



A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Customer Contact Week (CCW) Las Vegas 2026

What Matters in the AI-Native Customer Experience Era

Because the meetings you take at CCW should
move the needle, not fill your calendar



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2026



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Caesars Forum

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What's Inside

Firstsource brings three things to this guide that most commentators cannot.

The first is domain knowledge accumulated across decades of running customer experience operations for some of the world's most complex organizations, across financial services, healthcare, utilities, and beyond.

The second is the practitioner's lens: we do not observe these systems from the outside. We design, build, and operate AI-native customer experience systems, which means we understand what it takes to move from pilot to production.

The third is direct, ongoing work with many of the vendors you will encounter on this floor. We know which platforms hold up under real operating conditions and where the gap between a vendor's pitch and a client's reality tends to show up.

That combination is what this guide is built on.

01 How the CX World Has Changed Since CCW 2025

CCW Las Vegas 2025 was the moment the customer contact industry collectively decided agentic AI was real. CCW Las Vegas 2026 will be the moment it has to prove that it works at scale. The shift in 12 months has been less about new technology and more about a hard-earned operating discipline.

The headline shifts

91%

customer service leaders are under executive pressure to implement AI in 2026¹.

Investment hesitation has given way to scaling pressure.

88%

organizations now use AI in at least one business function. Contact center automation is among the commonly reported use cases.²

The pilot phase is over.

Five forces reshaping the agenda from 2025 to 2026

Force	CCW 2025 narrative	CCW 2026 narrative
From hype to operating discipline	"What can agentic AI do?"	"How do we govern, observe, and scale it?"
The trust gap	Bots are improving. Adoption will follow.	- Only 15% of customers trust bots³ 81% of brands report customer refusal of bad self-service³
Implementation gap	Deploy first, integrate later	- Only 13% of companies are prepared to leverage AI effectively⁴ 53% still operate in silos⁴
The consolidation pressure	Best-of-breed point solutions	- Only 3% of contact centers run on a single platform² - The average juggles 3.9 systems²
Workforce repositioning	AI will replace agents	50% of leaders who planned headcount cuts have abandoned them⁵ 95% will retain human agents⁵

Sources: ¹Gartner: Customer Service and Support Leaders Must Prioritize Blending Human Strengths with AI Intelligence, Dec 2025. ²McKinsey: The State of AI in 2025 — Agents, Innovation, and Transformation, Nov 2025. ³CCW Digital Market Study, 2025. ⁴Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025. ⁵Gartner, cited in NextPhone analysis of 2026 customer service statistics, Apr 2026.

02 What to Pay Attention to at CCW 2026

The CCW 2026 expo floor will be busy. To make your time count, focus your meetings around five domains where the buying decisions of 2026–2027 will be made.

For each, we have flagged the trend that should shape your evaluation criteria, and a representative set of vendors to engage with on the floor.

How to use the next five sections

Treat the vendor lists as a starting filter, not a shortlist. For every vendor you meet, ask the same three questions:

01 What is your reference architecture for governance?

02 What is your fastest production deployment in my industry?

03 What is your commercial model when outcomes don't materialize?

The answers will sort the demoware from the production-ready faster than any analyst report.

2.1 CX Platforms

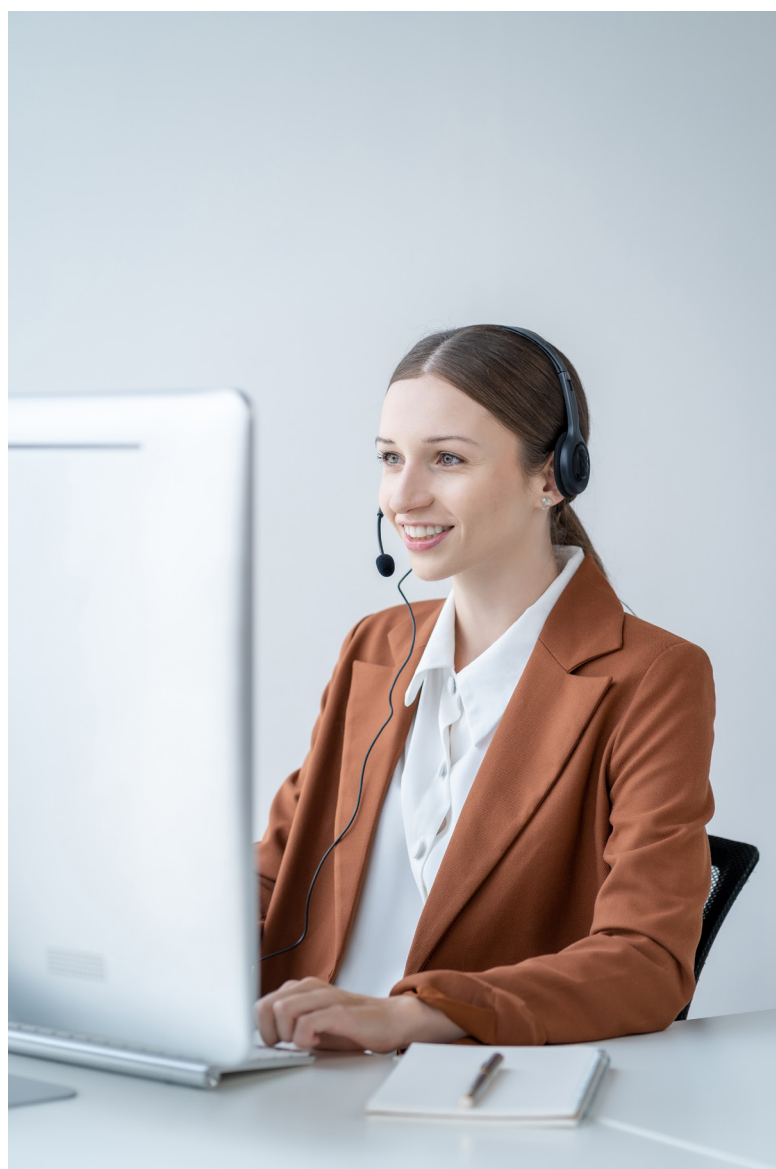
Enterprise CX infrastructure, multi-channel orchestration, system architecture

Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) is no longer a debate; it is the substrate everything else runs on. The global CCaaS market grew to USD 8.33 billion in 2026 and is projected to reach USD 30.15 billion by 2034 at a 17.4% CAGR.¹

The 2026 conversation has shifted from cloud migration to platform consolidation: most enterprises now juggle 3.9 different contact center technologies on average, and only 3% operate on a single unified platform.²

That fragmentation is the single biggest structural drag on AI performance because AI without a clean data layer is a chatbot in a tuxedo.

Expect 2026 to be the year of the “platform-of-platforms” pitch. The vendors who can credibly orchestrate across voice, digital, agent assist, knowledge, and workforce engagement on shared data will pull ahead.



Vendors to watch on the floor

Vendor	Why they matter at CCW 2026
Salesforce (Agentforce Service)	- Going hard on the “AI agents as infrastructure” thesis - The EVP and GM of Agentforce Service has publicly framed 2026 as the year AI agents move from experimentation to infrastructure³
AWS Connect	- Hyperscaler-anchored platform gaining ground in IT-led buying centers - Expect heavy expo presence around vertical reference architectures and Bedrock-powered agent capabilities
ServiceNow	- Customer service management embedded across front-, middle-, and back-office workflows - The “platform-of-platforms” pitch is increasingly credible at the enterprise tier

What to ask in every CX platform demo

“Show me the same customer interaction handled across voice, chat, and email with one shared context, one shared agent assist, and one shared analytics view.”

If the demo requires switching modules or stitching screens, the “platform” is still a portfolio.

Sources: ¹Fortune Business Insights, cited in CMSWire, Mar 2026. ²Puzzel State of Contact Centres 2026. ³CX Today, ‘2025 CX Trends Part 1’, Dec 2025.

2.2 Conversation Design

Dialogue frameworks, personality design, human–AI interaction patterns

Conversation design, once a niche craft, has become a board-level concern. The reason is plain in the data: 81% of brands report having customers who simply refuse to engage with their self-service¹, and 50% of consumers say chatbot interactions still frustrate them².

The blocker is not the model. It is the dialogue.

In 2026, expect the leading platforms to ship richer dialogue frameworks that combine intent prediction, emotion detection, persona consistency, and graceful handoff.

Voice has re-emerged as the front line: enterprise voice agents now average 11-minute conversations resolving issues that used to take multiple human touchpoints³, and Gartner-tracked design tenets like “hybrid voice AI” (on-device first, cloud-augmented) are becoming a differentiator⁴.



Vendors and capabilities to watch on the floor

Vendor	Why they matter at CCW 2026
Parloa	- Voice-first agentic AI gaining traction in enterprise - Published a notable 2026 trends piece on multimodal orchestration that is shaping vendor narratives
Kore.ai	- Strong enterprise positioning with banking and healthcare reference cases - Expanded design tooling for enterprise governance
Cresta	- Real-time agent assist and generative coaching for live conversations - The demo to watch is how their conversation intelligence shapes the dialogue while the call is still in progress
Sanas	- Real-time accent translation and voice clarity layer - Reframes the conversation design problem from “what is said” to “how it is heard,” particularly relevant for global delivery models - Watch for a demonstration of its expanded speech intelligence capabilities on the floor
ElevenLabs, Deepgram	- Emerging voice infrastructure layer - Watch the booths for partnership announcements with platform vendors - Voice realism is becoming table stakes
Synthflow, CallBotics, and similar vendors	- New entrants who are pushing Voice-Agent-as-a-Service - Watch their demos for emotional intelligence and tone-adaptation patterns

What to ask in every conversation design demo

“ Show me the same flow twice: once with a frustrated customer, once with a calm one. ”

The vendor that adapts tone, pacing, and escalation in real time is two product cycles ahead of one that doesn't.

Sources: ¹CCW Digital Market Study, 2025; ²Cyara analysis of chatbot customer experience, Dec 2024 ³NextLevel.ai, ‘Voice AI Trends 2026’, Dec 2025. ⁴Kardome and Gartner ‘Physical AI’ trend analysis, Dec 2025.

2.3 Agentic AI

Autonomous agents, large action model orchestration, multi-agent workflows

Agentic AI is the dominant CCW 2026 narrative, but the conversation has matured. The question last year was, “What is an agent?”

This year it is, “How do agents collaborate, hand off, and stay accountable?”

Cisco’s 2025 AI Readiness Index found 83% of organizations plan to deploy AI agents within the next year¹, and another report, Cisco’s CX Agentic AI Research, projected that 68% of customer interactions will be handled by agentic AI by 2028².

Gartner’s parallel forecasts are equally aggressive: by 2029, agentic AI will autonomously resolve 80% of common service issues, cutting operational costs by 30%.²

But the gap is widening between ambition and execution. Only 13% of companies are prepared to leverage AI effectively, and 53% still run AI in silos¹.

The vendors who win in 2026 will be the ones who solve the orchestration problem, not those with the most autonomous single agent.

Vendors and capabilities to watch on the floor

Vendor	Why they matter at CCW 2026
Salesforce Agentforce	- The most assertive agentic narrative in enterprise - Service-edition agents are now positioned as infrastructure, not pilots
Pega	- Pega Agent Experience (AgentX) frames the workflow backbone as the safety layer for autonomous agents, - It's a thesis directly aligned with the governance question buyers are asking
ServiceNow	- Embedded AI agents in front-, middle-, and back-office workflows - Growing footprint in customer service via the CRM and Industry Workflows portfolio
Ada	- Agent-native vendor maturing fast with strong vertical reference cases - Commercial models are increasingly tied to resolution outcomes rather than seats
AWS (Bedrock Agents, Amazon Q)	- The most complete reference stack for building enterprise agents on a hyper-scaler - Expect deep showcases on multi-agent orchestration, guardrails, and integration with Connect
Google Cloud (Vertex AI Agent Builder, Gemini)	- Strong on multi-modal agent design and grounding in enterprise data via BigQuery - Particularly relevant for organizations with significant Google Workspace and data footprints

What to ask in every agentic AI demo

“ Show me what happens when the agent gets it wrong. Walk me through how the failure is detected, who is notified, what the recovery path is, and how the model is updated so the same mistake does not recur. ”

If the answer is “our model does not make mistakes,” the vendor is not ready for production.

Sources: ¹Cisco AI Readiness Index 2025. ²Cisco CX Agentic AI Research, May 2025 ³Gartner, cited in CX Today, Mar 2025.



2.4 Integration and Data

Real-time data orchestration, experience memory, context continuity

If 2025 proved that AI works, 2026 is proving that AI without integrated data does not.

The Puzzel State of Contact Centers 2026 report finds that half of CX leaders cite fragmentation as the direct cause of rising support costs, and nearly as many say it produces inconsistent training and unreliable data.¹

The implication is sharp: the next round of CX investment is less about adding capability and more about wiring what already exists.

Three integration patterns are gaining ground:

- a. experience memory:** persistent customer context that follows interactions across channels
- b. real-time event orchestration:** conversations triggered by inventory, compliance, or service signals rather than by the customer
- c. the agentic context layer:** a unified data and policy substrate that lets multiple agents act safely on the same customer.^{2, 3}

Vendors and capabilities to watch on the floor

Vendor	Why they matter at CCW 2026
Salesforce Data Cloud	- The most prominent Customer Data Platform (CDP)-meets-agent-context play in enterprise - Pairs directly with Agentforce
Twilio Segment	- Continues to push real-time customer data infrastructure tied to engagement - The CCW pitch will be on agent-ready data
MuleSoft, Workato, Boomi	- These integration platforms are becoming the spine of agentic AI deployments - Worth visiting even if you already have a CCaaS
Snowflake, Databricks	- These data platforms are now actively positioning for the agentic context layer - Expect partnership announcements with CCaaS and CRM vendors
Pinecone, Weaviate, MongoDB	- Vector and operational databases enabling experience memory - Relevant if you are building rather than buying agents
MCP-aligned vendors (Anthropic ecosystem)	- Watch for Model Context Protocol (MCP) adoption announcements - This standard is starting to shape how vendors think about portable agent context

What to ask in every integration demo

“ Show me how a customer’s interaction in your system on Tuesday changes the way an agent acts in another system on Friday. ”

If the answer requires a project, you have a CDP. If the answer is built in, you have experience memory.

Sources: ¹Puzzel State of Contact Centres 2026, cited in CX Today, Feb 2026. ²TechBlocks ‘Conversational AI Trends 2026’, Apr 2026. ³World Economic Forum, ‘Agentic AI requires a rethink of CX’, Nov 2025.

2.5 Analytics and Insights

AI observability, experience intelligence, predictive optimization

As more decisions are made by AI rather than by humans, the analytics conversation is migrating from “What did the agent do?” to “What did the model decide, on what context, and was it right?” This is the rise of AI observability, and it is becoming a procurement requirement, not a nice-to-have¹.

The specific shifts to watch:

- Real-time conversation intelligence is moving upstream, from QA to coaching to live agent assist;
- Predictive optimization is moving from reporting (“these customers may churn”) to action (“this customer just churned in real time — intervene”)
- Experience intelligence is starting to merge customer signals with operational signals to reveal the upstream causes of CX failure rather than the symptoms.



Vendors and capabilities to watch on the floor

Vendor	Why they matter at CCW 2026
Verint	• Continues to lead in workforce engagement and conversation intelligence • Expect a strong AI observability narrative
Calabrio	• Workforce analytics with growing AI-first positioning • Useful in mid-to-large enterprise
Medallia, Qualtrics	• Established experience intelligence vendors facing growing competitive pressure as newer players move into their territory • The merge of Experience Management (XM) and Operational Intelligence (Op-Intel) remains the trend to track, but watch who executes it first
Observe.AI, Level AI	• Real-time conversation intelligence and agent-assist • Demos will showcase live coaching, not post-call scoring
SuccessKPI, CallMiner	• Cross-channel insight platforms tying analytics to next-best action • Useful if you run multiple CCaaS environments
Arize, Fiddler, WhyLabs	• AI observability vendors that have not historically appeared at CCW but should be on your radar • They answer the “Is the model still right?” question that procurement will start asking.

What to ask in every analytics demo

“ Show me a real conversation that went wrong last week. Trace the failure back: which model decided what, on what context, and what business signal would have predicted the bad outcome in advance. ”

If the platform can only report what happened, it is a rear-view mirror. You want a windshield.

Source: ¹TechBlocks ‘Conversational AI Trends 2026’, Apr 2026; CCW Digital AI Trends in 2026 Report (with NICE), Feb 2026.

03 How Firstsource Can Help You Get the Most From CCW

A pragmatic partner for the journey from AI ambition to AI in production.

CCW will show you more technology than you can evaluate in four days.

What it will not show you is the operating discipline that determines whether any of it works: the data, the workflows, the governance, and the commercial accountability that holds it together.

Only 13% of organizations are prepared to leverage AI effectively. The gap is not technology. That is the conversation Firstsource is set up to have.

Where we fit in your CCW agenda

If you are...	Talk to us about...
A CX or contact center leader evaluating new platforms	- How to design an AI-native operating model around the platform you choose, so the technology investment translates into measurable Customer Satisfaction (CSAT), First Contact Resolution (FCR), Average Handle Time (AHT), and cost outcomes, not just deployment milestones. - We bring the playbooks, the workflow design, and the workforce model that platform vendors do not.
A CIO or CTO architecting the AI stack	- Reference architectures for governed, multi-agent CX, including the data layer, the integration spine, the agent orchestration patterns, and the observability stack that platform vendors typically under-spec. - We can also stress-test the architectures the vendors will show you this week.
A C-suite leader scrutinizing AI ROI	- An outcomes-linked engagement model where Firstsource has skin in the game. - We underwrite transformation programs, take risks on outcomes, and tie commercials to results rather than effort. - This is rare in the market, and it should be the question you ask every partner on the floor.
Mid-AI journey and stuck	- A four-week AI maturity diagnostic that maps where you are against your industry peers, and surfaces the two or three highest-value moves to make next. - Many of our clients are not stuck because they lack technology, but because the technology is not wired into the operating model. - We diagnose that gap fast.
A buyer with a long shortlist	- Independent, vendor-agnostic evaluation. - We work with the platforms in this guide every day. We will help you stress-test the demos you see, separate the production-ready from the demoware, and design the integration and operating-model investments the vendors will not quote you for.

What makes us different, and why it matters for the decisions you make at CCW

Firstsource's Intelligence That Operates is a full-stack, agent-first model where we design, build, and run AI-powered operations with outcomes underwritten, not promised. It is defined by five principles:

What we bring	Why it matters at CCW 2026
Domain Intelligence	25 years of operating experience across BFS, Healthcare, Communications, Media & Tech, Retail, Edtech, and Utilities encoded into our AI as decision logic that handles the edge cases your industry throws at it every day. This is the layer that platform vendors typically leave for you to build.
Full-Stack Delivery	We design, build, and operate agentic business systems under one roof, under one contract. The platform you select at CCW is one element. We bring the operating model redesign, the AI workflow build, and the run-state operations as a single continuous motion.
Compounding Intelligence	Every decision, exception, and outcome we handle is captured and encoded. The longer we operate for you, the smarter the system becomes. This addresses the question vendors struggle to answer: "What happens after deployment?"
Outcome Accountability	We do not just deliver results; we underwrite them. Our commercial model is tied to outcomes, not inputs. If we cannot put our revenue behind the result, we have not earned the right to operate it. This is the conversation buyers should be having on the expo floor, but they rarely are.
Governed Autonomy	Trust is not assumed; it is architected. Governance is built into every agentic system we deploy, with progressive human-in-the-loop (HITL), human-on-the-loop (HOTL), and human-above-the-loop (HATL) patterns calibrated to your risk tolerance and regulatory context.

Three ways to spend 30 minutes with us at CCW

01

Industry benchmark briefing

A private 30-minute briefing on the CX maturity benchmark for your industry: where the leaders are, where the laggards are, and what the leaders are doing differently.

02

Vendor stress-test session

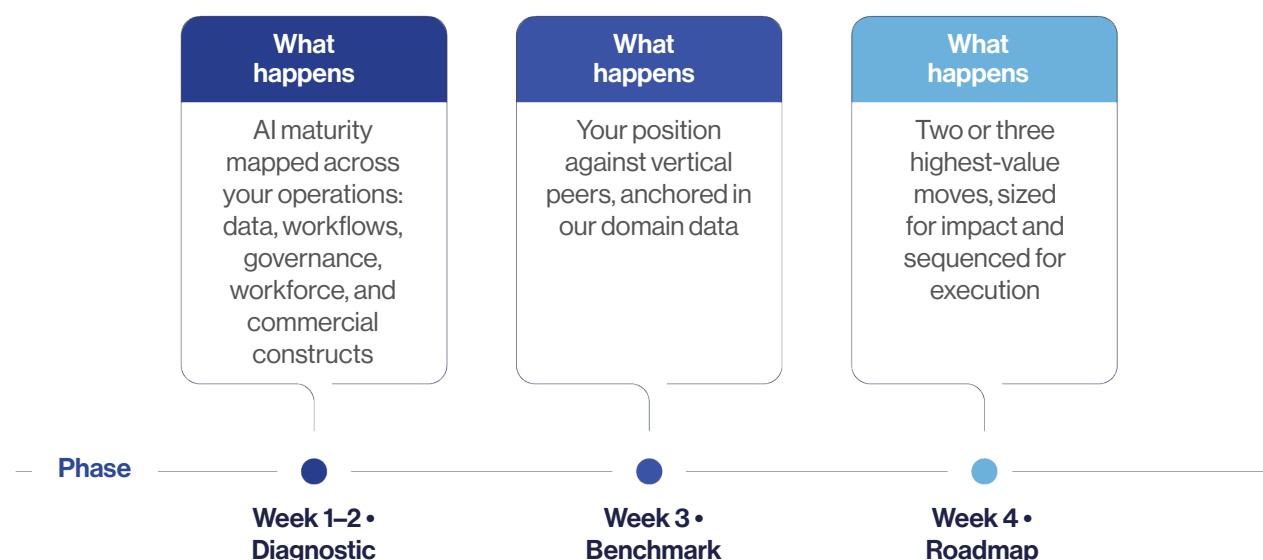
Bring the shortlist you are considering. We will help you evaluate it against the questions in this guide and surface the integration and operating model costs the vendors will not quote.

03

4-week diagnostic offer

A scoped take-home: in four weeks, we will map your CX maturity, benchmark you against your peers, and show you the two or three moves with the largest economic impact.

What the 4-week diagnostic looks like



**Let's make
CCW 2026 count**

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with us by replying to this email.**

**Visit our Customer Experience
page to learn more.**

**We make it happen
for our clients, solving their
biggest challenges with
hyper-focused, domain-
centered teams and cutting-
edge tech, data and analytics.
Our real-world practitioners
work collaboratively to
deliver future-focused
outcomes.**

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About Firstsource

Firstsource Solutions Limited, an RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group company (NSE: FSL, BSE: 532809), is a global intelligence partner to enterprises across healthcare, banking and financial services, communications, media, technology, retail, and utilities. Its inch-wide, mile-deep practitioners work collaboratively to reimagine business process management.

With operations across the US, UK, India, Philippines, Mexico, Romania, Trinidad & Tobago, South Africa, and Australia, Firstsource combines over twenty-five years of domain expertise with an agent-first delivery model to design, build, and operate intelligent enterprise operations. Through its Intelligence That Operates promise—powered by Kairos, the operating system that makes it real—the company unifies consulting, implementation, and operations into a single full-stack engagement and underwrites outcomes, not effort, turning deep domain intelligence into a compounding operational advantage for the world's most regulated industries.

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