

REPORT

# The AI Dealbreakers Making Consumers Ghost

---

Cyara partnered with leading global research firm Dynata to uncover what really makes customers “ghost” brands, and what it takes to earn their trust in AI-powered customer experiences.

# Survey Purpose & Methodology



## Purpose

AI has become a core driver of customer experience innovation, but trust is yet to catch up. Cyara wanted to understand how consumers truly feel about AI in customer service: when it helps, when it hurts, and what pushes them to walk away.



## Methodology

This online survey was commissioned by Cyara and fielded by Dynata, a leading global research firm, in September 2025. The survey included 1,000 U.S. adults, balanced across gender, age, and region to closely mirror national representation.



## Objective

To identify key “dealbreakers” in AI-powered CX, measure AI trust levels by generation and industry, and uncover where brands must focus on assurance and innovation to rebuild confidence.



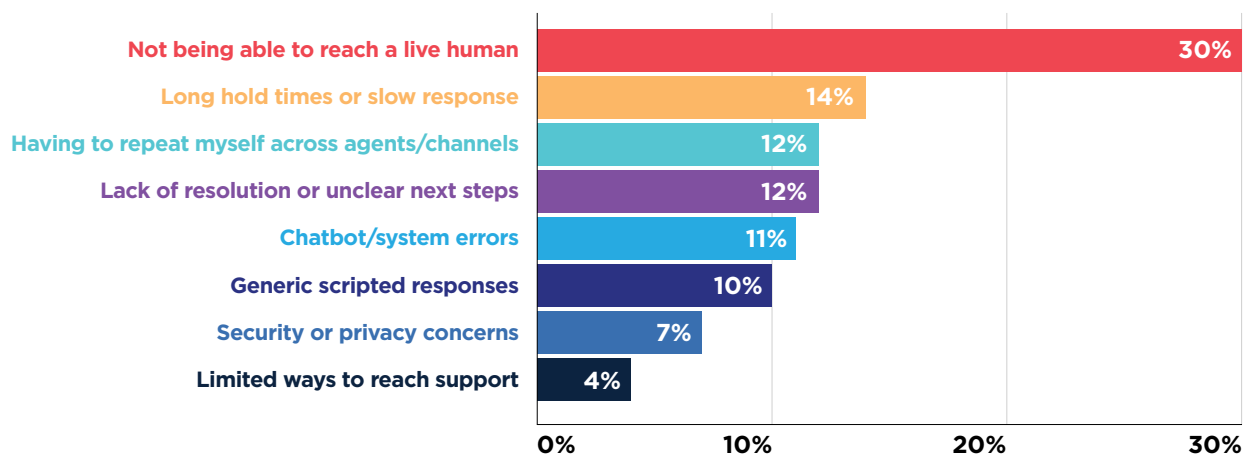
## Key Takeaway

Not everyone is ready to embrace AI. Customers are curious about it, but also cautious with their trust. Brands that continuously validate AI performance and assure seamless end-to-end customer journeys will be the ones to accelerate adoption, rather than resistance.

# The Top CX Dealbreakers

## Question

When interacting with a brand, what is your #1 customer experience “dealbreaker” that makes you stop using their service/product?



## Generational insight

Older consumers have a much lower tolerance for automation blocking access to real people: 37% of Baby Boomers say it's a top CX dealbreaker, compared to only 22% of Gen Z. Brands serving multigenerational audiences must design AI journeys that adapt to different comfort levels with automation.

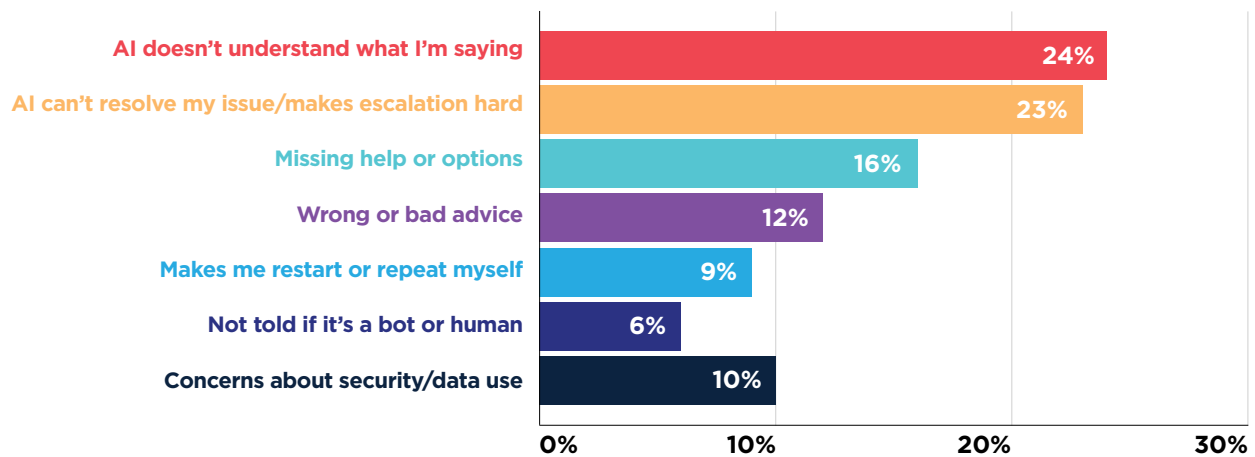
## Takeaway

**Customers expect access to real people when it matters most.** AI and automation can enhance service, but only if customers can easily reach a human when they choose. Testing and monitoring ensure these handoffs are seamless, so automation never becomes a barrier to resolution.

# AI Dealbreakers

## Question

When interacting with an AI bot, what's your #1 "dealbreaker" that makes you stop using a brand?



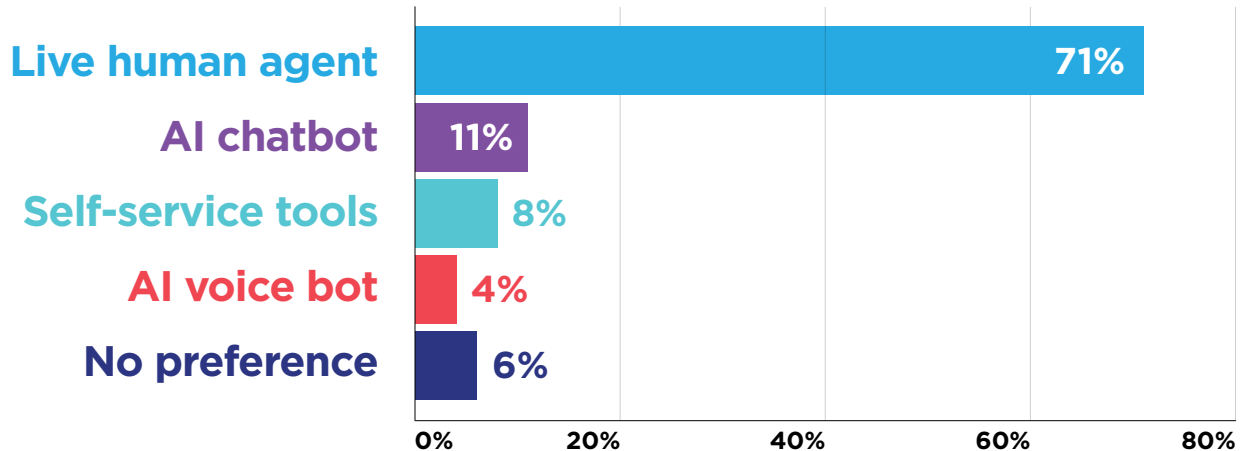
## Takeaway

**When AI misunderstands, customers disconnect.** A single failed interaction, whether it's confusion, repetition, or a dead end, can instantly erode trust. Continuous testing and real-time monitoring help brands catch these moments before customers do, keeping every AI conversation smooth, accurate, and frustration-free.

# Humans Still Set the Standard

## Question

How do you prefer to start a customer service interaction?



## Generational insight

89% of the Silent Generation and 86% of Baby Boomers prefer a live human, compared to 58% of Gen Z. Winning loyalty requires balancing both expectations.

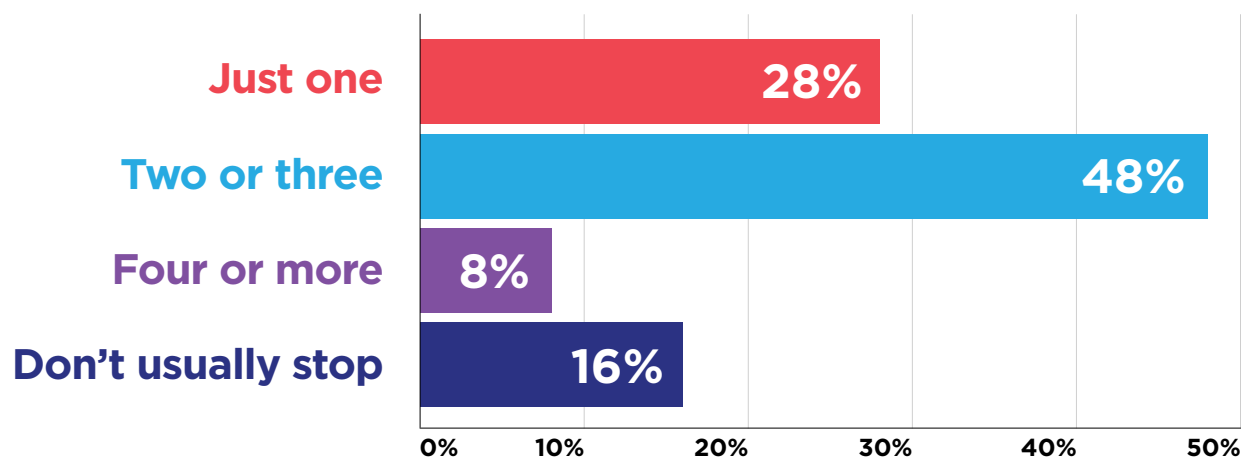
## Takeaway

**Even in the age of AI, human connection defines brand trust.** Delays, dead ends, and poor design erode trust before a human ever enters the conversation. Continuous testing across all channels ensures every automated or human-assisted journey works exactly as customers expect.

# The Patience Gap

## Question

How many bad experiences would it take for you to stop using a brand?



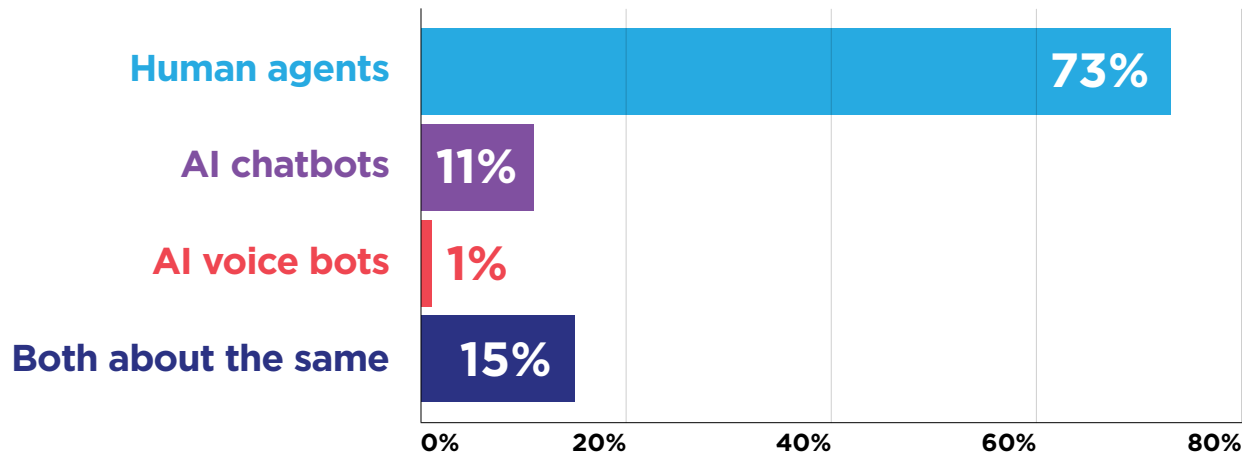
## Takeaway

**Customer loyalty is fragile.** One bad experience might earn a second chance, but rarely a third. Every broken link, misrouted call, or failed AI handoff creates frustration that lingers long after the issue is resolved. Continuous testing and monitoring give brands the power to prevent those moments, preserving trust, reducing churn, and strengthening long-term relationships.

# Who Resolves Issues Faster?

## Question

Who do you believe resolves customer issues faster?



## Generational insight

81% of Baby Boomers believe humans resolve issues faster, compared to 60% of Gen Z.

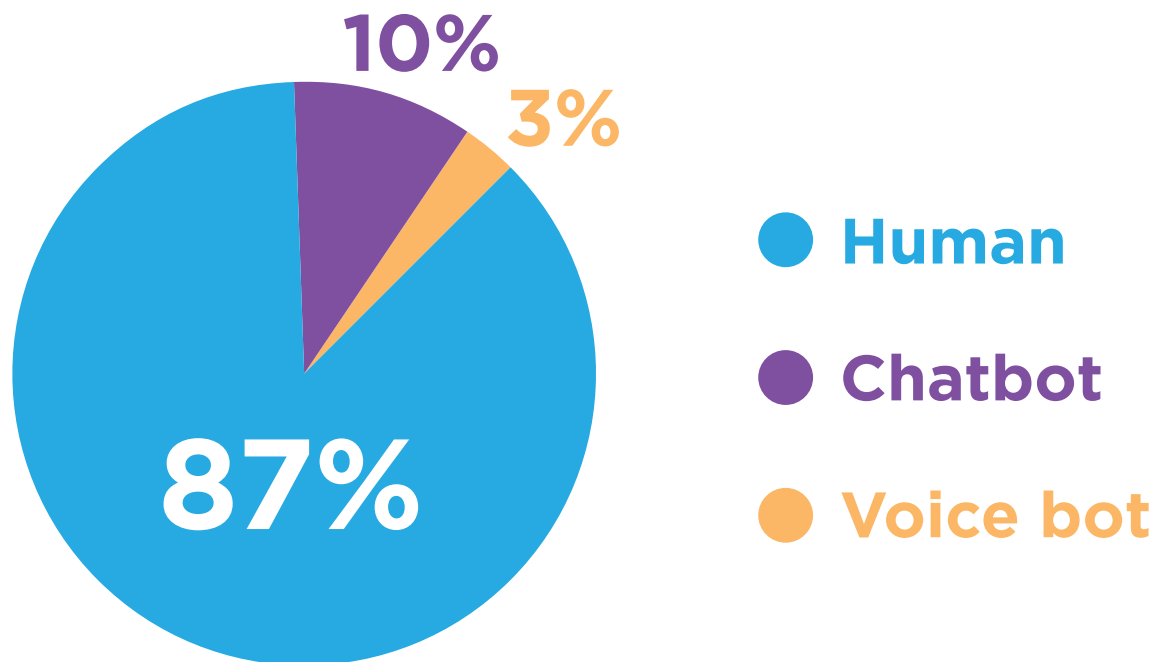
## Takeaway

**AI in CX isn't just a performance issue. It's a perception issue.** Consumers say humans resolve issues faster, but that's not always true. To change that belief, companies must demonstrate reliability through tested, transparent, and well-governed AI systems that perform flawlessly every time.

# Expectation Divide

## Question

Are your expectations higher for issue resolution when dealing with a human or an AI bot?



## Takeaway

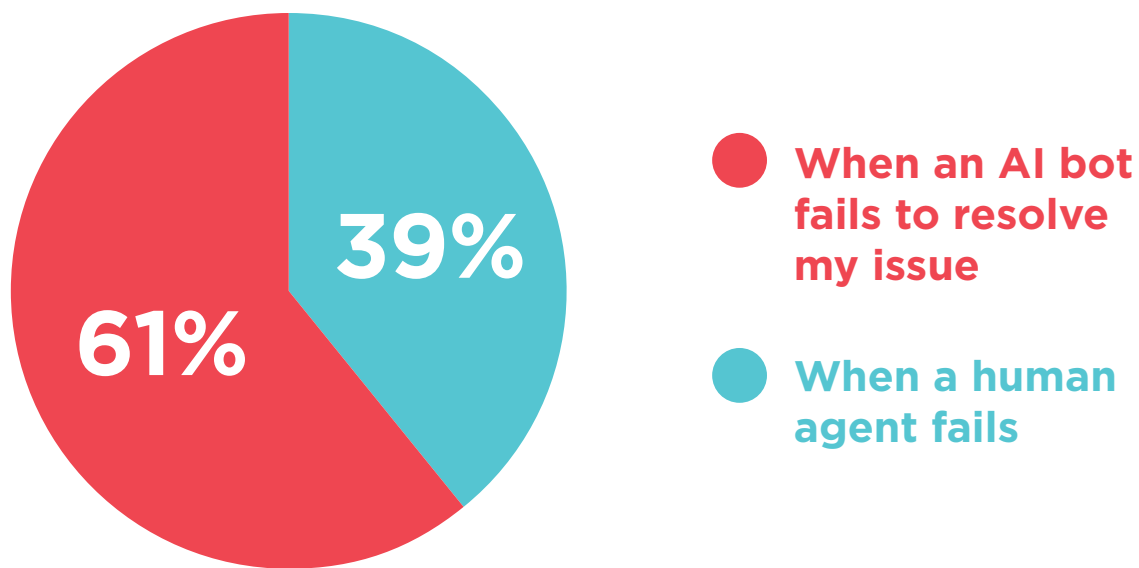
**AI must match human-level quality before it can replace it.** Every interaction sets a new expectation. Through continuous testing, validation, and real-time monitoring, brands can ensure their AI performs to human-level standards of accuracy and responsiveness, eventually setting a new bar for consistency, speed, and quality.



# The Frustration Factor

## Question

Which situation causes more frustration?



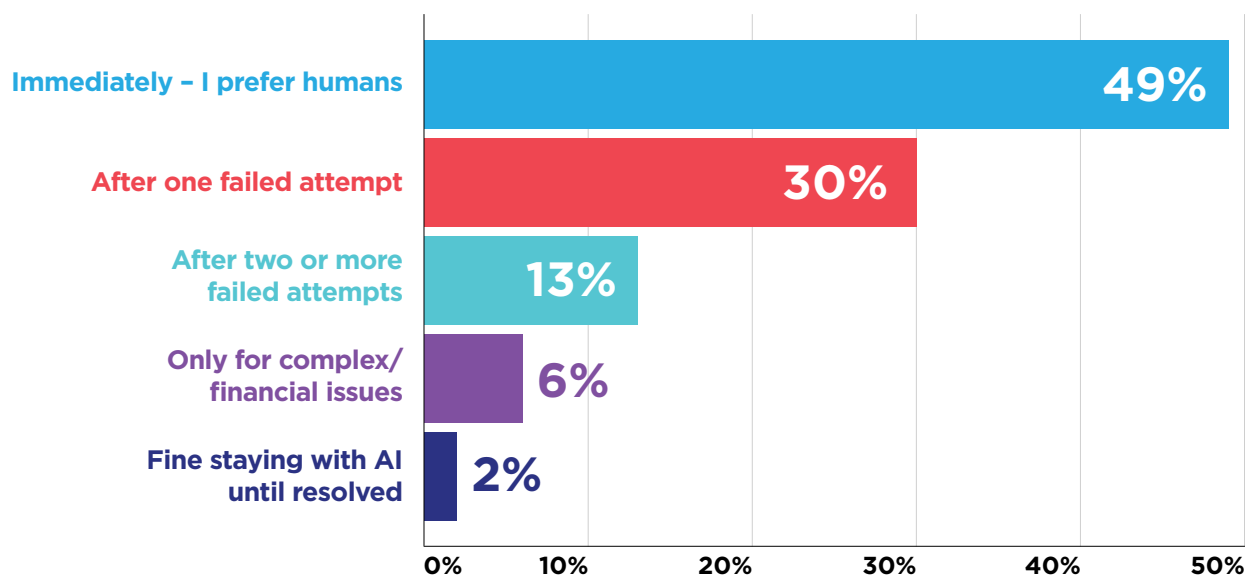
## Takeaway

**AI gets less grace. Customers forgive people, not programs.** When bots fail to understand or resolve an issue, it feels impersonal and frustrating. Continuous testing and assurance help prevent those failures, ensuring AI is always learning, improving, and earning back customer confidence with every interaction.

# The Escalation Trigger

## Question

At what point would you want to escalate from a bot to a human?



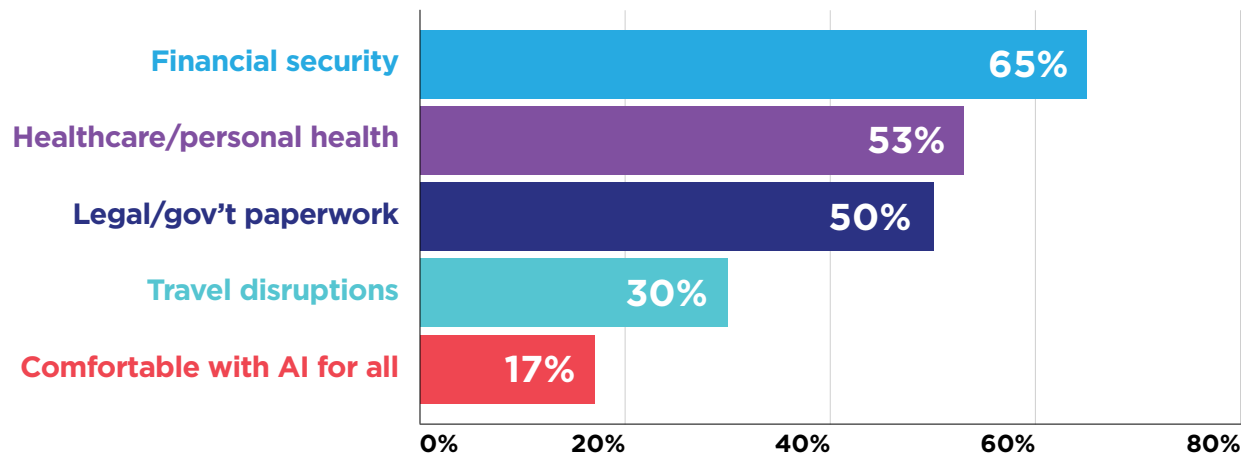
## Takeaway

**For most customers, AI gets one shot (or less) before they expect a seamless handoff to a human.** Without real-time testing and monitoring, those transitions can break trust and disrupt journeys. Assurance ensures escalation paths work every time, keeping service consistent, reliable, and frustration-free.

# The Trust Gap

## Question

Which type of issue would you never trust an AI bot to handle?  
(select all that apply)



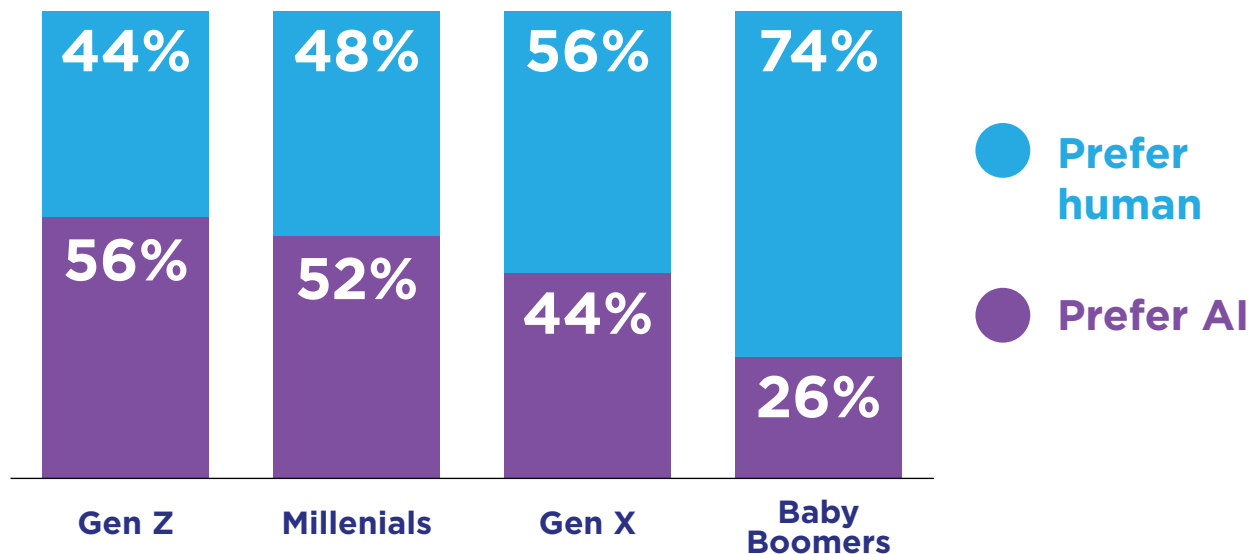
## Takeaway

**AI trust is a journey, not a given.** Travel leads the pack in consumer readiness for AI, while finance, healthcare, and government services face steep trust barriers. Strong governance, transparency, and human oversight will be essential to close this trust gap.

# Generational Divide

## Question

If AI could seamlessly resolve your issue, would you prefer it over speaking to a human?

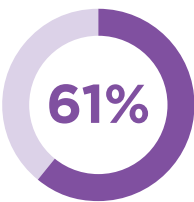


## Takeaway

**Customers value empathy, clarity, and accountability** – qualities they instinctively associate with human interaction. Even the most AI-ready generations still measure trust by human standards. For AI to gain that same trust, it must prove it can listen, understand, and respond just as effectively. That requires continuous testing and assurance to ensure every AI interaction meets human-level expectations for accuracy, responsiveness, and care.

# Turning Dealbreakers into Dealmakers

## - DEALBREAKER

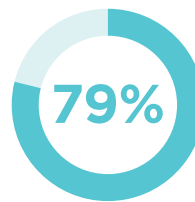


lose patience  
when AI fails

## + DEALMAKER

Test, monitor, and tune continuously  
to stay one step ahead.

## - DEALBREAKER

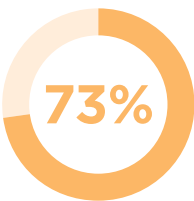


escalate after  
one failure

## + DEALMAKER

Engineer effortless handoffs  
between bots and humans.

## - DEALBREAKER

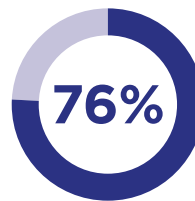


trust humans to  
resolve issues faster

## + DEALMAKER

Validate AI performance to prove  
reliability at scale.

## - DEALBREAKER



walk after two  
bad experiences

## + DEALMAKER

Assure every journey because  
loyalty depends on consistency.

## Conclusion

Customer experience is now the most important brand differentiator, and AI is changing the rules of engagement. As expectations rise and patience wanes, brands can't afford unvalidated AI experiences. Continuous testing, monitoring, and assurance ensure every interaction—human or machine—is consistent, accurate, and worthy of customer trust.



## About Cyara

Cyara is the global leader in **AI-powered CX productivity, growth, and assurance**, helping enterprises test, monitor and validate flawless customer journeys across voice, digital, and AI channels. Partnering with the world's leading brands, Cyara ensures every customer interaction performs as intended, building confidence in every conversation.



**AI-led CX**  
productivity, growth  
and assurance



**Continuous testing  
and monitoring across  
every channel - voice,  
chat, AI, and beyond**



**AI Trust** suite  
for hallucination,  
misuse, security,  
privacy detection



Real-time  
monitoring across  
voice and digital  
channels with  
**Cyara Pulse 360**