

Planning, Investments, and Priorities

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ZAPSCALE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Purpose of the Survey

The Customer Success Survey 2025 was conducted to understand the trends, challenges and strategic priorities shaping the future of Customer Success. With businesses focusing more on customer retention and expansion as core drivers of revenue growth, understanding the evolving role of customer success teams has never been more critical.

The objective of this report is to provide valuable insights for SaaS businesses by highlighting key areas such as team structure, collaboration, budget allocation, best practices and the adoption of emerging technologies like Gen-AI. The report also examines the challenges of 2024 and how CS professionals plan to address them in 2025, offering a roadmap to plan their CS strategy for the future.

This report provides a reference point for CS professionals, helping them improve strategies, focus on effective programs, and achieve measurable results in a constantly evolving business landscape.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### **Key Findings**

Don't have the time to read the full report? Here are the key findings from the Customer Success Survey Report 2025.

- 1. "Lack of budget", "Dissatisfaction with the product" and "Bad-fit customers" were the top 3 reasons for churn in 2025.
- 2. A majority (43%) of respondents identify Net Revenue Retention as the North Star Metric for measuring success, followed by Gross Revenue Retention at 22%.
- 3. In 2025, 43% of respondents expect their customer success budget to remain unchanged compared to 2024
- 4. "Usage and adoption", "Delivering customer value", and "Managing churn rate" emerged as the top three customer success challenges in 2024.
- 5. Customer success professionals are prioritizing investments in self-service resources, success plans, and customer onboarding programs for 2025.
- 6. More than 85% respondents are planning to invest in Generative AI in 2025.

Adapt to AI and scalable strategies in 2025 or risk downsizing or losing your CS team.

- Irit Eizips, Renowned Customer Success Expert



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## OVERVIEW OF CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Customer success has become a cornerstone of effective business strategy, especially with the rise of SaaS and the shift towards subscription-based revenue model. It plays a crucial role in driving customer retention, expansion and satisfaction. As companies increasingly pivot from transactional models to recurring revenue models, the ability to nurture strong customer relationships is paramount. Customer Success ensures that customers not only achieve their desired outcomes but also derive maximum value from the products or services they invest in.

Today, switching costs are low and customer expectations are high and hence, focusing on customer success is no more a choice but a need for businesses. It bridges the gap between the product and customer expectations and helps to foster loyalty and advocacy. CS is no longer just a support function, it is a growth driver that helps businesses unlock new revenue streams and achieve sustainable success.

## METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted to capture the perspectives of Customer Success professionals across diverse industries, organizational sizes, and roles. Respondents included Customer Success Managers, Directors, VPs, and other CS professionals and provided a balanced view of the industry.



## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 1,000 responses were collected globally.
- Industries Represented: MarTech, FinTech, Healthcare, Sales Tech, E-commerce and more.
- Respondents hailed from organizations ranging from **start-ups (1–50 employees)** to **large enterprises** (1,000+ employees).
- The survey captured input from CS teams of varying sizes, from small teams of 1-3 people to large teams with 30+ members.

The survey was conducted online over a period of six weeks, leveraging targeted outreach to Customer Success communities, professional networks, and industry forums. The data was then analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and priorities that define the CS landscape as it evolves into 2025.

This report also integrates quotes from renowned Customer Success leaders and experts to enrich the findings with valuable industry perspectives and thought leadership.





## A TOTAL OF 1,024 CUSTOMER SUCCESS PROFESSIONALS

from around the world participated in this survey, representing diverse industries, company sizes, and roles within the CS ecosystem.



## CHAP TER2 ROLE

The survey participants included a wide range of roles within Customer Success, such as **Customer Success Managers** (CSMs), **Customer Success Directors**, **VPs of Customer Success**, and other key professionals involved in driving customer outcomes and business growth.

## Customer Success Manager 21.4% Sr. Customer Success Manager 17.3% Director of Customer Success 21.6% VP of Customer Success 28% Other

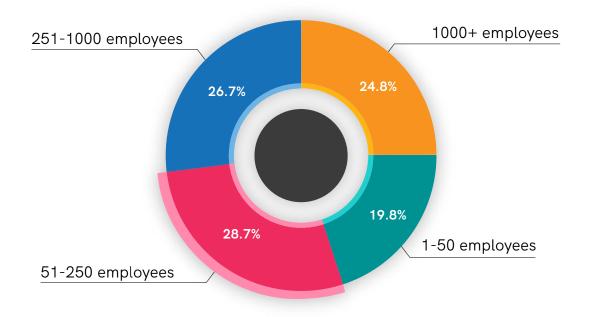
#### Other roles included:

CS Ops Managers, Onboarding Managers, Customer Strategy Managers and Rev-ops Managers



## CHAP TER2 COMPANY SIZE

Most survey respondents were from organizations with 51-250 employees, followed by those from companies with 251-1000 employees, reflecting the priorities of mid-sized and growing enterprises in customer success.





## CHAP TER2 INDUSTRY

The survey revealed that most respondents were from the **MarTech industry**, making up **19.9%** of the total, followed by those in **E-Commerce** at **13.9%**, and **Healthcare** at **9%**.

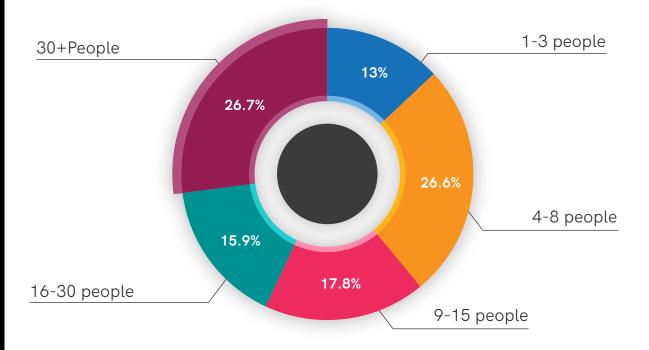
#### MarTech 19.9% E-commerce 13.9% Healthcare 9% Fintech 6% Logistics 5% Sales Tech 5% **HRTech** 8% Others 33.2%

#### Other roles included:

Legal Tech, Data Integration, Cybersecurity, FMCG, InsurTech, Event Tech, Supply Chain, Media Tech, Retail Tech, Edtech and Energy Tech.

## CHAP TER 2 TEAM SIZE

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of customer success team sizes. The most common team size is 30+ people (26.7%), followed closely by 4-8 people (26.6%), while smaller teams of 1-3 people make up the smallest share (13%).





## CERAP TER2 COLLABORATION

When asked which team they collaborate with the most, the top three responses were **Product**, followed by **Sales**, and then **Operations**, in that order, highlighting the cross-functional nature of Customer Success.

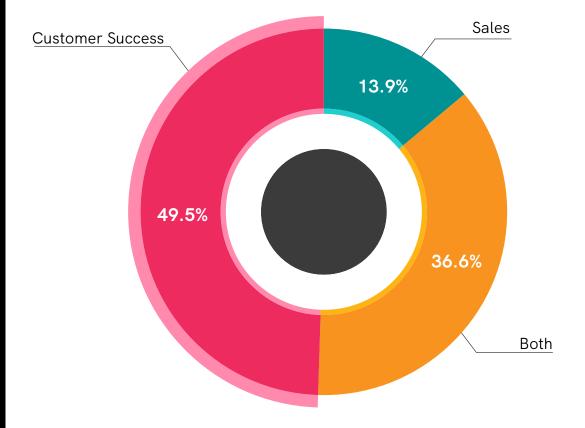


#### Other roles included:

Development, Support and Admin



RENEWALS AND UPSELL A significant portion for renewal and upsell responsibility, 49.5%, is managed by Customer Success teams, while 13.9% is handled by Sales. The remaining 36.6% reflects shared responsibility between the two teams.



Watch our podcast on Upselling

Upselling Strategies for Customer Success Professionals ft. Rachel Provan



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS TEAMS SHOULD INCREASINGLY TAKE OWNERSHIP OF RENEWALS AND UPSELLS

because they are uniquely positioned to drive these conversations. Here's why:

- They work closely with customers throughout the year, building trust and understanding.
- They deeply understand the customer's business goals and challenges.
- They design and implement a tailored customer journey based on individual requirements.
- They ensure customers maximize the platform's value and utilize it effectively.
- They articulate and demonstrate the tangible value derived from the product or service.
- They help customers realize the ROI.

Given these responsibilities, Customer Success Managers (CSMs) are well-equipped to lead renewal discussions. Their strong relationships with customers and stakeholders position them as trusted advisors, ensuring these conversations feel natural and value-driven.

In 2025, customers increasingly recognize that renewal discussions led by a CSM align with their role, rather than being perceived as sales-focused. Businesses are adapting to this shift, acknowledging that CSMs, with their strong relationships, are the ideal points of contact for renewal and upsell conversations.

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By enabling sales teams to focus on acquiring new customers, CS teams can concentrate on retention and expansion. Moreover, as CSMs gain insights into a customer's business, they are well-placed to identify additional solutions that align with the customer's needs, driving upsell opportunities.

This approach also underscores the growing importance of Customer Success Qualified Leads (CSQLs), which are increasingly becoming key performance indicators for CSMs.

By leveraging their existing relationships, CSMs can contribute to new business opportunities, further solidifying their role as essential drivers of both customer retention and organizational growth.



#### RAMAN BINDRA

Customer Success Leader & CS Director, Recruiterflow

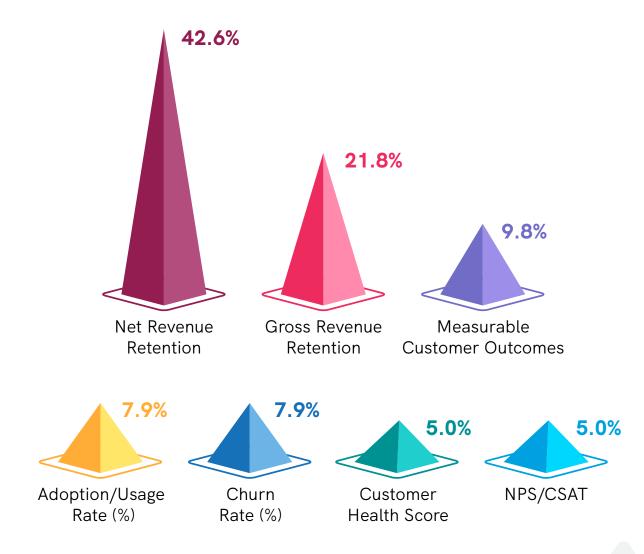
DO YOU USE A CUSTOMER SUCCESS PLATFORM? When asked about using a Customer Success platform, 52.5% said they currently use one, 37.6% said they don't, and 9.9% are in the process of implementing one.





WHAT IS YOUR NORTH STAR METRIC OF MEASURING SUCCESS?

The survey revealed that **Net Revenue Retention (NRR)** is the most preferred North Star metric for measuring success among respondents.



# THE MEASUREMENT OF CUSTOMER SUCCESS HAS EVOLVED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER TIME.

Initially, it focused primarily on customer sentiment (e.g., CSAT and NPS) and basic retention or churn ratios, offering a limited view of the customer experience. Today, these foundational metrics remain important but have been supplemented with broader activity, engagement, and outcome-based measurements.

Key activity-based metrics now include the number of free trials offered and successfully completed, the number and ratio of new customers successfully onboarded, and the number and ratio of customers engaged in success plans or additional sales opportunities.

Engagement metrics such as product usage and customer health scores further enrich our understanding of customer satisfaction and risk.

Operational metrics like Time to Value (TTV) and CSM utilization provide insight into the efficiency of customer success efforts. Financial outcomes, such as revenue growth from existing customers (Net Revenue Retention, Annual Recurring Revenue), Gross Revenue Retention, and the overall Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), demonstrate the financial impact of customer success strategies.

Lastly, customer advocacy metrics (e.g., referrals, testimonials), community engagement levels, and support effectiveness metrics (e.g., response and resolution times) highlight the depth of customer relationships.

Together, these metrics provide a comprehensive view, balancing operational performance, customer experience, and financial results, helping organizations align their customer success goals with long-term revenue growth.



#### RICK ADAMS

Author, Mentor and Expert Consultant in Customer Success, Founder, Practical CSM



WHAT WERE YOUR TOP CUSTOMER SUCCESS CHALLENGES FOR 2024? The top Customer Success challenges for 2024 were usage and adoption (56.4%), followed closely by delivering value to customers (53.5%), and churn rate (40.6%). Other notable challenges included improving the customer experience (32.7%), time to value (28.7%), and upsell/cross-sell rate (27.7%), reflecting the ongoing focus on customer engagement and growth.

#### Usage and Adoption

	56.4%
Delivering Value To Customers	
	53.5%
Churn Rate	
	40.6%
Improving The Customer Experience	
	32.7%
Time to Value	
	28.7%
Upsell/Cross-sell Rate	
	27.7%
Scaling Customer Success	
	22.8%
Customer Satisfaction	
	19.8%
Profitability	
	17.8%



SHRINKAGE DURING THE YEAR IN CUSTOMER RETENTION RATES, IN ARR, AND IN FREE CASH FLOW WERE JUST THREE OF THE BUSINESS METRICS WITH RESULTS THAT CASCADED INTO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CUSTOMER SUCCESS PROFESSIONALS.

It's become accepted wisdom that CS pros now have to add to their set of skills the ability to better-understand the business of their customers and to exercise a more mature sense of financial acumen, both of which will bolster their ability to have more strategic conversations not just with customers, but with - more importantly - executives in the C-suite of their own companies.

But improvement in those skills will not arrest the trajectory. Compounding the situation and making it more challenging for CS is AI and its rapidly evolving capabilities, especially in the area of agents and the almost limitless way that companies will be able to inject automation and speed into newly designed processes. AI is also playing a catalyst role in the increasing prevalence that we see of alternative (to ARR-based) subscription pricing models, such as usage-based, consumption-based, and outcome based.

I think the shift in that direction is unstoppable because paying for what you want, or need is a core expectation of any customer. All agents will make this possible and it will drastically change the way Customer Success is built and how it operates.

To close, most organizations in the world of business were ill-prepared for all the uncertainty that was unleashed in 2024. Customer Success had its own unique challenges, but it was buffeted by the same storms as the others. The biggest learning for me was that I was not alone in seeing the answer this way - the secret to being successful going forward will not be found in looking to the past. The secret lies in being able to think and act in new ways.



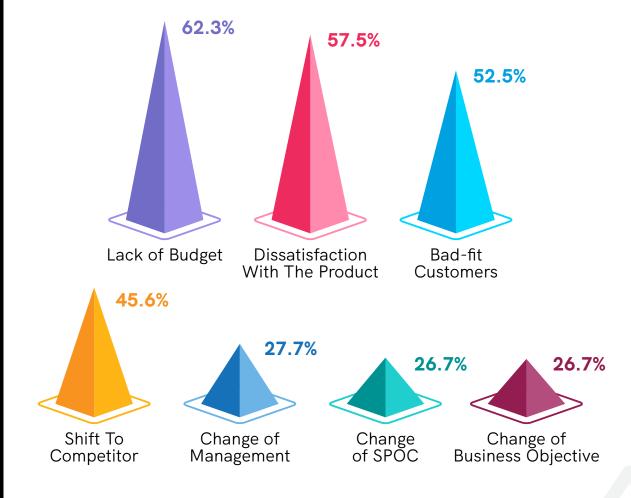
#### PETER ARMALY

Customer Success Industry Advisor & Principal at Valuize Consulting



WHAT WERE
THE TOP 3
REASONS FOR
CHURN IN 2024?

The top three reasons for churn in 2024 were lack of budget (62.3%), dissatisfaction with the product (57.5%), and bad-fit customers (52.5%). Other factors included a shift to competitors (45.6%) and changes such as management or business objectives (both around 27%).





# CUSTOMER CHURN CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO MANY FACTORS, BUT THE THREE I FEEL ARE MOST PREVALENT ARE: CHANGE OF SPOC, LACK OF BUDGET, AND DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PRODUCT.

Change of SPOC is number #1, because it is clear, when new ownership comes into play you need to resell/reengage and re-insure them on your product. This is best done with a playbook trigger which notifies the right parties, and helps the team deploy a plan of action.

Plans may vary based on the level of stakeholder change, and the former engagement of that person or not. Example - an engaged user who gets promoted, maybe a good escalation and one to celebrate; whereas a new business director being hired in from outside, would be a negative escalation.

Lack of budget is tricky and can be the result of many things such as force majeure. The keys here are understanding the level of comparison of cost, stage of the decision, and what you are willing to sacrifice. If it means dropping 10% of contract value, you may deem it doable. But if it is 30% or more, that can be challenging.

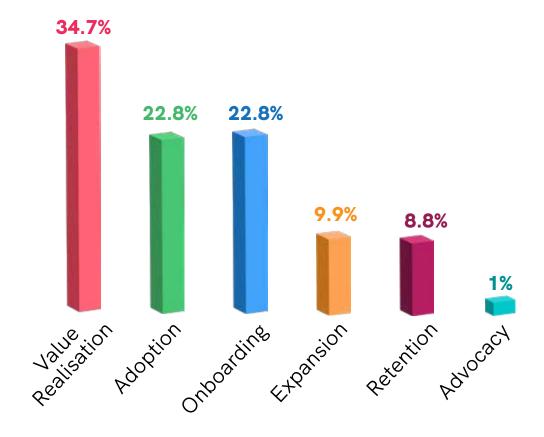
Dissatisfaction with the product can be gleaned from many factors such as feature requests, NPS or other surveys, and PMF (i.e., is the customer in your ICP industry). The best thing to do here - track requests, keep up with updates, advocate for your customers, and ensure you really assess revenue at risk in your product decisions.



#### PARUL BHANDARI

CS Consultant & CSM Coach, Founder, South Asian Success Community

WHICH CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE STAGE REQUIRED THE MOST EFFORT IN 2024? In 2024, the **Value Realisation** stage demanded the most effort from Customer Success Managers, with **34.7%** of respondents highlighting it as the most challenging. This was followed by **Adoption** and **Onboarding**, each at **22.8%**, while stages like **Expansion (9.9%)** and **Retention (8.8%)** required comparatively less focus. **Advocacy** was the least effort-intensive, at just **1%**.





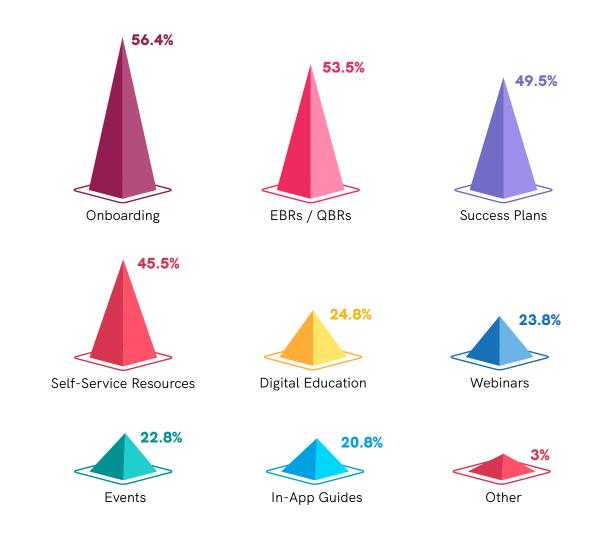
WHAT SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS DID YOU PRIORITIZE FOR 2024?

The top system improvement priorities for 2024 were **Process Automation** (55.4%) and **Success Planning** (48.5%), reflecting a focus on efficiency and strategic alignment. Other key areas included **Reporting Tools** (37.6%) and implementing a **Customer Success Platform** (34.7%).

#### **Process Automation** 55.4% Success Planning 48.5% Reporting Tools 37.6% **Customer Success Platform** 34.7% Customer Intelligence 28.7% **Forecasting Tools** 27.7% Data Integrity 23.8% Machine Learning and Al 22.8% Conversation Intelligence 20.8%



WHAT PROGRAMS DID YOU INVEST IN FOR 2024? In 2024, **Onboarding** was the top investment priority, chosen by **56.4%** of respondents, closely followed by **EBRs/QBRs (53.5%)** and **Success Plans (49.5%)**.



#### Other:

CSEs, Hiring, Lack of resources, Gamifications, Surveys, Analytics Training, Community Engagement, Advocacy Programs.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 IN CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Al Integration Took Centre Stage

2024 witnessed a surge in Al adoption within customer success, with tools like Generative Al, Al Agents, and Al Co-Pilots.



Focus on Customer Retention

Companies prioritized retention over acquisition, using health scores and predictive analytics for proactive engagement.



Expansion of CS
Technology Ecosystems

The rise of integrated platforms allowed teams to consolidate tools, making operations more efficient and data-driven.



**Upskilling CS Teams** 

2024 saw a growing investment in training and upskilling, with organizations focusing on Al literacy, data analysis, and strategic relationship management.

These trends paved the way for what's next in 2025, setting the stage for a tech-enabled, customer-centric future.





WHAT CHALLENGES ARE YOU AIMING TO SOLVE IN 2025? For 2025, Customer Success teams are focusing on tackling key challenges, with **delivering value to customers** topping the list **at 60.4%**. **Usage and adoption follow closely at 47.5%**, underscoring the need to enhance product engagement.

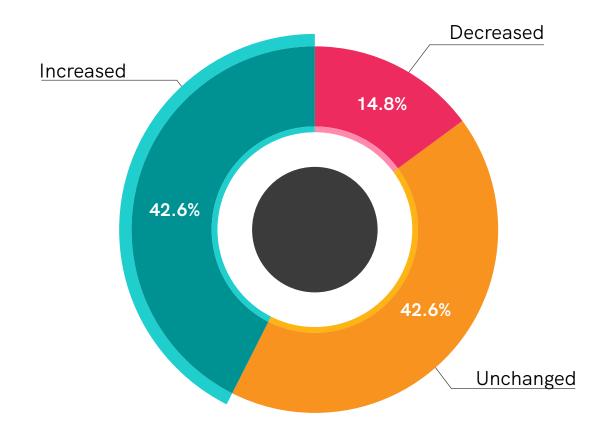
#### Delivering Value to Customers 60.4% Usage and Adoption 47.5% Churn Rate 45.5% Upsell/Cross-sell Rate 35.6% Time to Value 26.7% Improving the Customer Experience 24.8% Scaling Customer Success 22.8% **Customer Satisfaction** 21.8% Profitability 14.9%

WHICH SYSTEMS NEED IMPROVEMENT TO ADDRESS YOUR 2025 CHALLENGES? To address their key challenges in 2025, Customer Success teams emphasized the need for system enhancements. **Process automation** emerged as the top priority, with 46.5% of respondents seeking to optimize workflows and reduce manual intervention. **Forecasting tools** were a close second at 43.6%, underscoring the importance of anticipating customer trends and outcomes.

#### **Process Automation** 46.5% **Forecasting Tools** 43.6% Success Planning 37.6% Reporting Tools 32.7% Customer Intelligence 29.7% **Customer Success Platform** 29.7% Data Integrity 27.7% Machine Learning and Al 26.7% Conversation Intelligence 25.7%



HOW DO YOUR CUSTOMER SUCCESS BUDGETS FOR 2025 COMPARE TO THOSE OF 2024? When asked about Customer Success budgets for 2025, the responses revealed an equal split: **42.6% reported increased budgets**, reflecting growing investments in CS initiatives, while **42.6% indicated budgets would remain unchanged**, suggesting stability in their current financial allocations. Meanwhile, **14.8% of respondents expected a decrease**, highlighting the financial constraints some organizations face.





#### WILL THE BUDGETS GO UP FOR CS IN 2025? WELL, THINK THAT MAY DEPEND ON COMPANY MATURITY.

Far too many early-stage start-ups don't understand the function of CS, and how important it is, so when it doesn't immediately drive top line growth, they see it as ineffective.

And customer success cannot be effective without the necessary tools, headcount and time to develop strategy. It's an upfront investment. But the larger companies that have been around for years will double down on Customer Success if they want to survive. Long term growth isn't sexy. But it's essential for survival. Without retention, growth is next to impossible.



#### RACHEL PROVAN

CS Leadership & Strategy Coach Founder & CEO, Provan Success, LLC

WHAT CHANGES ARE YOU PLANNING FOR YOUR CUSTOMER SUCCESS TEAM IN 2025? In 2025, most respondents plan to **maintain the same team size**, with **48.5%** indicating no changes. However, **42.6%** are looking to **increase their team size**, signalling growth in Customer Success functions, while **8.9%** are considering **reducing their team size**, potentially due to budget constraints or organizational shifts.

Are you going to maintain the same team size



Are you increasing your team size



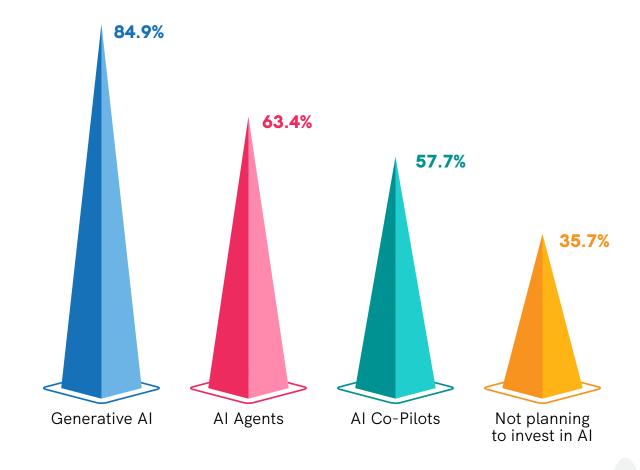
Are you reducing your team size





WHICH AITECHNOLOGY
ARE YOU
PLANNING TO
INVEST IN FOR
YOUR TEAM
IN 2025?

In 2025, the majority of respondents are focusing their AI investments on Generative AI, with 84.9 % planning to adopt this technology. 63.4% are looking into AI Agents, while 57.7% are interested in AI Co-Pilots to assist their teams. On the other hand, 35.7% of respondents are not planning to invest in AI, potentially due to budget constraints or different strategic priorities.



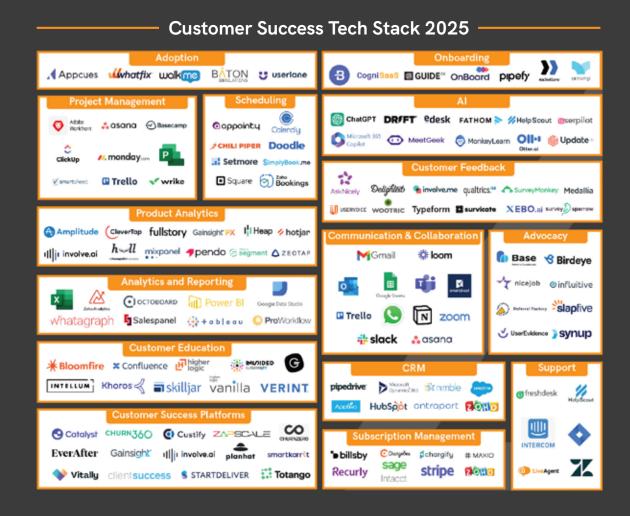




Are You Equipped with the Right Technology for Customer Success?

Discover Our 2025 Tech Stack for CS!

Click here to download



#### CUSTOMER SUCCESS TEAMS THAT RESIST AI AND SCALABLE STRATEGIES IN 2025 WON'T SURVIVE AS THEY ARE.

Leaders who fail to adapt will face downsizing or total restructuring as companies prioritize efficiency and full-base coverage over outdated methods. Evolve...or risk becoming obsolete.



IRIT EIZIPS
World-renowned Expert in CS

CCO & CEO at CSM Practice

## CUSTOMER SUCCESS TEAMS SHOULD EMBRACE AI TECHNOLOGIES THAT ENHANCE PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS, AUTOMATION, AND PERSONALIZATION

By doing so, they can anticipate customer needs, streamline workflows, and deliver tailored experiences at scale. These advancements enable proactive engagement, intelligent risk detection, and data-driven decision-making, ultimately strengthening customer relationships and driving long-term growth.



#### **MAUSMI AMBASTHA**

Co-Founder & COO, ZapScale



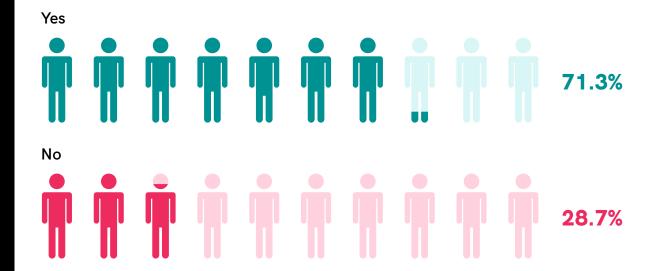
WHAT
PROGRAMS ARE
YOU PLANNING
TO INVEST IN
FOR 2025?

For 2025, the top programs that respondents plan to invest in are **Self-Service Resources**, with **51.5%** prioritizing it, followed closely by **Success Plans** at **44.6%**. **Onboarding** remains a key focus for **39.6%**, while **EBRs/QBRs** and **In-App Guides** are also receiving significant attention, with **36.6%** and **35.6%** planning to invest in them, respectively.

#### Self-Service Resources 51.5% Success Plans 44.6% Onboarding 39.6% EBRs / QBRs 36.6% In-App Guides 35.6% **Digital Education** 32.7% **Events** 29.7% Webinars 29.7%

IS ECONOMIC VOLATILITY INFLUENCING YOUR DECISION TO PURCHASE TOOLS FOR CS?

It's clear that economic volatility is a major factor for many, with 71.3% of respondents indicating it is influencing their decision to purchase tools to support Customer Success. In contrast, 28.7% of respondents feel that economic uncertainty is not impacting their purchasing decisions.



#### I'M NOT SEEING A LOT OF INCREASED TECH INVESTMENTS IN CUSTOMER SUCCESS.

Those who are investing in tech are looking at how it is enabled by AI, and they have a big focus on being more productive/ saving time and getting AI enriched insights for revenue opportunities.

Those who are not investing in new tech are doubling down on their tech stack and incorporating AI in scrappy ways. When they identify something that they can't bridge between tools or build in house incorporating AI, then they'll invest in a native AI tool. I think we're just beginning to see the impact of Agentic AI.

By the end of 2025, I think Agentic AI will be well known—the way that ChatGPT and other LLMs have become routine use. Ultimately, people will need to upskill their abilities to use AI and increase their productivity, and their understanding of GTM alignment across prospects and customers will be more critical to their success. Teams will continue to get smaller, and which people you have on your team will be more important. Creative thinking will be at a premium.



#### JAN YOUNG

Customer-Led Growth Advisor, Investor Founder & Chief Customer Officer, JanYoungCX



## CONCLUSION

The 2024 and 2025 survey results paint a clear picture of the evolving landscape of Customer Success. As organizations continue to grapple with the core challenges of value delivery, adoption, and churn, there is an increasing emphasis on automation, AI, and strategic investments to drive efficiency and customer engagement. The investment in tools, technologies, and team structures demonstrates the growing importance of Customer Success as a key driver of long-term business outcomes.



#### Created by







