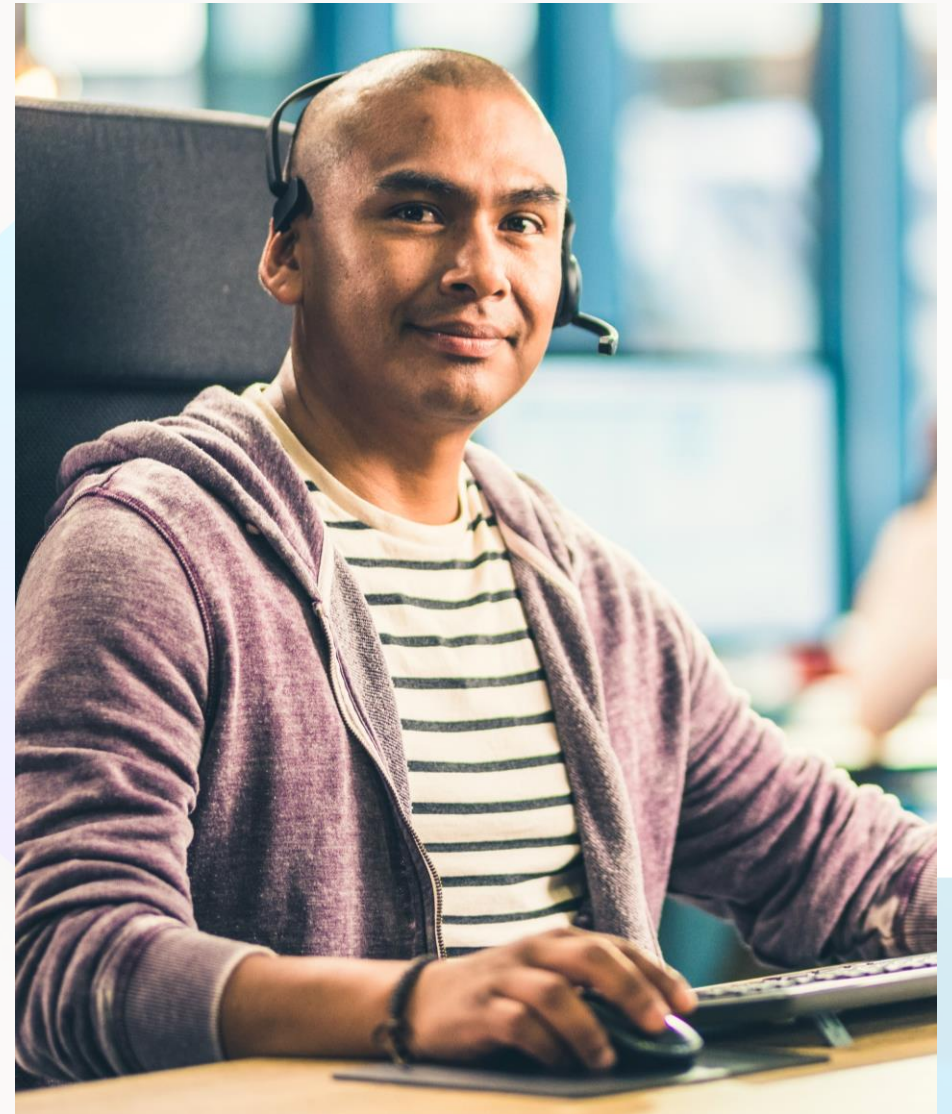


Generative AI in Microsoft's Customer Service and Support

Learnings from Microsoft's successful deployment of Copilot to Customer Service and Support (CSS)



About this whitepaper

Our Customer Service and Support (CSS) team was one of the first at Microsoft to start using Microsoft Copilot for Dynamics 365. CSS is one of the largest customer support orgs in the world, operating in 120 countries and helping more than one billion end consumers annually.

Copilot deployment for CSS started in March 2023, and by the time the initial launch concluded in June, tens of thousands of agents globally were equipped with Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Service. We optimized about 67,000 knowledge articles in those four months too.

It's been a year since we began outfitting our CSS team with Copilot, and we've learned a lot about the process since then. This whitepaper passes those learnings along to you—but it's not an instructional manual; it doesn't offer step-by-step guidance for deploying the generative AI solution. Instead, it's a set of best practices we discovered while adopting Copilot in Customer Service here at Microsoft.

Those best practices are organized into the following six parts:

1. Prepare for (big) change
2. Don't skimp on knowledge
3. Address inefficiencies to quell AI fears
4. Engage enthusiasts
5. Listen earnestly, communicate honestly
6. Embrace the moment!

Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Service

Copilot is quickly making its way into almost every Microsoft app, but this whitepaper focuses exclusively on Copilot in Dynamics 365 Customer Service. The generative AI solution helps support agents with a variety of everyday tasks directly in Dynamics 365 Customer Service, like automating case and conversation summaries, drafting emails, and answering questions. It also offers managers and supervisors quick, visualized insights about Copilot usage and other metrics to identify productivity gaps. So far, our CSS team has realized some serious time-savings benefits from Copilot, which have improved the customer experience too. We've listed some of those results on the next page.

Resources

Here are the best resources to learn more about Copilot in Customer Service.

- Website: aka.ms/D365CustomerService
- Technical details: aka.ms/D365CustomerServiceCopilot
- Infographic: [aka.ms/Copilot in CS Infographic](https://aka.ms/Copilot_in_CS_Infographic)

The story so far across select CSS businesses

Copilot's early impact on Microsoft CSS agents

We're serving
more customers

9%

faster First
Response rate

9-12%

increase in number of
cases and chats support
agents manage

We're **faster** when
helping customers

7.5%

reduction in
Days to Close

12-16%

decrease in Average
Handle Time for
chat cases

Our junior agents are
becoming **super** agents

13%

reduction in
Days to Solution

13%

increase in cases resolved
without the need for
assistance from peers

Part 1

Prepare for (big) change

“What was true yesterday will not be true tomorrow.”

— Ric Todd, Director, Strategy and Innovation, CSS at Microsoft

You've never deployed technology quite like Copilot

We won't mince words: Copilot will probably be the biggest and fastest solution you've ever deployed. It can impact every part of your customer support business, and unlike other apps, its behavior will constantly evolve as the underlying data changes. Copilot is a truly unique solution, which means you'll encounter unique deployment challenges. But you can avoid the most critical mistakes with careful planning.

- **Fix what's broken first**

Copilot acts as a powerful amplifier, enhancing the strengths of your processes and highlighting areas for improvement. Use this multiplying effect to your advantage: identify and clean up long-festering problems, like outdated knowledge articles, because ignoring those issues could actually make things worse for support teams once Copilot is launched.

- **Be honest about what Copilot is—and what it's not**

Honesty should be your top priority while preparing for deployment. That starts with acknowledging everyone's top concern—that AI is coming for their jobs—and admit that roles *will* evolve. You can soften that message with all the

benefits of Copilot, just don't go overboard. Yes, Copilot is a major breakthrough, but it still depends on human interaction. It is a co-pilot, after all, a supportive technology. Finally, consider how you'll encourage honest dialogue about the experience, because feedback can help improve processes while establishing trust between agents and leaders.

Key takeaways

- Before doing anything else, clean up long-festering process problems and data issues
- Highlight the benefits of Copilot to quell fears around AI, but don't overpromise
- Encourage honest feedback

Words of wisdom

"A lot of the old playbooks you have are no longer valid. You can't do deployment the way you could six months or a year ago because things are moving too fast."

— Andrew Brummett, Partner, Director of Product Management at Microsoft

Part 2

Don't skimp on knowledge

“For everything you put in, it’s either valuable or not—and **Copilot** has a multiplying effect on that.”

— Ric Todd, Director, Strategy and Innovation, CSS at Microsoft

Knowledge management is one of the single most important thing to get right

“Garbage in, garbage out.” Remember that phrase, because it could mean the difference between success and failure. Copilot is only as useful as its corpus of knowledge, which is all the guides, articles, and documentation Copilot uses to support agents. That means bad content will produce equally bad results—and bad results could derail your entire effort. If Copilot consistently offers incorrect or outdated answers, your agents will quickly abandon it. There's simply nothing more important before launching Copilot than ensuring your underlying content is accurate, up-to-date, and organized.

- **Leverage our 6Ds Framework**

Some very smart CSS folks created a standardized process for optimizing Large Language Model (LLM) content. It's called the [6Ds Framework](#) for its six steps—Discover, Design, Develop, Diagnose, Deploy, and Detect—and it's what we followed to ensure our corpus of customer support content was up to snuff. We'd suggest you do the same.

- **Treat responsible AI as non-negotiable**

You'll notice there are multiple Responsible AI reviews baked

into the 6Ds Framework. These should not be optional. Ensuring your content meets [Responsible AI principles](#), which we did for all our CSS knowledge, is a win-win approach: it helps protect you and it promotes a better experience for your customers. Besides, it's the right thing to do. Generative AI is still in its infancy, and the more companies that treat it responsibly, the more likely it'll be a force for good.

Key takeaways

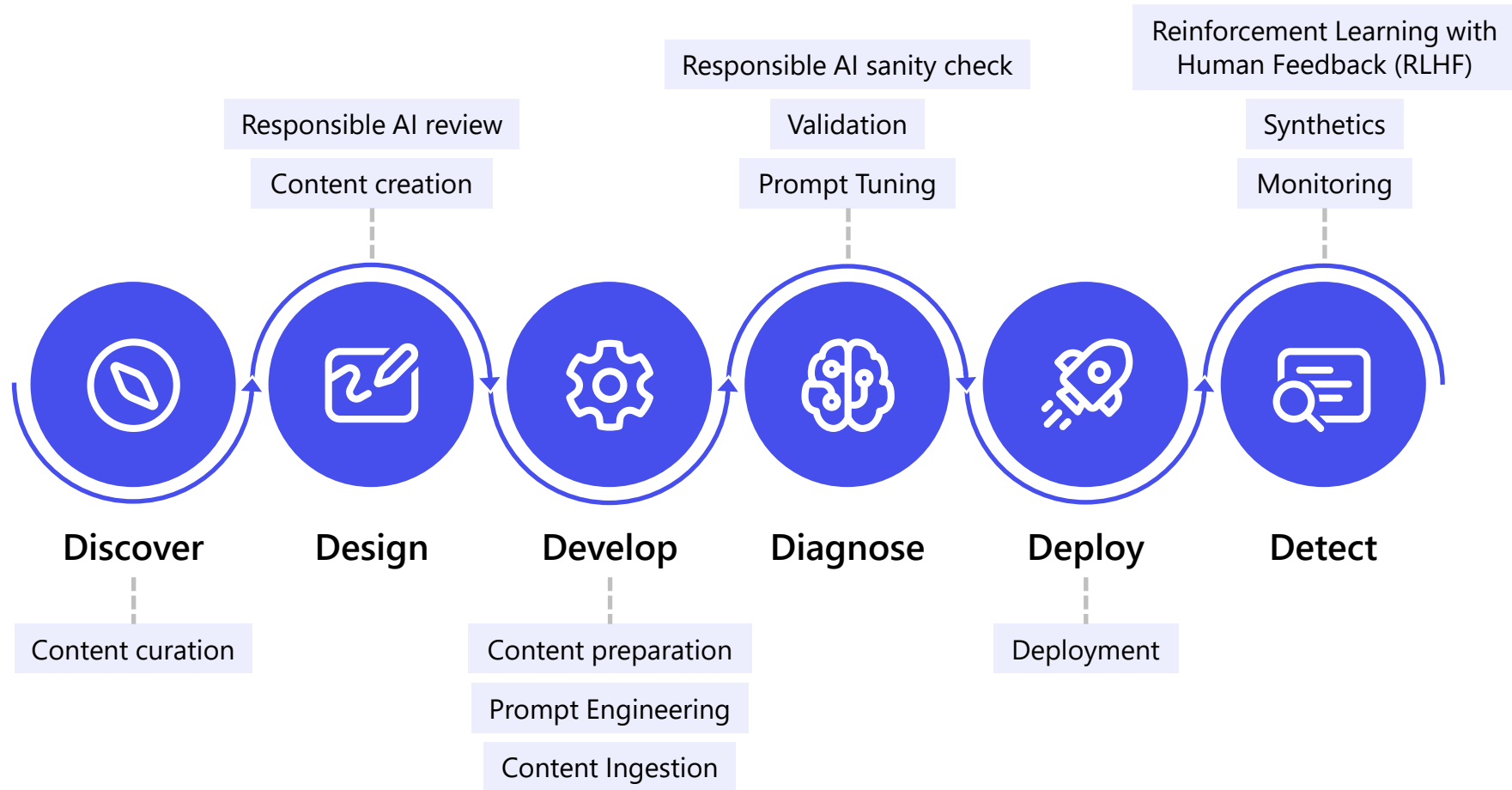
- Follow our 6Ds Framework for step-by-step knowledge management guidance
- Bake Responsible AI into all your content

Words of wisdom

“We went into the process of building AI models, utilizing our support content, early on without specific AI or data science experience. We just had a passionate team of technical escalation engineers. Along the way, we tried to capture all our learnings from our many trials and errors. The result of our experiments was this framework, which we continue to refine.”

— Ross Smith, Worldwide Support Leader for Modern Work at Microsoft

The 6Ds Framework



Discover

Understand agent needs and assess existing content

Design

Ideate, create, and test content

Develop

Build model and fine-tune prompts

Diagnose

Jailbreak model and test for bias

Deploy

Launch model and scale accordingly

Detect

Maintain model with feedback and automated testing

Part 3

Address inefficiencies to quell AI fears

“What Copilot helps me do is **get through the administrative tasks faster** so I can move on to the next call. Now the whole process is taking 15 minutes or less, where it used to take 30 or 40.”

— Michael Simons, Support Engineer Azure Chat Team at Microsoft

Copilot adoption depends on proving AI will support agents, not supplant them

People are understandably nervous about AI. According to [Microsoft's Office of the Chief Economist](#), nearly half (49%) of the 31,000 people surveyed are worried AI will replace their jobs. Like we said in Part 1, it's important to be honest about Copilot, but it's equally important to demonstrate its value. Copilot can streamline time-consuming customer support tasks, helping shift agents' AI perspective from cautious to optimistic.

- **Go all-in on deployment—maybe**
CSS deployed the entire suite of Copilot in Customer Service all at once, but only because our corpus of knowledge was strong enough to support an all-in deployment. If you can't get all your content clean before launch, just deploy the summarization capabilities to start—more on that below—and follow up with the rest later.
- **Prioritize the least-threatening features first**
To confront the underlying fears about AI, CSS prioritized the Copilot in Customer Service features that help agents streamline mundane (but required) tasks, like writing summaries. Those features, Conversation Summary and

Case Summary, are helping CSS agents spend less time on low-value and, quite frankly, boring to-dos and more time helping customers—which is what they want to do anyhow.

Since both features are native to Copilot in Customer Service, you should start promoting them on Day 1. But choose your words carefully: messaging should focus on the benefit to *agents*, not the organization. You might even consider dropping some historical context into those comms, like we did in CSS. The AI revolution is a truly unique moment in time, and certain agents will be extra motivated to use Copilot because of that. AI is also inevitable, so those who embrace it now will be much better positioned for future success.

Key takeaways

- If your knowledge base is clean, deploy all Copilot in Customer Service features at once
- Encourage agents to adopt the Conversation and Case Summary features first
- When talking about the benefits of Copilot, focus on the agent, not the organization

- **Highlight Copilot's value for junior and senior agents**
In addition to showcasing certain Copilot features, we also focused on communicating the specific value to different CSS groups—namely, junior and senior agents. Newly hired agents naturally lack the intrinsic company and product knowledge that comes with experience. Copilot helps close that gap with features like Ask a Question, which empowers junior agents to get answers faster and without help. Likewise, Copilot minimizes the burden on senior agents to answer basic questions from their junior colleagues. It also equips veterans with tools that expedite administrative tasks, like Draft an Email, so they can instead use their time, experience, and deep knowledge solving high-value customer problems.
- **Remember: ChatGPT popularity ≠ Copilot know-how**
ChatGPT took the world by storm when it was announced in November 2022. Since then, it's been a constant source of news and commentary. You can hardly avoid it. But we quickly learned at CSS that just because people know *about* ChatGPT doesn't mean they know how to successfully use a generative AI tool. You can avoid that same mistake by over investing in training and focusing on the basics, like [how to write prompts](#).

Four features that support every agent

Conversation Summary

Automatically generate customer chat summaries, which include a brief overview of the issue and resulting troubleshooting steps

Case Summary

Recap long-running cases to quickly understand key details, like the subject, product, and priority

Ask a Question

Write natural-language questions and let Copilot surface answers from across knowledge sources, like internal documentation and external wikis

Draft an Email

Choose from a set of predefined prompts for Copilot to create a baseline email that you can further edit and personalize before sending

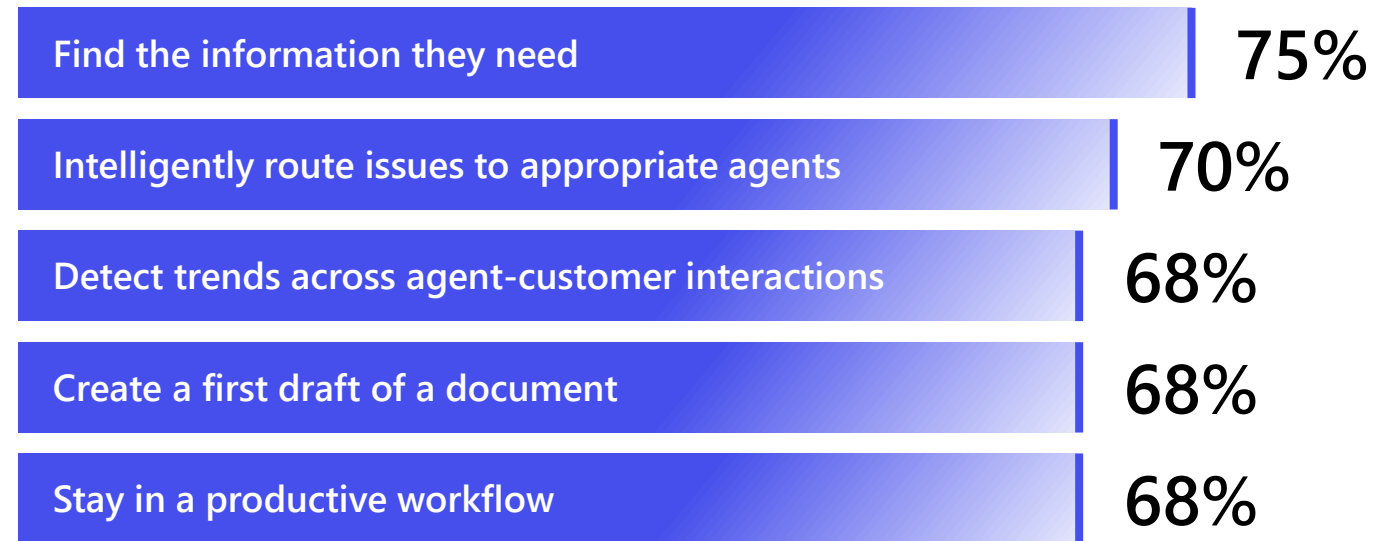
How AI improves customer service

In 2023, we surveyed 18,100 workers, both full-time employed and self-employed, across 12 markets and from a variety of industries, company sizes, tenures, and job levels. We asked those customer service respondents the following question:

“If AI could help you with each of the following activities, how much of a positive impact do you think it would have on your performance at work?”

This bar chart summarizes their answers.

Share of customer service respondents who agree AI would help them...



Part 4

Engage enthusiasts

“Engineers like to
**learn from other
engineers.**”

— Daniel Pickworth, Senior
Director, Innovation and
Strategy at Microsoft

The value of a strong champions program cannot be overstated

Every large-scale deployment effort, especially one as unique as Copilot, should include a structured champions program. Nothing is better at driving adoption than the people using it. Because of how fast Copilot in Customer Service was deployed to CSS—we equipped tens of thousands of agents with the solution in just four months—our champions program wasn't as robust as it should've been. Learn from our oversight and start thinking about how you'll empower Copilot champions now.

- **Turn your most enthusiast users into champions**

Your best champions are those who are naturally excited about Copilot. At CSS, we found that agents are more willing to adopt new technology if their peers are using it. This doesn't mean you should skip other adoption methods, like communication campaigns and workshops, or that leaders and managers can't be champions too. But focusing on *agent* champions first should be your top priority. Those agents can also support and help streamline the Copilot adoption effort in other ways, like answering questions from their team or relaying concerns to leadership.

- **Empower managers**

If peer champions are the No. 1 priority, engaged managers are a close second. You cannot successfully deploy Copilot without manager buy-in, so empower them to support the effort. For example, managers should send all team communications about Copilot, even if corporate writes them. Managers know their teams best and leaders should entrust them to drive adoption accordingly.

Key takeaways

- Prioritize agent champions to evangelize Copilot among their peers
- Trust managers to lead adoption in whatever way is best for their team

Words of wisdom

"Honestly, knowing what I do today, I would've spent 10 times the effort standing up the community infrastructure."

— Ric Todd, Director, Strategy and Innovation, CSS at Microsoft

Part 5

**Listen earnestly,
communicate
honestly**

“Get curious’
is our mantra—
and check your
assumptions at
the door.”

— Reid Warner, Principal
Support Planner at Microsoft

Copilot will challenge your assumptions

We've learned a lot about our CSS team since deploying Copilot. But that wasn't an accident; instead, it's because we built systems around feedback, metrics, and communications, all while maintaining a humble, honest approach with agents.

- **Make sure your agents are heard**

Copilot feedback is so important to CSS that we're actively building a specific program called CSS Listens to manage it. The program will have four parts in its final form:

- **Inputs:** This is where we collect all user feedback from across channels, like direct emails, surveys, focus groups, and the built-in thumbs-up, thumb-down feature in Copilot.
- **Transform:** This is the heart of CSS Listens. It's an LLM solution that stores all the feedback inputs and processes them into themes. Each bit of feedback is attributed to the person who submitted it so we can circle back with them to provide updates.
- **Output:** Here's where all the organized feedback is stack ranked to help us prioritize updates. The primary metric for prioritizing feedback is agent pain, which directly

affects the customer experience and our ROI.

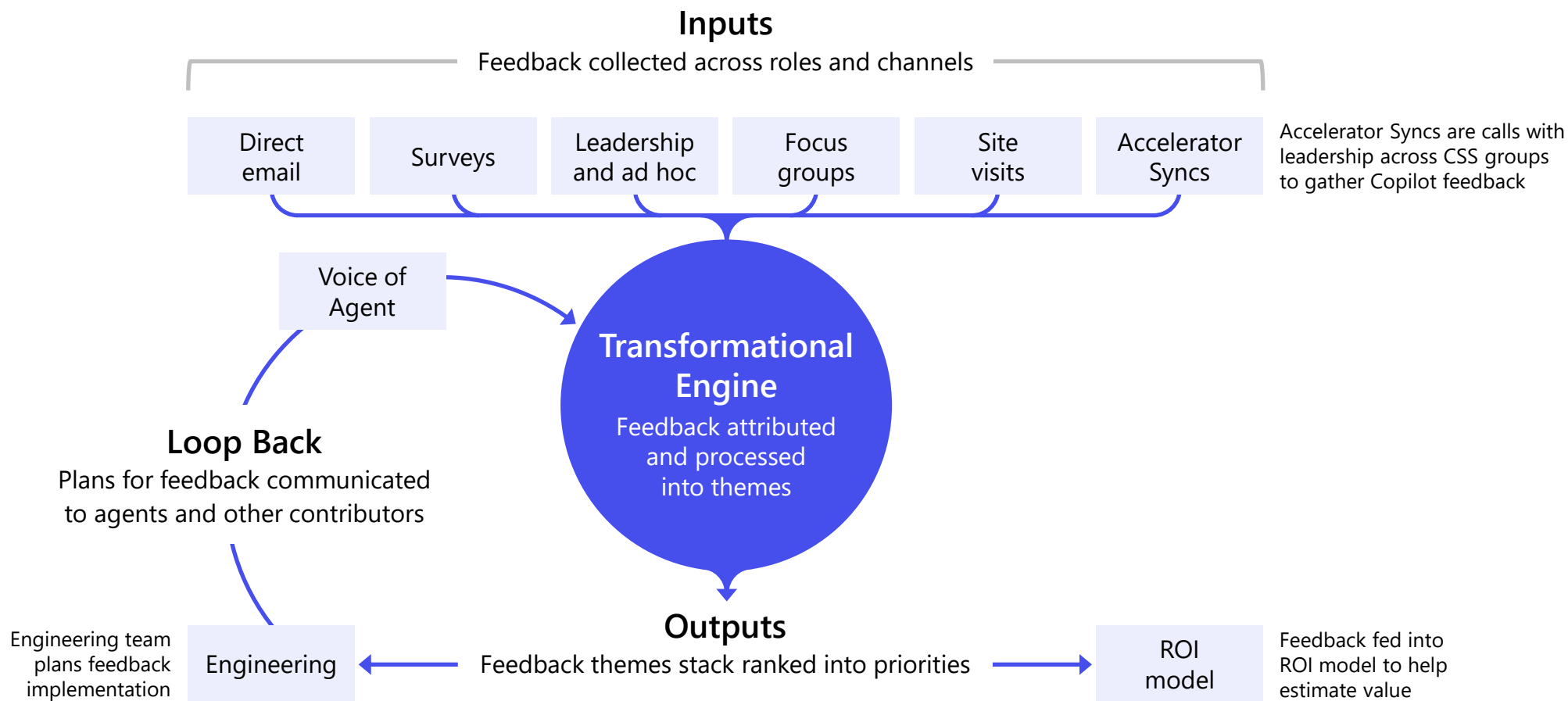
- **Loop Back:** The final step of CSS Listens might be the most important. At this stage, we systematically respond to the people who gave us feedback with next steps. We learned from agents that, historically, they felt like their feedback wasn't heard. The Loop Back part of the CSS Listens program addresses that concern.

Of course, building CSS Listens requires deep technical know-how—something we're fortunate to have at Microsoft. If you can't mimic the program exactly, you should at least consider how to implement these four parts in some form. Gathering inputs, transforming them into themes, stack ranking priorities, and then circling back with agents are the key ingredients to a strong agent feedback program.

- **Trust the numbers, not your assumptions**

We certainly hoped Copilot in Customer Service would help our agents, but we wouldn't know for sure until we measured its impact objectively. To do that, we conducted a comprehensive study of 9,900 agents that focused on several key metrics, such as throughput, Average Handle Time, Time to Close, and percentage of cases closed without peer assistance, that are generally indicative of an agent's

Customer Service and Support (CSS) Listens



efficiency and the customer's experience. (The results from this study are on Page 3 of this whitepaper.) Those metrics were evaluated at the business unit level specifically, as opposed to across CSS at large, to help us understand disparities in performance. Once all the data was in, we used the Difference in Differences (DiD) statistical method to compare changes in outcomes over time between the active and non-active Copilot users.

The findings surfaced two overarching insights: differences in business unit performance were normally due to the quality of knowledge (or lack thereof), and the top benefit for all agents was closing the gap on lost time.

Once Copilot is in the hands of your agents for several months, you should consider a similar study. Instead of guessing at performance issues or which capabilities benefit agents the most, you'll know for sure where to focus your remediation and communication efforts.

- **Communicate everything across every channel**

With so much skepticism around AI, it's important to communicate broadly and with honesty about Copilot. That means embracing a variety of messaging mediums (e.g., meetings, emails, in-product pop-ups, embedded

videos, Viva Engage threads, engineering road shows, etc.) to accommodate different learning styles. Word-of-mouth, just like peer champions, is the most effective medium, but it shouldn't replace a structured communications plan. You also need to be transparent, even if that requires sharing difficult messages.

Key takeaways

- Listen to agent feedback and circle back so they know you're listening
- Take an objective approach to measuring the impact of Copilot
- Use every means of communication at your disposal to talk about Copilot

Words of wisdom

"There's no shortage of people having an opinion, which is great. Our challenge is, how do we master this and give it a meaningful customer signal all up?"

— Reid Warner, Principal Support Planner at Microsoft

Part 6

Embrace the moment!

“The number of people who are willing to say, ‘Yes!’ right now—that’s a materially different attitude than we’ve seen in the past. **The cohesiveness it’s created in our organization is amazing.**”

— Daniel Pickworth, Senior Director, Innovation and Strategy at Microsoft

Ride the wave of AI enthusiasm to success

You never know how people will respond to new technology. Some will love it, and some will think their work lives are so much worse because of it. And because we've deployed so many solutions at Microsoft over the years, the response to Copilot in Customer Service was truly shocking. People were *energized*. The overwhelming positivity toward Copilot has been unprecedented at Microsoft, and it's one of the main reasons we were able to deploy the solution to so many people so quickly. Our agents were fast to recognize Copilot's immediate impact on their jobs and that they were at the forefront of the AI revolution.

If your customer service agents, managers, and leaders are equally enthusiastic about generative AI, use it. Momentum like this doesn't happen often and that energy could be your best asset for successfully launching, deploying, and adopting Copilot in your own customer service org.

Start your AI journey

The best place to get started is on our [Dynamics 365 Customer Service website](#), where you can also learn more about Copilot in Customer Service. You'll find an offer to trial the solution for free for 30 days on the website too, or you can use this direct link: aka.ms/D365CustomerServiceTry.





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