The Role of AI in the Future of WFM

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Today's Agenda

- Trends Impacting Contact Center Workforce Activities

- The Role of AI in the Future of WFM

- How to Streamline Scheduling with Innovation

- Real-life AI Success Stories

- Q&A

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Research Background

- ***Fact-based, independent*** *research focused on customer care trends and best practices*

- *431 organizations separately surveyed*

- *Global study with participants from all industries*

- *Participating firms include small, mid-size, and large organizations*

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The ROI of AI in WFM

Improvement in **agent utilization rate** 64%

Improvement in **agent productivity** 39%

Improvement in **customer satisfaction rate** 46%

Improvement in **service costs** 2.5x

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Key Learnings

- *Agents' roles and headcount are changing with the greater use of AI. Savvy use of technology allows firms to more efficiently use their workforce to meet customer demand.*

- *Despite growing AI adoption, agent churn remains a costly problem for business leaders to solve to attain CX objectives.*

- *Strategic use of AI in WFM helps improve forecast accuracy, increase utilization rates, grow CSAT scores, and reduce costs.*

- *Balance the pursuit of efficiency gains with enhancing agent experiences through next-generation best practices for scheduling.*

Trends: Top Contact Center Pressures

Struggle in finding and retaining qualified customer support staff
- 2024: 38%
- 2020: 29%
- 2019: 36%

Struggle in implementing new technologies (i.e., AI) & channels to address changing customer behavior
- 2024: 31%
- 2020: 31%
- 2019: 24%

Increasing contact center operational costs
- 2024: 28%
- 2020: 23%
- 2019: 28%

Customers are empowered with greater visibility into products / services and experiences of others
- 2024: 26%
- 2020: 31%
- 2019: 38%

Lack of integration between enterprise systems resulting in lack of end-to-end visibility into the customer journey
- 2024: 21%
- 2020: 20%
- 2019: 21%

Inability to deliver seamless customer experiences across all channels
- 2024: 16%
- 2020: 23%
- 2019: 14%

Struggle with monetizing service interactions
- 2024: 13%
- 2020: 17%
- 2019: 18%

Legend:
- 2024
- 2020
- 2019

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, May 2024

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Challenges Affecting WFO Programs Are More Complex Than Ever Before

Challenge	All Respondents
Customer demand for better service	36%
Unpredictable customer traffic resulting in overstaffing or understaffing	26%
High turnover of top-tier agents	24%
Lack of insight	23%
Adapting to deliver customer care across multiple channels	21%
Changing workforce demographics makes it harder to manage agents with different expectations & capabilities	21%
Competition for skilled agents	21%
Increasing labor costs due to inflation and economic uncertainty	20%
Remote & hybrid work programs	6%

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, May 2024

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Best-in-Class Prioritize AI & Automation in Their WFO Programs

Increase the frequency of agent training activities — Best-in-Class: 36%, All Others: 25%

Automate key activities (e.g., customer traffic forecasting, agent scheduling and task management) — Best-in-Class: 28%, All Others: 25%

Hire agents based on competencies of most successful agents — Best-in-Class: 21%, All Others: 18%

Use AI to empower agents with real-time contextual guidance — Best-in-Class: 14%, All Others: 12%

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, May 2024

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AI Forecasting

The WFM Challenge

- "As a WFM Analyst, I should be able to…forecast and schedule for teams handling mixed work across multiple unique lines of business

- Multiple lines of business with variable arrival patterns

Our NICE Solution

Moving
Weighted Average

Exponential
Smoothing
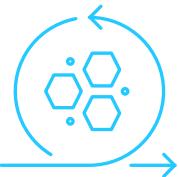
Box-Jenkins
ARIMA
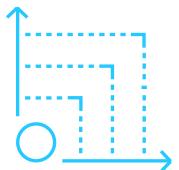
Multi-Linear
Smoothing Regression

**Can't Decide? We'll Automatically
Select the "Best Pick"**

Why Are CX Leaders Using AI?

Top Reasons for Using AI (n=610)	2024	2023	2020	2019
Improve our ability to use data more intelligently in customer interactions	61%	59%	61%	58%
Reduce inefficiencies related to manual processes	40%	32%	33%	19%
Empower employees with more actionable insights	33%	38%	29%	40%
Reduce labor costs by decreasing headcount through automation	29%	33%	34%	37%
Enable customers to self-serve where they can, in the preferred channel	20%	19%	N/A	N/A
We hear our competitors use it; we need to do the same to keep up	3%	3%	8%	5%

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Firms Using AI Enjoy Superior Agent Productivity & Utilization

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, December 2024

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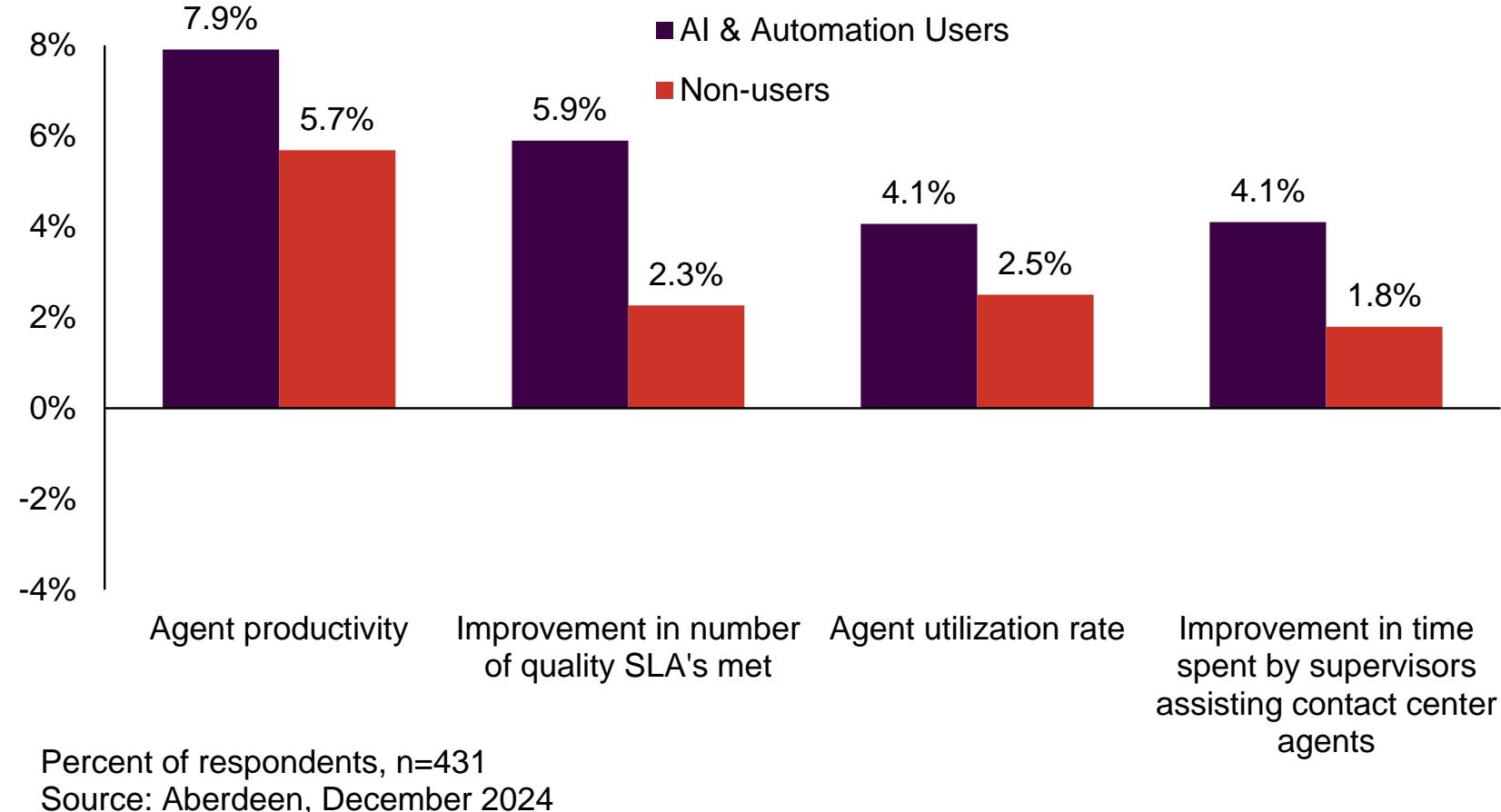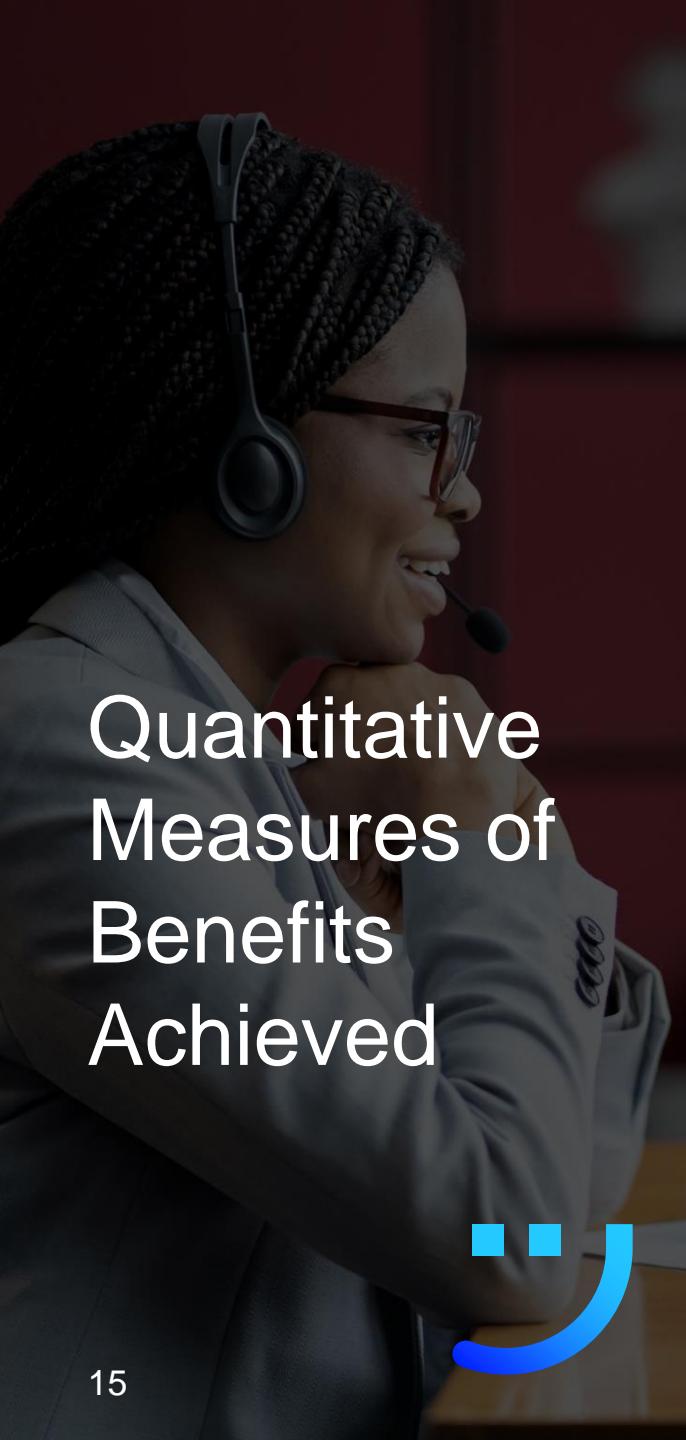
## Quantitative Measures of Benefits Achieved
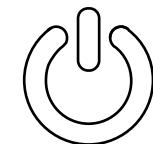
45% + Improvement in Agent Retention
25% improvement scheduling satisfaction
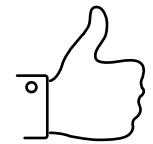
**20% Improvement in Service Level**
with 10% increase in occupancy
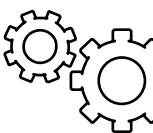
10% Reduction in Administrative Processing Workload
much more opportunity exists as additional automation is turned on

32% Year over Year Increase
in VTO offers accepted ($600K annualized benefit)
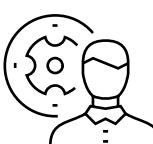
80% YOY Reduction in Overtime Hours,
driven in part by more effective intraday process & ability to call OT closer to the time of need

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AI Users Lead with CX Gains
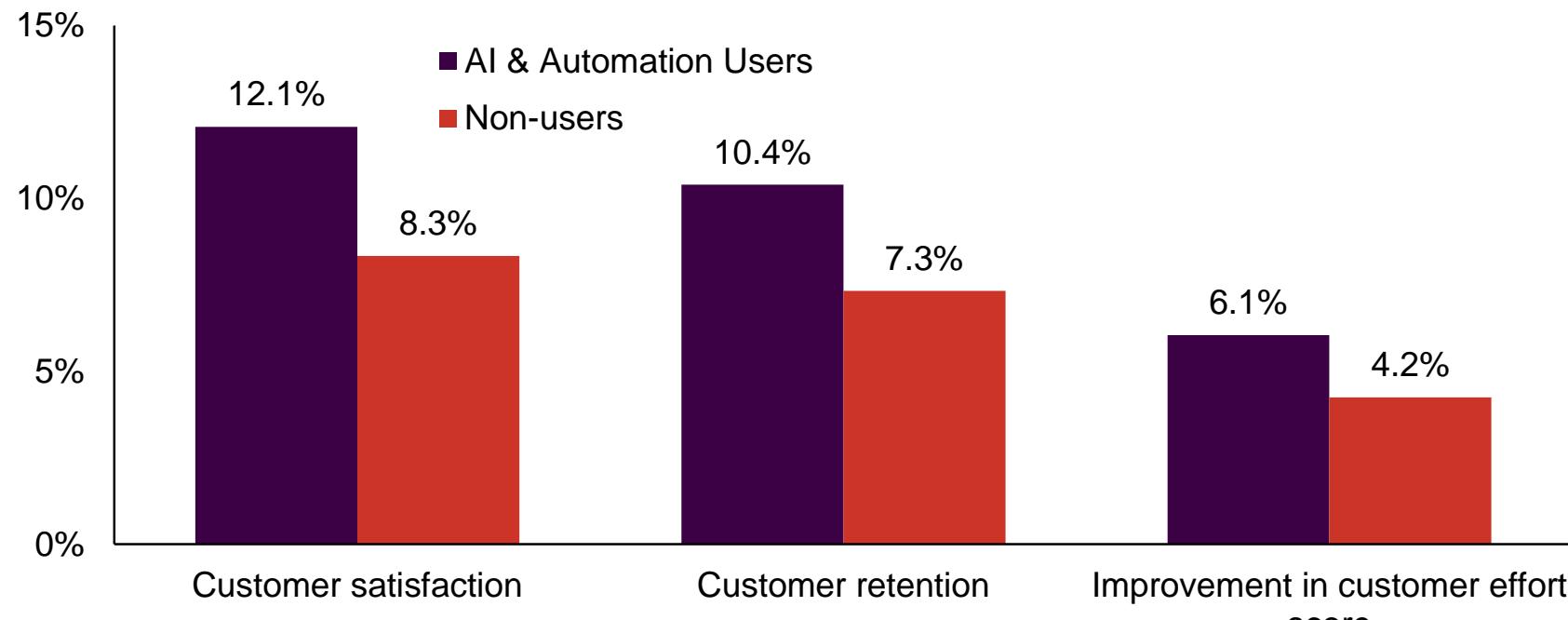
Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, December 2024

Companies with AI Enjoy Drive Cost Efficiency & Greater Revenue Growth

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, December 2024

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KPN

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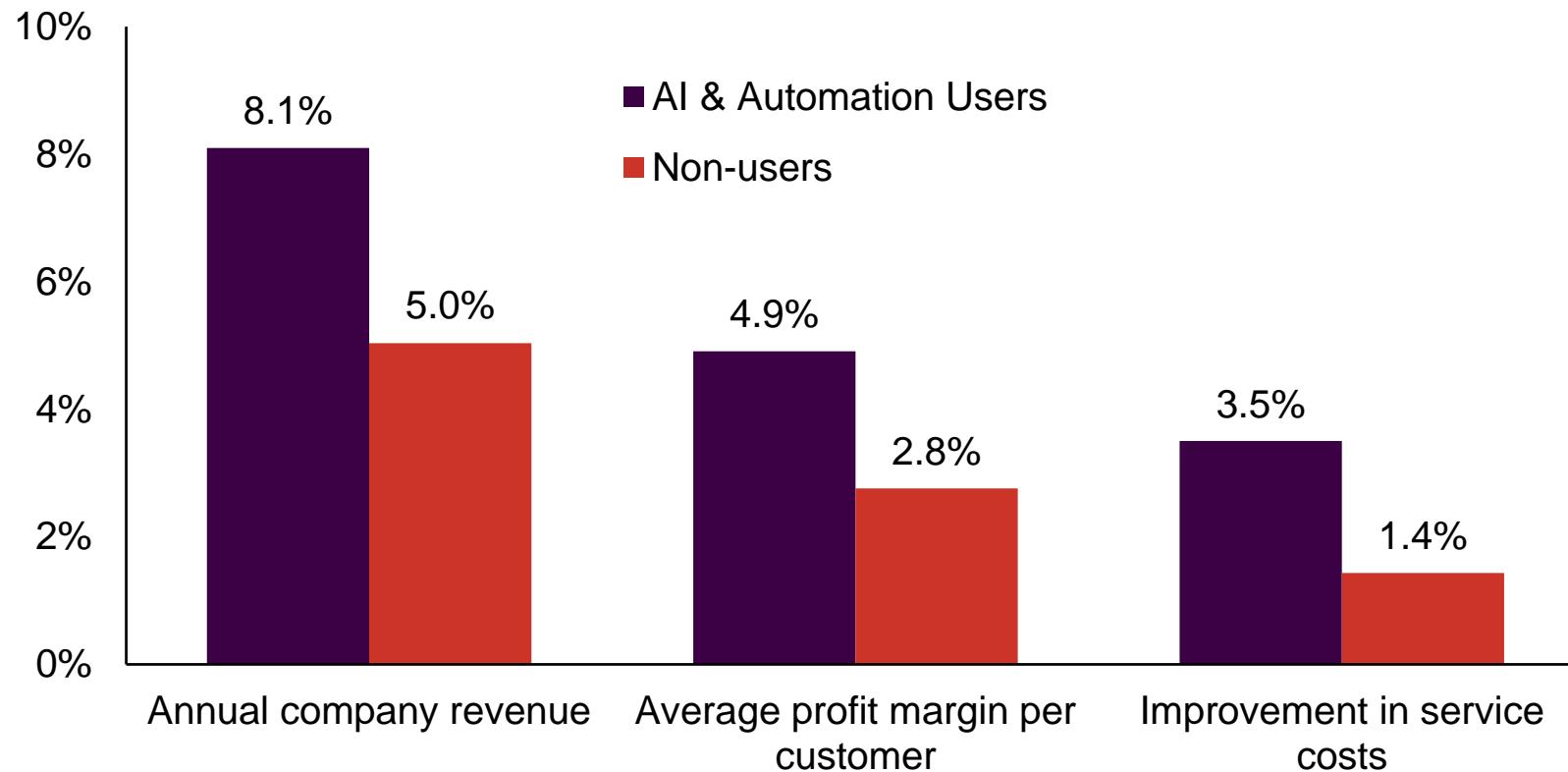
Background

KPN, a leading supplier of telecommunications and IT, aspires to be the reliable digital partner for private customers, business users, and telecom providers in the Netherlands. The company serves customers at home and abroad with leading-edge and fine-meshed fixed and mobile networks for telephony, data ,and television, coupled with an excellent digital customer experience. KPN is at the forefront of the digitization of the Netherlands with modernized connectivity via 5G and fiber optic.

- 2501-5000 employees use solution

NICE Solutions

- NICE Workforce Management
- NICE Employee Engagement Manager
- NICE Value Realization Services

Impact

- Agent absence reduced from 3% to 1%
- Evening "reachability" improved by 6%
- Agent attrition reduced from 15% to 5%
- ASA reduced by 300 seconds
- Interval accuracy between 90% to 110% for half of all intervals
- Forecast accuracy increase ranging from 1% to 4% on most important CTs

"Without EEM, an agent is very dependent on the team leader to be available to answer questions or request leave on short notice. Now, they are fully enabled and empowered to swap with other colleagues. This has improved employee satisfaction and the company's attrition. There's now more possibility to align their private and work lives."
– Evert van der Zee, WFM team lead, KPN
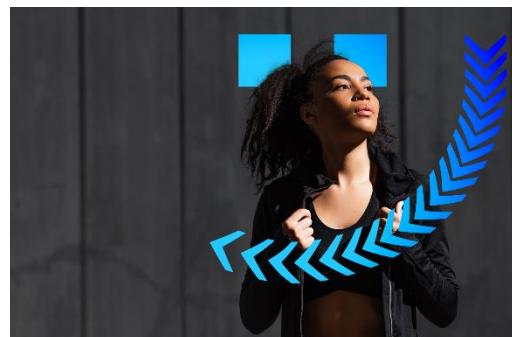
Solution Highlights

Unique migration complicates capacity planning, scheduling, and forecasting
- Double migration to NICE WFM and incumbent Cloud system impacted operational efficiency. Different system configurations required specialized expertise to integrate, so KPN struggled to fully implement and operationalize WFM's AI-enabled capabilities
- Data discrepancies during migration led to distrust and manual processes
- KPN turned to NICE VRS to guide configuration process, provide counsel on operations and governance and prepare their people and systems for change

**Intelligent automation of WFM processes drives operational alignment**
- Adoption of WFM and EEM solutions streamlined scheduling and AI forecasting and gave KPN insight into occupancy, capacity, and intraday demand
- Agents were equipped with training on how the solution works, how to leverage the AI functionality to improve data accuracy, how to use the automized "call me later" tool, and how to manage intraday change
- Equipped with this guidance, agents' confidence and trust in WFM improved exponentially

AI-powered functionality improves agent satisfaction, flexibility, and accuracy
- Agents can self-manage their own availability and view schedules on the go
- Automated "call me later" functionality enables customers to request call backs at their convenience, in alignment with agent availability (at an interval level)
- Forecasting team conducts AI analysis to develop insights into operations
- Agents spend less time on manual efforts and more time on strategic endeavors to deliver a seamless digital journey to customers

How to Streamline Scheduling with Innovation

Factors Impacting Agent Experiences

Fit to job requirements — 36%
Technology tools facilitating the ability to conduct day-to-day tasks — 32%
Sense of empowerment in addressing customer needs — 32%
Compensation and benefits — 24%
Lack of control over work schedule — 17%
Determined career track for advancement — 17%
Poor performance — 16%
Lack of continuous coaching & feedback — 15%
Non-financial rewards (e.g. remote work, extra time-off) — 9%

■ All Respondents

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, May 2024

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84%

of contact centers are _not_ satisfied with the accuracy of their customer traffic forecasts for CX channels.

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Unique Algorithms for Omni Channel Forecasting...

Work is No Longer Sequential & Contiguous

Interruptions

Synchronous

Customer Interaction 1

Customer Interaction 2

Agent's Focus Changes

Customer Interaction 3

Asynchronous

Elevation
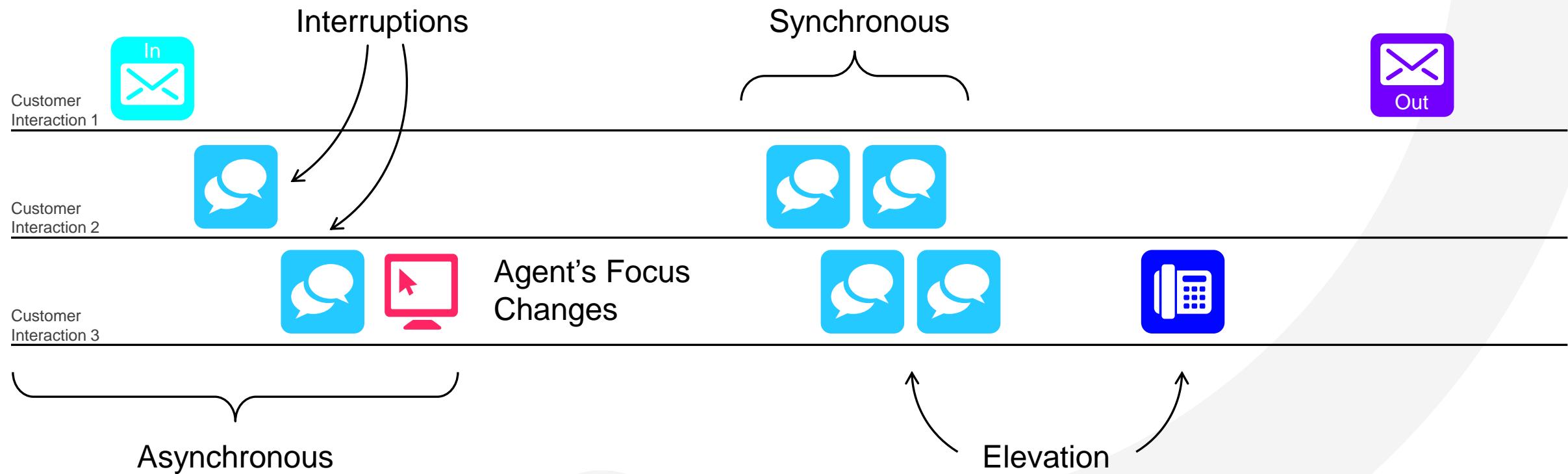
Typical Omni Channel Agent Day

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Top Ways Contact Centers Currently Use (And Plan to Use) AI

Generating data insights & analytics — Best-in-Class: 61%, All Others: 35%
Customer self-service — Best-in-Class: 55%, All Others: 53%
Fraud prevention — Best-in-Class: 52%, All Others: 43%
Process automation — Best-in-Class: 52%, All Others: 34%
Knowledge management — Best-in-Class: 51%, All Others: 39%
Customer authentication — Best-in-Class: 49%, All Others: 46%
Employee coaching & training — Best-in-Class: 40%, All Others: 40%
Real-time employee guidance — Best-in-Class: 45%, All Others: 33%
Sales performance management — Best-in-Class: 33%, All Others: 18%

Legend: Best-in-Class, All Others

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, May 2024

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AI Users Excel in Scheduling Agility & Flexibility

Chart: Percent of respondents showing AI & Automation Users (dark purple) vs Non-users (red)

- **Ability to adjust schedules to accommodate new & unexpected staffing needs**: AI & Automation Users 91%, Non-users 78%
- **Use self-service activity data when forecasting agent demand**: AI & Automation Users 74%, Non-users 51%
- **Calculate the financial impact of agent overstaffing & understaffing when scheduling agents**: AI & Automation Users 72%, Non-users 55%
- **Forecast agent demand using historical & real-time data**: AI & Automation Users 63%, Non-users 34%

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, December 2024

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Flexible Scheduling Is Critical for Agents

Flex breaks and lunchtimes **65%**

Flexible number of hours to work during the week **61%**

Variable shift lengths during the week **54%**

Pre-approved extra hours and self-swaps between my scheduled days **53%**

Flexibility in the days that I am off during my work week **49%**

Access to request schedule changes 24/7 **47%**

Split-shift options **30%**
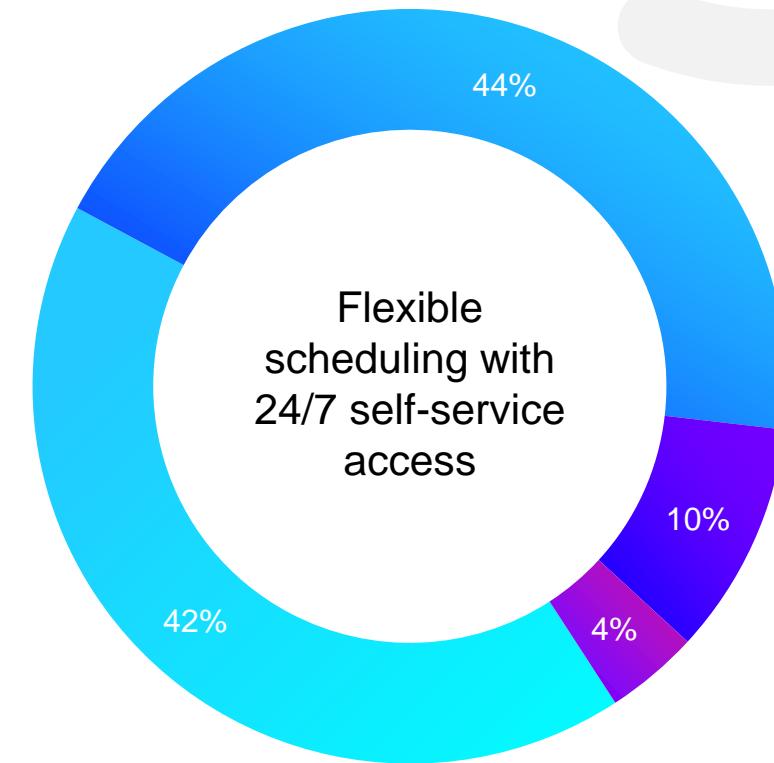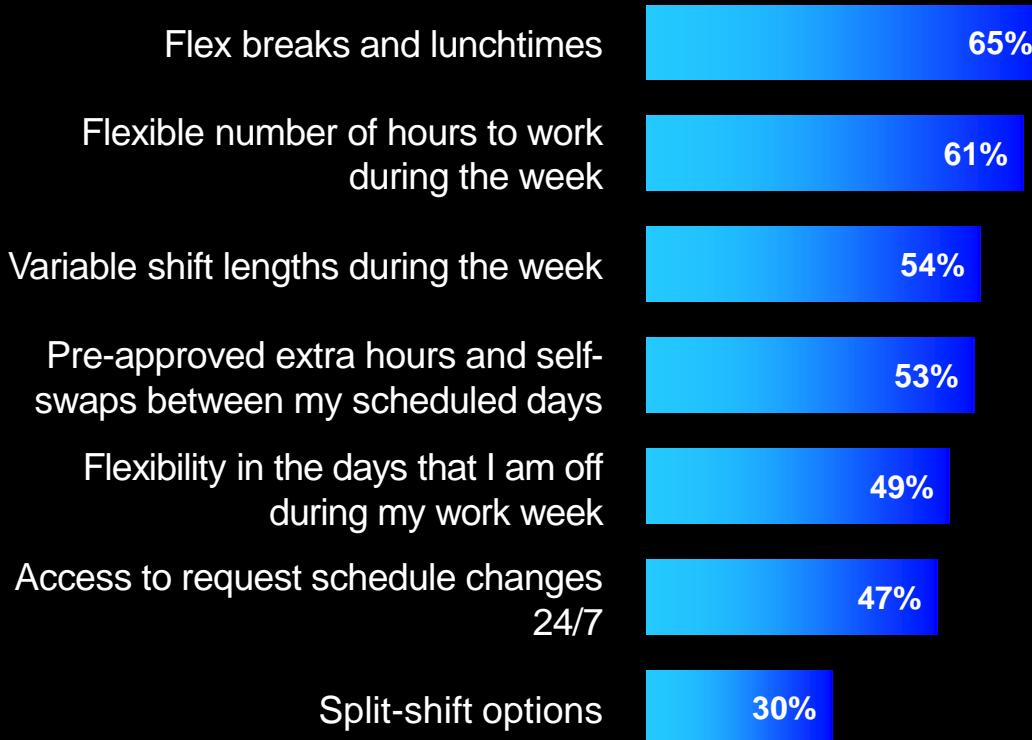
The most important aspects of flexible scheduling

■ High impact   ■ Moderate impact
■ Low impact   ■ No impact

Flexible scheduling with 24/7 self-service access

44%

42%

10%

4%

Factors that affect the decision to keep a position

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AI Helps Enrich Employee Experiences in Scheduling

Legend:
- AI & Automation Users (dark purple)
- Non-users (red)

Category	AI & Automation Users	Non-users
Provide agents with flexibility to align work schedule based on personal preferences & needs	82%	68%
Notify agents of overtime and voluntary time off, even when out of office	78%	66%
Enable agents with self-service capabilities to manage schedules	75%	51%
Allow agents to post their time preferences	74%	52%
Enable agents to bid on shifts and swap shifts with others	66%	46%

Percent of respondents, n=431
Source: Aberdeen, December 2024

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Rules Monitoring Dashboard and AI Recommendations:

Usability and Accessibility

Accessible interface to show status and execution history of all Rules.

Tracking and Monitoring
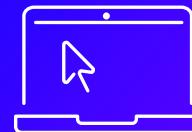
Detailed summary for workforce managers to view business conditions and actions taken.

Assistance with AI
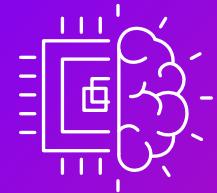
AI Based recommendations to know which rules to configure.

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Key Learnings

- *Agents' roles and headcount are changing with the greater use of AI. Savvy use of technology allows firms to more efficiently use their workforce to meet customer demand.*

- *Despite growing AI adoption, agent churn remains a costly problem for business leaders to solve to attain CX objectives.*

- *Strategic use of AI in WFM helps improve forecast accuracy, increase utilization rates, grow CSAT scores, and reduce costs.*

- *Balance the pursuit of efficiency gains with enhancing agent experiences through next-generation best practices for scheduling.*

Thank You!
Questions?

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