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BUZZ!

What's Buzzing in CX World This Month?

As we say goodbye to 2025 and look forward to 2026 it's traditionally the time for the internet gurus to provide the world with their predictions for the year ahead. Past experience shows their output to be like the curate's egg (good in parts) but this year it is AI that is grabbing the headlines, body copy and footnotes.

Can other factors that are also important be overlooked or is this relatively new kid on the block set to overwhelm all previous wisdom to the extent that some brands risk a decline of their value in the eyes of their customers?

That thought is echoed by Geoff Spick in an article in Customer Service Magazine

2026 Predictions: The Year AI Turns Nasty and Makes Us Lazy?

This article take a look across multiple aspects and impacts of AI on CX in a cross section of industry sectors drawing its input from many sources with this from Katie Costanzo President of Customer Experience at CSG

Marketing and AI Could be 2026's Match Made In Heaven

Marketing will be a huge and fertile opportunity for AI, as long as it doesn't fail the humanity or empathy test. 2026 will be the "Know Me" year as we see the true ROI of hyper-personalization

She says, "In many ways, what customers want is simple. They want an easy experience that is consistent from end to end. But for brands to make experiences truly easy, they need to understand the customer like never before. In 2026, the most successful brands will leave retroactive measurement like CSAT behind and invest in real-time, even predictive, analytics. They will battle data silos to gain a unified view of the customer, then use tightly scoped agents and automations to craft a fluid, adaptive customer experience that feels truly personal."

[2026 Predictions: The Year AI Turns Nasty and Makes Us Lazy? - Customer Experience Magazine](#)

The mixed viewpoints are reiterated by Hope Dorman of KUSTOMER in her 23 Dec. article

3 Predictions for how AI will transform CX in 2026

Covering predictions for AI in CX in 2026, synthetic empathy eroding customer trust, Goodwill using AI tools, and more.

The senior editor of CX Dive shares three predictions for next year. They are:

- 1. Most brands will use AI for discreet tasks*
- 2. Some companies will deploy AI too quickly and sabotage their self-service experience*
- 3. Federal AI directives will speed up AI deployments, but at a cost*

We're seeing the pendulum swing away from pure hype about AI-powered CX back to a world that's realistic about how the technology works, what it takes to be successful, and how consumers feel about it.

<https://www.kustomer.com/resources/newsletter/3-predictions-2026>

Next

Francesca Roche, Technology Journalist for CX Today interviews Maxie Schmidt, VP and Principal Analyst at Forrester about their CX predictions for 2026

1. The CX Team Crisis: Disbandment and Restructuring

CX teams are facing unprecedented organizational pressure, with consistent restructuring, disbandment, and acquisitions, this 'survival' move feels like the new norm in the industry.

2. The Metrics Death Spiral

CX teams are undermining their own value by becoming measurement factories instead of strategic problem-solvers.

By prioritizing dashboards and metrics over real strategic direction, CX leaders are receiving results they don't actually need, reducing the perceived value of these teams.

3. Journey Mapping's Dramatic Decline (2/3 Drop Predicted)

Another of Forrester's predictions argues that journey mapping will see a decline in use, with its value having been diluted from overuse and poor application. Once the go-to CX tool for every problem, business leaders have now taken little to no interest in journey mapping, arguing that in comparison to newer tools, now provides far too limited outcomes.

4. AI Self-Service: The Overconfidence Crisis

Schmidt predicts that AI self-service initiatives will fail from misplaced confidence and limited understanding during adoption.

Organizations are rushing to deploy AI solutions without proper understanding, with cost pressures driving faster adoptions and fundamental misconceptions still remain with the technology.

5. The Fundamental Misalignment: Measurement vs. Customer Obsession

This prediction argues that organizations are confusing measurement with customer obsession, claiming to be customer-centric but remain fundamentally measurement-obsessed.

When companies heavily invest in metrics, dashboards, and reports, CX teams are expected to produce internal scores, trends, and benchmarks rather than focusing on customer outcomes.

The Bottom Line

Forrester concludes that CX is in a death spiral, where teams prove value through metrics that AI can replicate, use tools that business leaders are tired of, and serve measurement obsessions rather than customer needs.

The path forward requires stopping tool-first thinking, understanding actual business problems, and shifting from reporting to strategic problem-solving before AI makes the current approach completely redundant.

<https://www.cxtoday.com/customer-analytics-intelligence/unpacking-forresters-cx-predictions-for-2026>

So as AI sweeps with endless potentially exciting opportunities it seems that all advice points to a need for elements caution and clarity about how AI is to be applied if the benefits are to be optimised for organisations, employees and the source of their revenue , their customers

The final word comes from Kevin O'Connor as Global Managing Director of Technology for Deloitte-Touche's Tax Division.

AI is best employed when directed at high value customer outcomes. This is not unique to AI and should be true of any business investment -- especially technology. Technology investment and deployment for the sake of saying they've done "something" is a recipe for multiple disasters -- financial, customer experience, employee impact/satisfaction, etc. Organizations and teams that work backwards from their customers' most pressing challenges and invest (including tech and AI) to address those issues and differentiate the customer experience will always stand tall among their market peers.

ICXI Wishes the global CX and EX world every success in 2026

See <https://icxi.com/>for all details of the institute's newest products including the new Standard for the Health Care sector

The International Patient Experience Standard IPExS 2026