The AI Expectations Gap: Twilio's Report Finds Businesses Are Measuring AI Success on Metrics Customers Don't Care About

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Twilio's 2026 Customer Insights Series finds that 86% of companies believe customers are satisfied with their AI-powered customer service, but just 51% of consumers agree that AI-powered interactions are satisfactory when engaging with various businesses

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 9, 2026-- Twilio (NYSE: TWLO), the infrastructure for customer engagement in the AI era, today unveiled its 2026 Customer Insights Series[1], a collection of insights revealing how AI is reshaping customer engagement. The global survey[2] reveals a major disconnect between how businesses evaluate their AI customer service and how consumers experience it. Across key areas of transparency, customer context, empathy, and value, companies often measure success solely by speed and efficiency. However, customers expect more than fast answers: they want to feel recognized, understood, and genuinely helped.

Key findings from the report show AI is quickly taking on a growing share of customer support for brands. AI agents now handle half of customer service interactions with this figure expected to reach 63% by 2027.

Top insights include:

- **Consumers prefer AI disclosures early and often:** 76% of consumers feel an AI agent should identify itself at the beginning of a conversation, but only 32% of businesses say they actively prioritize AI transparency when designing agents.
- **Consumers want a human on demand:** 63% of consumers want a quick, easy way to escalate to a live person at any time and 78% say they've tried to bypass AI agents to speak directly to a human.
- **Lost context leads to lost satisfaction:** 99% of companies state major challenges prevent them from fully understanding their customers. The biggest challenge is connecting customer data across disparate channels like voice, email, and messaging. 91% of brands report a drop in customer satisfaction resulting from AI errors, like lost context between channels or past interactions.
- **Personalized interactions matter:** 98% of organizations are training AI to behave and communicate in a human way. However, while 73% of brands believe that consumers want AI with more human characteristics, only 54% of consumers report the same. Additionally, 91% of consumers say personalized AI interactions feel more real, and the top driver of authenticity is when a brand acknowledges their specific needs or problem.
- **Customers feel valued when AI actually helps:** 55% of consumers feel that as long as AI is intelligent enough to help them, they still feel valued by the company using it. 64% report that the AI chatbots they've interacted with have improved over the last year, and 34% are more likely to choose an AI chatbot over a human than they were a year ago.

"Successfully getting AI into production is the first hurdle for brands, but the next one is whether customers can feel the difference in their interactions," said Chris Koehler, Chief Marketing Officer at Twilio. *"Right now, too many organizations are rating their AI on a scale that their customers aren't actually using, and closing this gap means embracing what customers have been asking for all along: transparency, retained context, and an easy way to connect with real humans when needed."*

The Twilio Customer Insights Series consists of:

- How to Scale Automation Without Losing Customer Confidence
- Navigating the Data Deluge: A Compass for Customer Context
- The Great AI Illusion: Why Customers Value Empathy Over Imitation
- Is AI Adding Value to the Customer Experience—or Taking It Away?

About Twilio Inc.

Twilio (NYSE: TWLO) is the infrastructure for customer engagement in the AI era. By combining global communications, memory, and AI orchestration with identity, governance, and observability, Twilio enables businesses to deliver continuous, contextual, personal, and secure conversations across every channel and participant—human or AI.

Across 180+ countries, hundreds of thousands of the most innovative companies—from the Fortune 500 to startups—and millions of developers, rely on Twilio's global platform across messaging, voice, email, and beyond, to power trusted customer experiences that drive real results. For more information about Twilio visit www.twilio.com.

Methodology

Twilio surveyed 7,652 global consumers and 660 business leaders from April 9–May 1, 2026 across 18 markets. Respondents include Gen Z to baby boomer consumers and Director-level and above leaders familiar with CX, customer engagement, and data strategy.

1. Twilio's 2026 Customer Insights Series consists of survey findings shared across four theme-based recaps: How to scale

automation without losing customer confidence; Navigating the data deluge: a compass for customer context; The great AI illusion, why customers value empathy over imitation; Is AI adding value to the customer experience – or taking it away?

2. **Research Sample Size:** To map the current landscape of AI and customer engagement, Twilio surveyed 7,652 consumers and 660 business leaders across the globe. Responses were gathered between April 9 and May 1, 2026, spanning 18 global markets: Australia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. **Global Consumers:** We surveyed 7,652 global consumers who all made an online purchase in the past six months. In each country, the sample was balanced by gender and age, as well as racial diversity in the U.S. and U.K. Age groups were defined as follows: Gen Z (18–29), millennials (30–45), Gen X (46–61), and baby boomers (62–80). **Business Leaders:** The 660 business leaders surveyed hold senior leadership positions at the Director level or above, work full-time at companies with 500 or more employees, and are familiar with their company's customer experience, customer engagement, or customer data strategies. The sample included minimum requirements for C-suite executives and a spread of company sizes above and below 5,000 employees.

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