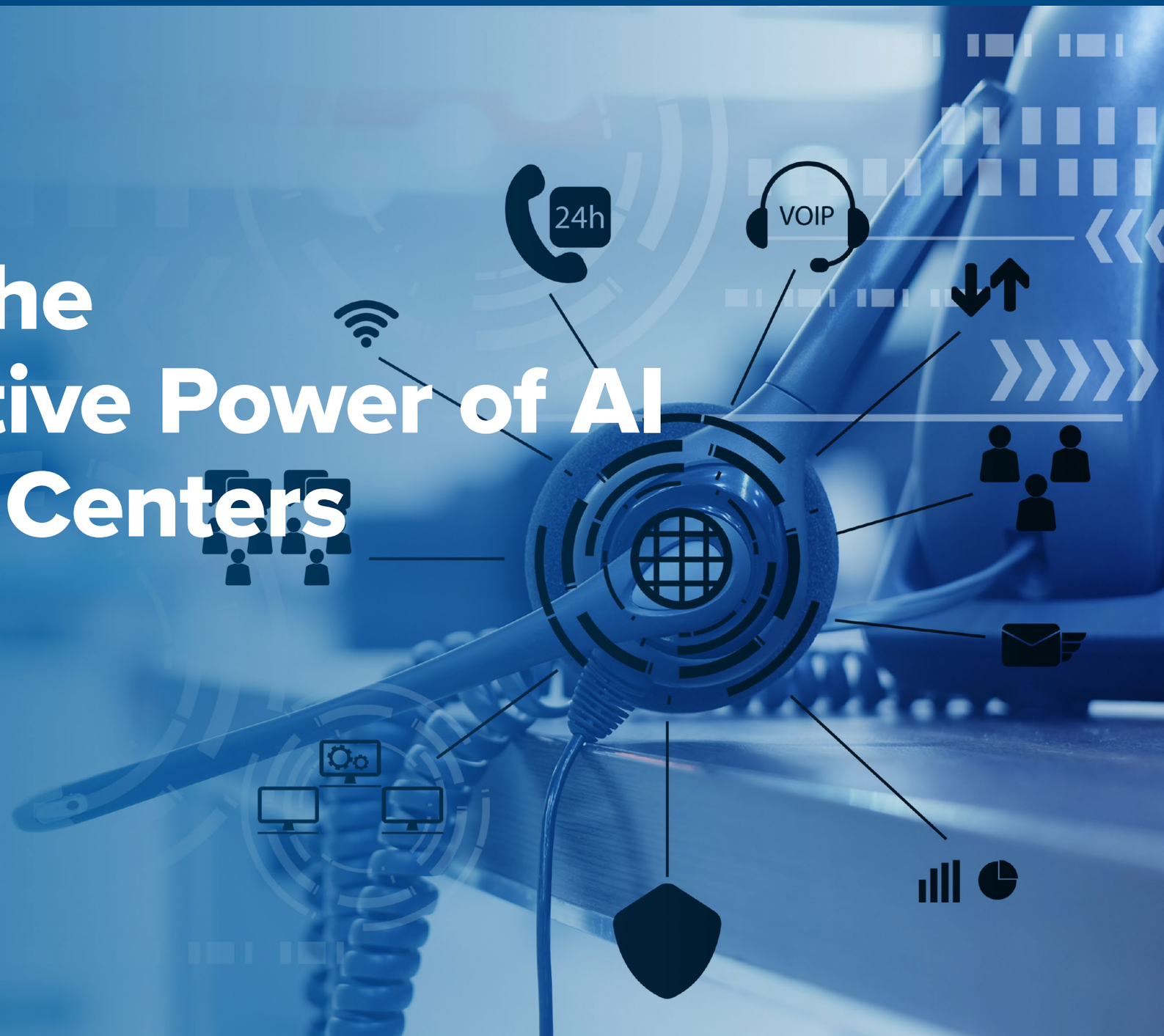
IDC | ANALYZE THE FUTURE

# Unlocking the Transformative Power of AI for Contact Centers

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# Executive Summary

While customer experience (CX) has always been important to businesses, it has moved more into the spotlight with evolving customer preferences during these uncertain times. We all know customers no longer base their loyalty on price or product alone. Instead, they stay loyal to companies based on their overall experience.

Yet, a 2020 IDC Contact Center AI study shows the industry wasn't well prepared to enable a remote contact center workforce when COVID-19 stay-at-home mandates were issued.

**While 40% of the respondents share that they experienced higher than usual call volumes than the currently trained employees could handle, only 10% of customer interactions currently occur via virtual agents.**

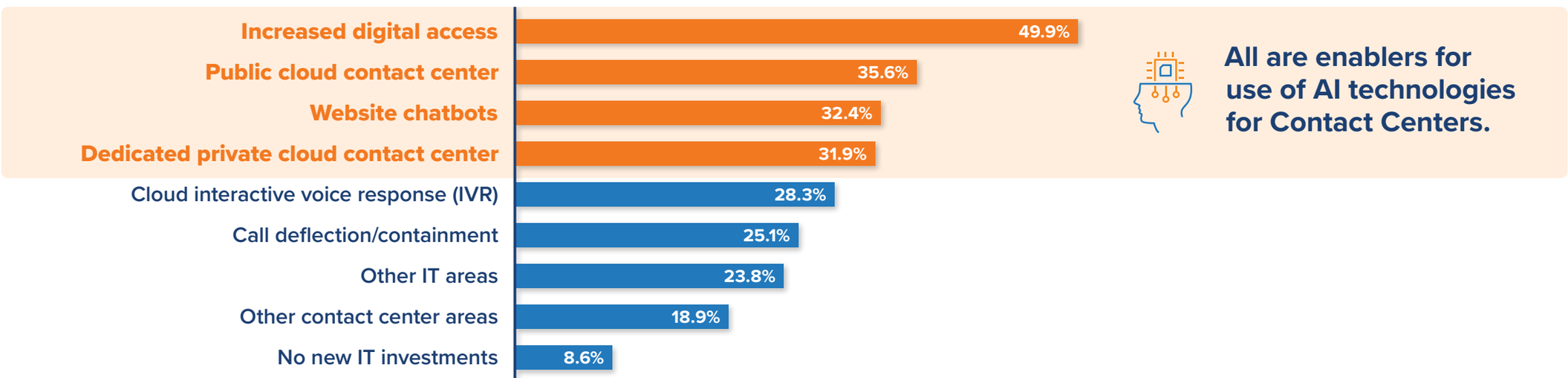
Fortunately, artificial intelligence (AI) can alleviate these challenges. AI is poised to transform contact centers and improve customer experience—without compromising operational efficiency. It can empower leading brands to make customers happier and increase customer lifetime value.

Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

# New IT Investments Driven by the COVID-19 Crisis

Businesses globally report that the crisis has driven new IT Investments to help businesses be more resilient and more agile, and support their overall goal of providing the best customer experience.

## Top New IT Investments Companies Have Made Due to the COVID-19 Crisis




Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

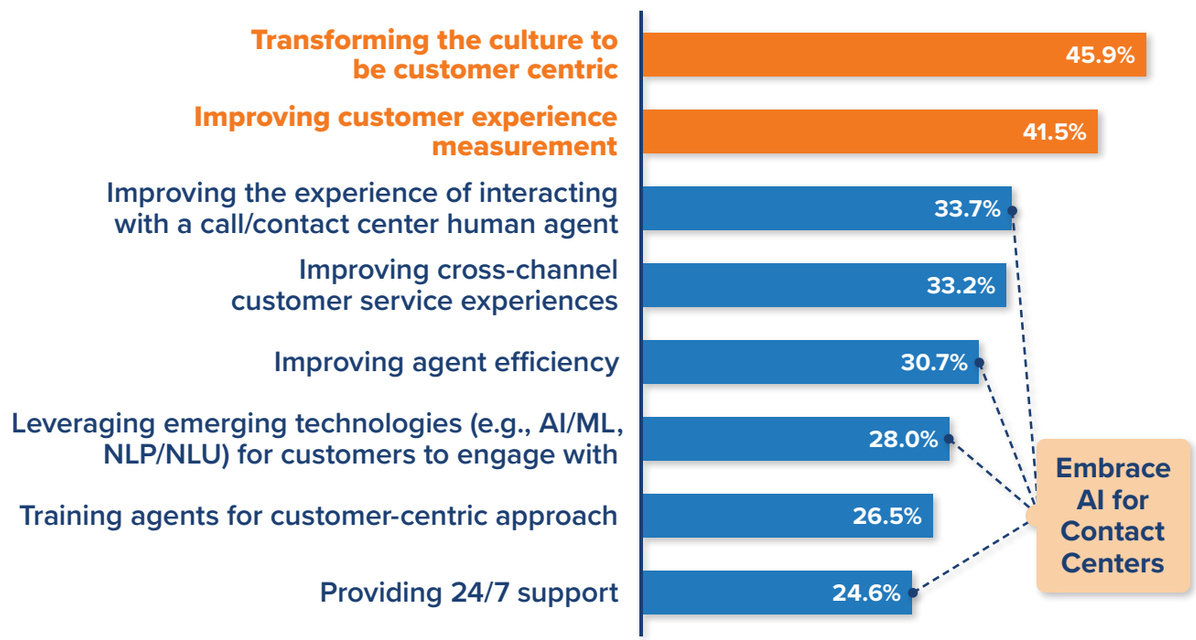
# Organizations Can Transform the Customer Service Experience

**Transforming culture**
to democratize customer insights and make every employee a change agent.

**Embracing AI**
for contact centers.

**Improving CX measurement**
aligning with contact center AI metrics.

## Top 3 Actions Organizations Are Taking to Improve CX

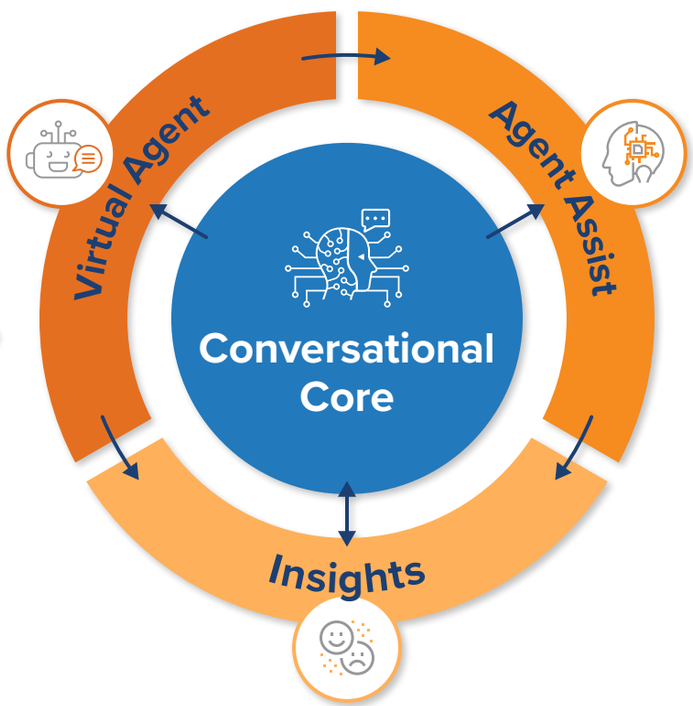



Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

# Introducing Contact Center AI

## Google Contact Center AI combines Google Cloud's natural language understanding and speech capabilities with third-party popular contact center software, improving customer experience as well as operational efficiency.

**The heart of Contact Center AI is its conversational core, whose human-like interactions are redefining the possibilities of AI-powered conversation.**



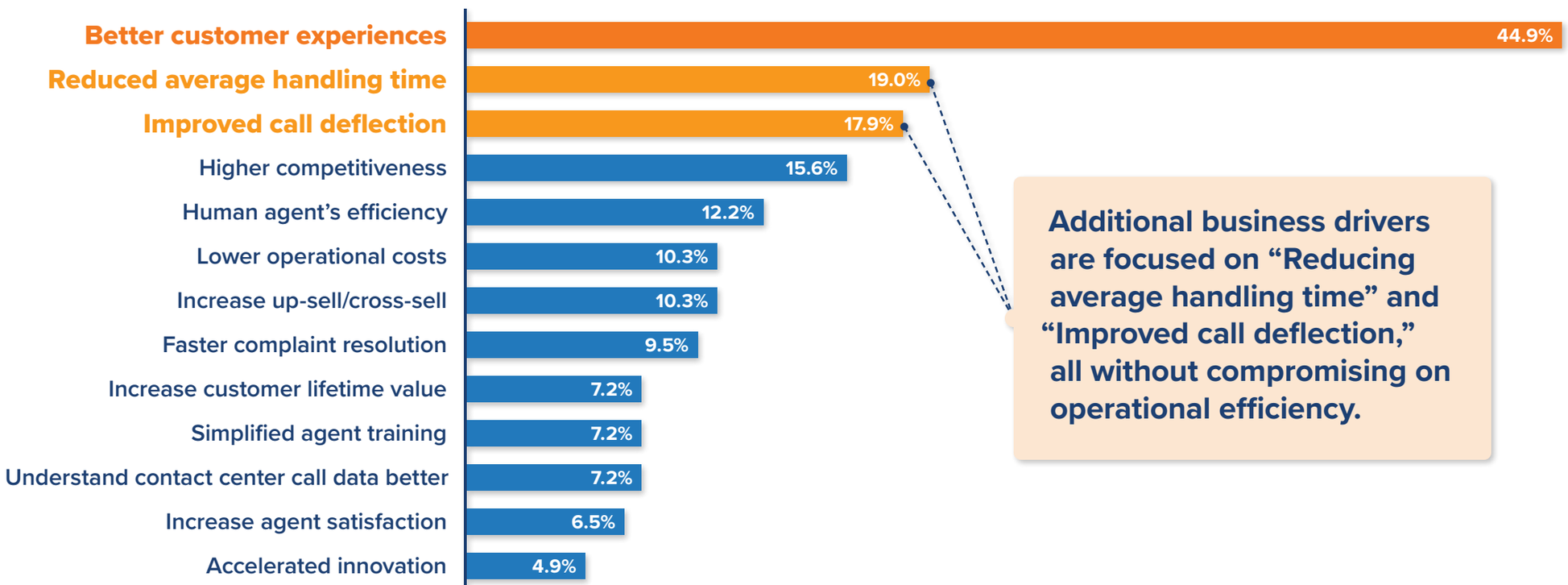

**Virtual Agent** is a platform for creating voicebots and chatbots to automate customer interactions with voice or text, and hand off the conversation to a live agent when the bot is unable to help a customer.

**Agent Assist** is a platform that integrates into the agent desktop that uses AI to augment agent interactions with customers. It integrates with real-time interactions and provides turn-by-turn guidance and automated surfacing of relevant knowledge bases to the human agent.

**Insights** is a module that uses natural language processing to identify call drivers and sentiment. It can help contact center managers learn about customer interactions to improve call outcomes.

# Primary Business Drivers for Embracing AI for Contact Centers

## The #1 business driver for embracing AI for contact centers is providing "Better Customer Experiences."




**Additional business drivers are focused on "Reducing average handling time" and "Improved call deflection," all without compromising on operational efficiency.**

Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

# Organizations Can Realize Significant Business Outcomes by Using Contact Center AI.

**Increase customer satisfaction**

**Empower human agents**

**Augment business insights**

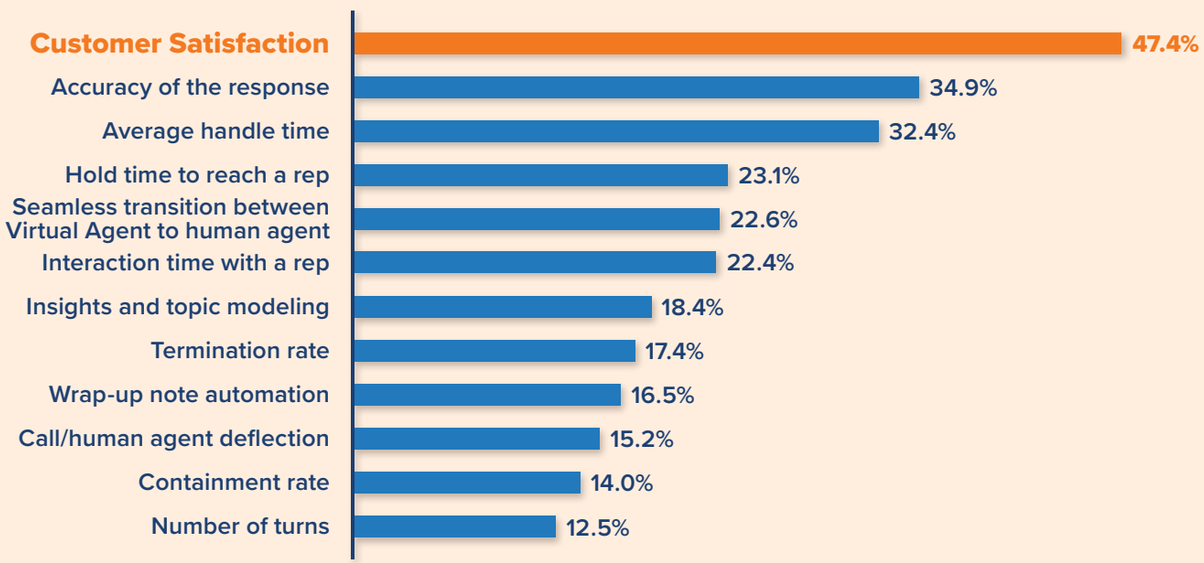
# Increase Customer Satisfaction

Improvement in customer satisfaction is the #1 success metric used by businesses for usage of AI-powered Virtual Agents, followed by average handling time, and accuracy of the response.

**Businesses can use Virtual Agents (VA) to:**

- Provide a seamless conversational experience for customers to get issues resolved easily 24/7.
- Handle more common issues which helps with containment and call deflection.
- Leverage Virtual Agents as a part of the interactive voice response (IVR) so that customers can speak naturally into the phone rather than using the keypad, and the Virtual Agent can either help the customer or transfer them to a human agent.

## Important Metrics for AI-powered Virtual Agents that Provide Call Automation




Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

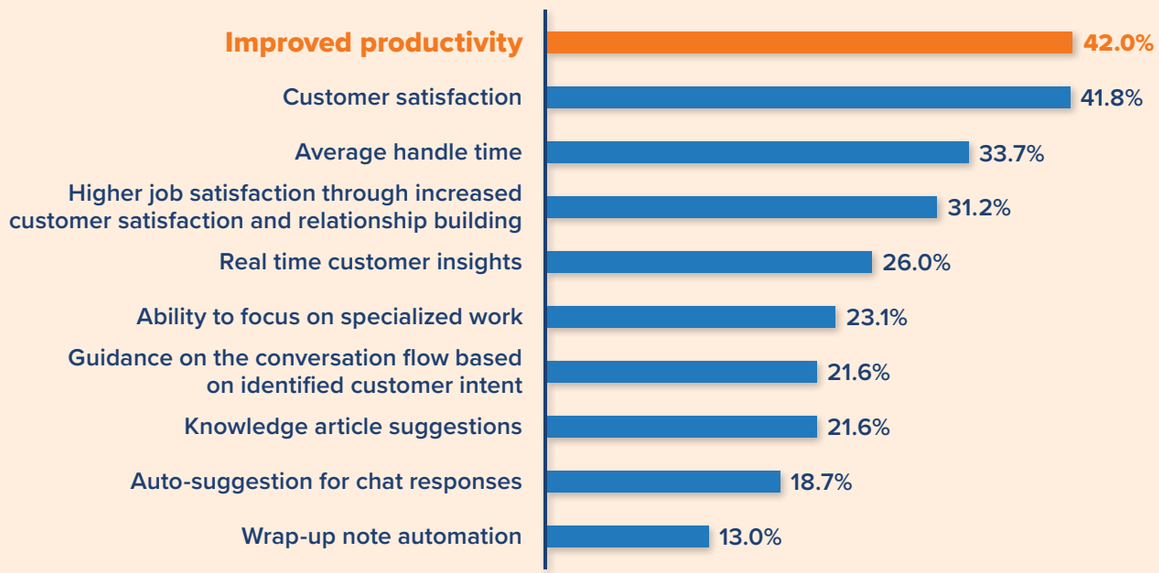
# Empower Human Agents

Improved productivity is the #1 success metric used by businesses for usage of AI-powered Agent Assist, followed by customer satisfaction, average handle time, and higher job satisfaction through increased customer satisfaction and relationship building.

**Businesses can use Agent Assist to:**

- Helps contact center agents seamlessly by surfacing answers, and providing knowledge articles, and turn-by-turn agent guidance.
- Reduce call time.
- Avoid putting the customer on hold for the agent to research.
- Improve the customer experience.

## Important Metrics for Empowering Human Agents Via AI-powered Agent Assist




Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

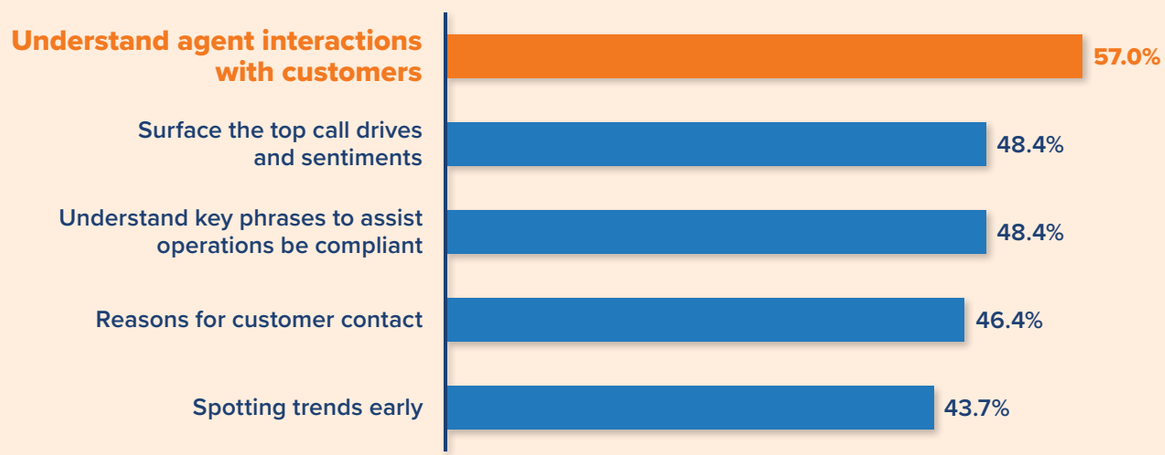
# Augment Business Insights

## Understanding agent interactions is the #1 success metric used by businesses for usage of Insights module—a module that can enable businesses to gain in-depth customer knowledge.

**Businesses can use natural language processing (NLP) to:**

- Identify why customers are contacting the business.
- Surface the top call drivers and sentiments to prioritize strategy and product/service improvements.
- Assist with compliance by identifying key phrases to allow operations and QA to stay on top of the most important obligations.
- Surface sentiment and language data to understand how agents interact with customers and drive faster complaint resolution.

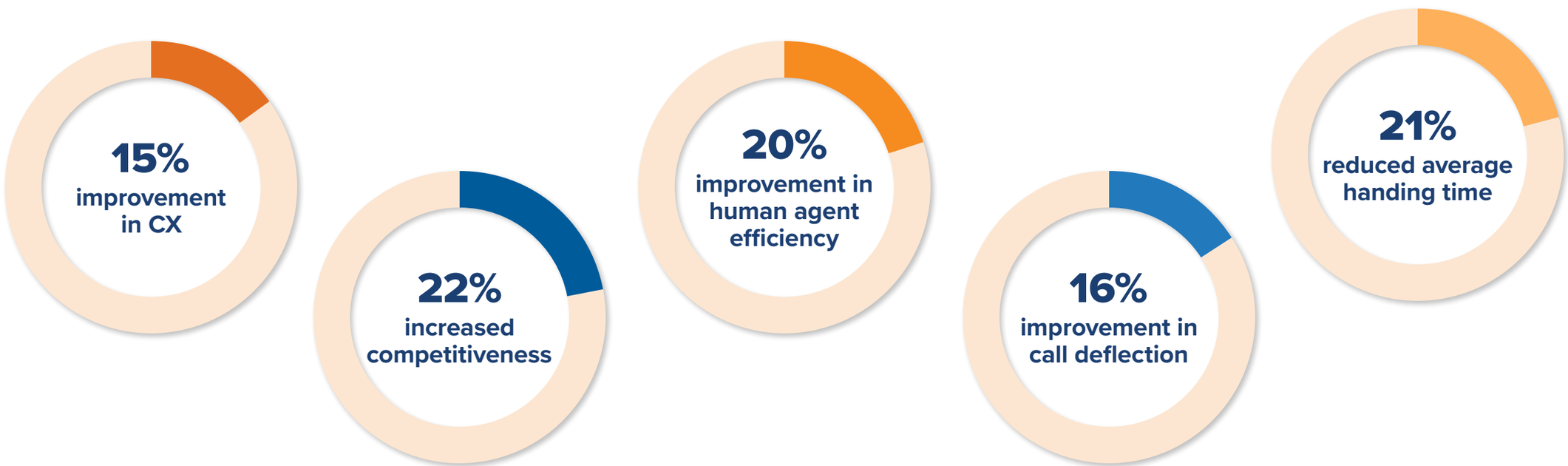
### Important Metrics for Augmenting Business Insights Through Contact Center AI




Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

# Early Adopters Success Metrics with Contact Center AI

Adopters of Contact Center AI report a 15–22% improvement in customer experience, improvement in call deflection, reduced average handling time, increased competitiveness, and human agent efficiency.




Source: Google Contact Center AI Survey, IDC, May, 2020 | n = 407

# Cisco and Google Cloud Advantage for Contact Centers

Cisco is known for its decades of focus on feature-rich, secure, omni-channel contact center solutions, and has a robust installed base with 3.6 million agents across 30,000+ enterprises using Cisco Contact Center solutions in flexible cloud, on-premises, and hybrid deployments. By integrating Google Cloud Contact Center AI capabilities across the contact center portfolio, customers can leverage functionality such as Virtual Agent Conversational IVR, Virtual Agent chatbots, and Agent Answers. "Benefits include reduced average handle time, increased call deflection rates, increased agent efficiency and increased first-contact resolution.

Cisco's Agent Answers, a cloud-based AI agent assistant solution powered by Google Cloud's Contact Center AI, empowers agents in the background with the needed context and information to deliver personalized and proactive care while they're interacting with a customer. Instead of the agents needing to manually search for information during interactions, Agent Answers proactively presents intelligent suggestions, documents, and key forms of enterprise knowledge to the agent desktop in real time. Agents feel empowered because they're more informed, and it minimizes the need for triple-tasking, which can be distracting while assisting customers. This speeds service, improves agent knowledge and ramp up, and drives differentiated customer experiences that lead to customer loyalty and improved customer lifetime value.

**Cisco and Google Cloud Contact Center AI**

Cisco abides by the most stringent compliance standards (e.g., HIPAA, PCI, SOC2, GDPR), supports tenant specific encryption, and provides enterprise-grade availability, reliability, and security. Google Cloud adheres to 99.99% availability as a service-level objective, which eliminates unplanned downtimes. Google Cloud and Cisco both have global enterprise customers, and mutual channel partners (e.g., Accenture, Deloitte) that can sell solutions and provide services. The combination of Google Cloud AI and the power of Cisco's Contact Center solutions is designed to deliver an end-to-end solution for contact centers, supporting smarter and faster models, while improving the customer experience and operational efficiency.

Cisco is integrating these AI-based capabilities across its entire contact center portfolio — on both its cloud and on-premises contact center platforms, so that all customers can take advantage of advanced AI capabilities available on the cloud. Cisco extends the contact center to remote locations such as agent home offices to increase capacity of the contact center and improve agent productivity and job satisfaction. Implementing chat and voice bots to handle incoming customer inquiries gives customers intuitive 24/7 access to the business, and ensures a seamless transition to remote agents when live agent assistance is needed.

# About the Analysts

**Ritu Jyoti**
**Program Vice President, Artificial Intelligence Research, Global AI Research Lead, IDC**

Ritu Jyoti is responsible for leading the development of IDC's thought leadership for AI Research and management of the Worldwide AI Software research team. Her research focuses on the state of enterprise AI efforts and global market trends for the rapidly evolving AI and Machine Learning (ML) innovations and ecosystem. Ms. Jyoti also leads insightful research that addresses the needs of the AI technology vendors and provide actionable guidance to them on how to crisply articulate their value proposition, differentiate and thrive in the digital era.

More about Ritu Jyoti

**Mary Wardley**
**Program Vice President, Loyalty and Customer Care, IDC**

Mary Wardley Joined IDC in 1988 and currently manages IDC's CRM and Enterprise Applications programs. As vice president of the CRM Applications Software program her primary responsibility is delivering leading qualitative and quantitative market sizing and analysis of the CRM software segments. This research in connection with IDC's Software Research group provides the most comprehensive look at the evolving CRM and enterprise applications market available.

More about Mary Wardley

# Message from the Sponsor

Cisco delivers a complete contact center portfolio powered by best-of-breed artificial intelligence technologies from Google Cloud Contact Center AI and Cisco AI, combined with world-class cloud calling, meetings, team collaboration, experience management solutions, and the most advanced audio/video devices and headsets.

Cisco has more than 30,000 loyal contact center customers and more than 3 million agents installed globally. Cisco Contact Center AI solutions are delivered by an innovative team of AI experts with over 100 years combined experience in AI research and development.

Learn more

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