The Chatbot *Experience* Report

How Satisfied Are Enterprise Buyers?

Executive
Summary

2023 is the year of experience, and chatbots are front & center in the race to deliver against rising customer expectations. With the hype around new Natural Language Generation models like ChatGPT, **all eyes are on chat.**

In the face of next-gen AI-powered chat capabilities, garden variety chatbots—scripted, impersonal lead capture pop-ups—**fail to meet minimum experience requirements** to turn interest into revenue.

We surveyed more than 250 enterprise buyers to see where sentiment stands on chatbot experiences and uncover what's next in chat. Here's what we found:

The **majority of B2B buyers use chatbots** as part of their vendor evaluation process. However, they report that the experience delivered by most chatbots on the market is severely lacking—which often leads to increased costs and lost revenue.

> - **60%** of B2B buyers use chatbots at some point in the buying cycle.
> - **81%** will give up on the conversation if the chatbot can't answer their question. 1 in 10 will immediately move on to a different vendor.
> - **4 out of 5** will abandon a conversation over an answer not relevant to their unique needs.
> - **One-third** rated the impact of the chat experience as highly important to their decision to purchase.

Overall, the buyers surveyed reported their use of chatbots was **concentrated in the early stages** of evaluating a business product or solution, with limited belief in their ability to handle requests more complex than basic research.

As a result, traditional mass-market chatbots are **being abandoned for human representatives or, worse, competitors**, thus failing to deliver on the promise of creating positive customer experiences, reducing workloads, and potentially increasing revenue.

To deliver a great chat experience, companies need to focus on **fast, accurate responses that are relevant to the individual**. But they also need to ensure that the chat technology they invest in is **used to its fullest advantage** for maximum return, both by limiting the need for human intervention and ensuring utility at more stages of the buying cycle to more directly influence revenue.

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The Current Chatbot Landscape Is *Failing* B2B Buyers

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Study results showed that while the majority of B2B buyers use chatbots when considering a business product or solution (60%), they're generally unimpressed with the experience most of the time.

> "I don't mind speaking to an AI bot to answer simple questions but sometimes my issues can be a little nuanced and too complex for a bot to figure out."

Buyers find the majority of chatbots today largely unhelpful, with utility being limited to very early purchase stages.

40% said they choose not to interact with chatbots at any point during their buying cycle.

Only **11%** interact with chatbots through all phases of the buying cycle.

Of those who do choose to interact, the largest group **(21%)** does it early in the research phase.

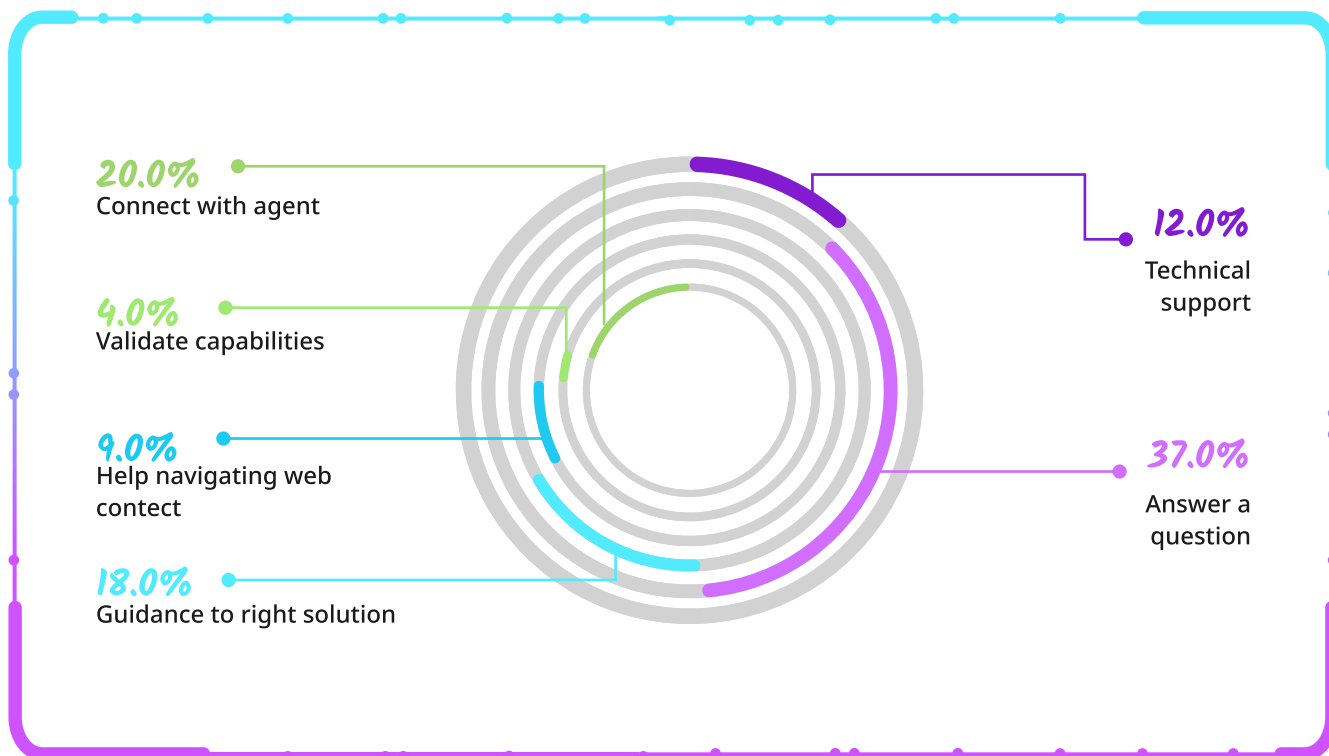**68%** of respondents use chatbots to research and evaluate a vendor before they're ready to speak with a rep.

Have you ever interacted with a website chatbot in your work when considering purchasing a business product or solution?

60% Yes   **40% No**

21%	8%	11%	9%	11%	
Research Phase	Vendor Comparison	Purchase	Post-Purchase	All Phases	
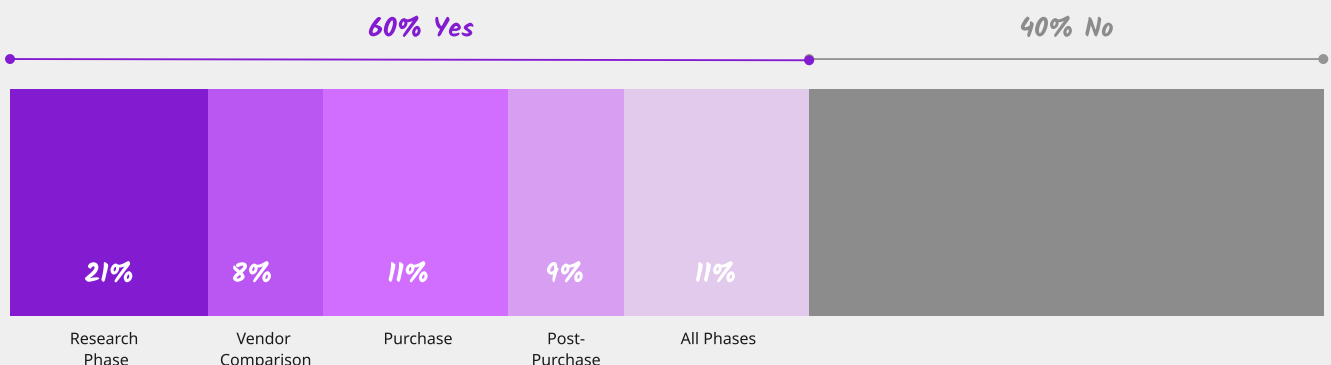
When using a chatbot on a business's website, *what are you trying to accomplish?*

Study results showed that while the majority of B2B buyers use chatbots when considering a business product or solution (60%), they're generally unimpressed with the experience most of the time.

20.0%
Connect with agent

4.0%
Validate capabilities

9.0%
Help navigating web contect

18.0%
Guidance to right solution

12.0%
Technical support

37.0%
Answer a question

Conclusion

This indicates that most chatbots on the market today with limited conversation capabilities are only useful at the earliest stages of the sales process. Consequently, they are not generating revenue because buyers don't believe the experience offered by current chatbots can support the more complex conversations that are necessary later in the sales cycle. The result? Buyers need human interaction to satisfy their questions, increasing labor costs.

Buyer Patience with Chatbots is *Razor-Thin*

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B2B buyers aren't waiting around for your chatbot to get it right, and they're definitely not up for a long process to get to an answer. If a chatbot can't handle their request, the majority of buyers will give up—leading to either increased staffing costs to pick up the conversation or worse, lost revenue.

> "[My ideal chatbot] answers my question and I'm done.
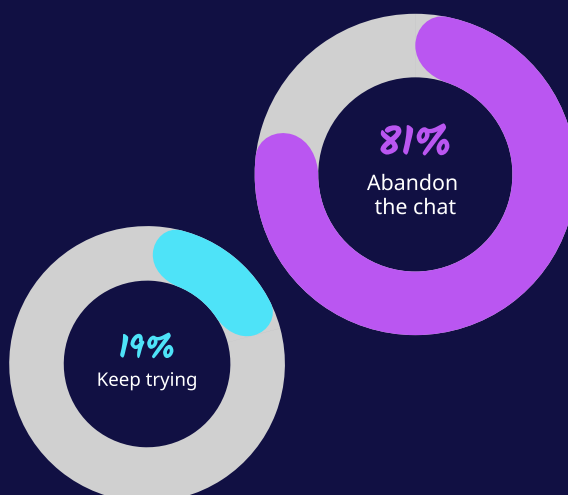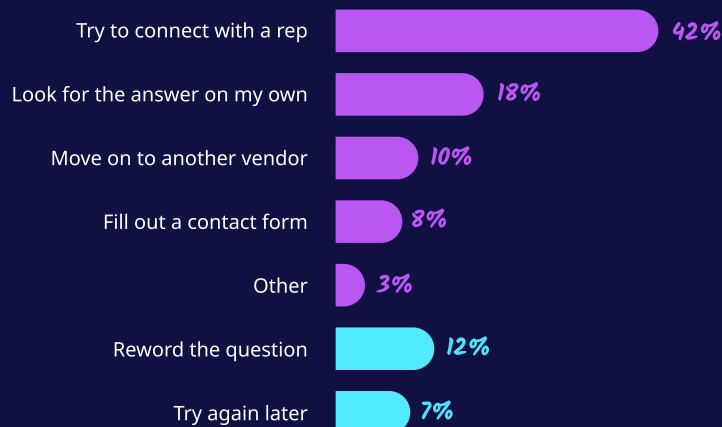> No time wasted with 20 questions."

If they can't get what they need in the conversation, *81%* will abandon the chatbot. *1 in 10* will give up on the vendor entirely and move on to a competitor.

- Interestingly, older buyers, who are more likely to be responsible for higher ticket purchases, were *70% more likely* to say they would move on to a different vendor if a chatbot couldn't meet their needs.

Only *12%* will reword their question if a chatbot fails to answer.

If the chatbot fails to answer your question, *what would you do next?*

Try to connect with a rep	42%
Look for the answer on my own	18%
Move on to another vendor	10%
Fill out a contact form	8%
Other	3%
Reword the question	12%
Try again later	7%

81% Abandon the chat

19% Keep trying

Ideally, how many messages would it take to get the information you're looking for from a chatbot?

And the time to get it right before the buyer exits the chat window is extremely limited. → 76% will give a chatbot 3 or fewer messages to get to the information they're seeking.

15.0%
5+ messages

9.0%
4 messages

19.0%
1 message

24.0%
2 messages

33.0%
3 messages
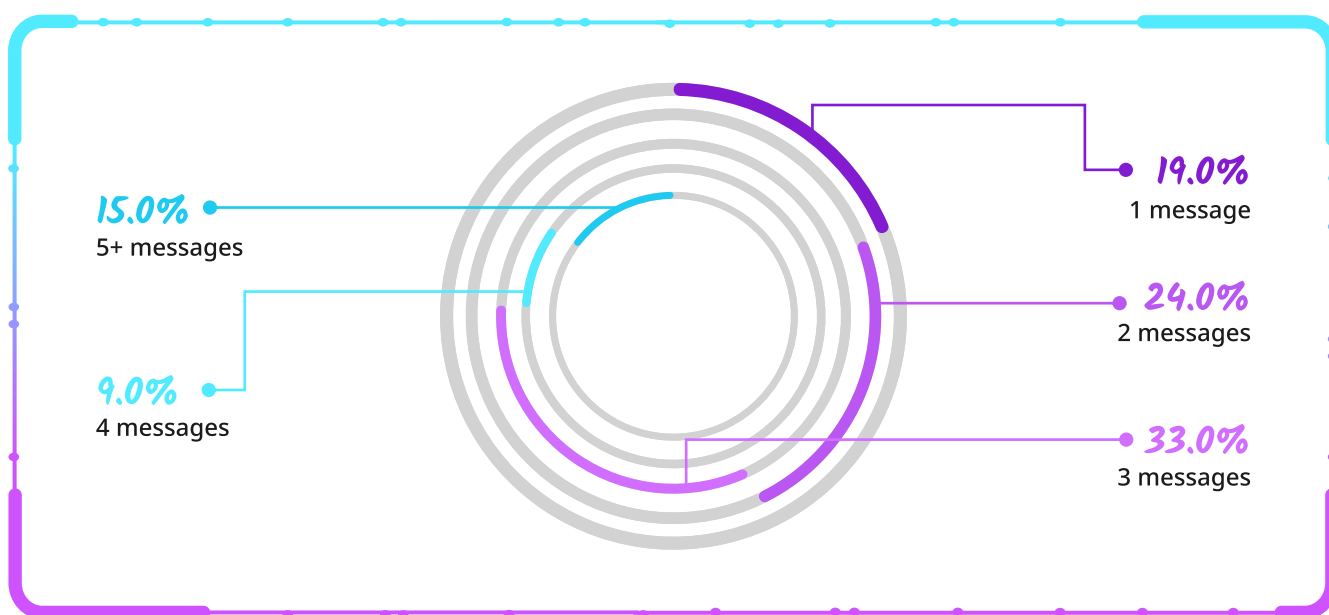
The data also show that for a significant group of B2B buyers, the experience they have with chatbots makes a big difference in their decision. A good chatbot experience would make them more likely to purchase—but a chatbot that didn't meet their expectations would have a significant negative impact on their evaluation.

1 in 3 respondents scored the impact of a chatbot experience on their evaluation of a vendor as 70 or higher on a scale of 100.

Conclusion

If your chatbot can't understand freeform questions and get to the answer in three messages or fewer, you're not only increasing staffing costs, you're losing revenue. And with a significant portion of B2B buyers saying the chatbot experience has a significant impact on their purchasing decisions, the risk of a bad experience is high. This is where the first-gen chatbots really miss the mark: without NLP capabilities, they have to rely on vendor-supplied scripts to force visitors down a defined path.

What's *Killing* Today's Chatbot Experience

So what constitutes missing the mark for B2B buyers? Answers that don't speak to their individual needs.

51% said irrelevant responses would cause them to abandon a conversation with a chatbot.

28% of buyers would abandon a conversation over a lack of personalization or specificity to their situation.
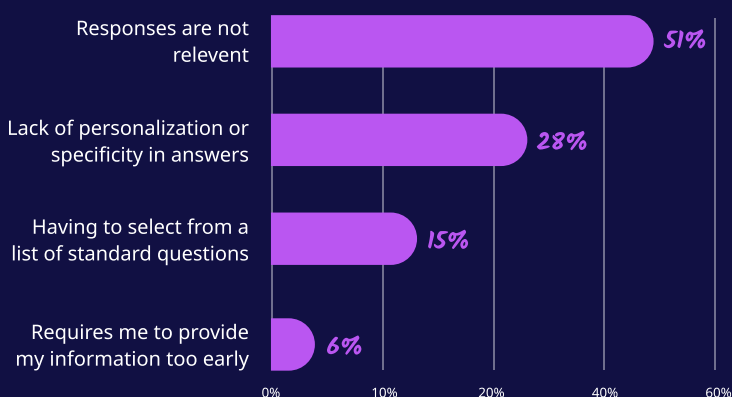
Ultimately, *4 out of 5 buyers* are unwilling to continue a conversation if the chatbot doesn't speak to their unique needs.

Rigid options for questions (e.g., pick lists) round out the top 3 reasons not to continue a conversation with a chatbot.

"[My ideal chatbot is] one that can answer a range of questions instead of just referring me to a list of irrelevant solutions as most chatbots do."

What would cause you to abandon a conversation with a chatbot?

Reason	Percentage
Responses are not relevent	51%
Lack of personalization or specificity in answers	28%
Having to select from a list of standard questions	15%
Requires me to provide my information too early	6%

0% 10% 20% 40% 60%

Conclusion

B2B buyers are not immune to the overall trend of consumers expecting a "see me, know me" experience from brands. Chatbots that can't accurately tailor conversations to the individual on the other side of the interaction or those unable to answer a variety of questions across the entire sales cycle will lose potential buyers.

Fixing the Chat Experience

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The vast majority of chatbots on company websites today are not meeting enterprise buyers' expectations. So what do they want?
In the words of one respondent:

"[A chatbot that] anticipates what I need in the very first question and keeps the responses on track."

Enterprise buyers want smarter chatbots that can provide more accurate and relevant information quickly and with as few interactions as possible.
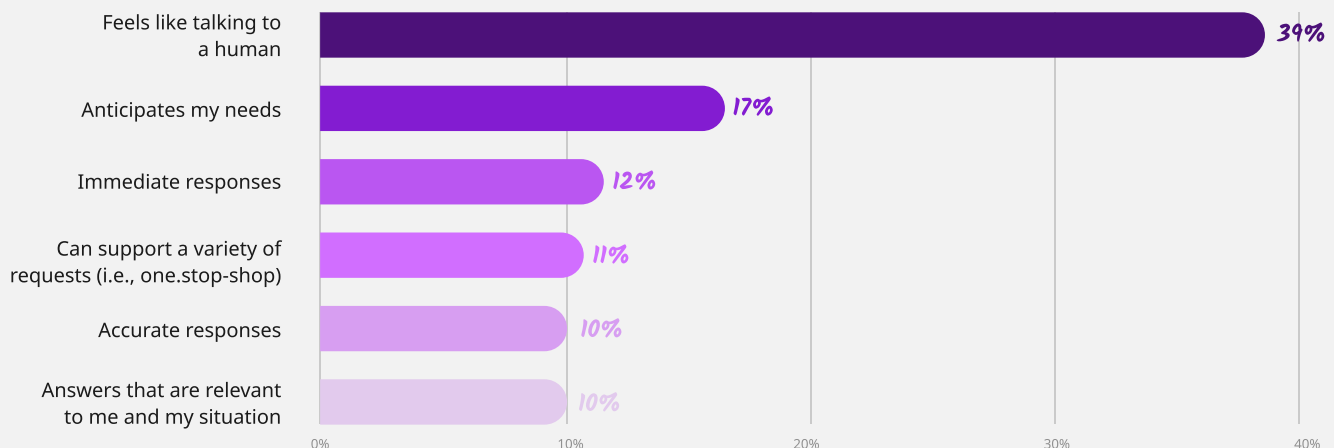
Respondents ranked a *humanlike feel* to the conversation as having the highest impact on their decision, with *39% rating it a 6 out of 6.*

"*Accurate responses*" had the highest average rating for influence on vendor evaluation.

Nearly equally important were "*relevancy*" and "*immediate responses.*"

On a scale of 1 to 6, rate the importance of each aspect of the chatbot experience on your evaluation of a vendor (1 being "Doesn't Influence Decision" and 6 being "High Impact on Decision")

Factors Rated 6/6 Highest Impact on Decision

Factor	Percentage
Feels like talking to a human	39%
Anticipates my needs	17%
Immediate responses	12%
Can support a variety of requests (i.e., one.stop-shop)	11%
Accurate responses	10%
Answers that are relevant to me and my situation	10%

Overall Average Scores

Accurate responses	4.25
Answers relevant to me and my situation	3.87
Immediate responses	3.81
Can support a variety of requests (i.e., one-stop-shop)	3.17
Anticipates my needs	3.17
Feels like talking to a human	2.83

Conclusion

On the whole, the majority of chatbots out in the wild don't meet enterprise buyers' preferences. However, their expectations aren't unrealistic; the technology to deliver the preferred chat experience is available today.

Based on the survey results, B2B companies should prioritize three characteristics for their webchat technology to maximize ROI:

01. Superior Natural Language Processing

Chatbots need to "get" what the customer means, regardless of their wording, and be able to respond in the moment. AI-powered chat trained on large-language models like GPT ensures questions are answered quickly and accurately without needing to pull in a human rep.

02. Data Enrichment for Hyper-Personalization

Chat technologies that can plug into data sources both to leverage existing insights and to feed information from the conversation back into your database ensure the conversations are relevant and tailored to each buyer's specific needs.

03. Trainability for Deep Expertise

The ability to train the AI on your company's products and services enables the chatbot to answer questions autonomously—and ensures conversations are useful further down the funnel, not just for early-stage, basic research.

Other Key Considerations:

→ Look under the hood to see if AI is actually being used to understand intent and generate responses. Most bots force a scripted experience and can't adapt to a visitor's request.

→ Make sure the solution you're buying is designed for enterprise use, with the governance and controls needed to keep the conversation relevant and driving towards a business goal.

About
Conversica

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Conversica's Revenue Digital Assistants™ (RDAs) supercharge workforces to acquire untapped revenue through perfectly structured conversations across chat, email, and SMS. With billions of human interactions spanning more than a decade, Conversica's RDAs have learned to influence and persuade customers and prospects throughout the customer journey lifecycle. Unlike first-gen chatbots, Conversica RDAs are Powerfully Human™ and can hold meaningful conversations at every touchpoint to create brand loyalty and maximize every revenue opportunity.