

# KEEP SERVICE HUMAN

What Real People Think About AI in Customer Service.



**Great service is getting up before dawn. It's working with your hands. And fixing what's broken.**

We believe in keeping service human, because we believe in the art of great service.

We're not the only ones. We surveyed 6000 people about what service means to them.

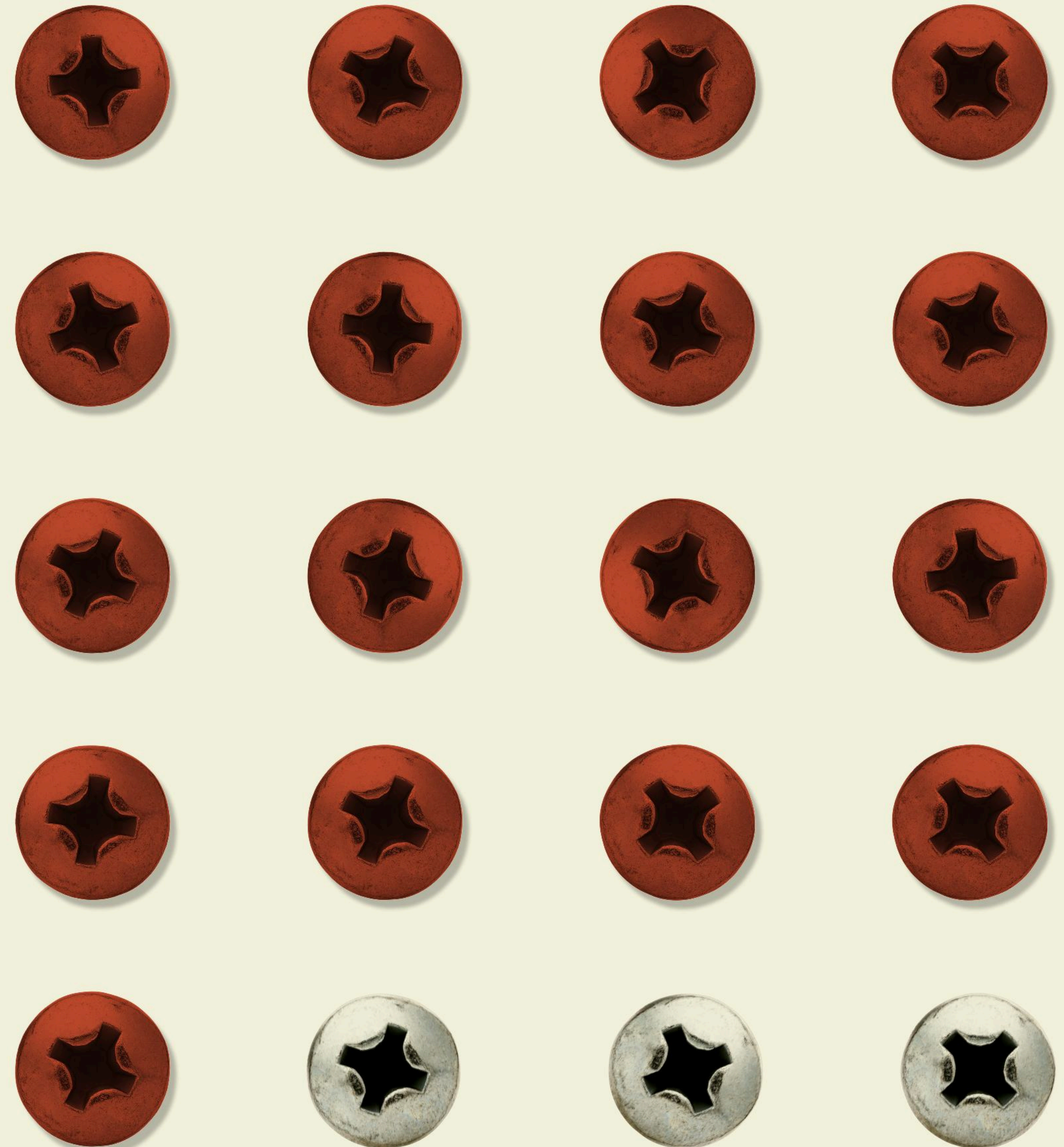
Here's what they told us.

# 87%

## want to speak to a real person when calling a local service.

17 out of 20 prefer a human voice.

WHEN CONTACTING A LOCAL SERVICE (E.G., PLUMBER, ELECTRICIAN, ROOFING COMPANY), WOULD YOU RATHER SPEAK TO A REAL PERSON, OR AI?



# 62%

**don't trust AI when they need a tradesperson in an emergency.**



WHEN CONTACTING A TRADESPERSON IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION HOW MUCH WOULD YOU TRUST AN AUTOMATED AI SERVICE TO TAKE THE CORRECT ACTION AND RELAY ACCURATE INFORMATION?

**62%**

Untrusting

**27%**

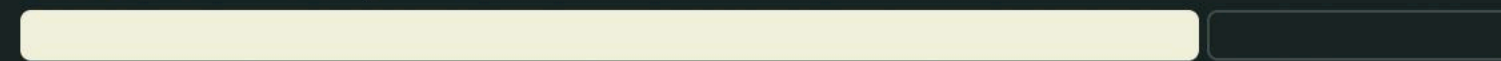
Trusting

# 4/5

choose the business  
where a human answers  
the phone.

WHEN LOOKING FOR A BUSINESS, IF YOU CONTACTED THREE WITH SIMILAR REVIEWS,  
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD MAKE YOU MOST LIKELY TO CHOOSE THAT  
BUSINESS?

**79%** A human receptionist



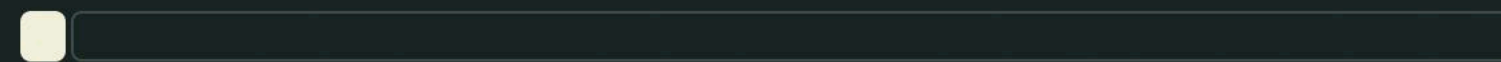
**10%** No difference



**9%** An AI/automated system



**3%** No one

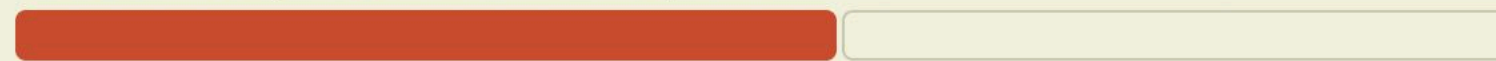


# People are 7x more likely to leave a review after talking to a real person.



IN WHICH OF THESE SCENARIOS ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO LEAVE A REVIEW OF A BUSINESS?

**55%** After a positive interaction with a person



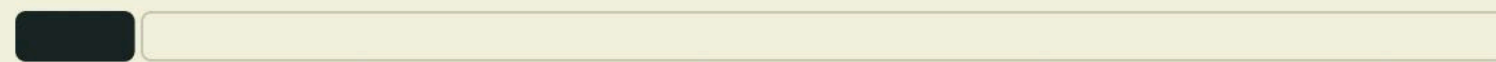
**21%** Both equally



**16%** Neither



**8%** After a positive interaction with AI



# Talking to AI is as frustrating as being put on hold.

WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS DO YOU FIND MOST FRUSTRATING WHEN CONTACTING A BUSINESS?

**31%** Being placed on hold



**30%** Talking to an AI agent or chatbot



**23%** Call unanswered



**10%** Leaving a voicemail



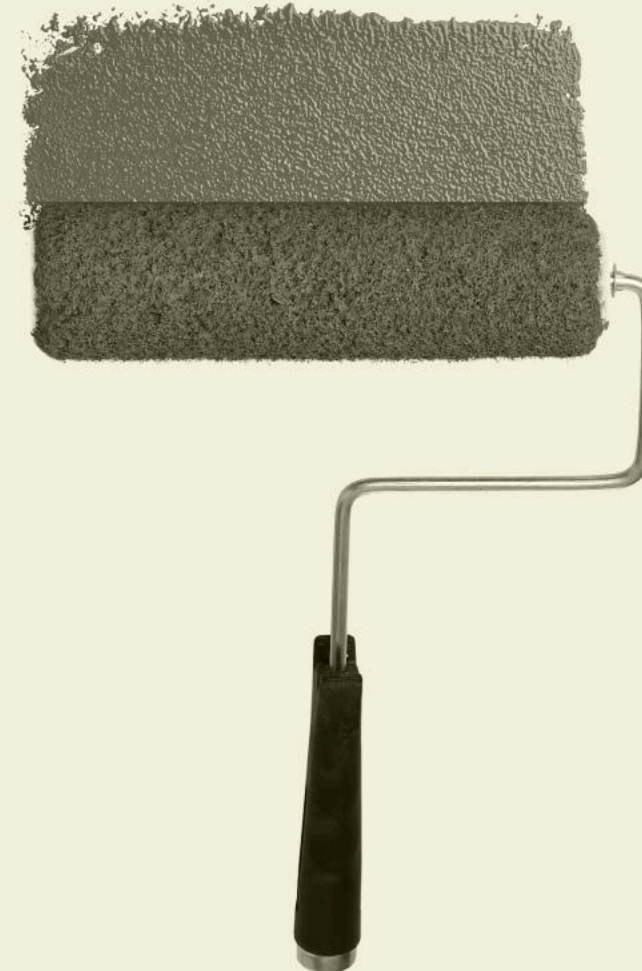
WOULD YOU BE MORE LOYAL AS A CUSTOMER TO A COMPANY THAT EMPLOYS AI OR PEOPLE FOR ALL THEIR SERVICE INTERACTIONS?

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**73%**  
**stay loyal to businesses  
powered by people.**

People want people. Stay human and win customers for life.

**8%**  
Employed AI for all its  
service interactions



**19%**  
Neither / No difference



**73%**  
Employed people for all  
its service interactions



# 4/5

## people will ask to speak to a real person.

82% have asked to speak to a real person instead of AI (68% have asked multiple times).

HAVE YOU EVER REQUESTED TO SPEAK TO A REAL PERSON INSTEAD OF AN AI AGENT OR CHATBOT?

82%

Yes

18%

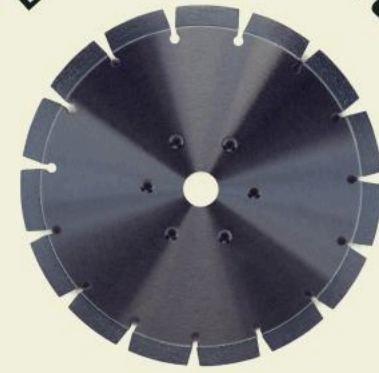
No



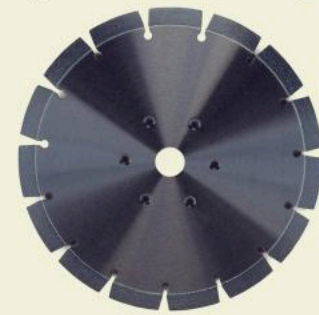
DO YOU FEEL THAT HUMAN AGENTS, OR AI / AUTOMATED AGENTS SHOW MORE EMPATHY AND CARING IN CUSTOMER SERVICE SCENARIOS?

**71%**  
say humans show  
more empathy.

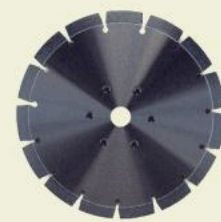
Both equally 12%



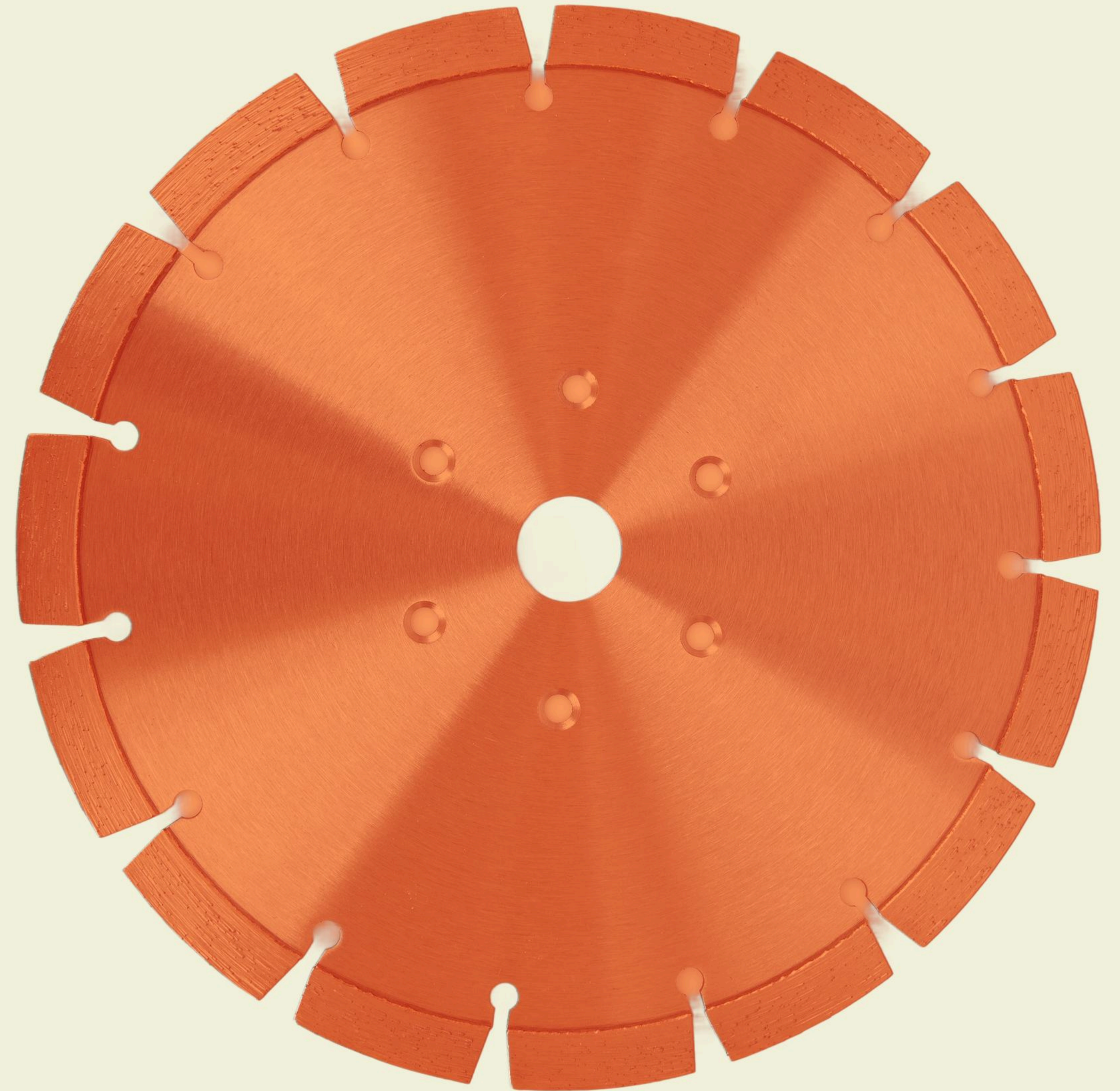
Neither 10%



AI 7%



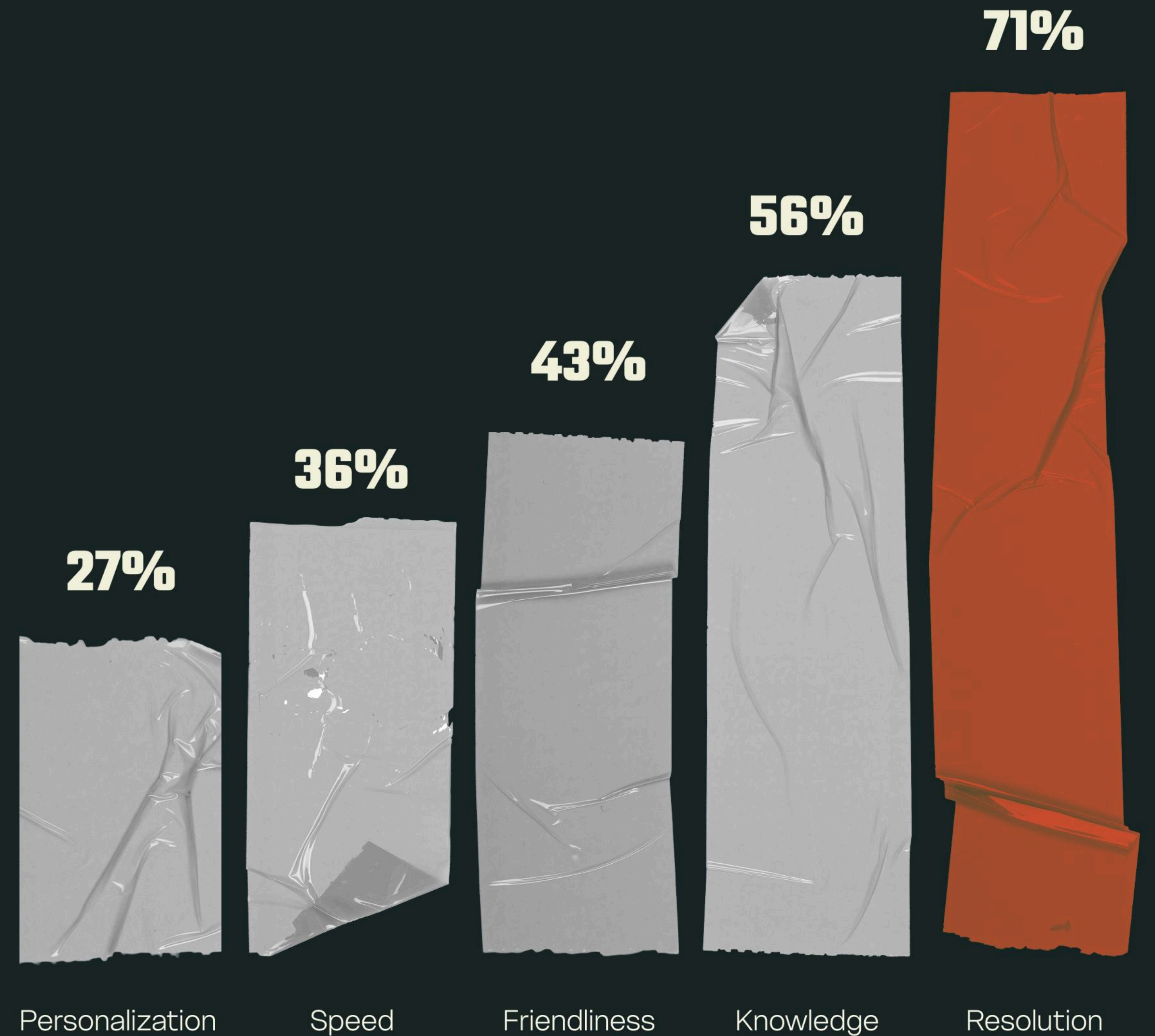
Human agents 71%



WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING MATTERS MOST TO YOU DURING A CUSTOMER SERVICE INTERACTION?

**71%**  
**want resolution,  
not just speed.**

Grit beats glitch. When someone calls, they want resolution. A fast wrong answer is still a wrong answer.



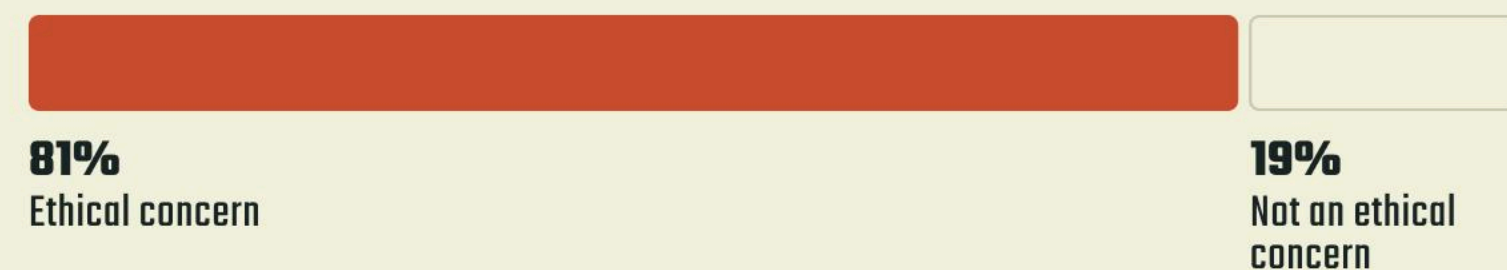
# 85%

say AI shouldn't pose as people. 81% think it's an ethical concern if they do.

DO YOU THINK THAT IT SHOULD BE CLEARLY INDICATED WHEN YOU ARE INTERACTING WITH AI RATHER THAN A PERSON?



TO WHAT EXTENT, IF AT ALL, IS IT AN ETHICAL CONCERN IF AN AI TOOL PRETENDS IT IS A REAL PERSON (E.G., A CUSTOMER SERVICE AI TOOL SAYING "I AM A LIVE PERSON")?



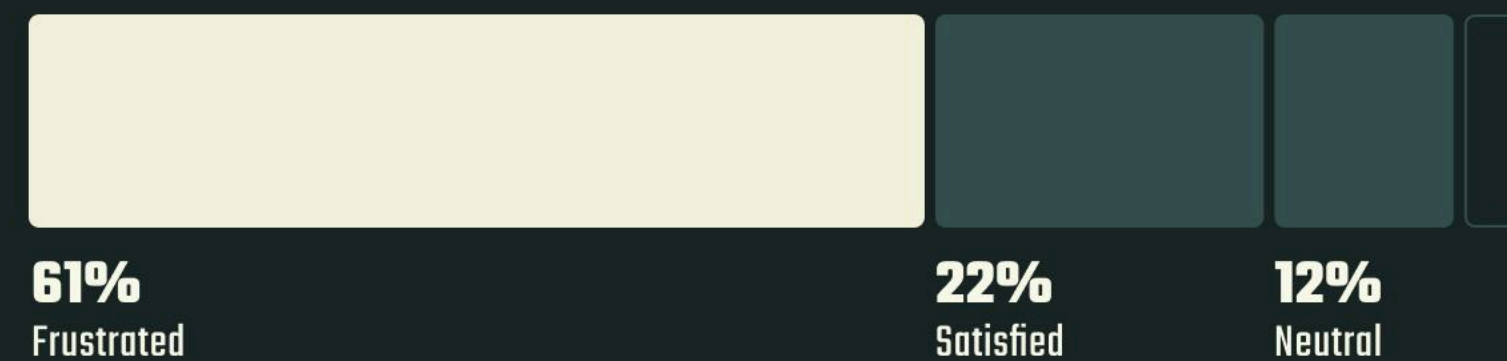
# 6/10

are frustrated by the AI to human handoff.

We believe in handshakes, not handoffs.



IF YOU HAD TO FIRST EXPLAIN YOUR PROBLEM TO AN AI SYSTEM AND WERE THEN TRANSFERRED TO A HUMAN AGENT TO RESOLVE IT, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?





[TALK TO US](#)

**ABOUT  
THIS REPORT**

This survey was conducted by OnePoll in April 2026 with 6,000 adults in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Respondents answered 33 questions about their preferences, experiences, and concerns regarding AI in customer service. All percentages are based on total respondents and rounded to the nearest whole percentage.