metrigy



The 2Q AI Consumer Experience Index

Summary Report: Moving from AI Skepticism to Strategic Personalization

A Metrigy study in partnership with NiCE

Q2 2026

Layne Haaksma
Senior Research Analyst
Metrigy

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Deconstructing the AI Consumer Experience Index	3
The New Consumer Buying Personas	3
The Alarming Business and Consumer Gaps	4
The Industry Scorecard	5
The Proactive Outreach Value	6
The Bottom Line: Trust Over Resolution	6
Conclusion: The CX Balancing Act Continues	7

Introduction

The initial shock and skepticism surrounding AI in customer service is beginning to fade. In Q2 2026, we are entering an era of normalization where consumers are no longer just tolerating automated service—certain demographics are actively rewarding companies that implement it effectively.

According to the newly released Metrigy *Q2 2026 AI Consumer Experience Index*, the overall baseline score rose to an impressive 104.6 this quarter, indicating a measurable, positive shift in consumer sentiment compared to the first quarter's baseline of 100.
However, this positive momentum has created a substantial divide, highlighting widening gaps across age groups, gender, and socioeconomic lines. As AI acceptance surges in some groups, others are digging in their heels, demanding the human touch more fiercely than ever.

Deconstructing the AI Consumer Experience Index

The Q2 score of 104.6 is a composite built on eight distinct sub-indexes tracking the nuances of customer sentiment. Here's how the eight pillars stack up this quarter:

- AI Satisfaction Index (111.8) – Experiencing the largest quarter-over-quarter jump, this score shows consumers are experiencing better-than-expected outcomes from AI agents, likely driven by improvements in natural language processing
- AI Trust Index (107.6) – A significant jump from Q1, suggesting that the underlying technology is maturing past frustrating deflection tactics into genuine problem resolution
- Proactivity Index (105.8) – A substantial positive jump from the first quarter, proving consumers are highly receptive to proactive outreach when done correctly
- CX Ease Index (104.7) – Measuring the perceived effort required to resolve issues, this score indicates interactions are becoming slightly more frictionless
- Empathy Index (103.4) – Measuring how well companies show empathy, making modest gains
- Resolution Index (102.0) – Tracking the effectiveness of the outcome
- CX Momentum Index (101.8) –Tracking how consumers rate customer service compared to the year prior
- Relationship Index (101.0) – Evaluating how valued customers feel after interacting with a brand

The New Consumer Buying Personas

Consumer sentiment towards AI varies greatly between different demographics. The integration of AI has fractured the market into distinct behavioral groups:

- **The AI Superstars –** 35-to-44-year-old males with high household incomes ($125K+). Among them, 63.9% say technology is more important than humans in creating a positive CX. They demand hyper-efficient, tech-driven resolutions and allow only 2.83 bad experiences before abandoning a brand.
- **The Human Loyalists –** Seniors aged 65 and older. An overwhelming 90.1% prioritize people over technology. Even if a resolution is guaranteed by AI, 94.8% still prefer humans. Companies cannot force this demographic into AI self-service.
- **The Silent Multitaskers –** Young (18 to 24) males. Their environment dictates their channel (43.9%). They vastly prefer text/writing over voice and have low phone usage. They require robust in-app chat and SMS.
- **The Tolerant-but-Trapped Middle –** Lower-income earners ($35,000 to $49,999). They are the most forgiving, enduring 4.88 bad experiences, but primarily because they are trapped by finances. Among this group, 56.1% will switch companies simply for lower prices.

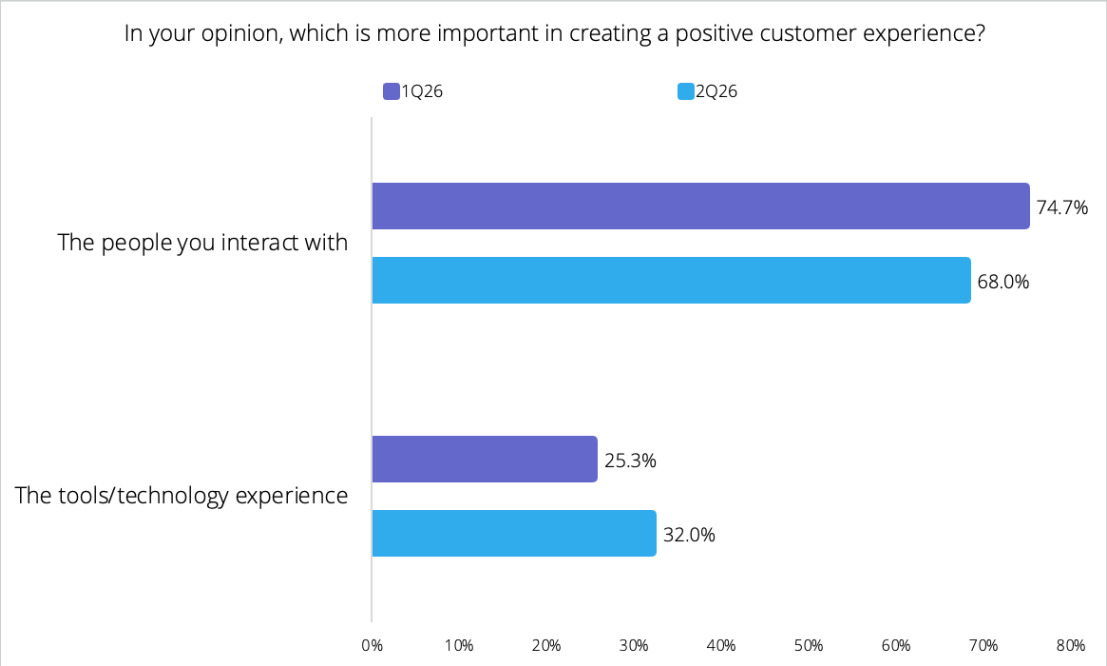


Figure 1: In your opinion, which is more important in creating a positive customer experience?

The Alarming Business and Consumer Gaps

There is a significant and threatening disconnect between business assumptions and consumer reality regarding AI preference. Metrigy's *AI's Role in Customer Experience: 2026-27* global study of 759 companies shows that IT/CX leaders assume 42.7% of their customers prefer using AI agents. However, consumer data reveals that only 21.7% actually prefer them. Furthermore, businesses assume only 10.3% of customers actively avoid AI, when 32.7% of consumers state that they do.

Brands aggressively pushing AI deflection based on these flawed internal assumptions risk severely alienating nearly a third of their customer base.

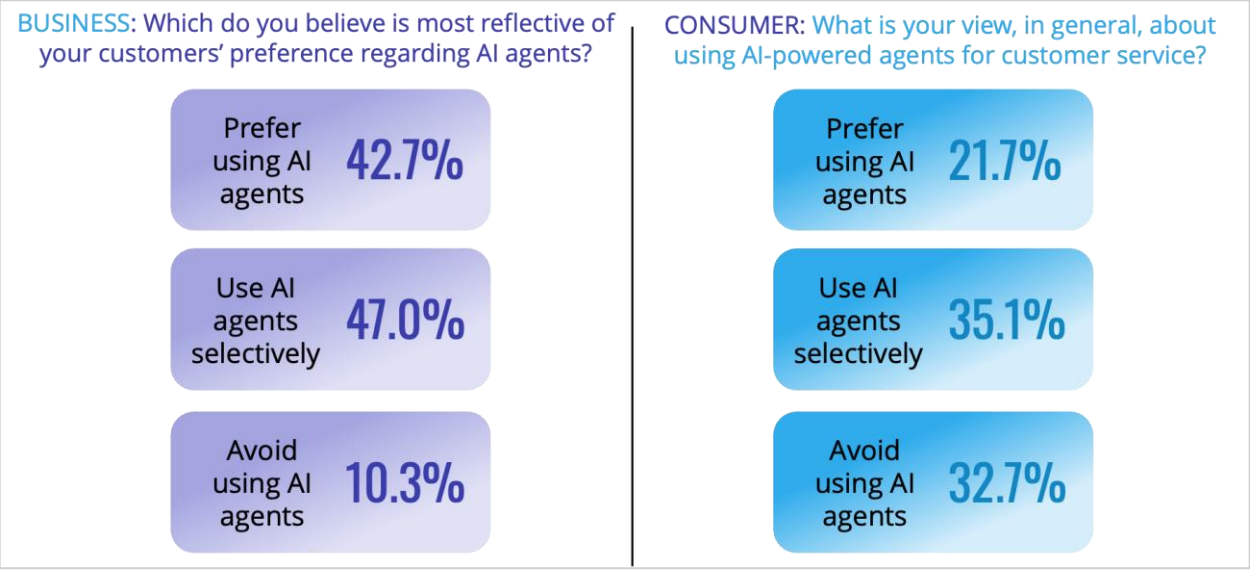


Figure 2: Business vs Consumer AI Agent Preferences

The Industry Scorecard

Retail, healthcare, and financial services continue to dominate customer interactions.

Retail is the undisputed champion this quarter. Not only did it have the best delta score (scores calculated by subtracting the percentage selecting worst customer experience from best customer experience) for providing the best customer experience, but it had the highest index score for its AI-powered customer service, at 113.5 compared to first quarter's 100 baseline. Retail has successfully executed an omnichannel strategy, keeping in-person interactions king, while utilizing digital, AI-assisted self-service for logistics.

Financial services wins in AI implementation, securing the best delta of all industries for most-effective AI implementation. However, the largest threat to their success is the human hand-off. When consumers need human intervention for sensitive financial matters, the hand-off must pass full context, or trust is broken.

Healthcare sees the highest interaction volume of the top three industries, and despite the massive volume, 72.4% of consumers rate their healthcare interactions as either excellent or good. Consumers are increasingly utilizing AI text and voice agents, dropping the traditional phone reliance.

Government is in last place, consistent with historical trends. Government agencies represent the significant low point in this study, ranked worst in both general CX and AI implementation.

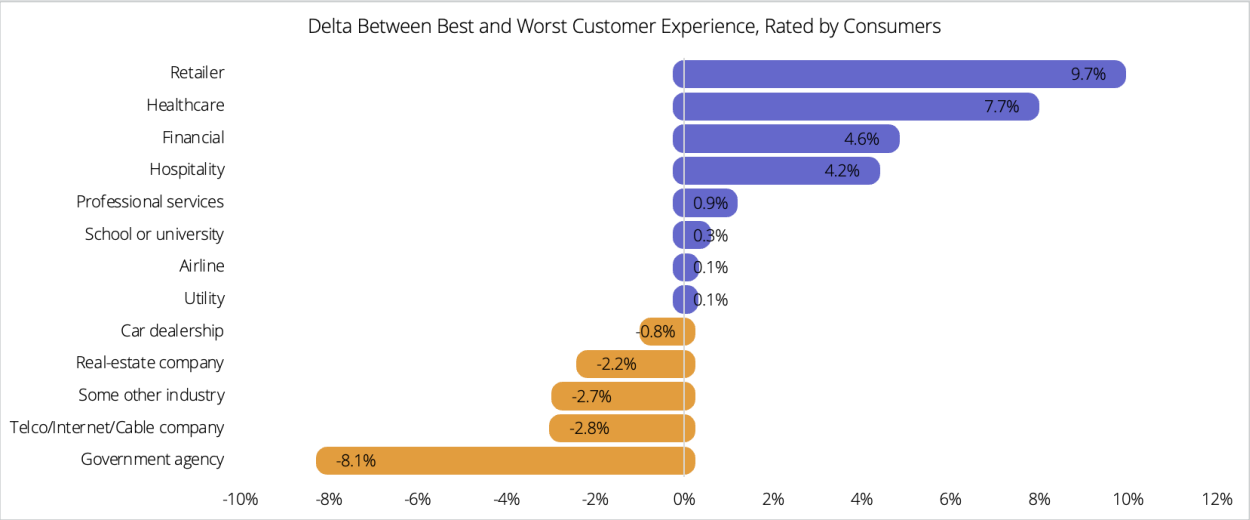


Figure 3: Delta Between Best and Worst Customer Experience, Rated by Consumers

The Proactive Outreach Value

Proactive communication remains highly valued in the second quarter. The most important insight is that logistics and follow-ups drive the most value—consumers want utility over marketing. The top forms of proactive outreach that are genuinely helpful to consumers are deliver/order status updates (41.9%) and appointment or reservation reminders (40.3%).

Consumers are open to AI handling this outreach. Nearly 60% will give AI voice agents a chance for proactive engagement, and 75.4% are open to proactive AI voice calls under the right circumstances—a testament to the drastic improvement in the quality of AI voice agents. What's more, 43.8% of consumers say companies reach out appropriately (16.1% say not frequently enough, and 28.6% say mixed depending on the company), proving that bothering the customer is less of a risk when the information is useful.

The Bottom Line: Trust Over Resolution

With AI increasingly solving for speed, consumers feel that trust is now more paramount than resolution, personalization, or speed. Consumers rated trust 10% higher in importance than they did in the first quarter, with 45.1% saying trust matters the most in interactions with companies.

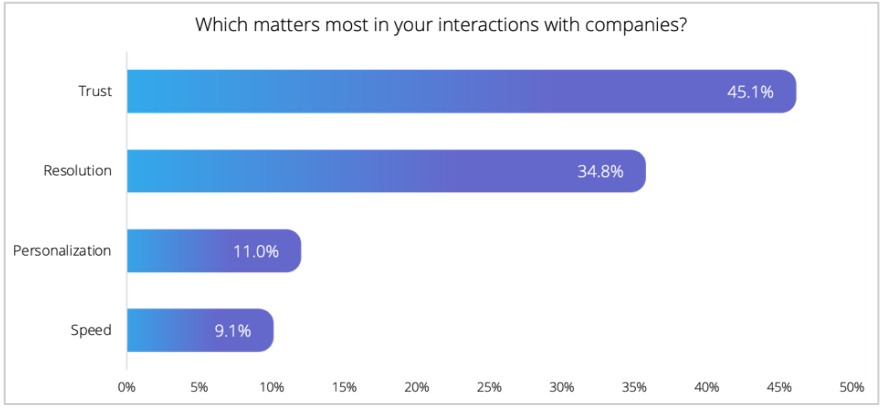


Figure 4: Which matters most in your interactions with companies?

Conclusion: The CX Balancing Act Continues

Ultimately, the Q2 2026 AI Consumer Experience Index reveals a market actively dividing along demographic lines. Successful companies will abandon the one-size-fits-all deflection strategy. Instead, they must align their strategy to the new personas: architecting highly efficient self-service flows for Gen Z and working-age professionals, while protecting the high-touch, human-centric channels for older demographics.

The full Metrigy study includes extensive data tables, cross-tabulations, and richer detail on the sub-indexes, verticals, and shifting channel preferences discussed here.

About Metrigy: Metrigy is an innovative research and advisory firm focusing on the rapidly changing areas of artificial intelligence, customer experience, and workplace collaboration—along with several related technologies, including knowledge management, security, and workforce engagement management. Metrigy conducts research with business leaders, consumers, and technology vendors. Our analysts deliver strategic guidance and informative content, backed by primary research metrics, indexes, and analysis, for technology providers and enterprise organizations.