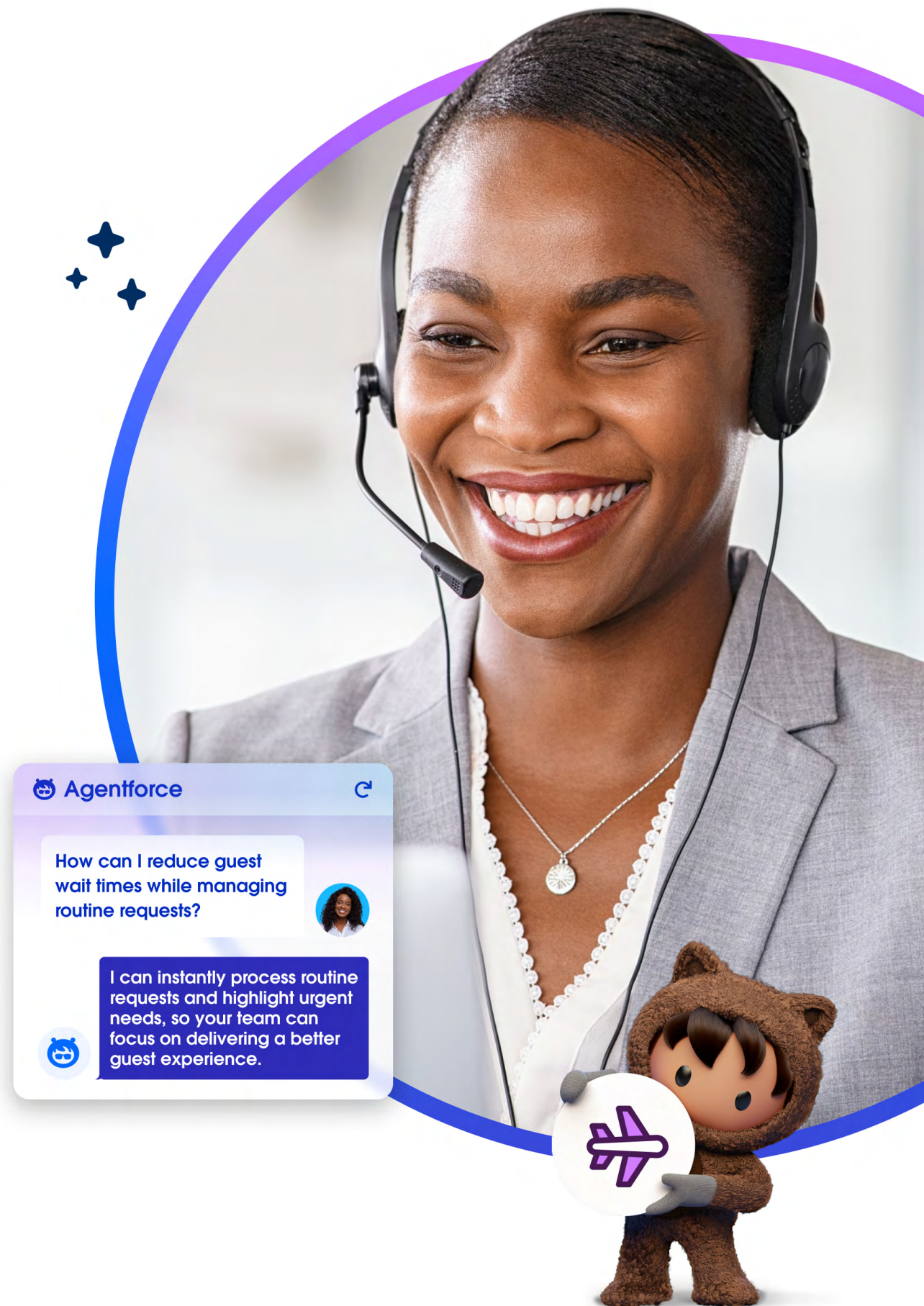




# State of Service: Trends in Travel and Hospitality

Insights and trends from 350+ customer service professionals in the travel and hospitality industry worldwide



# Executive Letter



This report focuses on insights and trends critical to the service industry culled from our comprehensive [State of Service report](#). Over 350 travel and hospital professionals nationwide were surveyed to get the latest answers to today's most pressing questions.

We're at a critical juncture. Service pros are navigating many headwinds, including rising customer expectations, shrinking teams, and technology that is advancing faster than policy or processes can keep up. Yet they remain the voice, presence, and memory that defines a traveler's experience.

AI is already shaping how service is resourced, routed, and resolved. **60% of service companies surveyed have adopted AI tools**, and nearly all report measurable gains in satisfaction, team productivity, and resolution speed.

Successful AI adoption requires more than tools; it demands a purposeful approach. When applied thoughtfully, AI doesn't replace care – it enables it. Trust, care, and consistency in travel and hospitality go beyond technical outcomes. They embody the values that guide how we implement great service.

We hope this report provides you with space to reflect, question, and reimagine service for what it's always been – a relationship.

*Jacqueline Nunley*

**Jacqueline Nunley**

Global Strategist Travel & Hospitality  
Industry Center of Excellence (CoE)

# What You'll Find in This Report

This report extracts travel and hospitality data from our larger [State of Service](#) research, which covers all industries. Here, we examine insights from 359 travel and hospitality professionals to learn more about:

- Current challenges and opportunities
- Why AI is crucial to today's service organizations
- How organizations are implementing AI-powered solutions

Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report sum to 100%. All comparison calculations are made from total numbers (not rounded numbers).

Data in this report is from two double-anonymous surveys conducted from April 25, 2025, through June 6, 2025. Respondents represent 40 countries across five continents. All respondents are third-party panelists.

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Argentina              |  Australia        |  Austria         |
|  Belgium                |  Brazil           |  Canada          |
|  Chile                  |  Colombia         |  Czech Republic  |
|  Denmark†               |  Finland†         |  France          |
|  Germany                |  Greece           |  India           |
|  Indonesia              |  Ireland          |  Israel          |
|  Italy                  |  Japan            |  Mexico          |
|  Netherlands            |  New Zealand      |  Norway†         |
|  Peru                 |  Philippines    |  Poland        |
|  Saudi Arabia         |  Singapore      |  South Africa  |
|  South Korea          |  Spain          |  Sweden†       |
|  Switzerland          |  Thailand       |  Turkey        |
|  United Arab Emirates |  United Kingdom |  United States |

**359** travel and hospitality leaders surveyed worldwide

†Single Sample Group

Flag icons: Getty Images

# Who We Surveyed

In this report, we refer to the following respondent groups.

## Service representatives

Frontline employees who support customers from the employee's home, store, or office.

## Field service technicians

Frontline employees who provide support in the field, at the customer's home or business – in-person or virtually.

## Service operations

Service professionals who oversee operations and equip internal teams with tools, systems, and processes.

## Service leaders

Service vice presidents, directors, and team leaders who oversee both field service technicians and service representatives.

- **Field service leaders**

Service leaders who oversee field service only.

- **Representative leaders**

Service leaders who oversee service representatives only.

## Service professionals

All survey respondents, inclusive of all groups above.



# Contents

**Executive Summary** ..... 06

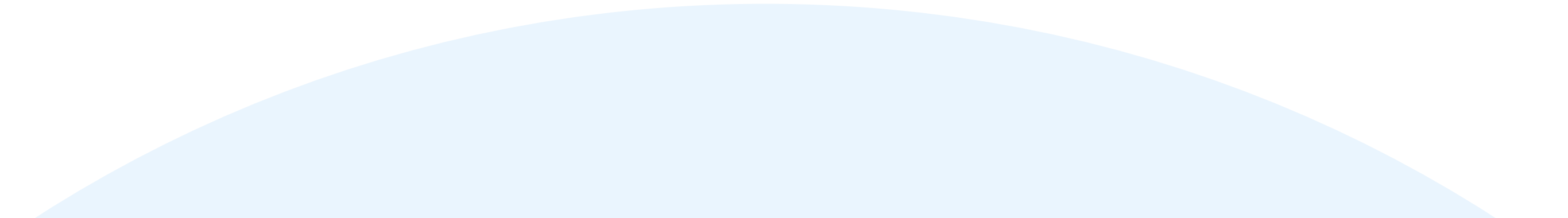
**Chapter 1:** Customer Expectations Are Turning Pressure into Potential..... 07

**Chapter 2:** AI Is the New Backbone of Service ..... 12

**Chapter 3:** AI Investments Are Paying Off..... 16

**Salesforce’s Perspective** ..... 20

**Explore More Resources** ..... 21



# Executive Summary

As travel patterns settle after the 2024 boom, travel and hospitality organizations now face rising operating costs, limited headcount, growing customer expectations, and high employee burnout – making success dependent on finding new ways to cut costs without adding staff or diminishing the customer experience.

This is a tall order in an industry with ever-increasing traveler expectations and high employee burnout.

Many travel and hospitality leaders are looking to AI, including agents, to unlock efficiencies and meet customer expectations for personalized, proactive service.

**82% of service leaders believe investment in AI agents is essential to meet business demands.**

To succeed, organizations need to reimagine the way they use AI, going beyond traditional use cases and implementing the technology in a way that transforms traveler experiences – so travelers feel AI is working for them, not happening to them.

## 01 Priorities and Challenges

Service organizations face rising pressures, with employee and customer satisfaction topping the list of both challenges and opportunities. **86% travel and hospitality professionals agree customer expectations are higher than they used to be.**

## 02 AI Is the New Backbone of Service

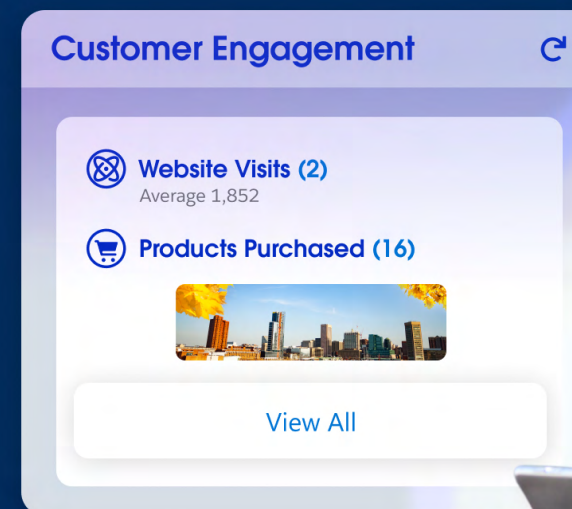
Service organizations are investing heavily in AI – and it's paying off. Adoption is steady, results are strong, and the technology is showing promise across all channels. **AI-resolved cases are expected to nearly double over the course of the next two years.**

## 03 AI Investments Are Paying Off

AI is easing the burden on service representatives by boosting efficiency, enhancing customer experiences, and strengthening teams through smarter operations; **88% of service organizations using AI believe it helps them serve their customers better.**

1

# Customer Expectations Are Turning Pressure Into Potential



01

# Expectations Are Rising, But Resources Aren't

Increased expectations in the travel and hospitality industry are coinciding with an increase in case volume. This puts strain on service representatives who recognize they must step up to meet rising standards – but lack the time and resources to do so.

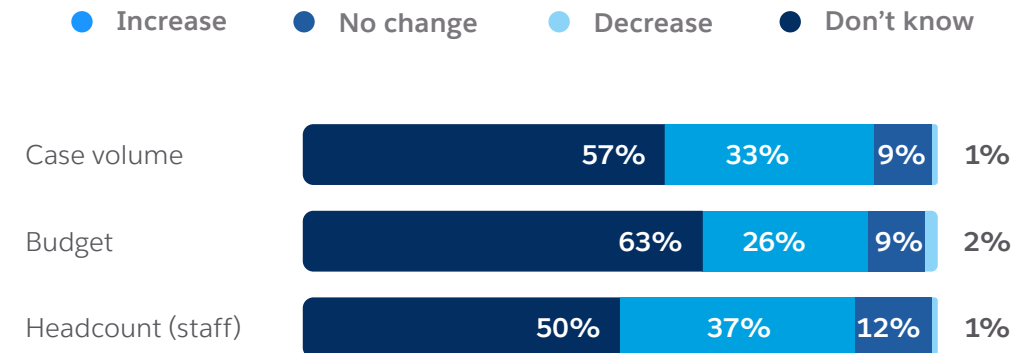
Furthermore this isn't just about a rise in case expectations. The cases are becoming more complex while administrative tasks continue to grow – and resources remain too limited to meet business demands.

Rising expectations, increased caseloads, and limited resources put a strain on travel and hospitality professionals, demanding that they provide faster, more personalized service even when lacking the time, skills, or support to do so.

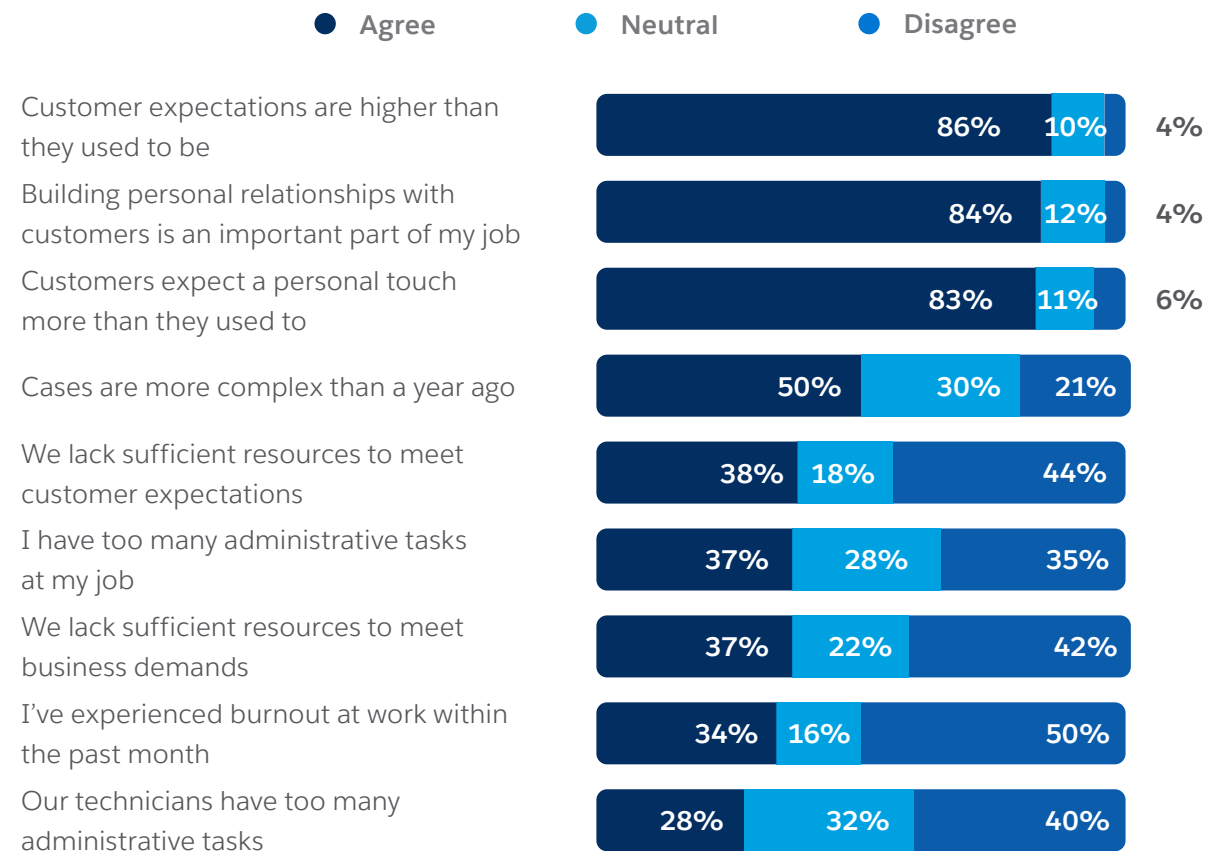
The eventual result is burnout, inconsistent customer experiences, and wasted opportunities to build loyalty that drives growth.

## Service Representatives Struggle With High Expectations and Low Support

Changes Service Leaders Anticipate Over the Next Year



## Service Professionals Who Say the Following



Base: Service professionals

# Travel and Hospitality Reps Are Stretched Thin

Service representatives are bogged down with competing priorities that keep them from the customers they serve.

In addition to a lack of resources, challenges may also stem from a gap in understanding between management and a service representative's day-to-day reality – a gap that could undermine both employee satisfaction and customer experience.

Seventy-seven percent of managers say their representatives have extensive opportunities to build relationships with customers. Compare this to just 53% of frontline service representatives. This 20+ point gap holds for tasks like working with high-value customers, upselling, mentorship, training, and more.

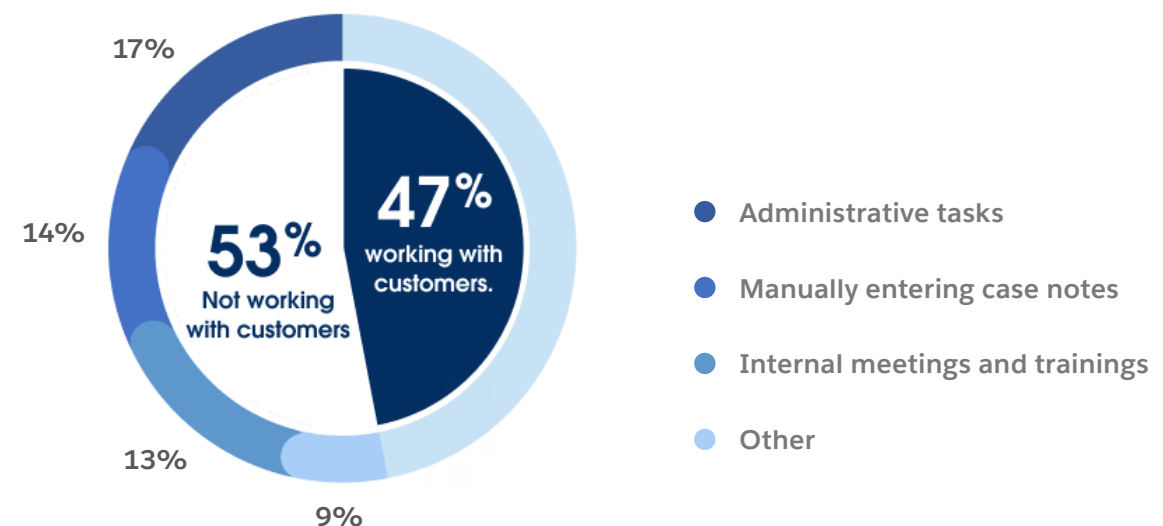
This is a significant disconnect. Leaders believe representatives have ample time for relationship-building and growth, but representatives report far fewer opportunities to engage meaningfully or develop their skills.

## Two Views, One Challenge

Management and Frontline Service Representatives Don't Always See Eye-to-Eye



## How Representatives Spend Their Time During an Average Week



01

# Challenges and Opportunities Represent Two Sides of the Same Coin

The World Travel and Tourism Council projects that travel will represent \$15.5 trillion in the economy by 2033. This presents travel and hospitality organizations with an immense array of opportunities – if they are well positioned to seize them.

Customer service professionals have identified improving the customer experience, workforce skills, and service technologies as their top opportunities to improve the customer experience. Interestingly, there is overlap between these and their top challenges, suggesting that, though they recognize the path forward, walking it isn't always easy.

Topping the list of challenges are customer expectations, employee satisfaction, cost inefficiencies, and technology implementation. Service organizations are one of the main touchpoints for travelers – how they tackle these challenges and seize these opportunities could be the difference between meaningful growth and stagnation.

---

## Customer and Employee Satisfaction Tops the List of Challenges and Opportunities

### Top Service Challenges in Travel & Hospitality

- 1 Keeping up with changing customer expectations
- 2 Difficulty hiring and/or retaining employees
- 3 High operational costs
- 4 Insufficient tools and technologies
- 5 Budgetary constraints

---

### Top Service Opportunities in Travel & Hospitality

- 1 Improving the customer experience
- 2 Improving workforce skills
- 3 Improving service technologies
- 4 Automating processes and workflows
- 5 Integrating service across the business

## Spotlight: Strategies to Address Service Demand

Travel and hospitality service leaders realize more must be done to meet service capacity demands to address business needs.

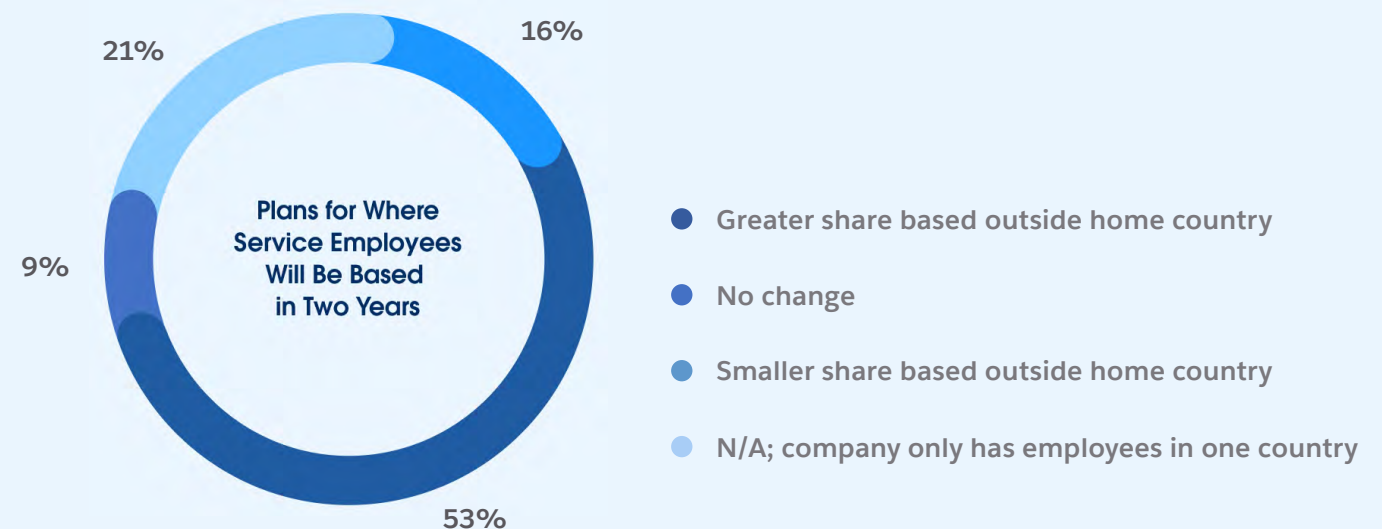
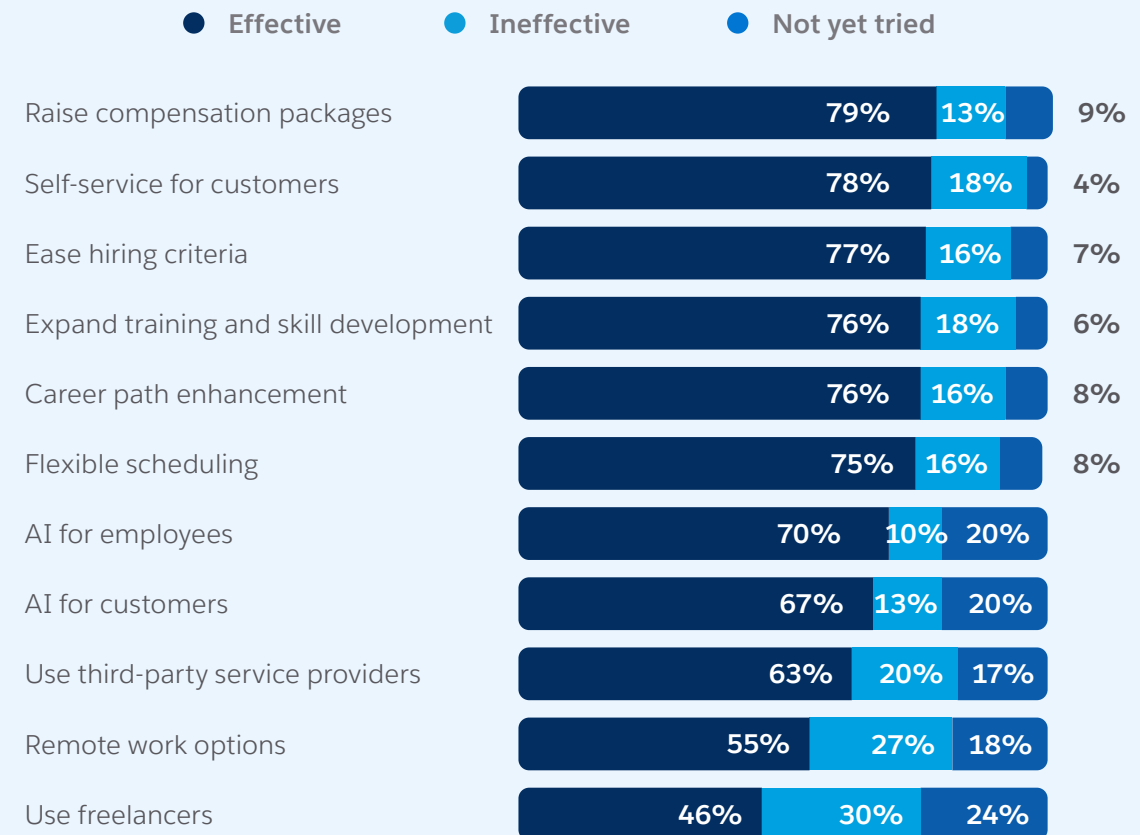
Many have tried to address these demands through better compensation, more training, self-service options, and AI – all of which have proved beneficial. Conversely, relying on freelancers and third-party service providers has proven less fruitful.

This may explain why most leaders say they don't plan to increase offshoring in the next two years – suggesting offshoring is no longer seen as a sufficient solution.

Strategies like training, AI, and self-service are working – while outsourcing is falling short – signaling a shift toward in-house, tech-driven capabilities.

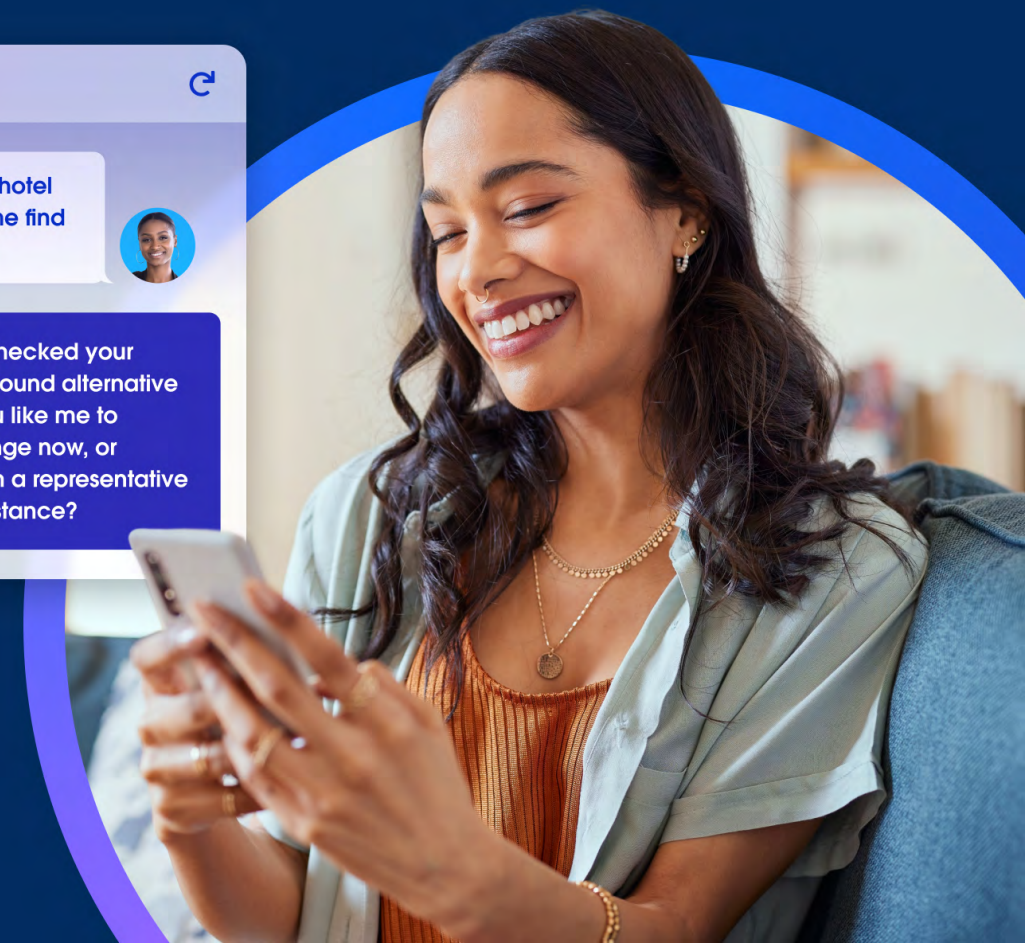
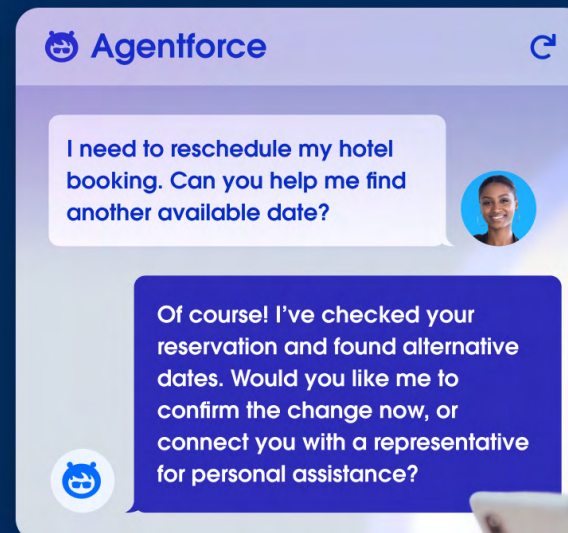
### Service Leaders Look to Meet Demands In-House

#### Effectiveness of Tactics to Address Service Capacity Demands



## 2

# AI Is the New Backbone of Service



## Service Organizations Are All In on AI

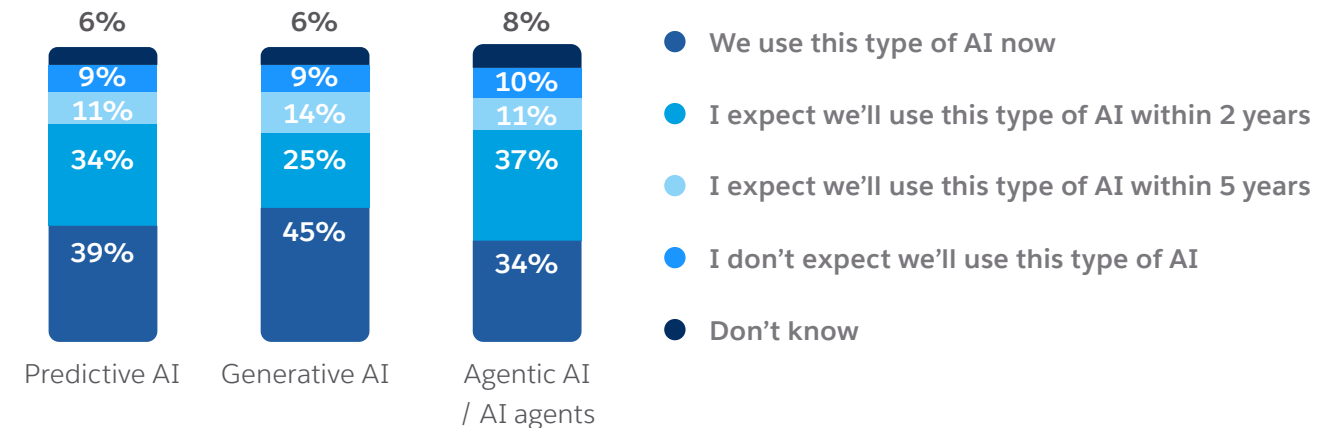
Service leaders aren't just experimenting with AI, they're all in – adoption is already widespread and expected to grow.

Currently, **60% of travel and hospitality service organizations use at least one form of AI**, and most plan to expand usage across predictive, generative, and agentic AI in the future. Agentic AI refers to systems that can make decisions and take action on their own to complete tasks with little or no human help.

One way teams use AI is to resolve cases directly. Already, just over a fourth of travel and hospitality service cases are resolved by AI – a number predicted to double over the next two years.

### AI in Service Is Both Common and Crucial

Service Organizations' Use of the Following Types of AI



### Service Cases Resolved by AI

**80%**

of customer expectations are higher than they used to be.\*

**75%**

of customers expect a more personal touch than they used to

# AI Adoption Is Predictable, Productive, and Paying Off

AI implementation in travel and hospitality service organizations is progressing largely as expected with relatively few hiccups.

Leaders report that most challenges that arose during AI implementation were largely foreseen and implementation went as expected. Of the challenges that arose during implementation, many were tied to a lack of AI expertise, siloed data, and trust and security concerns. This is despite the fact that a large majority of professionals in the travel and hospitality sectors recognize the importance of investing in technology integration, data security, and accuracy.

This suggests a clear tension: While AI is widely seen as a critical investment, the reality of implementation is proving more complex – especially when it comes to data. Despite broad recognition of the need for stronger data integration, quality, and security, many organizations are still struggling to bring those investments to life. The result is that even well-prepared service leaders are finding AI adoption harder to execute than anticipated.

## Service Organizations Double Down on Tech

Degree of Difficulty for Service Organization to Implement AI



## Service Leaders Who Say the Following



## Top Challenges Implementing AI

- 1 Lack of AI expertise
- 2 AI accuracy/explainability concerns
- 3 Siloed data
- 4 Poor data quality
- 5 Security concerns

02

## Field Service Leaders Are Slower to Adopt

Field service's slower adoption of AI agents could be related to the complexity of the work and its resistance to automation. Unlike structured tasks – like rebooking a flight – that follow clear rules with structured data and escalation guardrails, field work often involves unstructured data, on-the-spot judgement, and physical diagnostics – making AI use cases less clear and more limited.

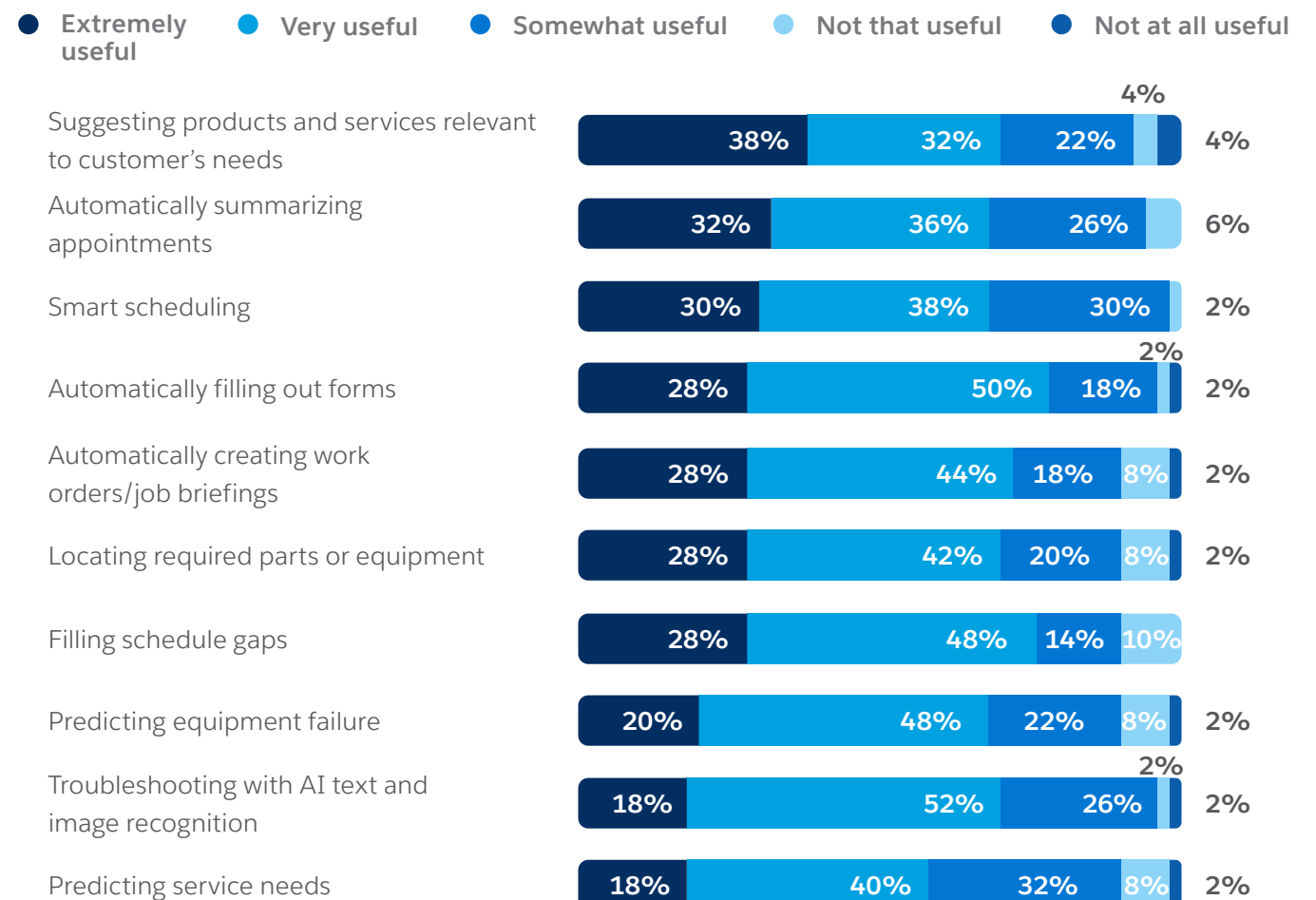
**38% of field service leaders believe AI supports proactive service across channels. In contrast, 89% of frontline service professionals see it as beneficial.**

### Field Service Lags Behind in AI Use Across All Channels

Service Representatives Lead the Way, While Field Service Lags

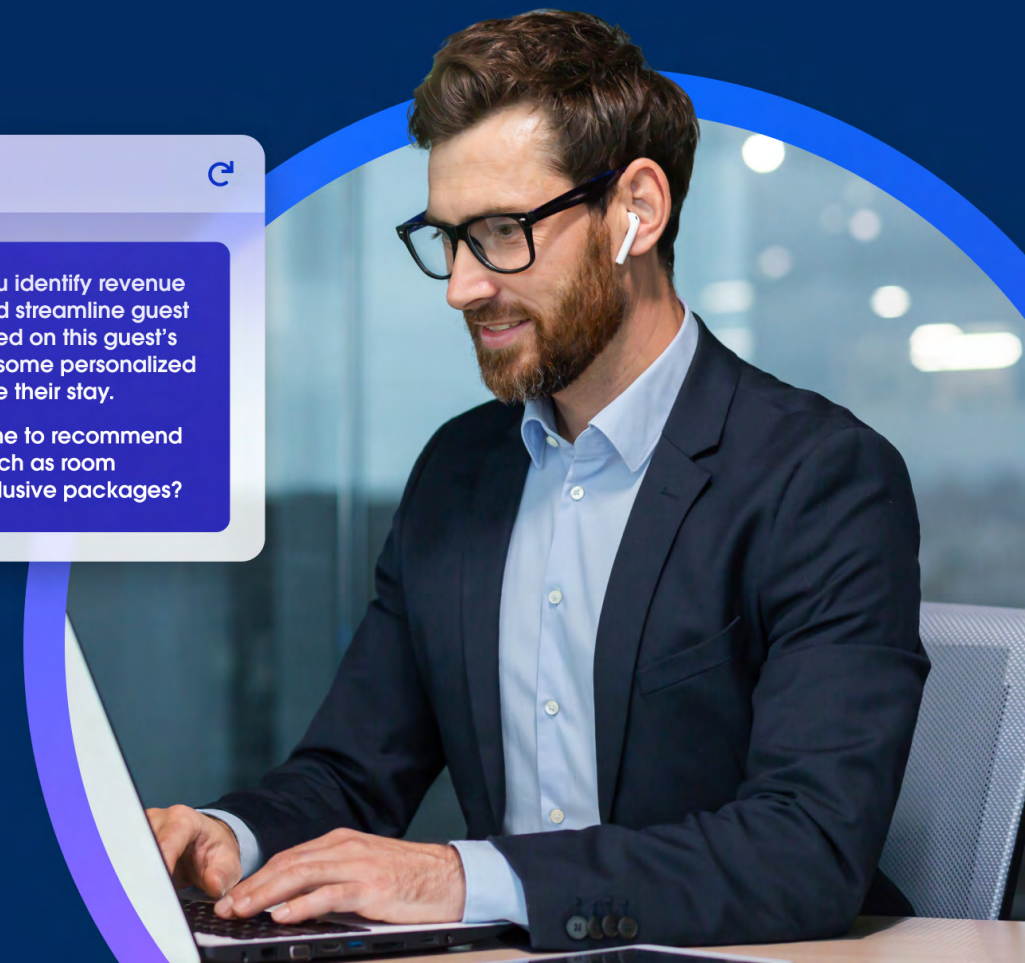
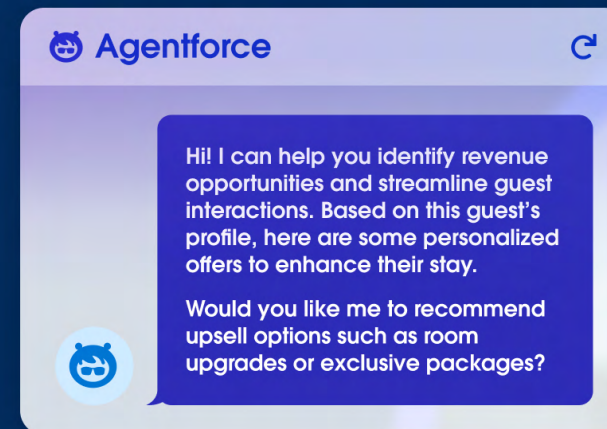


### Top AI Agent Use Cases in Field Service



## 3

# AI Investments Are Paying Off



## AI Is Taking Pressure Off Service Reps

Service professionals are under pressure – **34% say they’ve experienced burnout in the past month**, and **78% admit that the inability to offer either a good work/life balance or competitive benefits/wages** is making it hard to hire talent.

Service leaders are hoping AI can help alleviate these pressures, which makes sense. Organizations using AI are already seeing benefits in employee sentiment around productivity, increased job satisfaction, stress relief, and more.

Although agentic AI is still in its early stages, service professionals are hopeful about AI’s ability to take over administrative tasks and routine cases to help employees focus on higher-value tasks such as creating customer relationships.

This is valuable given that service representatives say **45% of their workload consists of routine cases**. Delegating these tasks could help organizations serve more customers more efficiently.

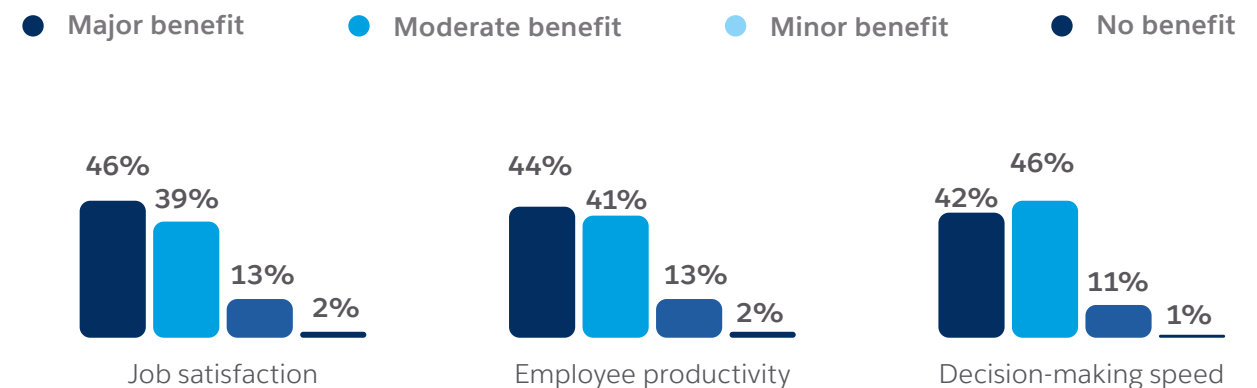
### Agents Amplify Employee Experience and Capabilities

#### Service Professionals Who Say the Following



Base: Travel and hospitality service professionals with AI

#### Extent AI Agents Are Expected to Benefit the Following



## AI Is Key to Smarter Ops and Stronger Teams

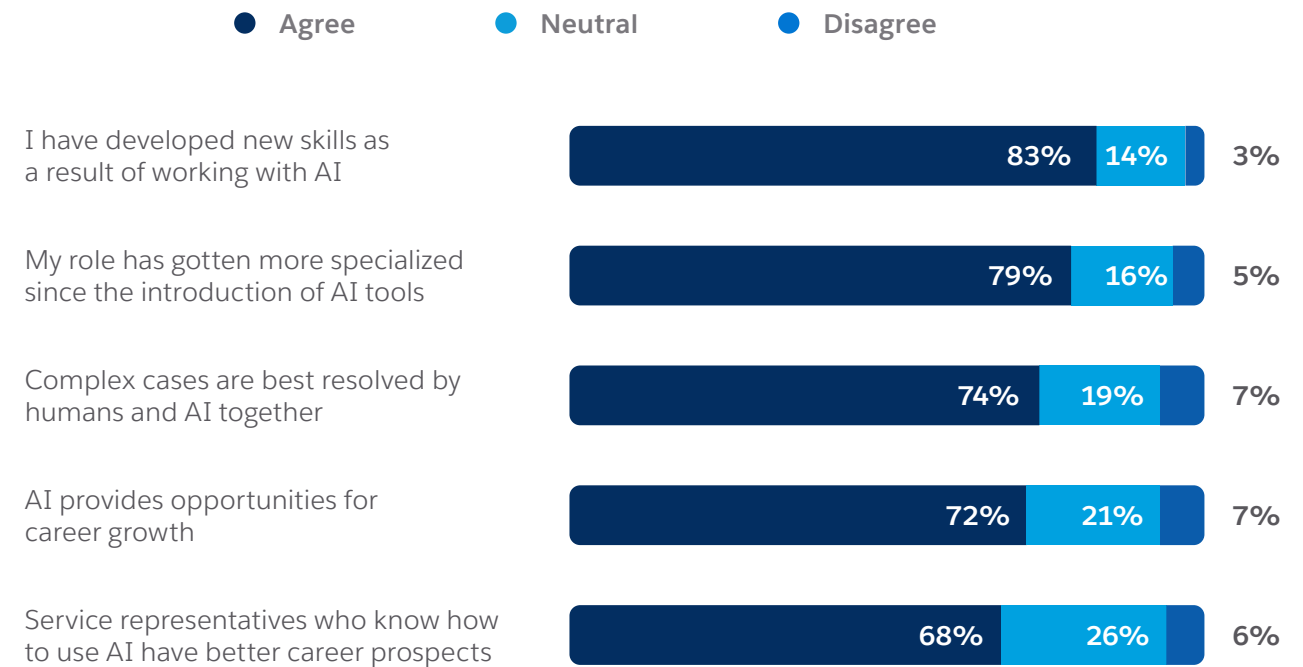
Service professionals see potential for AI in nearly every area of operations. Many find the technology useful for everyday tasks like answering FAQs, speeding up knowledge access, and managing accounts. Service professionals also reported benefits across operational use cases like closing employee skills gaps, streamlining service operations, and helping solve staffing and training issues.

These use cases, whether they are efficiency plays or more strategic, hold great value. They enable service organizations to reinvent operations in a data-driven and proactive way while simultaneously boosting employee skills and satisfaction.

For instance, if customer satisfaction rates consistently decline during late-night shifts (often staffed by less experienced representatives), AI can evaluate conversations and determine which representatives are encountering difficulties. It can then propose tailored training and staffing adjustments where needed to improve service quality and employee development.

### AI Agents Are Driving Service Wins

#### AI's Impact on Skills and Career Growth



#### Top AI Agent Use Cases

- 1 Customer FAQ
- 2 Personalized product recommendations
- 3 Forecasting
- 4 Knowledge retrieval for representatives/technicians
- 5 Account management

03

## AI Improves Efficiency and Customer Experiences

Nearly 100% of service professionals using AI report improvements in customer wait times, satisfaction, cost savings, productivity, and field service – boosting speed, efficiency, and revenue all at once.

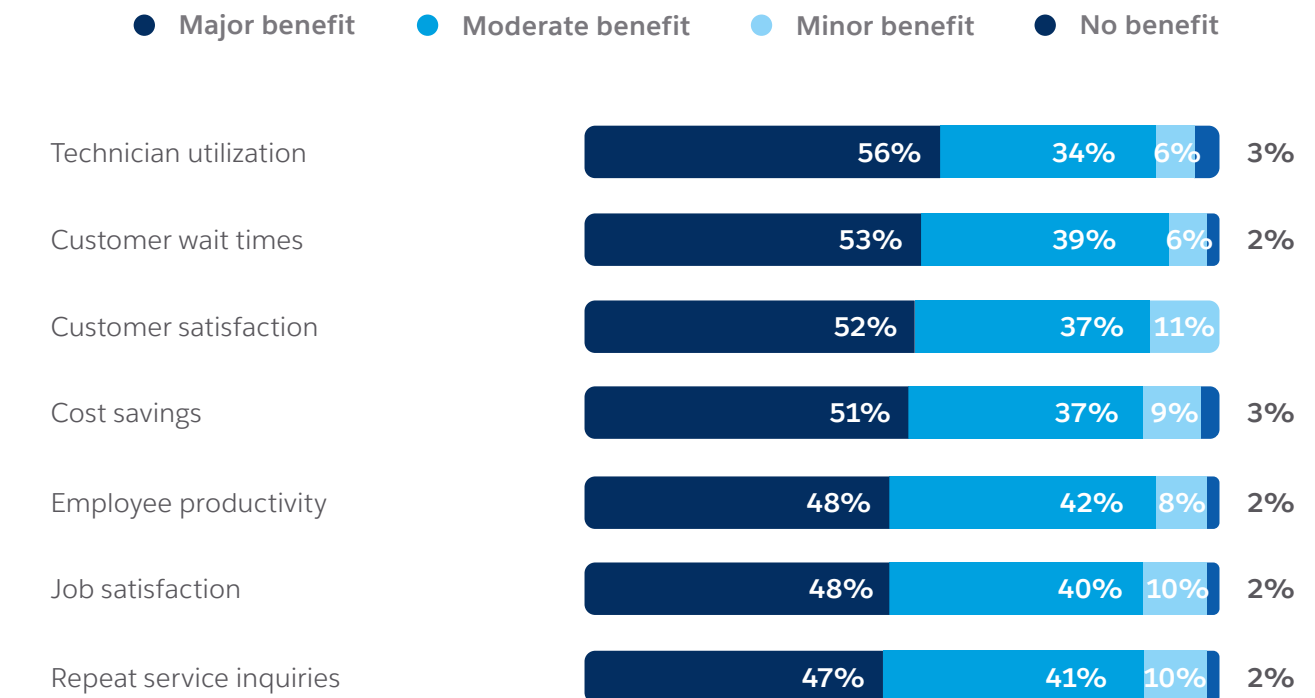
AI can now augment knowledge, streamline operations, and deliver proactive, personalized services that substantially impact results – like understanding travelers' preferences, likes, and dislikes.

For example, in the absence of AI, a traveler on a delayed flight could activate a no-show on a hotel reservation. Using AI, the hotel could cross-reference arrival schedules, flag the delay, inform staff, and communicate late check-in options to the guest – autonomously.

For travel and hospitality organizations, this can lead to improved customer experiences and operational gains that directly impact revenue and loyalty.

### AI Is Transforming Service, End to End

#### AI Benefits to the Following



Base: Travel and hospitality service professionals with AI

#### Service Professionals Who Say the Following



## Salesforce's Perspective

As the industry continues to embrace all forms of AI, including agents, there are myriad opportunities for innovation, personalization, and operational efficiency.

However, while the technology holds a vast amount of potential, it's important to remember that travel and hospitality is a human-centric industry. The smile when you check in, getting to know your guide, feeling seen at the airport check-in desk – these moments show why AI and humans go hand-in-hand.

Going forward, success will come to organizations that not only effectively use AI, but also combine it with a human touch. That way, the technology bolsters, rather than replaces, human interaction – making travelers and guests feel seen, heard, and catered to personally and purposefully.



**The message for the travel and hospitality industry is clear: In an era of ever-rising customer expectations, AI has transitioned from being a choice to becoming the essential foundation of service. Our research shows that nearly 100% of service professionals using AI report improvements in crucial areas like wait times and customer satisfaction. This clearly demonstrates that AI innovation is not only meeting, but surpassing expectations in driving efficiency and elevating experiences across the board."**



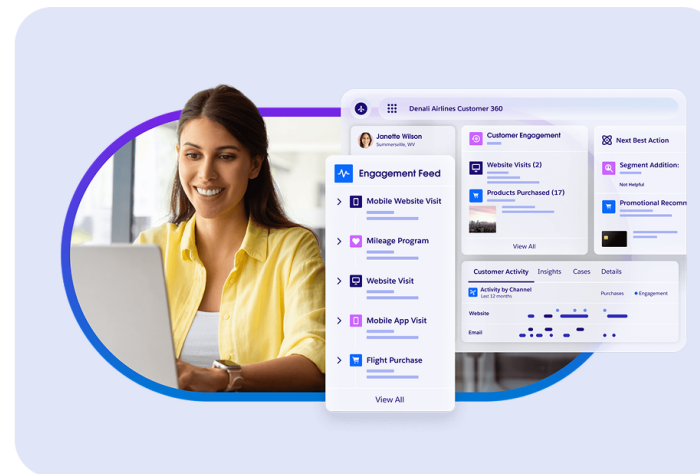
**Jacqueline Nunley**  
Salesforce Global Industry Expert

# Explore More Travel & Hospitality Resources



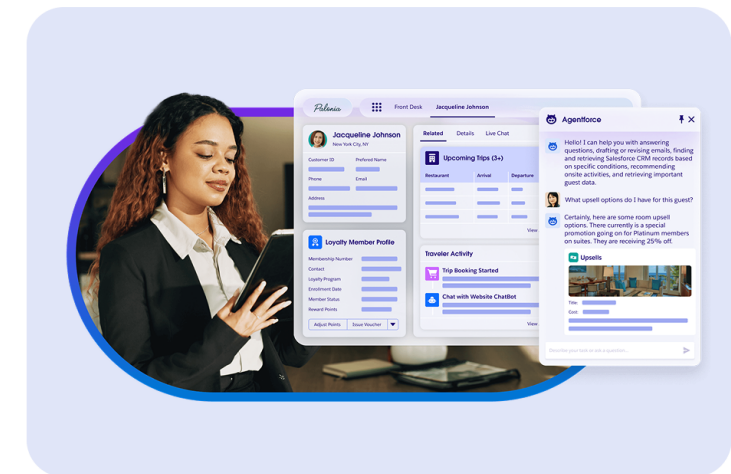
## 7th Edition State of Service Report

Insights from 6,500 service professionals worldwide on customer support in the AI era.

[Get the report](#)

## Transform travel experiences with Agentforce

Agentforce helps tech companies grow revenue and retention faster – with digital labor, not more headcount.

[Learn more](#)

## Orchestrate guest journeys

Unify data, connect teams, and leverage Agentforce to deliver exceptional service and transform guest experiences with a hospitality CRM.

[Learn more](#)



The information provided in this report is strictly for the convenience of our customers and is for general informational purposes only. Publication by Salesforce does not constitute an endorsement. Salesforce does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of any information, text, graphics, links, or other items contained within this guide. Salesforce does not guarantee you will achieve any specific results if you follow any advice in the report. It may be advisable for you to consult with a professional such as a lawyer, accountant, architect, business advisor, or professional engineer to get specific advice that applies to your specific situation.

© Copyright 2025, Salesforce, Inc. All rights reserved.