

# A vision for agentic AI for customer experience transformation

## From possibilities to practical adoption

Professor Mohamed Zaki, University of Cambridge

**The future of customer experience will be defined by agentic AI, systems that sense intent, act in real time, and embody empathy, personalisation, and trust. However, success will depend not on AI technology alone, but on how organisations orchestrate these agents across customer journeys, channels, processes, and different value streams. Those who achieve this will transform not only experiences, but the very economics of customer relationships.**

My recent research<sup>1</sup> at the Cambridge Service Alliance shows that nearly half of customer enquiries with clear buying intent remain unresolved in digital channels, putting millions in potential sales at risk. This challenge is compounded by operational constraints and workforce limitations, with human agents often overwhelmed by the sheer scale of demand. In some cases, digital enquiries across multiple channels can exceed one million conversations, with social media comments emerging as

the dominant source, underscoring its growing influence on customer engagement and sales. Faced with this pressure, many agents fall back on scripted responses, eroding both customer value and trust.

Agentic AI has the power to change this equation, turning customer service from a cost centre into a revenue engine by delivering seamless, empathetic experiences that also drive measurable commercial returns. In a pilot and implementation with Tactful AI and the Elaraby Group, a leading manufacturer of consumer electronics and home appliances with a portfolio of 14 global brands across 25 product categories, we deployed a designed system of collaborative AI agents to analyse, assist, and act across digital customer environments.

The results were striking: First Contact Resolution nearly doubled—from 53% to 92%, peaking at 97%, while First Response Time improved by 22%, falling from 36.5 minutes toward an optimal 10 minutes. Customer satisfaction rose from 22% to nearly 80%, and digital sales conversions increased by 15%. Moreover, by automating

<sup>1</sup> M. Zaki, "Data-Driven Customer Experience Transformation: Optimise Your Omnichannel Approach" (London: Kogan Page, 2025).

routine tasks such as enquiry handling, maintenance replies, and social media comment management, the AI agents saved the equivalent of three full-time employees per month, automating more than 30,000 interactions and saving at least one minute per task.

These results demonstrate how, when orchestrated effectively, agentic AI can enhance human performance by classifying enquiries, retrieving information rapidly from dispersed systems, detecting buying signals, routing interactions intelligently, and delivering personalised, empathetic responses at scale.

The next frontier is autonomous orchestration, multimodal agent ecosystems that anticipate customer needs and initiate proactive engagement across multiple modalities, including text, voice, images, and video. By integrating Voice of the Customer (VoC), Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), and profitability analytics, these systems can transform the customer experience into a strategic growth engine that seamlessly connects digital and physical experiences.



**Professor Mohamed Zaki** is a Professor at the Institute for Manufacturing, Engineering Department, University of Cambridge, and the Deputy Director of the Cambridge Service Alliance, a leading centre for digital service transformation. Recognised internationally for research leadership in AI-enabled customer experience transformation, he has published over 100 papers in top journals, authored a book on Data-Driven Customer Experience Transformation, and serves as Associate Editor of the Journal of Service Management. Recipient of the prestigious Bo Edvardsson Industry Impact in Services Award.



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