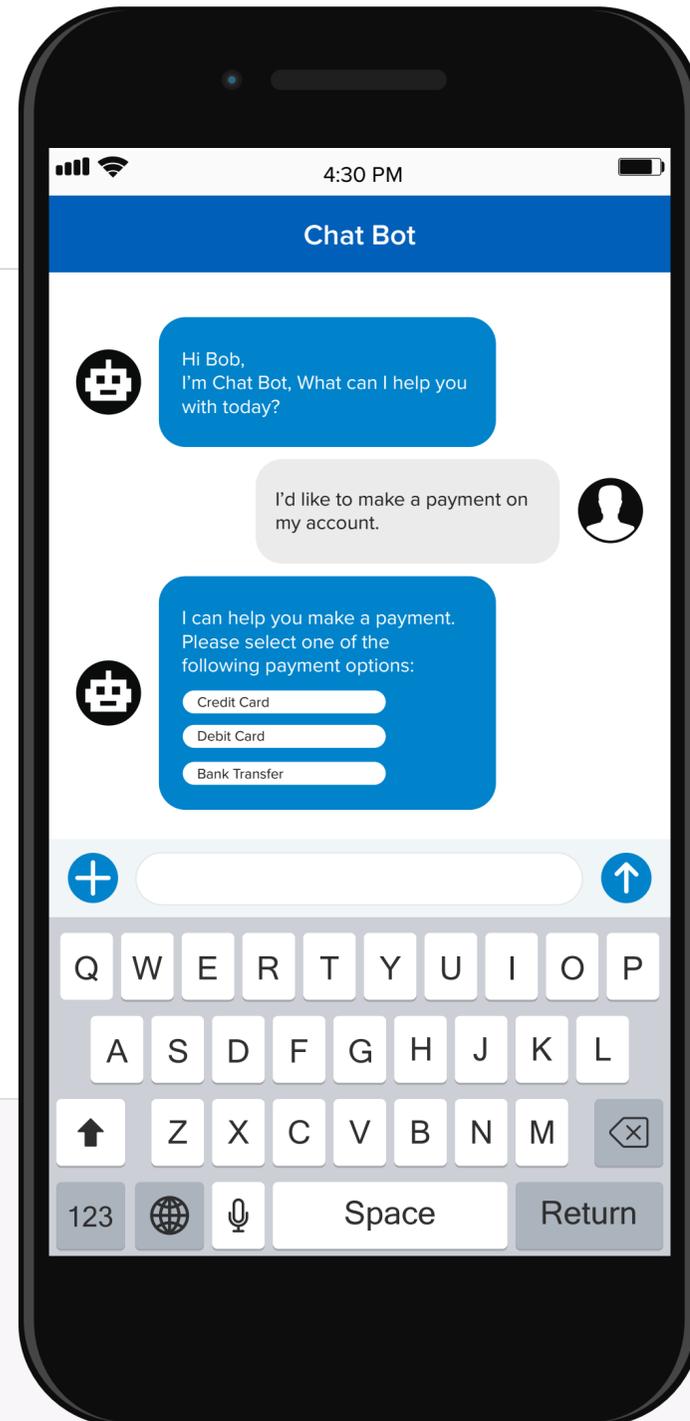




A Multi-Industry Assessment of AI

Simplifying Artificial Intelligence





The State of AI

Everyone knows they can benefit from Artificial Intelligence in their contact center, but few know how and where to start.

AI isn't science fiction anymore. It's a very real part of our everyday lives. AI plays the role of personal assistant, listening to our voice commands and making our lives easier. It directs us as we navigate in our cars, and now in some cases, can even drive the car itself. It can help control our homes—setting the perfect temperature, showing us who's at the door, or dispensing the exact amount of water from the faucet.

Which begs the question: if AI is this powerful at home, how much value does it have for businesses? The answer: more than you might even think—by automating routine tasks, driving down costs, and serving customers faster and better than ever before.

And that's just the beginning.

Despite all of this opportunity, AI adoption lags behind expectations. Companies are reporting an anticipated increase in AI spending, but fewer than 10% of them are currently deploying AI in their day-to-day operations.* You don't need a crystal ball to see what this means. There's a huge opportunity for forward-thinking contact centers to set themselves apart from competitors through the use of AI.

That's why, in this survey report, we polled hundreds of leaders from across industries to take a deeper look at AI adoption, usage, challenges, and possibilities. The time for AI is now.



For more insights on the current landscape of AI plus additional information on how to use AI in your contact center, download LiveVox's free eBook on the subject by clicking the link below.

[Free LiveVox eBook — AI in the Contact Center: A Toolkit →](#)

Industries Represented



Banking



Education & Healthcare

Colleges/Universities and Hospitals/Physicians



Insurance

AI enables organizations to:



Enhance capacity of human agents, not replace them



Create a seamless, personalized journey for customers



Use data and analytics for continuous improvement and simplification

Key Insights

✓ AI Adoption Lags Behind Intention

Most leaders know they need an AI strategy for their contact center, but are unsure where to begin. Instead of starting somewhere, then continuously evaluating and adjusting the process, they don't get started at all.

✓ It's Still All About the Customer

Contact centers are looking for ways to improve the customer experience and create a more personalized journey, but haven't recognized the serious urgency in getting started now.

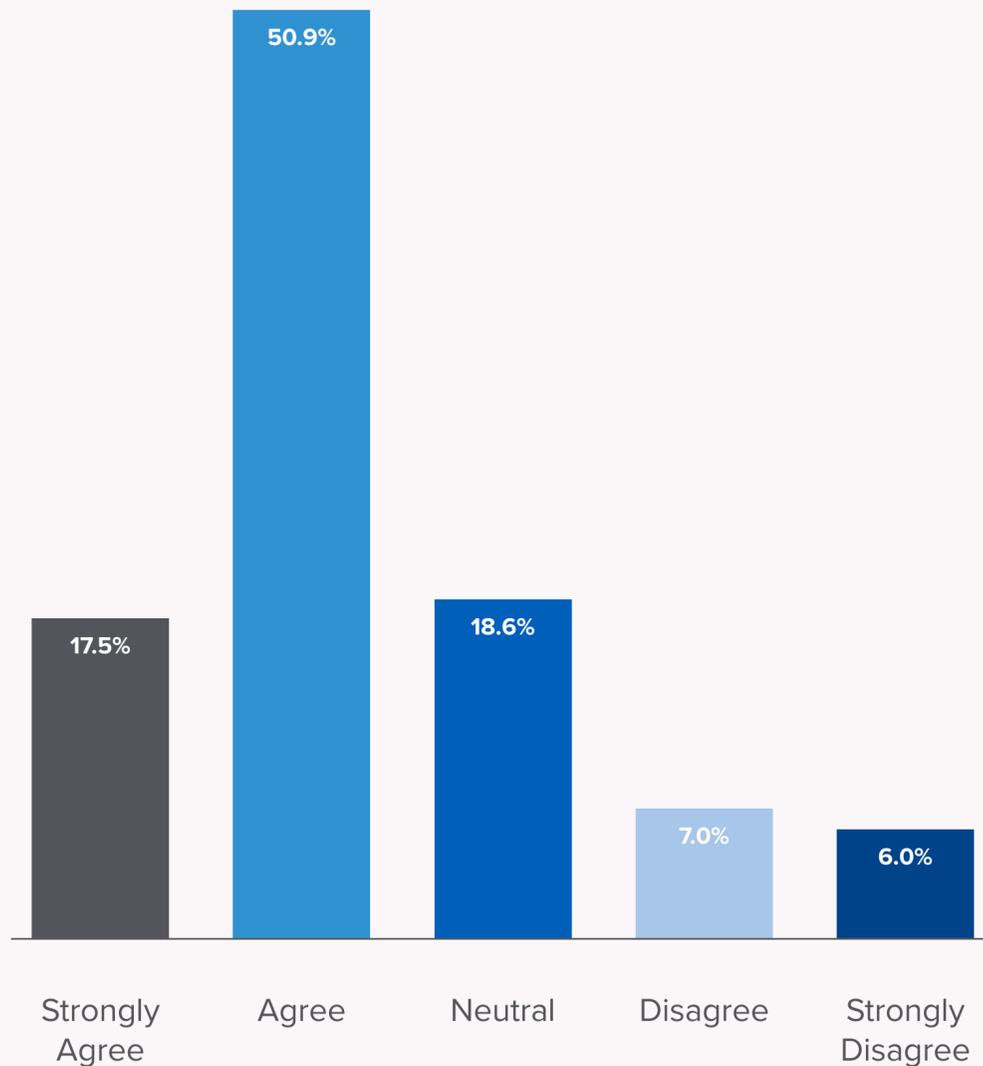
✓ Balancing Human and Virtual Agents is a Process

Specifically, most people are struggling with how to maintain human touch in their contact center while also applying AI and automation. Finding the right balance doesn't happen overnight.

✓ IVR and Analytics are Must-Haves

Nearly everyone agrees that the IVR is the most important technology component of the customer journey and that data/analytics are absolutely critical—particularly for understanding why the customer called and for gauging customer satisfaction.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: To remain competitive, contact centers must have an artificial intelligence strategy that includes virtual agents or chatbots.



AI is table stakes, but that doesn't equal implementation.

A majority of respondents, nearly 69%, agree or strongly agree that they need an AI strategy in today's competitive environment.

They understand the power of AI in getting results for their contact center, especially in leveraging virtual agents or chatbots to automate routine tasks and free up human agents to handle more important interactions with customers.

What is less clear, however, is exactly how to go about implementing an AI strategy that's effective for their unique needs. AI can seem complicated, intimidating,

and even downright scary on the surface. This is likely why we see such strong agreement from respondents on this statement, yet actual adoption of AI—and spending—still lags behind intent.

Those who responded neutrally or disagreed are likely in high-touch industries such as Healthcare that place extra value in human interactions with customers. But even here, there are opportunities for AI to streamline and personalize the customer journey and improve the overall experience.



Context is still key.

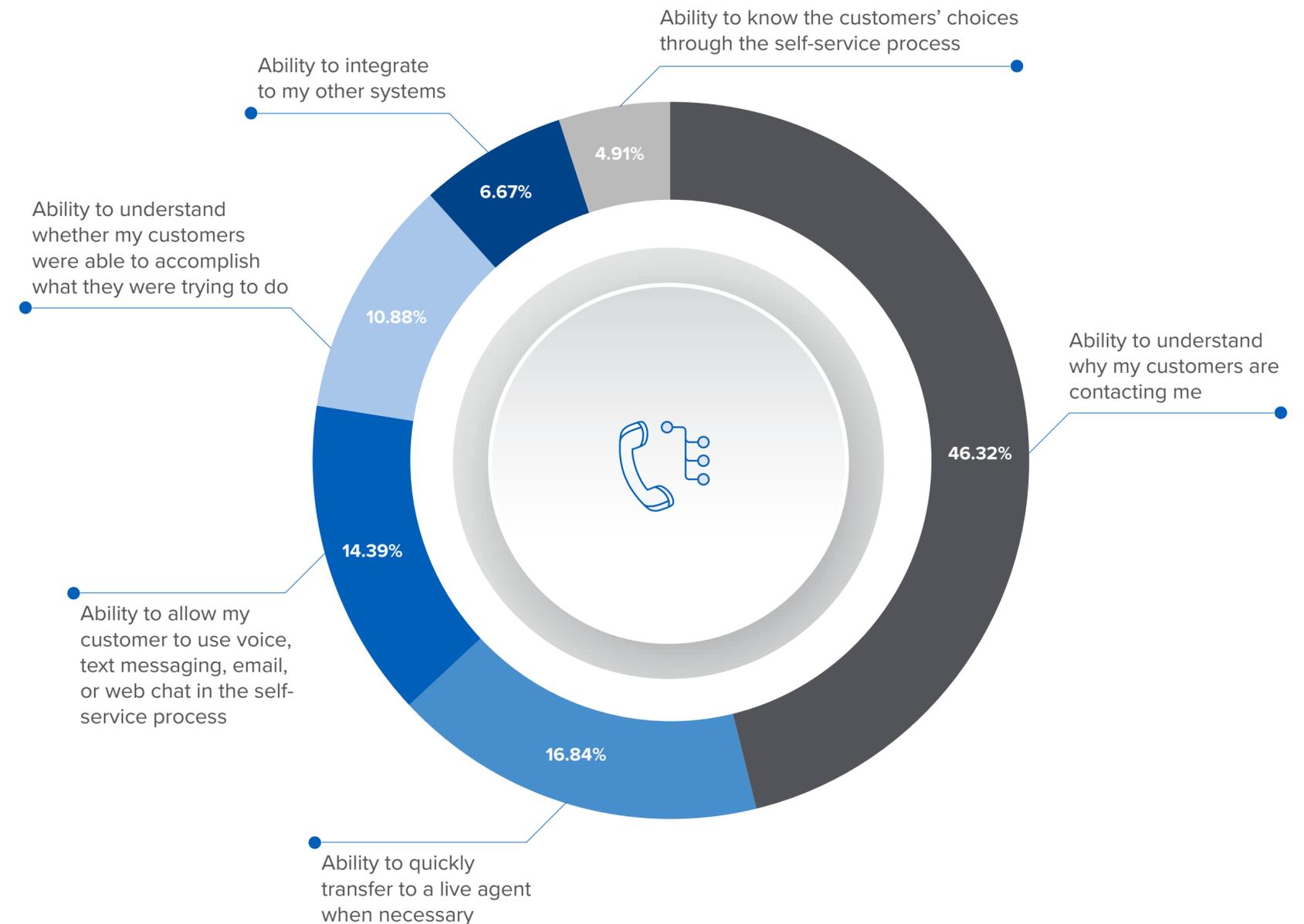
When you have a better sense of what your customers want, you can deliver better service. That's just good business. And that's why nearly half of respondents say the ideal IVR should offer the ability to understand why customers are reaching out.

As the results show, there are other important factors to consider, such as being able to transfer to a live agent and giving customers multiple channel options for self-service. But an IVR truly shines when AI enables a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

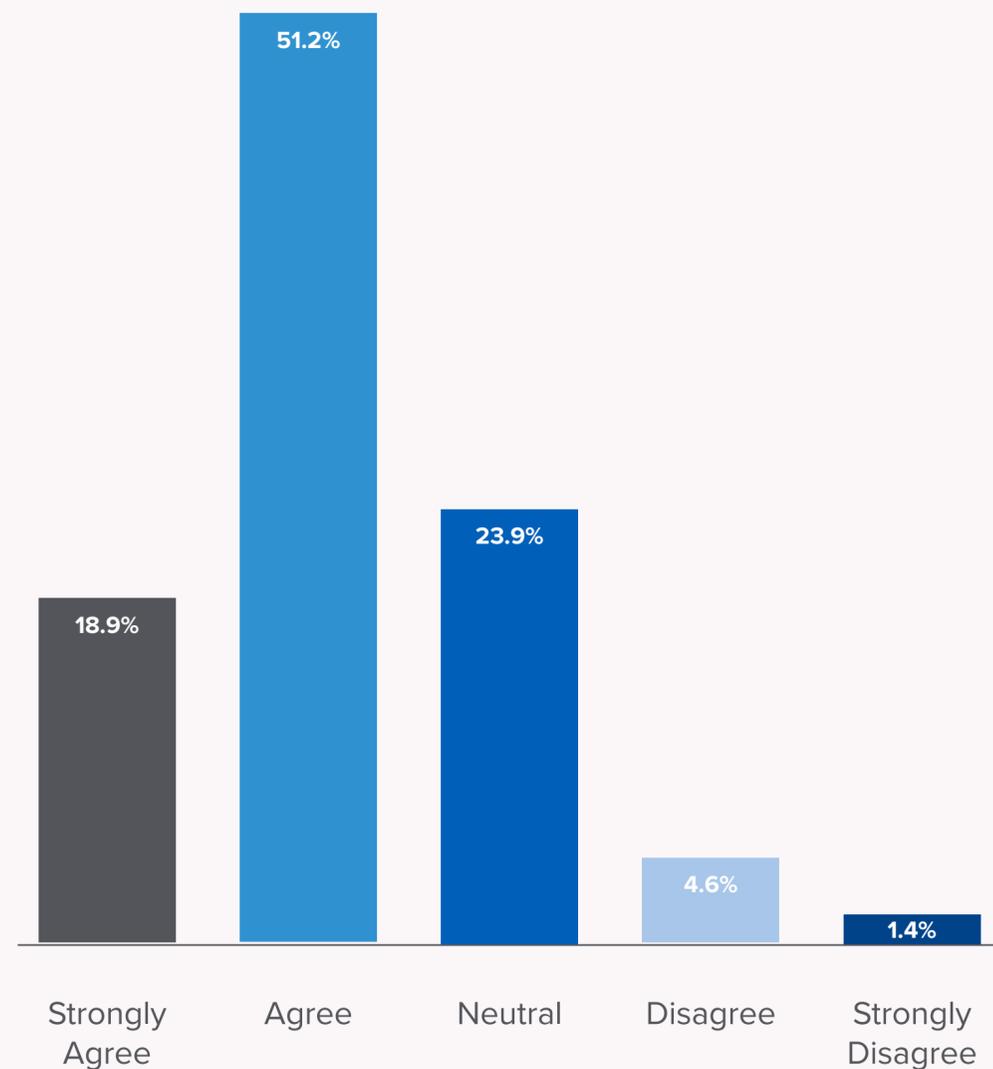
By gathering feedback, analyzing data, and understanding customer intents, you'll be equipped with the right information to adjust your process and evolve your CX.

It's why you've likely been hearing talk about terms like speech analytics, business intelligence, virtual agents, call drivers, and caller intents. As we said before, the best way to get better at doing what your customers need is by knowing what your customers need. AI has the power to provide those insights in spades.

When thinking about the ideal IVR system for giving your customers the ability to self-service, rank the following functionality in order of importance.



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:
Replacing legacy technology systems with cloud software is usually worth the effort and expense.



Moving to the cloud is a matter of “when” and not “if” anymore.

You might think these results would be different, considering there are still plenty of headlines in the trades about how this-or-that company or industry “thinks the future is in the cloud.”

But the answers to this survey question indicate those stories are yesterday’s news, with more than 70% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that replacing legacy systems with cloud software is worth the costs involved.

It appears the mental hurdles involved with making a move to the cloud have been overcome—leaders know

it’s the right decision and can see the value in doing so. However, they can’t just snap their fingers and make it happen, because there are also operational and logistical hurdles that must be addressed.

If this is the situation you find yourself in, we strongly recommend considering a software solution that offers you a path to the cloud with AI capabilities—one that layers onto and enhances your current system instead of replacing it completely.

Virtual agents can mean happier human agents.

There's a lot of talk out there about improving the customer experience and elevating the customer journey. In fact, it seems like these days everybody is talking about that exact same thing. So how do you differentiate your contact center in a sea of sameness?

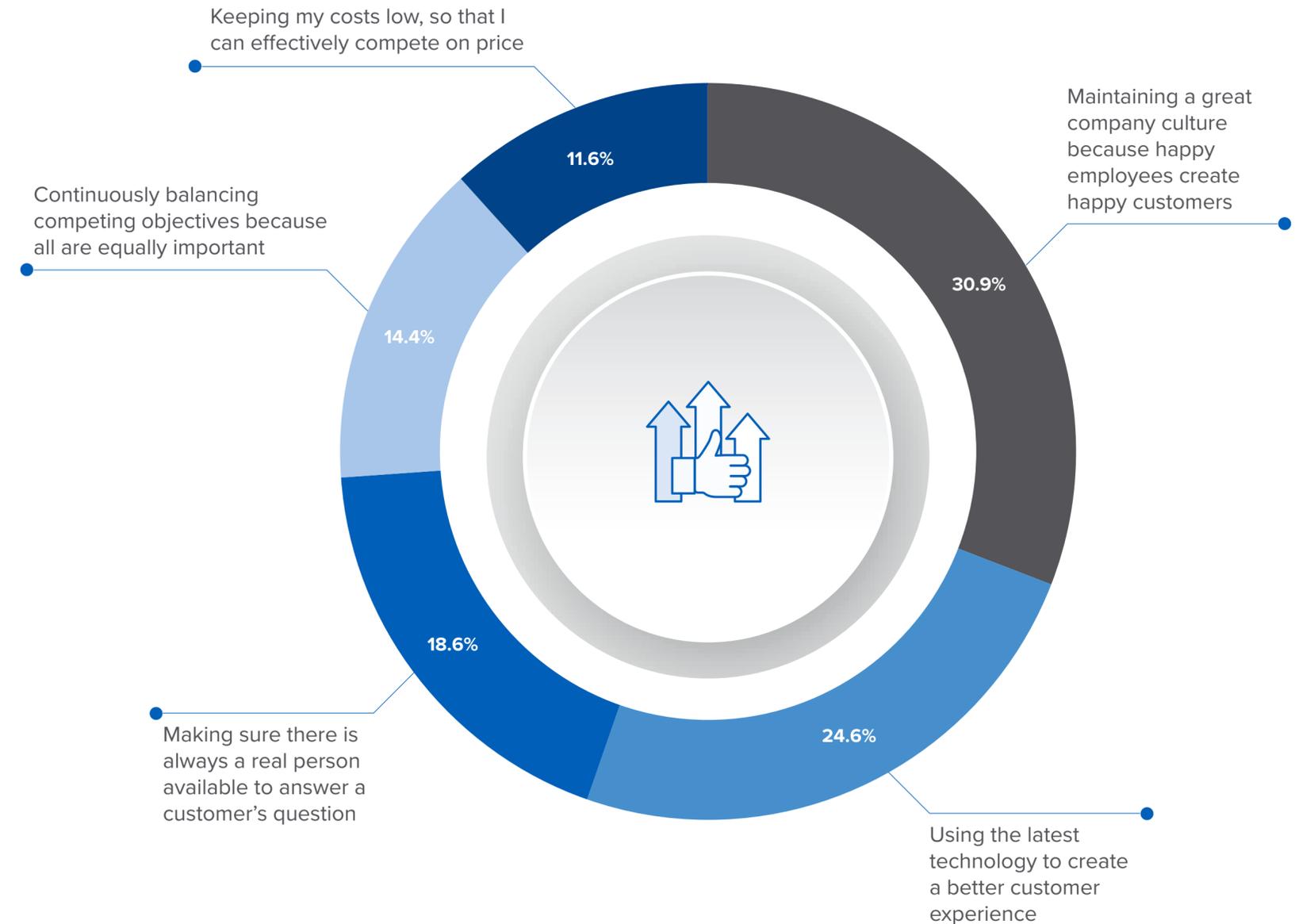
More than 30% of respondents agree that focusing on maintaining a great company culture is the best way, because they understand that when employees are happy, it usually leads to happier customers.

And that's where AI comes in. When you deploy virtual agents and human agents together, AI can handle those routine, mundane tasks that waste valuable time and often lead to burnout.

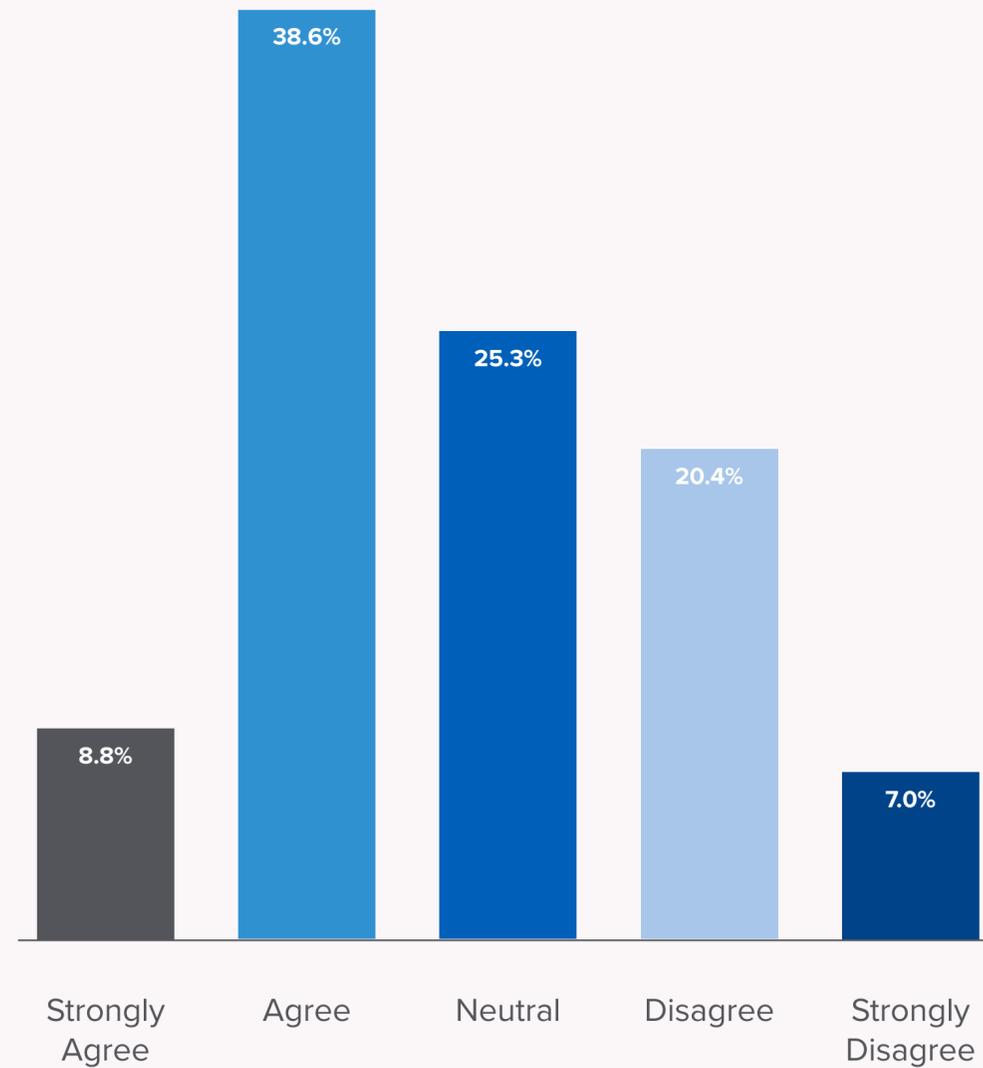
Ultimately, AI has the power to give you the best of both worlds—a better agent experience and customer experience at the same time. Which is great news for those nearly 25% of respondents looking to use the latest technology to create a better CX.

One last note: for those focused on keeping costs down as their #1 priority, these results show that having the right solution is worth the price, because it pays dividends in so many other ways.

When thinking about how you differentiate your business, rank the following objectives in order of importance.



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: For routine issues, my customers would prefer to self-service rather than speak to a real person.



Results are split on self-service.

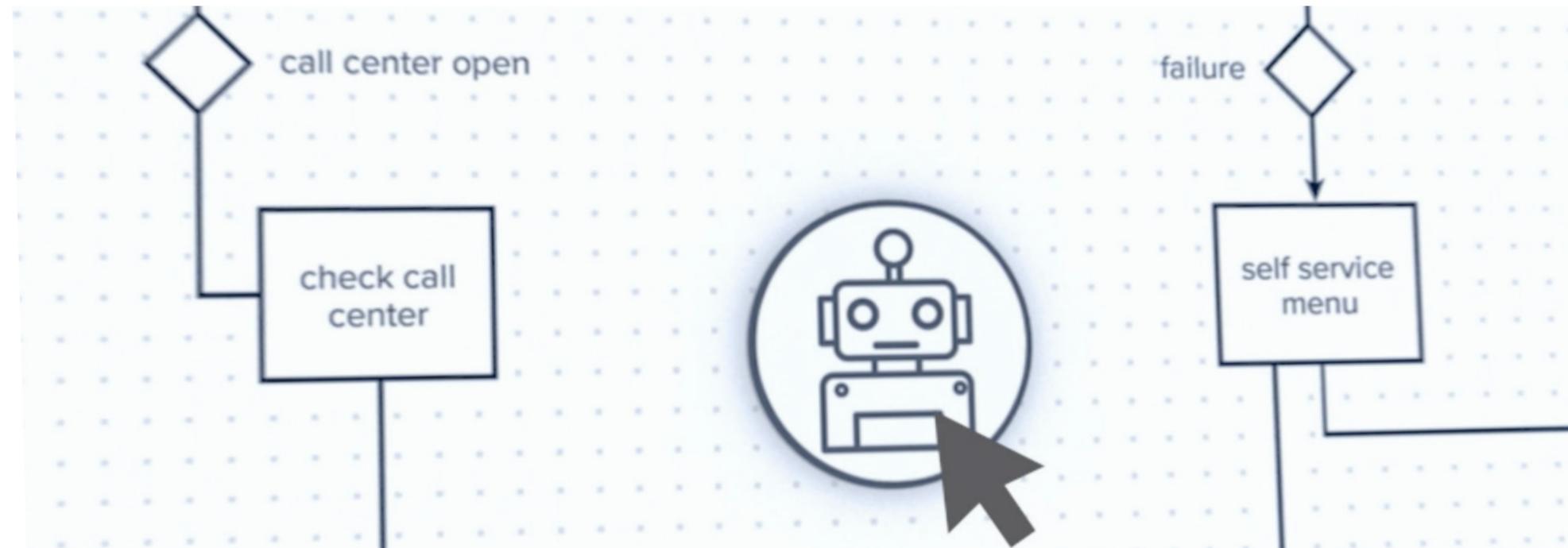
My how times have changed. What seems like long ago, people preferred to speak with other people. But today we live in a world where AI is quite literally at our beck and call.

This has changed the way customers think about service, especially for routine issues. And contact centers have caught on, with nearly half of respondents saying that their customers would prefer to self-service instead of talking to an agent. Once, this seemed unthinkable. Now, it feels almost obvious.

Yet more than half of respondents are either neutral on the subject or disagree altogether. Why might this be?

Our hypothesis is that some contact center leaders have had bad experiences with self-service workflows in the past—either within their own company or as a customer themselves—and this has jaded them to idea as a whole.

That's why it's crucial to implement the right AI-enabled IVR solution, not just any one. The difference between a good self-service process and a broken or lacking self-service process makes all the difference to customers.



Current IVR systems are lacking.

Nearly half of contact center leaders responded neutrally to this statement, while more than 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed altogether. So if people aren't satisfied with their current IVR, why aren't they making the switch to a solution that does more of what they—and their customers—want and need?

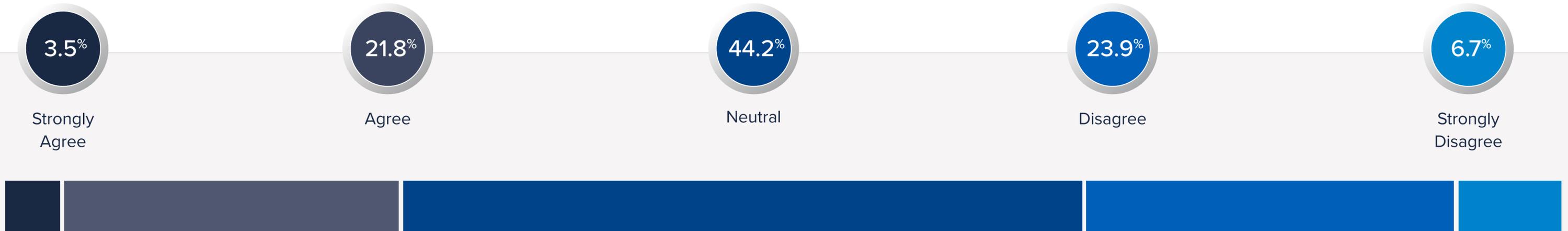
This result suggests that the market is constantly looking for ways to improve the customer experience with AI, but a compelling case needs to be made for why leaders should do that now versus later. It seems in a majority of cases, people feel like the roadblocks to switching IVR solutions—logistics, price, timing—outweigh the potential benefits.

Think about it this way, though. If you don't believe your IVR does nearly everything it needs to do, then your customers are likely going to be saying the same thing—and will possibly be even more critical. Every day you don't offer them a better solution is yet another day of frustration, repeating information, dropped calls, and more problems for customers.

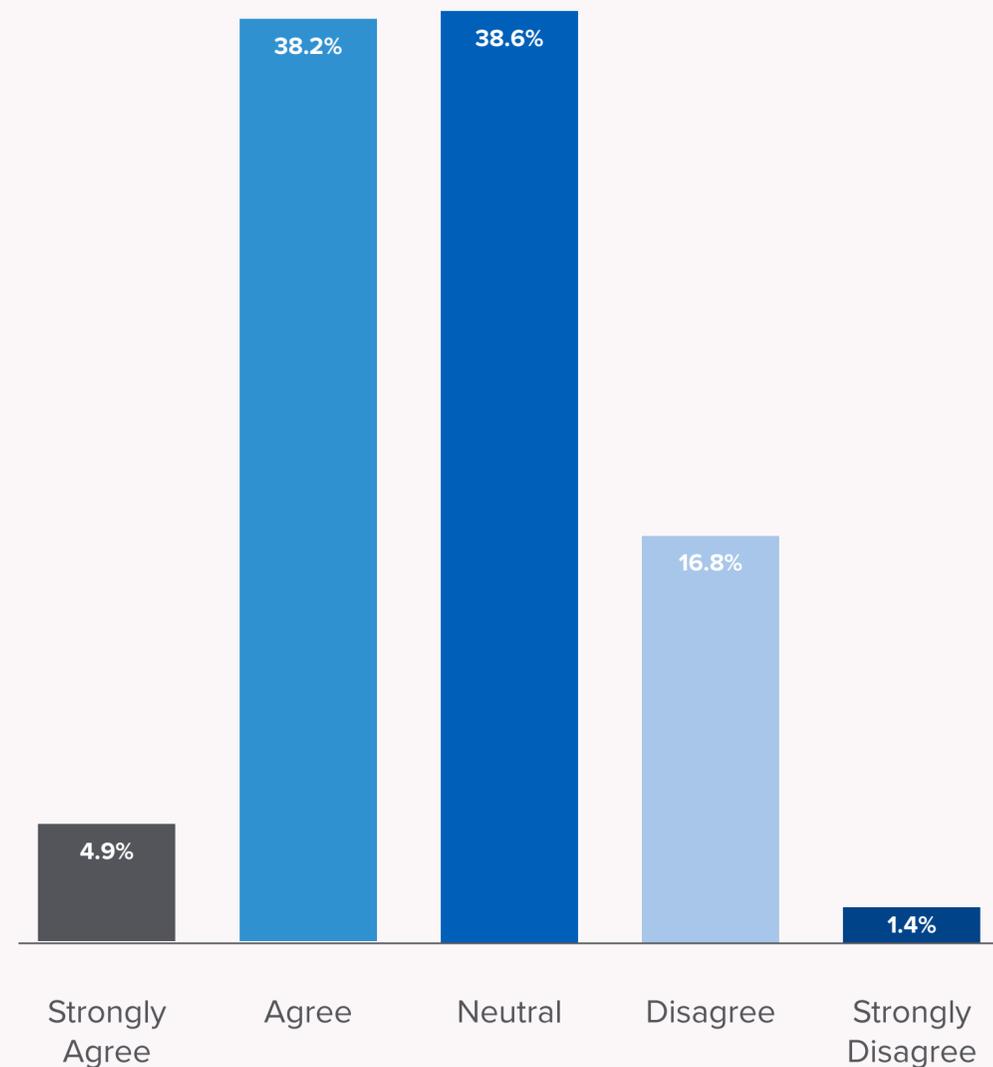
The right AI-enabled IVR system is the answer to those issues—and LiveVox itself offers a solution that's cost-effective and simplifies the technical aspects. There's one best time to improve your offerings to customers, and that time has always been right now. Not later.



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My current IVR does nearly everything I need it to do.



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: The most crucial element of the customer journey is an optimally configured IVR.



An optimized IVR has tremendous value, but timing is an issue.

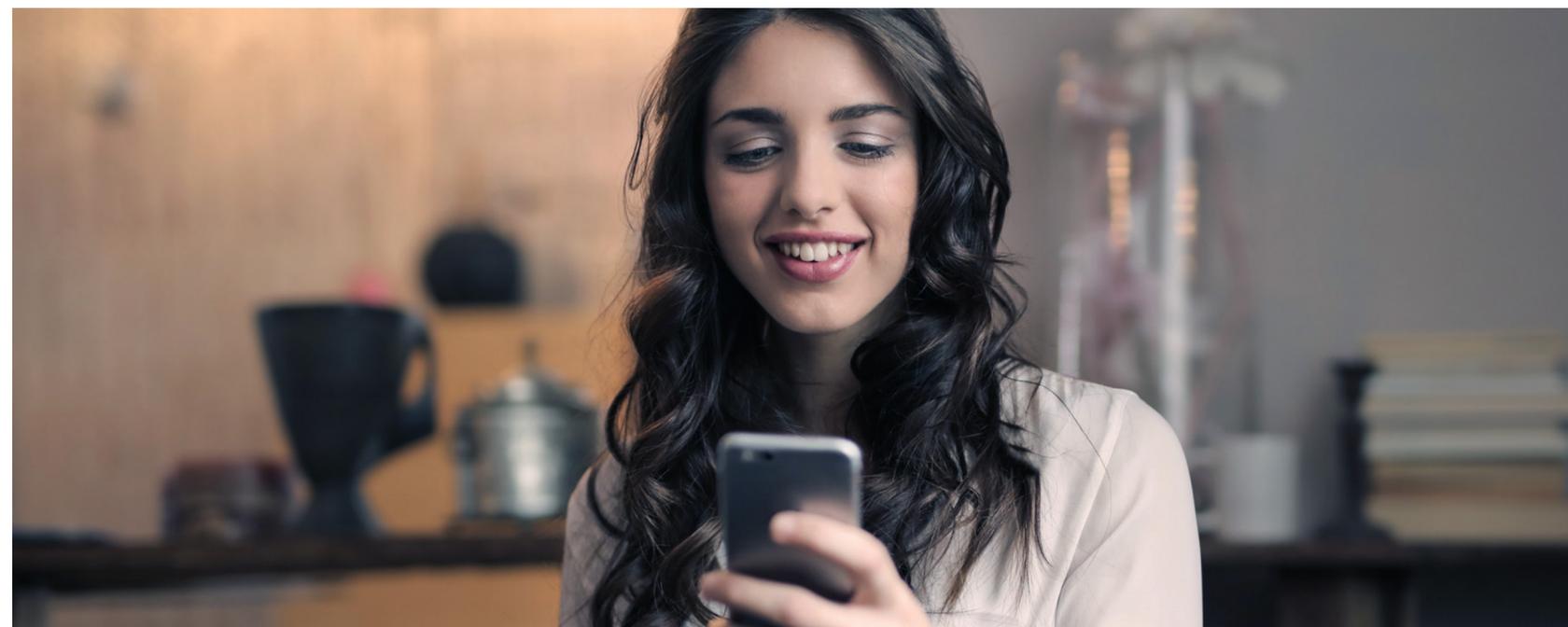
This result is particularly interesting in contrast to the responses to a previous question asking if customers preferred to self-service versus speaking to a human agent.

Why? Because you can't have it both ways. If people agree that customers want to self-service routine tasks above all else, then it stands to reason the most crucial element of the customer journey is an optimally configured IVR. Yet the responses here are split, with nearly the same number of people agreeing as answering neutrally.

Our phrasing on this question was deliberate: we included the word "most" to see how many people

felt like an optimally configured IVR was the absolute top priority. That's why it's likely that even the 38% who responded neutrally do understand and believe that an IVR is the front door to your company and first impression to customers.

All together, these results suggest that contact center leaders know it's important to have the right IVR system in place. They just don't know how to do it the right way, right now. This corresponds with our other findings that suggest people know they need AI, they just don't know the best way to implement it in their current operations at this exact moment in time.



Tools and processes are important, but reporting and analytics are crucial.

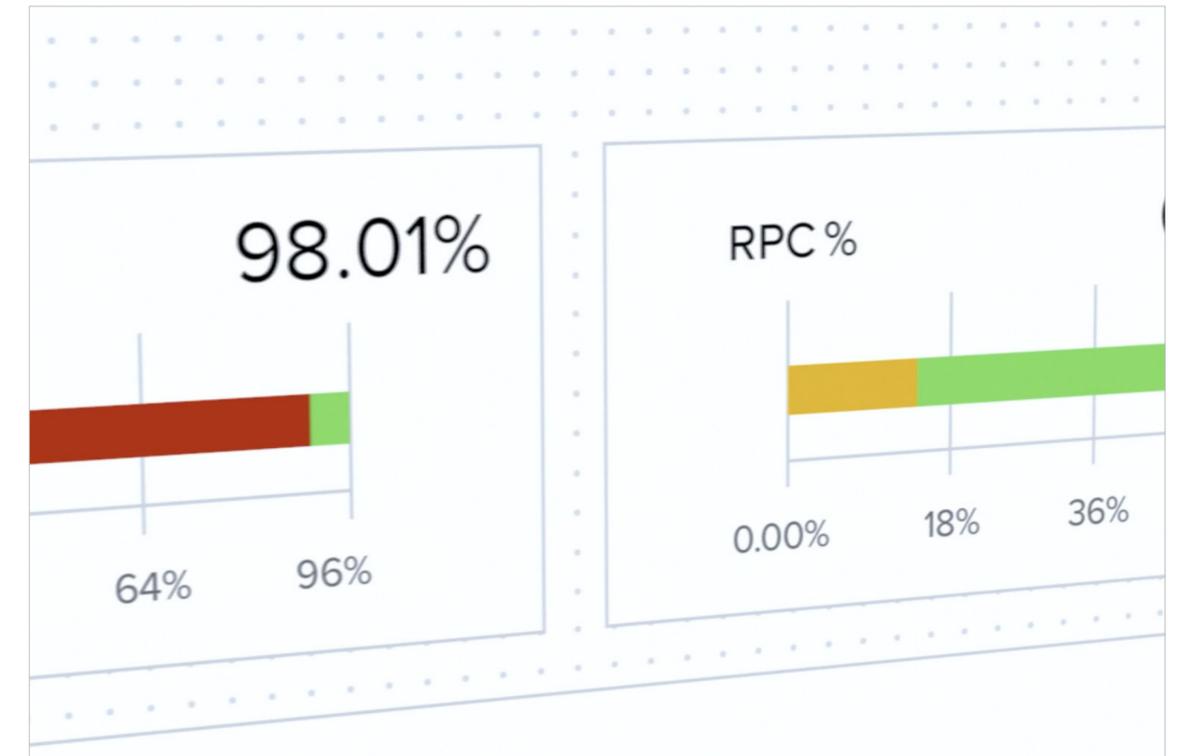
This was yet another surprising result.

What the respondents appear to be saying, with more than 91% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement, is that the ability to understand why their process works is just as important as building a great process in the first place.

That's because, as a contact center leader, your job is never done. Even after you put the work into building the "perfect" self-service process for customers, you still need to measure, evaluate, and adjust that process so you can make continuous improvements in the future.

On the surface, you might assume that tools and processes would be the most important. Yet those aspects are only part of the overall equation. Overwhelmingly, respondents concur with the sentiment of this question.

And that's where AI comes in, because it equips you with the reporting and analytics capabilities needed to help enhance your tools and processes. Because you can't have improvements unless you have the right information and insights first.



Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: Having good reporting and analytics to discover areas of improvement is at least as important as having good tools and processes.



Strongly Agree



Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly Disagree

There are AI-enabled alternatives to replacing your current system.

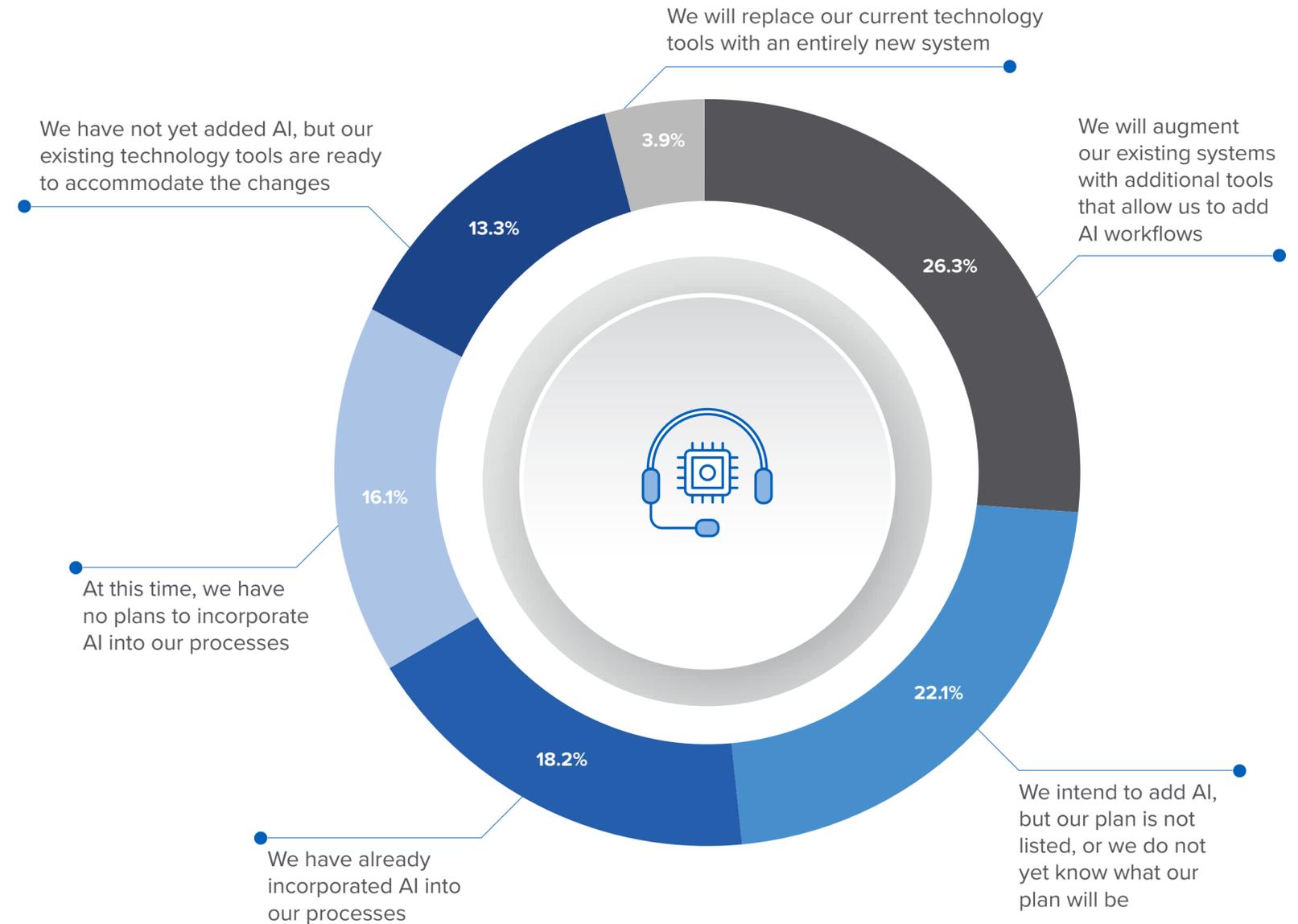
It's interesting that just under 4% of respondents are looking to replace their current technology with an entirely new system. This reinforces our findings from before, which showed that people understand they need to layer in AI tools to their processes, they just don't want to have to rip out their current systems and replace them in order to do that.

Which is likely why we see 22% of people saying that they intend to add AI, but don't exactly know what that plan should or will look like. Because they don't want to start over from scratch, and why should they? The time and effort involved could be more costly than the ROI gained. But the costs of maintaining the status quo could be even higher.

Fortunately, there are AI-enabled IVR alternatives out there that allow you to augment your existing systems, as 26% of contact center leaders are looking to do. One of these solutions is LiveVox's own Cloud IVR Bundle, which provides a simple path to adding the AI workflows you want and need while also integrating with your current ACD or PBX.

The implications are clear. It's time to implement AI in your operations now, not later. And by working with a company like LiveVox, you can overcome the traditional challenges involved—resulting in an elevated agent and customer experience, better cost management, and the insights needed to keep improving your process.

How will your contact center incorporate AI into your processes?
Select one:



Afterward

The Path to Simplified AI Starts here

Knowing how to use AI in your operations can seem complicated. But there are proven steps you can use to simplify the process, improve the customer and agent experience, and reach other key metrics at the same time.

Above all else, remember that AI is here to enhance human agents, not replace them. Nor will AI diminish the ability of your agents—on the contrary, AI's effectiveness lies in its ability to make your agents more productive than ever before.

For a step-by-step guide that breaks down how to implement AI in your contact center, check out our helpful infographic available at livevox.com/AI_infographic.

If you have specific questions about AI as it applies to your business, please reach out to our consulting experts at LiveVox. We can provide answers and help you devise a strategy that fits your unique needs.



About LiveVox

LiveVox is a next-generation contact center platform that powers more than 14 billion interactions a year. We seamlessly integrate omnichannel communications, CRM, and WFO capabilities to deliver an exceptional agent and customer experience while reducing compliance risk. Our reliable, easy-to-use technology enables effective engagement strategies on communication channels of choice to drive performance in your contact center. Our battle-tested risk mitigation and security tools help clients maximize their potential in an ever-changing business environment. With 20 years of pure cloud expertise, LiveVox is at the forefront of cloud contact center innovation. Our more than 500 global employees are headquartered in San Francisco, with offices in Atlanta; Columbus; Denver; New York City; St. Louis; Medellin, Colombia; and Bangalore, India.

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