

Why the Phone Remains the Primary Path to Connection in an AI World

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Executive Summary

What is the Voice Paradox?

The modern customer journey appears, at first glance, to be a triumph of optionality. Consumers message brands through apps, chatbots, social feeds, and portals, often simultaneously. They are, by behavior, multichannel by default. And yet, when the moment turns serious—when confusion replaces convenience, when stakes replace speed—the pattern breaks.


They reach for the phone.

This contradiction sits at the center of what can be called the Voice Paradox. While digital channels dominate volume, voice continues to dominate meaning. Data from 2026 confirms this tension. Forty-one percent of consumers name the phone as their primary preferred channel for resolving important issues, more than double the preference for live chat or email. At the same time, consumers report high comfort using AI for routine tasks, signaling that voice has not survived because of habit, but because of relevance.

The implication is profound. Voice is no longer the channel of first resort, but it has become the channel of final trust.

Brands that continue to treat voice as a legacy cost center are misreading its role in the experience economy. The phone is not where efficiency peaks; it is where relationships are tested and preserved. When brands succeed in these moments, loyalty follows. When they fail, customers often leave quietly, without complaint, without feedback, and without return.

Avaya Infinity reframes this reality. It positions voice as an AI-enhanced connection center, where automation handles scale, but humans deliver resolution, empathy, and reassurance. In an era defined by fragmentation, the human voice becomes the most powerful unifying signal a brand can send.



AI excels at diagnostic scale, surfacing data, patterns, and possibilities. Humans excel at interpretive care, translating information into meaning and action.

The Data Behind the Dial

Why Does Voice Still Dominate?

Digital usage is not the same as digital preference. Consumers may interact with brands through email, chat, and self-service tools out of convenience, but convenience does not equal confidence. When issues become complex, layered, or emotionally charged, the limits of text-based interaction surface quickly.

Eighty-three percent of consumers say it is very or extremely important to speak with a human when problems arise. This is not a rejection of AI. It is an acknowledgment of its boundaries. While email and chat are widely used, they remain poorly suited for moments that require interpretation, judgment, or reassurance.

Voice offers something digital channels struggle to replicate: immediacy with nuance. It allows for interruption, clarification, and emotional calibration in real time. It also feels faster, even when it is not. Speed, in the customer's mind, has become a proxy for respect. Sixty percent of customers report frustration after waiting just six minutes. A phone call, even when queued, signals intent and progress in ways asynchronous channels cannot.

The phone persists because it collapses distance. It turns ambiguity into dialogue. And when trust is on the line, dialogue matters.

When Words Matter Most

What is the Threshold of Trust?

There are moments when efficiency is insufficient, no matter how advanced the system. These moments form what can be called the threshold of trust. They appear most clearly in sectors where the cost of misunderstanding is high.

In financial services, nearly all consumers prefer human interaction for serious matters such as fraud, disputes, or claims. Money carries emotional weight. It represents security, livelihood, and identity. A human voice does more than confirm facts; it restores confidence.

Healthcare follows a similar pattern. Consumers readily accept AI for administrative tasks like scheduling or reminders, but overwhelmingly prefer humans when discussing symptoms, diagnoses, or test results. Information may be digital, but interpretation is deeply human. Patients want to be heard, not processed.

This distinction reveals an important boundary. AI excels at diagnostic scale, surfacing data, patterns, and possibilities. Humans excel at interpretive care, translating information into meaning and action. Avaya Infinity respects this boundary. It does not blur roles; it clarifies them.

How Does Avaya Infinity Handle Voice Differently?

How Can Voice Be the Agent's Ally?

The failure of traditional voice experiences was never the phone itself. It was the friction surrounding it. Repetition. Transfers. Context loss. Avaya Infinity exists to remove these barriers.

At its core is persistent context. Nearly all consumers expect that when they move between channels, their history moves with them. Avaya Infinity ensures that agents receive a summarized, unified view of the customer's journey before the call even begins. The opening line shifts from a generic inquiry to informed assistance.

This enables the informed greeting. Instead of asking customers to restate their issue, agents acknowledge what has already occurred and focus on resolution. The experience feels personal, seamless, and intentional.

AI further strengthens voice through real-time sentiment analysis and speech analytics. Frustration is detected early. Escalation is guided intelligently. Agents receive support in the moment, allowing them to adapt tone, pace, and approach.

The result is not automation replacing empathy, but automation protecting it. AI carries the cognitive load so humans can carry the emotional one.

Strategic Implications for the C-Suite

How Can CX Be a Growth Lever?

Customer experience has crossed an invisible threshold. It is no longer a defensive function designed to prevent complaints. It is now a primary driver of growth.

Seventy-six percent of consumers report choosing one brand over another based solely on service quality. At the same time, seventy-four percent of customers who have a bad experience leave without saying anything. This phenomenon, often described as silent abandonment, is one of the most expensive blind spots in modern business.

Avaya Infinity acts as a safety net. It creates space for recovery before relationships fracture. When brands intervene with empathy at the right moment, loyalty is not just preserved; it is strengthened.

This applies beyond commercial enterprises. Public sector organizations face rising expectations shaped by private-sector

experiences. Citizens now expect responsiveness, continuity, and respect, regardless of industry. Avaya Infinity provides a framework for meeting those expectations without sacrificing scale or efficiency.

For leadership teams, the message is clear. Voice is not an operational artifact. It is a strategic asset.

The Future Is Blended

Why is the future of customer experience not a choice between AI or Human?

Most consumers want AI and human agents to work together. They do not want substitution; they want partnership. Avaya Infinity embodies this balance. It uses AI to orchestrate journeys, unify context, and surface insight. It uses humans to listen, interpret, and resolve.

Resolution closes a ticket. Responsiveness builds a relationship.

In an AI-mediated world, the human voice becomes more valuable, not less. It is the moment where brands demonstrate care, competence, and commitment. Avaya Infinity ensures that this moment is never lost in the machine.

Technology, at its best, does not distance us. It gives us the time and clarity to connect. And when connection matters most, the phone remains the most powerful path forward.

Avaya Infinity Delivers the Future of Customer Voice

The future of customer voice requires more than features — it requires a new operating model. Delivering it requires more than adding AI to a call flow or layering analytics onto legacy systems. It demands an architecture designed for connection, not just contact.

This is where Avaya stands apart.

For decades, Avaya has been trusted with the most mission-critical voice interactions in the world—financial institutions, healthcare systems, governments, and global enterprises where failure is not an option and trust is not negotiable. That legacy is not about nostalgia. It is about institutional knowledge of how voice behaves under pressure, at scale, and in moments that matter most.

Avaya Infinity represents the evolution of that expertise for an AI-driven era.

From Contact Center to Connection Center

The central promise of Avaya Infinity is not faster calls or lower costs. It is better outcomes. Stronger relationships. Preserved loyalty. Fewer silent exits.

Avaya Infinity enables organizations to move from reactive service to proactive connection, from fragmented systems to orchestrated experiences, and from transactional voice calls to meaningful conversations that reinforce brand trust.

In an AI world filled with automation, the brands that win will be the ones that know when to listen, when to respond, and when to let a human voice lead.

Avaya Infinity is built for exactly that future.

Built for Connection, Not Channel Fragmentation

Most platforms attempt to modernize voice by bolting it onto digital-first architectures. Infinity reverses that logic. It treats voice as a first-class connection layer, fully integrated with digital channels, data systems, and AI orchestration.

This enables what the future of customer voice requires:

- Persistent context that travels with the customer across every interaction
- Seamless escalation from digital to human without loss of meaning
- Orchestrated journeys rather than isolated touchpoints

Avaya Infinity does not ask customers to adapt to systems. It adapts systems around customers.

AI With Guardrails, Not Guesswork

The future of customer voice depends on AI that enhances human capability without undermining trust. Avaya Infinity is designed around open standards, secure integration, and enterprise-grade governance, allowing organizations to adopt AI confidently and responsibly.

This matters because voice interactions often carry the highest emotional, financial, and regulatory risk. Infinity ensures that AI supports agents with insight, context, and real-time guidance while keeping humans firmly in control of judgment, empathy, and resolution.

In practice, this means AI handles the complexity behind the scenes so agents can focus on what customers hear and feel.

Designed for the Moments That Matter Most

Avaya Infinity is not about average interactions. It is about edge cases, escalation moments, and thresholds of trust.

Avaya's strength has always been in these moments:

- When a customer is frustrated but still reachable
- When a patient needs clarity, not efficiency
- When a citizen expects accountability, not deflection

Avaya Infinity is purpose-built to support these interactions through reliability, clarity, and scale—without sacrificing humanity.

Frequently Asked Questions

Avaya Infinity, AI, and the Future of Human Connection

What is the future of customer voice?

the future of customer voice is the evolution of traditional phone-based customer service into an AI-enhanced connection experience. It combines the empathy and judgment of human agents with AI-driven context, orchestration, and real-time intelligence. The goal is not faster calls, but better outcomes in moments that matter most.

Why does voice still matter in an AI-first world?

While consumers are comfortable using AI for routine tasks, they consistently prefer voice when issues become complex, emotional, or high-risk. Voice enables nuance, interruption, clarification, and reassurance in ways digital-only channels cannot. In an AI-driven world, voice has become the primary path to trust.

Is AI-powered voice a step backward from digital transformation?

No. investing in AI-powered voice is not a retreat from digital channels; it is the next phase of transformation. AI handles scale and efficiency across digital touchpoints, while voice becomes the escalation layer where resolution, empathy, and confidence are delivered. The model is blended, not binary.

How does AI improve voice interactions instead of replacing them?

AI enhances voice by removing friction. It provides agents with persistent context, summarizes prior interactions, detects sentiment in real time, and surfaces insights during the conversation. This allows agents to focus on listening, problem-solving, and relationship-building rather than data retrieval or repetition.

What is “persistent context,” and why does it matter?

Persistent context means that customer history, intent, and prior interactions travel with the customer across channels. When a customer transitions from digital self-service to a phone call, the agent already understands what happened. This eliminates repetition, shortens resolution time, and signals respect.

How does Avaya Infinity reduce customer frustration and churn?

Avaya Infinity addresses the root causes of silent abandonment: long wait times, repeated explanations, and impersonal interactions. By enabling informed greetings, faster escalation, and empathetic resolution, organizations can rescue relationships before customers disengage quietly.

Where is the future of customer voice most critical?

the future of customer voice is especially critical in high-stakes industries such as financial services, healthcare, utilities, and the public sector. In these environments, trust, clarity, and accountability matter more than speed alone. Voice remains the preferred channel when outcomes affect money, health, safety, or livelihood.

How is Avaya Infinity different from traditional contact center modernization?

Traditional modernization focuses on channel expansion or cost reduction. Avaya Infinity focuses on connection quality. It prioritizes orchestration over silos, empathy over scripts, and outcomes over call volume. It treats voice as a strategic asset, not a legacy burden.

Why is Avaya uniquely positioned to deliver the future of customer voice?

Avaya has decades of experience supporting the most mission-critical voice interactions in the world. That expertise translates into deep understanding of reliability, scale, and human behavior under pressure. Voice has always been central to Avaya’s DNA, not an afterthought.

What is Avaya Infinity, and how does it support the future of customer voice?

Avaya Infinity is a unified experience platform designed to orchestrate voice, digital channels, data, and AI into a single connected system. It enables persistent context, seamless escalation, AI-assisted agents, and secure integration across enterprise environments. Infinity is built to support connection, not fragmentation.

How does Avaya Infinity handle AI responsibly?

Avaya Infinity is designed with enterprise-grade security, open standards, and governance in mind. AI operates with transparency and guardrails, ensuring that humans remain in control of decisions, empathy, and outcomes. This is especially important for regulated industries and sensitive interactions.

Does customer experience orchestration increase operational costs?

When implemented correctly, customer experience orchestration reduces cost by preventing churn, minimizing repeat contacts, and improving first-contact resolution. AI absorbs routine workload, allowing human agents to focus on fewer, higher-value interactions that preserve revenue and loyalty.

What role does Avaya Infinity play in long-term brand loyalty?

Resolution may solve a problem, but responsiveness builds trust. Avaya Infinity ensures that when customers need reassurance, clarity, or care, they are met with a human experience that reflects the brand's values. Over time, these moments define loyalty more than any marketing message.

What is the biggest risk of not evolving to the future of customer voice?

The greatest risk is invisibility. Customers who experience friction increasingly leave without complaint or feedback. Without Avaya Infinity, organizations lose the opportunity to listen, recover, and improve. Avaya Infinity turns the contact center into an early warning system rather than a postmortem.

What does success look like with Avaya Infinity?

Success means fewer repeated interactions, faster resolution for complex issues, more confident agents, and customers who feel understood. It means moving from disconnected channels to orchestrated journeys, and from transactional service to meaningful connection.

About Avaya

Avaya is a global enterprise software leader that helps the world's largest organizations and government agencies forge unbreakable customer connections. The Avaya Infinity™ platform is built to unify fragmented experiences, equipping enterprises to evolve their contact centers into connection centers and strengthen relationships that create business value. Learn more at www.avaya.com.

