



The Future of AI-Driven Service Operations

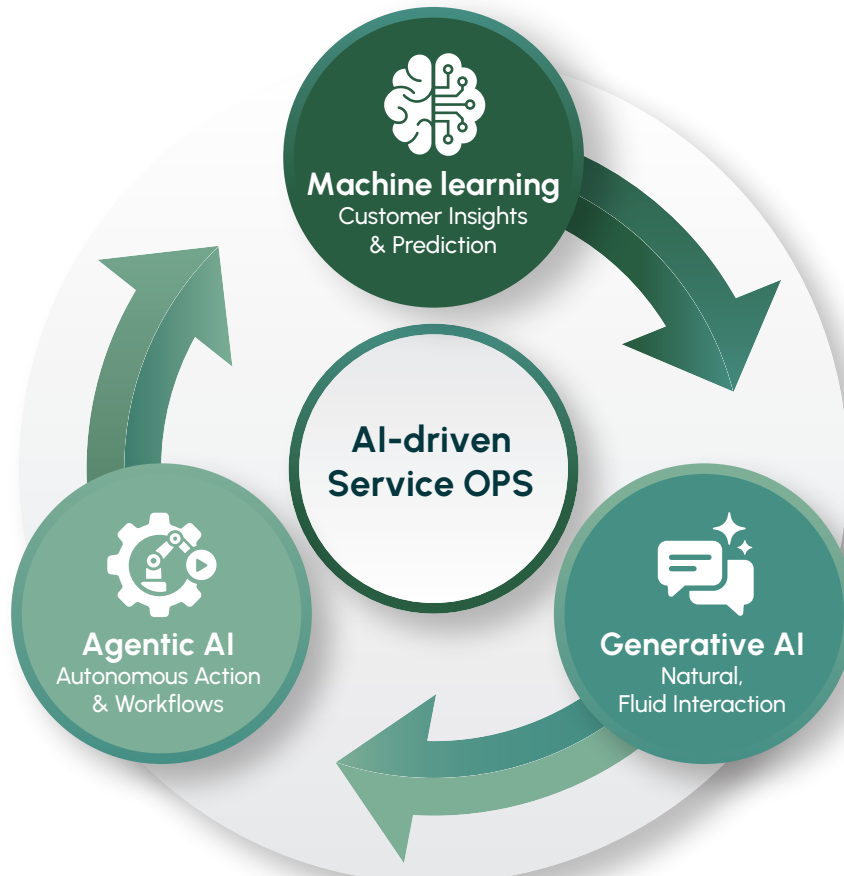
Introduction

The concept of customer service is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by a desire to do away with traditional, slow, and ultimately inefficient service approaches, and a shift to faster, more efficient, and more dynamic ways to service customers. These new service models are designed to prioritize speed, efficiency, and accuracy, while also enabling revenue expansion and excellent customer experiences.

Service operations now extend beyond customer-facing roles to include back-end functions, driven by the need for greater visibility and control over the entire customer experience. Organizations are seeking seamless internal and external coordination across the value stream. This enhanced process integration enables a holistic service delivery approach where AI optimizes customer interactions, internal workflows, and decision-making, leading to more autonomous and efficient enterprise operations.

Organizations are increasingly using various forms of AI—machine learning, generative AI, and agentic AI—to transform enterprise service operations. Machine learning uncovers customer insights for personalized interactions, generative AI enables natural data interaction for both customers and support staff, and agentic AI automates processes to enhance worker capabilities and provide rich self-service, boosting productivity, efficiency, and scalability.

The evolving landscape of customer service technology is characterized by the deep integration of AI into both front-end and back-end operations. However, the adoption of AI in service operations also brings challenges, particularly concerning governance, compliance, and data security. Enterprises must navigate these issues to fully realize the benefits of AI integration. As AI continues to advance, its role in transforming enterprise service operations is expected to grow, offering new opportunities and challenges for businesses worldwide.





Key Technology Innovations

The landscape of enterprise customer service is undergoing a rapid transformation, driven by advances in AI, automation, and intelligent workflow orchestration. Forward-thinking SaaS platforms are increasingly leveraging agentic AI and embedded intelligence to deliver both customer-facing and internal operational enhancements. These innovations are not merely incremental; they are reshaping the architecture of support operations, extending capabilities across roles, and enabling real-time, data-driven decision-making.

For example, Zendesk's recent advancements in AI-driven service operations include the introduction of Voice AI Agents and Administrative Copilots. These AI agents handle both customer interactions and internal administrative tasks across multiple modalities, reducing manual workloads and maintaining responsiveness. The copilot model enhances agent capabilities by offering real-time recommendations, intelligent issue escalation, and continuity in customer experiences, effectively augmenting expertise across the service organization.

Significant strides have also been made in Zendesk's Knowledge Graph, with new connectors such as Confluence and AI-powered content generation. This allows organizations to quickly access trusted answers by bridging information silos and contextualizing knowledge. The enhanced Knowledge Graph empowers support agents for efficient issue resolution by providing the contextual connections between data, and enables AI agents to operate with greater autonomy and accuracy, forming the backbone for both human and AI-driven support processes.

Complementing these are advanced workflow and app-building tools. Zendesk's no-code and low-code builders integrate with Google Suite applications, custom fields, and AI copilots, enabling rapid deployment of custom workflows and applications. This permits business users to create and optimize workflows without extensive technical expertise, leading to faster implementation, greater adaptability, and better alignment with customer expectations.

Zendesk's innovations extend to backend operations and include real-time business intelligence tools and a GenAI BI platform powered by Hyperarc acquisition. This capability, combined with their newly released, customizable real-time quality assurance tools, provides continuous visibility into support performance and uncovers actionable insights that drive strategic planning and timely interventions across the service ecosystem. Employee service enhancements are also a priority, with AI-first IT Asset Management (ITAM) solutions improving visibility for IT teams, reducing manual work, and accelerating issue resolution by embedding AI into ITAM processes.

Using Agentic AI to Reimagine Customer Service

AI is revolutionizing customer service by integrating AI agents to handle a large volume of inquiries, across a wide range of channels, including voice, chat, email, SMS, and social channels. This reduces human agent workload, allowing them to focus on complex issues, increasing efficiency, and requiring new skill sets from customer service professionals. AI agents, such as the ones created by SaaS-based platforms, can now resolve multi-modal customer issues without human help, using advanced NLP and machine learning. They also automate administrative tasks such as data entry and case routing, improving efficiency and reducing errors across all customer touchpoints.

The integration of copilots into customer service workflows further amplifies the benefits of automation. Copilots assist human agents by providing real-time suggestions directly from your knowledge base, automating routine tasks and after-call work, such as note-taking, and offering richer insights into customer interactions. This enables agents to handle inquiries more efficiently and with greater accuracy.

As AI technology continues to evolve, its role in enhancing customer service workflows is expected to expand, offering new opportunities for innovation and improvement, including more context-aware and personalized experiences, as well as driving incremental revenue through timely offers.

Real-time quality assurance (QA) tools are becoming essential in monitoring AI performance and agent interactions. They provide supervisors with instant notifications on live interactions, making it easy to spot and fix issues right away, while automatically triggering the right ticket routing and workflows. By tracking important metrics like response time, sentiment, quality scores, and resolution effectiveness, businesses gain a clear understanding of overall performance and ensure consistency between AI and human agents. This continuous monitoring facilitates ongoing improvements, ensuring that service standards are consistently met and that agents receive the support needed to enhance their skills.

Despite AI advancements, robust guardrails and human oversight remain crucial to driving organization-wide adoption of agents. AI systems are non-deterministic, so organizations must define acceptable AI behaviors and responses. Ongoing human review of AI outputs ensures quality, trust, and a reliable, responsible hybrid model combining AI efficiency with human judgment and empathy.





Leveraging Technology to Expand Zendesk's Capabilities

Zendesk is also revolutionizing employee service by introducing AI agents that offer rapid deployment, seamless connectivity to multiple knowledge sources, and scalable automation with operational control. These AI agents are designed to handle a wide range of employee inquiries, providing instant responses and resolutions. By integrating with various internal systems and knowledge bases, Zendesk ensures that employees have access to accurate and up-to-date information, enhancing their overall experience. The platform's scalability allows organizations to expand their AI capabilities as needed, ensuring consistent service quality across the board.

In addition to AI agents, Zendesk offers a no-code integration and automation tool called Action Builder, which streamlines multi-step workflows across departments. Action Builder's visual interface provides prebuilt connectors, customizable actions, and in-product testing, enabling teams to automate integrated processes without the need for extensive coding knowledge. This empowers service admins to extend Zendesk's platform into their organizations' back office operations, including cross-functional workflows with departments such as HR, IT, and finance. By simplifying the automation process, Zendesk ensures organizations can quickly adapt to changing requirements, improve efficiency, reduce manual errors, and maintain smooth operations.

Zendesk is also enhancing its Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) offerings to provide a more integrated and efficient support experience. The platform includes visual support features such as integrated video calling and screen sharing, allowing agents to offer more personalized assistance. These tools help bridge the gap between digital and human interactions, ensuring that customers receive comprehensive support to address issues that may be difficult to explain solely using voice or language-based channels.

Furthermore, Zendesk is in the process of introducing voice AI capabilities, including voice copilot and native voice AI agents, to enhance the contact center experience. By integrating voice AI into the contact center, Zendesk ensures that organizations can manage high call volumes effectively while maintaining a high standard of customer service.

Voice copilot, which is available now, can assist live agents by providing real-time suggestions and insights during calls, improving response times and service quality. Voice AI agents, which can independently solve more sophisticated customer issues and redirect them to a human agent when necessary, will be available by the end of Q1 2026 for Zendesk voice. These AI-driven tools can help resolve issues efficiently and allow human agents to focus on more complex tasks.

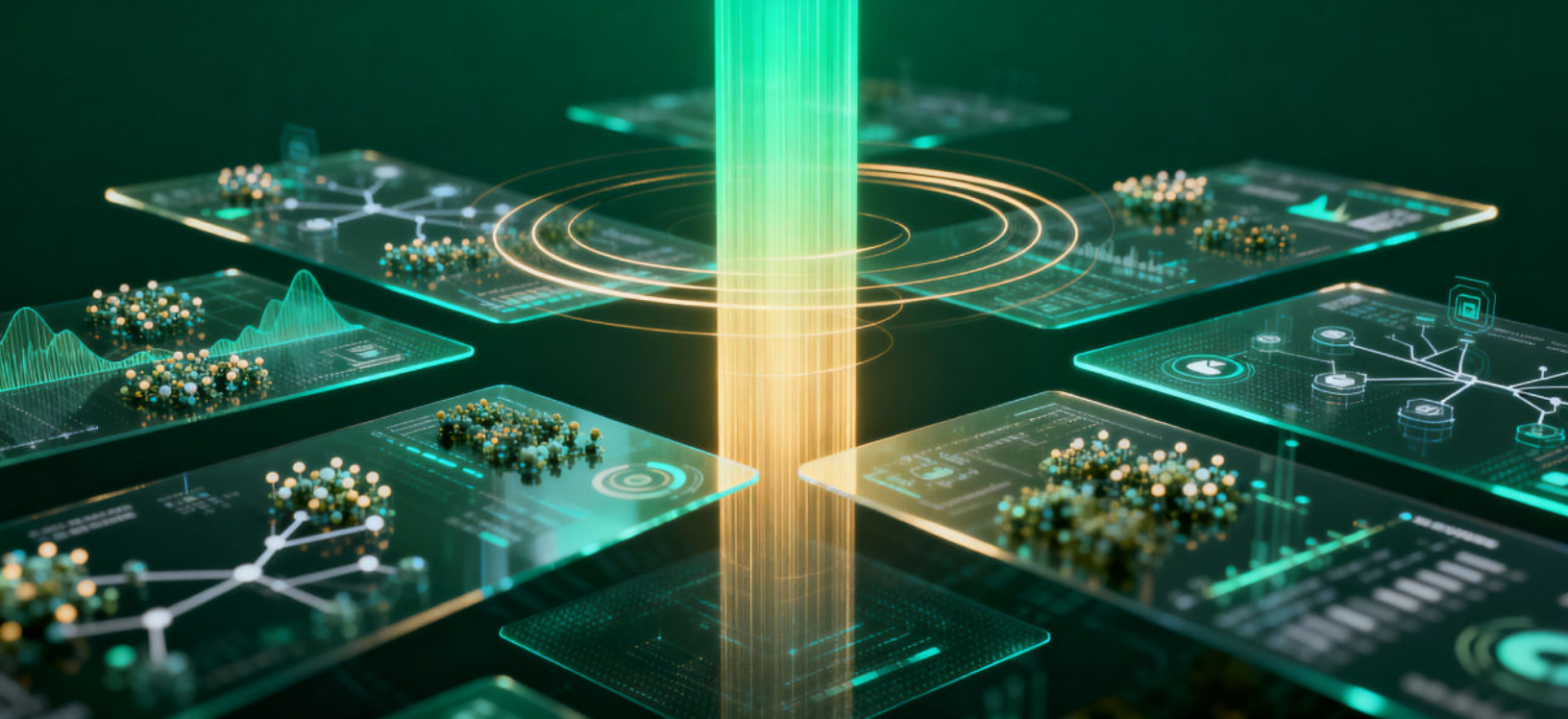


Realizing Value Through Zendesk's Resolution Platform

Traditional AI licensing models, often based on seat counts or consumption metrics, are increasingly misaligned with the actual value delivered by AI agents. These legacy approaches fail to account for the tangible outcomes AI solutions produce. For instance, Zendesk's shift to an outcome- or resolution-based pricing model—charging only for successfully resolved interactions—demonstrates a move toward aligning costs directly with value. This model ensures that customers pay only when AI agents effectively address issues, fostering a more transparent and performance-driven pricing structure.

Furthermore, to make AI-driven service more accessible, Zendesk has introduced flexible pricing options. The company's Dynamic Pricing Plan allows businesses to adjust their investment between human agents and AI agents, providing the flexibility needed to be responsive as customer needs, business goals, and market demands evolve. This approach ensures that organizations can scale their AI capabilities in line with their requirements, without incurring unnecessary costs.

By focusing on resolutions, rather than processes or costs, organizations can unlock immediate ROI from AI deployments. This approach not only builds confidence among stakeholders but also accelerates momentum in AI adoption. As AI solutions prove their effectiveness in delivering measurable results, businesses are more likely to expand their use, leading to broader organizational transformation.



Conclusion

As organizations increasingly adopt AI-driven service solutions, a strategic approach that integrates agentic AI, enhanced workflows, and actionable insights becomes essential. Agentic AI enables autonomous, context-aware interactions, allowing businesses to automate complex tasks and provide consistent, personalized service across various channels. Platforms such as Zendesk exemplify this approach by offering AI agents capable of handling a wide range of customer and employee inquiries, from simple requests to intricate issues, thereby improving efficiency and satisfaction.

Complementing this, no-code automation tools empower organizations to further customize and streamline processes, reduce manual errors, and accelerate response times. Using AI-powered analytics helps businesses to monitor performance in real-time, identify trends, and make data-driven decisions that enhance service quality and operational effectiveness.

Notably, AI technologies are also instrumental in enabling mid-market and smaller organizations to bridge gaps in service capabilities and performance. Historically, smaller businesses faced challenges in providing comprehensive support due to limited resources. However, with the advent of AI-driven platforms, these organizations can leverage advanced tools and technologies that were once exclusive to larger enterprises, and can now provide enterprise-level service without the need for extensive infrastructure or large teams.

The integration of AI and use of advanced workflow orchestration tools reflects a broader industry trend toward agentic AI that operates reliably across complex environments, reducing operational friction and setting the stage for new business models emphasizing speed, accuracy, and employee empowerment. Zendesk's holistic approach, extending AI across customer-facing roles and internal operations, integrating richer knowledge frameworks, empowering low-code workflow creation, and delivering real-time intelligence, provides a rational blueprint for the evolution of service technology.

Important Information About This Report

AUTHORS

Keith Kirkpatrick

Research Director, Enterprise Software
& Digital Workflows | The Futurum Group

PUBLISHER

Futurum Research

INQUIRIES

Contact us if you would like to discuss this report and The Futurum Group will respond promptly.

CITATIONS

This paper can be cited by accredited press and analysts, but must be cited in context, displaying author's name, author's title, and "The Futurum Group." Non-press and non-analysts must receive prior written permission by The Futurum Group for any citations.

LICENSING

This document, including any supporting materials, is owned by The Futurum Group. This publication may not be reproduced, distributed, or shared in any form without the prior written permission of The Futurum Group

DISCLOSURES

The Futurum Group provides research, analysis, advising, and consulting to many high-tech companies, including those mentioned in this paper. No employees at the firm hold any equity positions with any companies cited in this document.



ABOUT ZENDESK

Zendesk powers exceptional service for every person on the planet. As a leader in AI-powered service, we offer the Zendesk Resolution Platform, designed to redefine customer experience with advanced tools that integrate AI Agents, a comprehensive knowledge graph, actions and integrations, governance and control, measurement and insights, and human expertise. Our purpose-built platform enhances service by combining automation and human insight for seamless interactions. Easy to use, easy to scale, and easy to get value from, Zendesk helps companies strengthen relationships, improve efficiency, and grow. Learn more at www.zendesk.com.



ABOUT THE FUTURUM GROUP

The Futurum Group is an independent research, analysis, and advisory firm, focused on digital innovation and market-disrupting technologies and trends. Every day our analysts, researchers, and advisors help business leaders from around the world anticipate tectonic shifts in their industries and leverage disruptive innovation to either gain or maintain a competitive advantage in their markets.



CONTACT INFORMATION: The Futurum Group LLC | futurumgroup.com | (833) 722-5337

© 2025 The Futurum Group. All rights reserved.