

White Paper

# Unifying Customer Experience Through Intelligent Orchestration

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December 2025

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is fundamentally reshaping the future customer experience (CX) through AI-fueled business models. AI and automation capabilities offer organizations the promise of delivering hyper-personalized customer experiences and dynamic, real-time customer journeys. Large language models (LLMs) and agentic technologies empower enterprises to analyze vast, complex data sets; orchestrate intelligent actions; and deliver seamless experiences across multiple channels and touch points. In addition to improved operational efficiency and productivity, this transformation also promises top-line improvements through accelerated innovation and revenue growth.

To fulfill these promises, organizations must address their long-standing challenges with experience transformation from integration gaps, fragmented data management, skills shortages, and a growing trust and authenticity crisis. Many organizations struggle to move beyond siloed front-office improvements, failing to unify customer and operational data or coordinate actions across the entire enterprise. The rise of AI also amplifies risks related to data privacy, security, and ethical use, making responsible AI governance and transparency essential.

To succeed, organizations must prioritize AI readiness by investing in centralized data infrastructure, end-to-end integration, and multidisciplinary operating models. Building a connected enterprise, developing an intelligent core, and embedding responsible AI practices are critical for delivering unified, value-driven experiences. Human involvement remains vital, especially for high-risk and creative tasks, ensuring that empathy and authenticity are preserved in AI-driven interactions.

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## AI CAUSES A SEMINAL SHIFT IN FUTURE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

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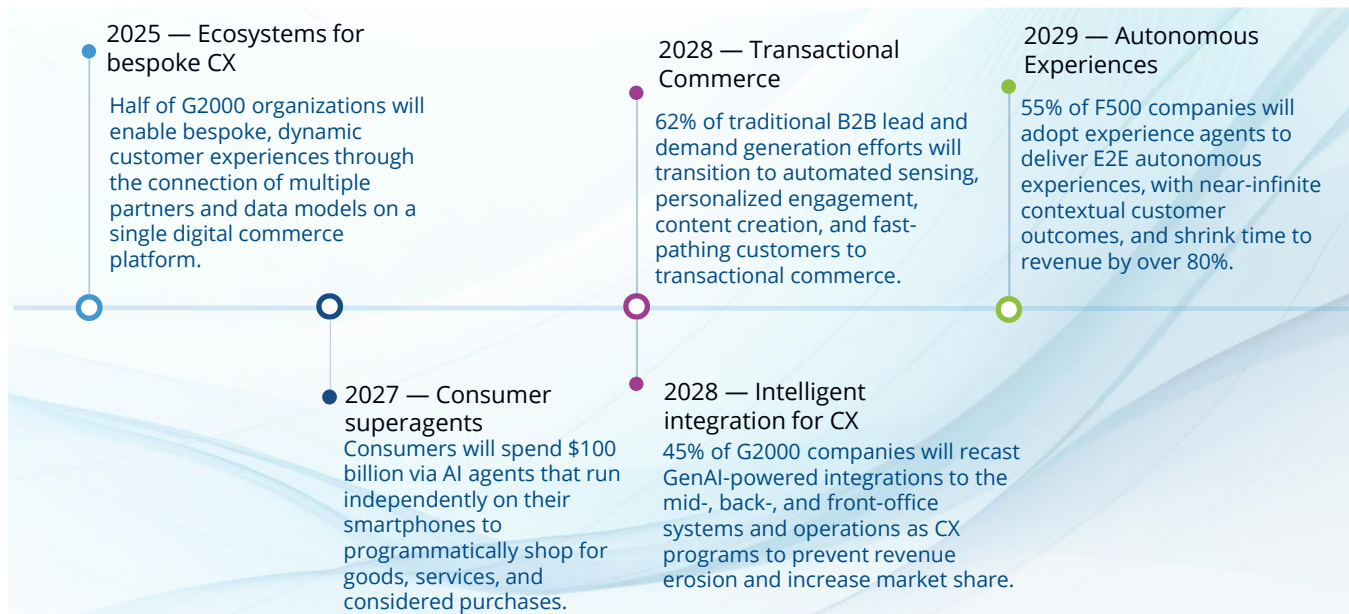
Intelligence now forms the very fabric of how future customer experiences are woven and delivered. Customer expectations and behavior are changing and being influenced due to the more pervasive presence of artificial intelligence capabilities in their interactions with brands. The recent introductions of AI summaries in search engines are a great example of how technology influences customer expectations and behavior and are in fact a prime reason for the traditional SEO going the way of the dinosaur. These digital and AI-savvy customers expect brands to deeply understand when, where, and how they wish to engage, spanning both ends of the engagement spectrum — transactional and experiential. Crucially, they want to engage with brands in a way that feels personal, authentic, and human. To keep up with rising customer expectations and the proliferation of engagement modalities, marketplaces, and customer segments, companies are reimagining the entire acquisition-to-retention customer life cycle.

AI is a critical part of organizations' future CX strategies. Organizations are using AI to drive productivity, innovation, and insights-driven transformation across the end-to-end customer life cycle. In addition, IDC finds that companies are steadily maturing in their AI journeys, evolving from isolated proofs of concept (POCs). In fact, IDC's October 2024 *Customer Experience Management Strategies (CXMS) Survey* found that 46% of enterprises are putting generative AI (GenAI)-enhanced CX applications and use cases into production. The same survey also found that 55% of organizations are planning to incorporate AI and GenAI into all stages of the customer journey and life cycle, signaling continued expansion and investments in AI capabilities for newer customer journeys. Finally, as more CX technology vendors introduce and evolve CX applications to an embedded-AI approach, the door to an AI-first business model is opened for enterprises (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**

## The Age of Intelligent Experiences

Q. *What will the next generation of customer experiences look like?*



Source: IDC, 2025

AI and automation capabilities are at the forefront of revolutionizing customer experience. For instance, AI large language models are much more capable of analyzing very large data sets comprising both unstructured and structured data. Such capabilities enable enterprises to reinvent themselves through new digital business models that help them transition from a digital-first business focus to an AI-fueled business. Applied in the context of customer experience, this translates to greater contextual awareness in customer interactions, personalization that more accurately meets customer outcomes, ability to expand interaction complexity across a wider set of channels (e.g., conversations, zero UIs), and truly real-time, dynamic customer journeys that are driven off a continuous and updated stream of customer intelligence. As such, organizations can simultaneously deliver improved operational efficiency while driving top-line revenue growth through faster and better-scaled product and services innovation. In addition, the growing consumerization of AI-first technologies, devices, and agentic capabilities will enable customers (B2B and B2C) to programmatically control much of their brand engagement.

## THE IMPERATIVE FOR INTELLIGENT EXPERIENCE ORCHESTRATION

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IDC finds that almost all customer experience transformation efforts are driven by AI, with much of the push for AI in CX coming top down. IDC found that customer-facing applications are the number 1 area of focus for the C-suite when it comes to integrating generative AI into existing applications and processes. Organizations have also started to see some initial return from the investments made in AI. IDC's 2023 *Business Value of AI Survey* found that over half of all organizations globally saw 2–3x return on investment (ROI) for every \$1 spent on AI initiatives. Many of these returns are being delivered from AI being applied against efficiency gains. For instance, the same survey found that some of the largest ROIs were on productivity and efficiency metrics — areas such as increased employee productivity or improved cycle times and lower costs from automation resulting in an increase in profits. However, to stay ahead, organizations must innovate in areas beyond just productivity and efficiency. Case in point — IDC explored the top business objectives of the C-suite in charge of major customer experience functions that span sales, marketing, and customer service/support. Three core experiential themes surfaced:

- Make experience delivery more *effective*
- Make experience consumption *easier*
- Optimize experiential *value parity*

However, CX and IT leaders have a steep hill to climb to deliver on these C-suite priorities considering the current market and business model risks. IDC's October 2024 *CXMS Survey* explored risk factors that will most impact organizations' future CX strategies over the next 12–18 months. Regulatory uncertainties and AI-related workforce challenges top the list (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2**

**Top Market and Business Model Risks That Will Most Impact Future CX Strategy**



n = 1,262

Source: IDC's *Customer Experience Management Strategies Survey*, October 2024

Factors such as agentic technologies are expected to have dramatic productivity impacts on front-office and back-office functions. For instance, IDC predicts that combined AI capabilities will have a productivity impact of more than 40% across all roles in marketing in the next five years. IDC also predicts that driven by the adoption of new AI-enabled work models, 95% of current IT and LOB job roles will be redefined or eliminated by 2030. Such transformations hold profound implications for staffing, roles, skills, and processes. As a result, there is a shift in how organizations and leaders are starting to rethink business outcomes. IDC's October 2024 *CXMS Survey* found that the top 5 business outcomes that organizations want to achieve from customer experience are increased operational efficiency, improved customer experience, improved employee productivity, revenue growth, and improved profitability. However, too often CX organizations track these metrics and KPIs in silos, which undercuts enterprisewide goals. The successful CX organization of the future will be one where metrics relate to each other across functions and help meet unified strategic business goals.

Finally, IDC's October 2024 *CXMS Survey* found that many enterprises face an experience fulfilment gap — 35% of enterprises report that the end-to-end fulfilment aspects of their customer journey improvements don't extend beyond front-office processes. Essentially, while experiences are being digitally improved and innovated within the scope of a single function, organizations fall short in being able to incorporate a complete view of the customer context (i.e., across journey stages,

interactions across other business functions) in delivering customer-desired outcomes and value. The age of AI everywhere brings organizations closer to achieving unified customer experience orchestration. With a growing number of technology vendors introducing AI and now agentic capabilities into their products, organizations today have powerful tools at their disposal to accelerate their progress toward a unified stack for whole-journey experience orchestration that spans both front-office and back-office customer journeys and business workstreams.

## RETHINKING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOR THE AGENTIC ERA

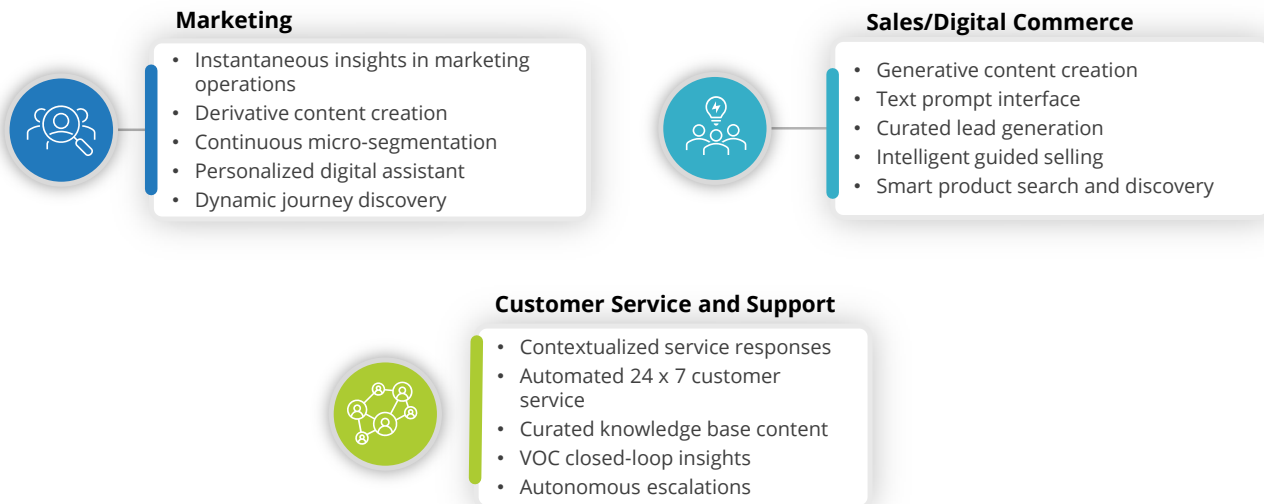
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Enterprises have embraced AI to reinvent themselves through new digital business models that help them transition from a digital-first business focus to an AI-fueled business. They are keen to capitalize on AI's scale and depth of intelligence capabilities for customer experiences. They hope that these new business models will simultaneously deliver improved operational efficiency while driving top-line revenue growth through faster and better-scaled product and services innovation and improved customer experiences.

In IDC's July 2024 *Worldwide GenAI Use Case Survey*, IDC explored the use cases organizations have started to implement and are planning to implement over the next 18 months. For customer experience, these spanned the full customer life cycle, including marketing, sales and digital commerce, and customer service and support (see Figure 3). What is immediately evident is that AI is simultaneously disrupting existing business models while creating new opportunities for customer experience innovation.

**FIGURE 3**

## AI-Enabled CX Use Cases



n = 246 for marketing, n = 227 for sales, n = 186 for customer service

Source: IDC's *Worldwide GenAI Use Case Survey*, July 2024

As such, organizations must stay mindful of the key themes and foundational prerequisites discussed in the sections that follow to capitalize on the promise of AI for future customer experiences.

## The Promise of Hyper-Personalization

The majority of enterprises have been somewhat successful at techniques that achieve field-level personalization (i.e., customer name, address and, in some cases, actions) or rules-based segmentation strategies. Such techniques miss contextual complexities — these include not only data such as prior customer actions but also current/real-time actions, preference changes, sentiment, or intent based on customer engagement with the organization as well as with other parts of the CX ecosystem (i.e., customer networks, partner firms, third-party vendors/suppliers). But generative AI and agentic technologies change that equation for enterprises. GenAI was born to find patterns and correlations in data sets. Large language models have the ability to analyze very large data sets comprising both unstructured and structured data. With the right guardrails, such as anchoring model training within proprietary/internal business data, organizations can more accurately contextualize customer interactions and expand interaction complexity across a wider set of channels/modalities (e.g., conversations). This heralds a great opportunity for future customer experiences. For example,

capabilities like dynamic and automated content creation not only benefit organizations with expanded capacity for support agents or marketers but also improve customer engagement through a wider data set of context dimensions such as recent customer actions, customer sentiment, or interpreting customer intent. Further, the ability to analyze unstructured data sets through a larger context window improves the quality of contextual awareness, offering more accurate recommendations and hyper-localization of customer-facing assets. Organizations that need to scale personalization through a single brand voice, across multiple global markets and customer segments, will find this a valuable capability.

## **Conversations Anchor Customer Journeys**

Many companies excel at communicating with their customers, but only a few have mastered conversing with their customers. IDC finds that conversations offer enterprises a clear exchange of information, knowledge, and understanding between the customer and the organization built on context. Conversations form the fundamental construct of human-centric experiences, and sustainable customer relationships essentially are built through conversations. Furthermore, the explosion of AI (and GenAI) and its use within CX applications will result in conversational customer interactions to mature from being just systems of engagement to becoming systems of action. In fact, IDC predicts that as sentiment and intent AI improve real-time contextual awareness, 55% of G2000 firms will fulfill all customer journeys primarily through conversations by 2025, boosting revenue and customer loyalty. Conversational businesses operate differently than traditional businesses as they bring customers and partners in more frequent collaboration with each other and their workforce.

## **Connected Experiences Across the CX Ecosystem**

Customer data, employee data, operational data, and the experience data associated with customer journeys and internal business workstreams will create an intelligent ecosystem context that will become the primary foundation for value creation between customers and companies. In parallel, the customer experience technology market has steadily witnessed a growing number of vendors introducing AI capabilities into their products. However, the prerequisites to optimally leverage these capabilities are causing a shift in organizations' mindset as to how CX is viewed. As businesses progress through improving their CX stack with embedded AI, they are realizing internal true CX is not solely limited to the front office. IDC research shows that success in GenAI implementations depends on creating a more integrated organization. Meaningful, whole-journey customer experience requires all aspects of the organization — front office, middle office, and back office — to be working in sync. In fact, IDC predicts that by 2028, 45% of G2000 companies will recast GenAI-powered integrations to the

middle-, back-, and front-office systems and operations as CX programs to prevent revenue erosion and increase market share.

## **A Renaissance of the Customer Trust Crisis**

Research reveals that confidence in AI and automation hinges greatly on perceptions of customer and employee trust. IDC's 2024 *CXMS Survey* found that customer data privacy/security and regulations is the number 1 risk factor that will most impact what organizations prioritize in their future customer experience strategies. Enterprises are paying attention — technology areas such as security, privacy/risk management, AI, and infrastructure face relatively low immunity with regard to any potential investment pullbacks. In addition, a crucial point for human-led customer experiences is the resounding customer desire for authenticity and the role that AI will play. AI now offers organizations the unparalleled ability to offer more options, more accuracy, more clarity, and greater ability to scale content creation. However, at the end of the day, human thinking and cognitive empathy must remain at the heart of AI-driven experiences. Outcomes must demonstrate that the brand empathizes with the customer's needs. Aspects such as creativity, differentiation, novelty, targeted personalization, and knowing when not to engage a prospect will become hallmarks of organizations that excel at authentic experiences — an intangible human quality that AI (yet) struggles to imitate.

## **AI EVERYWHERE SETS THE STAGE FOR UNIFIED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ORCHESTRATION**

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Customers do not perceive their journey as moving through distinct stages of marketing, commerce, and postsales/customer support. However, the customer journeys that many brands deliver reflect a linear, "inward facing" journey engineered to optimize the brand's operations. Organizations must rethink experience delivery as greater than just the sum of multichannel front-office interactions. When done right, IDC research shows that unified CX can lead to higher customer retention, improved advocacy, and ultimately profitable revenue growth. This begs the question, "Can the age of intelligent experiences help organizations make the transition to deliver unified experiences and optimize customer and business outcomes alike?"

Consider, for example, a customer navigating the typical awareness-to-purchase cycle. As the customer explores a brand's digital properties across owned and paid websites and social media, the brand gets access to behavioral signals and intent data. In turn, fed into a propensity model, these insights enable the brand to contextualize offers and adjust product recommendations and associated content/messaging that meets the desired customer intent. In addition, through tighter integration with back-office systems such as inventory and/or the financial applications, the brand can offer

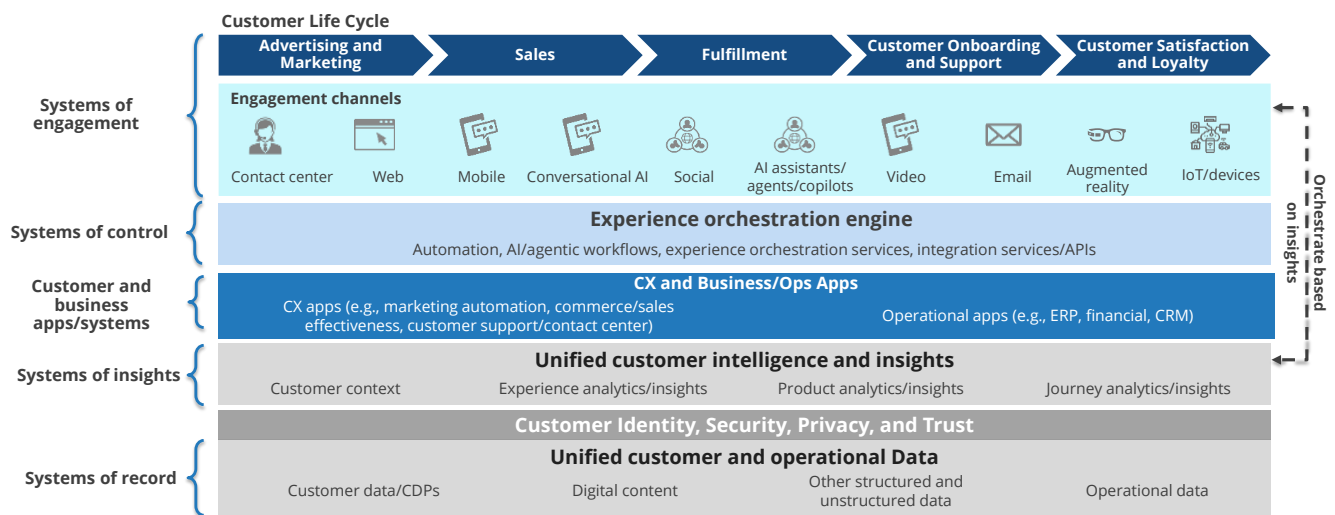
microsegment-specific discounts or recommend alternative products if the inventory of the desired product is delayed or unavailable. Along the way, product-related questions (e.g., feature/capability/support) are intelligently routed to either an AI agent/assistant in marketing or service or a sales/commerce associate. AI models fed by a continuous data stream make real-time routing decisions based on sentiment, intent-driven strategies, and an understanding of request complexity within the context of the customer interaction.

## Unifying Customer Experience Outcomes Through a Multilayered Approach

Delivering unified experiences requires organizations to negotiate and activate experience actions across a wide variety of modalities, customer interactions, journeys, workflows, employees (digital and human), organizational functions/teams, and systems/applications. To negotiate this complexity, organizations must adopt a multilayered approach to CX delivery — a vertically integrated technology stack that spans systems of record, insights, customer and business applications, systems of control, and systems of engagement across both internal organization functions and ecosystem partners. Figure 4 highlights IDC's conceptual framework illustrating the core components needed to orchestrate unified experiences.

FIGURE 4

### Unified Intelligent Experience Orchestration Framework



Source: IDC, 2025

## **Systems of Record: Build a Sound Foundation of Data**

True customer context and understanding are dependent on unifying both customer and operational data. Marrying operational data (i.e., business apps, SOR data) with behavioral data (e.g., support tickets, support interactions, online reviews) is how organizations can arrive at a deeper experiential understanding of customers. Further, organizations must continue to unify fragmented data between the front and back offices. For instance, IDC research found that while about 58% of organizations have currently deployed CDPs for CX, much of this is primarily across front-office applications. Further, only about 24% of organizations have fully integrated customer data across front- and back-office applications. By centrally pooling all experiential and operational data, customer insights can be effectively used to orchestrate unified front-end customer engagement.

## **Systems of Insights: Develop a Cohesive Fabric of Customer Insights**

Insights when combined with customer context result in customer intelligence; however, the current-state reality is that organizations' tech stacks are data rich but insights poor. Building a unified customer intelligence fabric requires organizations to stitch computed insights with customer profile insights. Customer and experience analytics solutions provide details about customers' preferences, behavior-driven actions, sentiment, and intent. Journey analytics tools provide a blueprint of past customer actions and predict possible next steps/actions along the customer journey. By correlating these insights across channels to a single customer (B2C) or account ID (B2B), organizations can actively and continually apply a context-aware customer point of view for compelling customer experiences in real time.

## **Customer and Business/Operational Applications**

Both CX and operational applications need to be fed with customer data and insights that are accurate, current, and compliant. Furthermore, organizations need to be able to share intelligence and insights outside of "functional or channel verticals" and mature from doing so across the organization over a span of time versus at specific moments in time. IDC's 2024 *CX Path Survey* found that improving scale and consistency for orchestrating experiences across the enterprise was the number 1 business driver for companies implementing customer experience orchestration solutions.

## **Systems of Control: Orchestrate Unified Experiences**

The orchestration layer/engine is responsible for coordinating and centrally managing actionable customer engagement in a near-real-time manner. It is the glue/connective

tissue that connects and coordinates organizational functions, applications, operational systems, and employee tools to customer data and insights. Key components include:

- AI and analytics services determine what, when, how, and where steps in a journey must be presented to a customer. This includes but may not be limited to areas such as recommendations on actions, tasks/workflows, business logic management, and context-aware analytics to augment decision-making.
- Automation is not a single technology, but rather a collection of technologies that can be knitted together and layered into an organization's enterprise automation strategy. Automation uses (and creates) data and insights to execute tasks and workflows with a specific customer context and outcome in mind.
- Experience orchestration and integration services execute experience segmentation strategies, govern business logic to drive experience outcomes, and integrate best-in-breed apps and services (e.g., data management, privacy).

## **Systems of Engagement: Delivering Responsive Experiences**

Systems of engagement include, but are not limited to, the various customer engagement channels across digital, physical, and blended employee-facing tools and platforms that may be either exclusive or shared by both employees and customers and various engagement channels through which third parties engage with the brand. Organizations must be able to deliver responsive experiences via a broad range of channels or edge devices — depending on stakeholder preferences and as appropriate for the channel/modality.

## **How Do Agentic Technologies Enable Unified Experience Orchestration?**

AI agents are a route to deliver greater sophistication for unified experience orchestration. Data and computing power advancements and the availability of advanced reasoning models are driving more sophisticated, more advanced agentic AI capabilities. The core characteristics of AI agents make them optimally suited to address the requirements needed to deliver unified intelligent experience orchestration.

AI agents all share the following core characteristics:

- **Planning:** Plan and sequence actions to achieve specific goals.
- **Perception:** Perceive and process information across multiple modalities.
- **Perform operations:** Use tools such as code execution, search, and computation capabilities to perform tasks.

- **Memory:** Remember past interactions (operations and perception) and behaviors (operations and planning).

This enables AI agents to orchestrate a layer of "intelligent actions" on top of CX and business applications. The ability to sequence and break down tasks into discrete steps enables AI agents to consume and hand off customer and operational data and insights across applications, processes, and business functions through a structured approach anchored in reasoning and decisioning. Tool usage and memory enable agents to perform tasks and take action within various applications and systems, often through function calling in a context-aware manner. This offers organizations the needed automation and scale for seamless vertical integration through the multiple layers for unified experience orchestration.

## FOUNDATIONAL CX CHALLENGES HOLD ORGANIZATIONS BACK FROM SUCCEEDING WITH EXPERIENCE ORCHESTRATION IMPLEMENTATION

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As customer experience and IT executives navigate this rapidly evolving landscape, one of the areas IDC investigated was how prepared organizations are to take full advantage of AI capabilities in the next 24 months. Findings from IDC's April 2025 *AI Tech Buyer Survey* showed that a little over half of all organizations globally say they are very or extremely prepared to take full advantage of AI. This is a clear signal that the market at large has a significant amount of catching up to do. With AI as a key driver of CX modernization, ongoing CX transformation challenges at organizations hamper their efforts to effectively embed and scale AI capabilities for experience orchestration. IDC explored what challenges companies experienced as part of their CX transformation across three distinct and crucial facets of operational-, technology-, and employee-related challenges (see Figure 5). In detail:

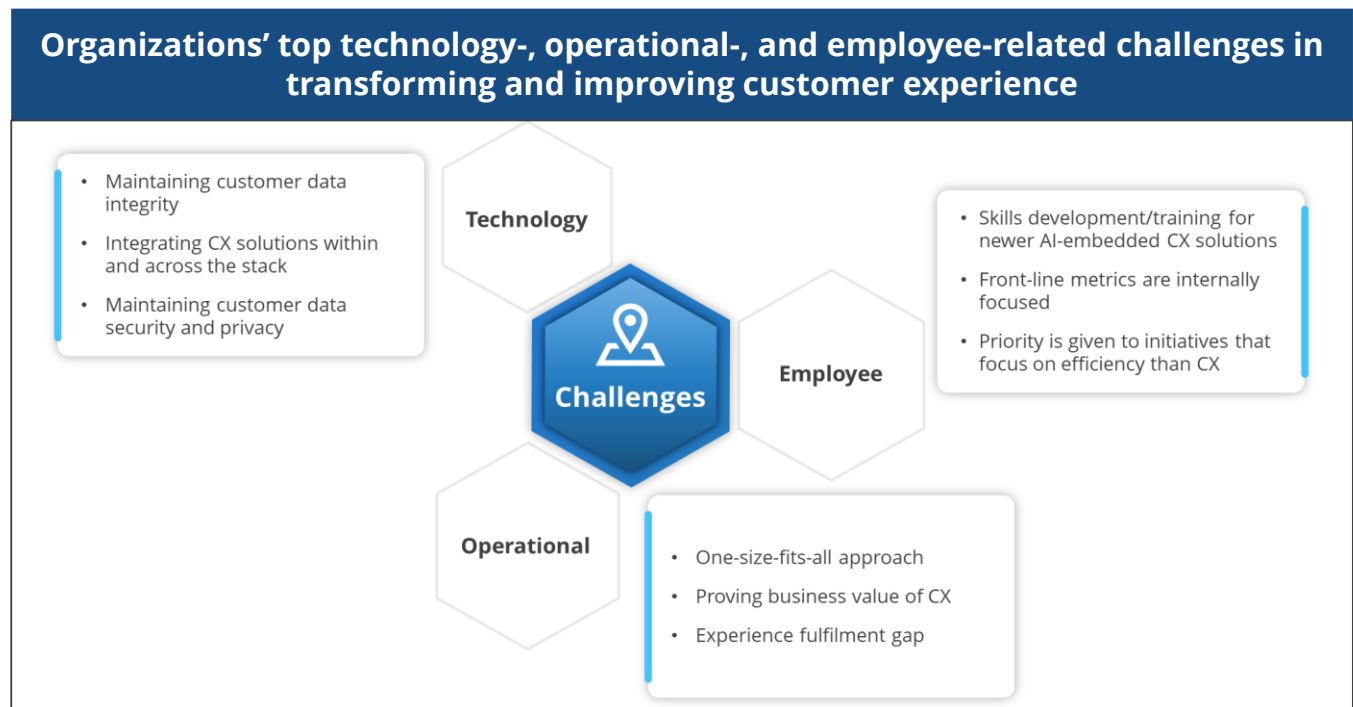
- **Integration gaps:** A fundamental shortcoming of many enterprise CX transformations is failing to transform beyond the engagement layer — a key indicator of success for positive CX outcomes. IDC's October 2024 *CXMS Survey* found that just 22% of organizations globally say that they have in place full-stack vertical integration across all CX and business applications, spanning data, insights, business processes, and teams/functions. In fact, 42% of enterprises report that integrating CX solutions within and across the stack is a key challenge in their CX transformations. The root cause of why organizations struggle with CX initiatives points to issues with integration with other key business processes (e.g., ERP, supply chain), the variety and breadth of CX applications across business functions, data silos, and legacy infrastructure — all of which lead to an experience fulfillment gap.

- **Data management:** Data and AI strategies remain heavily connected across organizations due to their reliance on one another. An important factor has been the growth in volume, velocity, and variability in the data captured, used, and stored. As AI use expands, the risk of exposure of noncompliant customer and operational data grows. Organizations are grappling with multiple, varied data sources — spanning structured and, especially, unstructured data — which is estimated to grow at 7x the rate of structured data through 2026 — in their efforts to execute unified, omni-channel experiences. In turn, organizations face higher demands for managing data integrity, security, and customer privacy through better data management and governance. AI's ability to generate and synthesize multimodal content across multiple channels, at scale, adds additional risk for a brand to maintain authenticity and integrity. Enterprises must also establish guardrails so that proprietary data is kept out of public models and they maintain control over owned data.
- **Challenges in AI-related CX skills:** Newer agentic AI technologies continue to widen the skills gap that organizations face. In addition, as the scope, complexity, and extent of AI-related use cases expand, organizations are continuing to face challenges related to upskilling more employees in AI-related CX capabilities; this includes IT/developers, line-of-business users, and frontline employees. Organizational structures and operating models have yet to be upgraded to perform in an AI-first world. Organizations remain challenged in defining new ways of working for their human employees — across leadership, employees, and partners — in a world with AI assistants, AI advisors, and AI agents. It will also be incumbent upon organizations to balance technical enablement with training in human skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.
- **Impending customer trust and authenticity gap:** Customer trust is paramount for customer retention. Clean, reliable data and responsible AI form the foundation of trust for intelligent experiences. AI-related risks span the gamut from content authenticity concerns to transparent data use to ethics/bias and even extending to hidden deceptive practices and dark patterns. The democratization of AI tools and capabilities has led to rampant growth in areas such as deepfakes (AI-generated photos, videos, or audio), which use legitimate existing people or places and artificially manipulate them. Brands that rely heavily on user-generated content (e.g., in customer communities, social marketing/commerce, and customer success/support) will need to manage the serious risk arising from misrepresentation and misinformation, which could erode customer trust. Finally, a critical issue surrounding AI has been that of lack of transparency. These could be at the model level (e.g., specific details of reasoning steps, how the model arrived at the specific output) or more broadly about data use (what customer data was used, and for what purpose, and in the

manner/context it was applied) to arrive at the specific output. The root of the issue lies in the unpredictability of AI itself, especially GenAI.

**FIGURE 5**

## Top Organizational Challenges in Transforming and Improving CX



n = 1,262

Source: IDC's *Customer Experience Management Strategies Survey*, October 2024

## KEY PRIORITIES TO DELIVER INTELLIGENT EXPERIENCE ORCHESTRATION

AI readiness must be a priority for organizations. IDC's February 2025 *Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending (FERS) Survey* found that just 44% of GenAI-enabled proof of concepts advanced to production — more than a year after most companies' initial GenAI efforts started. Leading organizations have found success by establishing customer-centric AI governance; ensuring the availability of clean, governed data; adopting a customer trust-by-design approach; overhauling workforce models primed for AI, and investing in ongoing AI-related employee training and enablement. Without a strong operational foundation, AI will only accelerate poor outcomes.

CX and IT executives can build a game plan for AI-fueled experiences through the following eight priorities:

- **Shore up the customer data infrastructure:** Organizations must continue to invest in data unification, eventually working toward establishing a centralized customer data service and a trusted, real-time data-sharing network. Delivering highly contextualized experience outcomes begins with access to high-quality insights (i.e., organizations must track the value of customer and operational data so that the data collected and managed is intentional, accurate, compliant, and ethical and minimizes bias and ensures traceability). Organizations must also establish operational practices for data quality management and integrity, including data validation, lineage tracking, and criteria for anomaly detection. Incidentally, many of these capabilities can be addressed by agentic AI. For instance, AI agents can autonomously identify and classify data across silos, including structured and unstructured formats for customer data discovery and classification. In addition, by synthesizing data from multiple sources (contextual integration), agentic AI can power use cases such as dynamic segmentation and delivering personalized customer outcomes.
- **Build a connected organization:** End-to-end integration will be crucial if IT needs to consume and deliver against a continuous stream of customer intelligence and fluid touch points (channels). A connected enterprise that spans operations, technology, and organizational elements will foster continuous improvement by enabling applications to continuously consume unified insights and data to provide subsequent AI-driven insights to other applications or AI agents. In turn, there will be significant demand for full and clean integration across the front-office to back-office stack. Embedded AI capabilities in apps/systems will foster collaboration and communication between departments and between technology and business units.
- **Institute an experience-orchestrated operating model:** IDC found that many organizations suffer from poorly defined customer journeys and associated business workstreams often because many of these processes are complex or nonstandard, requiring continuous human intervention. IDC's 2024 *CX Path Survey* found that 46% of organizations globally estimate that 50%+ of their organization's CX work should be automated or assisted by GenAI in the CX orchestration software. However, less than 15% of organizations have 60%+ of their customer journeys running through or being executed by their current CX orchestration solution. To address this gap organizations, must foster cross-functional collaboration through multidisciplinary delivery teams (e.g., IT, marketing, and CX professionals). For AI-infused customer and operational applications and platforms, which tie work, collaboration, processes, and metrics together, connected operational structures and workstreams will be essential.

- **Connect agentic orchestration capabilities to customer outcomes and strategic business value:** Proving the business value of CX is among the top operational challenges for organizations undertaking CX transformation (refer back to Figure 5). Organizations must tune out market claims and noise about the wild possibilities of GenAI and agentic technologies and develop their own assessments and actionable road map and plans to deploy these capabilities. Enterprises must also develop financial (and nonfinancial) cost and benefit models to accurately track returns on investments against CX KPIs and business value metrics.
- **Develop an intelligent core:** Organizations must assess and evolve their intelligence architecture to enable sharing insights. For instance, is relevant customer and operational data being collected within the context of or for the customer engagement to take the right action? Is customer, employee, or third-party data clean, relevant, and secure? Organizations must establish corporatewide guidelines to track the use of GenAI data and models, identifying the value of data/insights through new metrics such as volume of data used versus captured and the percentage of data used for decision-making. As the organization matures in its ability to share insights in a trusted manner, across functions and eventually through the CX ecosystem, these CX insights can be incorporated into driving the day-to-day actions (operations) of how the business is run.
- **Envision what human-in-the-loop means:** Organizations must clearly define their particular paradigm for human interaction with agentic-orchestrated experience journeys — these include customer-facing as well as employee-facing CX journeys. For instance, organizations can provide an "off-ramp" for automated systems like chatbots so that customers always have an option to escalate their interaction to a human. IDC found that most CX and line-of-business leaders identify high-risk and high-value tasks such as in use cases impacting brand risk or those that may raise ethical considerations as candidates for having a human-in-the-loop. AI excels at pattern recognition and data processing, but humans are indispensable for innovation. Organizations must pivot their human workforce toward those aspects of experience design that demand novel creativity, critical/lateral thinking, and the ability to envision new markets, products, and experience strategies. Finally, organizations must also assess applicability of regulatory requirements such as the EU AI Act, which mandates having human control.
- **Champion responsible AI for CX:** Organizations must develop and programmatically embed frameworks and requirements for model transparency, AI reasoning explainability, fairness, and customer data privacy into customer journey design and execution. Systematic bias monitoring must be ongoing and

automated on the data sets used for model training as well as the data generated from model outputs. In addition, as the velocity and volume of content grow exponentially, organizations must dedicate more importance to authenticity. Cognitive empathy must remain at the heart of AI-driven experiences. Aspects such as creativity, differentiation, novelty, targeted personalization, and knowing when not to engage a prospect will become hallmarks of authentic experiences. Organizations must build authenticity into the brand's DNA, reflecting it in brand voice, responsiveness to customer feedback, and all customer engagements (asynchronous and synchronous) and across digital and physical channels. Embed authenticity into how customer experiences are designed and delivered. Ensure that bias mitigation is an ongoing effort beginning at the data layer and moving upward to the engagement layer.

- **Invest in AI-related employee skills enablement:** Invest in role-specific AI literacy from the front line to the C-suite while embedding digital ethics at every level. Elevate and enable LOB and CX practitioners with skills such as prompt engineering, ethics oversight, LLM optimization, experience auditing, and broader AI proficiency to focus on delivering experience outcomes versus experience outputs. Regular trainings and enablement programs will also need to be established for CX teams specifically around customer trust and compliance requirements. Prioritize clear communication to address employee concerns about role changes/eliminations and sponsor structured, facilitated enablement by role and business function versus just access to AI tools and training.

## CONCLUSION

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AI and agentic technologies offer compelling opportunities for customer experience leaders across the full spectrum of the experience life cycle, from advertising and marketing to customer service. However, to extract meaningful business value from AI, organizations must adopt a unified approach to AI-fueled CX transformation. All components of a business — the front, middle, and back offices — must work in sync, spanning technology, organization and people, and operations/processes. Organizations must move beyond fragmented, siloed CX efforts and toward unified CX strategies rooted in a unified customer and operational data foundation, a connected enterprise, and responsible AI practices. Data integrity and trust must form the core of organizations' AI journeys, with new workforce models that can adapt to both digital and human requirements. In the age of intelligent experiences, sustained business value demands that organizations equally prioritize technology investments along with a focus on authenticity, creativity, and transparency in every customer interaction.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SPONSOR

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