

CCA Industry Council 2026



**BEYOND
AUTOMATION:**
LEADERSHIP,
JUDGEMENT AND
TRUST IN
CUSTOMER
SERVICE TO 2030



ANNUAL PROGRAMME



Programme Overview

Automation is no longer the defining question for customer service and CX. For most organisations, it is already embedded, expected and increasingly invisible. The question for leaders now is, what this changes and importantly what it does not.

CCA's Future Scenarios to 2030 research highlights a clear shift: as automation removes routine demand, the work that remains is becoming more complex, more emotionally charged and more consequential. Customer service is increasingly where judgement is exercised, trust is tested and organisational values are experienced.

The 2026 Industry Council programme, Beyond Automation, focuses on how service models, roles and leadership approaches must evolve in this new reality. Rather than revisiting debates about technology adoption, the programme explores where value is now created, how responsibility is held, and what this means for leadership decisions over the next three to five years.

Across three sessions, senior leaders will engage with the strategic implications of this shift and the questions that arise, sense-check direction with peers and explore how customer service and CX must be led as automation becomes business as usual.



Session 1: 25 Feb 2026

Beyond Automation: What the Future Is Telling Us About Customer Service

This session sets the strategic context for the 2026 programme, drawing on the most significant insights from CCA's Future Scenarios to 2030 research – a year-long programme of research, consultation and collaboration across sectors.

Rather than presenting a single predicted future, the session explores the future pathways identified through the research, the signals, headwinds and tensions that underpin them, and what these imply for how customer service and CX are already evolving.

A defining insight is the Human–AI Paradox: as automation removes routine demand, it concentrates emotional, ethical and judgement-heavy work elsewhere in organisations. This shift is placing customer service at the centre of organisational trust, accountability and risk.



Leaders will explore:

- The forces reshaping customer service to 2030 and why some are being underestimated
- Emerging customer needs and the tensions they create for service design
- Where existing service models, metrics and leadership assumptions may no longer hold
- Why customer service is becoming a leadership exposure point, not just a delivery function



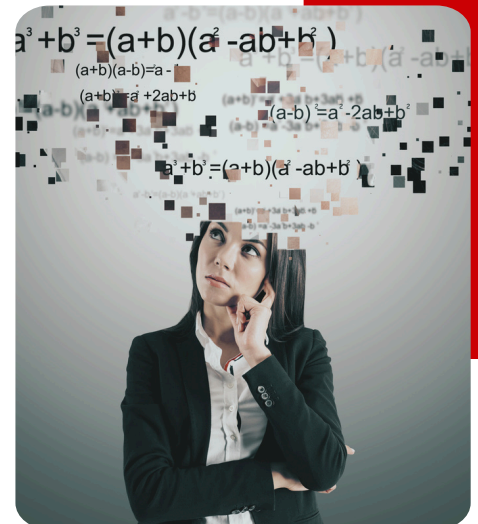
Session 2: June 2026

Where Value Now Lives: Designing Service for Complexity, Care and Outcomes

With automation increasingly taken for granted, this session shifts the focus from efficiency gains to value creation.

The Future Scenarios research points to a widening customer spectrum – from highly self-sufficient digital customers to those who are anxious, vulnerable or unable to self-serve. Serving both well, often within the same journey, is creating new tensions for service design, workforce capability and leadership decision-making.

This session explores where complexity now sits in customer journeys, how roles are changing as transactional work declines, and how service models can be designed to support judgement, care and accountability without overextending people or increasing risk.



Leaders will explore:

- Where customer service genuinely creates value beyond automation
- The trade-offs involved in designing for both efficiency and care
- How frontline roles, skills and emotional load are changing
- What sustainable service design means for wellbeing and long-term capability

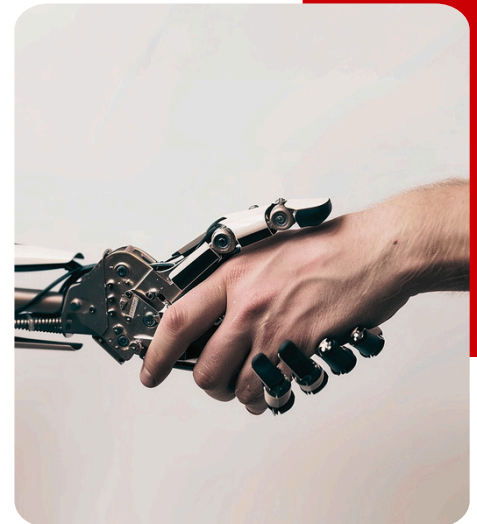


Session 3: October 2026

Owning the Outcome: Leadership, Accountability and Trust in AI-Enabled Service

The final session focuses on leadership accountability in a world where AI increasingly influences service decisions.

As AI increasingly influences service decisions, leaders face growing expectations – from customers, regulators, boards and employees – to explain, justify and stand behind outcomes. Traditional performance measures focused on speed and cost are no longer sufficient, and in some cases may actively increase risk.



This session explores how leaders retain ownership of AI-influenced decisions, how accountability is retained in AI-enabled service models, and how performance can be measured in ways that reflect trust, fairness and long-term outcomes.



Leaders will explore:

- What accountability and ownership look like when decisions are AI-influenced
- The limits and unintended consequences of traditional performance metrics
- Explainability, governance and the relationship to customer trust
- Leading teams carrying increasing emotional and ethical load

➔ Programme Summary

Beyond Automation reflects a shift in how customer service and CX must be led. As technology becomes embedded and expected, the defining challenges for leaders are no longer about adoption, but about judgement, responsibility and where value is created.

The 2026 CCA Industry Council programme brings senior leaders together to examine these challenges in practice; challenging assumptions, testing direction with peers and exploring what leadership now demands as customer service becomes a focal point for trust, accountability and organisational risk.

Why Attend

Customer service and CX are no longer just operational concerns. As automation becomes embedded and expected, they are increasingly where judgement is exercised, trust is tested and organisational risk is exposed.

The CCA Industry Council provides senior leaders with a confidential, peer-level forum to step back from day-to-day pressures and engage with the leadership questions that cannot be delegated or automated.

Grounded in CCA's Future Scenarios to 2030 research, the programme supports leaders to challenge assumptions, test direction and explore how service models, roles and accountability must evolve.

Participants gain clearer confidence in where customer service creates value, how responsibility is held in AI-enabled environments, and how to lead teams and decisions in ways that sustain trust, fairness and long-term outcomes.



→ Why This Matters



Customer service is becoming a leadership exposure point as automation removes routine demand and concentrates judgement-led, emotionally complex and high-risk decisions elsewhere in the organisation.



Traditional service metrics no longer tell the full story, with speed and cost measures increasingly disconnected from trust, fairness, regulatory expectation and long-term outcomes.



AI-enabled service models raise new accountability questions, requiring leaders to explain, justify and stand behind outcomes influenced by automated decision-making.



Workforce capability and sustainability are under pressure, as frontline roles shift toward higher emotional and ethical load without corresponding changes to design, skills or support.



Senior leaders need a defensible point of view on where service creates value, how responsibility is held and how customer service should be led as automation becomes business as usual.

Contact:

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