshow in the fall of 2022 we conducted our traditional survey and asked the participants a number of questions about their view of the current situation in the customer service industry, and what questions and areas of development are prioritized for them. The customer care survey responders are active in different industries and organizations, but all work in roles where the customer, citizen or the patient experience is in focus.

In this report we present the survey results along with our analysis.

Focus on the customer experience

We asked what business goals that are the most important for 2023, and 88% said that they prioritize to enhance the customer experience. 39% stated that they prioritize to develop automation and business processes during 2023, and 25% that they are planning to accelerate the pace of innovation. 30% state that they want to work in a smarter way with their data and to become more insight driven.

The answers are not surprising, as the technological development is accelerating, and the question of how we can use new technology to achieve our business goals becomes more relevant by the minute. But a good customer experience is not all about technology. It requires the right people doing the right things, and 31% says that an important goal for 2023 is to attract and retain staff.

Which of these business goals are important for your organization over the next year?*

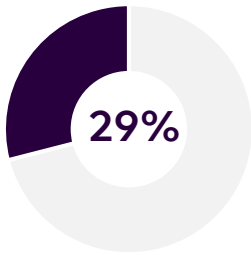| Category	Value
Improving customer experience	88%
Automating business processes	39%
Attracting and retaining talent	31%
Becoming more "data-centric"	30%
Accelerating the pace of innovation	25%

*) Multiple answers possible

Reasons for implementing AI technology

We asked about the driving force behind the implementation of AI solutions. 65% state that the goal is to enhance the customer experience, 56% that they want to achieve a higher level of efficiency in the customer meeting, and 39% that they want to use the data to become more insight driven. There is also an interest in AI as a vitalizing force, and 22% says that one of the goals is to promote creativity and innovation.

One third of the responders answered that it is important to retain and attract new personnel, but only 3% answered that they intend to use AI to achieve that goal. Later in this report you can learn how AI can make the workday more fun and be used to create new career paths.
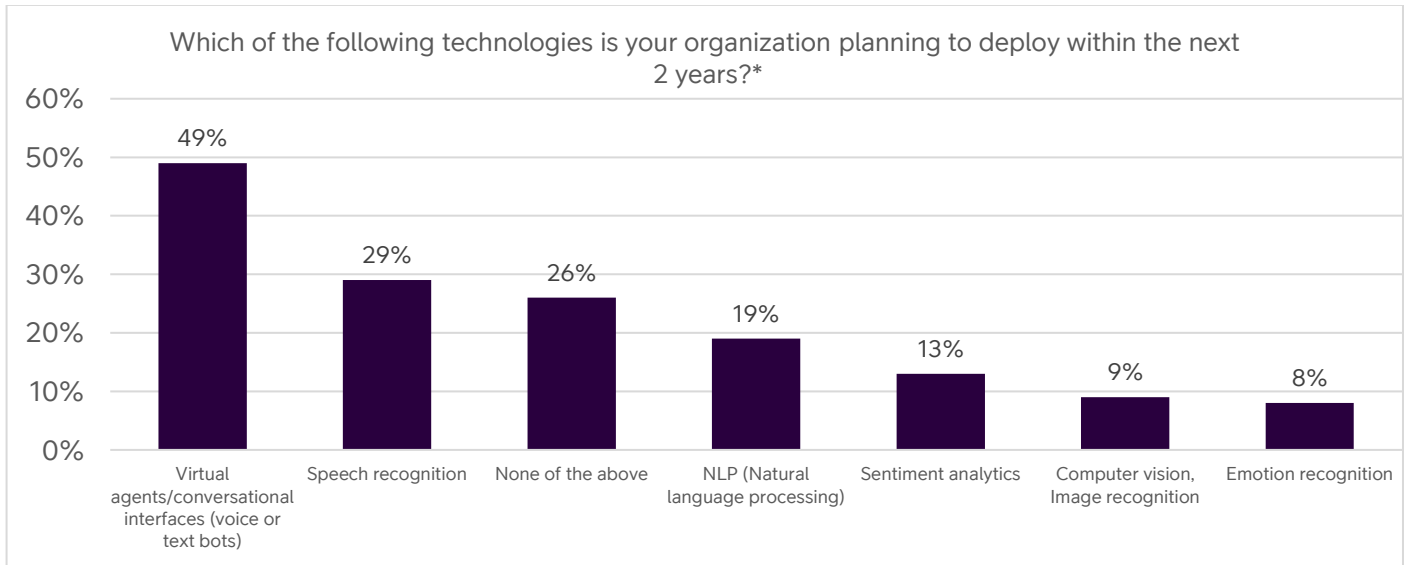
What are the most important purposes for which your organization is implementing or is planning to implement AI technologies?*

Category	Value
Improving customer experience and satisfaction	65%
Improving operational efficiencies	56%
Becoming more data centric	39%
Boosting creativity and innovation	22%
Automating business processes	16%
Enhancing sales and marketing effectiveness	13%
Launching new products and services	13%
Rapidly responding to market demand and disruption	13%
Growing revenue	11%
Expanding to new markets – segments or regions	3%
Hiring and retaining talent	3%

AI: Where we are and where we are headed

29%

Many are already aware of the potential of AI or determined to learn more about the applications. 29% answered that they already have implemented a service with AI, 14% that they have implemented several and 9% that they are in the proof of concept or prototype stage. 54% answered that they are working actively to learn more about the opportunities with AI.

Currently the interest is the greatest for conversational AI, which means automated solutions that interact with the customers via speech. 49% answered that they plan to implement virtual agents or conversational interfaces within the next two years, and 29% that there are plans to implement a solution for speech recognition that translates spoken language to text.

29% have implemented AI

Which of the following technologies is your organization planning to deploy within the next 2 years?*

Technology	%
Virtual agents/conversational interfaces (voice or text bots)	49%
Speech recognition	29%
None of the above	26%
NLP (Natural language processing)	19%
Sentiment analytics	13%
Computer vision, Image recognition	9%
Emotion recognition	8%

If you use conversational AI together with robotic process automation (RPA) there are additional gains to be made. If, for example, the voicebot understands that the customer wants to know the status of an errand or the account balance, the RPA can fetch information from an underlying system and answer the customer's question automatically.

AI-driven analysis: A power factor for customer service

About 10% of the survey responders stated that they are ready to explore how AI can help them work smarter with data. Structured analysis of customer interaction data makes it possible to understand exactly what happens, from the moment when the customer reaches out, until the errand is solved, such as why a bot turns a call over to an agent.

A contact center that works in a data driven and insight driven way will achieve a more prominent role in the organization. Because when we not only see what happens, but also explore and find an explanation to why it happens, the organization can take the right steps to address the root cause of a problem. Insights extracted from customer interactions will stretch beyond web shop visit statistics and purchasing patterns: What makes they happy or angry, what don't they understand, and what do they really mean?

Problems that reach the contact center point out shortcomings in other parts of the organization, such as a product of poor quality, or faulty deliveries. A lot of the times a little detective work is required to figure out the root case or to discern a pattern, such as the fact that customers who ask for a copy of an invoice do so because they believe that the request will extend their credit for another 30 days.

And who are the ones who best understand the customers, and have a feeling for what different patterns mean? Well, it's the contact center staff! Data in combination with the experience and competence that the personnel who meet your customers, citizens or patients have will position the contact center as a catalyst for insight driven business development regarding efficiency and customer experience.

Does lack of competence stand in the way?

For AI solutions to become successful, the organization needs to invest time and energy in them. 28% of the survey responders state that they lack people with the right competence to implement AI solutions in a successful way.

With the right solutions you do not have to be an expert to succeed. At the Swedish trade union Byggnads, two member advisers without any significant IT experience, have trained a chatbot and a voice bot with a great success. So rather than turning to IT experts, let your customer service stars do the job – as they will create bots that reflect their own competence and personality.

Security & Compliance

Many see the possibilities that come with AI, but 60% of the responders answered that they are concerned about questions regarding information security and management of personal data. 14% stated that they are unsure of how to apply the regulatory frameworks.

And in the current situation it is perfectly reasonable to experience concern. For the past few years, laws and regulations have changed significantly, as well as the way we deliver IT platforms and store data. The threat level aimed at the Nordic countries has also increased, and cyber criminals are more numerous and have access to vast amounts of resources.

The decision of exploring self service solutions and AI should be based on whether there is a good business case - and not by a hazy worry regarding security and laws. Information security and regulatory requirements are questions that need to be addressed, but there are solutions that will work even for organizations that operate in regulated industries. Invite one or several suppliers and ask them to help you sort out what the laws say, and what will be a good fit for your needs.
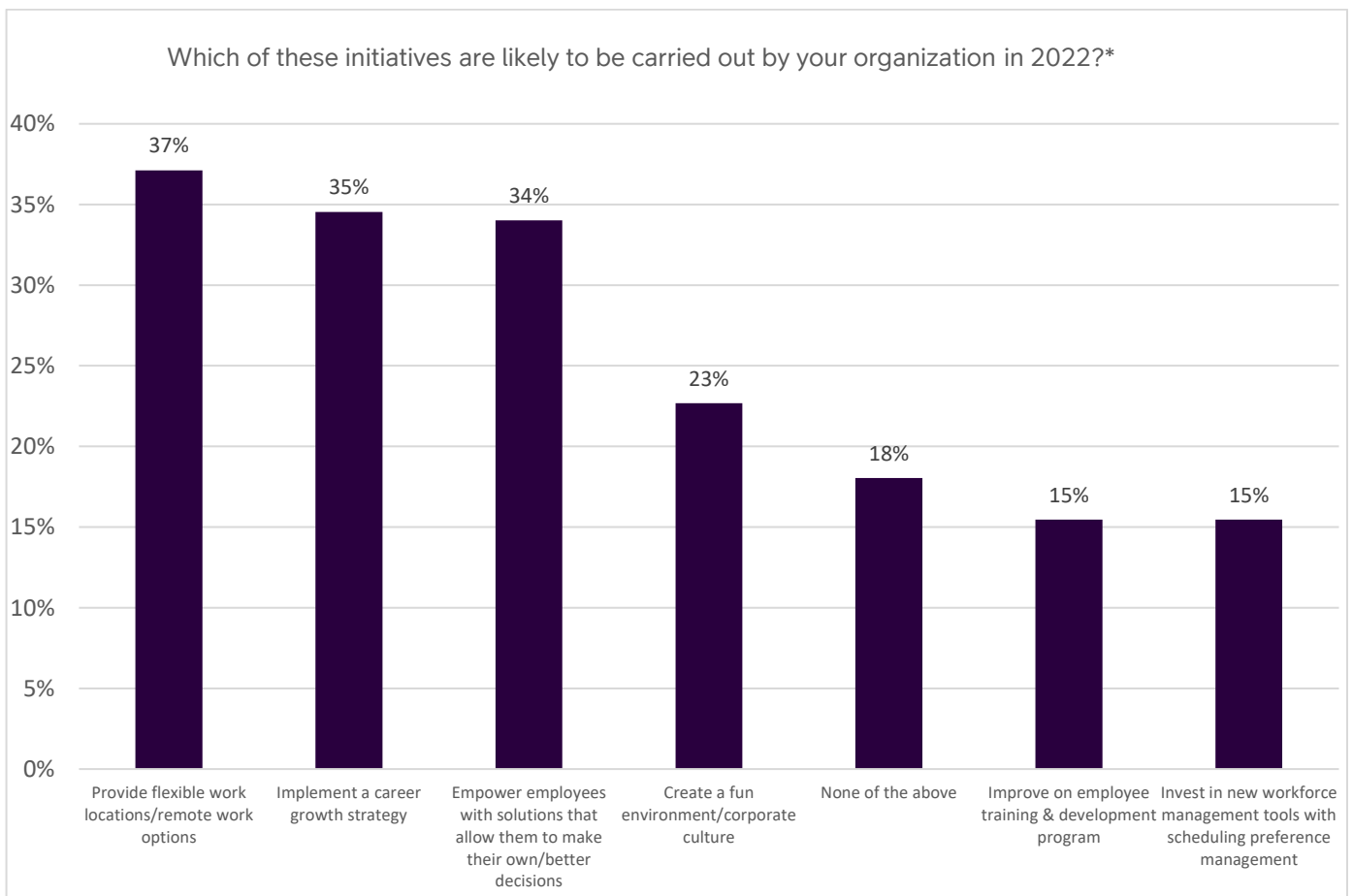
Employees want flexibility and fun work tasks

When we asked what makes the customer facing employees happy on the job, 57% answered that the personnel want to be able to work remotely, 54% said that a flexible schedule is a key factor, and 52% that the work tasks are important to enjoy the workday.

In your opinion, what areas are your organization's customer-facing employees and contact center agents happy with?*

Area	Percentage
Remote working	57%
Flexible schedules	54%
Job responsibilities	52%
Corporate culture	27%
Investments in new workforce management tools	15%

And to make their employees happy, 37% stated that they either offer flexible schedules or remote work, or are working to make it happen. 35% answered that they are exploring the opportunity of creating new career paths in customer service and 34% that they are planning on offering smart tools for making the workday easier.

Which of these initiatives are likely to be carried out by your organization in 2022?*

Initiative	Percentage
Provide flexible work locations/remote work options	37%
Implement a career growth strategy	35%
Empower employees with solutions that allow them to make their own/better decisions	34%
Create a fun environment/corporate culture	23%
None of the above	18%
Improve on employee training & development program	15%
Invest in new workforce management tools with scheduling preference management	15%

AI for a more fun workday and new career paths

AI technology can contribute in a several ways to make coworkers happier and staying longer. However, only 3% of the responders stated that they have considered implementing AI solutions to attract and retain staff.

Self service solutions and robotization can perform the simple and repetitive tasks, which means that the human workers can focus on more stimulating tasks. It also creates new career paths and assignments, such as chatbot coach, content editor of the smart database and robotization expert.

AI and structured data analysis also open the door to roles in analytics, quality management and business development, and the contact center will become a source for insights that generate value for the entire organization.

For more information, visit us on:

https://ace-showcase.com/

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