daktela

Customer Care Insights 2027

Customer care leaders' plans
in the CEE region

by daktela



Customer care is becoming an increasingly important part of business success. With rising expectations and new technologies, the right strategic decisions matter more than ever. Everyone asks the same things: Are we setting the right priorities? Are we missing the AI train? And what is the competition investing in?

Most companies, however, deal with these questions only internally, with nothing to compare against. **We decided to change that and open the discussion to the people who actually run contact centres**, from customer support managers and Heads of Customer Care to CTOs, COOs and business owners.

The result is an open view from **132 professionals at successful companies across the CEE region**, who shared where their investments, team development, and use of AI and new technologies in customer care will be heading in 2027. Alongside concrete plans, they also openly named their concerns and the areas where they see the biggest opportunities for customer care to grow.

I believe this data will serve you as a useful benchmark and help you plan and decide where to direct energy and investment in your own company in 2027.

Jiří Havlíček CEO, Daktela

KEY FINDINGS

AI as priority #1

For 75% of companies, AI and automation is one of their top three priorities for 2027. 77% plan to invest in it – more than in any other area.

Speed as the main competitive advantage

78% of industry professionals see speed of response and resolution as the main source of competitive advantage. A human approach and empathy follow right behind at 56%.

Systems and trust hold things back, not budget

42% of companies say integration with existing systems is holding back their AI ambitions, and 40% cite concerns about AI accuracy and customer acceptance. The obstacle isn't money – it's systems and trust.

People stay, AI takes over routine

Most companies (63%) want to keep their team size and handle growing request volumes with the help of AI. Only 15% plan to cut headcount through automation. The direction of investment matches this – 72% of companies with a concrete AI plan are targeting agent support first, not automating customer contact.

Striking a balance between AI and people

Customer care in 2027 won't rely on bots and automation alone. Although automation speeds up request handling, a human approach and empathy remain the second most cited source of competitive advantage for 56% of companies. Beyond automation itself, companies will also need to balance it with the human factor.

Care as a revenue generator

71% of leaders agree that by 2027 customer care will become a source of revenue. The traditional view of customer support as a necessary cost is shifting towards an investment with a clear, measurable return.

Strategy & investment

Where customer care is heading in 2027 and what companies will invest in

When building strategy and allocating budgets in customer care, short-term, reactive solutions are no longer enough. Rising customer expectations around speed and availability collide head-on with management's demand to keep costs under control and operate more efficiently. At the same time, it is ever harder to stand out – **what was above standard a few years ago, customers now take for granted.**

Planning for 2027 therefore requires a clear view of where it makes sense to invest energy and money, and how to combine new technology with care for the teams themselves. Investment isn't just a question of budget. It also depends on whether a company can remove obstacles and connect its systems so that new technology has something to build on.

That's why our survey asked industry leaders about their direction, planned investments, main roadblocks, and where they see the biggest competitive advantages in the coming period.



77%

of companies plan to invest most in AI and automation in 2027



78%

see speed of response and resolution as the main source of competitive advantage

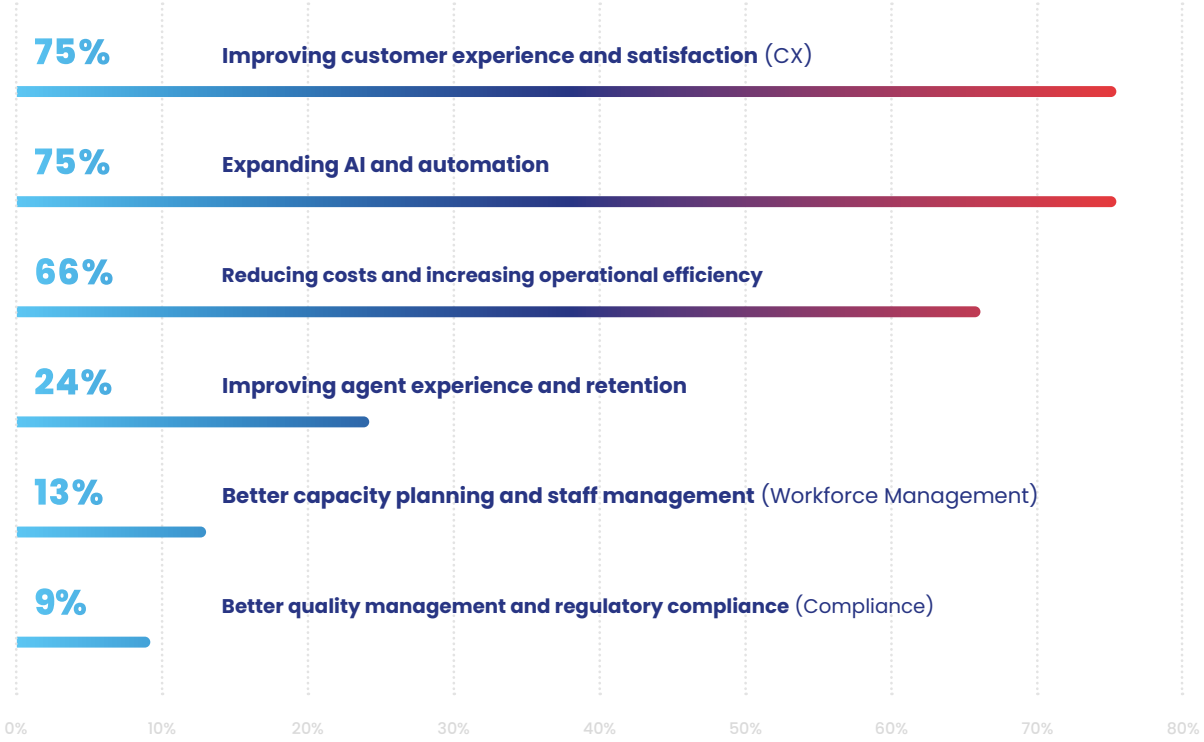


71%

agree that by 2027 customer care will become a source of revenue, not just a cost centre

What are your customer care priorities for 2027?

(select up to 3 options)



75%

Improving customer experience and satisfaction (CX)

75%

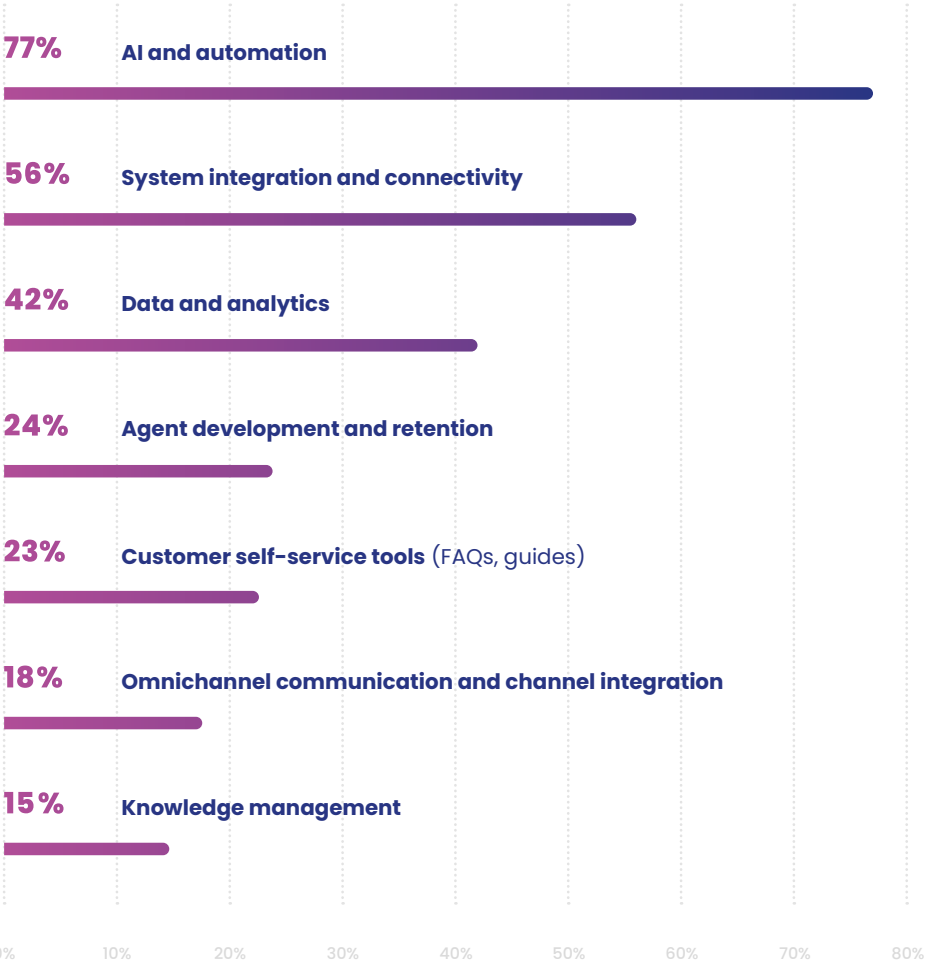
Expanding AI and automation

66%

Reducing costs and increasing operational efficiency

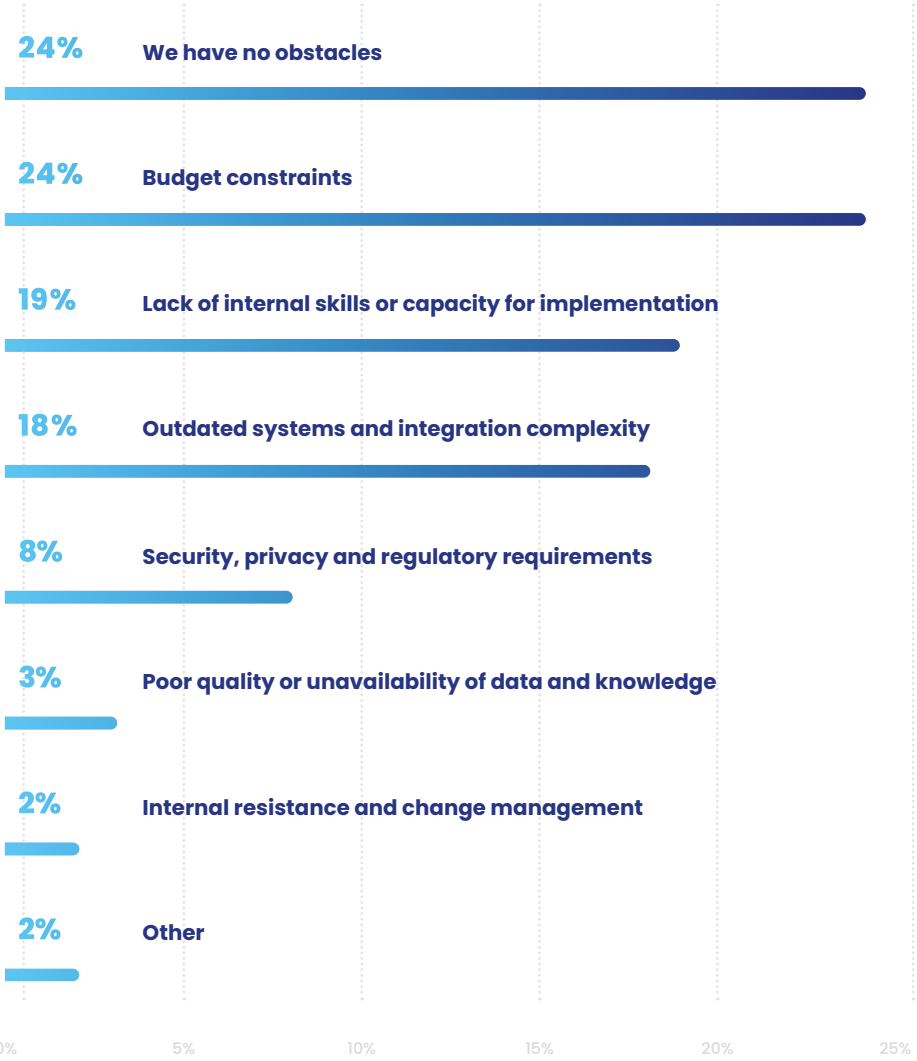
Which customer care areas does your company plan to invest in most in 2027?

(select up to 3 options)



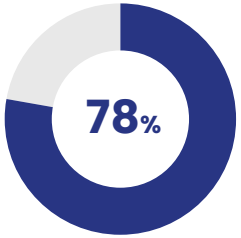
What is the biggest obstacle to achieving your customer care priorities for 2027?

(select only 1 option)

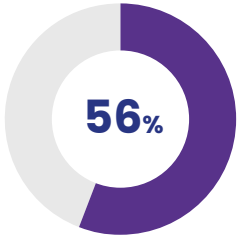


What do you think will be the main sources of competitive advantage in customer care by 2027?

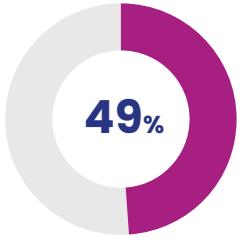
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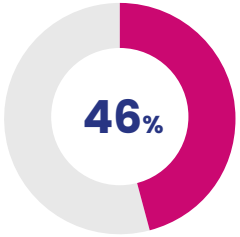
Speed of response and resolution



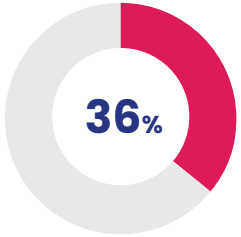
Human touch and empathy



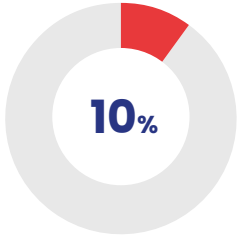
AI and automation in customer communication



Personalisation based on data and customer history



Consistent customer experience across channels

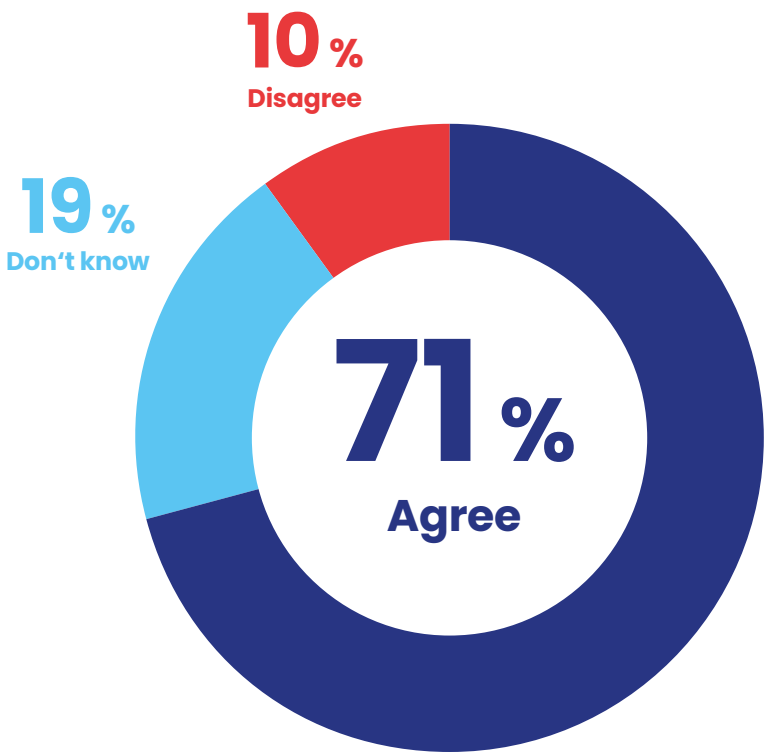


Data and customer insights

Speed of response (78%) and a human approach (56%) lead as the main sources of competitive advantage. Neither is at odds with automation – quite the opposite. AI can deliver instant answers to routine queries while freeing up agents for situations that call for empathy and human judgement. So companies aren't investing in AI to replace people, but to give them more room to handle complex cases.

To what extent do you agree with the statement:

‘By 2027, customer care will become a source of revenue for companies (upsell, retention, referrals), not just a cost center.‘



Customer care is often where a customer decides whether they stay with you, buy from you again or start looking elsewhere. That’s why I’m not surprised that 71% of leaders see customer care becoming a revenue driver by 2027.

We see it every day. When people have the right information, the full customer history and the time to have a proper conversation, resolving a problem can naturally lead to retaining that customer, strengthening the relationship or creating another sale.

If customer care is going to drive revenue, it can’t just be about closing tickets as quickly as possible. The real opportunity is in the conversation. By 2027, I think the businesses getting this right will be looking beyond how many calls they handled and focusing much more on how many customers stayed, came back and bought again.

Samantha Haylor
Managing Director,
Daktela UK



AI & automation in practice

How far companies have come with AI and what's holding them back

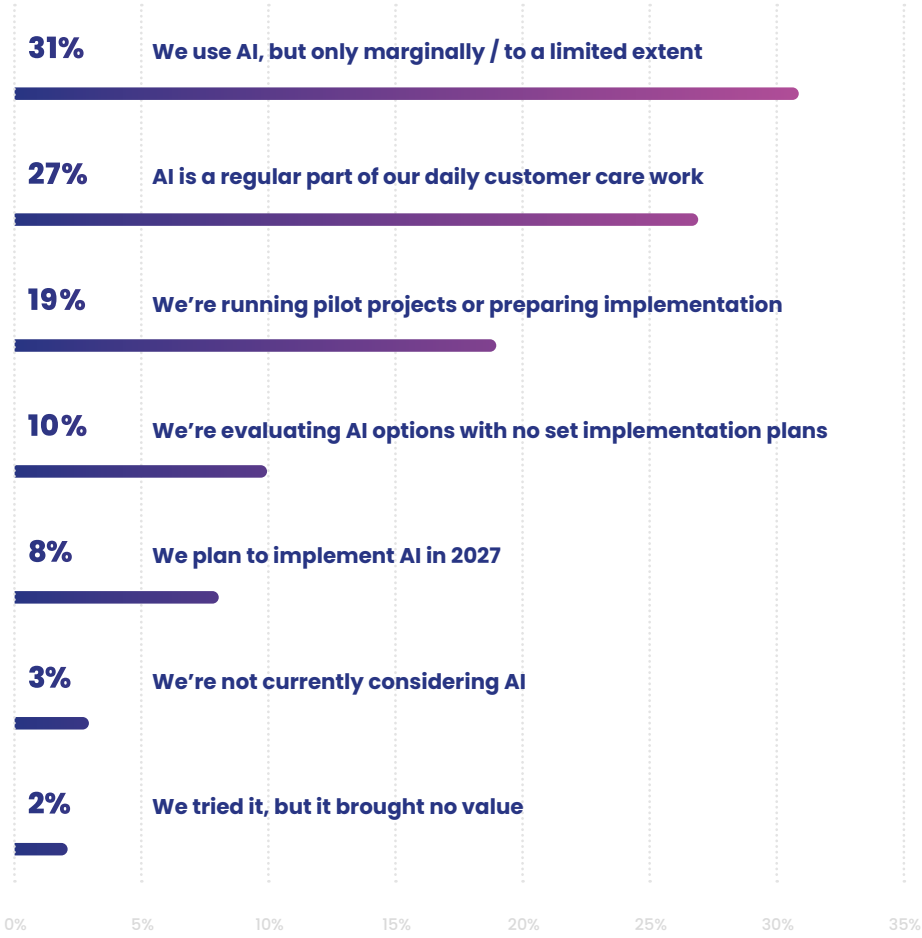
For the past few years, AI in customer care has been discussed mainly in terms of expectations – everything it could handle and how fundamentally it would transform the industry. The survey shows this is starting to change: most companies already have some experience with AI, but only a quarter use it in day-to-day operations.

So the question is no longer whether to deploy AI, but how to move it from pilots and marginal use into everyday work. Where to start so it delivers results as soon as possible with the least risk, and what needs to be resolved before implementation.

That's why the survey asked about three things: how far companies have come with AI, where they plan to deploy it first, and what is holding them back the most.

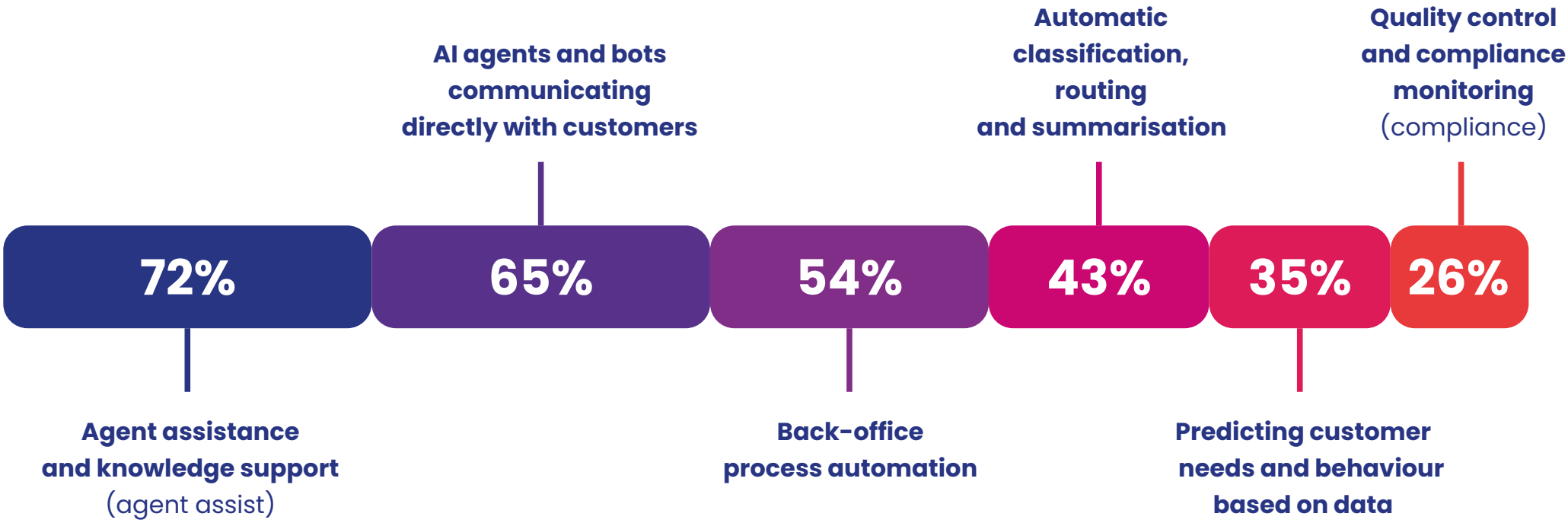
How would you describe the current stage of AI use in your customer care?

(select only 1 option)



In which areas does your organisation plan to implement or expand the use of AI in customer care by the end of 2027?

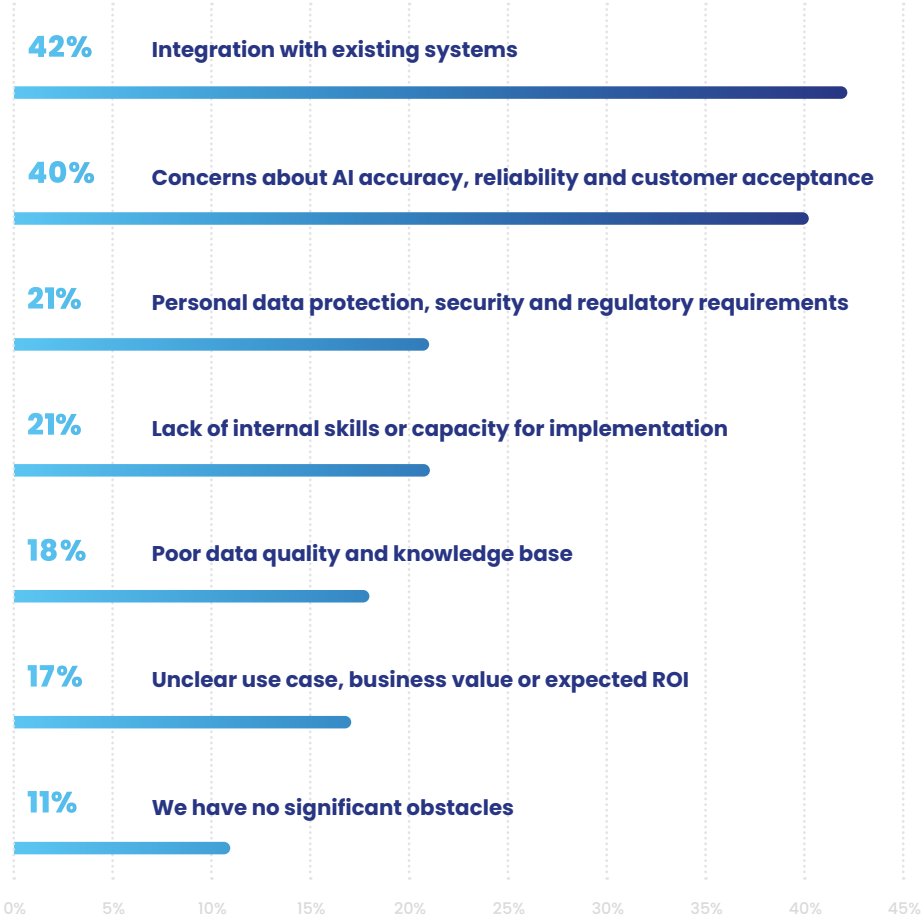
(select all that apply)



(NOTE: This question was shown only to respondents who answered the previous question positively = they use AI or plan to deploy it; n=113)

What are the biggest obstacles holding back your AI ambitions in customer care?

(select up to 3 options)



The results match what we hear in practice. The biggest roadblock to adopting AI is connecting it to the systems companies already use (42%), along with concerns about insufficient customer trust (40%).

The second barrier can be overcome by supporting agents **with AI assistants, which 72% of companies are planning for.** In a modern contact centre, AI drafts suggested replies, looks up data across channels, or automatically creates and updates tickets. But the final decision stays with the agent, so any mistake is caught before the customer sees it.

It's this principle of human oversight that lets companies safely hand most routine work over to AI and gradually build the trust they need in its results.

Mikuláš Starý
Head of Product, Daktela



People & operations

How teams and their pay will change

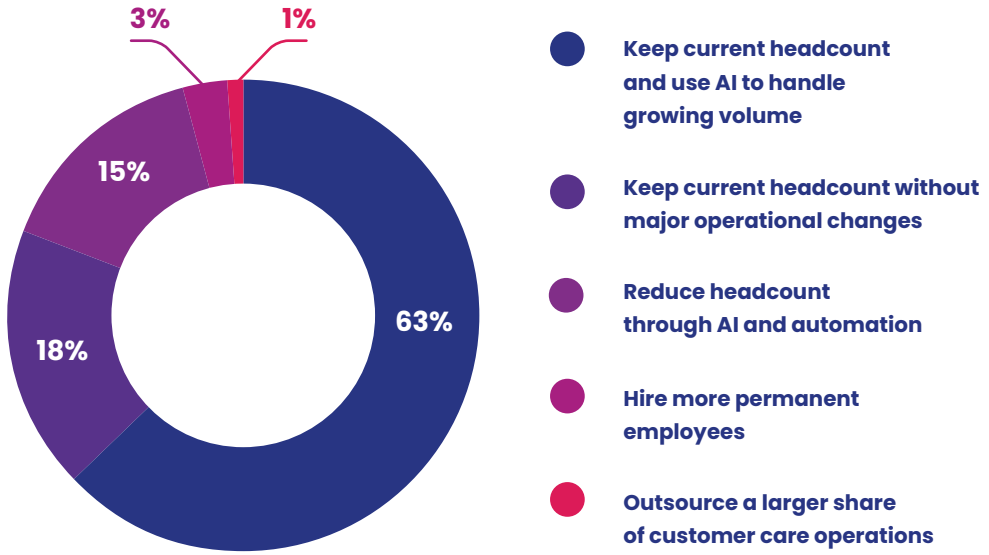
Finding and keeping good agents has long been hard in customer care. **Turnover is among the highest of any field, and stress and heavy workloads are among the main reasons people leave.** Demands keep rising and the work isn't letting up.

Then along comes automation, and with it a question almost everyone in the industry is asking: what will it do to the team? Will it mean layoffs, or keeping the same headcount, with AI letting people handle more work?

Answers from the professionals in our survey show that **they are not planning mass layoffs because of AI**. Most companies want to keep their teams and use automation to cover growing request volumes. And they agree not only on how big teams will be, but also on what they expect for pay.

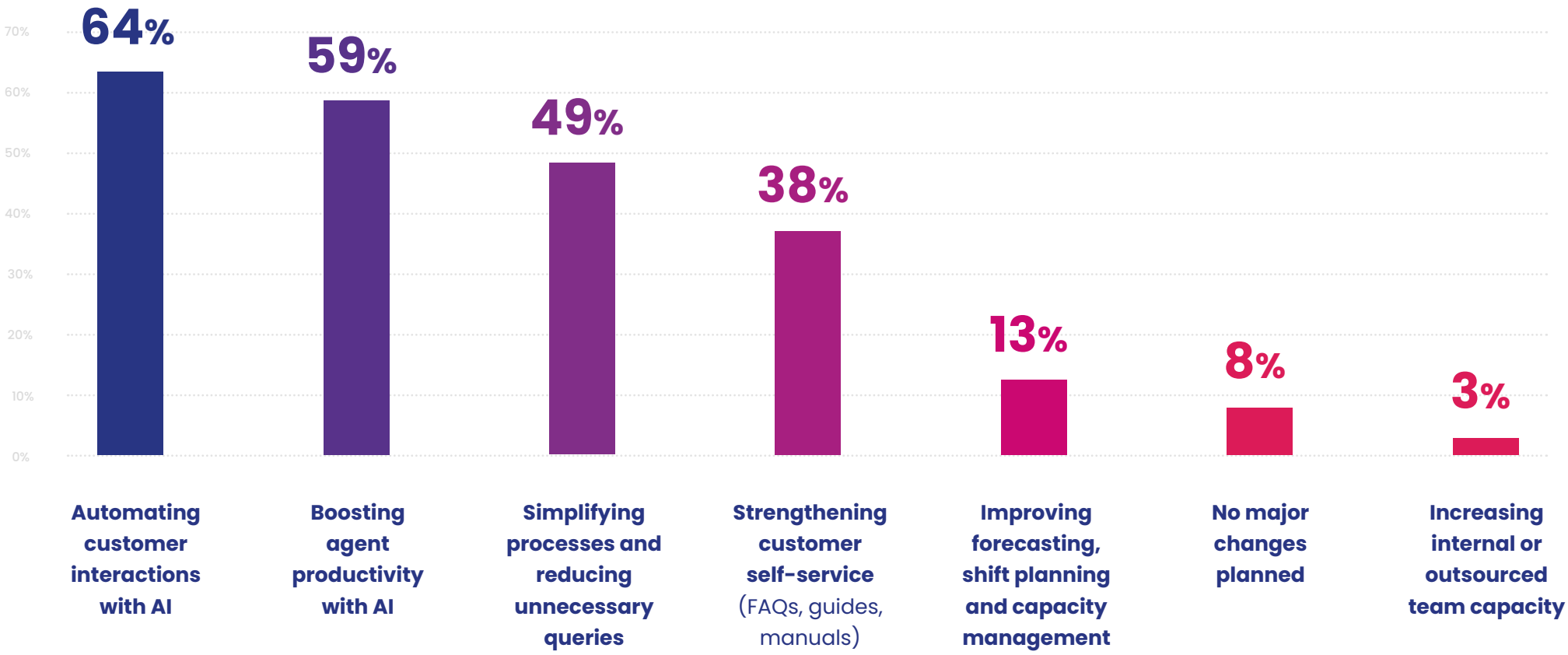
What will be your company's main HR strategy in customer care for 2027?

(select only 1 option)

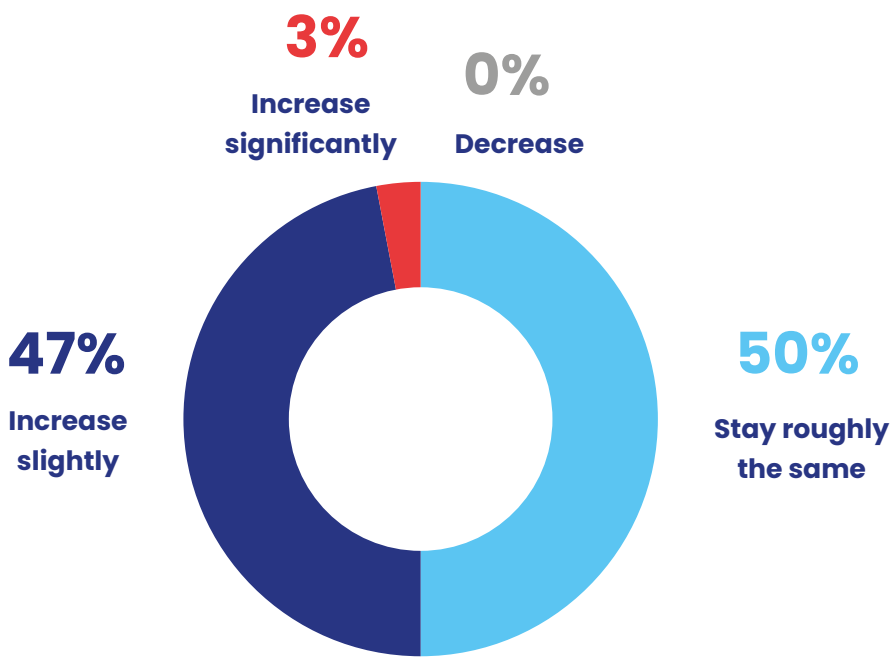


How does your organisation plan to handle changes in customer request volume in 2027?

(select up to 3 options)



How do you expect the average agent salary at your company to change in 2027?



Automation doesn't have to mean pressure on wages – not a single respondent expects average agent pay to fall. This also has to do with the kind of work people will be left with once AI is in place.

Simple, repetitive queries – where agents could catch their breath between tougher calls – will disappear, but escalations, non-standard situations and dissatisfied customers will remain.

That also changes who customer care should be hiring. **The work will require more independent and experienced people – and they aren't getting any cheaper on the job market.**

How success will be measured

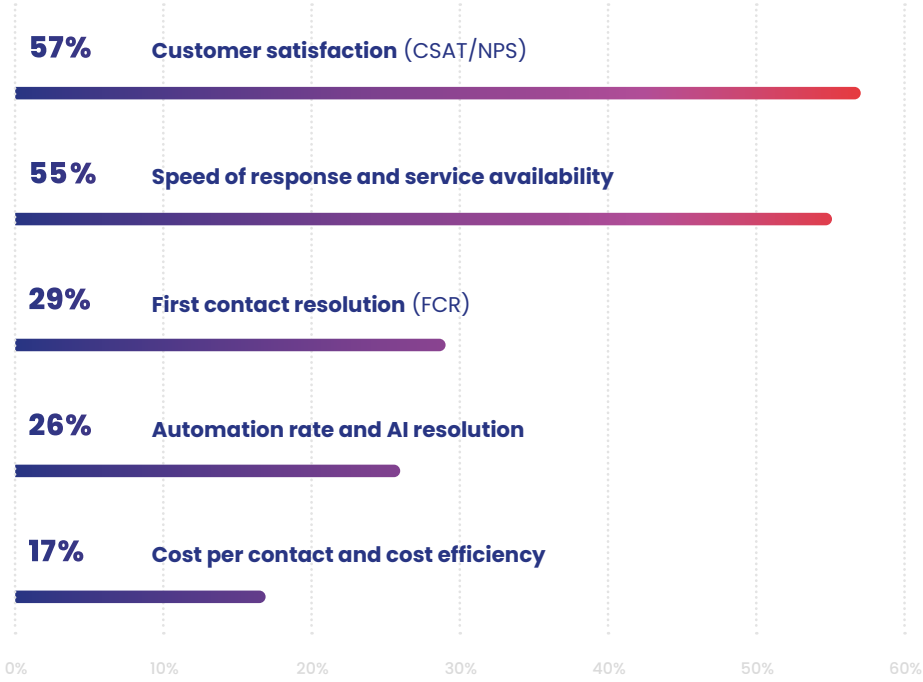
The ranking of metrics confirms what matters most to companies: customer satisfaction (57%) and speed of response (55%) will grow in importance by 2027, well ahead of everything else.

Compared with other findings in the report, however, some interesting gaps emerge. While 66% of companies named cost reduction as a priority in another question, only 17% give greater weight to cost metrics. Similarly, 65% of companies plan to deploy AI agents, but only 26% expect automation rate to be a key metric for them.

So companies plan to save and automate, but don't expect their success to be measured that way. **Anyone who wants to justify investment in modernising customer care in 2027 will need numbers alongside customer satisfaction** that show whether new technologies actually deliver a return.

Which customer care performance metrics do you think will grow in importance by 2027?

(select up to 2 options)



What worries me most about 2027 is...

1. ...failing to strike the right balance between automation and a human approach to customers.
2. ...regulation and getting the AI Act wrong.
3. ...not keeping up with the dizzying pace of technological progress and growing competition.
4. ...a shortage of skilled staff. It keeps getting scarcer, and training new people is costly, with uncertain results.
5. ...growing pressure to cut costs while customers expect ever-higher speed and quality of care.

The biggest opportunity I see in 2027 is...

1. ...an effective hybrid model. AI resolves routine matters instantly and agents gain room for situations where empathy is key.
2. ...a shift from reactive problem-solving to care that anticipates customer needs before they even get in touch.
3. ...personalised offers built on customer behaviour data, not guesswork.
4. ...freeing up agent capacity with AI, giving agents time for work that actually generates profit.
5. ...customer care having an even greater impact on satisfaction, client loyalty and company-wide results.



The data speaks clearly: **AI is one of the top priorities for 2027.** 75% of companies put it there, on par with improving customer experience. But reality still lags far behind ambition. **AI is a regular part of daily work at only 27% of companies.**

The good news is that companies want to use AI to get rid of routine work – 72% plan to deploy AI as an assistant that makes agents' work easier. 65% plan to introduce AI agents that communicate directly with customers. Most companies are doing both at once.

AI adoption is most often complicated by technical debt – 42% of companies run into problems integrating with existing systems.

A big theme for 2027 will be finding **the balance between deploying AI and people**. 56% of companies see a human approach as their main competitive advantage. 40% worry whether their customers will trust AI – a concern we heard from leaders again and again. The question has long stopped being whether to deploy AI. Successful companies should be clear about what AI should do and what people should do, and set up their processes, systems and measurement accordingly.

Karel Vůjtek
COO, Daktela

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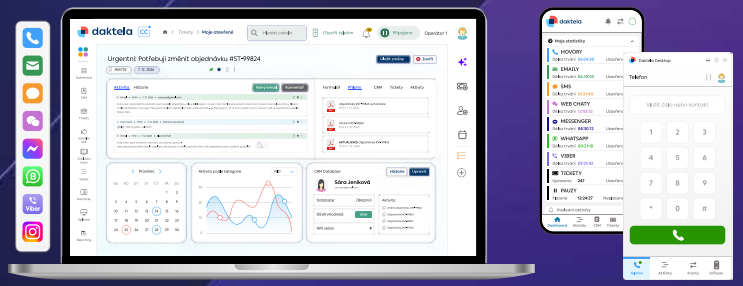
Customers matter

The survey showed that customer care leaders in CEE are focusing on three key things in 2027: fast response, a human approach, and AI that works in day-to-day operations. What's holding them back isn't money or budgets. It's systems that don't talk to each other, and worry about whether AI will give customers the right answers.

This is exactly what we've been solving at Daktela for over 20 years. Omnichannel, analytics and our own AI tools (from AI agents to Copilot for agents) all live in one platform, so there's nothing complicated to connect. 1,600+ companies across Europe rely on us, from local e-shops to major international brands.

Want customer care that keeps you one step ahead in 2027?

Email us at **daktela@daktela.com** and together we'll look at where AI can help your company too.



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