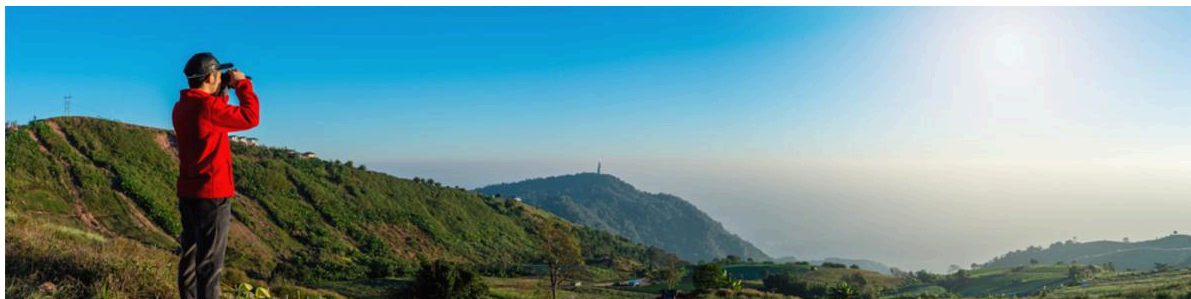

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3 Contact Center Trends Few Saw Coming

The headlines are screaming lots of messages. But what's actually happening in contact centers? And what do leaders need to be paying attention to now? Here are three important trends that few saw coming.

1. Workloads in most contact centers are growing.

This is the first trend to take many by surprise. In fact, according to ICMI research, *The State of the Contact Center in 2026*:

- 58% of leaders predict AI integration will result in staff reductions.
- 39% expect staffing levels to remain about the same.

But what's playing out on the ground looks different from what many are predicting.

Instead, these major factors are adding to contact center demand: Unmet demand, complexity, more channels, the self-service paradox, security and fraud, and business change.

So while AI is creating efficiencies for sure, these forces are expanding the scope and complexity of the work.

2. Gen Z is calling!

One of the surprises to many researchers and practitioners in the last couple of years was finding that Gen Z is often more likely to call than Millennials or Gen Xers. Yes, they start with self-service or chat, but they quickly move to phone if need be.

Gen Zers are calling, Boomers are using chat. These are reversals in the trends we were seeing in years past. This really highlights the

importance of rolling out the channels that make sense for customers and making things easy for them.

3. Contact centers are more important than ever

An assumption many made that proved to be dead wrong is that contact centers would become less important as AI becomes more powerful.

However, as we see rapid growth in AI use in many areas, AI interaction analytics are a game changer. AI can now analyze thousands, even millions, of customer conversations and surface patterns that used to take months to find.

In many cases, the contact center is becoming the most powerful listening post in the enterprise.

So the role of the contact center is evolving. Not just as a place that resolves problems....But as a place that helps organizations understand customers, improve products, and strengthen the organization.

That puts contact center leaders in a more strategic position than ever before.

There is a real opportunity right now to up the value of your contact center. And a real danger of falling behind. In fact, during times of change, we tend to see greater separation between the best centers and those that are not keeping up. Which will yours be?



[Watch the video](#)

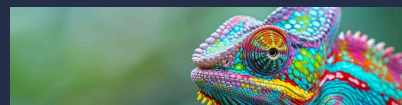
Did you know?

Just 9% of employees say they are very comfortable using AI in their role. (Gallup, AI Indicator Survey)

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