

Implementor's Guide to AI

for Retail and Consumer Goods



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Foreword by Salesforce

We've only just begun scratching the surface of what's possible with AI. Already, autonomous AI agents are transforming how businesses serve customers and support employees. These trusted digital assistants can work 24/7 to answer queries, troubleshoot issues, schedule meetings, summarise calls, recommend next best actions, and much more.

For Indian businesses, the real challenge lies in moving from AI experimentation to large-scale execution. One in seven businesses is stuck in a “strategy paralysis” – they're aware of AI's value, but are unclear on how to operationalise it.

Here's how to realise the potential of agentic AI

- **Unify data:**

A single, real-time view of customer data and other relevant information gives AI agents the context they need to act intelligently.

- **Prioritise AI governance:**

Proper guardrails such as data masking, zero retention, and toxicity detection help ensure that AI agents operate ethically and responsibly.

- **Move up the agentic maturity scale:**

Scaling agentic AI effectively across the business requires a thoughtful, phased approach that typically unfolds across five levels:

- **Level 0: Early stage AI agents like chatbots and co-pilots** automate repetitive tasks, but lack reasoning or learning capabilities.
- **Level 1: Information retrieval agents** assist humans by retrieving information and recommending actions. For example an agent can check corporate policy documentation to let an employee know how much they're allowed to spend and even remind them to create an expense entry for the dinner.
- **Level 2: Simple orchestration, single domain** - Building on capabilities of Level 1, a Level 2 agent has the ability to act on the data it finds and autonomously execute low-complexity tasks such as summarizing an account record, or cancelling a flight.



- **Level 3: Complex orchestration, multiple domain** - A Level 3 agent delivers concierge-level service, orchestrating end-to-end workflows with harmonized data across multiple domains. Example - An agent dynamically “triggers” a seat upgrade action based on the customer’s unique CRM data and then straddles multiple systems, including billing, to complete the transaction
- **Level 4: Multi-agent orchestration** - The future state of agentic AI where a bustling ecosystem of AI agents seamlessly connect to other agents across disparate tech stacks. Example - Imagine a future where the airline booking agent automatically connects to a ride share company’s agent to meet the traveler upon arrival, or even connect to the hotel agent to make sure their room is ready for check-in.

The path from simple automation to multi-agent orchestration shows how far AI can evolve. Now is India’s moment to lead with AI – not just by adopting the technology, but by doing so in a way that inspires trust.



Sridhar Hariharasubramanian

Senior Director, Salesforce



Executive summary

AI adoption in Retail & Consumer Goods is gaining momentum, but enterprise-wide transformation is still limited. Based on 260+ survey responses and 3 expert interviews, this report examines adoption maturity, business priorities, challenges, and best practices shaping AI in RCG.

Adoption with intent, but shallow maturity: Half of RCG firms have begun using AI, and most leaders show clarity on goals. Yet scaling beyond pilots remains rare.

- **Shifting priorities**
Efficiency was the initial focus, but growth and customer loyalty are now emerging as the primary objectives of AI.
- **Distinct adoption patterns**
Chatbots and service automation dominate, while personalisation is still exploratory and fraud detection is underdeveloped.
- **Barriers to scale**
Poor data foundations, non-compliant vendors, talent shortages, and high costs keep most projects stuck at experimentation.
- **Governance gap**
Although strong infrastructure exists, fragmented customer data and weak responsible AI practices limit trust and hinder scalability.
- **Visible risks**
Privacy, hallucinations, and bias are top concerns in consumer-facing AI, where brand trust is at stake.
- **Future focus**
Hyper-personalisation, voice-led commerce, generative content, predictive churn models, and locally trained AI will shape competitive advantage.

For RCG leaders, scaling responsibly and anchoring AI to loyalty outcomes will decide who wins in the next era of intelligent commerce^{centre}.



Santosh Abraham

CEO and Founder

Research **NXT**



Approach and methodology

260+

Survey responses

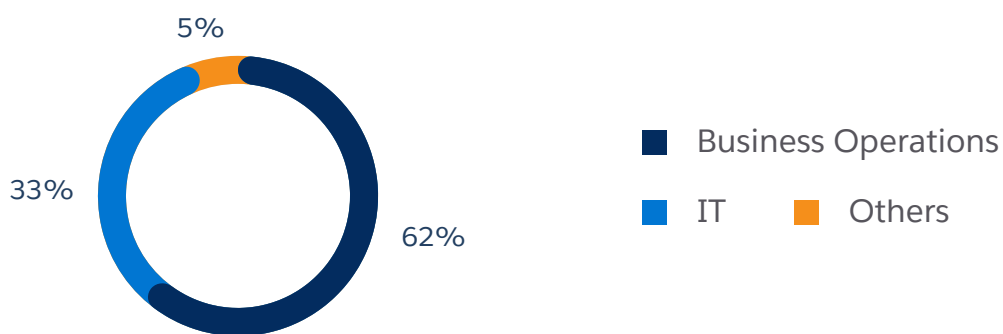
RCG leaders provided insights on the current scenario of AI adoption.

3

Expert interviews

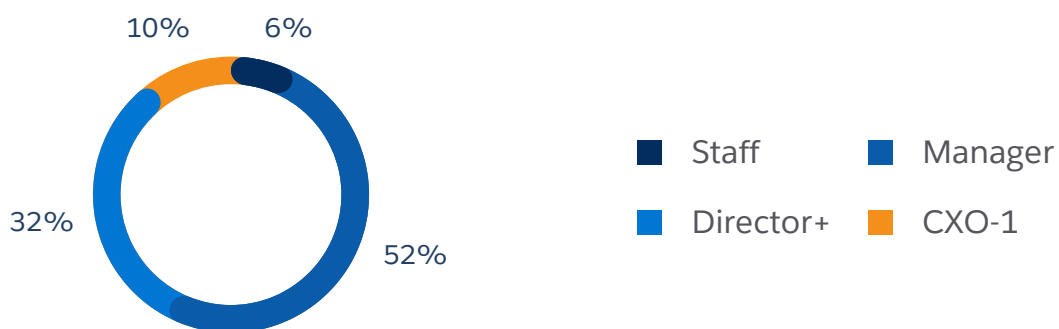
Leaders provided key insights from real-world AI practices.

Department



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

Level

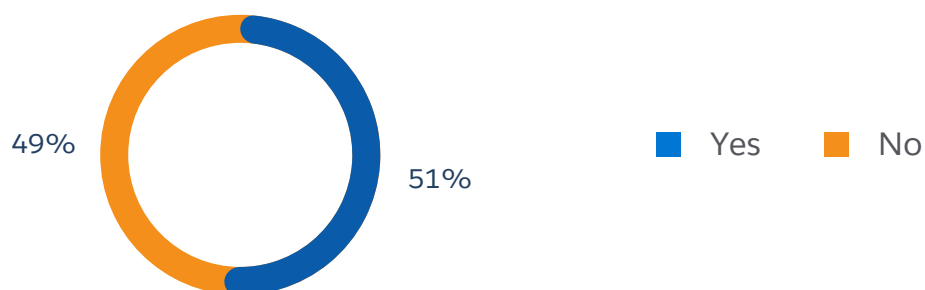


Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey



AI adoption pulse in RCG

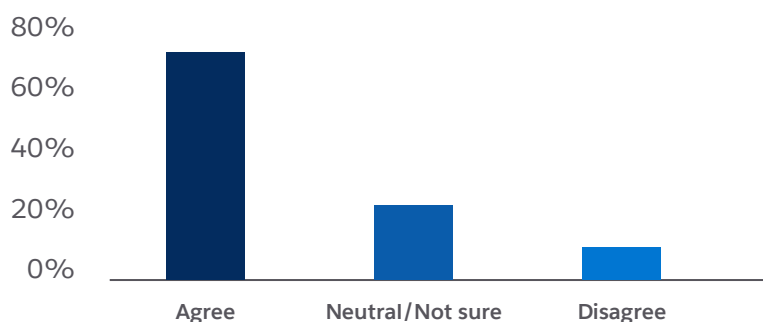
Does your organisation use any form of AI ?



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

- Half of RCG companies have already stepped into AI, proving it's no longer optional. Yet most remain stuck at experiments.
- The intent to modernise is strong, but the leap to an enterprise-wide transformation is still missing.

Clarity of vision for leveraging AI



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

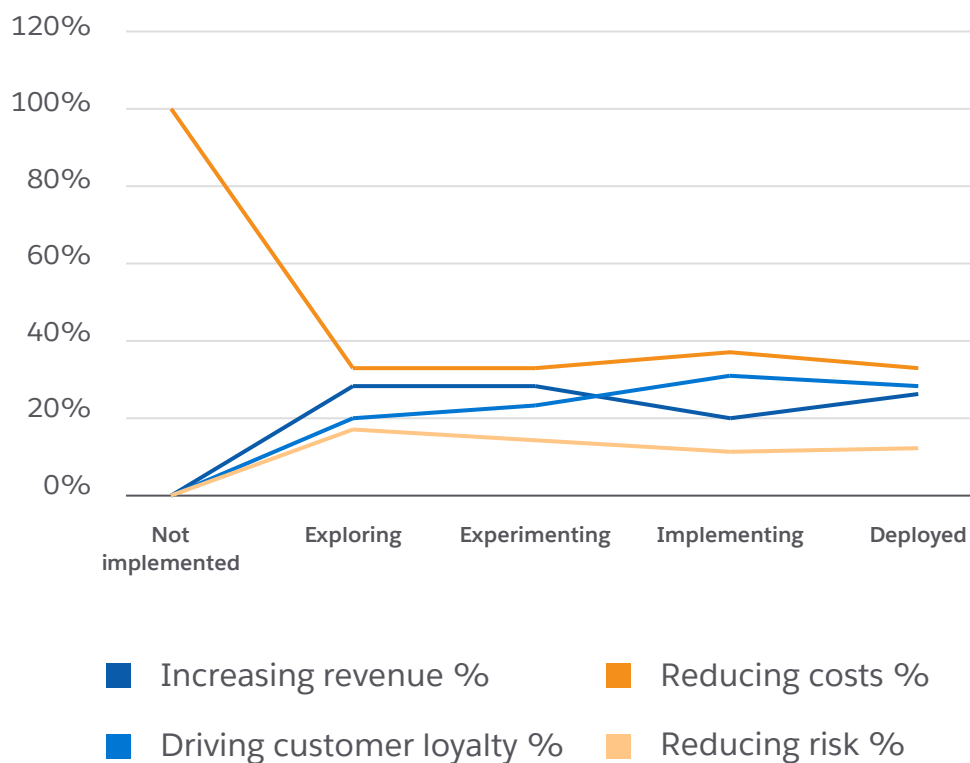
- Leaders already know what they want from AI – customer loyalty, efficiency, and growth etc.
- The challenge is not vision, but execution: turning clarity into impact. This positions the industry at a critical inflexion point – ready in ambition, but shallow in maturity.



Shifting business priorities

AI priorities shift from efficiency to driving loyalty as RCG companies approach implementation and deployment.

Evolving goals across stages of AI



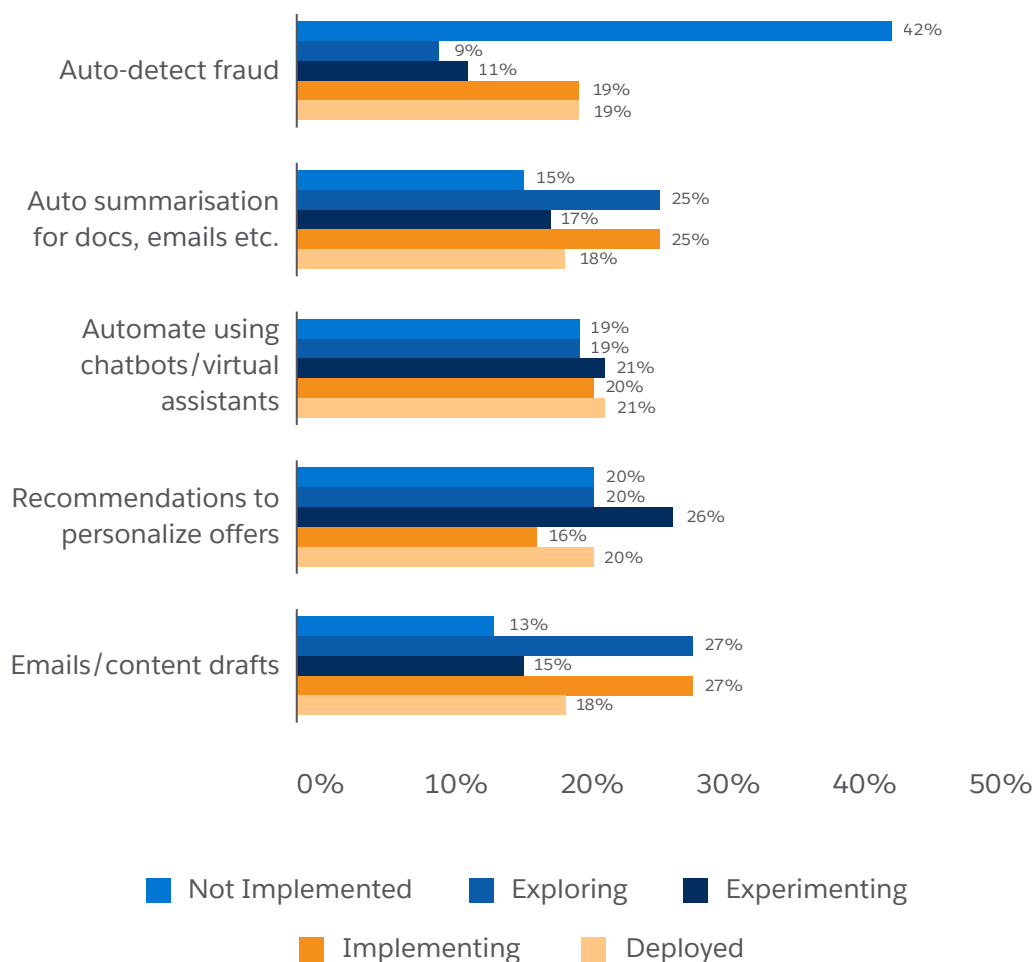
Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

- Efficiency was the starting point – cutting costs and optimising operations.
- Growth and profitability are now key objectives in core AI.
- Customer loyalty is emerging as a strategic priority.
- The shift of AI's role is moving from cost control to revenue and retention impact



Adoption trends across key RCG AI use cases

Organisational level of AI adoption across use cases



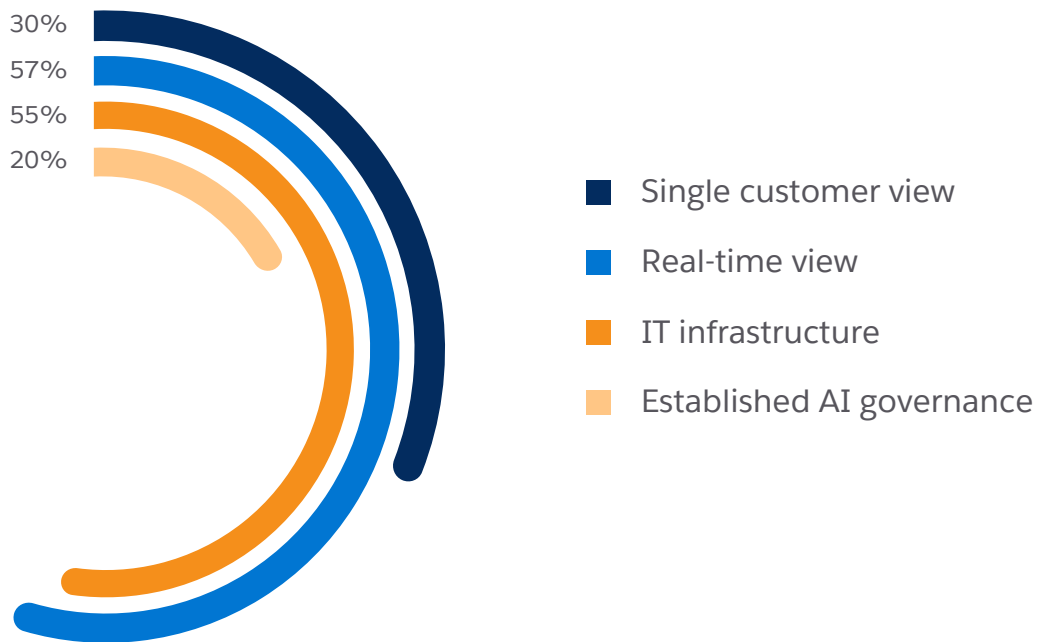
Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

- Chatbots and service automation are the first AI wins in RCG.
- Productivity tools like auto-summarisation are gaining exploratory traction.
- Fraud detection and trust-building use cases remain underinvested.
- Adoption patterns show RCG chasing visible impact while overlooking deeper resilience.



Scaling AI demands more **than tech readiness**

AI maturity distribution



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

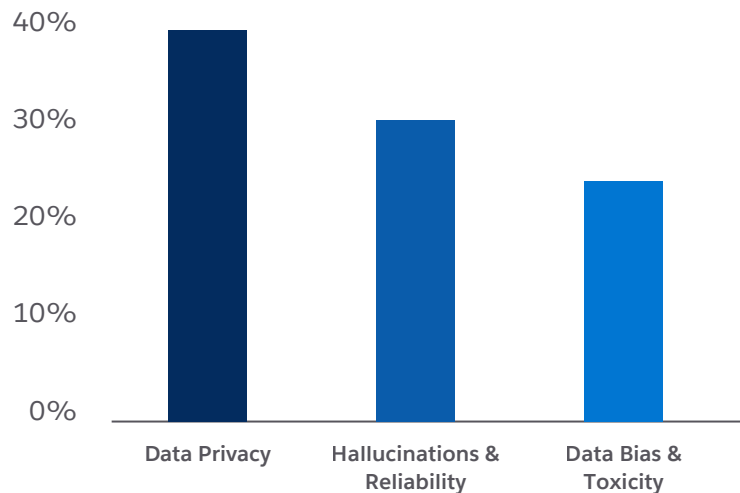
Strong infrastructure gives leaders confidence to scale AI, but fragmented customer data and weak risk frameworks mean insights often stop short of delivering enterprise-wide value

Governance is the sharpest gap – while firms are technically ready, the absence of robust responsible AI practices leaves scaling efforts exposed to consumer trust and compliance risks.



Risk & trust concerns in AI

Level of concern w.r.t. use of AI



Source: Research NXT's 2025 AI Implementation Survey

- **Privacy and bias dominate RCG's trust concerns** - in a sector where customer interactions are highly visible, any misuse of data or biased output can damage brand reputation instantly.
- **Hallucinations and lack of transparency weaken confidence in scaling AI**, reinforcing the need for stronger guardrails before deploying consumer-facing solutions at scale.



Personalisation as the competitive edge

AI-Powered Customer Journeys

- Real-time monitoring of interactions enables proactive nudges.
- Builds stronger engagement and conversion outcomes.

Localised Personalisation

- Context-specific datasets improve the accuracy of recommendations.
- Strengthens trust and relevance for diverse consumer groups.

Hyper-Personalised Engagement

- Predictive analytics segments customers into actionable cohorts.
- Enables sharper retention and loyalty campaigns.

Dynamic Offers & Pricing

- AI adjusts pricing and offers based on live signals.
- Balances fairness for consumers with profitability for brands.



Hyper-personalisation is no longer about calling customers by name – it's about understanding intent and delivering in the moment.

Akshay Matkar
Chief Growth Officer
Pressto

[Read the full interview](#)



Proven best practices for AI implementation in RCG sector

1 Start with the business problem, not the platform

AI adoption is most effective when it addresses a real business challenge, not when driven by trend or tech enthusiasm.

2 Prioritise data quality before AI scaling

Clean, complete, and structured data is the foundation of impactful AI. Poor data input leads to poor AI output.

3 Use AI to augment—not automate—expertise

AI is best used as a support system, especially in categories where nuance and human discretion are crucial.

4 Leverage AI in low-risk, high-impact areas first

Deploying AI in areas like creative automation or customer segmentation allows businesses to prove value quickly.

5 Educate and involve teams in the AI journey

Team buy-in improves adoption, trust, and creative use of AI tools, especially where resistance to automation exists.

6 Validate AI outputs through human checks

Systematic human oversight ensures that AI outputs are accurate, actionable, and aligned with brand tone and values.



What's coming next?

Future AI trends to watch

- Voice-enabled AI assistants are set to revolutionise digital commerce by offering interactive, guided shopping experiences.
- Generative AI tools are expected to replace manual asset creation, enabling efficient scaling of content, ads, and video messaging.
- Predictive segmentation will become central to customer retention, helping reduce churn and increase repeat purchase rates.
- Real-time sentiment tracking will influence campaign adjustments, service interventions, and long-term brand strategies.
- Locally relevant AI training datasets will continue to gain traction, improving accuracy and customer trust in culturally specific categories.



Industry leader insights



AI has enabled us to proactively monitor the customer journey—not just react to complaints, but prevent friction in real time.

Avnish Anand

Former Co-founder & CEO
CaratLane

[Read the full interview](#)



The effectiveness of AI depends on the quality and relevance of the data. We built our AI tools on Indian faces for that very reason.

Meera Iyer

Co-founder & CEO
SkinQ

[Read the full interview](#)



Before applying AI, get the basics right: clean data, privacy, and internal alignment. Only then can you scale it meaningfully.

Akshay Matkar

Chief Growth Officer
Pressto

[Read the full interview](#)



Agentforce

Build and deploy AI agents at scale on the world's #1 digital labour platform

Agentforce brings digital labour to every employee, department, and business process to augment employees and improve customer experiences. Agentforce works with your existing apps, data, and business logic and can take action across your entire enterprise. Plus, it's built on the trusted Salesforce platform, so your data always stays safe.



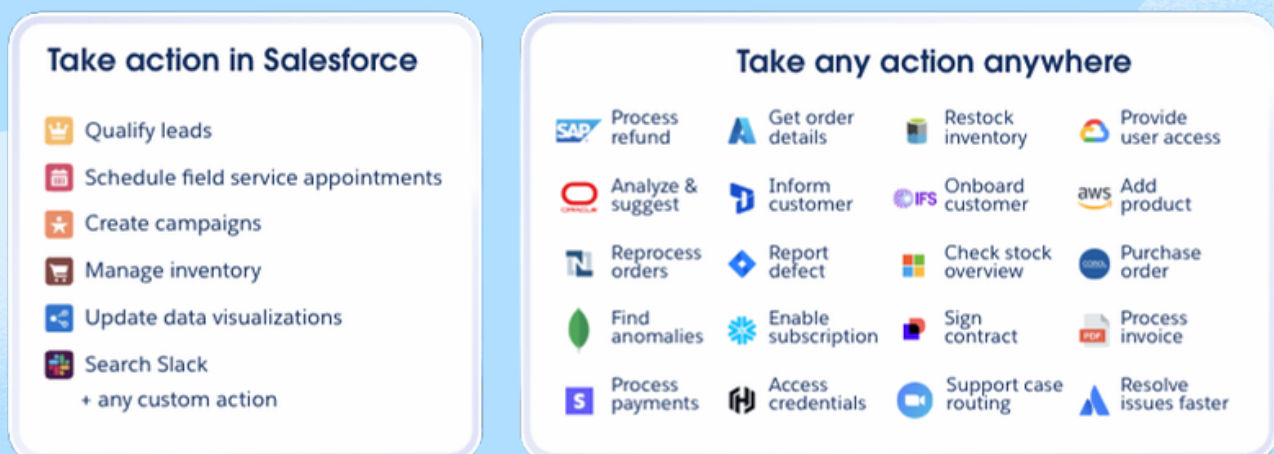
Agentforce is powered by an open ecosystem...

- Connect any data, bring your own AI, and run Salesforce on different clouds
- Get pre-built actions and templates from 200+ partners for faster deployment on AgentExchange, a marketplace for trusted AI agents



...And takes action across any business workflow

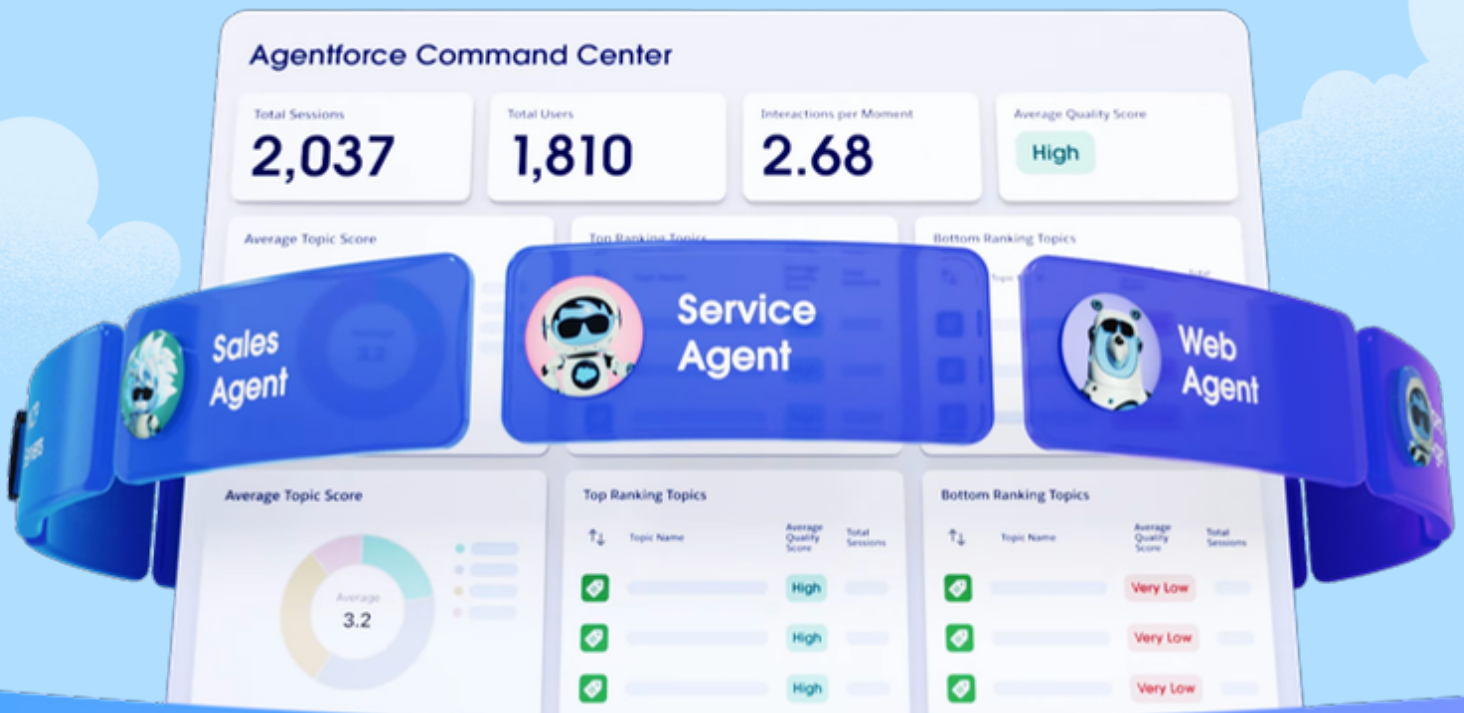
- Agentforce works across every team and workflow
- It can take action outside of CRM, too, through Mulesoft integrations



Agentforce also helps manage, optimise, and scale your **hybrid workforce at enterprise scale...**

The Agentforce Command Center gives you real-time visibility into agent activity and its impact on human productivity – so, you can drive positive outcomes, ensure accountability, and scale with confidence.

- Uncover patterns across interactions to optimise your agents
- Track agent health and intervene in real time
- Understand what's working and where to improve
- Build and test agents fast with AI-assisted development tools



Speed time to value with 200+ prebuilt industry actions

Discover practical, custom use cases across industries, so you can tailor agents to your business and customer needs.



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