

FUTURE OF SERVICE

Setting CX up for success in the AI Era



Marina Snegirjova

Head of Marketing, Asia and India



All eyes are on
service leaders
as the focus of
board-level AI
strategies...

91%

of customer service and
support leaders report
feeling executive pressure
to implement AI, not just
for efficiency, but to
directly improve customer
satisfaction

Gartner

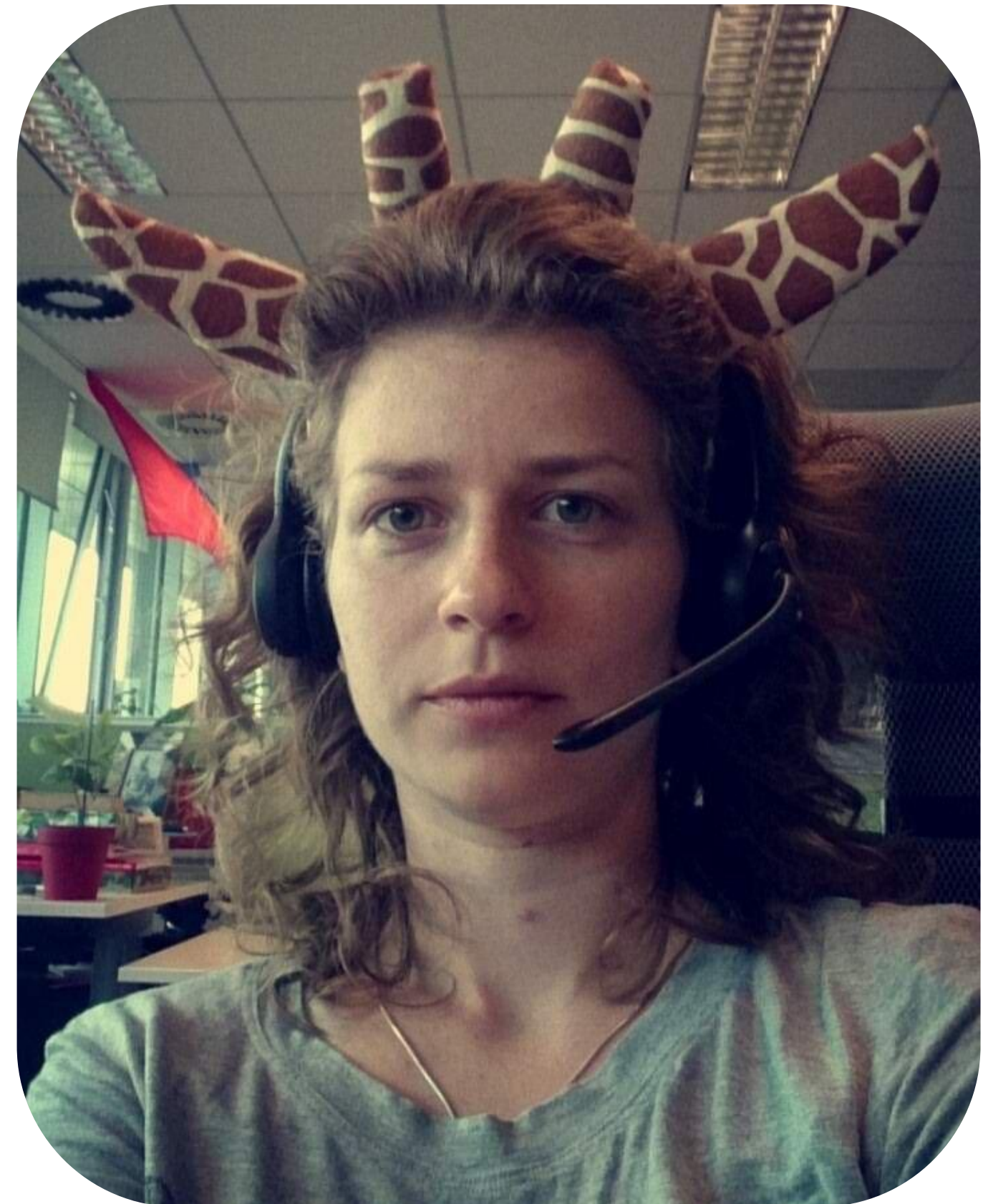
Back to 2016

Customer Support Specialist
for a large tech-company
in a low-cost hub

Most frequent interaction:
"Where do I download my invoices?"

Most frequent response:
Big red button. Top right corner.

Critical job skill:
Searching knowledge base. Fast.



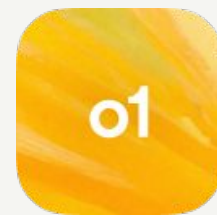
In the last 4 years, AI innovation has been the epitome of "decades where nothing happens and weeks where decades happen"

Generative searches and responses



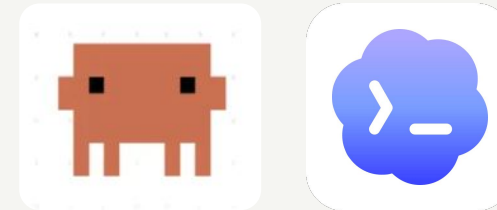
LLMs + Chat interface made conversational bots possible

Planning and sophisticated conversations



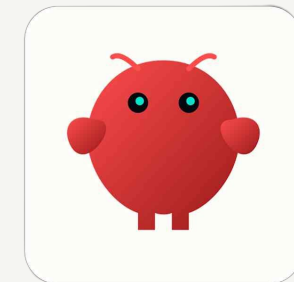
Reasoning ("o" series models) made Agents possible

Complex problem solving and tool use



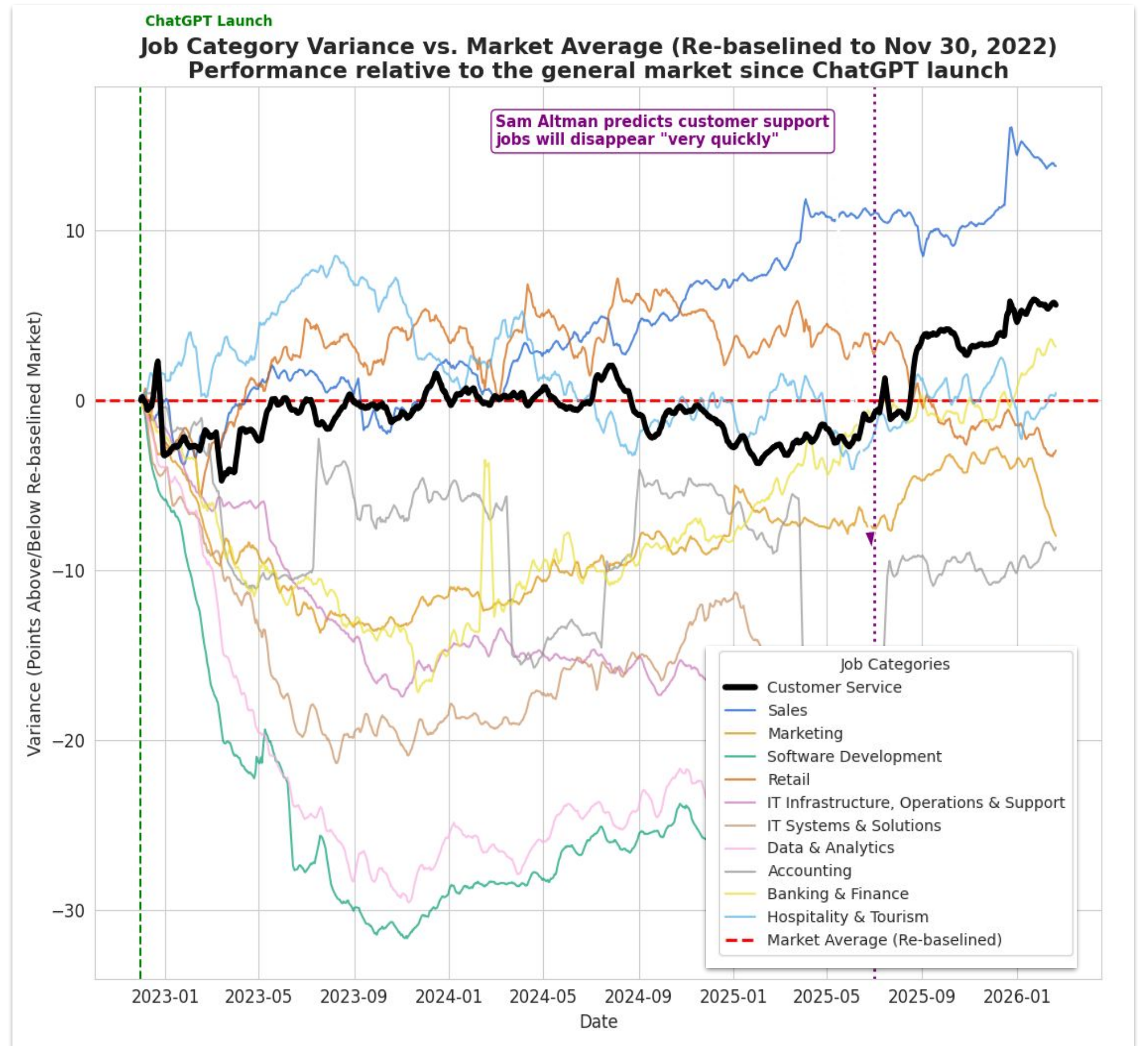
Claude Code/Codex showed the power and potential of Agents to drop cost of software

Agentic task completion

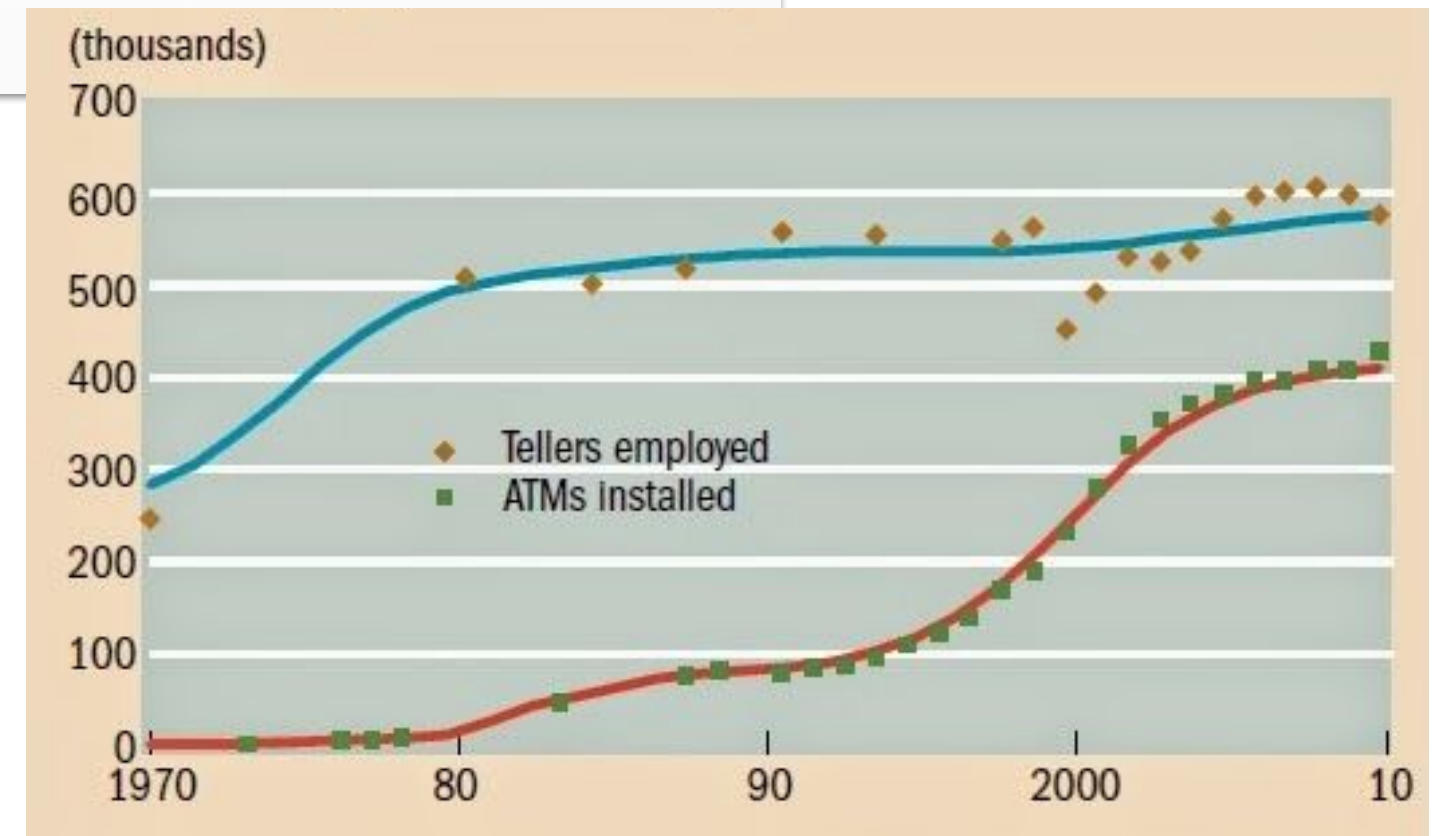
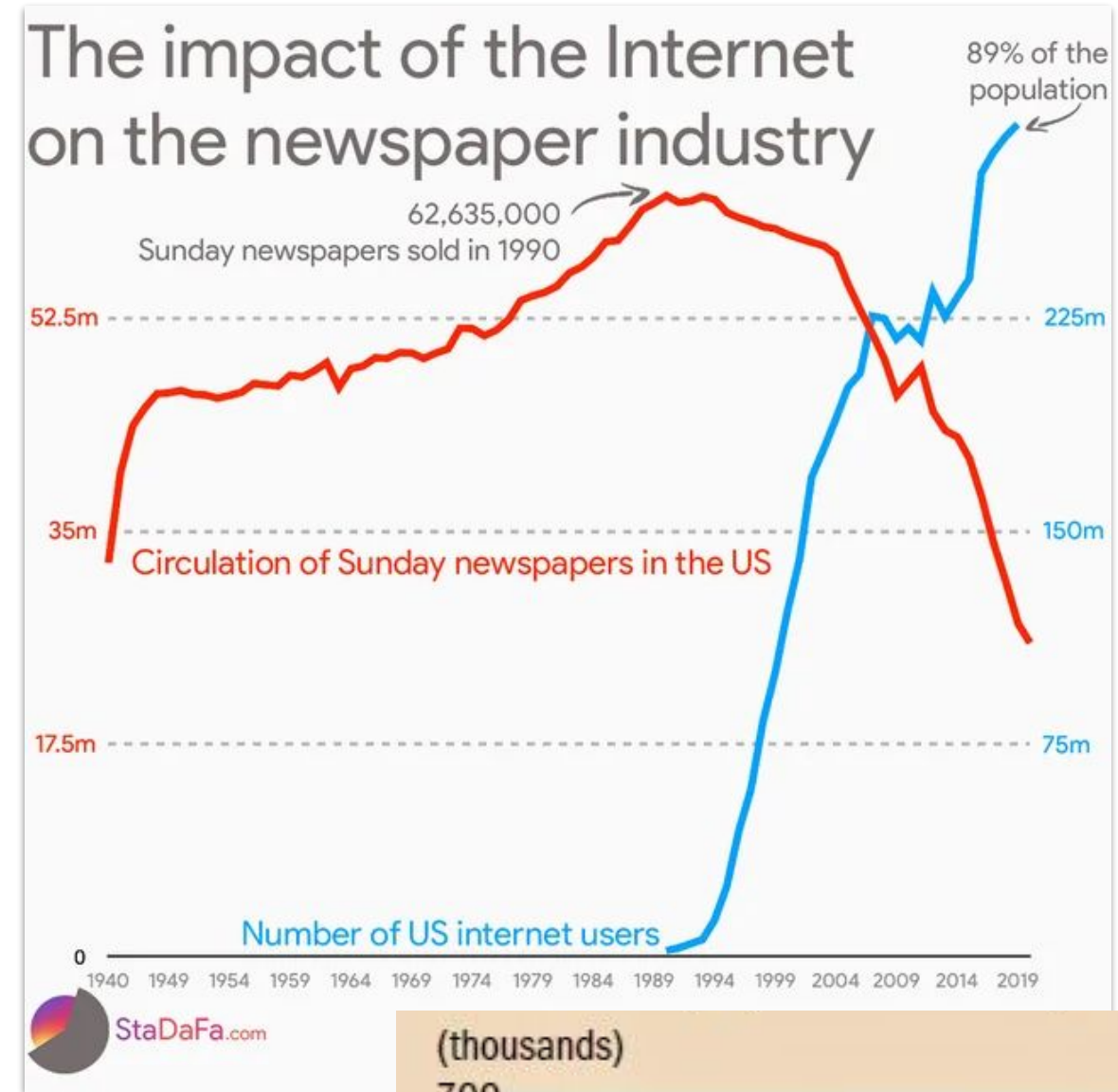


OpenClaw democratised Agents for consumers and solved the system access and memory problems

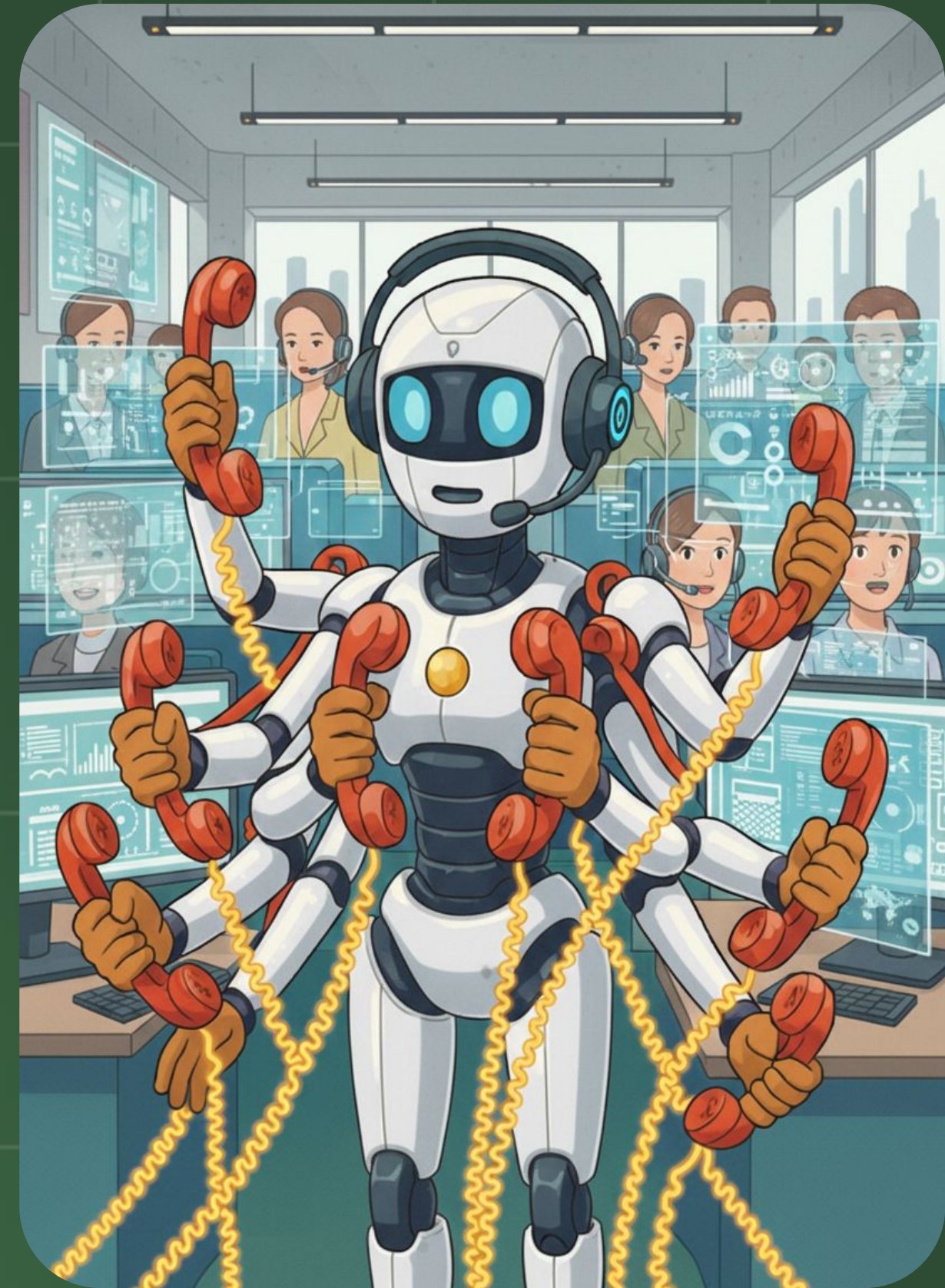
So far in the US,
we're seeing
customer
service job
postings are
actually 6%
higher than the
broader market



But this is likely a short-term increase, much like we saw with newspaper subscriptions after the internet and bank tellers after the ATM



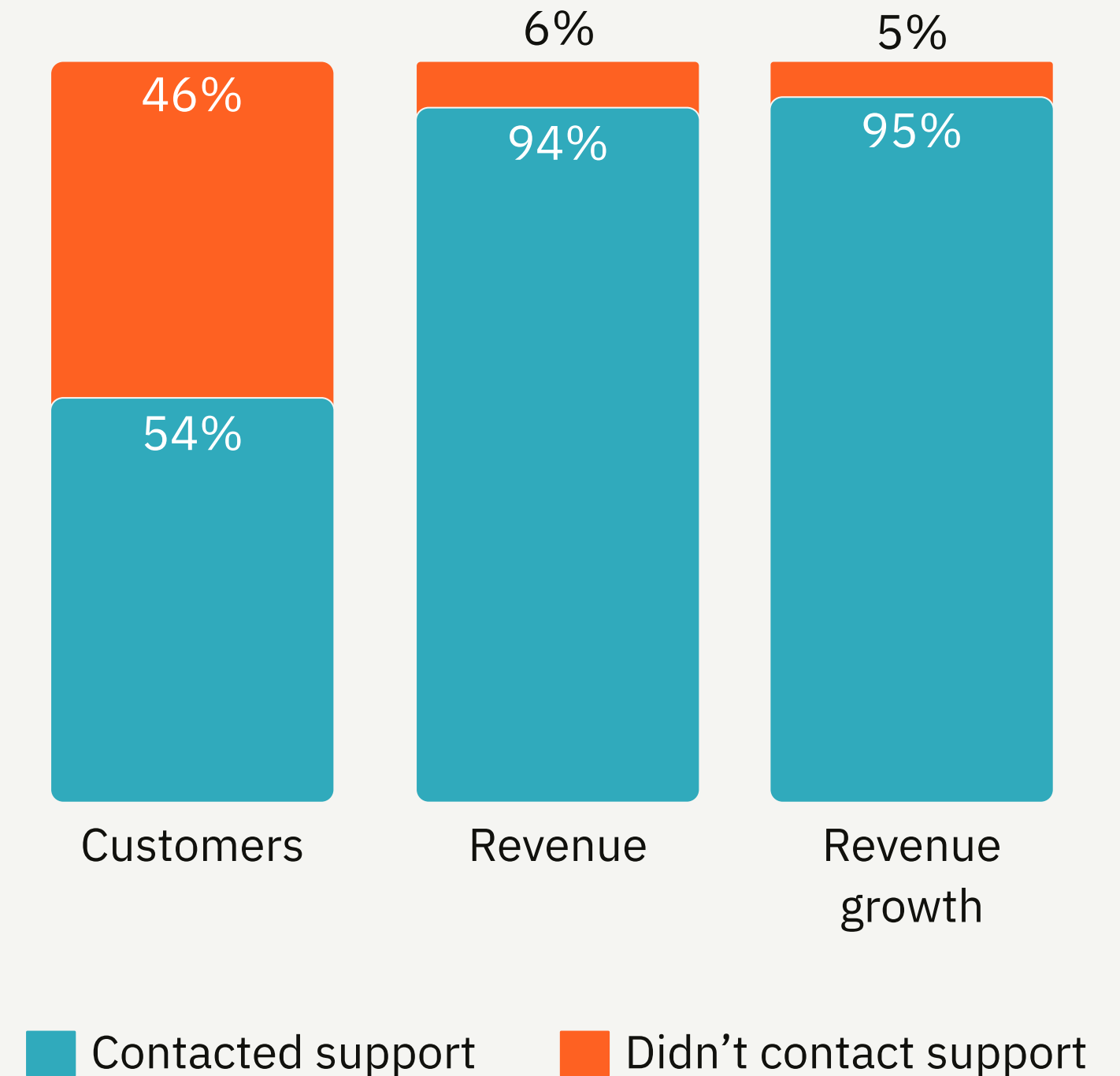
What is the
job to be
done for AI
in CX?



Support is the highest stakes, lowest recognition function at any company

CX boils down to engaging the customers that have fallen off the happy path of using a business's product or service, and helping them resolve their most complex challenges

Zendesk CX Example



JOB TO BE DONE FOR AI IN CX

CX is the cleanup for every other department's mistakes

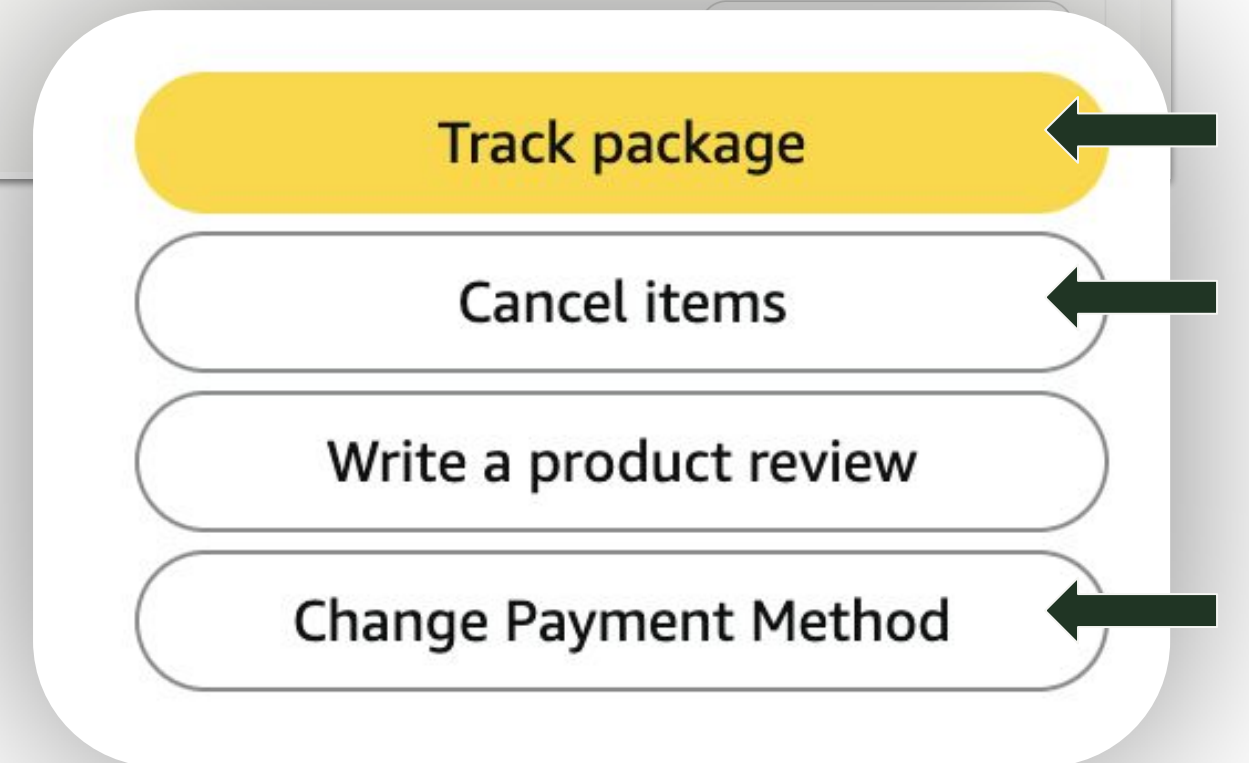
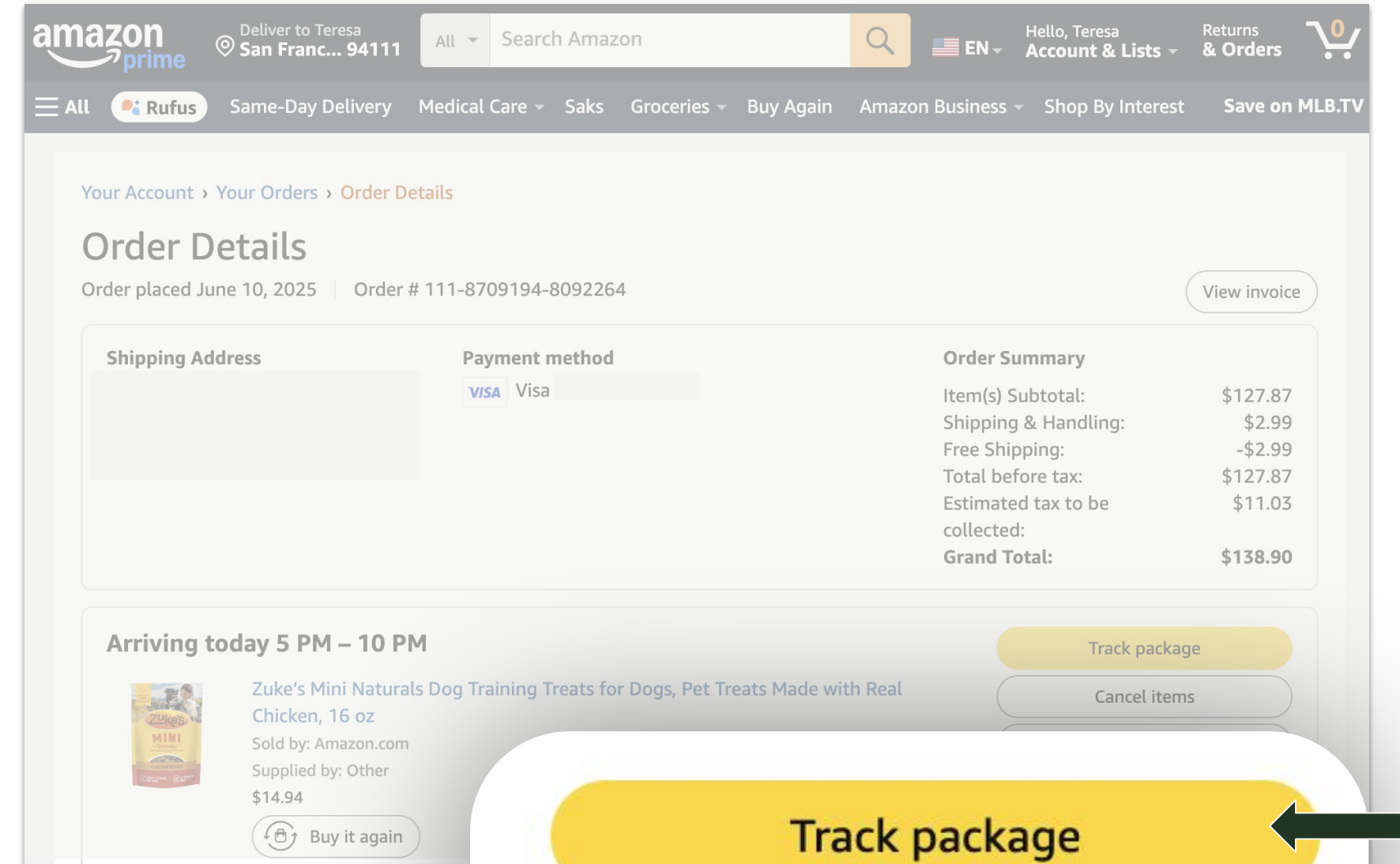
Customer Support is the catch-all "solve" for the shortcomings of every other customer-facing function at a company, like marketing, sales, product, or services



JOB TO BE DONE FOR AI IN CX

CX should instead be elevated and empowered to actually help customers succeed

Let Support do what it does best: help people succeed rather than put out fires. That's the ultimate baton pass, and everyone wins.



Determining the right tasks for AI vs humans



Understand the interactions CX deals with

The service interaction spectrum

Failure
interaction

eg. Frustrated customer
with a shipping delay

Low value interaction

eg. Product question about
how to setup a feature

High value interaction

eg. Customer wants to
understand how you can help
expand



47% of interactions are failures, where something has broken or gone wrong

Failure interaction

Low value interaction

High value interaction

47%



- Refunds>Returns eg. “I want to return my order”
- Product/Service Failures eg. “The product is not working as expected”
- Order/Delivery Issues eg. “I received the wrong item / wrong size”
- Billing & Account Problems eg. “Haven’t received the funds from transaction”

28% of interactions are low value routine or informational requests

Failure interaction

Low value interaction

High value interaction

47%

28%

- Basic Order / Status Checks eg. “What’s the order/shipping status?” or “I didn’t receive a confirmation”
- Account & Admin Tasks eg. “Change email address” / “Change phone info”,
- General Info and Housekeeping eg. “Send proof of payment”
- Usage Questions eg. “Does this product come with...? Please give me more details.”

TASKS FOR AI VS HUMANS

Only 25% of interactions are high value opportunities for revenue growth, relationship-building, or complex, consultative support

Failure interaction

Low value interaction

High value interaction

47%

28%

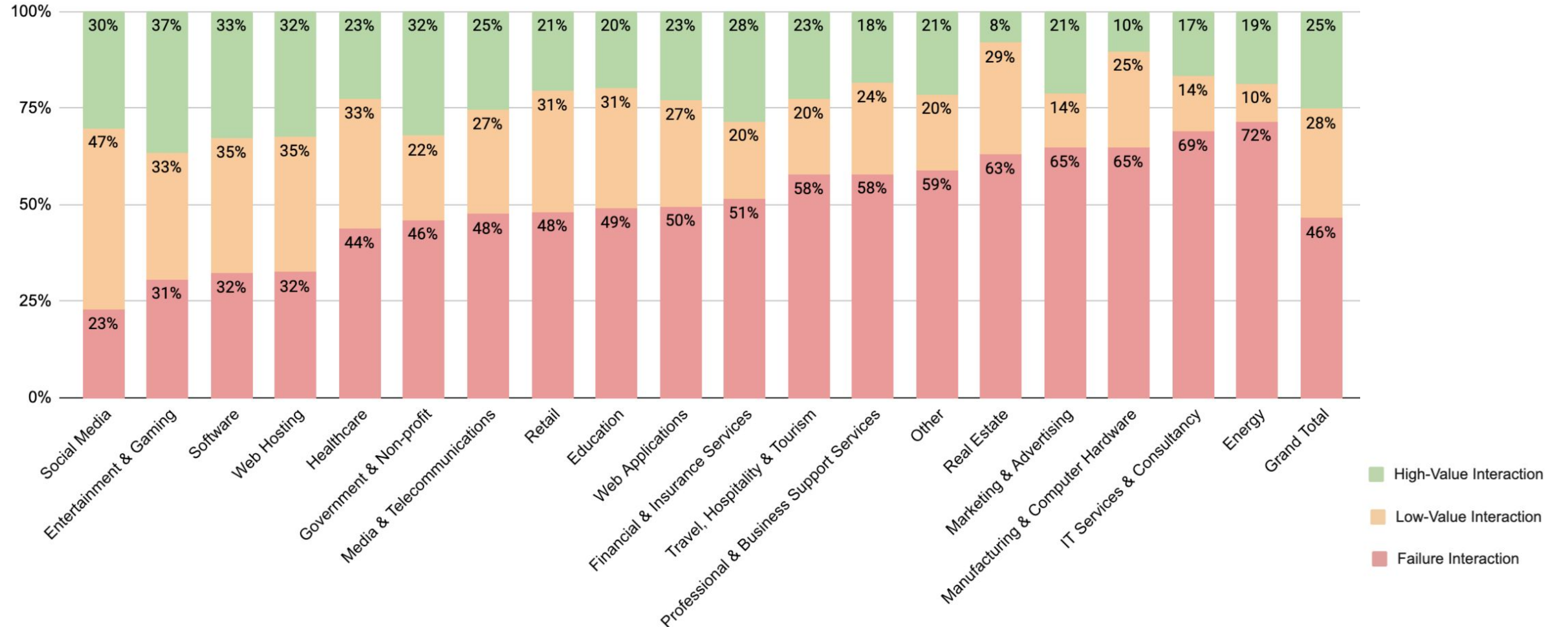
25%



- New sales and upsells eg. “I want to arrange a booking / more info (flights, hotels, tours)”
- Complex changes that may lead to upsell or loyalty eg. “I need assistance to reschedule my flight to a new date/time.” or “How else can I use this product?”
- Churn prevention eg. “I want to cancel my subscription / trial / service” or “I want to close my account”

TASKS FOR AI VS HUMANS

The opportunity for significantly more high-value interactions exists across every industry



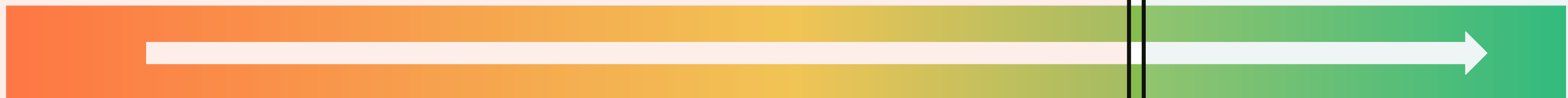
Use AI to automate failure and low-value work, so humans can focus on high-value interactions

The service interaction spectrum

Failure interaction

Low value interaction

High value interaction



AUTOMATE WITH AI



USE HUMANS

How AI CX leaders are adapting

Evolving
service roles

Improving
knowledge
strategy

Paying off
'service
debt'

How AI CX leaders are adapting

**Evolving
service roles**

**Improving
knowledge
strategy**

**Paying off
'service
debt'**

Evolving service roles

The traditional roles of support teams today will evolve significantly "tomorrow"

Support roles TODAY

Tier 0 Agent

Tier 1 Agent

Tier 2 Agent

Tier 3 Agent

Agent Team Leader

Knowledge Manager

Workforce Manager

Quality Manager

Operations Manager / Admin

Head of Support

Support roles "TOMORROW"

Evolving service roles

Allow humans to focus on the purpose of their roles, using AI to automate the tasks

Support roles TODAY	TASK	PURPOSE
Tier 0 Agent	<i>Search, collate, respond, triage, follow SOP</i>	<i>Solve customer problems, de-escalate emotions, and advocate for customer needs</i>
Tier 1 Agent		
Tier 2 Agent	<i>Research, diagnose, empathise, solve</i>	
Tier 3 Agent		
Agent Team Leader	<i>Monitor queues and assign agents</i>	<i>Onboard, organise & coach AI & human agents</i>
Knowledge Manager		
Workforce Manager	<i>Generate documentation, monitor KPIs, audit sample tickets, configure workflows</i>	<i>Drive efficiency & automation. Manage CSAT/NPS, customer journeys, and outcomes</i>
Quality Manager		
Ops Manager / Admin		
Head of Support	<i>Reporting, budgeting, resource forecasting</i>	<i>Align support strategy with biz goals, drive loyalty, be the "Voice of the Customer"</i>

Evolving service roles

Across every role, support should expand to add much more value in every customer interaction

Support roles TODAY

Tier 0 Agent

Tier 1 Agent

Tier 2 Agent

Tier 3 Agent

Agent Team Leader

Knowledge Manager

Workforce Manager

Quality Manager

Operations Manager / Admin

Head of Support

Support roles "TOMORROW"

Automated by AI

VIP Agents

AI + VIP Agent Supervisor

AI Service Architects

Head of CX

Evolving service roles

**AI service
architects
need to train
AI like humans
of the past**

*... just like OpenAI
did with Codex*

OpenAI's Newest GPT Model Helped to Build Itself

GPT-5.3-Codex is the first time the ChatGPT maker has found that its own models can be instrumental in its own development.

Humans steer. Agents execute.

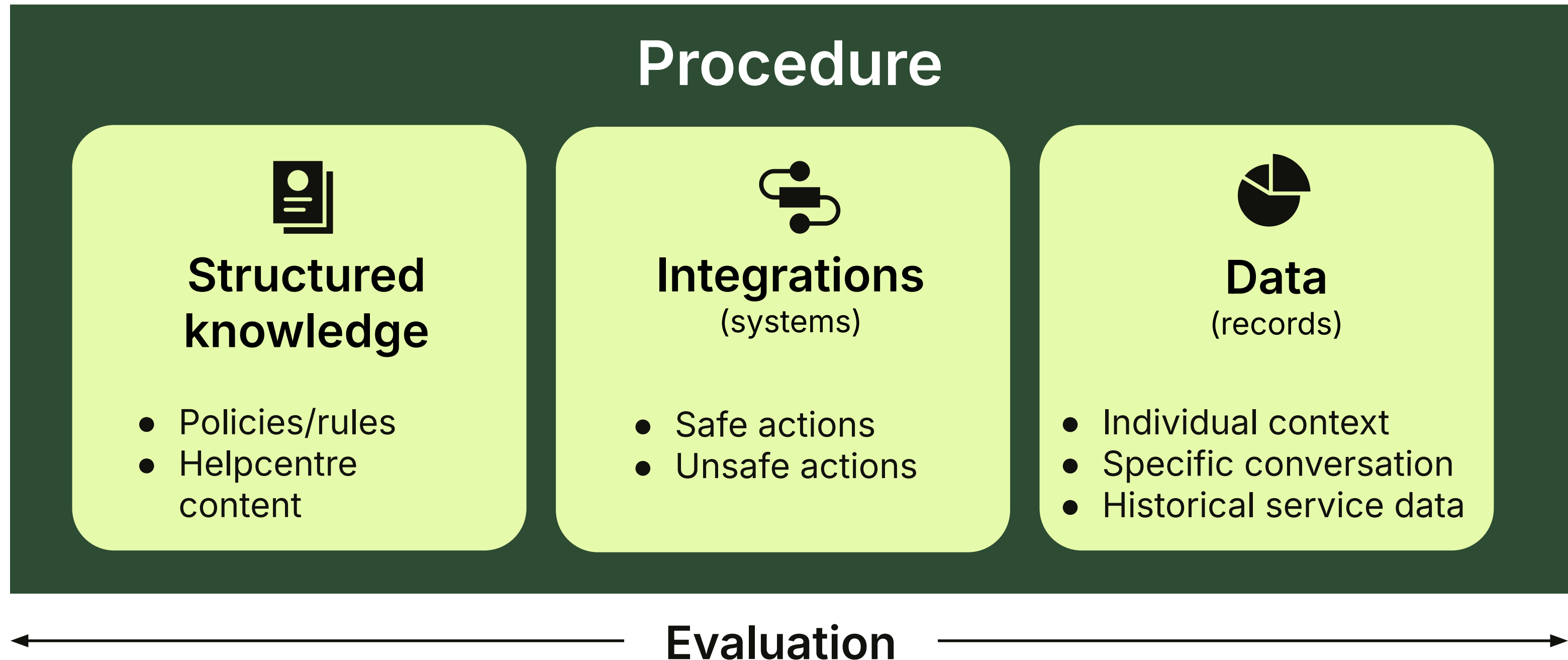
Redefining the role of the engineer

Our most difficult challenges now center on designing environments, **feedback loops**, and **control systems** that help agents accomplish our goal: build and maintain complex, reliable software at scale.

**The limits of agent knowledge:
What Codex can't see doesn't exist**

We made repository knowledge the system of record

AI service architects will set AI up for success with good procedures



How AI CX leaders are adapting

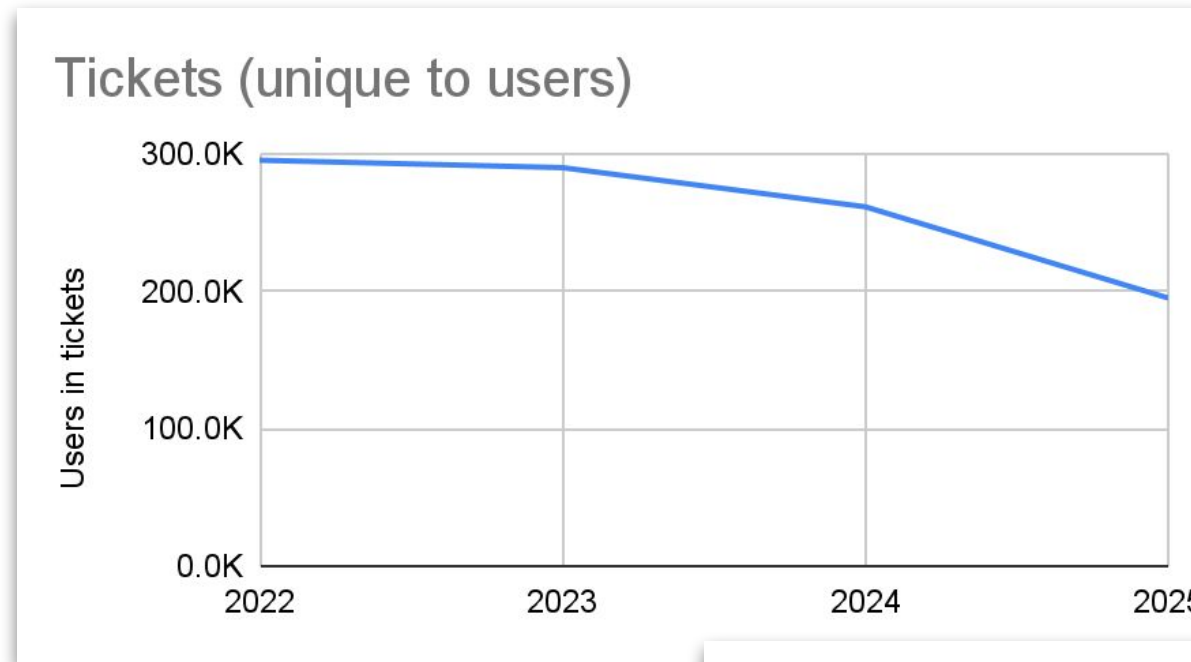
Evolving
service roles

Improving
knowledge
strategy

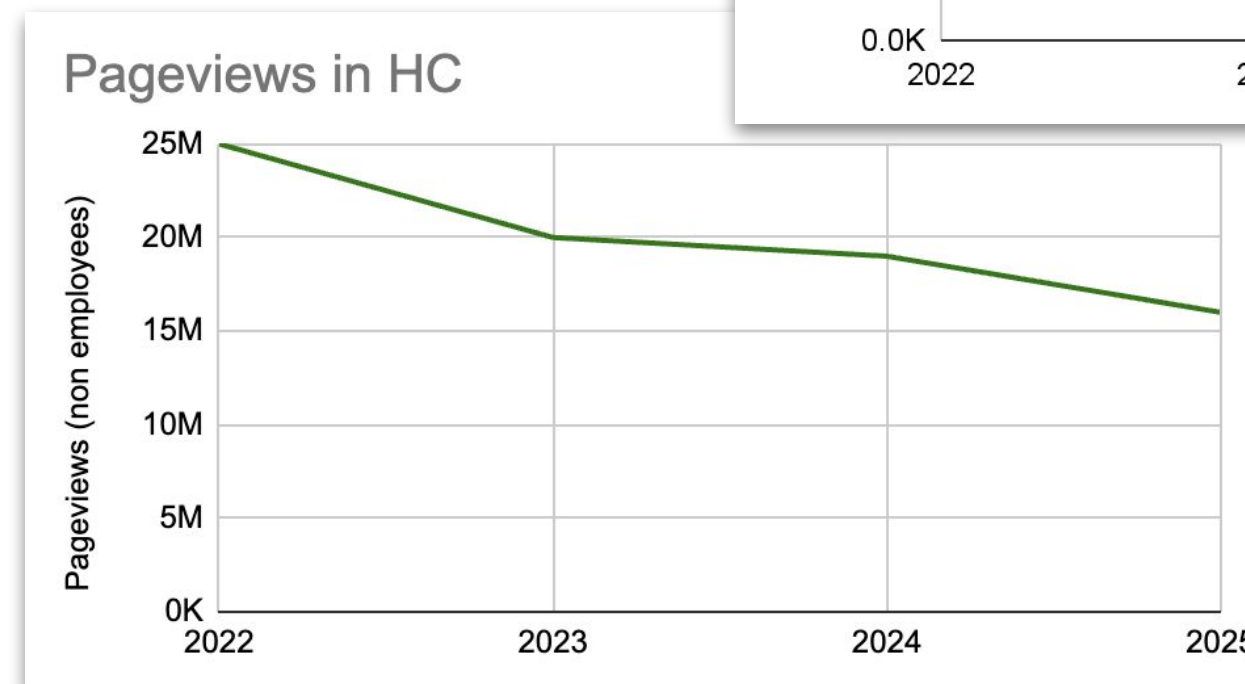
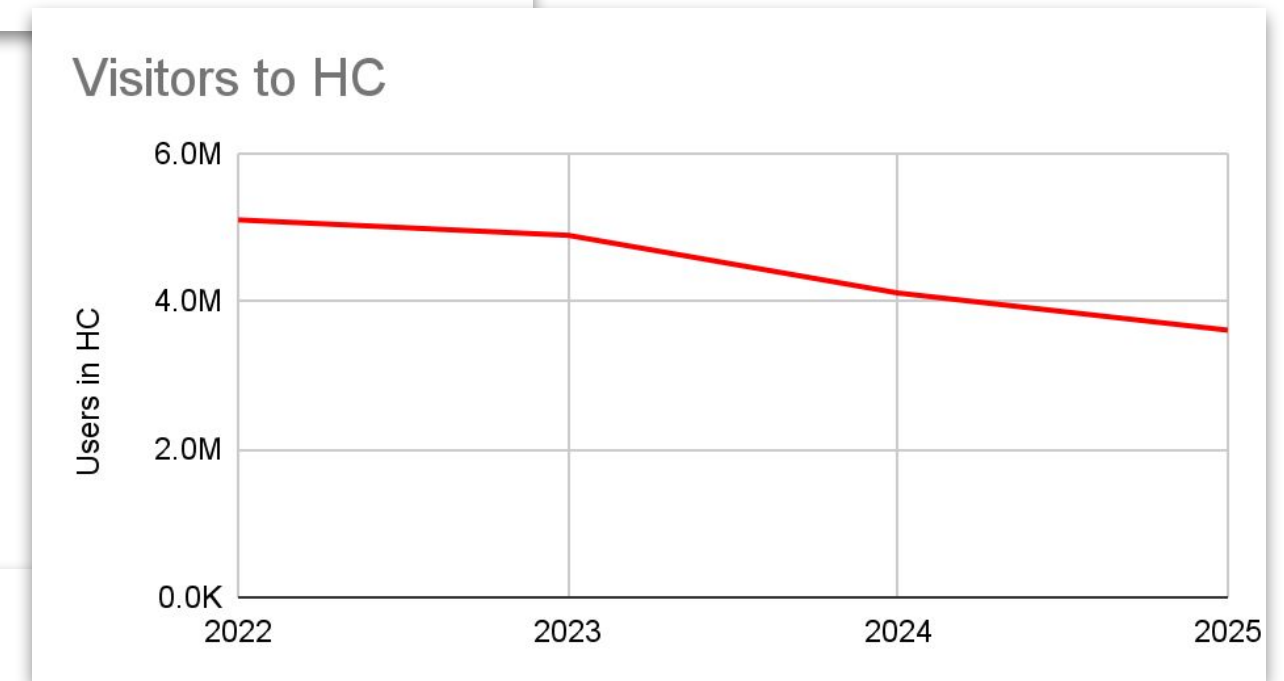
Paying off
'service
debt'

Improving knowledge strategy

Service teams must focus on creating the right source of truth, as support becomes more common on LLMs



We can already see this trend as tickets and visitors & pageviews on Zendesk's own helpcentre are all declining



How AI CX leaders are adapting

Evolving
service roles

Improving
knowledge
strategy

Paying off
'service
debt'

Paying 'service debt'

No business
ever said "we
have enough
service"

We all carry a
"service debt"

80% of organisations reported focusing AI initiatives primarily on efficiency (cost-cutting), but the companies that saw the greatest profit prioritised growth and innovation more

3.6x

more likely to see significant **profit when focusing AI initiatives on growth and innovation**, not just efficiency

QuantumBlack
AI by McKinsey

The state of AI in 2025

Agents, innovation, and transformation

November 2025

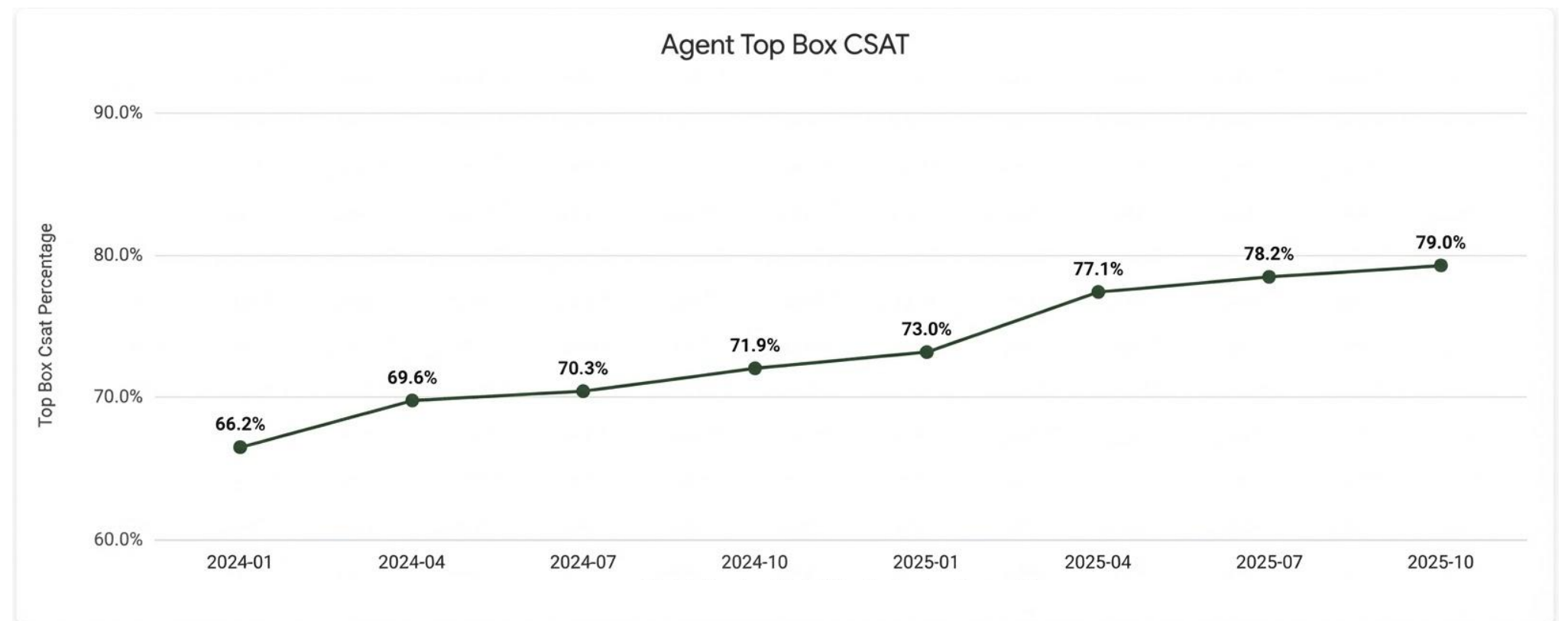
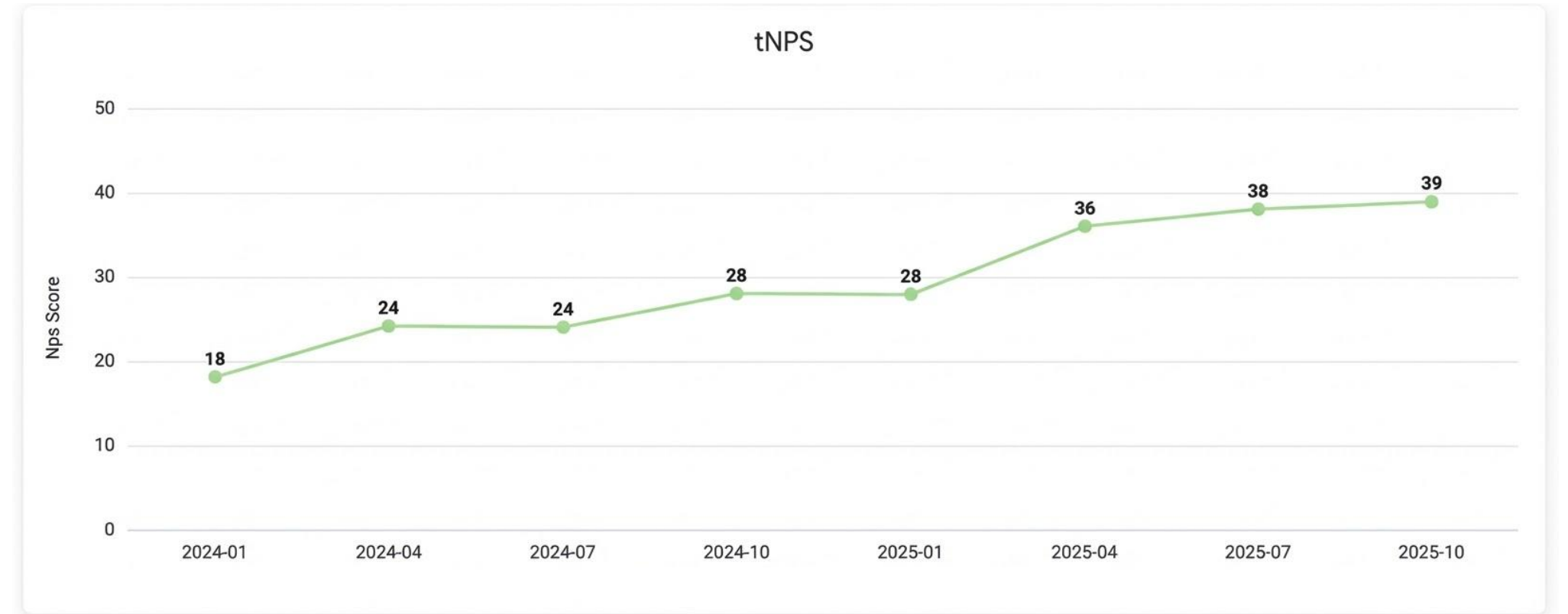


Paying 'service debt'

Don't just automate service as it has been

Use AI to finally make service exceptional

Zendesk tNPS and top box CSAT progress with AI





zendesk relate



Save your seat:
May 28 | 11:30am