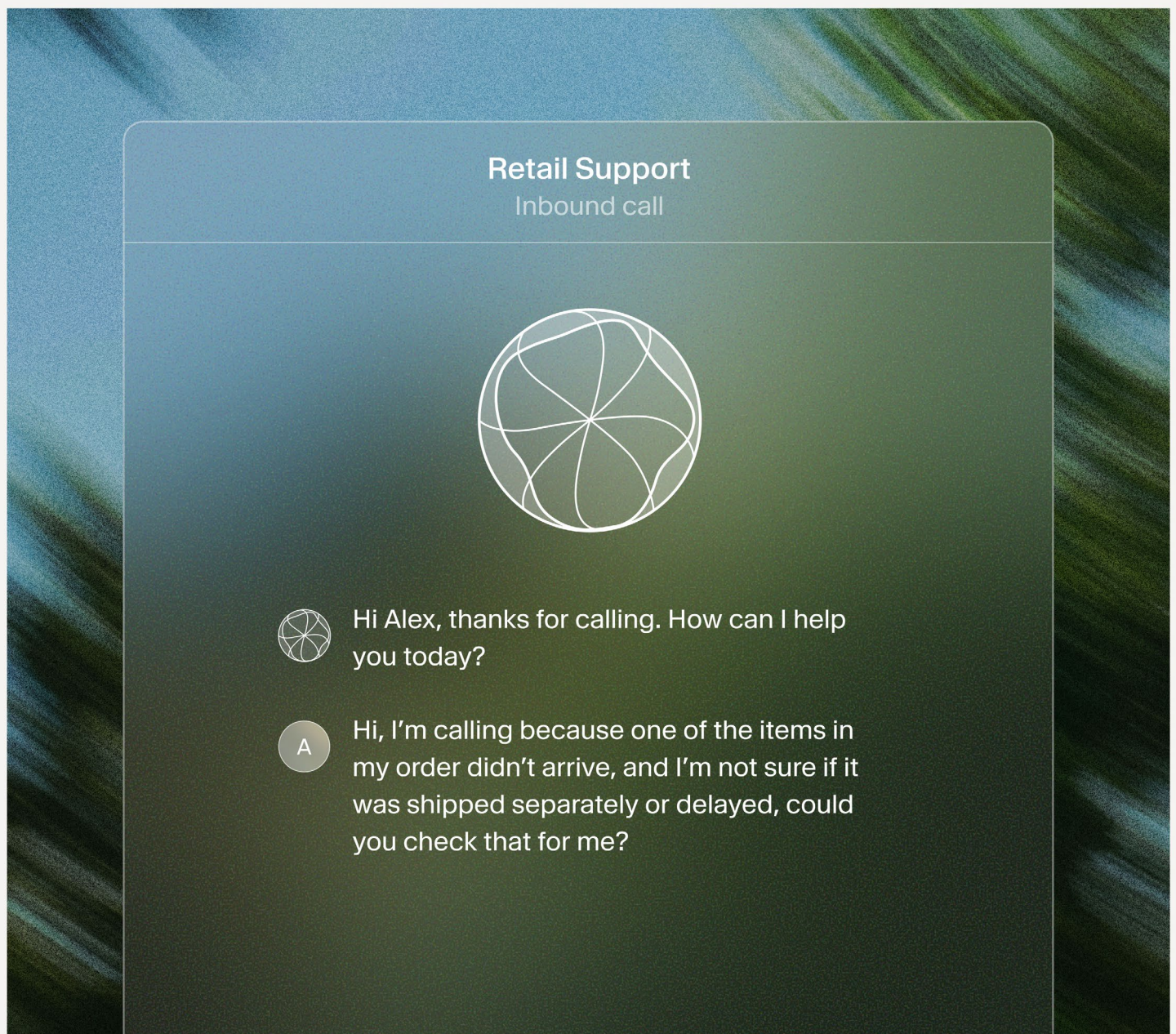


The State of Conversational Agents in Retail and E-commerce

Turning customer interactions from a cost center into a growth engine



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Introduction

For decades, we have seen retail and e-commerce companies struggle with a fundamental tension: customers increasingly expect instant, personalized service, yet delivering it at scale has been both operationally complex and economically challenging.

Traditional customer support systems that deployed the first wave of AI chatbots have failed to deliver on the promise of AI. They frustrate customers, drain resources, and miss opportunities to upsell during critical moments in the buyer journey.

Meanwhile, call centers built on rigid IVR systems also fall short. Human service typically achieves higher satisfaction scores than chatbots that cannot resolve issues, but rising acquisition costs, thin margins, and high turnover in support roles make it difficult to scale profitably in a competitive market.

In this report, we will explore how with recent advances in AI voice technology leading retailers and e-commerce platforms are deploying intelligent, human-like conversational agents that transform customer interactions from cost centers into sources of growth. These agents don't just answer questions - they improve conversion, create memorable experiences that drive loyalty and lifetime value, and reduce operational expenses.

[Talk to an AI Agent Deployment Expert](#)

What you'll learn:

- 01** How to turn customer conversations into conversion opportunities and competitive advantages.

- 02** The proven AI agent use cases across online marketplaces, fashion & apparel retailers, and consumer electronics that deliver immediate ROI.

- 03** How to estimate potential savings and revenue uplift from AI agent deployment for your specific use case.

- 04** The essential steps to deploy with enterprise-grade security, compliance, and scale.

Consumer expectations have never been higher. In the age of AI, shoppers demand instant responses, personalized recommendations, and seamless experiences across channels. Meanwhile, rising customer acquisition costs, thin margins, and fierce competition make every interaction critical.

Legacy automation has failed to meet these expectations. Six in ten¹ consumers report poor experiences with traditional chatbots, and 73% of online shoppers abandon purchases due to inadequate customer service². These failures come at a high cost: lost sales, eroded loyalty, and ballooning support costs.

This piece explores the next generation of customer engagement: conversational agents powered by large language models, ultra-low-latency voice technology, and intelligent orchestration. These agents deliver human-like interactions across both voice and chat that drive immediate, measurable results:

- **Revenue Growth:** Convert browsers into buyers with contextual product recommendations, proactive assistance, and seamless checkout experiences that reduce cart abandonment by up to 40%.³
- **Cost Efficiency:** Achieve 75% reductions in customer service costs by automating 90% of routine inquiries while freeing human agents for high-value interactions.⁴
- **Customer Experience:** Boost satisfaction scores by 25% through instant, accurate, multilingual support available 24/7 across voice, chat, and messaging platforms.⁵

Why Now: From Cart Abandonment to Agent-Powered Engagement

The Breaking Point

For years, retailers relied on basic chatbots and offshore call centers to manage customer inquiries. These solutions created an illusion of scale but delivered poor experiences. Customers faced frustrating menu trees, repetitive questions, and agents unable to access order history or product information.

These failures come at a high cost:

- **Cart abandonment rates average 70%** across e-commerce, with poor customer service cited as a top reason for abandonment.⁶
- **48% of consumers** have abandoned a purchase after encountering an unhelpful chatbot.¹
- Traditional customer service costs retailers **\$1.3 trillion annually**, with limited differentiation or competitive advantage.⁷

Meanwhile, customer expectations have fundamentally shifted. AI assistant powered one-click ordering, real-time delivery tracking, and instant support have reset the baseline. Today's shoppers expect every brand to deliver:

- **Immediate responses:** No waiting on hold or browsing FAQ pages.
- **Personalized assistance:** Recommendations based on preferences, purchase history, and browsing behavior.
- **Omnichannel consistency:** Seamless experiences whether shopping via mobile app, website, voice assistant, or in-store.

Legacy systems simply cannot deliver these experiences at scale.

The Conversational Agent Solution

Modern conversational agents represent a major advance beyond basic chatbots and IVR systems. Powered by advanced transcription, reasoning, and speech generation AI models, conversational agents like [ElevenLabs Agents](#) deliver human-quality interactions that drive measurable business results. This is due to their ability to accurately understand requests, retrieve answers from large knowledge bases, communicate naturally, and integrate with key systems to perform actions such as authentication, ticket creation, and user verification in real time, often faster than human operators.

Key capabilities that distinguish modern agents:

01 Human-grade conversations

Agents speak and understand natural language in real time, eliminating awkward delays and robotic responses. They handle complex, multi-turn dialogues - from product discovery to post-purchase support - with context awareness that rivals human agents.

02 Complete customer context

Agents access unified customer profiles spanning purchase history, browsing behavior, preferences, and previous interactions. This enables proactive recommendations, personalized upselling, and one-touch issue resolution without customers repeating information.

03 Real-time orchestration and workflows

Agents follow existing policies and business logic, authenticating users through CRM integrations, checking stock in inventory systems, processing transactions through payment gateways, and verifying order statuses with logistics networks. They execute these actions - from returns and deliveries to applying promotions - within a single conversation, with escalation to human agents for high-value or sensitive situations.

04 Testing, evaluation and monitoring

Modern AI agent platforms make it simple to configure agents to behave predictably and safely in production. Teams can define tests and evaluations for expected behaviors, simulate conversations to measure success rates, and refine performance before deployment.

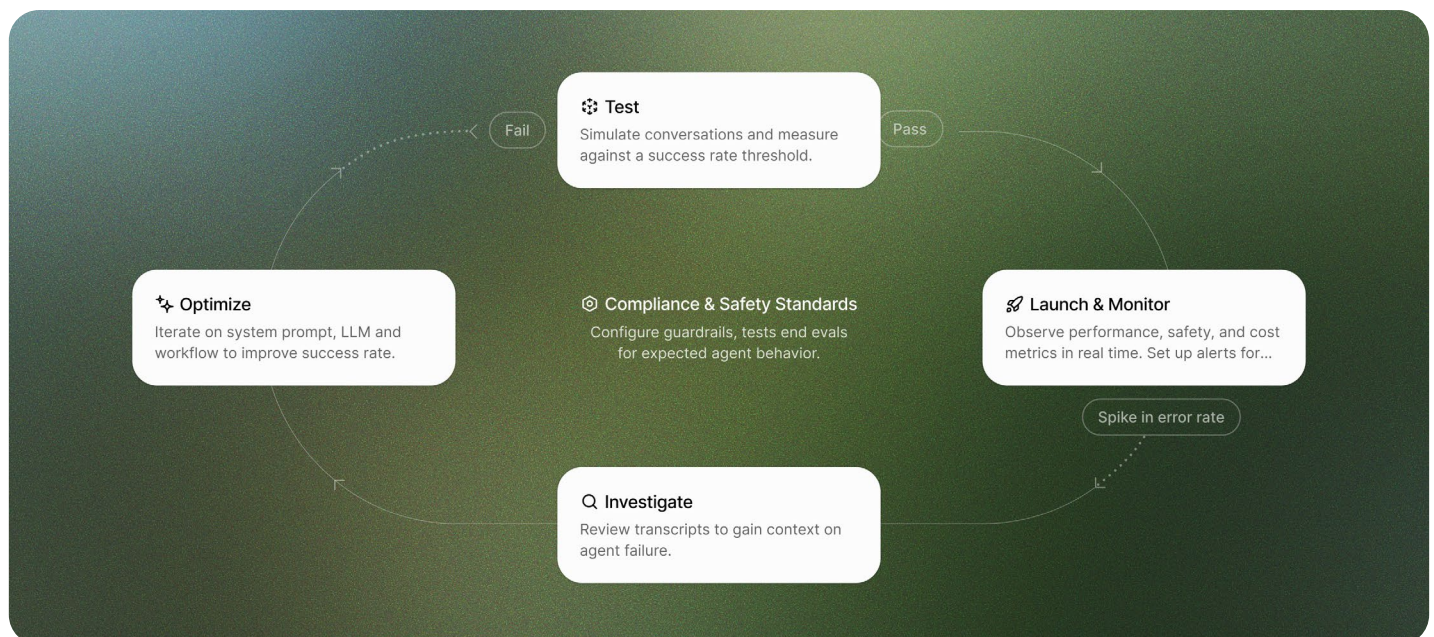
After launch, full visibility is maintained through detailed analytics that surface trends, topics, and performance metrics. Teams can review and audit specific interactions when success rates decline, enabling continuous optimization of prompts and workflows. This provides complete control over how the agent operates in real environments.

05 Multilingual and omnichannel

Deploy the same agent intelligence across voice and chat, in your app or on your website. Agents can also operate through WhatsApp, SMS, and email. Customers can start a conversation on one channel and continue on another without losing context, which is especially useful for capturing or confirming details such as emails or IDs. Agents are multilingual, enabling a single setup to launch globally across more than 32 languages, customizable by region for dialect and accent.

06 Enterprise-grade security and compliance

Modern agents must adhere to enterprise compliance standards and handle data securely. This includes configurable [guardrails](#) that ensure PII handling aligns with GDPR, CCPA, and PCI-DSS requirements. From a data security perspective, zero-retention modes and regional data residency options help ensure sensitive information is processed and stored in compliance with organizational and regulatory policies.



Emerging Channels: Voice Commerce and Messaging AI

The next frontier for conversational engagement is emerging across hands-free and messaging-native channels. Voice commerce - shopping and reordering via smart speakers and in-app voice assistants - is projected to exceed \$80B globally by 2028. Customers already use Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant for routine purchases, and retailers are extending their own branded voice agents into these ecosystems.

In parallel, **WhatsApp** voice messaging has become a dominant communication mode in markets like India, Brazil, and the Middle East. Retailers are now embedding conversational agents that can interpret and respond to voice notes, enabling frictionless shopping, order tracking, and post-purchase support directly within messaging apps. These channels blur the line between conversation and commerce - bringing the store to wherever the customer speaks.

Implementation Considerations for Retail

Leading retailers optimize conversational agents by:

- **Setting performance guardrails:** Define acceptable response times, accuracy thresholds, and escalation triggers before deployment.
- **Simulating at scale:** Test agents against thousands of conversation scenarios - edge cases, angry customers, complex product inquiries - before going live.
- **Monitoring and optimizing:** Track conversion rates, customer satisfaction, containment rates, and revenue per conversation. Use insights to continuously refine agent behavior.
- **Integrating across systems:** Connect agents to inventory management, order tracking, CRM, and analytics platforms for complete operational awareness.

For both online and brick-and-mortar retailers, the impact is immediate:

conversational agents reduce costs, drive revenue, and transform customer experience from a necessary expense into a competitive differentiator.

The Three Retail Archetypes

1 Online Marketplaces

Examples: Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, Shopee

Marketplace challenges

Online marketplaces face unique operational pressures:

- **Large-scale operations:** Millions of daily customer interactions across thousands of merchants, products, and geographies.
- **High support costs:** Customer service expenses consume 5-10% of revenue, with specialized agents needed for order tracking, returns, payment issues, and merchant disputes.⁸
- **Multilingual complexity:** Serving diverse markets requires support in dozens of languages, creating staffing and training challenges.
- **Conversion optimization:** Every abandoned cart or unresolved question represents lost GMV (Gross Merchandise Value) and potential customer lifetime value.

Conversational agents help marketplaces scale efficiently while improving experiences for both buyers and sellers.

Proven use cases

Automated customer support at scale

Up to 90% of marketplace support inquiries are routine: "Where's my order?", "How do I return this?", "When will I receive my refund?" Conversational agents handle these queries instantly, in any language, 24/7.

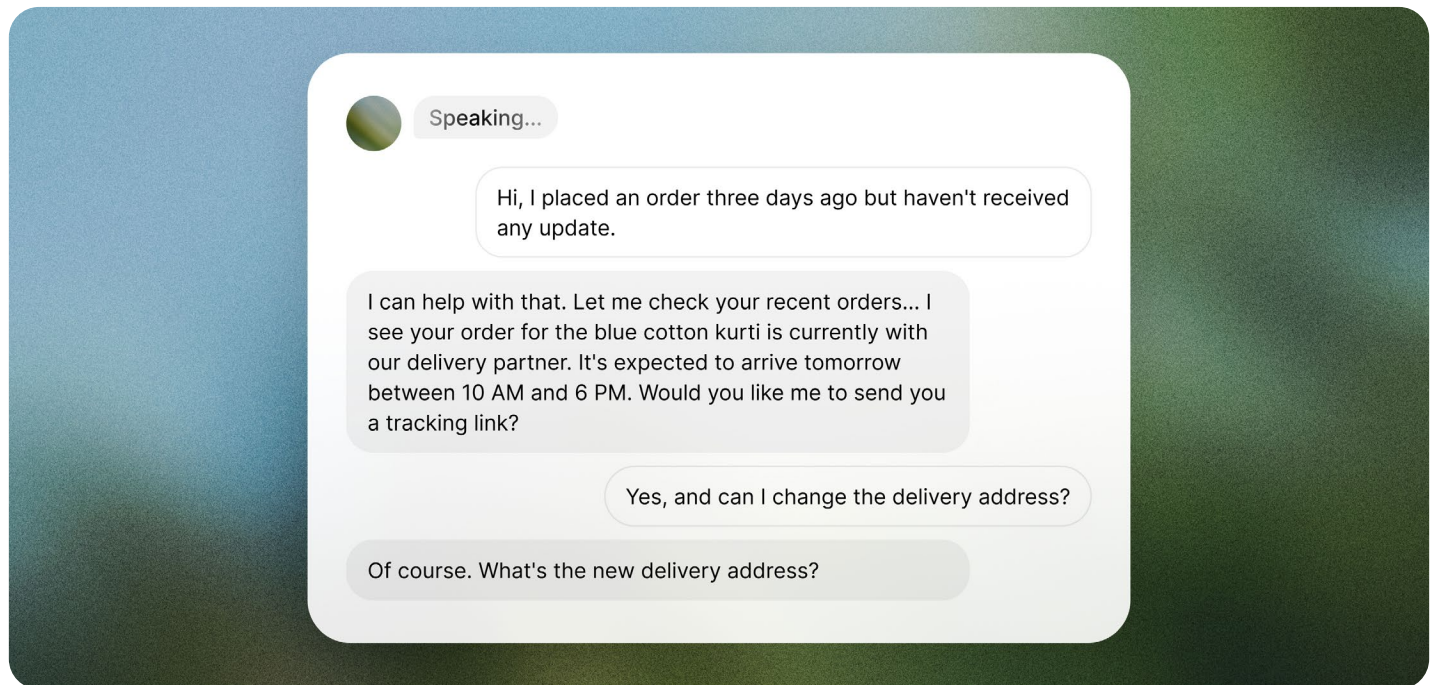
Meesho



[Meesho](#), one of India's largest e-commerce marketplaces, deployed ElevenLabs voice agents to automate customer support in Hindi and English. The results transformed their operations:

- **60,000+ calls handled per day** without human intervention
- **90% of support queries fully automated**, freeing human agents for complex escalations
- **75% reduction in customer service costs** compared to traditional call center operations
- **40% reduction in average handling time** through instant, context-aware responses
The voice agent accesses order databases, payment systems, and logistics platforms in real-time, providing accurate status updates and resolving issues without transfers or hold times.

Example call between a customer and a conversational agent



The agent updates delivery details, confirms changes, and sends SMS confirmation - all in one seamless conversation.

Outbound supplier engagement and growth automation

Scaling supplier acquisition and engagement is one of the most resource-intensive challenges for marketplace growth teams. Traditional outreach - cold calls, emails, and manual follow-ups - requires significant human effort and delivers inconsistent results.

Conversational agents now automate supplier prospecting, qualification, and scheduling. They reach out to prospective vendors, confirm interest, and book meetings automatically, transforming outbound workflows into predictable, scalable growth engines.

Deliveroo



[Deliveroo](#), a global food delivery marketplace, faced a similar challenge with its rider onboarding funnel. A large portion of applicants dropped off after initial registration, and manual outreach to re-engage them was time-consuming and inconsistent across regions.

Deliveroo deployed ElevenLabs voice agents to automatically contact riders who had been inactive for more than two weeks. The agent identified each rider's status, confirmed their continued interest, and guided them through the next onboarding steps.

Within weeks of deployment:

- 81% of inactive riders reached via call or voicemail
- 30% confirmed intent to continue onboarding

By automating re-engagement, Deliveroo reached thousands of riders in hours instead of days, reduced manual workload for operations teams, and improved activation rates without compromising the rider experience.

Outbound partner operations and network verification

Marketplaces with large, distributed partner networks must maintain accurate, real-time data on availability, hours, and service readiness. Traditionally, this has required thousands of manual calls each week to verify operational status or compliance, creating bottlenecks for local operations teams.

Conversational agents automate these outbound verification and update workflows. They contact vendors, confirm key details, and sync results back to internal

systems - securely and at scale. Each interaction is logged and encrypted, ensuring compliance and full traceability.

[Deliveroo](#)'s operations teams previously made thousands of weekly calls to verify whether restaurants flagged as "closed" were actually operational. To streamline this process, Deliveroo deployed ElevenLabs agents to automatically confirm live status, validate opening hours, and update systems in real time.

Results:

- 75% success rate in reaching restaurants

Following this success, Deliveroo expanded automation to help drive activation of **Rider Check-In (RCI) tags**, a key operational tool used to monitor rider activity at partner sites. ElevenLabs Agents proactively contacted sites that had not activated tags within five business days, confirming delivery, guiding installation, and reordering missing tags when needed.

Early results:

- 86% of partner sites successfully contacted

By automating these verification and activation workflows, Deliveroo eliminated thousands of manual follow-ups, accelerated partner compliance, and improved network reliability - all without adding operational headcount.

Lead qualification and buyer engagement

Marketplaces generate millions of product inquiries daily. Converting interested browsers into buyers requires instant, personalized engagement at scale.

Immobiliare.it



[Immobiliare.it](https://www.immobiliare.it), Italy's leading property marketplace, faced a challenge common to high-consideration purchases: buyers were hesitant to contact sellers due to concerns about spam, while sellers missed opportunities from delayed responses.

They launched a conversational voice agent that acts on behalf of sellers, answering buyer questions about listings, gathering lead information, and summarizing interactions for follow-up.

Within weeks of deployment:

- **Lead qualification jumped from 19% to 63%** - more than tripling the rate of serious buyer inquiries
- **Phone number collection increased from 42% to 73%**, enabling sellers to follow up with engaged prospects
- **30% improvement in customer satisfaction** as buyers received instant answers without commitment
- **70% of sellers opted into the feature**, with 80% of users rating it positively

The agent handles listing-specific questions (square footage, amenities, availability), captures buyer preferences (budget, location, must-haves), and schedules viewings - transforming passive listings into active sales pipelines.

Merchant and seller support

Beyond buyer-facing interactions, marketplaces must support thousands of partners who need help with onboarding, inventory management, payment reconciliation, and policy questions.

Conversational agents serve as 24/7 merchant help desks, guiding sellers through:

- Listing creation and optimization
- Inventory and pricing updates
- Order fulfillment and shipping
- Payment processing and fee structures
- Promotional campaign setup

This reduces merchant churn, accelerates onboarding, and improves catalog quality - all without expanding support teams.

Metrics That Matter

Across marketplaces, conversational agents consistently deliver measurable impact across both operational efficiency and growth metrics.

Efficiency and cost metrics

- **Containment rate:** Share of inquiries fully resolved by AI without human escalation Traditional chat bot automation achieves 45-60%, while companies deploying conversational agents reach 85% or higher containment.⁹
- **Cost per resolution (CPR):** With conversational agents, the cost per resolution is \$0.50-1.00, compared to \$4.50-8.00 with human operators.¹⁰
- **Average handle time (AHT):** With conversational agents, average handle time

ranges from 2-4 minutes, compared to 8-12 minutes with human operators.¹⁰

Growth and experience metrics

- **Contact rate:** Percentage of leads or partners successfully reached in outbound campaigns.
- **Customer satisfaction (CSAT):** Post-interaction satisfaction scores of over 25% improvement is typically attainable after deploying conversational agents.⁵
- **GMV impact:** Revenue influenced by agent interactions through cart recovery, upselling, and conversion assistance.

Together, these metrics demonstrate that modern conversational agents reduce operating costs by over 75%, improve resolution speed by 3-4x, and consistently outperform human benchmarks in customer satisfaction and sales conversion.

2 Fashion and Apparel Retailers

Examples: Zara, H&M, ASOS, Stitch Fix

Fashion retail challenges

Fashion and apparel retailers face distinct operational pressures:

- **High return rates:** Online apparel returns average 30-40%, driven by fit issues, color mismatches, and style disappointments - each return costs \$10-25 to process.¹¹
- **Style complexity:** Shoppers need guidance on sizing, fit, styling, and product comparisons that basic chatbots cannot provide.

- **Seasonal volatility:** Flash sales, new collection launches, and seasonal promotions create surges in inquiries that overwhelm support teams.
- **Personalization demands:** 73% of fashion shoppers expect personalized recommendations, yet most retailers lack tools to deliver them at scale.¹²

Conversational agents help fashion retailers reduce returns, increase average order value, and create personal stylist experiences accessible to every customer.

Proven use cases

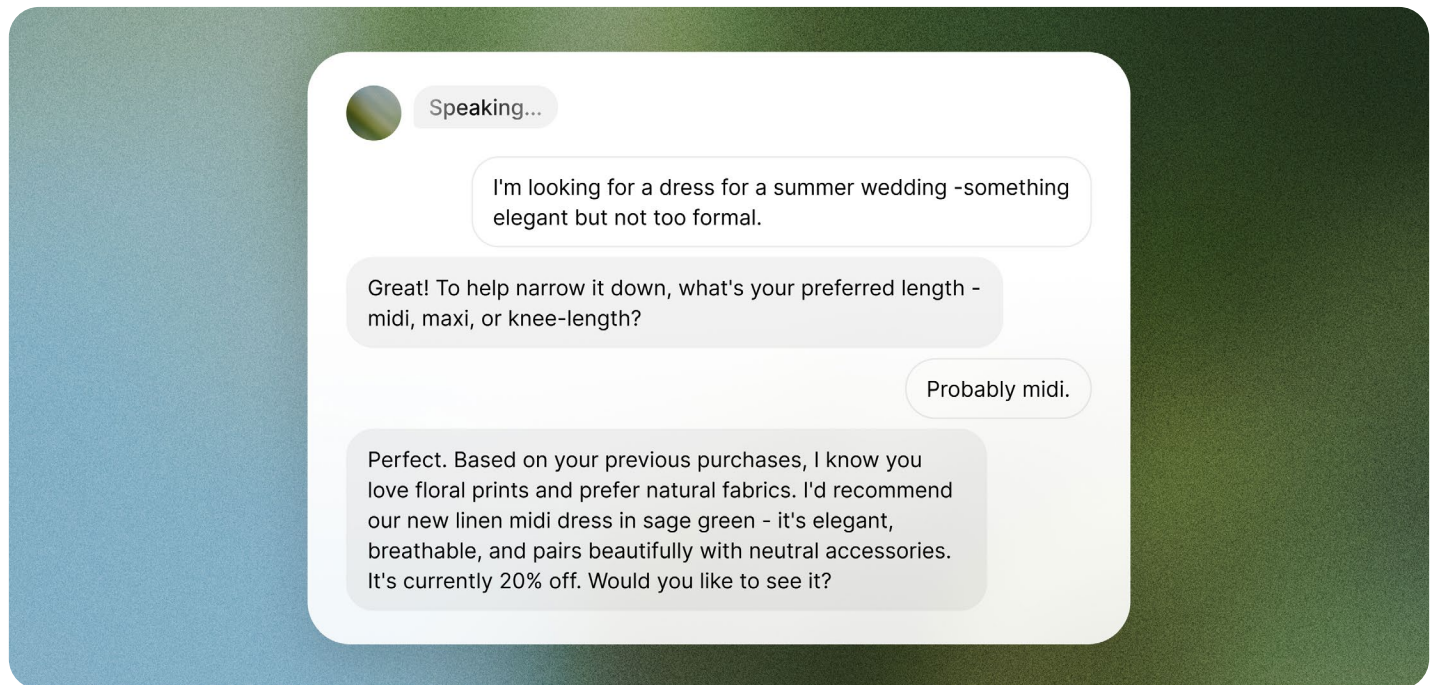
Virtual styling and product discovery

Modern shoppers expect personalized fashion advice - but hiring stylists for millions of customers is economically impossible. Conversational agents bridge this gap by acting as AI-powered personal shoppers.

Agents help customers:

- **Discover products** based on occasion, style preferences, and wardrobe gaps ("I need a business casual outfit for a conference")
- **Compare options** across price points, materials, and styling ("What's the difference between these two jackets?")
- **Get sizing guidance** using purchase history and body measurements ("What size should I order based on my previous purchases?")
- **Build complete outfits** through coordinated recommendations ("What would go with these pants?")

Example call between a customer and a conversational agent



This level of personalized guidance drives higher conversion rates and reduces returns by setting accurate expectations before purchase.

Size and fit assistance

Fit uncertainty is the **#1** driver of returns in online fashion. Conversational agents reduce this friction by:

- Analyzing purchase history to recommend sizes ("You ordered a medium in our t-shirts - our dresses run small, so I'd suggest a large")
- Comparing measurements across brands ("This brand's size 8 fits like a size 10 in your usual brand")
- Asking clarifying questions ("Do you prefer a relaxed fit or more fitted?")
- Providing detailed fit information ("This dress has stretch, runs true to size, and works well for pear-shaped figures according to customer reviews")

Retailers deploying fit assistance agents report 25-35% reductions in returns and 15-20% increases in conversion rates.

Order tracking and returns management

Post-purchase support dominates fashion retail inquiries: delivery status, return processing, exchange requests, and refund tracking.

Conversational agents automate these interactions end-to-end:

- **Proactive delivery updates:** "Your order shipped this morning and will arrive Thursday. Here's your tracking link."
- **Instant return initiation:** "I can start your return right now. Which items would you like to return, and why?"
- **Exchange facilitation:** "Instead of returning those jeans, would you like to exchange them for a different size? I can arrange that with free shipping."
- **Refund status:** "Your return was received yesterday and will be refunded to your original payment method within 3-5 business days."

This automation reduces support costs by 60-70% while improving customer satisfaction through instant resolutions.

Metrics that matter

Across fashion and apparel retail, conversational agents consistently drive measurable improvements in both operational efficiency and customer experience.

Efficiency and cost metrics

- **Return rate:** Return rate measures the percent of orders that returned. Retail return rates typically fall between 10–15%¹² driven largely by expectation mismatch

and product-fit issues. Conversational agents that assist customers pre-purchase (size, compatibility, product fit, usage guidance) have been shown to improve purchase accuracy and reduce avoidable returns - often materially improving return-related CX metrics.

- **Time to resolution:** Average time to resolve post-purchase inquiries. With conversational agents, time to resolution is 3-5 minutes vs with human operators the average is 8-10 minutes.¹³

Growth and experience metrics

- **Average order value (AOV):** Average order value is the average spend per order. Retailers deploying conversational agents typically target a 15-25% increase in AOV through AI-driven upselling and cross-selling. Vendor studies show up to 33% higher AOV with personalized recommendations.¹⁴
- **Conversion rate:** Conversion rate measures the percent of users who actually purchase after browsing. Fashion & e-commerce brands generally target 20-35% improvements in conversion after deploying conversational agents. Vendor case studies report 22% increases in cart conversions, supporting this range.¹⁵
- **Customer lifetime value (CLTV):** Lifetime value estimates the total spend a customer will have over time. Conversational agents that improve personalization and proactively upsell lead to higher AOVs, higher retention and incremental lifetime value.

Together, these metrics show how conversational agents help fashion retailers reduce costly returns, increase purchase confidence, and deliver high-touch personalization at scale.

3 Consumer Electronics & Durables

Examples: Best Buy, Samsung, Currys, Croma

Electronics retail challenges

Consumer electronics and durable goods retailers face specialized operational challenges:

- **Complex product specifications:** Customers need guidance comparing technical specifications across hundreds of SKUs (screen resolution, processor speed, battery life, compatibility).
- **High-consideration purchases:** Electronics are expensive, infrequent purchases requiring detailed research and comparison - yet 65% of buyers abandon carts due to unanswered questions.
- **Technical support demands:** Post-purchase support (setup assistance, troubleshooting, warranty claims) requires specialized knowledge that's expensive to staff.
- **Rapid product cycles:** New models, discontinuations, and specification changes create inventory management challenges and customer confusion.

Conversational agents help electronics retailers guide customers through complex purchase decisions, reduce support costs, and improve post-sale satisfaction.

Proven use cases

Intelligent product comparison and recommendations

Electronics shoppers conduct extensive research before buying - comparing specifications, reading reviews, and evaluating price-performance tradeoffs.

Conversational agents accelerate this process by acting as expert sales associates available 24/7.

Agents help customers:

- **Define requirements:** "What will you primarily use this laptop for - gaming, content creation, or general productivity?"
- **Narrow options:** "Based on your budget and needs, I'd recommend these three models. Let me explain the key differences."
- **Explain specifications:** "This model has a faster processor, but the other has better battery life. For your video editing needs, I'd prioritize the faster processor."
- **Highlight promotions:** "The mid-tier model is currently 15% off and includes a free software bundle worth \$200."

CARS24



[CARS24](#), India's leading platform for buying and selling used cars (a high-consideration durable good), partnered with ElevenLabs to embed Speech-to-Text intelligence into customer conversations at their physical hubs across India.

By transcribing 20,000+ hours of customer conversations monthly across 14 Indian languages, CARS24 extracted actionable insights that transformed their operations:

- **35% improvement in first-visit conversions** through better understanding of customer objections and preferences
- **40% reduction in evaluation disputes** by documenting condition assessments and pricing discussions
- **50% faster issue resolution** through searchable transcripts and interaction summaries

The system analyzes conversations to identify upsell opportunities, training needs for staff, and patterns in customer concerns - turning every interaction into competitive intelligence.

Technical support and troubleshooting

Post-purchase technical support is expensive and complex. Specialized agents cost upwards of \$75 per hour¹⁶, yet most support calls involve predictable setup and troubleshooting issues.

Conversational agents walk customers through:

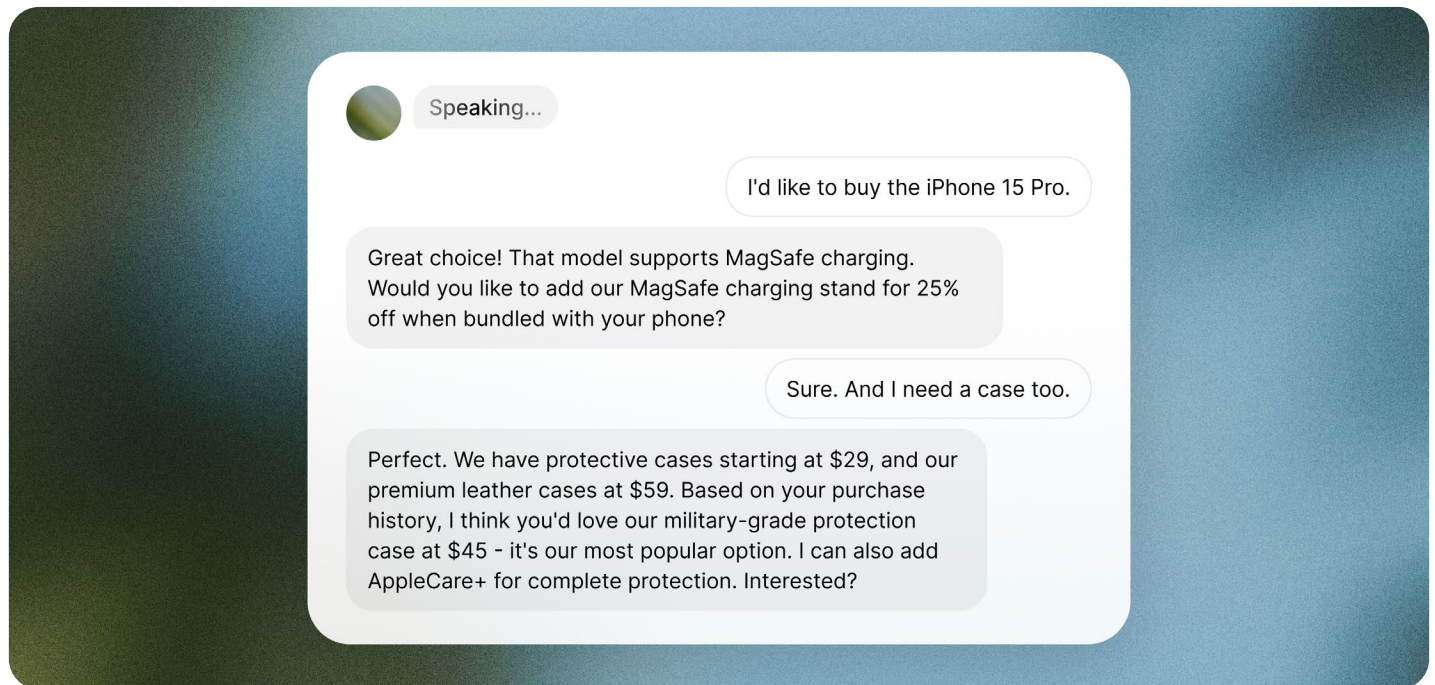
- **Setup and installation:** "Let's get your smart TV connected to Wi-Fi. First, press the Settings button on your remote..."
- **Troubleshooting common issues:** "If your headphones aren't pairing, let's try resetting them. Hold the power button for 10 seconds until you see a red light..."
- **Warranty and repair guidance:** "Your product is still under warranty. I can initiate a repair request and have a replacement shipped within 2 business days."
- **Product education:** "Your new camera has a portrait mode feature. Let me explain how to use it..."

Retailers report 70-80% containment rates for technical support inquiries¹⁷, saving millions annually while improving customer satisfaction through instant, accurate assistance.

Dynamic bundling and upselling

Electronics purchases often require accessories and complementary products - cases, cables, warranties, subscriptions - that significantly increase basket size.

Example call between a customer and a conversational agent



This contextual upselling increases average order values by ~30% compared to passive product recommendations.¹⁸

Metrics that matter

Across consumer electronics and durable goods retail, conversational agents deliver consistent gains in service efficiency, upselling effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

Efficiency and cost metrics

- **Technical support containment:** Conversational agents resolve 70-85% of technical inquiries without requiring human escalation.¹⁹
- **Cart abandonment recovery:** Through proactive outreach, conversational agents recover 20-30% of previously abandoned carts, re-engaging customers before they leave the purchase journey.²⁰

Growth and experience metrics

- **Average order value (AOV):** Average revenue per transaction. After deploying conversational agents, AOV increases of 30-50% are commonly achieved through improved upselling and bundling recommendations.
- **Warranty attach rate:** Percentage of customers purchasing extended warranties through agent recommendations. With conversational agents helping guide the user towards purchasing extended warranties, we see 40-60% warranty attach rate being targeted.²¹
- **Customer satisfaction (CSAT):** Post-interaction satisfaction scores. Companies deploying the most advanced conversational agents are typically targeting 4.5 or higher out of 5.0 across both pre-sale and support conversations.

Together, these metrics demonstrate how conversational agents improve support containment, expand revenue through attachment sales, and elevate satisfaction across complex customer journeys.

The Business Case for Conversational Agents

Any technology worth investing in requires compelling financial justification. For retail and e-commerce operators, that means tracking metrics directly tied to revenue growth, cost reduction, and customer lifetime value.

Cost savings

The most critical efficiency benchmark is **Cost Per Resolution (CPR)** - the total cost to fully resolve a customer inquiry from start to finish.

The economics are straightforward:

- **Human agent:** \$4.50 - \$8.00 per resolution (including salary, training, benefits, infrastructure, and management overhead)¹⁰
- **AI agent:** \$0.50 - \$1.50 per resolution (platform costs, API usage, and monitoring)¹⁰

Example for a mid-sized retailer:

Without automation:

- 200,000 monthly customer inquiries

- \$6.00 average CPR (human agents)
- **Total monthly cost: \$1,200,000**

With 75% AI containment:

- 150,000 inquiries resolved by AI agents at \$0.75 CPR = \$112,500
- 50,000 inquiries escalated to humans at \$6.00 CPR = \$300,000
- **Total monthly cost: \$412,500**
- **Monthly savings: \$787,500 (65% reduction)**
- **Annual savings: \$9.45 million**

Revenue impact

Beyond cost savings, conversational agents directly drive revenue through:

Abandoned cart recovery

73% of online shopping carts are abandoned.²² Conversational agents proactively reach out to customers who show abandonment signals:

"I noticed you left items in your cart. Can I answer any questions about sizing or shipping? I can also apply a 10% discount if you complete your order in the next hour."

Retailers report 20% recovery rates on abandoned carts through AI-powered outreach - representing millions in incremental revenue.²⁰

Upselling and cross-Selling

Conversational agents identify contextual upsell opportunities that increase basket sizes:

- Product bundles ("Customers who bought this camera also purchased this memory card")
- Premium upgrades ("For \$50 more, you can get the extended battery model")
- Warranty and protection plans ("Add 2-year protection for \$29")
- Subscription services ("Get 15% off with our loyalty membership")

Average order value increases of 25-40% are common when agents proactively suggest relevant add-ons.²³

Conversion rate optimization

Agents reduce purchase friction by instantly answering pre-sale questions:

- Product specifications and comparisons
- Shipping costs and delivery timelines
- Return policies and warranties
- Sizing and fit guidance

Retailers report 20-25% conversion rate improvements after deploying conversational agents, as fewer customers abandon due to unanswered questions.²⁰

Long-term value

The long-term value of conversational agents extends beyond individual transactions:

- **Loyalty and retention:** Superior customer experiences drive repeat purchases. Customers who interact with helpful AI agents show 40% higher retention rates.²³
- **Reduced churn:** Instant issue resolution prevents customer loss. Each retained

customer represents thousands in lifetime value.

- **Brand differentiation:** Best-in-class customer experience becomes a competitive advantage in commoditized markets.

Comprehensive ROI model

A complete business case for conversational agents includes:

Metric	Before AI Agents	After AI Agents	Impact
Monthly customer inquiries	200,000	200,000	-
AI containment rate	0%	75%	150,000 automated
Cost per resolution	\$6.00	\$1.65 (blended)	72% reduction
Monthly support costs	\$1,200,000	\$330,000	\$870,000 savings
Cart abandonment rate	70%	50%	20% improvement
Average order value	\$85	\$110	29% increase
Customer satisfaction (CSAT)	3.8 / 5.0	4.6 / 5.0	21% improvement
Annual financial impact	Baseline	+\$15.2M	Net benefit

This model demonstrates why leading retailers view conversational agents not as a cost-cutting measure, but as a strategic investment that drives profitable growth.

Risks, Governance, and How to Deploy Safely

Enterprise-grade conversational agents must be engineered with robust safeguards and governance protocols from the ground up. Missteps in deployment, architecture, or compliance can undermine customer trust, expose companies to legal liability, and damage brand reputation.

Critical security and compliance requirements

Secure PII handling

Conversational agents process sensitive customer data: names, addresses, payment information, purchase history. Enterprise deployments require:

- **Zero Retention Mode (ZRM):** Process PII in memory only, discarding data immediately after resolution without storage. This minimizes compliance risk and meets GDPR, CCPA, and PCI-DSS requirements.
- **Encryption in transit and at rest:** Protect customer data as it moves through networks and when stored in databases.
- **Tokenization:** Replace sensitive data with non-sensitive tokens for analytics and logging purposes.

Data residency and sovereignty

Global retailers must respect geographic data protection laws:

- **Data residency:** Store and process regional customer data within the regional boundaries to comply with GDPR.
- **Regional compliance:** Meet local requirements in markets like India, Brazil, and Canada where data localization laws mandate in-country processing.

Consent management

Ensure customer data is only processed with explicit permission:

- Clear opt-in mechanisms for data collection and AI interactions
- Easy opt-out options for customers who prefer human agents
- Transparent communication about how data is used and protected

Audit logging

Maintain complete records of agent interactions for regulatory reporting and dispute resolution:

- Timestamped conversation logs
- Decision trails showing agent logic and escalation triggers
- User consent records and data access history

Operational and performance risks

Execution and workflow gaps

Partial automation creates frustration. If an agent can check order status but can't process returns, customers experience unnecessary friction. Ensure end-to-end

workflow completion:

- Full integration with order management, inventory, payment, and CRM systems
- Clear escalation paths for scenarios agents cannot handle
- Seamless handoffs to human agents with complete context transfer

Scalability and reliability

Conversational agents must perform during:

- **Peak traffic:** Black Friday, holiday shopping, flash sales
- **Product launches:** New collection releases, limited drops
- **Incident response:** Website outages, shipping delays, product recalls

Test agents under realistic load conditions before deployment. Monitor latency, uptime, and error rates continuously to maintain service quality.

Brand voice and ethical AI

Agents represent your brand in every interaction. Establish guardrails to ensure they:

- Use on-brand language, tone, and personality
- Avoid harmful, biased, or inappropriate responses
- Decline requests outside their scope (illegal activities, medical advice, etc.)
- Escalate sensitive situations appropriately

How to Deploy Conversational Agents Safely and at Scale

01 Partner with Forward Deployed Engineers (FDEs)

Engage experienced AI deployment specialists to architect your rollout. FDEs help avoid costly missteps, integrate with your data stack, and accelerate time-to-value.

02 Start with a focused pilot

Select a high-volume, measurable use case:

- Order tracking for a single product category
- Sizing assistance for apparel
- Post-purchase support for electronics

Validate agent accuracy, containment rate, and customer satisfaction before expanding.

03 Comprehensive pre-deployment testing

Before going live, simulate agents against thousands of real-world scenarios:

- Standard cases: Smooth purchase flows and FAQs
- Edge cases: Stockouts, shipping delays, returns
- Adversarial tests: Malicious inputs, prompt injections, long or nonsensical queries

This stress testing (including red-teaming) exposes vulnerabilities and tunes responses, escalation logic, and guardrails before customer contact.

04 Staged rollout

Deploy gradually to control risk and learn fast:

- Week 1: 5% of traffic, intensive monitoring
- Weeks 2-3: 20% of traffic, collect feedback
- Weeks 4-6: 50% of traffic, refine based on data
- Week 7+: Full deployment with continuous optimization

Track containment, latency, and CSAT. Pause rollout if key metrics degrade.

05 Escalation and recovery framework

Not every interaction should be handled by AI. Define clear rules for:

- High-value or complex transactions
- Negative sentiment or dissatisfaction
- Legal or regulatory issues

Prepare failover systems to switch instantly to human support during outages or agent malfunctions. Protect trust with transparent customer communications.

06 Continuous monitoring and improvement

Track key KPIs in real time:

- Task success rate
- Containment rate
- CSAT and NPS
- Revenue impact (AOV, conversions, cart recovery)

Use insights to update agent behavior, retrain models, and expand coverage over time.

Why ElevenLabs Agents for Retail and E-Commerce

Ultra-responsive conversations: Sub-300ms response times make interactions feel human, not robotic - no pauses, no lag.

Global-ready voices: Native-quality speech in 32+ languages, from Hindi and Italian to Mandarin - enabling consistent customer experience across markets.

Real-time data integration: Agents access live inventory, orders, promotions, and profiles for contextual, accurate responses every time.

Omnichannel intelligence: Deploy once, engage everywhere - web chat, voice, WhatsApp with seamless context retention.

Testing, evaluation and monitoring: Define tests and run simulations to ensure agents behave as expected before going live. Improve outcomes by monitoring success rates and iterating with our A/B testing suite.

Enterprise-grade security and compliance: Built-in compliance with GDPR, CCPA, and PCI-DSS. Zero-retention PII mode and EU & India data residency options ensure privacy by design.

Expert implementation support: Delivering 65-75% lower service costs, 20-40% higher conversions, and 30-50% improved CSAT for Fortune 500 enterprises. operating in the retail and e-commerce space.

Expert Implementation Support: Beyond the technology, We partner with you to ensure success, with our Forward Deployed Engineers helping architect and deploy enterprise-ready solutions that deliver value faster.

Next Steps

If you are considering conversational agents for your brand or platform, here's how to get started:

1. Audit your customer touchpoints to find repetitive, high-cost interactions.
2. Calculate potential ROI using the benchmarks above.
3. Select your pilot use case with clear success metrics (containment, CSAT, cost per resolution).
4. Talk to an ElevenLabs Agent Deployment Expert to design your rollout roadmap.

[Talk to an AI Agent Deployment Expert](#)

Your customers expect intelligent, human-quality service experiences at scale. Make it happen with ElevenLabs.

About ElevenLabs

ElevenLabs is the leading AI voice technology company, powering conversational agents for the world's most innovative enterprises. Our platform delivers human-quality voice interactions at scale across 32+ languages with ultra-low latency, enterprise-grade security, and seamless omnichannel deployment.

Trusted by Fortune 500 companies and high-growth startups alike, ElevenLabs helps organizations transform customer experiences through conversational agents that drive measurable business results.

[Learn more](#)

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