

The State of the Contact Center: 8 Insights Shaping the Future of CX

Research Report



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Introduction

Customer experience is more than a moment—it’s a mindset. Your peers are investing to extend the CX mindset to every corner of their organizations. Success leads to customer satisfaction, growing revenues and stronger reputations. But the wrong investments can send KPIs spiraling downward.

How are companies like yours addressing the CX challenge? 8x8 commissioned Hanover Research to study how companies are prioritizing cloud versus on-premise, integrations versus security, agent development versus self-service, features versus price and much more. The results are revealing.

We summarized the insights of hundreds of professionals in companies from small to large, on two continents, in six major industrial sectors. (See “Research Segmentations” on the next page.) How does your contact center strategy compare?

Companies Surveyed:



Online quantitative survey



Software purchase decision makers



8 different job titles



18 different departments



388 companies headquartered in the US or UK



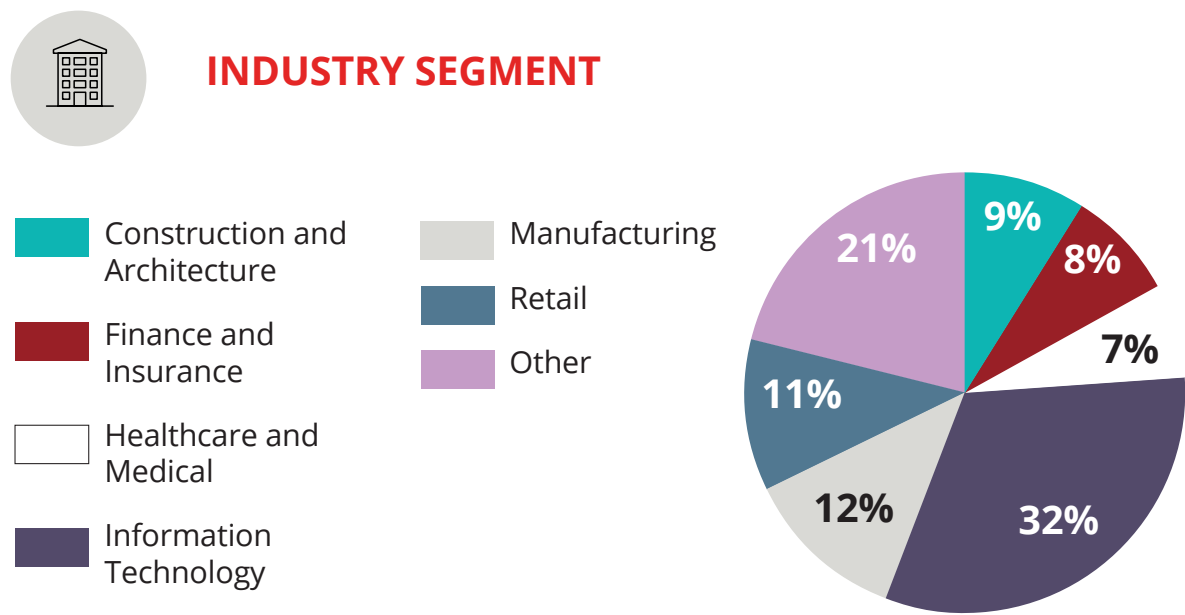
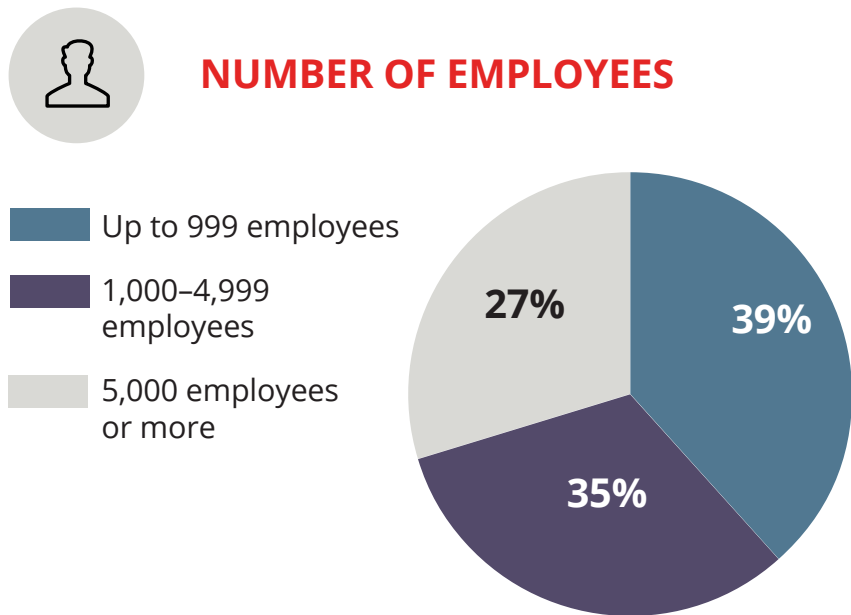
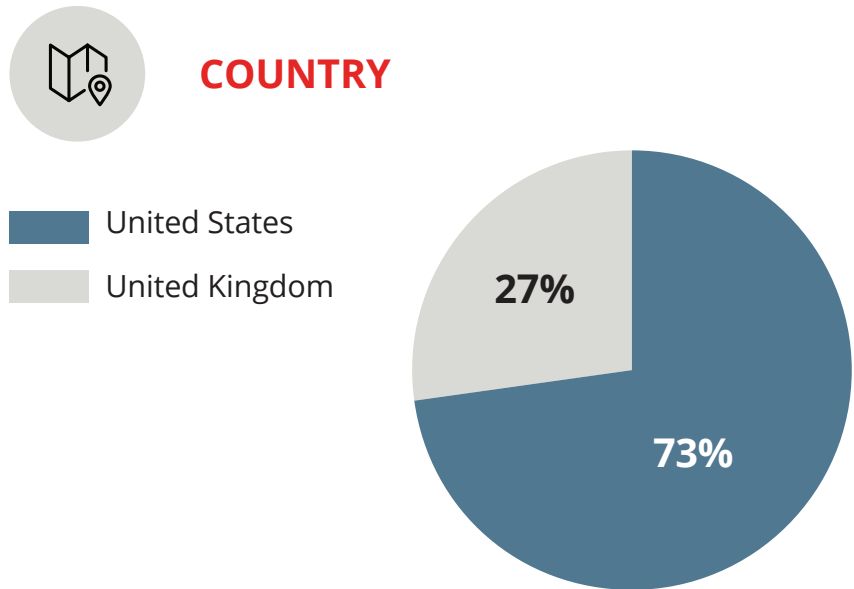
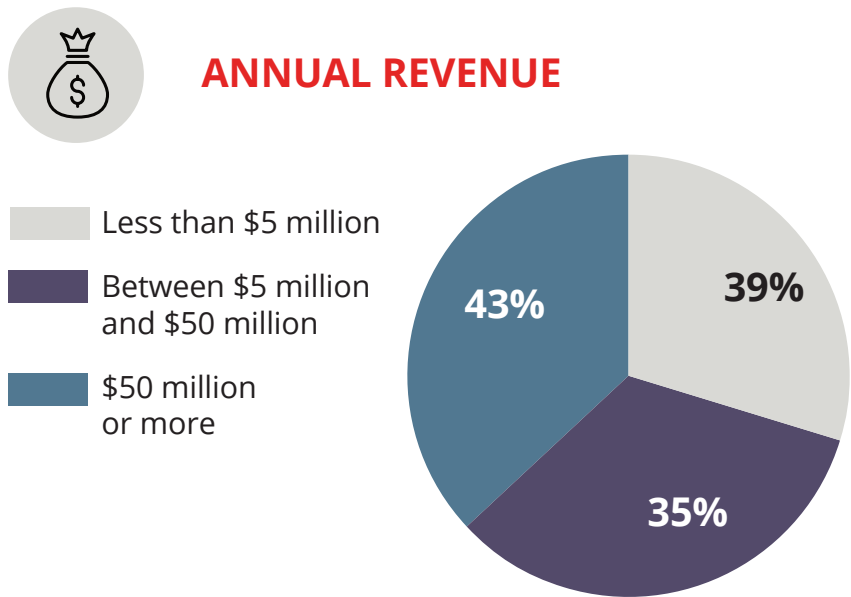
17 industries



Companies with **250** or more employees

Research Segmentations

This research explores trends across various industry segments. Of 388 participating companies, 330 use cloud-based contact center software and 58 currently do not. All 388 respondents are decision makers for software-related purchases.



Executive Summary

Key Findings

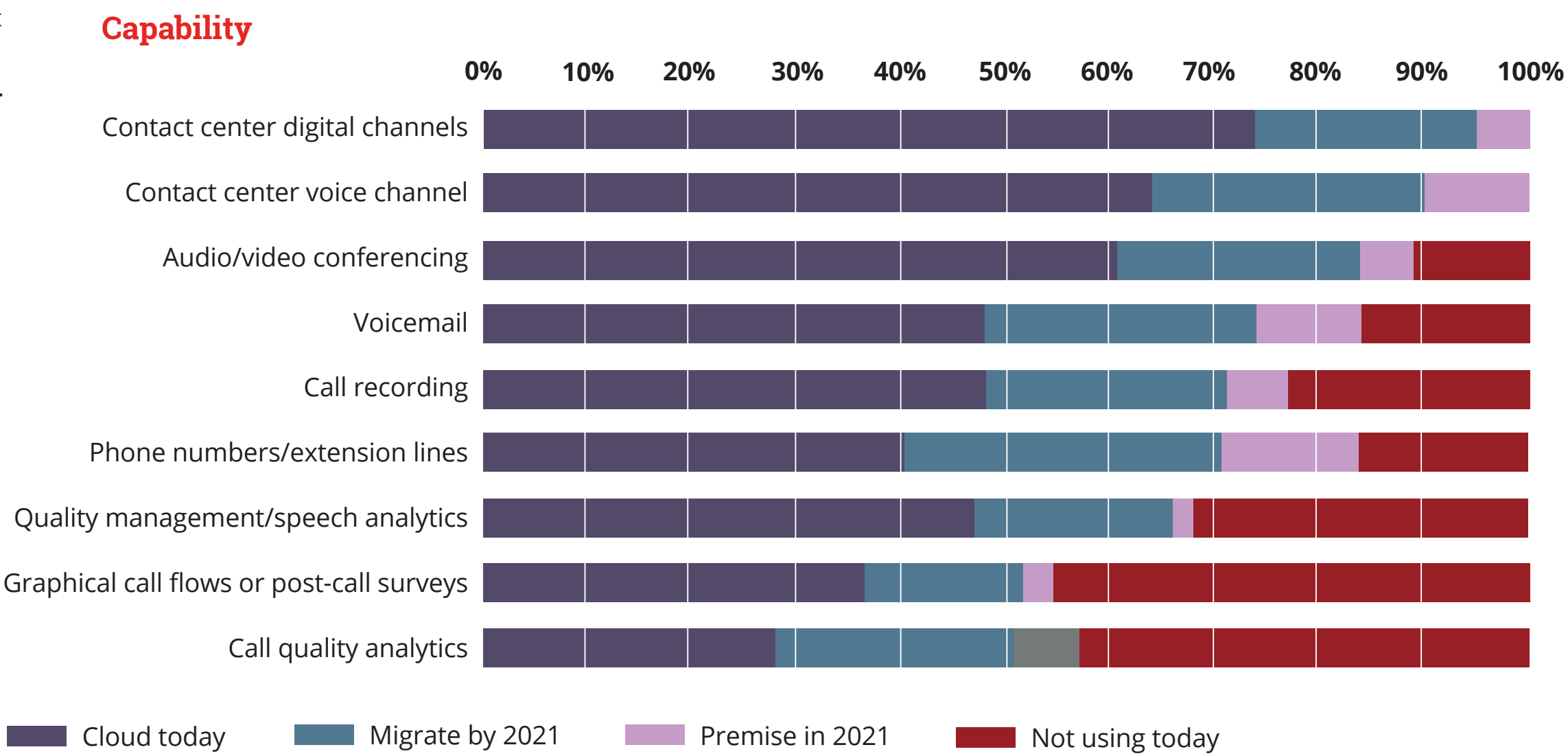
- **Contact centers choose the cloud first for more advanced capabilities like social media and webchat.**
- **Customers are migrating to non-voice channels and companies are racing to add multichannel capabilities.** That need is helping to drive a cloud migration that favors a single system of engagement for full visibility across channels.
- **Managers place high importance on supervisory and self-service functions in their contact center software, to maintain service levels at the new speed of customer care.**
- **Not surprisingly, security is the top-ranked attribute of contact center software across all industry segments.** In fact, this and several other attributes are rated more important than price.
- **Artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to revolutionize contact centers within five years.** Despite the rapid adoption of AI, the outlook for employing human agents is somewhat positive.

Contact centers overwhelmingly choose the cloud for more advanced capabilities


The shift to digital channels like social media and webchat (see next page) may be leading companies to leapfrog on-premise options when adding native cloud capabilities.

Q: For each of the following services or applications, does your company primarily use a premise-based or cloud-based platform?

Q: How likely are you to move to a cloud-based platform for the following services or applications in the next two years?



Note: The graph depicts the top two of five intent options selected, “somewhat likely” and “extremely likely.”



Companies are playing catch-up in customers' shift to non-voice channels

A single system of engagement is essential for visibility into all channels.

Q: Which of the following communication channels does your company use for contact center purposes?

Q: How often do customers contact your company using each of the following channels?

Companies Use



Customers Using Often



Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, "often" and "very often."

Four-fifths of companies have experienced more customers contacting their service departments via webchat. Even more have seen increases in social media contacts.

Q: Do customers contact your company using the following channels less often, more often or about the same as they did two years ago?

Customers using more often compared to two years ago



Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, “often” and “very often.”

Social media and webchat are quickly becoming staples of customer contact



Companies recognize the importance of making agents more effective

While about 90% of companies find all of these applications to be important, more than half rate quality management and workforce management as extremely important.

Q: How important are each of the following contact center applications to your company?

Applications ranked by importance

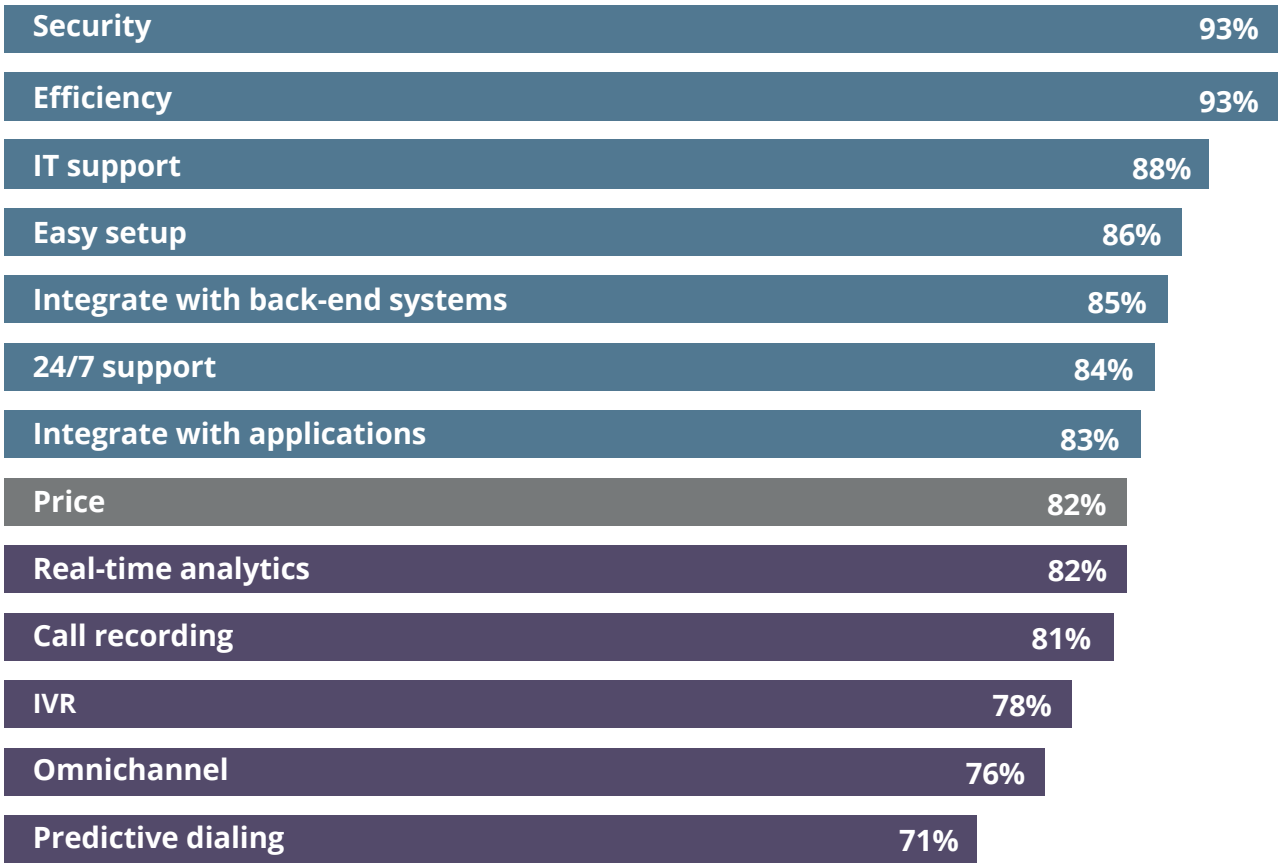


Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, “somewhat important” and “extremely important.”

Security ranks first across all industries surveyed. Seven attributes are more important than price.

Q: How important are the following features to your company when selecting contact center platforms or applications?

Features ranked by importance



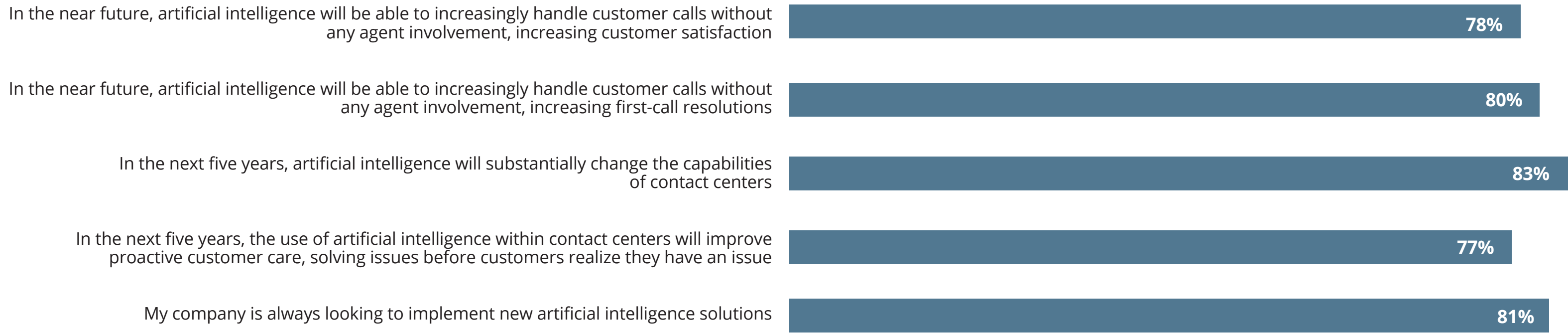
Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, “somewhat important” and “extremely important.”

Security and smooth implementation are must-have attributes

Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing the contact center

Companies give AI five years to bring sweeping changes to the contact center. 77% of companies are already looking to implement AI solutions.

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

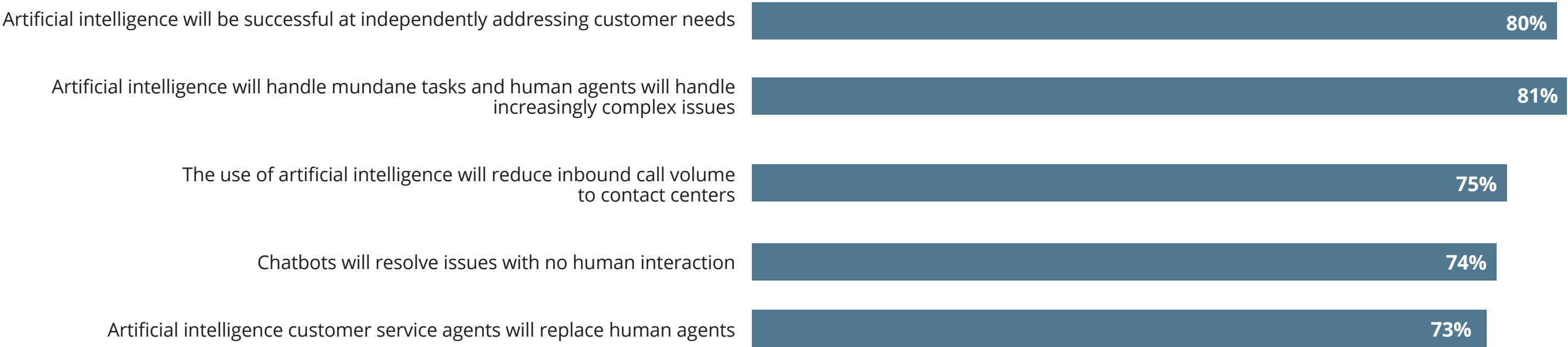


Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, “somewhat agree” and “strongly agree.”

In five years, most professionals foresee AI performing some agent functions...

In the next five years:

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

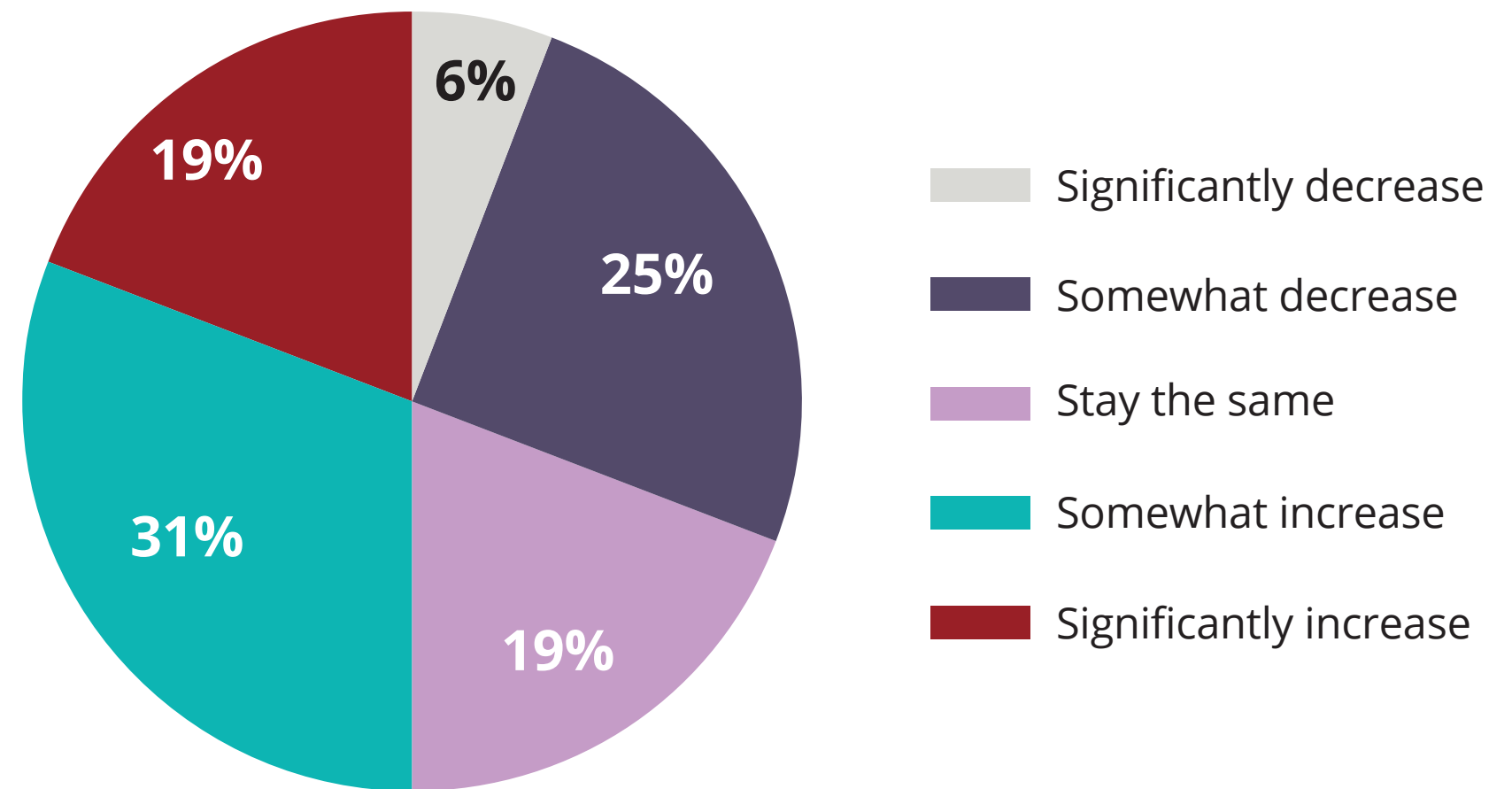


Note: The graph depicts the top two answer options selected, “somewhat agree” and “strongly agree.”

...but the demand for contact center agents will continue to grow

Half of the survey respondents anticipate an increase in service agent jobs at their companies.

Q: What would be the impact of artificial intelligence on the number of customer service agents your company hires? With the use of artificial intelligence capabilities in contact center solutions, the agent population will:



Conclusion

Customers are leading the shift to webchat, social media and video. When contact centers add these advanced capabilities, they choose the cloud over premise-based solutions. As these channels become commonplace (and as unforeseen future channels join them), one system of engagement provides 360° visibility that is essential to delivering better, more efficient customer care.

Cloud-based companies are using far more software capabilities than are those who are still premise-based. The move to the cloud is an opportunity to leave point solutions behind and to improve the end-to-end customer journey using one system of intelligence for all contact center data.

Artificial intelligence is inevitable. Companies expect sweeping changes from AI in the contact center within five years. Nonetheless, human agents are here to stay and managers place high importance on software tools to make agents more effective at delighting customers today.



Additional Resources

These resources are available to learn more about a communication platform that integrates voice, video, chat and contact center into one system of engagement.

1 **[Cloud-Based Contact Center Technology-8 Critical Questions to Ask](#)**

Use this guide to do your due diligence in selecting the solution that's best for your company.

2 **[Speech Analytics Video](#)**

Learn how voice of the customer insights enable you to optimize customer experiences.

3 **[Contact Center as a Service: A View from the Trenches](#)**

Analyst Sheila McGee-Smith evaluates this strategic move from multiple perspectives.



8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT) cloud solutions help businesses transform their customer and employee experience. With one system of engagement for voice, video, collaboration and contact center and one system of intelligence on one technology platform, businesses can now communicate faster and smarter to exceed the speed of customer expectations. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.



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