2025 CX IMPERATIVES

Industry Insights for the Experience Economy

MERKLE

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Successful brands recognize that it's no longer a matter of knowing everything about your customers – it's about knowing the right things, including their preferences and expectations for interacting with your company.

Last year, we reported on what consumers want and how brands rise to the occasion to deliver. Now, we've compiled those insights through an industry lens.

This report addresses the unique challenges and opportunities tech and telecom companies face with data-driven strategies to enhance customer engagement, personalization, and loyalty. See how you stack up against your industry peers and learn how to stay ahead of evolving customer expectations for long-term business growth.
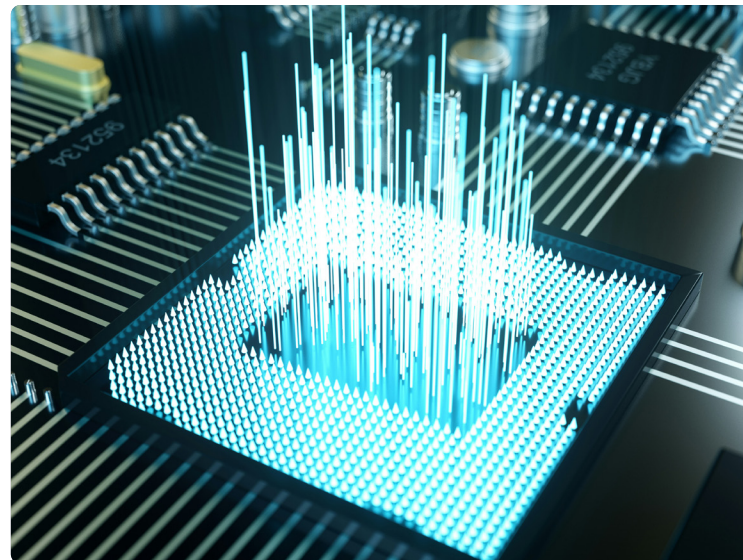
Tech and telecom customers want **cost effectiveness, convenience, consistency**, and **information** from their brand experiences.

The first three selections were clear standouts across all surveyed industries. We explored what they mean in more depth in our [consumer report](#). It's worth noting that the tech and telecom industries have large B2B audiences, and while B2B sales cycles are often longer than B2C, their customers have similarly high expectations for their brand experiences.

Access to information is the fourth most-cited area of improvement. This could be related to the share of B2B customers in these industries, the longer shelf lives of tech and telecom purchases, or the products and services' relatively high costs – or a combination of all three.

Q: In what ways would you like to see high tech and telecom companies improve your overall customer experience in the future?

A: Make my customer experience...

More affordable or cost-effective	**61%**
Easier or more convenient	**50%**
More reliable and consistent every time	**46%**
More well-informed	**40%**
More personalized or customized to my individual wants and needs	**39%**
More personal or human in nature	**27%**
More fun or enjoyable	**26%**
Better match or support my personal values and beliefs	**23%**

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%

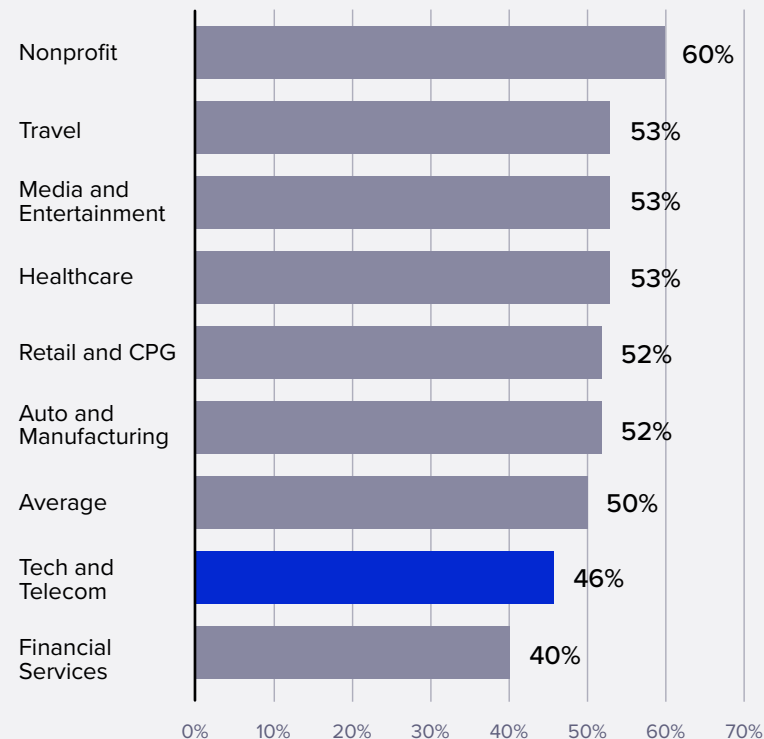# 46% of tech and telecom companies have customer-first cultures.

Of all surveyed industries, tech and telecom were second to last in their likelihood of having customer-first cultures (46%) and codified CX strategies (66%).

Of note: 60% of tech and telecom respondents reported that their CX investments were competitor-driven, nearly 2x the number who reported their investments were customer feedback-driven (33%). We can surmise from this data that this industry is focusing more on external factors than on its own customers when building CX strategies.

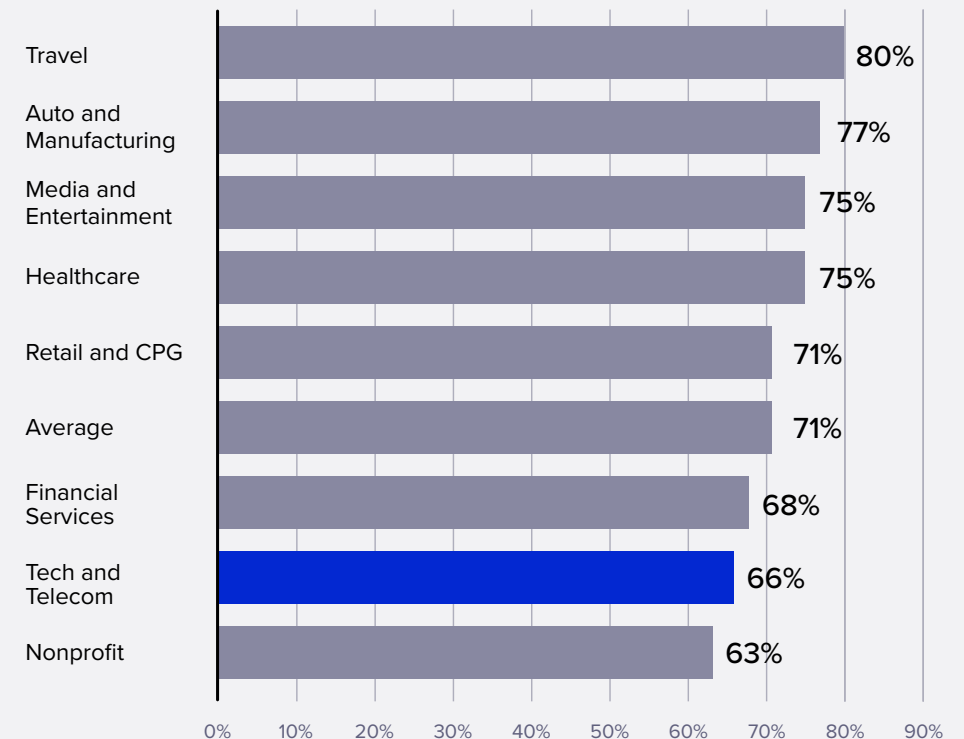**Q:** How well do you think the following statement describes your organization?

A: % strongly agree with "Our organization has a customer-first culture in which all functions and departments are committed to delivering a great customer experience"

Industry	%
Nonprofit	60%
Travel	53%
Media and Entertainment	53%
Healthcare	53%
Retail and CPG	52%
Auto and Manufacturing	52%
Average	50%
Tech and Telecom	46%
Financial Services	40%

Q: How well do you think the following statement describes your organization?

A: % chose "We have had a formal, codified customer experience strategy in place for several years"

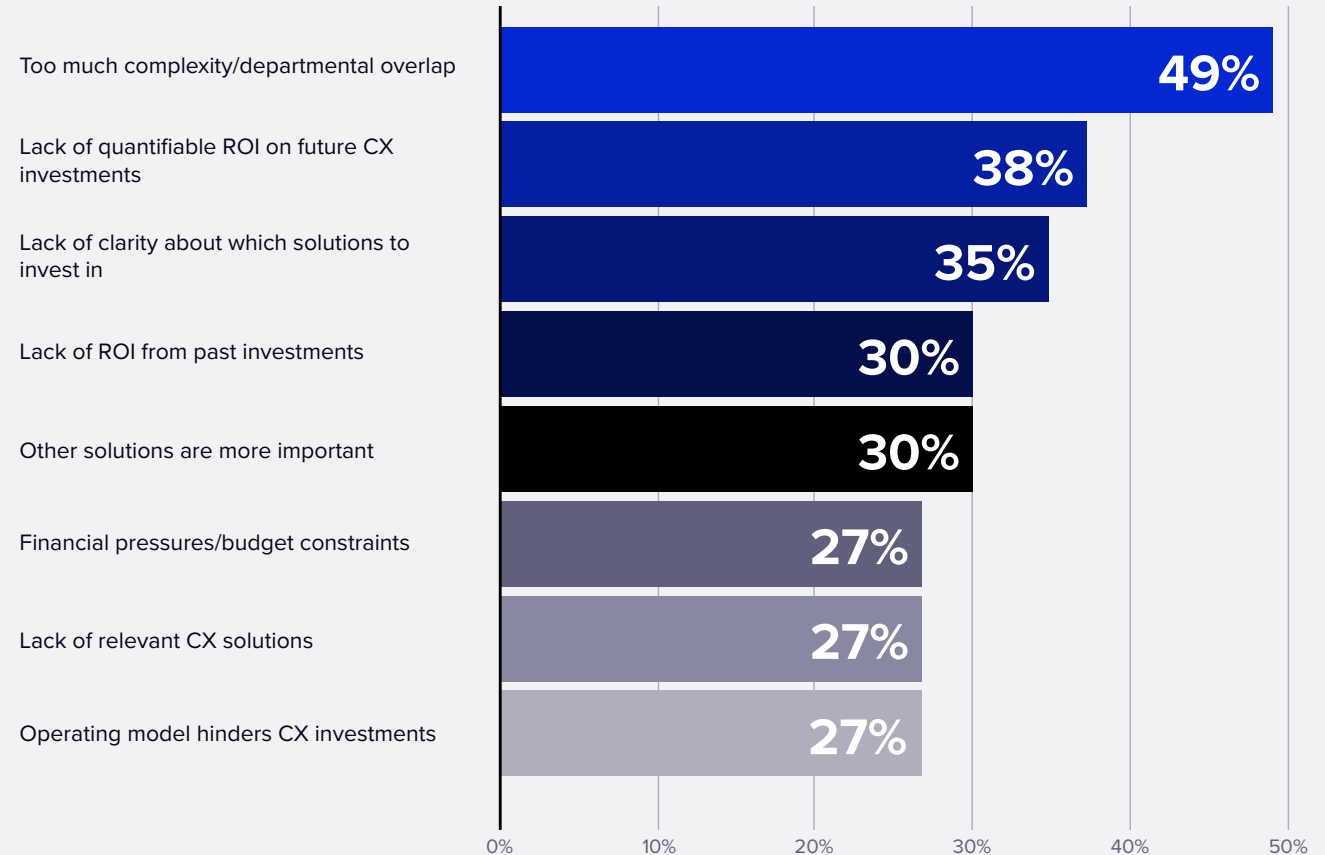| Industry	%
Travel	80%
Auto and Manufacturing	77%
Media and Entertainment	75%
Healthcare	75%
Retail and CPG	71%
Average	71%
Financial Services	68%
Tech and Telecom	66%
Nonprofit	63%

Departmental **overlap and complexity** are the most-cited hurdles to investing in CX.

Departmental overlap can lead to conflicting goals and measurement. It's unsurprising that the next two most-cited selections – lack of quantifiable ROI and lack of clarity on which solutions to invest in – are what follow.
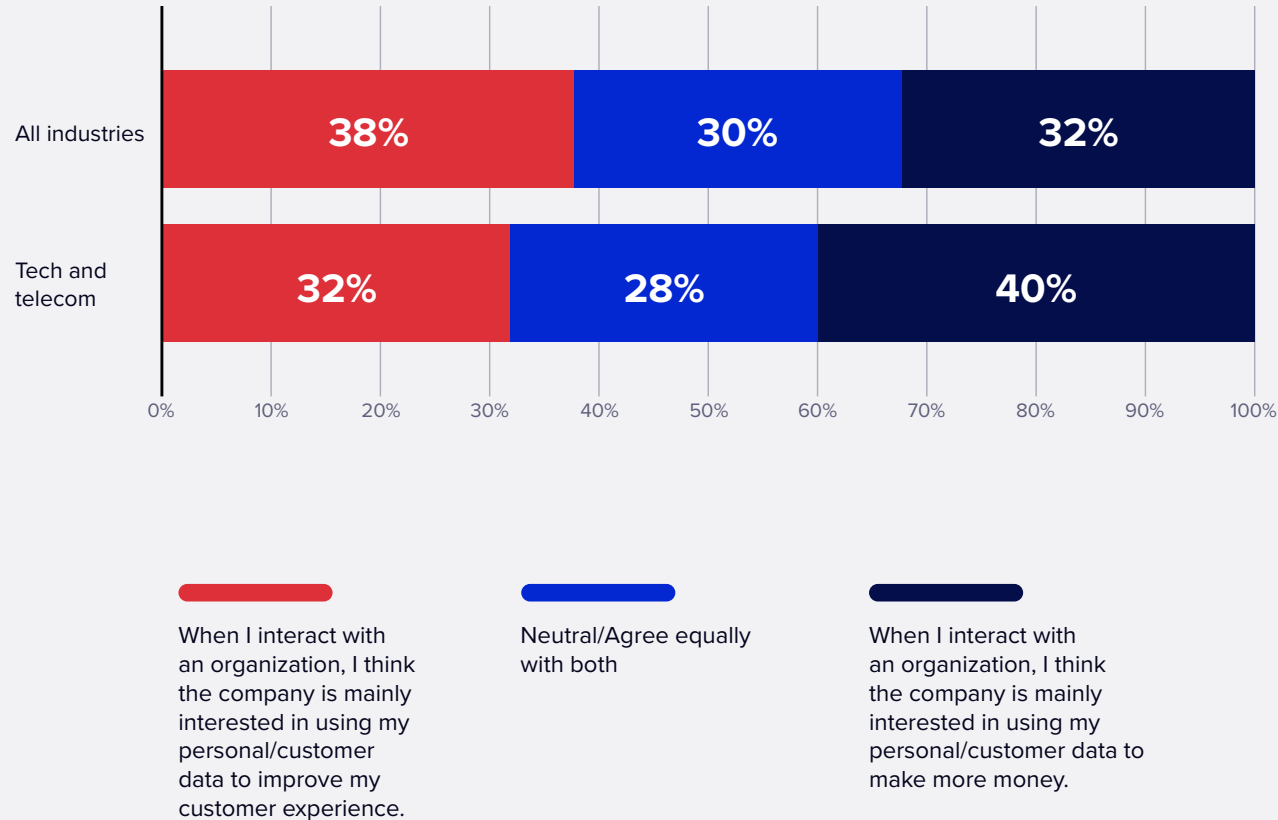
Q: What barriers or challenges does your organization face when looking to increase investments in customer experience initiatives or solutions?

Barrier	Percentage
Too much complexity/departmental overlap	49%
Lack of quantifiable ROI on future CX investments	38%
Lack of clarity about which solutions to invest in	35%
Lack of ROI from past investments	30%
Other solutions are more important	30%
Financial pressures/budget constraints	27%
Lack of relevant CX solutions	27%
Operating model hinders CX investments	27%

Q: Thinking about all the times you've engaged with, purchased from and/or donated to [brand], which one of the following pairs of statements do you agree with more?

All industries	38%	30%	32%
Tech and telecom	32%	28%	40%

— When I interact with an organization, I think the company is mainly interested in using my personal/customer data to improve my customer experience.

— Neutral/Agree equally with both

— When I interact with an organization, I think the company is mainly interested in using my personal/customer data to make more money.

Tech and telecom consumers are **more likely to think** that brands are **using their personal data to make money**, not to improve their customer experiences.

The lack of customer centricity manifests in tech and telecom brands' activations – only 32% of consumers in this category felt that their personal data was being used to improve their experiences. Forty percent of respondents felt that brands use their data to make more money – an 8-point increase over the average across all industries.

Q: Which of the following technologies and approaches is currently used by your organization to support your customer experience?
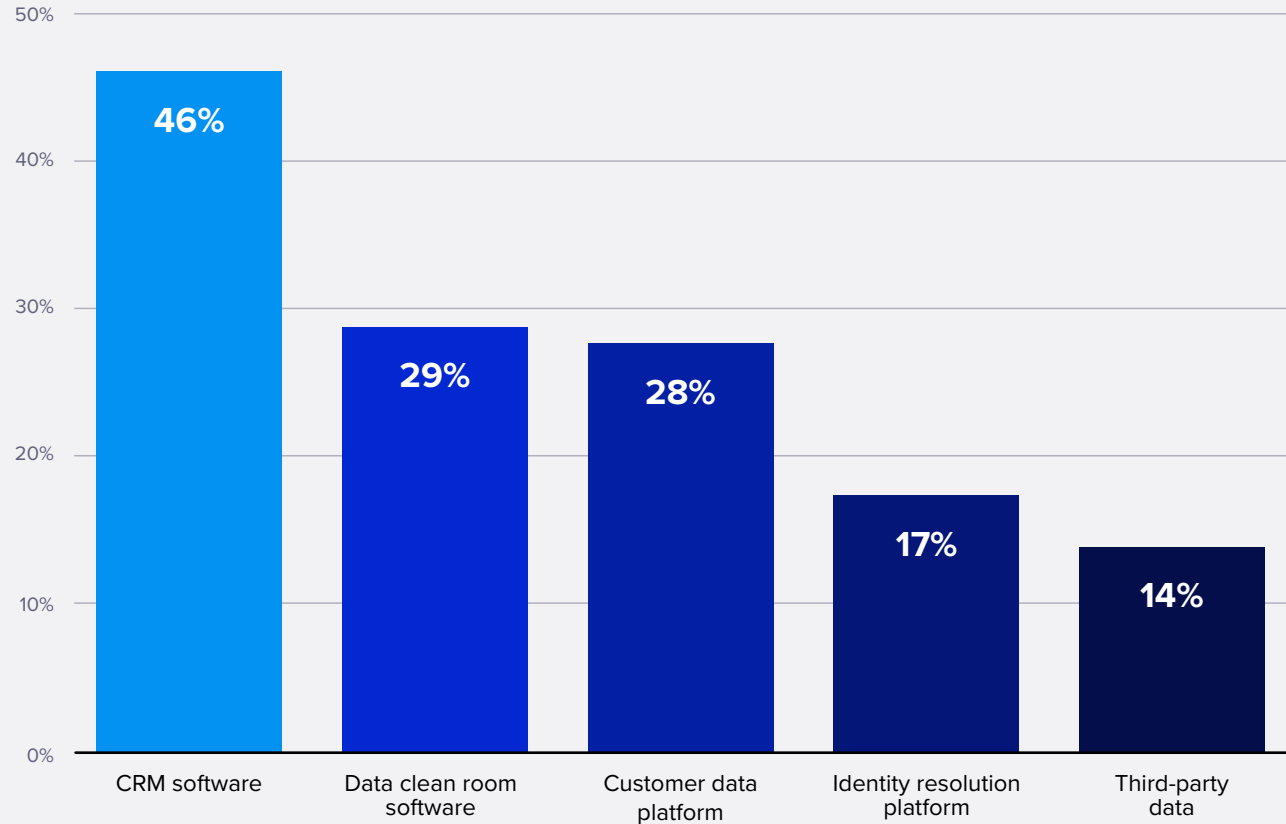
46% of tech and telecom companies use the requisite data management tools to personalize experiences.

The foundational CX technology required to parse, reconcile, augment, protect, and activate consumer data is not used at the rates needed to make a positive impact on the customer experience. Just 46% of tech and telecom respondents use the most basic software – CRM platforms – to keep records of customers, while even fewer brand respondents use data clean rooms (29%), CDPs (28%), identity resolution platforms (17%), and third-party data (14%).
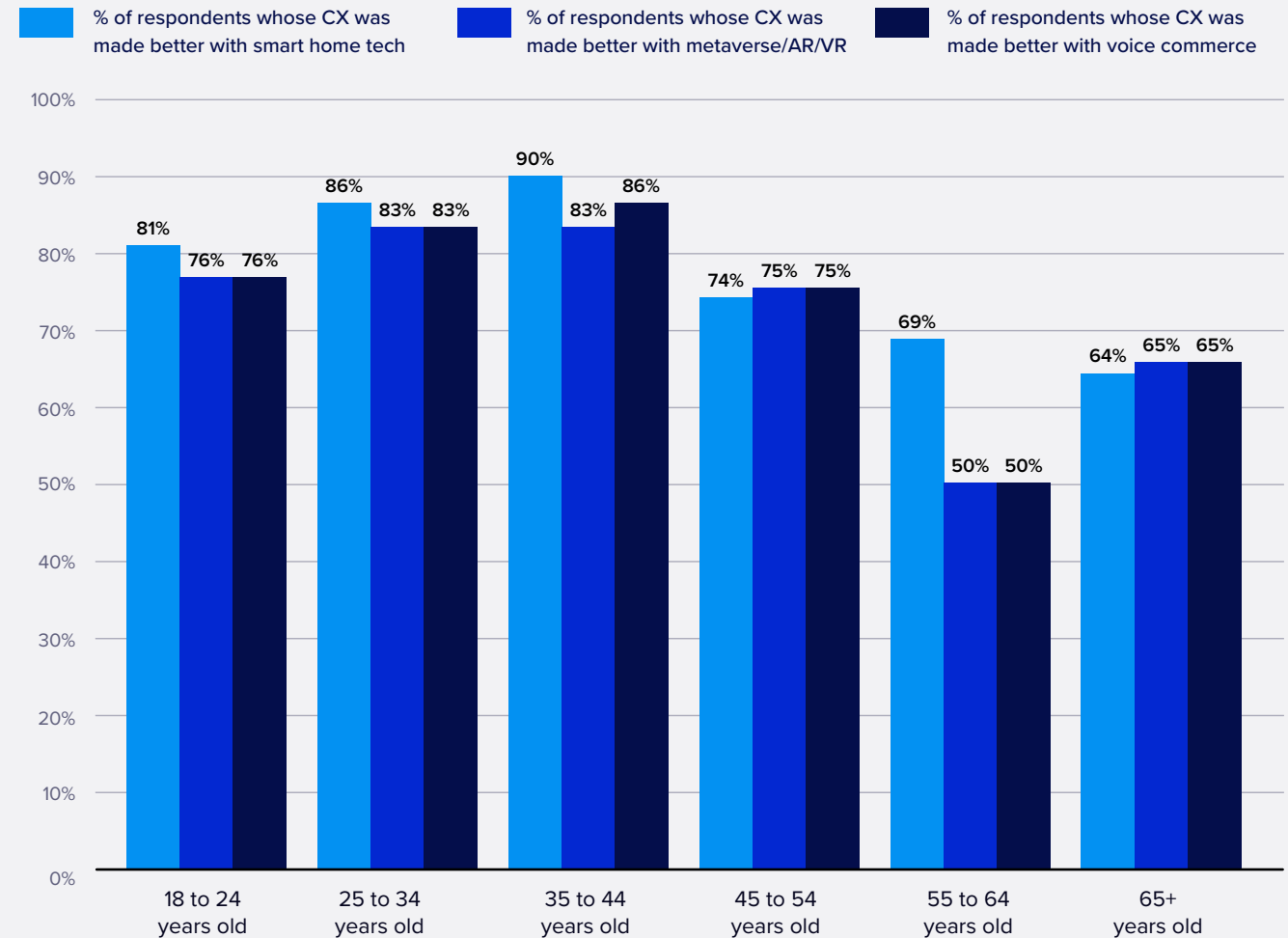
Preferences for emerging technology differ by generation. Millennials respond the most positively to smart home, metaverse, and voice commerce channels.

Showcasing technological prowess with emerging channels can be effective if your audience is on board.

High percentages of millennial buyers, particularly those between the ages of 35-44, who experienced various forms of emerging tech reported satisfaction with smart home tech (90%), the metaverse/AR/VR (83%), and voice commerce (86%). Twenty-five to thirty-four-year-olds also reported improved brand experiences via these channels.

Q: To what extent did each of these technologies impact your experience (compared to your experience without the technology)?

- % of respondents whose CX was made better with smart home tech
- % of respondents whose CX was made better with metaverse/AR/VR
- % of respondents whose CX was made better with voice commerce

Age group	Smart home tech	Metaverse/AR/VR	Voice commerce
18 to 24 years old	81%	76%	76%
25 to 34 years old	86%	83%	83%
35 to 44 years old	90%	83%	86%
45 to 54 years old	74%	75%	75%
55 to 64 years old	69%	50%	50%
65+ years old	64%	65%	65%

Key considerations

Tech and telecom consumers want cost-effectiveness, convenience, consistency,

and information from their future brand experiences. Brands are currently underserving them in these areas.

Brand respondents in tech and telecom lag respondents from other industries in their commitment to customer-first cultures and codified CX strategies,

citing complexity and lack of quantifiable ROI as significant hurdles to investing in CX. These are all related – a siloed organization will likely have different goals when it comes to customer experience, making it difficult to quantify the broad impact of a piece of CX strategy and technology. Mergers and acquisitions can complicate matters, introducing redundancies and inefficiencies.

To remove some complexity, start by aligning your departments with customer-related metrics (customer lifetime value, sales, conversion metrics, loyalty).

Tech and telecom organizations' adoption rates of data and data management tools are too low – and it shows.

Consumers aren't impressed with their experiences, as underscored by their perception that brands are using customer data to enrich the company rather than their experiences. Implementing a few fundamental pieces of technology will better aquaint you with your customers so you can cater to their needs.

Emerging technology is great – if it's employed intelligently.

It's tempting to jump on trends, especially if your competitors are testing new avenues for engagement. Look at how your customers prefer to engage with your brand and how these preferences differ by age groups, demographics, and other attributes to be intentional in your approach. The goal is always to connect with your customers in ways that will improve their experiences with your brand.

For further reading

REPORT
Customer Experience Imperatives

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REPORT
CMO Navigator, CX Edition

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REPORT
Content Supply Chain

Read now

BLOG
Finding Value in AI: A Framework for Practical Adoption

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Methodology

Primary research comprised online surveys of N=820 CX professionals with decision-making influence on customer experience at their organizations and N=2,100 consumers who had a qualifying consumer interaction with one or more brand categories in the past 3 months. Surveys were administered in six languages to professionals and consumers based in 18 countries across North America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region. Survey fieldwork conducted October-November 2023.

Representation of categories by CX professionals: 18% retail & CPG; 17% tech & telecom; 16% financial services & insurance; 15% automotive and manufacturing; 12% healthcare; 9% media and entertainment; 9% nonprofit; and 9% travel.

Representation of categories by consumers: 73% retailer; 64% restaurant or food service; 60% healthcare provider; 55% financial services; 48% packaged goods; 44% clothing or textile; 44% technology or telecoms; 43% travel or transportation; 43% hospitality; 34% insurance provider; 33% entertainment; 33% electronics or technology; 31% household goods; 31% media brand; 26% nonprofit organization; 21% vehicle manufacturer; 21% software company; 15% outdoor equipment.