

# Navigating Disruption with Generative AI Strategies



Custom Research by ISG, commissioned by Foundever™

# Introduction

Enterprises hoping to create an optimal customer experience (CX) are facing new challenges. Customer expectations have shifted, with an increased demand for personalized, omnichannel service. And the technology powering those in-demand services has become more complex, with higher requirements for integration and support.

As such, enterprises are embracing the potential for generative AI (GenAI) to help them navigate this disruption by modernizing their capabilities to deliver new levels of

productivity. GenAI offers the opportunities for enterprises to futureproof their business by optimizing their processes, enhance their agents' performance, and generate deeper insights from a wider range of data.

Such benefits are driving an urgency in the market for businesses to adopt GenAI quickly. However, enterprises should not expect immediate plug-and-play solutions. Capitalizing on the full potential of GenAI demands a careful, holistic strategy in order to deliver a future-ready CX ecosystem.

## The Evolving Landscape

Models for CX are very different than they were even a few years ago. Changes in customer expectations and disruptions in the technology landscape prevent enterprises from achieving modern, customer-centric solutions with their existing infrastructures.

Most enterprises ranked their own customer experience low. Just **20%** rated their performance significantly higher than their peers.

This has contributed to lower confidence amongst enterprises; ISG research showed that enterprises across all industries ranked their end-customer experience low against all other performance metrics. **Only 20% of respondents rated their performance as being significantly better than their peers<sup>1</sup>.**

For these enterprises, delivering a modern customer experience means having to adapt to keep up with demands from both new and old audiences. Today's customers have higher expectations for service:

- **Omnichannel experiences** were once a differentiator, but have since **become the new norm for consumers**, who also have a greater expectation to be able to move their actions seamlessly between each respective channel. Voice channels in particular have given way to digital channels, and social media has continued to evolve as a way to interact with customers.
- More **consumers expect a higher degree of personalization in their dealings**, seeking out the benefits **of companies that are able to leverage data about their interests or history**. That may include product recommendations and offers.
- **Self-service options are increasingly popular**, especially as they present a means for customers to quickly resolve their needs.

<sup>1</sup>ISG Future of Workplace Study, 2023

- Transparency is also a large driver for customers as a factor that goes hand-in-hand with consumers' enhanced interest in ESG. Audiences are more interested in engaging with enterprises that are open about factors like sourcing, supply chains, and company values.
- A major driver for these changes comes from the new generation of customers: Generations Z and Alpha. These so-called "digital natives" grew up around services dependent on high levels of technology and are acclimatized to them.

Being able to accommodate these shifting demands requires enterprises to proactively reconsider how they approach their CX strategy. That may require a change in where and how content is presented to customers. Or how customer data and interactions are analyzed and used strategically—areas where GenAI offers unique applications.

But in realizing these approaches, enterprises are likely to run up against the limits of their technology

architecture. These changing customer expectations evolve hand in hand with advancements in technology. The popularity of digital channels, for example, accompanied the proliferation of digital technologies. This speaks to the need for enterprises to prioritize future-proofing their CX ecosystems, lest they get left behind.

For example, AI chatbots and virtual assistants created a new opportunity for customer self-service, but to enable AI chatbots and add value to customers, enterprises need secure and accessible APIs in their systems and a team dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of the experience.

All of these challenges taken together represent a landscape where enterprises are faced with many complex demands, and substantial technical barriers to fulfilling them quickly. However, GenAI offers several strategic advantages which make it particularly useful for helping enterprises adapt to changes, and future-proof their operations.

## Generations Z and Alpha

The newest generations of consumers have created new demands for customer service. They represent the first generation of buyers who did not grow up with analogue technology and expect a digital-first experience. This has contributed to sea changes, like the drop-off in voice channel usage.

In order to best serve this audience, enterprises work to:

- **Embrace extreme personalization:** Use GenAI to tailor an experience using insights into their history, interactions, and preferences. This generation is not made up of passive consumers—they seek a high-level of engagement.
- **Prepare omnichannel offerings:** This generation expects to be served through online platforms, social media, and WhatsApp, to name a few. Enterprises need to maintain a consistent experience across all these avenues of communication.
- **Stay agile:** With increasing technology adoption and a mass-media ecosystem moving at breakneck speeds, this audience's trends and interests shift regularly. Design systems with flexibility in mind.

# The Strategic Role of Generative AI

GenAI offers many promising use cases for helping enterprises navigate their CX challenges in ways that were not possible with previous generations of AI. Especially through advancements in analytics and the generation of predictive insights, GenAI creates opportunities for businesses to better adapt to customer expectations, manage their contact centers, and enhance agents' abilities. And in doing so, respond to the growing complexity in CX, with greater agility.

These capabilities have driven a sense of urgency in the market. Enterprises are increasingly looking to invest in GenAI capabilities to seize an early competitive advantage. ISG Research found that 85% of enterprises believe that investment in GenAI is important or critical in the next 24 months<sup>2</sup>.

To understand how GenAI is able to deliver these enhanced capabilities, it is useful to understand the technology in the context of AI's general evolution:

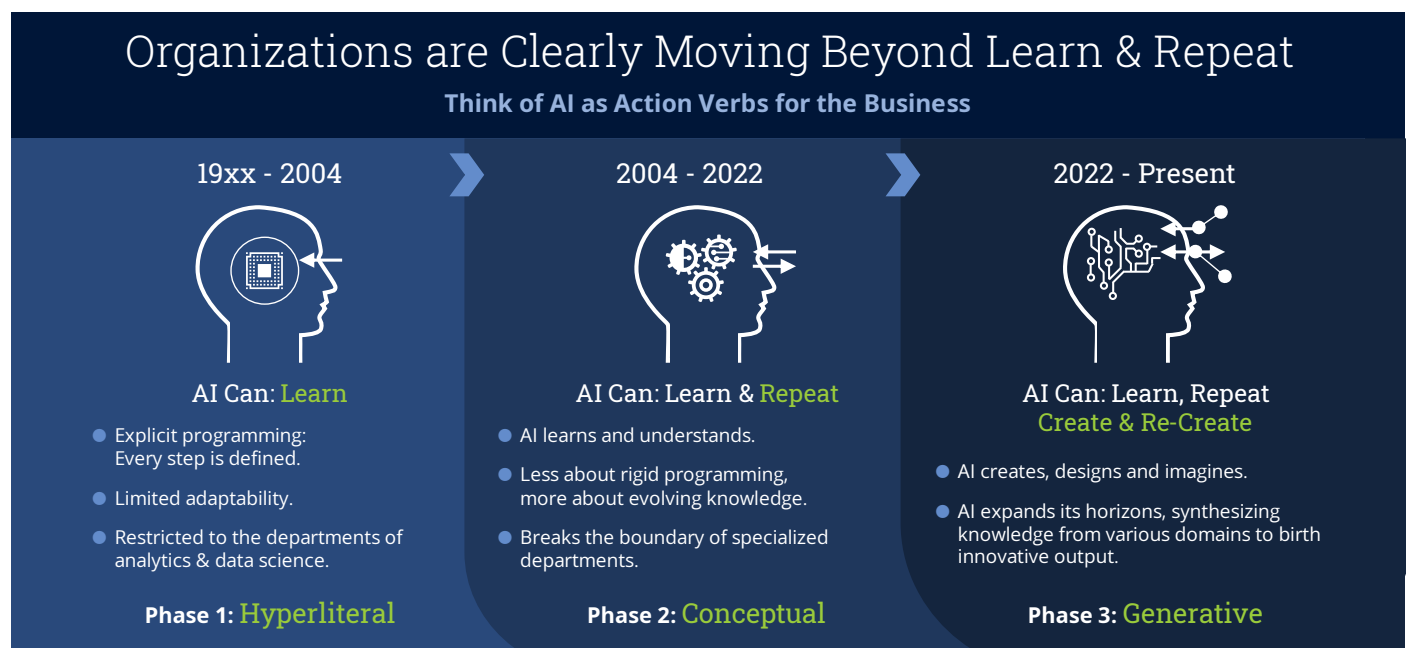
- One of the first instances where AI demonstrated a functional use case was almost 60 years ago with ELIZA, an early natural language processing (NLP)

**85% of enterprises believe investment in Generative AI technology is critical within the next 24 months.**

computer program. It engaged users in conversation through pattern matching and substitution methodology. At the time, it was a groundbreaking demonstration of the potential for computers to interact with human language in a manner that, at least superficially, resembled human-to-human conversations. This early exploration into NLP laid the groundwork for the development of more sophisticated AI-driven conversational agents.

- Advancements in machine learning enabled AI to learn patterns and repeat them. This allowed the development of advanced automation, but with a reliance on human supervision and in specific contexts.

Figure 1: GenAI is the latest step in the continuing growth of AI



Source: ISG "2023 State of Applied Generative AI"

<sup>2</sup>ISG Future of Workplace Study, 2023

- Where GenAI differentiates itself is through the ability to generate content. This allows AI to learn patterns, repeat them, and then create and re-create new outputs, further reducing the need for human inputs, and allowing AI to contribute to roles in development, editorial, or analysis.

As a developing technology, the applications of GenAI vary across industries and carry different levels of maturity. However, the top functional use cases tend to fall into one of two categories, knowledge management and process optimization:

## Knowledge Management

- Advanced data extraction and indexing, creating rich data sets with data tagging and annotation.
- Quick, expansive generation of synthetic data.
- Tools to quickly parse complex data sets, such as virtual assistants or contextual search engines.
- Recommendation engines, leveraging enhanced data analytics from wide-ranging datasets to generate deeper insights than ever before.



## Functional Process Optimization

- Code generation for enhanced application development or system migrations.
- Content generation, saving time and material for external materials like marketing copy, or internal material, like product metadata.
- Streamlining labor-intensive forms or reports as complex as compliance- or accounting-related filings. Or automating more mundane tasks like generating employee schedules or job listings.



Amongst use cases like these, ISG Research found that applications were the most mature in areas of customer support, where existing solutions can be bolstered by GenAI with relative ease<sup>3</sup>. That makes the technology a potentially pivotal tool for navigating the many disruptions in the CX space. Those use cases include:

- **Helping decision-makers manage, monitor, and analyze operations:** The analytic capabilities of GenAI allows enterprises to generate predictive insights from cross-functional datasets. These analytics have a wide range of applications depending on what data they are set on, helping decision-makers fundamentally improve in areas like operations, customer interactions, or agent performance. Per ISG research, **these applications carry the highest amount of mature use cases, with 57% of predictive analytic use cases categorized as mature<sup>3</sup>.**
- **Overcoming complexity with cross-functional data:** Knowledge and analytic applications of GenAI are useful for navigating complexity because they can be trained on data sources from multiple areas, creating a knowledge base that reflects an organization, holistically. Or, by creating functions with benefits that cover multiple parts of a business intuitively.
- **Improving process efficiency and technological development:** GenAI's ability to learn and adapt to new data is a unique benefit in the face of complexity and technology disruption. Companies can deploy GenAI to develop solutions that reduce their

workloads and quickly update their systems. Cutting-edge applications of automation can streamline processes. And generative code or application development can speed up the adoption of new technologies.

- **Quickly adapting to customer expectations:** The enhanced data capabilities of GenAI improve an enterprise's ability to study and understand their customers in a broad sense. By **generating insights on customer trends and interactions, companies can better strategically understand how their audiences want to be served, through which channels, and deploying which features.**
- **Creating proactive and personalized customer experiences:** Coupling data insights about customers with AI's generative capabilities unlocks new avenues for how customers interact with an enterprise on an individual-by-individual basis. GenAI can study customer habits and conversational sentiments, then generate insights or even direct copy, to enhance interactions. **A common example of this might be a virtual assistant that either deals with customers directly or aids a human agent.**

This use case is one of the most promising of GenAI for CX, where GenAI acts as a co-pilot for agents to assist them in real time and provide additional insights and knowledge on the next-best action.

<sup>3</sup>State of Applied Generative AI Market, ISG, September 2023



## Generative AI is an Innovation Driver

Businesses are embracing the transformative potential of GenAI to drive innovation in their CX strategies. This has led to innovative solutions such as:

- More customer insights – generating predictions of trends and interests
- Sentiment analysis – deriving insights from subjective markers
- Call intent prediction – helping to anticipate customer needs in advance
- Agent performance analysis – metrics to identify agent skill levels
- Virtual assistants – Supporting customers with more self-service capabilities
- Modernization tools – Rewriting legacy software more easily with newer technologies
- Multilingual support – providing fast and accurate translation capabilities

These solutions help individually improve CX operations, but bundled together, can transform a call center into a one-stop technology shop, with the ability to holistically manage, monitor, and analyze their operations.

# Human-GenAI Collaboration as the Next Stage of Digital Transformation

As an emergent technology, enterprises are still working to find the optimal levels of GenAI deployment with their business. Depending on the level of need, some businesses are deploying limited use cases while others are striving to find ways for GenAI to fully control their processes through tools as with AI chatbots.

In the complex, customer-focused area of CX, functional applications exist across the entire spectrum of human-GenAI collaboration. These can roughly be summarized through two different GenAI models, each bringing their own possibilities to empower a customer support team—the partially automated co-pilot model, and the fully automated AI agent model.

### Co-pilot Model

Rather than replacing a worker with AI, the co-pilot model aims to use GenAI tools to increase their capabilities and productivity. It conceptualizes GenAI as a virtual assistant supporting a human worker with insights and tools. Embracing the necessity of human oversight in an AI implementation, this model relies on workers' ability to use their own judgement and decision-making to resolve tasks. For support agents, this especially allows them to focus on connecting with customers and deploying their emotional intelligence.

The co-pilot model deploys a few key applications of GenAI:

- **Automation:** Helping employees focus on tasks by eliminating repetitive clicks and optimizing workflows.
- **Data management:** Offering context, like relevant customer history, and fact-checking numbers.
- **Generating insights:** Creating suggestions for employees to resolve issues.
- **Coaching:** AI can assist in providing recommendations on how agents can improve their service.

As an example, consider how a co-pilot method might help a customer support agent:

GenAI can eliminate a significant portion of administrative tasks, routing the customer through their preferred channel, and automatically supplying relevant personal information, history, and other relevant details. It can help an agent quickly look up relevant details about the product or service that the customer is having an issue with, through intuitive search features. Then, the agent can use these details to have the AI generate some potential solutions, considering data gleaned from the customer's personalized preferences, to help inform the agent how to best resolve the situation.

By assigning the labor-intensive, time-consuming, or distracting tasks through GenAI functions, an agent has the opportunity to deliver a more focused, rewarding experience for a customer. This also helps to improve the efficiency of the overall support service, allowing more agents more time to help customers.

## Fully Automated AI Agents

GenAI further delivers on the fundamental promise of all AI: to automate complex tasks traditionally performed by human labor. In the realm of customer service, that means creating new capabilities for chatbots and virtual assistants to expand the degree to which AI can either partially or fully automate conversations.

GenAI's ability to generate text outside of pre-written responses or logic paths, with a greater ability to parse inputs, has helped push the limits of the kind of service an AI agent can deliver. Especially as that service includes the personalization and knowledge management benefits already mentioned:

- Customers are able to receive a more positive experience, with more natural language and less effort on their part. It presents a wider range of self-service options for them, potentially helping them resolve their issues more quickly, with a higher degree of personalization.
- For enterprises, these agents represent a way to further optimize their service, freeing up human agents to concentrate on more complicated tasks or difficult customer issues.

It is crucial to note that no automated AI is advanced enough to operate without any human supervision. In order to deliver effective outputs, GenAI agents need to be monitored and trained on precise datasets, ensure accuracy, guarantee consistency, and encourage continuous improvement.

## Empowering Customer Support Teams

Both of these models demand human-AI partnerships—it may be fair to say that in the co-piloting model, AI is supporting human-driven service, and with AI agents, humans are supporting AI-driven service—but both of them significantly reduce the workload for human workers while also improving productivity and performance through improved problem solving, communication, and response times.

Rather than viewing this partnership as a means to replace human labor, enterprises should consider the opportunity this creates for reskilling or upskilling workers. In both models, the adoption of rote tasks by AI allows employees to develop higher-order skills, focusing efforts on leadership, complex problem-solving, critical thinking, or—especially in the co-pilot method—interpersonal skills.

GenAI's ability to provide multilingual support is a good example of this collaboration. The technology allows agents to translate large blocks of text quickly and accurately. However, deploying these services effectively demands agents who are well-versed in the culture of each respectively translated language. This allows them to oversee that the translations are constructed with the correct cultural connotations to have the correct impact with the desired audiences.



# Building a Future-ready CX Ecosystem

The potential benefits of GenAI for CX are large, but all of them are dependent on how well the technology is integrated into an enterprise's overall architecture. For example, most applications of the technology depend on robust data pipelines, and accurate, standardized sources of information to inform insights and analysis. Virtual assistants require staff with skills to handle and train AI.

Enterprises often overlook this need: ISG Research has found that one of the largest gaps in the market is in establishing GenAI architecture—enterprises tend to focus on individual solutions and overlook the importance of establishing a holistic ecosystem for GenAI<sup>4</sup>.

In order to integrate GenAI into CX strategies, enterprises must consider a holistic strategy with a tight focus on how certain use cases will have an effect on the desired area, what resources and expertise will they need, and what they should prioritize. In this area, it may also be helpful to engage a service provider, whose expertise and established tools can be a valuable resource to help establish goals, create a roadmap, or deliver early returns.

In order to develop a holistic approach, enterprises should work step-by-step to build a vision of what they want to accomplish and how GenAI can help. Make plans to account for the following areas in a strategy:

## Effective Benchmarking

Especially if you are on the fence about investing in GenAI, the best way to build confidence is to study the real-world CX use cases, review success stories in detail with involved parties, and build realistic expectations based on the tangible ROI other enterprises are achieving. But these are rare for now.

## Strategic Resource Planning

Any initiative takes money, time, and effort. Especially with the urgency in the market, it is easy to move too quickly and misjudge your capabilities. A flexible budget, accounting for assets like swift engineering support, can be a cornerstone for successful integration.

## Set Early Goals

Separate priorities into short-term, easy-win investments, and longer-term priorities. An immature architecture can sometimes be a roadblock to quick victories, but realizing short-term goals can help an enterprise understand its AI capabilities better, giving insights into which use cases will require outside help or deeper investments.

## Build a Long-term Roadmap

With a wide view of an organization's goals with AI, it is easier to start developing plans. Setting long-term goals should include taking inventory on all potential use cases and evaluating their benefits, costs, and risks. Taking visibility into account may also be helpful for change management and getting buy-in from the wider organization.

## Leverage Third-party Support

Some GenAI tools can be quickly adopted to secure quick benefits—with the right training and compliance policies. And an experienced partner can help create short cuts to an effective transformation. Staying well-informed on current market offerings will help an enterprise deploy those third-party assets where they will have the most impact.

## Continue to Innovate

GenAI is an emerging technology; the use cases discussed so far do not necessarily represent its full potential. Some organizations may be tempted to approach GenAI as simply a new form of chatbot process automation, but an enterprise should be willing to look beyond extant capabilities and question how the technology can be further developed.

<sup>4</sup>State of Applied Generative AI Market, ISG, September 2023

When developing their strategy, enterprises should consider two main types of disruptions that specifically affect customer experience: those based on customer needs and those driven by technology. It's important to proactively address these challenges during each planning stage. Enterprises should consider:

- Opportunities to build in personalization throughout the entire customer journey, surfacing more customer data and finding chances to analyze interactions wherever possible.
- Delivering consistent experiences across diverse channels to address audience expectations, by prioritizing a broad scope of channels at the earliest stages of planning. It is also vital for enterprises to keep in mind that new channels, or channel-specific capabilities, are always being developed, and to make plans to continue to expand service if needed.

## The Crucial Role of Data

When it comes to prioritizing a CX ecosystem for GenAI, it is hard to overstate the importance of a robust data infrastructure. Data powers all of the technology's most effective use cases, and an inability to provide that information to the AI solutions will limit its effective outputs:

- **Knowledge management and analytics:** AI models need a reliable connection to multiple databases in order to ensure their insights are accurate and up to date.
- **Content generation:** AI must be trained on clean, anonymized data in order to deliver consistent and accurate results. This is especially true for models that need to reference new or ongoing information sources, like customer data or market trends.
- **AI compliance:** Appropriate, anonymized, and usable data allows for the deployment of AI that is compliant with privacy and security concerns.

Enterprises should prioritize futureproofing their data infrastructure to make sure they are capturing the full potential of GenAI. That includes:

- Designing a data architecture with the models as close to the data sources as possible.
- Building data lakes with clean, standardized information.
- Structuring pipelines with future integration in mind, in order to capitalize on a wide array of data sources.

# Scaling GenAI Strategies for Long-term Success

After building a solid foundation for generative AI, enterprises should focus on scaling and evolving their GenAI solutions. As AI models undergo continuous training and updates, their ability to provide sharper insights and significantly enhance complex processes will constantly improve.

Recommendations for scaling solutions include:

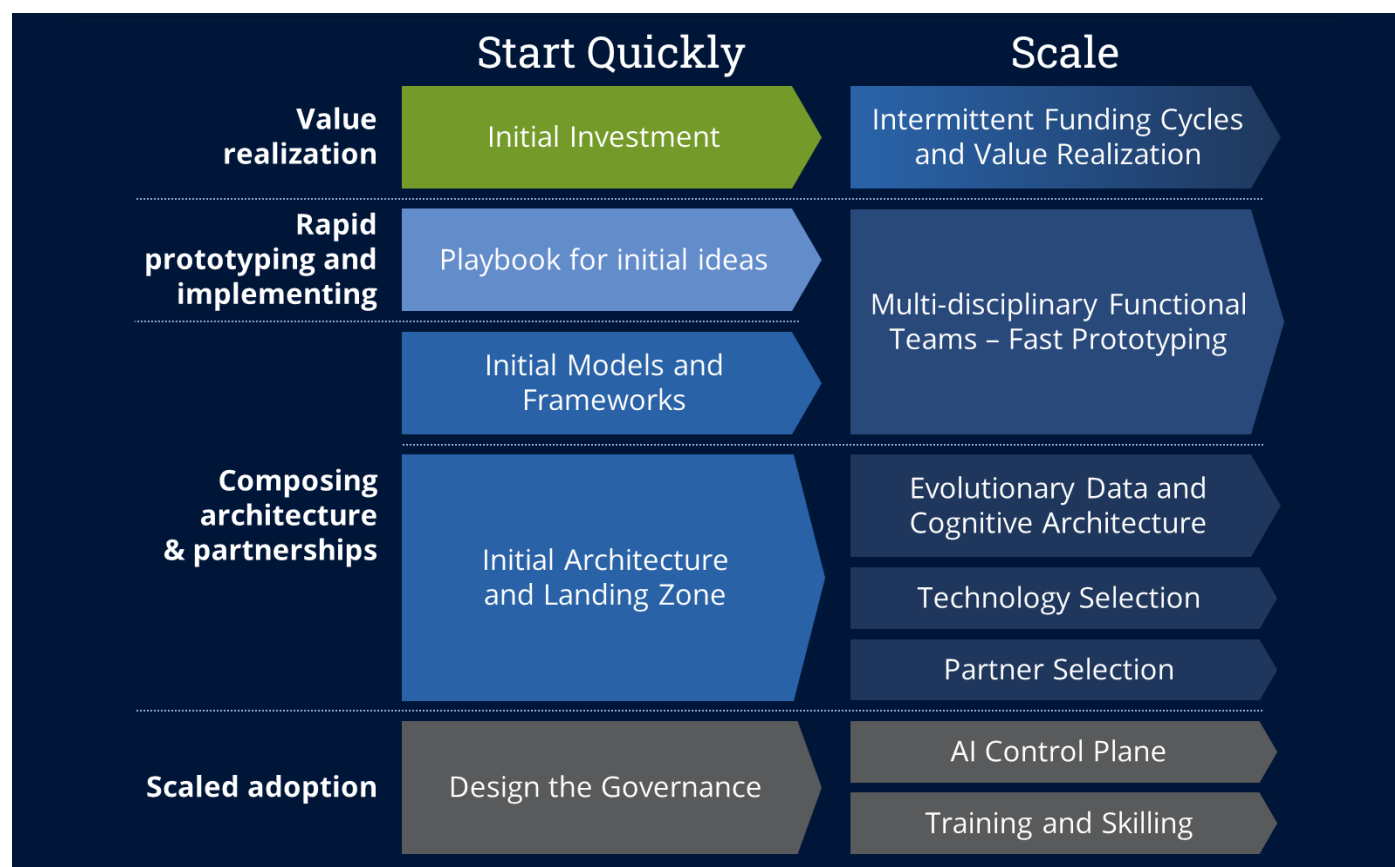
- **Embrace continuous learning and adaptation:**

Cultural change is always a challenge, but developing a habit of continual growth will pay off for GenAI. As the technology is predicated on learning and generation,

enterprises should strive to ensure their solutions remain relevant through ongoing growth.

- **Start planning now to stay ahead:** An enterprise's prototype solutions create a technological foundation for future growth, but they should also establish the groundwork for governance and further development. Making early investments in GenAI architecture could lessen the challenges associated with scaling the technology in the future. Additionally, establishing an AI team could be a useful resource in guiding growth, nurturing value creation, and ensuring effective delivery.

Figure 2: Starting and scaling GenAI solutions



Source: ISG "2023 State of Applied Generative AI"

- **Develop new capabilities:** There are few limits to the kind of content GenAI can be trained towards; the more functions a fully automated agent AI is able to take over, the greater the overall efficiency a customer service process can become. As the market expectations continue to shift, and competitors develop their own capabilities, GenAI's potential for growth will become crucial. Examine what roles AI can bring a benefit to, and what roadblocks are stopping an implementation.
- **Deepen the links between AI and enterprise data:** The more information an AI has access to train on, the better its outputs. With more sources of information at its grasp, GenAI capabilities can cover more areas of a business.
- **Take advantage of cross-functionality:** GenAI's ability to generate meaningful insights from unstructured data sources lends it strong potential to gain value out of varied, not intuitively linked, sets of data.

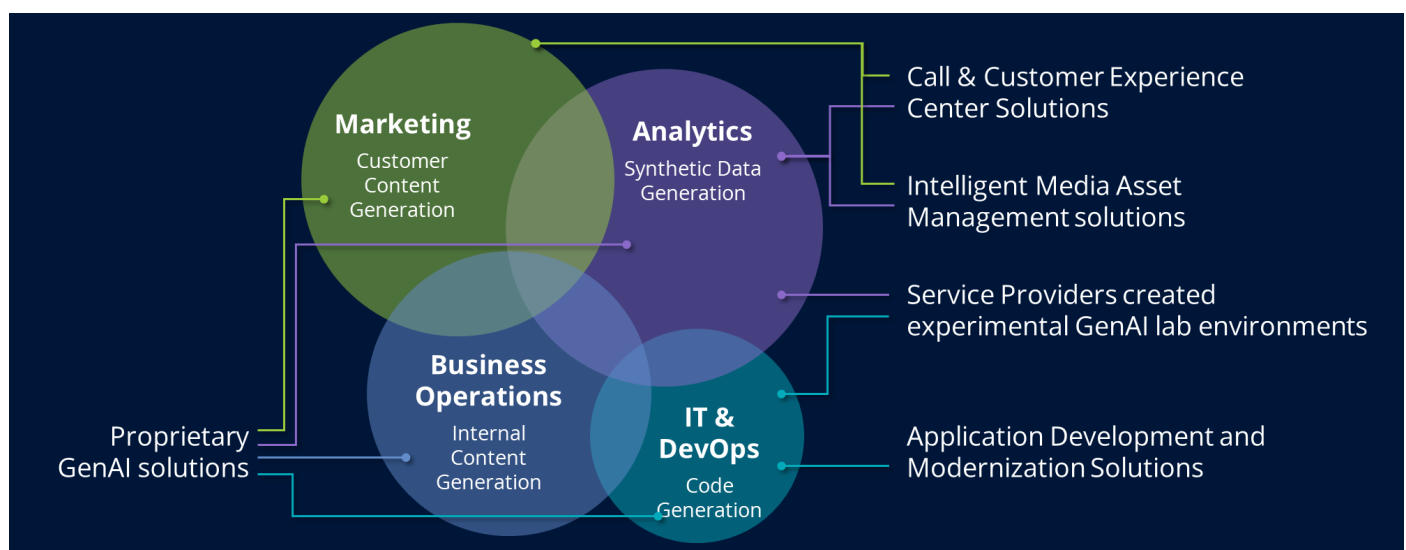
This last point, cross-functionality, represents a unique asset for GenAI, and a key concept to explore when looking to scale a solution. GenAI's creative functions streamline many of the barriers that makes inter-disciplinary functions

difficult to engineer. Many organizations are exploring how GenAI can be grown by exploring intersections between marketing, sales, IT, and DevOps, something previous generations of AI were unable to do, being mostly limited to analytics and data science.

For example, leveraging GenAI on top of unstructured content can help marketing analyze trends, identify patterns, and adopt the best strategies. Accessing the unstructured data in an enterprise, at scale, is a DevOps challenge that is often unattainable by operations or marketing teams.

Or, if an enterprise is satisfied with how GenAI is serving their CX, they can leverage similar benefits to other departments: a sales team can use the same co-piloting model to discover new sales leads or enhance a pitch. Marketing departments can use generative capabilities to create new copy. Once the technology is well established in an organization, the main barrier to expanding into new divisions is the available data. Another barrier is people adoption and if employees make a habit of using this technology frequently.

**Figure 3: GenAI excels at cross-functional use cases**



Source: ISG "2023 State of Applied Generative AI"

## GenAI by Industry

GenAI has a myriad of applications across all industries, although rates of adoption and maturity for use cases vary industry by industry. ISG Research found that financial services have the highest rates of adoption—24% of existing use cases apply to that industry. This is partly because banks are blessed with a large volume of unstructured data, giving them a perfect training platform for AI models. But GenAI has unique applications across all industries, for example:

### Financial Services

- Identifying and predicting market trends
- Boosting fraud and risk assessments with contextual searches
- Improving customer support at consumer banks

### Manufacturing

- Identifying waste and defects in production lines
- Generating insights to improve sourcing and supply chains
- Improving personalization in product design

### Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals

- Searching and summarizing disparate clinical trials or research data
- Improving patient interactions

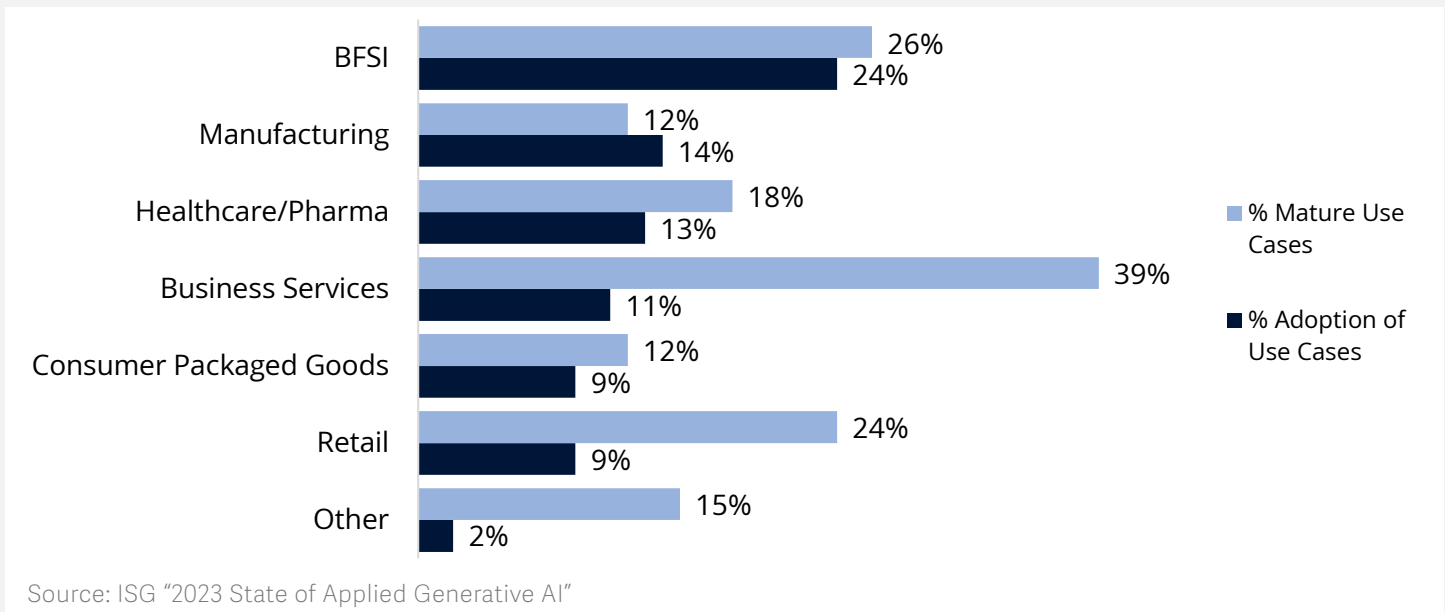
### Business Services

- Generating code to optimize speed-to-market software development
- Improving application migration and recoding
- Building tools for more effective deployment and testing solutions

### Retail

- Generating insights to help inventory management
- Predicting consumer trends and interests
- Improving marketing content

Figure 4: Adoption and maturity of use cases by industry



# Embracing a Future-ready CX Ecosystem

GenAI's ability to learn across varied, complex datasets, and deliver rich, multi-functional outputs, has pushed the boundaries of AI capability, and serves as a promising asset to help enterprises futureproof their offerings amid a challenging CX landscape. GenAI offers important applications to quip decision-makers with insights and tools to maximize the impact and efficiency of customer interactions, while also optimizing their entire workflows.

While a new technology, the number of mature use cases in the market indicates that GenAI has most definitely arrived. Enterprises across industries are working to quickly integrate GenAI capabilities into their operations, raising the threat that enterprises that are not investigating the potential applications may be left behind by their competition.



# About the Contributors



## Olga Kupriyanova

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Olga leads ISG's generative AI practice, driving research and thought leadership in that space. She also supports ISG's advisory capability in developing digital solutions with special focus on data, analytics and AI. Olga's extensive knowledge of analytics and data engineering framework combined with hands on experience in complex transformational projects results in unique insights invaluable for effectively assessing the data analytics solutions for ISG's clients.

Olga developed her expertise in data and analytics during her 15-year tenure at Caesars Entertainment, a recognized industry leader in applying analytics and data engineering to solve business problems. In addition to Analytics, Olga has worked extensively in B2C marketing and strategy functions, supporting both regional and national campaigns.



## Guillaume Laporte

Chief AI Officer

Foundever™

Guillaume Laporte serves as the Chief AI Officer at Foundever™, responsible for defining AI strategy and working with cross-functional teams to ensure it aligns with the company's overall mission. He is currently working to identify the organization's AI goals, develop a roadmap for achieving those goals and allocate resources to AI initiatives.

As an accomplished and dynamic tech entrepreneur, Guillaume specializes in conversational AI, SaaS and enterprise business and he continues to push the boundaries in AI and customer experience.

Based in Barcelona and a native of Switzerland, Guillaume is a multilingual leader who brings a wealth of digital know-how and knowledge to Foundever™. In 2016, he co-founded and led Mindsay, a conversational AI solution used to automate customer-facing processes. In 2022, Mindsay was acquired by Laiye, an AI-powered platform that creates a digital workforce intended to complement the human workforce in order to give companies a competitive edge. Following the acquisition, Guillaume served as General Manager of Chatbot International at Laiye, where he continued to build on his skill set of scaling AI SaaS prior to joining Foundever™ in 2023.

In addition to his career in AI, he has experience in the hospitality and travel industry, having served as a Market Associate at Expedia Group and Sales Manager at Newrest.

Guillaume has a background in Hospitality Management from EHL, the world-renowned hospitality school in Switzerland, and has completed a Startup Launch Pad program at the coding school Ecole42. Guillaume holds a master's degree in Entrepreneurship from leading European business school HEC Paris.

## About Foundever™

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Supporting +9 million customer conversations every day in +60 languages across 45 countries, Foundever combines global strength and scale with the agile, entrepreneurial approach of our founder-led culture, enabling companies of all sizes and industries to transform their CX.

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For more information, visit [www.isg-one.com](https://www.isg-one.com).