OliverWyman

NEXT FRONTIER IN TRANSFORMING TELECOM

Practical benefits of agentic AI and digital agents

AUTHORS

Laksh Maggoo
Charles De Pommerol
Ashik Ardeshna
Emmanuel Amiot
Laurent Bensoussan
Jad Haddad
Lindy Kouyoumji
Ivan Palencia
Benjamin Tubiana

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader

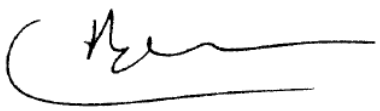
Many perspectives on the telecom industry emphasize the challenges of integrating AI and digital agents at scale, the struggle to fully capitalize on the efficiencies and innovations they offer, and the overall skepticism regarding the sector's ability to adapt to a rapidly changing technological landscape. These perspectives often overlook the transformative potential that these innovations bring to telecom operations, as well as the significant strides that forward-thinking telecom operators have made in leveraging these technologies.

AI and digital agents are more than just powerful tools; they serve as catalysts for enhanced operational efficiency, increased customer engagement, and accelerated strategic decision-making while transforming softer part of the Business such as culture or ways-of-working. As telecom operators harness these technologies, they unlock new avenues for growth.

How can telecom operators effectively leverage AI, digital agents and agentic AI platforms to drive operational excellence and growth? Beyond the hype, what are the use cases that operators are executing? What strategies can be implemented to deliver impact in the short term while successfully scaling fast and securing lasting value?

These are the questions we address in our perspective, "Next frontier in transforming telecom: practical benefits of agentic AI and digital agents". It is shaped by our strategic work with leading operators across the globe. We hope you find it an interesting read.

Sincerely yours



Laurent Bensoussan

Global Industry Head
Communications, Media and Technology

CONTENTS

THE DISRUPTIVE IMPACT OF AI AND DIGITAL AGENTS FOR TELCOS

Operators have undergone significant transformations, and AI is now serving as a powerful catalyst to supercharge every aspect of operator-wide transformation — from vision and processes to systems and ways of working.

Telecommunication companies are accelerating their use of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). Some estimates suggest that telcos will incorporate generative AI into their business processes over the next three years. The technology has the potential to transform many facets of telecom operations, ranging from enhancing the customer experience to optimizing network quality, driving not only value for customers but significant bottom-line impact.

Operators are quickly implementing AI use cases; however, most of these applications are not yet agentic AI. They often remain siloed, without clear performance measurement, which restricts enterprise-wide transformation and hinders rapid bottom-line impact. To unlock full potential, operators implementing AI-led transformations must align it with business goals, ensure adoption, and integrate quality data. They must also balance automation with human oversight, address risks, build the right infrastructure, and track long-term impact. Those that do will gain a competitive edge. Operators are actively deploying AI use cases, yet they face broader challenges related to enterprise-wide transformation.

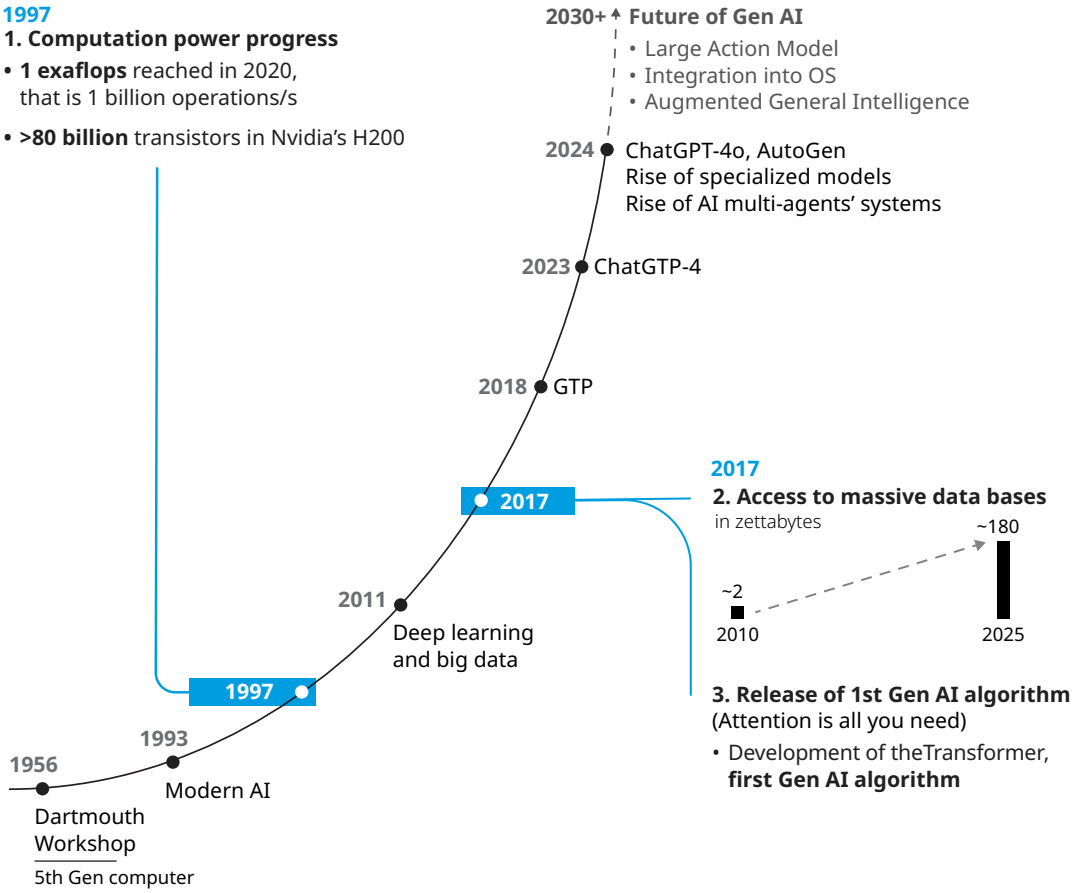
Roughly 94% of telecom operators believe that generative AI will have a significant impact on their businesses over the next five years. AI-powered digital agents, personalized interactions, and automated processes could enable telco operators to improve customer support, reduce downtime, and enhance operational efficiency.

Successful telcos understand that achieving the true potential of generative AI will not happen by merely deploying the technology. Instead, they are adapting their operating model and process architecture to fully harness the value of generative AI and digital agents for their business and applying it to high value use cases. They understand the importance of considering the company’s vision, identifying relevant use cases, and leveraging the right enablers.

The opportunity for generative AI in telco is just beginning; adoption at scale is the long-term goal. Right now, telcos appear to be focused on testing and learning in specific functional areas, concentrating use cases to gain insights and refine implementation strategies (Exhibit 2).

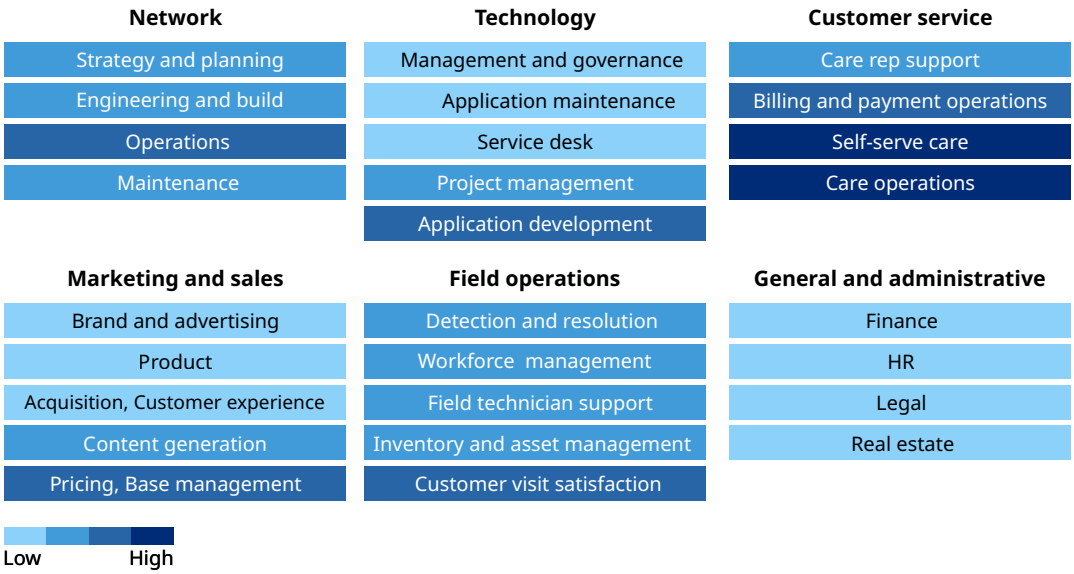
Additional opportunities to leverage generative AI include enhancing knowledge management for improved information retrieval and decision-making, as well as utilizing large data sets for co-piloting to boost productivity and creativity and facilitate actions at scale.

Exhibit 1: Generative AI has been achieved through 3 enablers



Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Exhibit 2: Relative current level of AI adoption of in the telecom industry by function



Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Exhibit 3: Continuum of maturity for AI and generative AI models

Lower setup costs → *Greater sophistication*

	Action coach Large action models that not only assist decision making but perform actions on-demand	**Supervised digital agent** Elevate operational efficiency: optimizing processes, automating workflows, and implementing cost-saving strategies	**Autonomous digital agent and multi-agents** Empower your business with autonomous digital agents, leveraging AI for intelligent, automated, and proactive decision-making
Level of autonomy	• Responds based on prompts but lacks ongoing engagement	• Engages users in a dynamic and adaptative manner	• Operates in autonomy under pre-defined guidelines
Example for a customer service agent	• Coach to augment human agent during and after the call (e.g., issue resolution, automatic transcript)	• Pre-diagnosis to qualify incoming call (for example, urgency, towing requirements) • Pitch recommendations to care agents	• Autonomous and zero-touch Digital call center agent for low and medium complexity cases
Example in network	• Embedded tools to predict outcomes and recommend strategies to NOC engineers	• Using AI to analyze data and act on recommendations with minimal human review	• AI automatically identifies issues and resolves them, taking necessary actions

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Autonomous digital agents powered by generative AI are the next frontier for telcos. Such digital agents could act as true co-workers, managing tasks and processes within functional domains. These smart bots or systems can be embedded in the core of back-end operations and interact autonomously. The most efficient approaches are agentic models, which consist of a group of specialized digital agents collaborating to address specific use cases. They can handle large workloads while driving better business outcomes. Team members can use everyday language to ask about project status, build software features, or seek in-field troubleshooting assistance from these agents. For instance, they can conduct root cause analysis on performance degradation and resolution, implement AI-driven Maintenance Operating Procedures that have reduced maintenance costs by 25%-30%, augment project management capacity by 30%-40%, and provide predictive demand and capacity recommendations that led to 5%-8% optimization in Capex.

Overall, the implementation of new AI tools could significantly increase earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) for telcos in the near to mid-term, with benefits extending beyond cost optimization.

Exhibit 4: Transformation potential enabled by AI on telco spend

		Mid-term impact	Full potential
OPEX	Marketing & Sales	15-18%	18-24%
	Network	22-27%	25-36%
	Field Operations	15-25%	25-30%
	Customer service	15-25%	25-35%
	IT	14-20%	20-35%
	Video	-	-
	Other SG&A	12-15%	15-22%
	Total Opex		
CAPEX	Labor	15-22%	25-35%
	Engineering	10-20%	20-30%
	Equipment & inventory	2-4%	4-6%
	CPE	-	-
	IT	Included above	
	Total Capex		

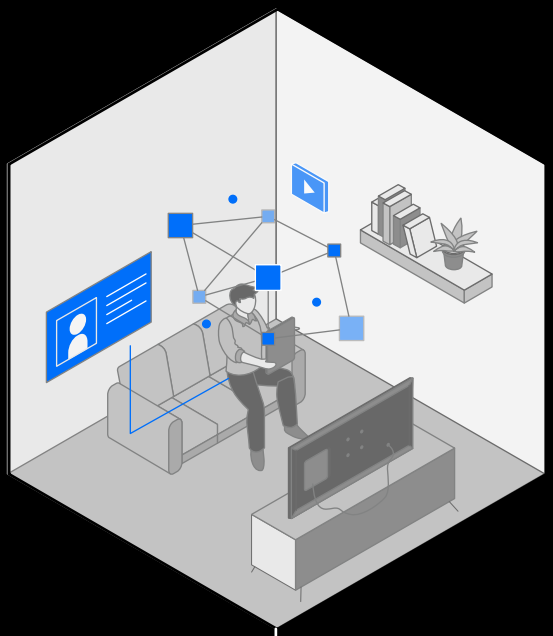
Note: Full potential refers to the enterprise-wide impact that goes beyond the implementation of AI use cases

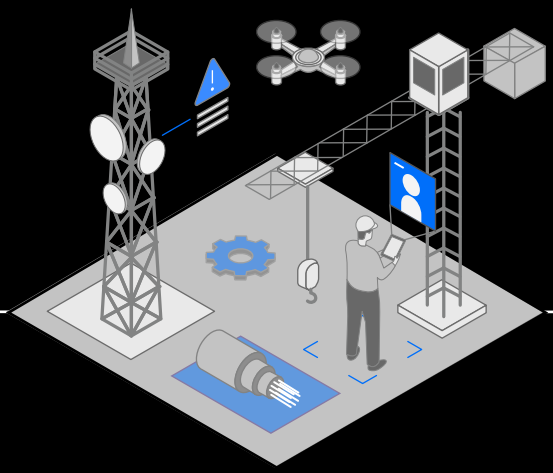
Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

NEXT-FRONTIER IN TELCOS TRANSFORMATION USING DIGITAL AGENTS

Customer

- Tailored experiences across networks, video & entertainment
- Interactions with my Telco anytime





Network

- Planning with maximum ROI
- Zero-touch site and network design
- Automated root cause identification
- Dark NOC and predictive maintenance

Field operations (network & customer)

- Next-gen workforce optimization
- Proactive anomaly detection and resolution
- Technician coach: real-time assistance for frontline

Customer service

- Real-time agent assist
- Automated post-call transcript and actions
- Service experience measurement and performance management
- Preventive communication

Support function (e.g., finance)

- AI-driven scenario planning
- Real-time financial reporting
- Automated contract management

Marketing & sales

- Multi-channel personalized experience
- Live proposal/contract generation
- Augmented negotiation pitches

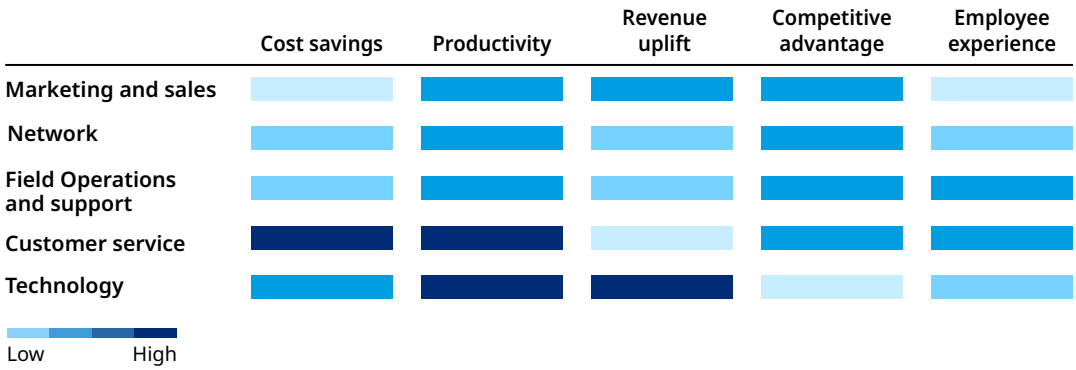
Technology

- Automated requirements generation
- Augmented UX/UI designs
- Code generation and explanation
- Test cases creation and execution

Generative AI, in particular, has the power to unlock value for telcos that surpasses that of advanced analytics and traditional AI, through its ability to generate new and innovative solutions. As the technology continues to advance, generative AI is on track to become a new standard in the telecom industry. As shown in Exhibit 5, we are already observing tangible examples of telcos beginning to unlock value across diverse functional areas, including marketing, customer service, information technology, and operations. For example, they are utilizing AI to enhance technician training and development, implementing a smart AI-powered Next Best Action (NBA) and Next Best Offer (NBO) engine to boost up-selling and cross-selling efforts, and accelerating technology debt modernization by transforming legacy code into newly refactored code.

Telecom operators are transforming their operations by integrating targeted AI solutions across specific domains, including Network, Field Operations, Technology, Customer Service, and Marketing and Sales. Other General and Administrative (G&A) domains are currently lower priorities due to more limited spending.

Exhibit 5: Value drivers of AI across functions



Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Exhibit 6: Examples of the impacts of AI on leading telco key performance indicators

Marketing spend efficiency optimization	Reduction of the marketing spend per gross add (USD)	**2.5x – 3.5x**
Right first-time optimization (repair)	Reduction of the share of repair orders that are not resolved on the first visit within 7 days	**0.1x – 0.2x**
NOC efficiency optimization	Reduction of required NOC FTE for fixed services per million homes connected	**2x – 3x**
Average handling time reduction	Reduction of the average number of minutes spent by care agents in calls (excludes hold time)	**2x – 5x**
Non-code committers reduction	Reduction of share of IT FTEs that do not commit code at least once a month	**1.5x – 1.8x**
Technical debt optimization	Reduction of share of the IT Budget consumed by technical debt	**3x – 4x**

Notes: Technical debt refers as the obligations an organization accumulates by prioritizing short-term technology demands over those required for long-term performance and sustainability. Technical debt results in enormous unproductive spend just to maintain operations.

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

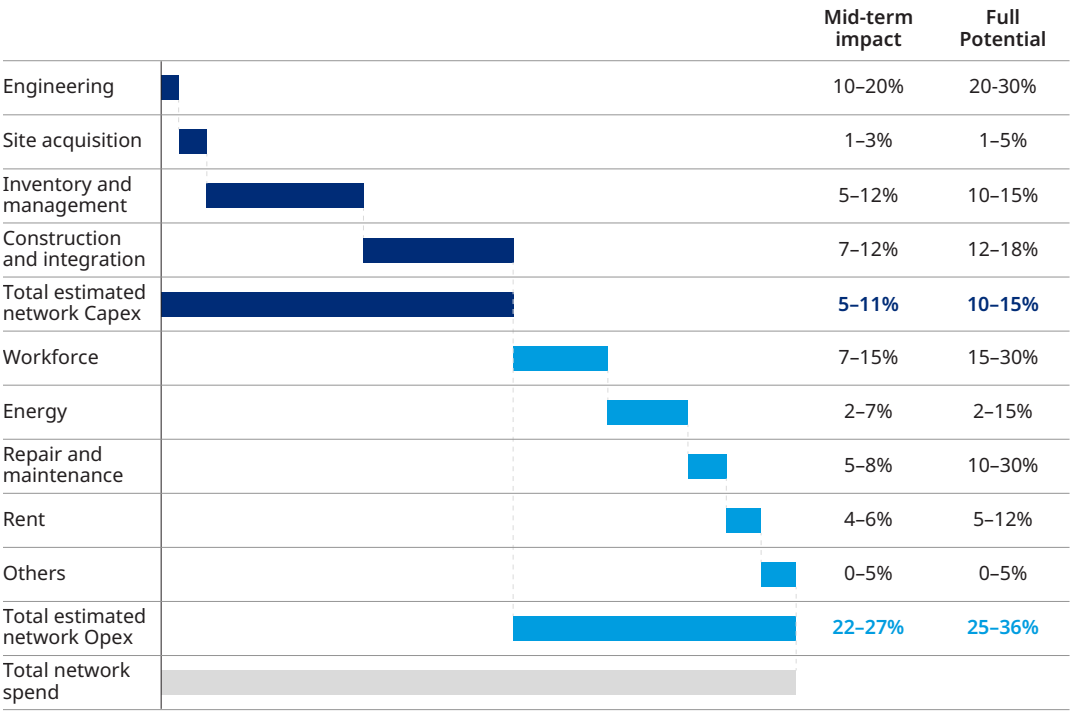
IMPACT ON NETWORK AND FIELD OPERATIONS

Envision a world where your network operations are not just efficient but transformative, preventive and not reactive only, boosting efficiency and improving customer experience. By implementing AI in workflows and operations — from network design to maintenance — telecom operators can create a seamless ecosystem of digital agents that work together to drive meaningful business outcomes.

The transformation is expected to result in a reduction of capital expenditures (CapEx) and operational expenditures (OpEx) by 20-40%, while simultaneously increasing return on investment (ROI) by 10% to 15% through automated and streamlined processes. Critically, AI-driven network automation is predicted to become standard practice in a near future, radically changing the level of operations performance.

Imagine a future where your network operations are seamlessly interconnected across all stages of the value chain — strategy and planning, engineering and build, and operations and maintenance. This future is empowered by an ecosystem of digital agents working in harmony, transforming your approach to network management allowing you to respond to challenges and opportunities in real time.

Exhibit 7: Transforming potential enabled by AI and digital agents on network spend



Note: Full potential refers to the enterprise-wide impact that goes beyond the implementation of AI use cases
Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

When it comes to strategy and planning, AI can be used to determine demand and traffic patterns, ensuring that networks are always aligned with market needs. More informed decisions based on real-time data can significantly improve network architecture and dynamic experience optimization. Backhaul planning and site acquisition become streamlined as well, maximizing ROI and enabling companies to develop robust build plans that set a clear roadmap for success. The entire construction process in network engineering is better and faster, lowering CapEx by 5% to 10% and builds time by 40% to 60%.

From an engineering and building perspective, AI can speed site designs and construction models through the use of data-driven insights. Radio frequency planning and tower design are optimized for efficiency, while engineering plans and bill of materials generation are created with minimal manual intervention. AI can also be used to improve vendor negotiations and contract management by analyzing real-time data and combing through reams of documents to find areas of improvement. Permitting and approvals are expedited through automated workflows enabled by digital agents. Project management could also be transformed with progress tracking and inventory management that keeps companies ahead of schedule and under budget. This approach transitions to managing project 'by exception', focusing on the most critical items only, with the rest being managed by AI and digital agents.

Exhibit 8: Examples of high-impact AI use cases in Network

Strategy and planning	Operations and maintenance	Engineering and building
• Capacity planning based on forecasted demand and traffic patterns • Market analysis and customer segmentation • Network architecture • Dynamic experience optimization • Backhaul planning • Site acquisition and ROI optimization • Build planning, sequencing and roadmap development	• NOC and Centralized operations: Network performance and traffic monitoring; Outage resolution and break-fixes; Tower and RF optimization • Field operations and maintenance: Field dispatch and scheduling; Plant, equipment and tower maintenance; energy management • FinOps and SDN optimization	• Technical site design: Construction modeling; RF planning and tower design; engineering plan creation; BOM generation • Vendor negotiation and contract management • Permitting and approvals • Project management and progress tracking • Inventory and equipment management • Site configuration and testing

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

In operations and maintenance, your centralized network operations center utilizes AI to monitor network performance and traffic, providing immediate insights into outage resolution and break-fix scenarios. Tower and radio frequency operations could become optimized with predictive analytics, while field operations benefit from automated dispatch and scheduling, ensuring that maintenance is timely and effective. Based on client experiences, we predict that the use of AI in network monitoring can decrease incident resolution times by 40%. Energy management becomes smarter, and financial operations are optimized.

IMPACT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is a strategic function, at the core of customer experience, and accounts for 7-11% as a percentage of total Opex for telcos. The main activities of a customer service function in telecom include technical support, billing and account management, service provisioning and activation, addressing customer inquiries, complaint resolution, customer education, feedback collection, and sales recommendations.

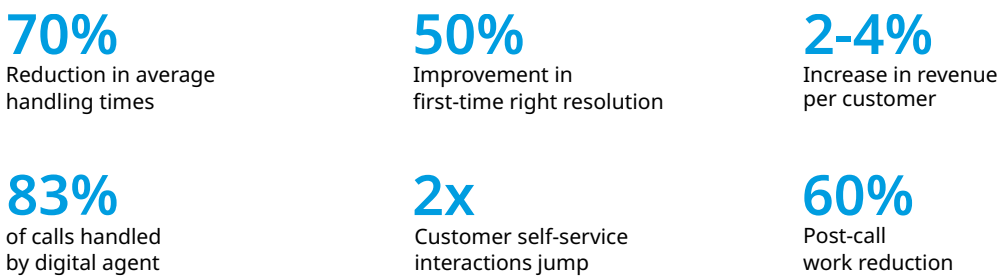
Imagine a future for your customer service operations, where every interaction becomes a seamless journey across all touchpoints. In this vision, you leverage the power of AI to enhance customer interactions, ensuring that each moment is proactively optimized for both satisfaction and efficiency. This future is becoming a reality.

According to IDC, almost two-thirds of telecom providers currently leverage generative AI

to enhance customer experience, with projections suggesting this figure could soar to 90% by 2027. This highlights a significant shift towards AI-driven solutions and digital agents. In customer service, the transformation is expected to result in a 30% to 40% reduction in capital expenditures (CapEx) and operational expenditures (OpEx) by 25% to 35% for telcos, while simultaneously reducing average handling time by 1.5 to 2 times, improving first-time right rates, and reducing post-call work by 40% to 50%, all while enhancing customer satisfaction.

Oliver Wyman estimates that GenAI powered Digital Agents can have more than $2tn value creation impact; a significant share of that being in customer services management functions and Telecom.

Exhibit 9: Observed impact of AI and digital agents on telecom customer service



Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Looking ahead, the integration of AI is expected to deepen, radically changing the level of operational performance. This evolution allows for the handling of complex queries and contextual understanding, enabling more personalized interactions. Furthermore, it empowers these systems to suggest relevant products and services at the optimal moment, transforming the customer experience.

Pre-call optimization with AI: By proactively reviewing customer data and identifying anomalies before they elevate to the support line, AI can detect potential issues early, allowing teams and digital agents to prepare tailored solutions in advance. This proactive stance not only minimizes incoming calls but also enhances the customer experience by addressing needs before they arise. As an example, Oliver Wyman recently developed a digital agent diagnostic and reporting tool for a leading customer service center. This tool harnesses unique, untapped data through a digital agent to analyze context, customer intent, resolution outcomes, and root cause identification for calls. As a result, it led to a 95% reduction in the time required for root cause analysis call tagging. Additionally, the tool generated actionable insights that not only addressed issues at their source but also enhanced call deflection strategies.

Enhancing in-call interactions: Digital agents can assist human agents by offering contextual help and smart suggestions in real time, allowing them to respond to inquiries swiftly and accurately. With in-call sentiment analysis, human agents gain immediate

insights into customer emotions, enabling them to adjust their approach on the fly. This ensures that every conversation is not just a transaction but a meaningful interaction that reinforces customer loyalty. Overtime, the AI learns based on top-performer interactions in order to increase the model further.

Streamlining post-call processes: Another key benefit is the instantaneous summary of a customer conversation, as well as with a follow-up call. AI-driven communication ensures that customers receive troubleshooting guides or appointment confirmations without delay, guaranteeing that their issues are fully resolved. This level of attention transforms post-call experience into an opportunity for continued engagement and satisfaction. GenAI and digital agents have the capability to significantly reduce post-call activities. We have seen savings of up to 80% in post-call work translating into 20 to 25 seconds for a minute of a call.

The outcome is material. Your customer service operations become not only more efficient but also highly customer-centric. The time customers spend on issue resolution decreases substantially, operational costs are reduced, and your team can focus more on meaningful interactions while offering additional services that boost revenue. Furthermore, your team experiences fewer disruptions. Most importantly, customer satisfaction and stickiness skyrockets as they value the proactive and responsive service they receive.

IMPACT ON TECHNOLOGY FUNCTION

Artificial Intelligence and digital agents are revolutionizing Technology and software operations, introducing unprecedented efficiency, automation, and intelligence across the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC). Key areas impacted by these technologies include IT Strategy and Governance, Software Development Life Cycle, and support functions.

The integration of AI and generative AI into technology functions is already yielding significant benefits. Oliver Wyman estimates that Generative AI has potential to optimize IT-spend by 14% to 35%, which is a material opportunity for telecom operators where IT spend as a percentage of revenue accounts for 3% to 7%.

Imagine a future where your organization’s technology landscape is not just reactive but preventive, driven by AI and digital agents. Organizations at the forefront of using AI are integrating three key elements of the value chain:

1. Enhancing IT strategy and governance
For strategy and governance, AI and digital agents are being used to synthesize market insights and summarize trends impacting telecom operations, empowering leadership teams to make better informed and strategic decisions. Automated risk monitoring systems are being deployed to detect unusual security anomalies, ensuring that organizations adopt a proactive approach to risk management and safeguard vital assets.

2. Transforming the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC)
Across the software development life cycle, generative AI transforms project planning by converting objectives into actionable tasks, recommending and allocating resources and costs, and proactively optimizing your IT project portfolio for maximum efficiency. AI-driven tools assist in generating and writing requirements based on user feedback, ensuring consistency and quality while prioritizing tasks according to urgency and business importance.

Exhibit 10: Transforming potential enabled by AI on technology spend

	Mid-term impact	Full Potential
Total IT Spend		
Management and governance	25%	40%
Application development	30%	60%
Application maintenance	7%	35%
Service desk	15%	70%
Digital workforce	5%	7%
Network	-	20%
Infrastructure and operations	6%	18%

Note: Full potential refers to the enterprise-wide impact that goes beyond the implementation of use cases
Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

During the design phase, teams leverage AI for ideation and writing, facilitating design reviews, and enabling early detection of flaws. During the build and application development phases, AI can augment work done by engineers by fast-tracking build activities, enabling them to develop code 30% to 40% faster, refactor code 20% to 30% faster, and complete code documentation 45% to 50% faster. Technology has matured to the point where it can rival the performance of a mid-level engineer. Artificial Intelligence can also be used to reduce a company's technology debt by updating legacy IT systems, which often represents over 30% of the total resources allocation in large telecom operators. As a result, managing technical debt becomes more feasible, allowing teams to concentrate on innovation instead of being hindered by legacy challenges.

Testing and deployment processes are augmented as well, with AI and digital agents automating the creation of test case descriptions and generating test data to ensure the robustness of software. Automating security scans help identify critical vulnerabilities before they can impact operations.

3. Enhancing support functions effectively
Functions that support technology undergo a transformation as well, with automated financial analysis and forecasting optimizing capital expenditures and resources in real time. Enhanced customer support capabilities deliver fast, personalized assistance, while the knowledge base is continuously updated to reflect the latest information and FAQs.

This is the vision of a telecom technology function that fully embraces the capabilities of AI and digital agents, creating a technology ecosystem that not only meets current demands but also anticipates future needs.

Exhibit 11: Examples of high-impact AI use cases in Technology

1. Project planning	2. Requirements
• Create project plan • Recommend and allocate costs • Optimize projects portfolio	• Generate and write requirements • Ensure consistency across requirements • Generate user stories • Check quality of requirements • Prioritize requirements
3. Design	**4. Development**
• Provide writing assistance and ideation support • Facilitate design review • Support product UI/UX design • Sequence and generate flow diagrams	• Generate code • Analyze code for bugs • Explain code • Translate existing code • Build application based on text input • Manage dependencies across software components
5. Testing	**6. Deployment**
• Write test case descriptions • Convert test case descriptions into testable code • Perform test cases • Analyze and aggregate tests results • Ensure traceability of test cases • Generate test data • Prioritize tests cases	• Support infrastructure code script writing • Write software documentation • Plan deployment • Create automated deployment rollback plans
7. Maintenance	
• Interpret performance • Conduct predictive maintenance • Synthesize incident reports • Manage and update knowledge base	• Synthesize user feedback • Perform security scans • Assist design refactoring • Observe SLAs

- *Established: proven technology, still ongoing improvement and refinement*
- *Testing: actively tested but still requires development, refinement, and optimization*
- *Emerging: early stages of development or not developed yet*

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Looking ahead, the role of the roles of Chief Information Officers (CIOs), Chief Technology Officers (CTOs), and software engineer will continue to evolve as AI technologies advance. These leaders will be instrumental in guiding their organizations through the complexities of AI adoption, ensuring that technology strategies align with business objectives, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

IMPACT ON TOPLINE PERFORMANCE

Generative artificial intelligence is helping telecommunications companies develop more targeted and personalized marketing messages for customers — consumers and commercial. Communications being sent to prospects make offers based on specific customer needs. Companies that want to maintain a competitive edge need to operationalize and continually refine their use of generative AI and other digital tools.

Exhibit 12: Illustrative examples of AI impact on topline

3–5bps	Reduction in **Churn** (monthly)	5–12%	Increase in **Revenue**
2–5%	Increase in **ARPU**	5–15%	Increase in **MROI**
5–10%	Increase in **GA**	20–30%	Increase in **Satisfaction**

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

Picture a world where creating awareness for your customers is hyper-personalized, with customized emails that are far from generic communications. Not only do we communicate the right value proposition that best fits customer needs, but we also do so at the right moment and with the right words that resonate the most — all of this accomplished by AI agents. Imagine AI agents supporting all customer interactions, coaching front-line representatives in real-time to personalize interactions and maximize conversions. Envision expanding the value proposition beyond telecom services by embedding AI in your customer offerings across both consumer and business sectors, such as advising them on what movie to watch, which service to buy, or how to optimize their smart home.

Imagine a world where a significant portion of your sales is driven by your AI agents. These intelligent systems autonomously manage tasks such as lead generation, customer engagement, and personalized service offerings, resulting in substantial revenue growth. By being aware of customer context in real time, they deliver the right offer at the right moment, significantly enhancing cross-sell performance.

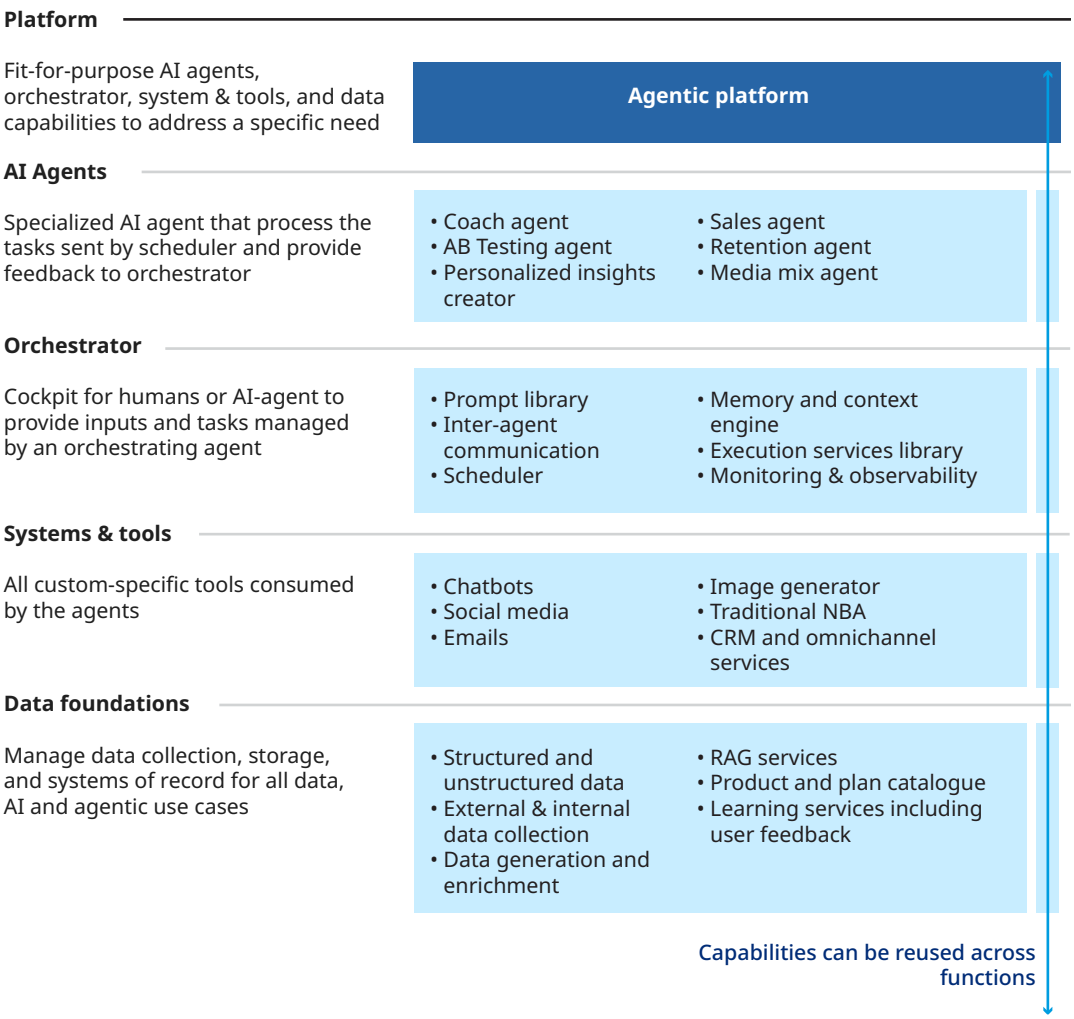
All of this can soon become a key part of your differentiating offer, and much of it is already achievable with today's technology. How exactly?

Understanding customer needs: Narrow traditional AI models (non-generative) remain well-suited for many marketing tasks, such as segmentation and churn/upsell propensity modeling. However, Generative AI can significantly enhance these algorithms by efficiently analyzing unstructured data. For instance, sentiment analysis of all customer communications — such as chat and call transcripts — can provide unique insights into what customers truly think, often revealing they may struggle to express directly. This deeper understanding can greatly refine narrow propensity models.

Achieving real-time insights into customer context and needs by integrating multiple sources of internal and external data — a task that was previously computationally challenging — is now possible. AI agents execute your marketing and sales strategy by generating offers, writing communications, pivoting based on success, and supercharging human-like and human interactions with customers at the right touchpoints in real time.

Getting into action: Building the right action for the right customer will involve a sophisticated blend of traditional machine learning — such as the Next Best Action model using predictive modeling — and enrichment through Generative AI. This approach will provide your marketing team with invaluable tools to ideate and create new offers by synthesizing customer needs from interaction transcripts, for example. The more effective the ideation, the easier it will be for your Next Best Action engine to deliver actions that genuinely create value.

Exhibit 13: Functional architecture to enable agentic workflows in Marketing and Sales



Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

NAVIGATING TO BECOME AN AI-FIRST TELCO

To effectively reach the next frontier integrating AI across the enterprise, operators must develop a comprehensive capability stack that extends beyond merely AI models. Achieving success with generative AI necessitates establishing robust foundations that facilitate model deployment, scale use cases, drive user adoption, and optimize costs. These foundational elements encompass not only technical elements but also vision, operating models, talent, culture, value capture, and change management considerations. As telcos prepare for next-gen transformation enabled by agentic AI, they will face several critical questions.

- What business problem should AI solve?
- What is the right-balance of AI with human oversight?
- How do we retrain and reskill our people?
- How to measure impact from AI initiatives and translate into bottom-line impact?
- How do we balance business-as-usual and transformative AI initiatives?
- How can we break down silos to unlock maximum potential?
- How can we balance the need for speed with the development of sustainable capabilities?
- What technical infrastructure and architecture do we need?
- What should we build internally versus sourcing from third parties versus off-the-shelf solution?
- What risks — ethical, regulatory, and security — do we need to mitigate?

While answering these questions is essential, this alone won't be enough to ensure successful scaling. Accelerating an AI-driven transformation will require additional key practices, such as clearly defining the business problem from the outset and regularly reviewing the sequencing of use cases. Other essential strategies will include embracing an iterative process that prioritizes progress over perfection, allowing for continuous improvement, and focusing on seamless integration rather than optimizing each individual component.

Operators can use the following checklist to assess whether they are truly heading to the next frontier leveraging fully AI and agentic ecosystems potential:

1. Develop a holistic vision for AI within the organization and assess the return on investment of AI and digital agent initiatives, rather than engaging in isolated AI projects
2. Reimagine operating model and domains: focus on optimizing entire business areas, including internal processes and operations, rather than implementing narrow use cases in isolation

3. Adopt a full-stack approach: integrate AI, generative AI, and agentic systems to create a cohesive strategy, instead of relying solely on AI for transformation
4. Implement multiagent platform: utilize multiagent systems to automate complex workflows, rather than depending on a single model to handle diverse tasks.
5. Ensure component reusability: prioritize the reusability of AI components to avoid starting each project from scratch and to enhance coordination across initiatives.
6. Make people responsible for value capture: either creating a value capture office with a lean team or an agile pod allocating responsibilities across functions
7. Proactively manage change: anticipate changes in the industry and invest in reskilling employees to support transformation efforts throughout the organization.

We have observed a few common patterns across companies succeeding with scaling AI use cases. To achieve maximum impact, we suggest incorporating a few essential elements such as starting with high-value use cases, securing quick wins, gradually evolving the tech stack, piloting and scaling efforts in partnership with line leaders and cross-functional teams, and embracing agile experimentation.

Exhibit 14: Successful approach to scale AI use cases and maturity

From: **Traditional approach**	To: **Rapid impact approach**
Conduct a detailed diagnostic and build a grand plan	Start with high value use-cases
Develop long series of business cases	Deliver quick wins related to the high value use-cases
Wait for a perfect tech stack before getting going	Evolve the tech stack as you go; form the strategy over time
Too many stakeholders to manage but minimal cross-functional collaboration	Pilot and scale with line leaders and cross-functional collaboration

Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

CONCLUSION

Unlocking the true value of AI-enabled transformation is fundamentally about enhancing business outcomes. For telecommunications companies, this means reimagining business processes and operating models from end to end. This involves pinpointing pain points, designing streamlined processes, simplifying business rules, and automating activities wherever possible. By leveraging AI and generative AI, organizations can accelerate this transformation journey. However, the primary challenge lies not in the technology itself, but in establishing sustainable practices. Effectively managing change and translation to bottom-line impact at scale will be crucial to overcoming this challenge.

Oliver Wyman, a business of Marsh McLennan (NYSE: MMC), is a management consulting firm combining deep industry knowledge with specialized expertise to help clients optimize their business, improve operations and accelerate performance. Marsh McLennan is a global leader in risk, strategy and people, advising clients in 130 countries across four businesses: Marsh, Guy Carpenter, Mercer and Oliver Wyman. With annual revenue of $23 billion and more than 85,000 colleagues, Marsh McLennan helps build the confidence to thrive through the power of perspective.

For more information, visit oliverwyman.com, or follow on LinkedIn and X.

Americas	Europe	Asia Pacific	India, Middle East & Africa
+1 212 541 8100	+44 20 7333 8333	+65 6510 9700	+971 (0) 4 425 7000

AUTHORS

Laksh Maggoo

Partner, Communications, Media and Technology Americas

laksh.maggoo@oliverwyman.com

Charles De Pommerol

Partner, Communications, Media and Technology Americas

charles.depommerol@oliverwyman.com

Laurent Bensoussan

Global Industry Head Communications, Media and Technology

laurent.bensoussan@oliverwyman.com

Ivan Palencia

Partner, Communications, Media and Technology Europe

ivan.palencia@oliverwyman.com

Benjamin Tubiana

Principal, Communications, Media and Technology Americas

benjamin.tubiana@oliverwyman.com

Emmanuel Amiot

Europe Industry Head Communications, Media and Technology

emmanuel.amiot@oliverwyman.com

Jad Haddad

Partner, Communications, Media and Technology IMEA

jad.haddad@oliverwyman.com

Askik Ardeshna

Partner, Digital — Quotient AI Americas

ashik.ardeshna@oliverwyman.com

Lindy Kouyoumji

Partner, Communications, Media and Technology IMEA

lindy.kouyoumji@oliverwyman.com