



Professional Services Edition

State of Service

Insights from 456 professional services leaders and practitioners worldwide



 Client strategy session



End Call

 Agentforce

Here's a summary and recommended next steps

Executive letter



John Benefield

Salesforce Director,
Solution Engineering

Professional services is built on expertise, advisory depth, and high-touch client relationships. Today, those strengths are being tested by rising client expectations, growing delivery complexity, and increasing pressure on expert capacity. As demand grows, organizations are under greater pressure to deliver responsive, high-quality support while making the most of limited capacity. In professional services, where engagements are often complex, project-based, and relationship-driven, service teams play a critical role in sustaining long-term client value.

Our research shows that 81% of service professionals say client expectations are higher than they used to be, while 64% say cases have become more complex over the past year. At the same time, teams continue to face familiar constraints. Many professionals report limited resources, growing administrative burden, and too little time available for direct advisory work with clients. In an industry where value is created through expertise, responsiveness, and continuity across client work, that imbalance carries real consequences.

AI is emerging as an important part of the response. Professional services organizations are adopting AI in step with the broader market, and leaders increasingly see it as a way to expand service capacity. The opportunity is not simply to accelerate work, but to redesign how service delivery is structured – allowing AI to absorb more routine tasks while professionals focus on the complex, relationship-driven work clients value most.

That shift could be significant. Leaders anticipate improvements not only in efficiency, but also in client satisfaction, revenue opportunities, and overall service performance. Realizing those gains, however, will depend on more than adoption alone. Strong data foundations, connected workflows, and embedded AI support will be essential to making AI effective in day-to-day service delivery.

We hope this report offers a useful view into how professional services organizations are navigating these changes. As AI becomes more deeply embedded in service, the firms that benefit most will be those that use it to expand capacity, strengthen expertise, and create more value through every client interaction.

John Benefield

Inside this professional services edition

This report extracts professional services (ProServ) industry data from our larger [State of Service research](#), which covers all industries. Here, we examine insights from 456 service professionals worldwide to learn how:

- Rising expectations are putting service capacity under pressure
- AI is opening new capacity across service operations
- AI is reshaping expertise, delivery models, and value creation

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 a double-anonymous survey conducted from April 25, 2025, through June 6, 2025. Respondents represent 37 countries across five continents. All respondents are third-party panelists.



456 professional services leaders and practitioners surveyed worldwide

†Single Sample Group

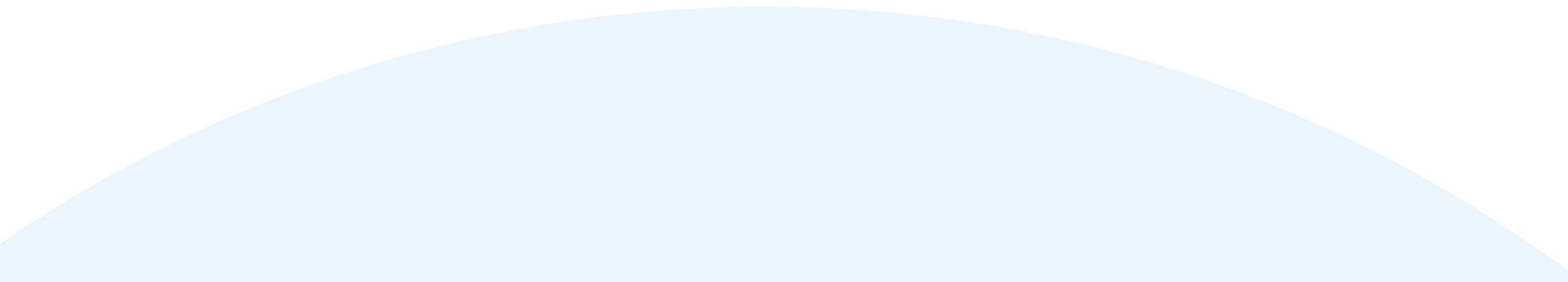
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Salesforce Research provides data-driven insights to help businesses transform how they drive customer success.

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Executive summary

Professional services organizations are under growing pressure to deliver responsive, high-value support as client expectations rise and cases become more complex. In project-based, relationship-driven service environments, administrative burden, limited resources, and specialized hiring challenges make it difficult to scale capacity through headcount alone – especially when expert time and client continuity directly shape outcomes.

AI is emerging as a practical response. Firms are adopting it in line with the broader market to support service delivery at greater scale while redirecting expert time toward more strategic client work. In professional services, where service quality can influence retention, account growth, and the strength of ongoing client relationships, leaders see potential not only in efficiency gains, but also in stronger client outcomes, career development, and new revenue opportunities.

As service models continue to evolve, AI offers a way to expand capacity while keeping expert time focused on the client work that matters most.

01

Rising expectations strain service capacity

Professional services teams are managing rising client demands, greater case complexity, and ongoing talent constraints while still maintaining strong service performance. Administrative and non-client-facing work continue to consume a large share of service time, limiting the expert attention available for higher-value client engagements. **81% of service professionals say client expectations are higher than they used to be.**

02

AI unlocks new service capacity

Professional services firms are adopting AI in line with broader market trends and increasingly positioning it as a way to support scale across service workflows. Even as day-to-day work remains heavily weighted toward non-client-facing activity, leaders see AI creating value across service operations and opening new capacity for client-facing work. **30% of service inquiries are currently resolved by AI, a figure expected to reach 50% within two years.**

03

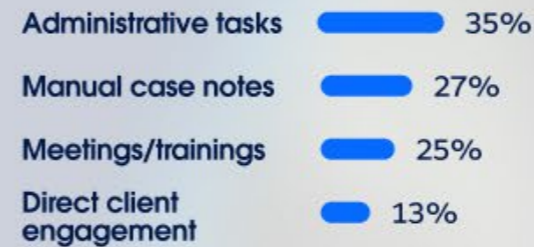
Professional services creates new value with AI

As AI takes on more routine work, service roles are shifting toward more specialized contributions, with leaders also anticipating gains in client satisfaction, revenue, and efficiency. The broader opportunity lies in using AI to improve both service outcomes and the long-term value delivered across client engagements. **85% of professional services respondents say they have developed new skills as a result of working with AI tools.**

01

Rising expectations strain service capacity

🕒 Workload Distribution



👤 Rising expectations



01

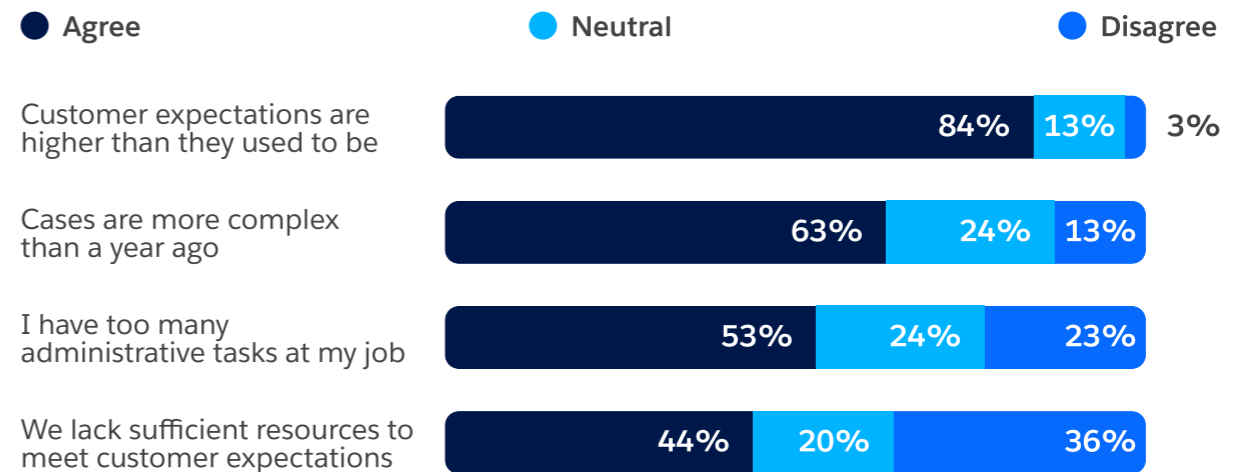
Resource constraints are testing service capacity

As client expectations and service complexity rise, many professional services organizations report that available resources are not keeping pace with demand. Forty-four percent of service professionals say they lack sufficient resources to meet client expectations, and the same share report experiencing burnout in the past month. Together, these findings point to sustained operating pressure rather than temporary workload fluctuations. Workflow inefficiencies add to the strain. On average, 10% of working hours are considered wasted, reducing the capacity available to support clients and manage growing workloads. In an industry where responsiveness, expertise, and continuity are central to the client experience, even small inefficiencies can have an outsized impact on service delivery.

As demand continues to increase, organizations face a difficult balancing act: maintaining high-quality service while managing resource limitations and workforce fatigue. These pressures highlight why many professional services firms are looking for new ways to expand capacity, reduce operational burden, and help teams focus more of their time on the work that delivers the greatest value to clients.

Service teams face capacity pressure as workloads expand

How service professionals assess service demands and workload



How service reps currently spend their time



01

Client expectations and case complexity continue to rise

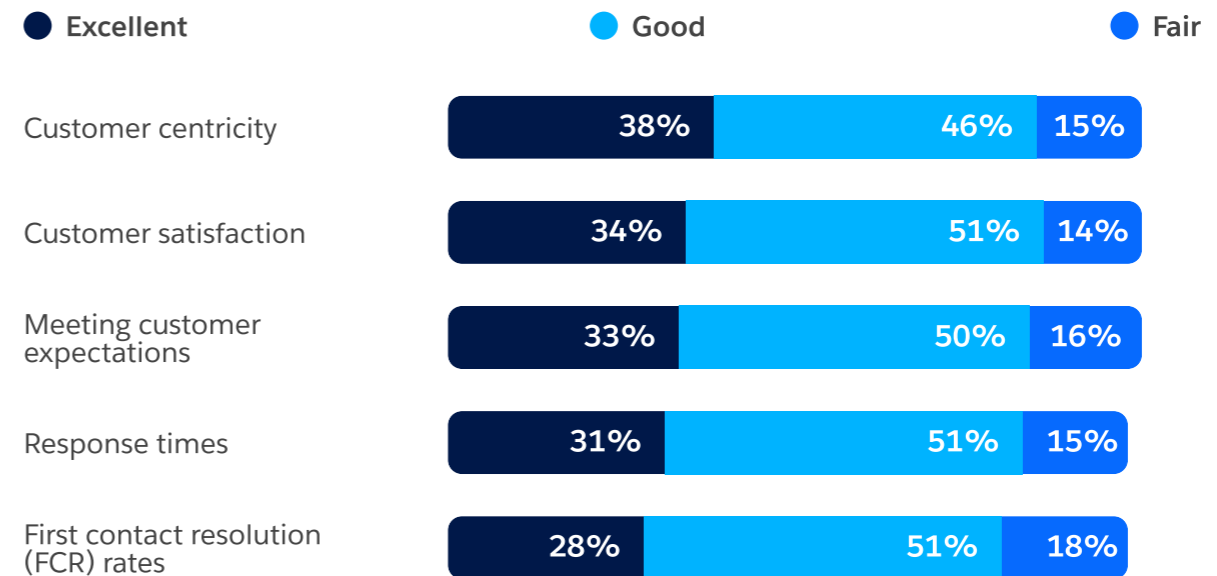
As service capacity tightens, the demands placed on professional services teams continue to grow. Eighty-one percent of service professionals say client expectations are higher than they used to be, and 64% report that cases have become more complex over the past year.

These shifts carry particular weight in professional services organizations that manage long-running, multi-stakeholder client engagements. Clients increasingly expect rapid responses, tailored guidance, seamless handoffs, and proactive support across channels and engagement teams. For service teams, that raises the bar on coordination and the ability to apply specialized expertise quickly and consistently.

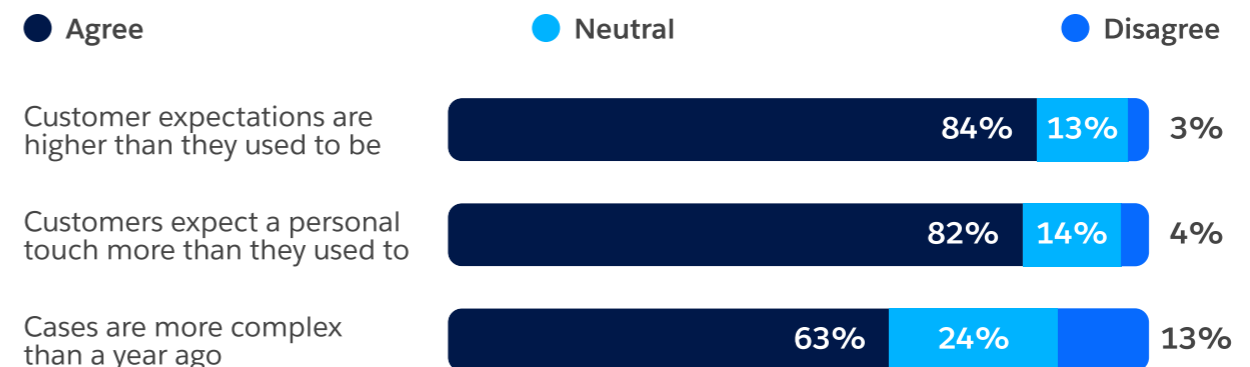
Despite these pressures, organizations continue to report strong performance across key measures such as responsiveness and client satisfaction. Sustaining those outcomes reinforces the need for tools that help teams respond faster, manage complexity, and protect the client experience.

Service performance remains strong despite rising expectations

How service organizations rate their performance across key metrics



Service professionals' perspectives on client expectations



01

Talent constraints limit service capacity expansion

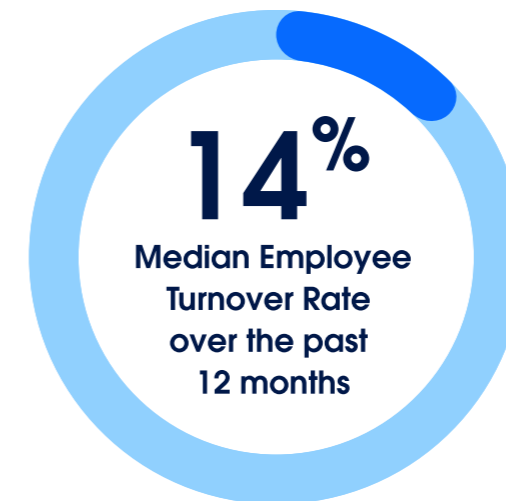
Hiring and retaining qualified service professionals presents a challenge for organizations seeking to scale support. Median employee turnover in professional services organizations stands at 14%, and leaders cite difficulty finding candidates with the communication skills, consultative capabilities, industry expertise, and domain knowledge required for client-facing roles.

In an expertise-driven industry, these constraints can have a ripple effect. New hires require time to build familiarity with client environments, internal systems, and specialized knowledge needed to resolve complex cases. As a result, expanding service capacity through headcount alone may not keep pace with rising demand. In client-led service environments, ramp time and knowledge transfer can become hidden capacity costs.

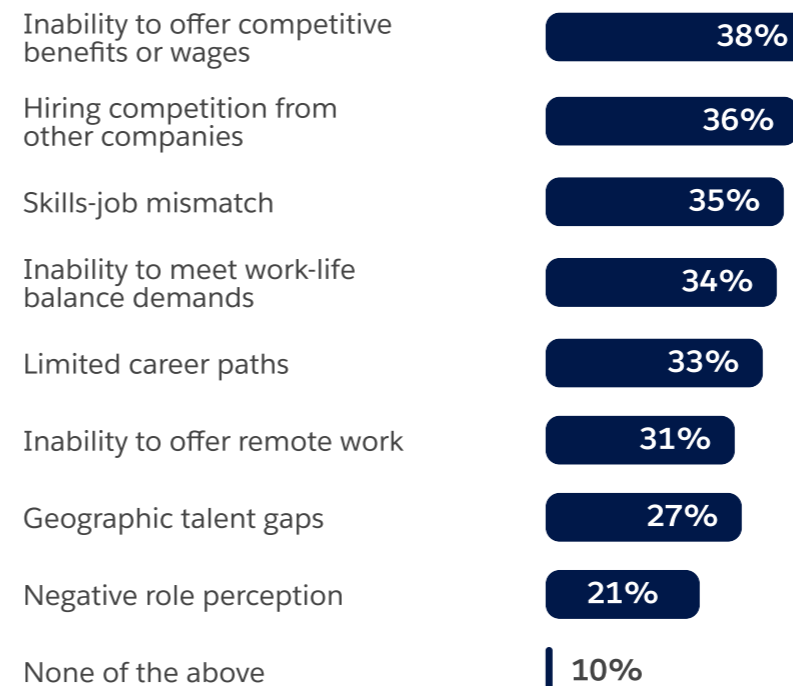
These dynamics are prompting organizations to reconsider how service work is structured. As expectations continue to rise and expertise remains limited, firms are exploring ways to scale service delivery while allowing professionals to focus on client work.

Service teams face growing barriers to hiring skilled talent

Median employee turnover rate in service organizations



Obstacles to hiring talent



02

AI unlocks new service capacity

 What is going on with this account's score?

 Account Health recently started trending upward, coinciding with a services engagement that began around that time.



02

AI adoption in professional services keeps pace with the broader market

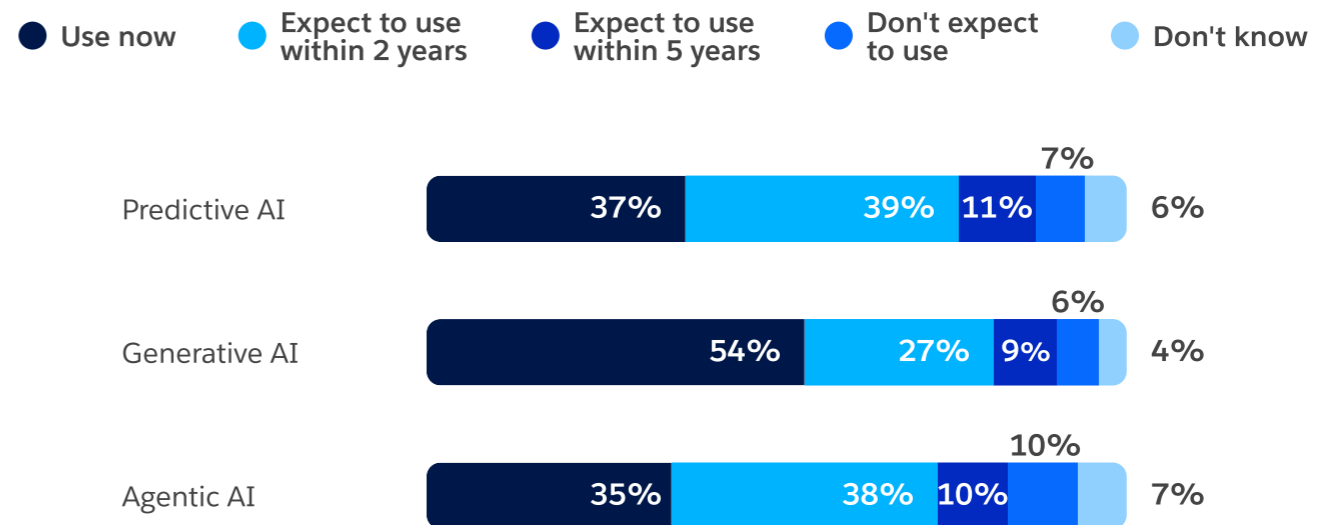
AI adoption in professional services is advancing in line with the broader service market. Organizations are already using multiple forms of AI, with generative AI leading current adoption and agentic AI close behind. At the same time, leaders increasingly view AI agents as essential to meeting business demands, signaling that AI is becoming a more central part of service strategy.

That broader momentum is reflected in how organizations expect service delivery to change. The share of inquiries resolved by AI is projected to rise significantly over the next two years, suggesting that AI's role will continue to expand across service workflows.

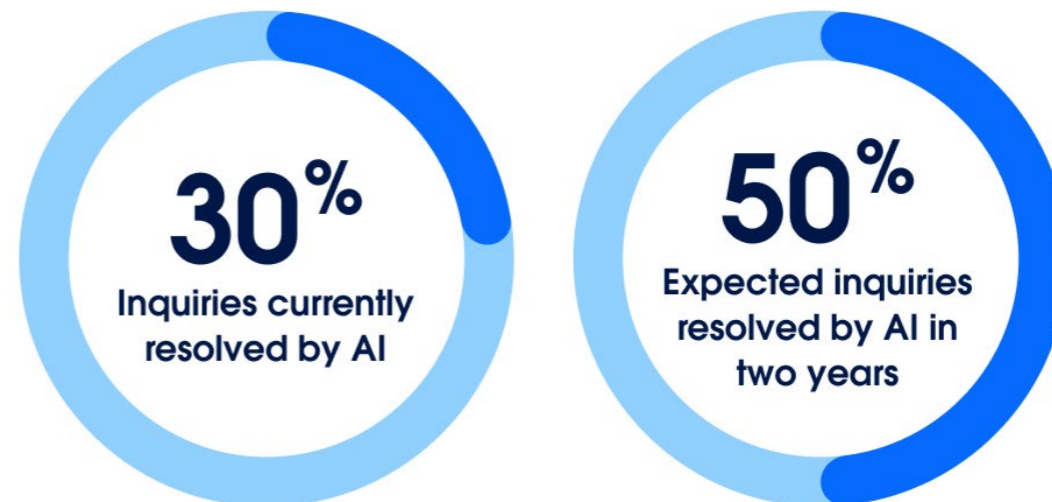
While professional services does not emerge as a dramatic outlier compared with the full survey base, the direction is clear: AI is becoming more deeply embedded in day-to-day service operations.

AI moves from adoption to service impact

AI adoption is broad – and still expanding



AI will handle a growing share of service work



02

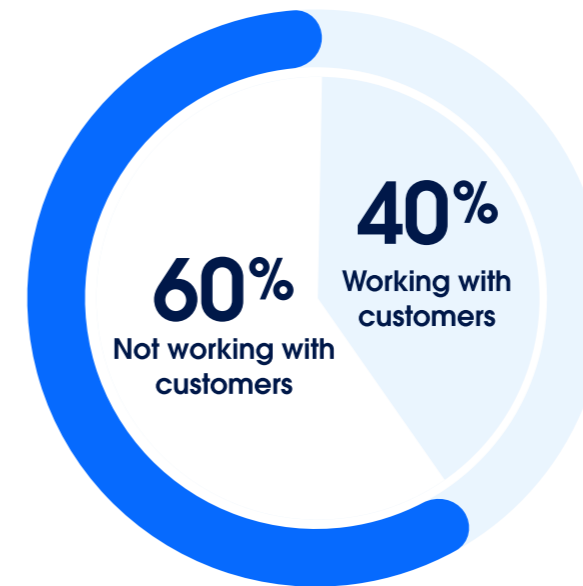
Service time imbalance persists in the age of AI

Even as AI adoption grows, day-to-day service work remains heavily weighted toward non-client-facing activity. The chart data shows that service representatives still spend most of their time on administrative, operational, and internal tasks rather than direct client engagement. In professional services, that imbalance matters because it limits the time experts can devote to billable advisory work, relationship development, and complex delivery support.

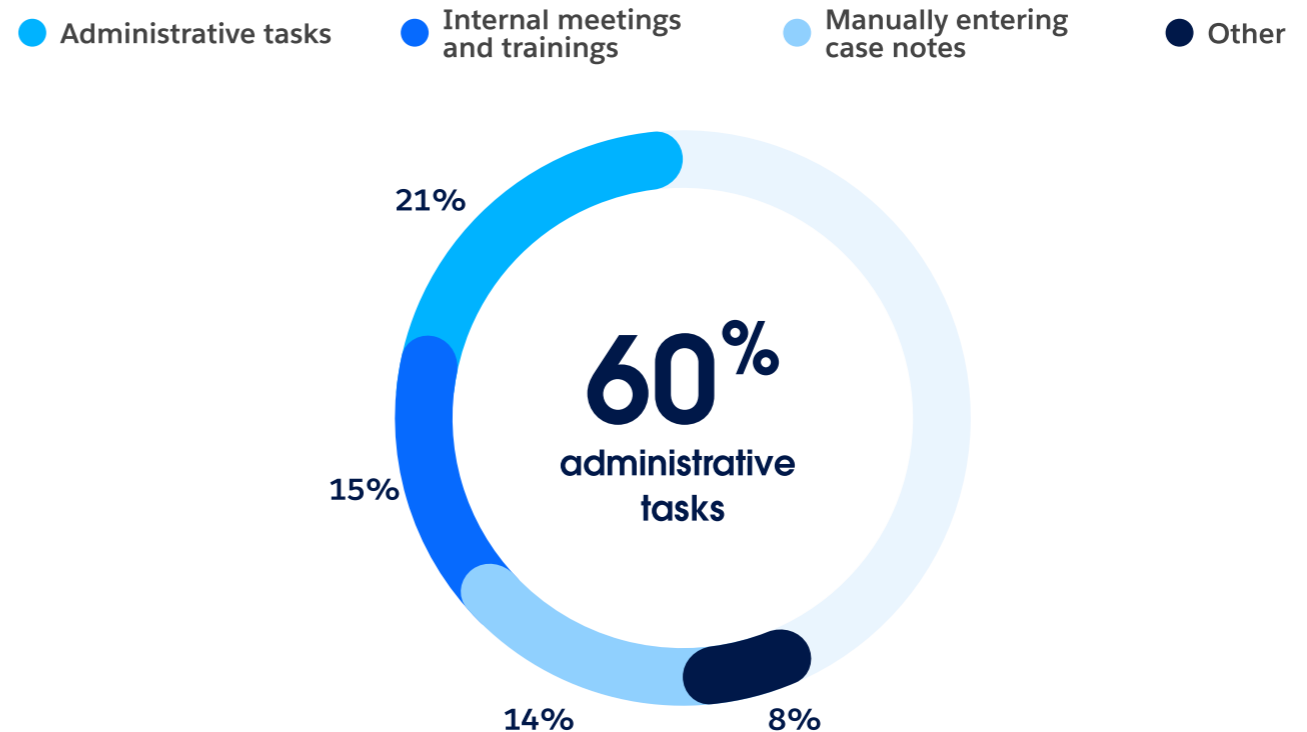
This creates a clear opportunity for AI to support service delivery, particularly in the routine and process-heavy work surrounding client interactions. The value of AI here extends beyond speed and automation alone. It is the potential to reduce manual effort tied to routine service work and free more expert time for higher-value client needs, stronger continuity across engagements, and more consistent client experiences. For firms operating under utilization and margin pressure, reclaiming even small amounts of expert time can create meaningful operational impact.

How service time is distributed across work activities

Most service time is spent away from clients



Administrative tasks make up a significant share of service work



02

AI creates value across service operations

As AI adoption expands, leaders increasingly view it as a source of value across service operations. The anticipated benefits extend beyond productivity alone, spanning client satisfaction, revenue-related outcomes, and operational performance. That breadth matters because it suggests AI is being positioned not as a narrow efficiency tool, but as a broader enabler of service improvement.

In professional services, service value is shaped by more than speed and cost. It also depends on responsiveness, relationship quality, and the ability to support complex client needs. AI's perceived value therefore lies in its ability to strengthen multiple dimensions of service delivery simultaneously. Leaders are increasingly looking to AI not simply to optimize individual tasks, but to build more scalable, resilient service operations that can meet growing client demands.

AI creates value across service operations

Service leaders see value beyond efficiency



AI adoption is accelerating



02

AI points to a dual payoff: better experiences and lower costs

While leaders see broad value in AI, the projected gains cluster around two especially important outcome areas: client experience and operational efficiency. On the client side, leaders anticipate stronger satisfaction, higher case deflection, and increased upsell revenue. On the operational side, they project lower service costs, shorter wait times, and faster resolution.

This pattern suggests that AI's perceived value is both external and internal. It is expected to improve the client outcomes that shape retention, expansion opportunities, and long-term account growth, while also reducing the friction and cost that constrain service operations. In that sense, AI is not being positioned to improve just one aspect of performance. It points to a dual payoff: strengthening the quality of the client experience while improving the economics of service delivery.

Projected AI value concentrates in two key outcome areas

Client experience and revenue lead anticipated AI gains



Efficiency gains cluster around cost and time reduction



03

Professional services creates new value with AI

 New value through AI



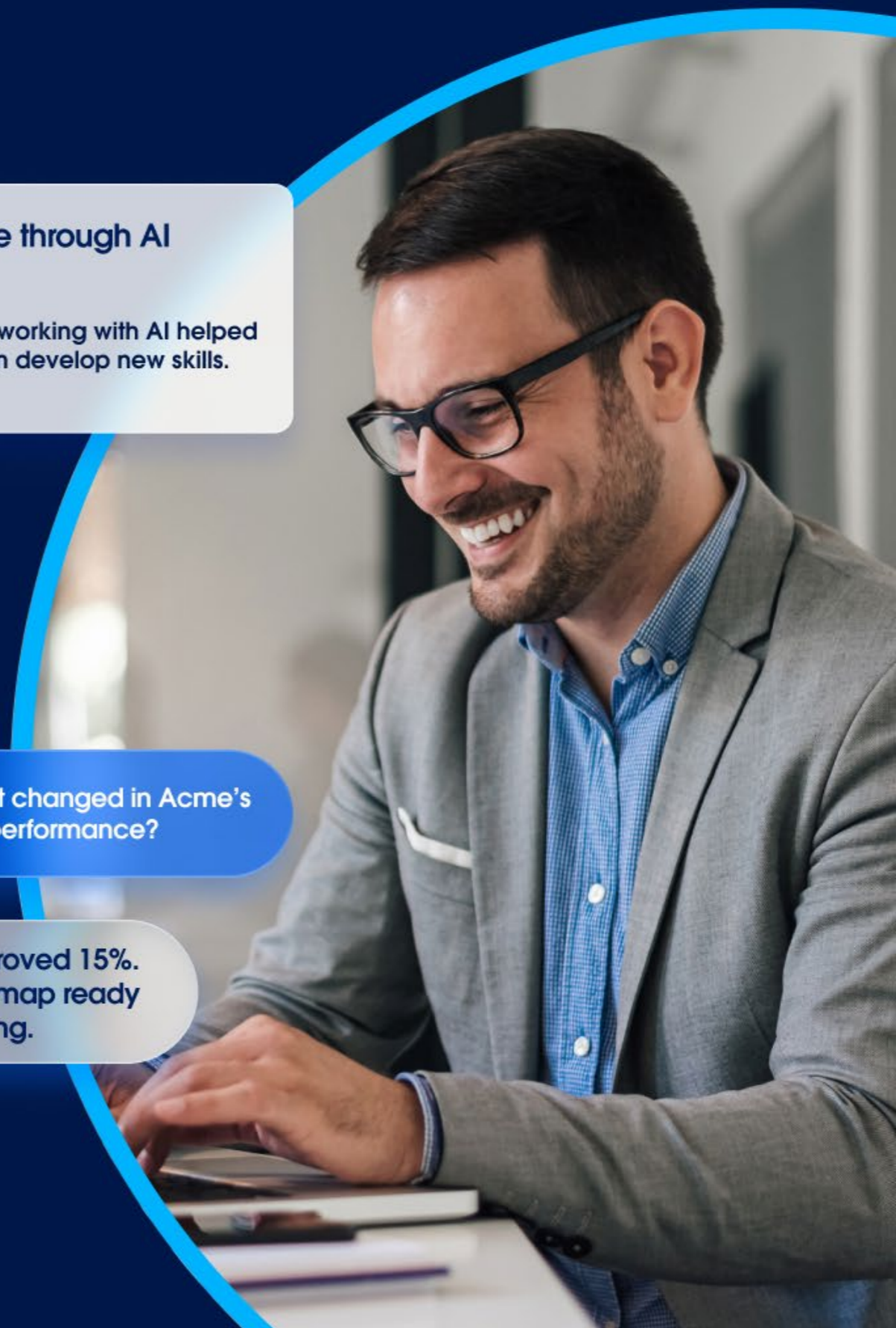
say working with AI helped them develop new skills.



What changed in Acme's Q3 performance?



Efficiency improved 15%. Advisory roadmap ready for your meeting.



03

Routine service work is primed for AI

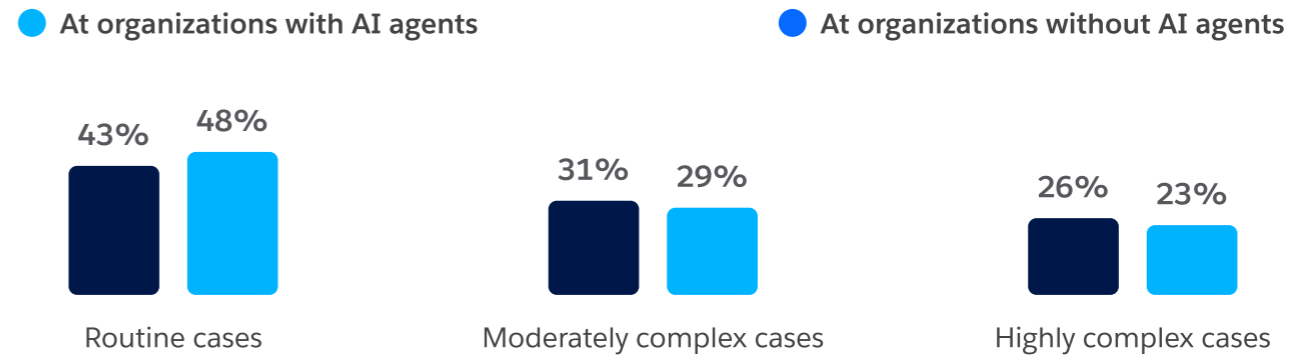
Service work in professional services remains heavily weighted toward routine activity. Across industries, nearly half of service caseloads consist of routine cases, with smaller shares devoted to moderately and highly complex work. This highlights a persistent imbalance: highly skilled professionals spend significant time on work that does not require deep domain expertise.

AI use case data reinforces where the greatest opportunity lies. The highest perceived value is concentrated in repeatable tasks such as FAQs, client inquiries, and conversation summaries. These are precisely the areas where routine demand is greatest – and where automation can reduce manual effort without compromising quality.

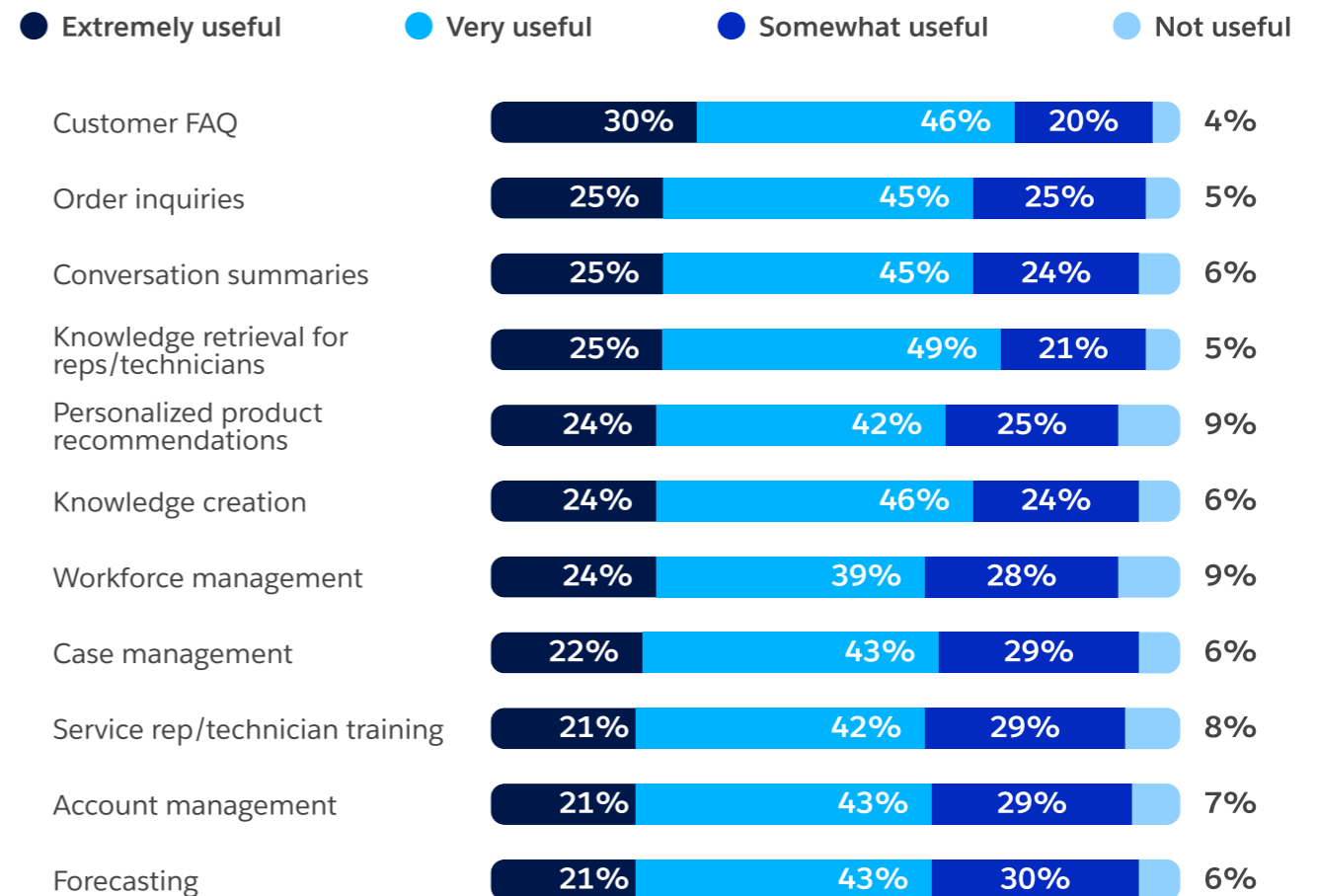
AI is not replacing complex service work, but it is well positioned to absorb routine interactions and help redirect expert time toward higher-value client needs.

AI use cases align with high-volume service work

Routine work dominates service demand



AI seen as most useful for repetitive tasks



03

AI is reshaping service roles and career paths

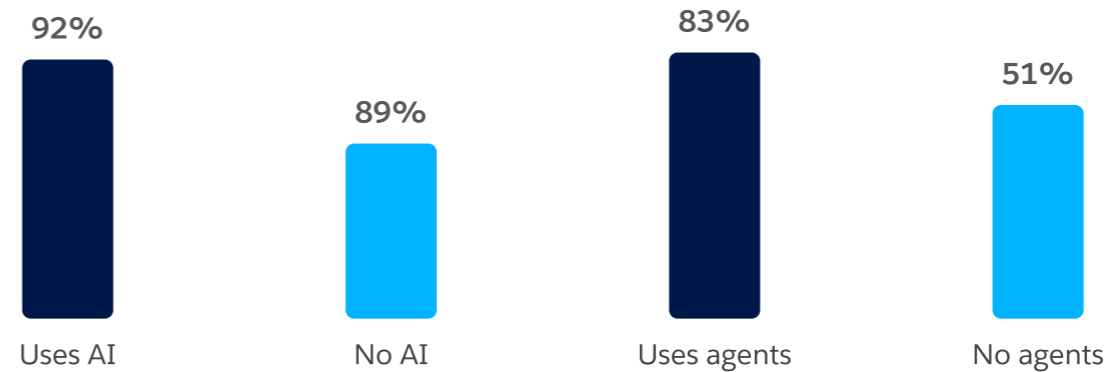
AI is changing not only how service work gets done, but what the work requires. A large majority of professionals report developing new skills as a result of working with AI, and many say their roles have become more specialized and strategically focused. Most also believe AI creates new opportunities for career growth, especially for those who know how to use it effectively.

The impact is also visible in how professionals view their future. Those using AI – and especially AI agents – are significantly more likely to report a positive outlook on career advancement than those who are not. This suggests that AI fluency is becoming a differentiator, shaping both day-to-day responsibilities and long-term career trajectories.

In professional services, stronger AI fluency can also support client continuity and confidence by enabling more consistent service quality across longer-running client engagements.

AI adoption is linked to stronger career outlooks

Service roles are becoming more skilled and specialized



Career outlooks vary significantly by AI adoption



03

AI creates value across client, revenue, and efficiency outcomes

AI's potential in service extends beyond efficiency alone. While lower costs and faster resolution remain important outcomes, leaders also see AI contributing to client satisfaction, case deflection, and revenue opportunity. In professional services, that broader value matters because service is closely tied to relationship quality, responsiveness, and the ability to support complex client needs across longer-running engagements.

AI is increasingly being positioned not simply as an operational tool, but as a strategic enabler of stronger client outcomes and more scalable expertise delivery. Across industries, organizations project double-digit gains in client satisfaction, case deflection, and upsell revenue, alongside meaningful reductions in service costs and wait times. In professional services, that points to a wider role for AI: strengthening both client experience and the business value created through service.

Service leaders see gains beyond efficiency

Key service metrics are expected to improve

Client & revenue impact



Operational impact



Our take

As professional services organizations continue to embrace all forms of AI, including autonomous agents, a clear opportunity is emerging: closing the gap between high-touch advisory service and operational efficiency. In an industry where cases are growing substantially more complex, AI offers a way to expand service capacity without sacrificing the human expertise and trust that define long-term client relationships.

At its core, professional services is a relationship-driven industry. That means the best AI use cases are the ones that protect trust, lighten administrative load, and free experts to spend more time on client context and judgment. The value of an expert's judgment, the nuanced guidance of a strategic advisor, and the trust built over years of partnership cannot be automated. These moments are precisely why AI and human experts must go hand-in-hand. As AI takes on more routine and administrative work, professionals can devote more time to complex client challenges and higher-value engagement.

The organizations that succeed will use AI not simply to reduce costs, but to reclaim time for their people – whose days are currently overloaded with administrative and routine tasks. With the right data foundation, connected workflows, and embedded AI support, companies can scale their impact while keeping expertise at the center of the client experience. Shifting focus back to high-value client work is what will drive revenue, build lasting loyalty, and support more consistent client outcomes across longer-running relationships.



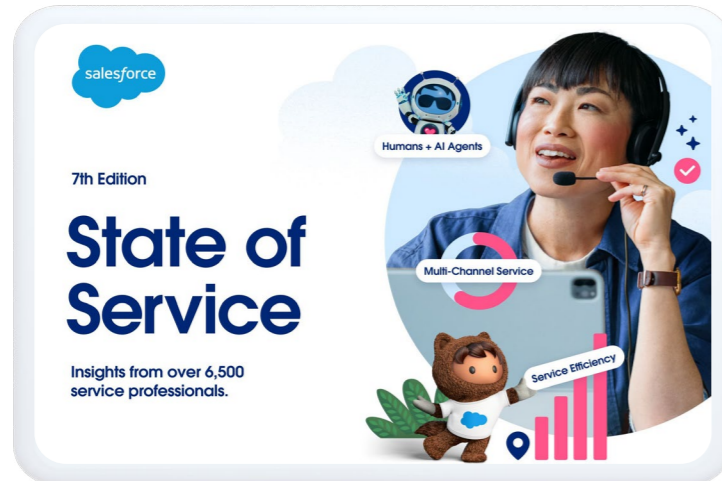
The message for the professional services industry is clear: In an era of shrinking capacity and rising complexity, AI has transitioned from an experimental differentiator to an essential operational baseline. Our research shows that AI is already resolving 30% of cases today, and with agentic AI fully implemented, leaders expect a '20/20/20' gain across wait times, service costs, and resolution speed. This isn't just about efficiency; it's empowering experts to spend more time on the strategic, relationship-driven work clients value most."

John Benefield

Salesforce Global Industry Expert



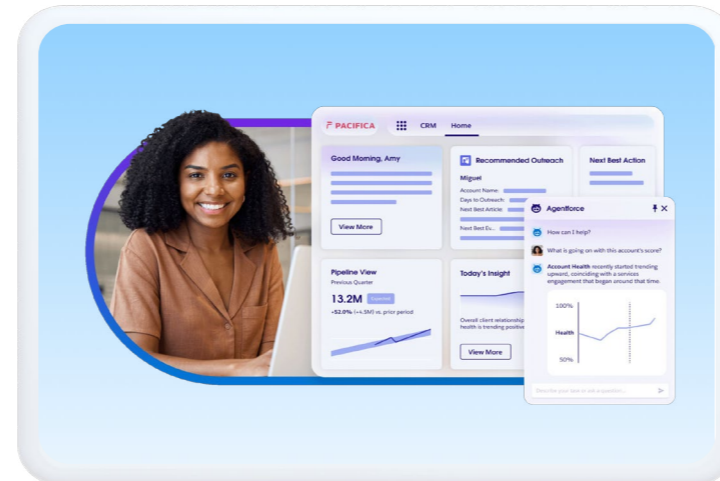
Explore more resources for professional services



The State of Service Report

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

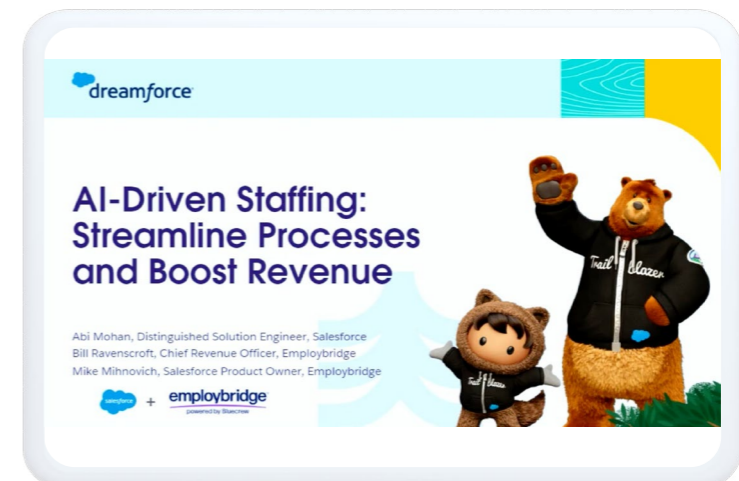
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