

The Rise of Intelligent Customer Journeys

Loganathan Siva and Brian Stavis

Loganathan Siva: Welcome to the party on a Friday. Appreciate you taking the time on behalf of the CX community that we all serve and are slaves to and sometimes masters. Welcome to this little podcast session of ours. On behalf of our Persistent Leadership team, thank you for joining us. Welcome.

Brian Stavis: I appreciate the time. Always love speaking with you, Loga.

Loganathan Siva: Likewise, sir. Let's kick this off with some fundamental, basic stuff. It's going to be more of an interactive session — more like you telling us and the world what's going on in the CX world and especially in the Google world. But let's start with a basic, fundamental perspective. What does the Google community see and what do you as a thought leader in the industry see, as the CX trends that large enterprises are currently prioritizing — especially to start with, 2026 and beyond, but for the short term and the medium term?

Brian Stavis: As an enterprise leader, we've moved beyond these basic chatbots that provide very rudimentary text-based responses. In 2026, you could argue — and everyone's talking about it — it's agentic AI in production. We're seeing leaders prioritize three major shifts. One is the digital assembly line, which I look at as orchestrating multiple specialized AI agents to handle complex, multi-step workflows end-to-end. Whether it's OpenClaw or some of the new announcements from Google recently, these are agents that can work side by side with you that you don't have to manage. You should govern them — human-in-the-loop is certainly advantageous — but these are conversational agents that can handle tasks asynchronously with a human, or simultaneously with other agents.

The second piece is a more proactive, concierge-level service. What I mean by that is shifting from reactive firefighting — taking in responses and trying to figure out which connectors to connect to — to automated, predictive care. It's rerouting an order. It's issuing a credit before the customer even notices a discrepancy in their bill.

The third piece is unified context. The example I always use is: When you're online searching for a car, you go to the dealership and make a purchase on that car. When you call in to get service on that car, every one of those connective points — that customer journey — should be connected. The dealership should know that you have a warranty and a service coming up. It should be a personalized experience, so that every time you deal with the dealer, they know your entire customer journey.

Loganathan Siva: I love the way you put it. When you said individual agents doing their job, it's almost like — I love Minions, so I always think of these as Minions running around trying to solve problems and doing the work Gru says. These are independent agents doing their stuff. But I also love how it all comes together — when all these agents, even though they're autonomous in nature, are working congruently toward achieving one common goal. With that dealership example, one individual dealer call, one individual agent call, tried to solve just your service problem, but then all the agents come together to say, "Okay, we're solving this collectively for you." I love that.

Brian Stavits: I view myself as a Minion at all times, especially working side by side with these agents.

Loganathan Siva: Totally. So as that comes together, where do you think customers are in their mindset, their perspective, their landscape? How do you think the definition of CX in their head has changed, given all these AI agents? In my head I still keep thinking Minions, but with AI entering the mainstream, where do you think the definition of customer experience has moved or evolved?

Brian Stavits: I would argue that every five years or so, the customer journey and customer experience change. Five years ago, it was about being responsive, being empathetic and reducing wait times. But today, that's table stakes. Being able to handle a call with a short wait window is table stakes. I would argue customer experience has evolved from instruction-based computing to intent-based computing. Traditional customer experience relied on rigid, deterministic, frustrating decision trees. You'd build a convoluted decision tree that said, "If the customer says X, deliver Y and if not Y, deliver Z." But if a customer went off script, the entire customer journey broke. Mainstream AI has restored the natural, verbal nature of service. Today, customer experience means providing a continuous, reason-driven, concierge-like experience where the system understands natural language. It processes multimodal inputs — like a photo of a broken part — and holds stateful memory across multiple sessions. So I look at it as moving from a chat-based interface to dealing with a partner, a co-pilot of sorts, where you're having real-time resolution based on your actual context and the task at hand.

Loganathan Siva: Very true. All of us have moved from being siloed — "let's focus on this requirement right now" — to intent, to the construct of the entire experience. That's awesome and we see that trend in our base as well. It further endorses the fact that this has to be a holistic experience that all enterprises are driving toward, to make each experience a new benchmark that tops the previous one.

Brian Stavis: And you could argue, too, that customer service used to be just a service-center metric — something the contact center had to evaluate. But now it's an end-to-end business strategy that goes from search and discovery, to the actual fulfillment or purchase, to post-purchase customer service and support.

Loganathan Siva: I totally agree with that perspective. Moving on from that customer evolution — on one side we see the landscape of customers changing completely, from the age-old metric to “how can I achieve the best out of that conversation or interaction” — how does Google see this and how is Google positioning itself? It's very unique, I know, but for the larger audience here, how is Google positioning its products and solutions to this AI-led change that's happening in the marketplace?

Brian Stavis: Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience came out recently this year. We look at it as: How do you connect that user journey to deliver a complete agentic offering across the customer experience? Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience is Google Cloud's unified, enterprise-grade platform built to design, deploy and govern intelligent agents across the entire customer lifecycle. A contact center deployment used to take anywhere from 18 to 24 months; this collapses those delivery cycles and the time to value and time to revenue for partners. Google is arguably the only player in the market with a fully integrated, full-stack AI infrastructure. We don't just provide ungrounded LLMs or an isolated contact center tool. Google uniquely combines the world's most advanced multimodal models — Gemini — with enterprise-grade data platforms like BigQuery, plus other surfaces like the Shopping Graph, Maps and YouTube and the underlying processing power of Google's custom TPUs. If you take that infrastructure and bolster it with our consumer-facing touchpoints — Search, Maps, Android and now Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience — we're bridging the gap between front-end customer discovery and back-end enterprise execution, so it should, in theory, work seamlessly.

Loganathan Siva: I love that all roads lead to Gemini. The power of Gemini comes up there — any associated data analytics, the decision-making algorithm, the power of Gemini being extended to the CX space. I think that's tremendous value and it's almost like bringing all the assets to the table for that unique experience. Think of Gemini as the center of the solar system, with all the pieces leading to it. That's a great way of looking at it and positioning it and I'm sure customers are seeing it that way. You did mention GCX, so let's talk about that a little. What is GCX? Talk to us about how Gemini is powering GCX from the back. And let's connect the dots with our friends the Minions and see how these individual agents come together on GCX.

Brian Stavis: Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience, at its core, is a set of solutions that touch search — AI commerce search. The second you hit a customer's site, instead of an obsolete, text-based search bar, it's now enriched. You have content recommendations, personalized recommendations and catalog enrichment — the power of Google Search now running on an enterprise-grade website. So, it starts from search, but then we introduced a shopping agent: Pre-built, out-of-the-box agents that handle a specific industry use case. Shopping was one of the

first we introduced. You can go see Macys.com, Home Depot, or Lowe's, where it provides a more guided purchasing experience.

When you juxtapose search versus a shopping agent — search is asking for something, whereas a shopping agent is more of a guided experience. “I'm looking for a remodel for my backyard,” and it will start to configure based on a photo of my backyard and what's already there. If I already have umbrellas, don't suggest umbrellas. Maybe I already have outdoor furniture but no pillows. It provides a more personalized shopping experience.

Then when you go from search to fulfillment or commerce and now to customer service, that's where we introduce CX Agent Studio. That, to me, is our low-code/no-code offering, where a customer can build a demo, a POC, or a pilot purely based off text. A customer can take a batch of call logs or chat transcripts and provide simple instructions — “here are three customer journeys: Order fulfillment, order status, account information” — and automatically your root agent and sub-agents, with individual instructions, are configured for you. It lets you see that time to value immediately, versus having to build those largely deterministic, complex decision trees.

At the end of that, you have wonderful Minions, or intelligent agents, running — and you need insights and pre-built metrics across the end-to-end customer journey. So, we introduced CX Insights to provide real-time language analysis of what's happening with your agents: Escalation rates, latency, semantic similarity. Did the agent call on the right tool at the right time to deliver the appropriate response? It takes customer experience — which is largely viewed as a cost center for a lot of brands — and turns it into an actual revenue driver. You can go Google it: There are significant PR case studies and public references where customers have seen noticeable sales-volume impact delivered by Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience.

Loganathan Siva: Awesome. You hit some great points there and that leads to the next question, although you've already touched on some of those differentiators. This is arguably a crowded marketplace and we see the legacy of many conventional players moving into the space from an infrastructure perspective. You know who I'm talking about. They're all coming at it from an infrastructure perspective, but I see the power of Google coming from “here is our massive experience engine and I'm going to apply that to the CX space as well.” How would you position GCX as a different product, solution and experience in the marketplace?

Brian Stavits: There are dozens, if not hundreds, of point solutions in the market today. I won't argue that there's a new voice or a new conversational wrapper. And what I mean by “wrapper” is: If you don't own the models, the infrastructure, or the data platforms — as the quote goes — you're just distributing someone else's software, or even hardware, at that point. Traditional customer experience platforms are reactive and deterministic. They're hard-coded systems that require massive human engineering to update. Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience introduces an LLM-powered reasoning layer. Instead of guessing every user's intent ahead of time, it evaluates company data, logistics and real-time policies dynamically to execute the next best action. We offer

about a dozen connectors — Salesforce, ServiceNow, or a first-party data store — so an agent can fetch information in real time and manage the customer conversation asynchronously. It doesn't say, "Hold, please." It can manage the conversation and look up account information, order history and order status in real time. So, you're reducing average handle time significantly. On top of that, it natively supports multimodality, so a customer can speak, type, or share images interchangeably without breaking the session's context. Give customers freedom of choice: If they want to engage with video streaming, voice, chat, or images — pick your poison and we can handle the rest.

Loganathan Siva: That's awesome. I was looking for one silver bullet; you gave me a whole gun. Moving the focus a little to our community — the partner community. It's always "what's in it for me," but at the same time, what does the partner community do for this? How can partners like us differentiate ourselves? Talk to us a little about good partner behavior for the whole ecosystem.

Brian Stavits: As you know, my only metric is partner-influenced revenue, workloads and pipeline. At the end of the day, my core goal is to ensure that partners can differentiate themselves from others and that partners are helping us win new business and new logos. There are thousands of partners, but partners, in my opinion, must stop selling AI capabilities and start selling business outcomes and agentic workflows. Don't just sell a standalone bot — that's not going to get you anywhere. Great, you could build a cool conversational agent for a hotel or an airline. You could build the greatest demos; I do this all the time. But designing a digital assembly line tailored to specific vertical pain points — I say this because you're super strong in financial services, insurance and healthcare — it might make sense to build the pre-built connectors that let a customer see time to value faster, so they don't have to work on that data hygiene and data foundation. If you already have that connector in place, great. But if you also have a vertical-specific template — if you know the common use cases for banking versus insurance — you might want to build pre-built agents that satisfy those needs. Differentiating by mastering AI orchestration and governance — helping an enterprise solve the hard problems of data security, model armor, guardrails and back-end system integration — is super valuable. All that to say: Developing custom IP — the connectors, the agents, or pre-built accelerators that help a customer see time to value faster — is going to be invaluable as we really start to accelerate GCX adoption.

Loganathan Siva: Awesome. A shameless plug for us here at Persistent: We've already built those and we're demoing this very actively. You hit three things there and I'll focus on all three. The accelerator piece is very critical, in my opinion. That's critical for somebody who is on legacy, or in a data center owned by customers. Customers are moving out of that legacy system for the freedom and the ease of use that GCX promises. So, through a company we acquired called Starfish a couple of years ago, we've built accelerators that'll move them from legacy on-prem to the latest and greatest on GCX. That's one. Two, it also helps move legacy Dialogflow CCAI to the latest and greatest on GCX. And to your point, GCX is super easy. It's so intuitive and so configurable, pulling everything out of the old, dated, build-your-own hardcore machinery that runs the call flow. All that's gone.

The second point you made is very relevant to folks like us. At Persistent, we have four extremely strong verticals: BFSI, Healthcare and Life Sciences, High-tech and what we call CMT — Communications, Media and Technology. Across all four verticals, we've built unique demos on GCX for each vertical that resonate with customers when they see them. We're out of PowerPoints and slideshows. Just play the demo, show them how it looks in their world and boom — the conversation is completely different. Let's talk timelines. Let's talk budgets. So, thank you for that. It's a cool takeaway for us after attending those sessions and it leads me to the next question. What should sellers like us do? How should sellers position GCX in a way that best addresses customers' needs?

Brian Stavis: To your point on “stop selling slideware and just show a demo” — you immediately see the light bulb go off for a customer: “Wow, I could build that today.” So, I tell partners, “Don't go after rip-and-replace opportunities.” You're not going to get your innovation out of the IVR telephony provider that's been working for you for 10 years. Eventually you might want to replace it, but your innovation isn't going to come from there. It's going to come from the orchestration layer, not an infrastructure replacement. I'd always evangelize to your team to lead the conversation with business transformation. Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience is not about replacing your CRM or contact center. It's a reasoning layer that plugs into your existing stack to turn every customer interaction into an automated resolution or conversion opportunity. So, focus on the proven metrics: Near-zero human engineering to launch, rapid time to value and a massive drop in ticket volume through proactive care.

Loganathan Siva: That's awesome. Great tips. Last and final, before we summarize: We talked about the opportunities for Persistent, or folks like Persistent. If I were to couple the GCX conversation, the pitch, the differentiator and the power of Persistent — how can we attach the customer perspective to all of this and say, “How can we help customers get the most value out of GCX?”

Brian Stavis: Persistent arguably has one of the best data practices. At the end of the day, like I said, I could build the most complex demo, but if I don't have a customer's data in the back-end systems, connectors, third-party tooling and first-party data stores, my demos fall flat. I could show the multimodality and the multilingual capabilities, but Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience working side by side with Persistent offers a massive revenue runway — because Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience provides the powerful AI engine, while Persistent provides the bridge to enterprise reality. Customers need help unlocking their legacy data lakes, connecting to complex back-end ERPs, CRMs and third-party tools and upskilling their teams into AI orchestrators — to use your words, Minion orchestrators. Persistent can deliver the high-value integration, the data monetization and the custom agent design that moves these AI solutions from a sandbox pilot — so they get out of pilot purgatory — to a multimillion-dollar production.

Loganathan Siva: Got it. I love the way you connected the three things and hit on the best value we can deliver together. The story comes together very strongly there. That leads to one last question — honestly, the last one. To round this off, talk to us a little about the readiness programs

Google has for partners like us. What does it take, in terms of a journey, to prep from ground zero to where we want to be? And talk to us about the escape velocity we can achieve together, coupled with the market motions.

Brian Stavis: As anyone who's been reading about the announcements from Google Next knows, we're announcing significant investment into our partner ecosystem. Our program is really tailored to provide a structured learning path, covering everything from conversational agent design fundamentals to building generative playbooks in CX Agent Studio. Our investment in partners is not only to upskill, but also to accelerate your deal velocity and pipeline velocity. We have funding mechanisms for upskilling and deal flow, as well as additional resources through forward-deployed engineers to help with specialized prototyping and to co-create custom proofs of concept. All this to say: Our investment in the partner ecosystem really goes back into upskilling, accelerating deal flow and innovation — new connectors, new pre-built agents and new integrations that you want to build. We really want to advocate for and invest in our partner ecosystem to capitalize on the opportunity at hand.

Loganathan Siva: Awesome. That pulls all of that together. I think we hit all the key elements today that we wanted to touch — the market, the perspective of customers and the changing dynamics and how Google is facing this market: More importantly, driving a difference, driving innovation and driving value for customers. Coupled with the massive horsepower of 27,000 to 28,000 people at Persistent, coming together with our 2,000-plus-strong force focused on just the CX portion of the market and the training and the landscape that takes us to the next level. I think we went one full circle and touched all the key elements. Thank you so much for your time and for helping us and keeping us on course. Looking forward to building more force together. May the force be with us.

Brian Stavis: This is my rally cry for those 28,000 people, to get them activated on Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience. I hope we accomplished that today and I appreciate the time.

Loganathan Siva: Awesome. Thank you so much.

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About Persistent

Persistent Systems (BSE: 533179 and NSE: PERSISTENT) is a global services and solutions company delivering AI-led, platform-driven Digital Engineering and Enterprise Modernization to businesses across industries. With over 27,500 employees located in 21 countries, the Company is committed to innovation and client success. Persistent offers a comprehensive suite of services, including software engineering, product development, data and analytics, CX transformation, cloud computing and intelligent automation. The Company is part of the MSCI India Index and is included in key indices of the National Stock Exchange of India, including the Nifty Midcap 50, Nifty IT and Nifty MidCap Liquid 15, as well as several on the BSE such as the S&P BSE 100 and S&P BSE SENSEX Next 50. Persistent is also a constituent of the Dow Jones Best-in-Class World Index. The Company has achieved carbon neutrality, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices. Persistent has also been named one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Inclusion & Diversity 2025 by Newsweek and Plant A Insights Group. As a participant of the United Nations Global Compact, the Company is committed to aligning strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, as well as take actions that advance societal goals. With 468% growth in brand value since 2020, Persistent is the fastest-growing IT services brand in 'Brand Finance India 100' 2025 Report.

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