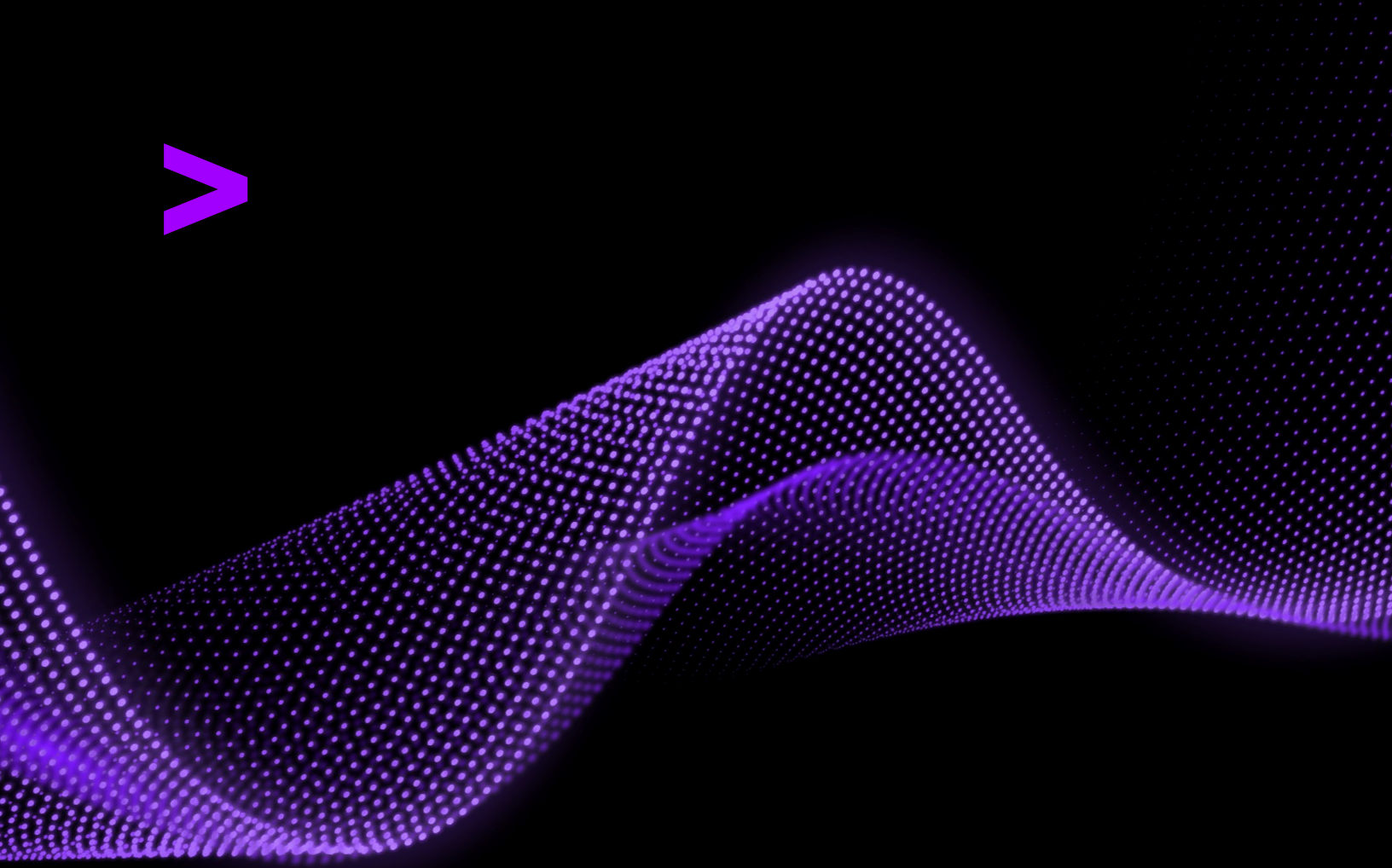


The Intelligent Service Center

Reinvent service and improve outcomes at lower costs with GenAI and agentic AI

Accenture
Federal
Services

Two major changes are happening right now to transform the relationship between government agencies and their customers.

The first is the ambitious modernization and cost-cutting agenda set by the administration. The second is the technological revolution in generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and agentic AI: systems that can act autonomously. These powerful tools can create more responsive, personalized, and empathetic citizen experiences.

The result is an unprecedented opportunity to reinvent federal service center operations for all end users, including citizens, clients, constituents, customers, and anyone else served by the agency. Today, federal agencies can quickly implement AI systems that generate cost savings and efficiency while maintaining—and even enhancing—the services that these customers need. Because the systems learn from experience, they can continually improve service quality while doing more with less. In short, instead of relying solely on human agents, an Intelligent Service Center deploys a well-balanced human-and-AI-powered machine equipped with the latest technologies tailored to your mission needs.

Accenture, with its longstanding experience in commercial delivery and capabilities, is uniquely positioned to partner with federal agencies to achieve this ambitious agenda. Our track record includes successful performance-based contracting to reinvent services and drive cost savings with Fortune 500 companies like Best Buy, Verizon, VMO2, and local and state governments. Take the case of a major telecommunications provider whose service centers were overwhelmed with high call volumes and customer frustrations. Following the implementation of **generative AI**, **wait times decreased significantly** with the **automation of 85%** of their customer interactions, contributing to a **40% reduction in operational costs** while enhancing the customer experience.

Designing an Intelligent Service Center

With the correct type of transition and design, AI can help agencies rapidly modernize their service center processes. Intelligent Service Center design must recognize the constraints on federal agencies: hefty labor costs, high attrition rates, the training burden, legacy technology that restricts agents to manual tasks, and reliance on paper forms that slow down processing. It is time for agencies to transform and rethink these barriers.

We deliver improvements by driving three elements: contact elimination, contact containment, and agent efficiency. (See Figure 1.) The approach uses AI and automation to deflect as much human contact as possible and raise the effectiveness and productivity of the remaining human contact. This model can help you improve service quality while doing more with less.

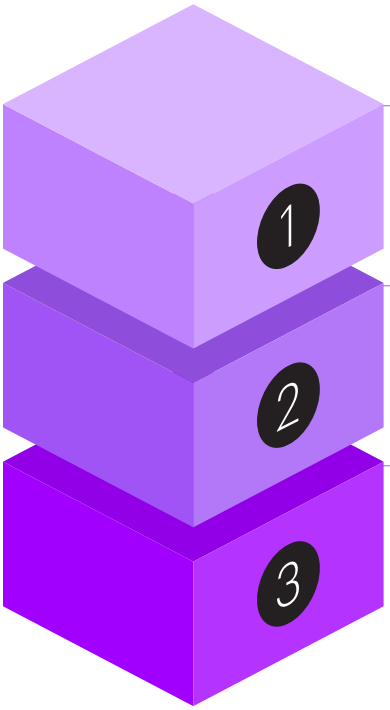


Figure 1: Three elements of an Intelligent Service Center

Source: Accenture Federal Services

Contact elimination
(Majority of Interactions)
Prevent contact from taking place in first place.

86% **average per-contact cost reduction**

Contact containment
If contact occurs, start with virtual agents.

85% **of specific call types handled by virtual agents**

Agent efficiency
(Minority of Interactions)
If human contact occurs, equip agents with tools to resolve accurately, efficiently, and with confidence.

50% **reduction in after call work**

ELEMENTS OF AN INTELLIGENT SERVICE CENTER

1 Contact elimination: 86% average per-contact cost reduction

Contact elimination is crucial to improving the operational costs of service centers. This element includes simplifying products, web pages, and user experience to ensure people can find what they need with ease. Data-driven services reduce unnecessary interactions by empowering customers to resolve most issues on their own through the digital interface.

These capabilities are crucial for contact elimination:

Self-service

Direct customers to accessible, intuitive digital self-service tools on multiple channels, including interactive websites and personalized audio or video instructions. For optimal impact, these self-service tools are tailored around data-driven insights. For example, an automated response might draw on a customer's history of previous encounters and recurring pain points.

Voice of the customer

Proactively reduce future customer support costs and minimize churn through continuous monitoring of **automated customer insights**. GenAI systems are equipped with natural language processing (NLP). They can identify the reasons why people make contact (call drivers). They recognize and answer commonly asked questions. They also conduct sentiment analysis, an NLP technique for deducing what users are feeling from their text and voice.

Proactive communications and outreach

Deploy data-informed predictive and preventative customer outreach. Personalized communications and social media campaigns can help resolve an impending issue and thus eliminate the user's need for contact.

The cost savings potential of these elimination efforts is significant. According to Gartner commercial benchmarks, every time a human agent picks up the phone, it costs about $13.50, while self-service options cost $1.84. Take, for example, a service center that answers 10,000 calls per day. A well-functioning automated service center can save 86% of the cost of each interaction. When automated agents or self-service options deflect 30% of a service center's calls, it can reduce costs by more than $26M per year.

ELEMENTS OF AN INTELLIGENT SERVICE CENTER

2 Contact containment: Virtual agents handling 85% of specific calls

When customers cannot resolve their issues independently with only self-service options, more direct contact may be needed. However, an AI-powered interactive voice response (IVR) and automated frontline capabilities can resolve most issues with highly contained, direct contact. More sophisticated than a standard "phone tree" of choices, virtual voice agents and chatbots can generate intuitive, human-like responses to inquiries. They automatically perform routine actions, such as scheduling calls or updating CRM tickets with notes from the latest interaction.

To drive contact containment, implement the following capabilities:

Automated response systems

Set up service pathways with no human interaction for low-risk cases. Examples include processing benefits applications or checking status. Human agents can then focus on high-risk, complex cases.

Intelligent responses

Train AI systems to interpret customer requests rapidly, detect cases that need personal interaction, and seamlessly transfer them to the most appropriately skilled agent.

Transparency

Ensure that AI systems identify themselves as such. In this way, they send a signal that the service center can be trusted.

Together, these capabilities ensure the provision of hyper-personalized, high-quality, and efficient services at scale, even when a human is not involved. The annual savings can be significant. Self-service IVRs can lead to a 50% reduction in the average handle time (AHT) for a call. Virtual agents can handle up to 85% of specific call types.

ELEMENTS OF AN INTELLIGENT SERVICE CENTER

3 Agency efficiency: 50% reduction in after-call work

When a human agent is needed to reach issue resolution, seamlessly transfer the call from the automated front line. Equip those human agents with AI technologies to improve **agent efficiency**. The technologies augment human capabilities, optimize AHT, reduce repeat callers, improve agent proficiency, and make the most of the interactions.

Introduce the following capabilities for immediate benefit:

AI-generated call summarization

Eliminate agent time spent on post-call work by offloading this manual task. Use automatic transcriptions and summaries to capture every interaction. This capability allows the agent to focus on the interaction itself, while improving operational efficiencies, agent productivity and capacity, and the quality of the response. It also assembles a large pool of data with which to train and refine AI models.

100% quality assurance (QA)

Replace today's laborious small-sampling QA methodology. Enhance service quality, customer satisfaction, and training capabilities by using AI to score all customer interactions. Create Gen-AI powered immersive training simulations of cases, along with hyper-personalized performance assessments & coaching insights and a supervisor dashboard to monitor performance. This capability improves operational efficiencies, first contact resolution, customer satisfaction, and the identification of root causes of recurring problems.

Integrating agent assist

Increase agent capacity with AI call transcription tools, intelligent prompting informed by a proprietary knowledge base, and AI-powered language translation. This capability improves resolution times and agent productivity, leading to higher customer satisfaction scores.

These capabilities can give you a 50% average reduction in after-call work across agent queues, increasing productivity and capacity. For service center cases where digital options are not viable, consider creative in-person and outbound contact options.

Adapting your technological foundation

The following recommendations best enable successful and efficient Intelligent Service Center implementation:

Streamlined technology stack

Today, service centers often use many vendors with redundant offerings to deliver needed technology and capabilities. For example, one system provides IVR and telephony, another provides workforce management (WFM), and another for quality assurance (QA), and so on. Vendors such as, Google Cloud, Salesforce, and other leading commercial providers are building modern federal agency solutions that consolidate contact center capabilities to help organizations drive cost efficiency and seamless integration while simplifying vendor management.

Performance-based procurement

Legacy vendors often charge by cost plus time and materials (T&M). This procurement model incentivizes higher call volumes and human agents. Replace it with a firm fixed price (FFP) or performance-based contracting approach like outcomes-based procurement. It will hold vendors accountable for results, incentivize innovation, and encourage cost reductions.

Service Center consolidation

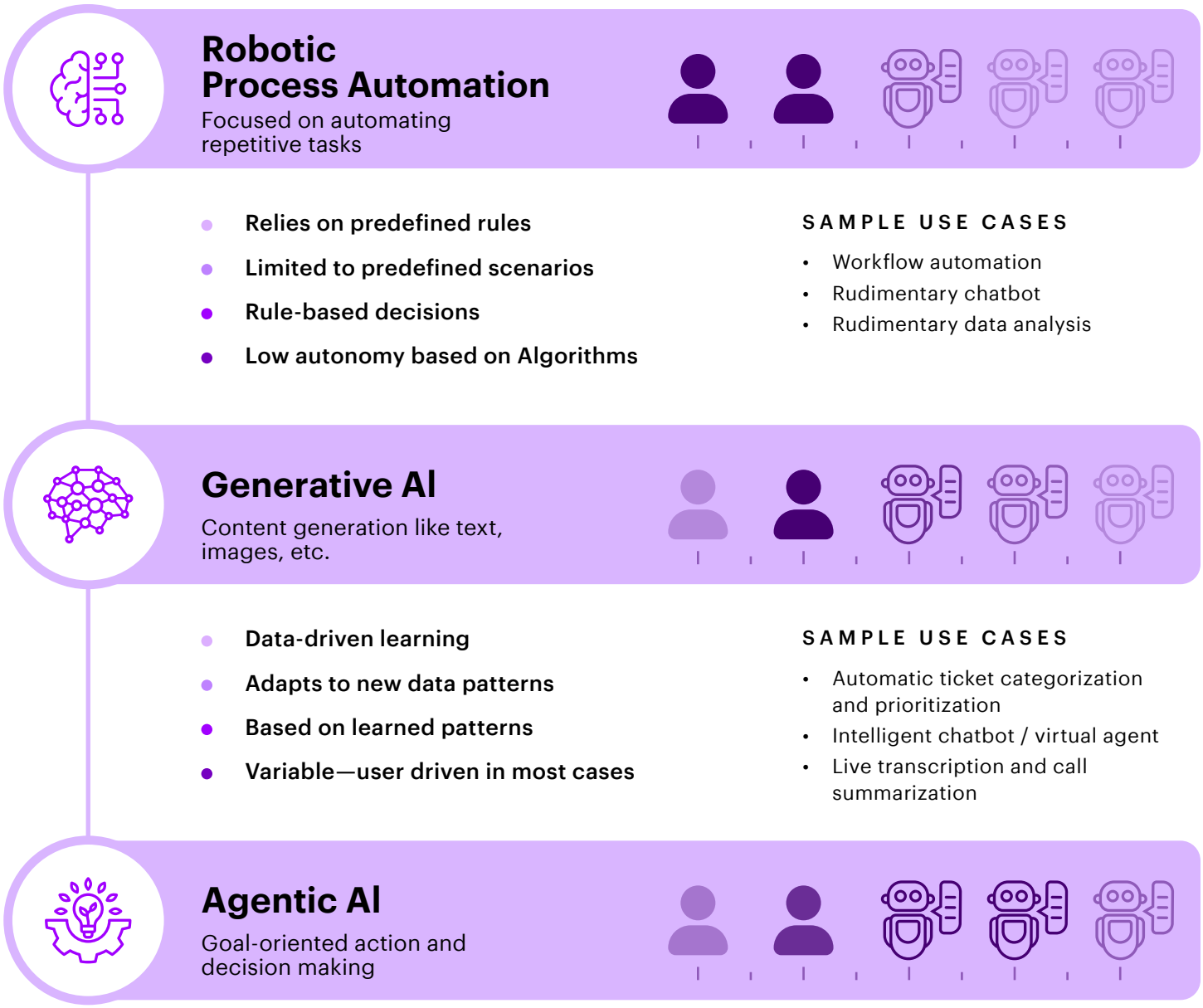
Streamline and consolidate intra-agency service centers to remove redundancies and allow efficiencies of scale. Settle on one or two Service Center solution vendors who can give you a comprehensive package with AI tools for all the capabilities you need—telephony, customer relationship management (CRM), and knowledge management (KM) included.

Agentic AI

AI can enhance both customer-facing processes and agent workflows by emulating human-like autonomy and decision-making, while continuously learning from every interaction to boost performance. For customers, this means analyzing their behavior and preferences to create more personalized and efficient experiences. On the agent side, AI optimizes workflows by automating repetitive tasks such as caller authentication, account and balance checks, and streamlining processes to minimize waste, errors, and bottlenecks. This includes tasks like data synthesis and assistance with claims or applications, making the service center more efficient and effective. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: The evolution of AI

Source: Accenture Federal Services



The transformation journey

Start immediately with a low-risk approach that allows immediate cost savings to be realized within the existing technology stack. Meanwhile, build the foundation for a modern, Intelligent Service Center solution. Set a goal of reducing operational expenses by 40% within a relatively short time frame (Figure 3).

Your transformative journey will have three phases:

Phase 1: Foundational AI

In your first step, the goal is to generate funding from early productivity gains and data by recording all interactions for phase 2. Rather than making broad changes in your existing architecture or client experience that would require agent training overhaul, add specific capabilities like automated call summaries, quality improvement, and sentiment analysis. The efforts may seem small, but they involve relatively little cost or risk and lead to tangible results. You can cut costs by 8% or more, expose human agents to the new approach, increase call record consistency, and generally decrease back-office procedures and client callbacks.

Phase 2: Contact elimination and containment

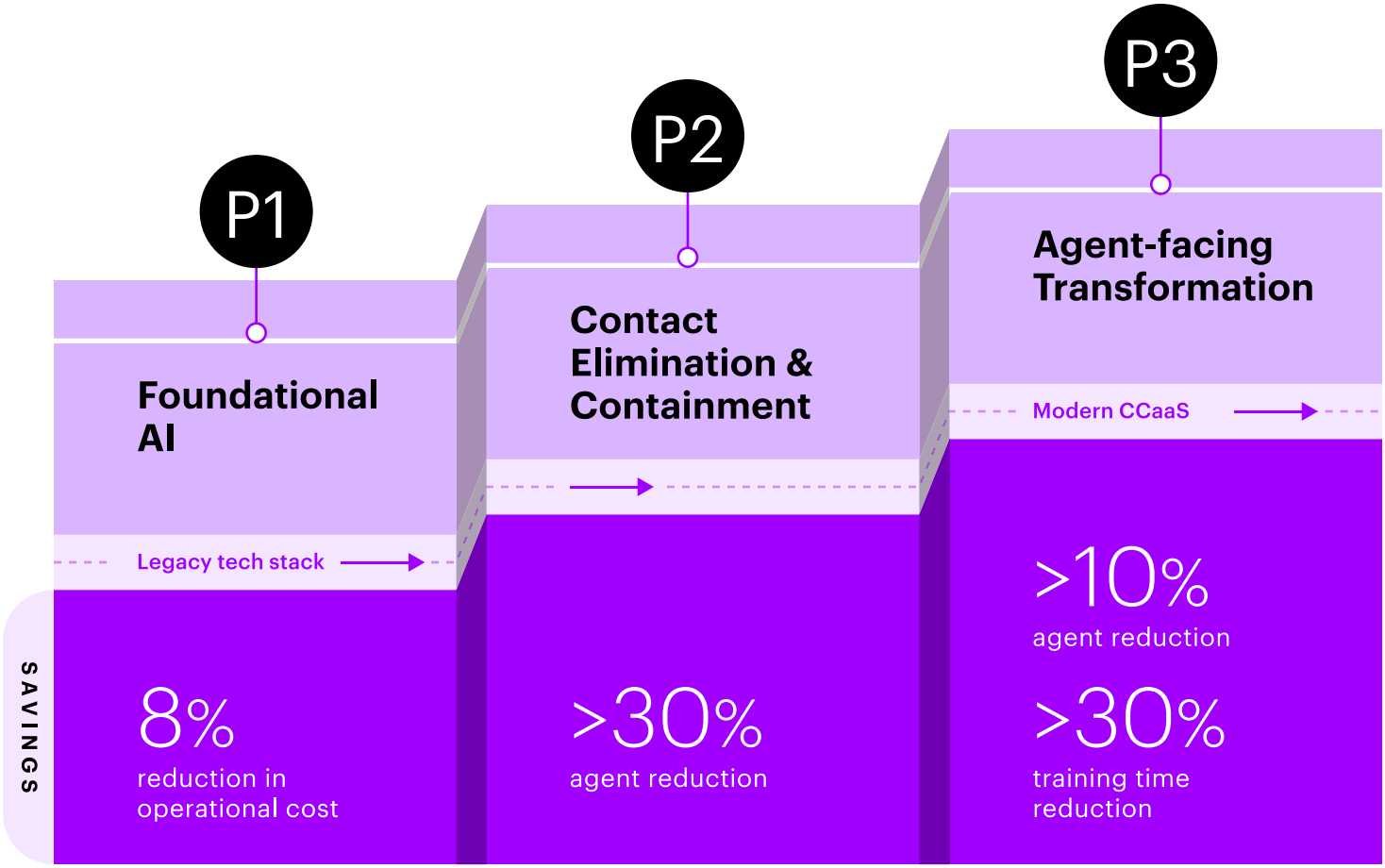
Within a few months, you will gather enough data to customize and fine tune a language model to handle almost any question received by the contact center. You can then expand the range and quality of your service center interactions. Build more transformational enhancements in the technology stack and agent operations, including proactive communications and voice agents. Outcomes during this phase include improved contact resolution, still greater productivity, fewer deflections to human interaction, and significant decreases in AHT.

Phase 3: Agent-facing transformation

Complete the transformation to a modern, end-to-end Intelligent Service Center. Scale up your operational efficiencies, providing the necessary training and support, along with new operational capabilities such as Agent Assist, in which automated systems step in with the information that human agents need. Your outcomes include greater system capacity and productivity, improved FCR, increased human proficiency, lower attrition, lower AHT, and the complete cost reductions you have been working toward.

Figure 3: Transition to a fully equipped Intelligent Service Center

Source: Accenture Federal Services



Getting started

In all three phases, define goals and measure progress with precision, using key performance indicators (KPIs) tailored to your circumstances.

Metrics like first contact resolution, deflection rate, quality assurance scores, and customer satisfaction can capture how well your new capabilities are functioning and the cost savings they deliver.

An example of this approach was the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), which partnered with Accenture to upgrade its defined contribution plan for over 7 million participants. A robust service center was a core goal. FRTIB modernized and streamlined participant interaction by integrating AI and cloud technologies, enabling multi-channel support, introducing self-service, and setting up AI-powered call summarization. In 2024, there was a **32% decrease in average wait time**, a **93% participant satisfaction** (PSAT) score on the phone channel, reduced call length, improved first call resolution, and enhanced interaction documentation.

Today, federal leaders face the convergence of the most significant technological revolution in history and a top-down mandate for modernization and cutting costs. There is no choice but to reinvent service center delivery. The answer is to build a **well-balanced human and AI-powered machine** tailored to each agency's mission and citizen group, delivering on efficiency goals without sacrificing the services provided.

Let’s get there. Together.

Start your intelligent service center transformation—
connect with our leaders today.

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