

The Future Normal of the Frontline

Data & Insight Report

Central The Big Game 2026 | 15 October 2026 | Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London

You imagined agents who know the whole story, stay with customers and solve problems without waiting for permission. Making that day possible means changing what agents can decide, how they learn and what you reward.

What you'd love your frontline doing.

Theme	Touch	What it tells you
Relationships that last	38%	Edith keeps one agent from buying to upgrading. A banking adviser stays with you from school to retirement. "I know my players!" Being known is the service.
Free to fix it	26%	No wait, no triage, no transfer, no approval. Trackers and BS tasks crossed out; ticket logging and record searches handed off. The agent resolves it on the first call.
Value out in the world	25%	The CEO flips from "Save me money" to "Create me revenue". An OVO van tours the country, a green energy adviser works with households, and a clean water role takes to a paddleboard.
The whole person	19%	An engineer visits a household in debt and sees the children, the solar panels and the help on offer. Health, money and mental wellbeing in one conversation.
The human beyond the bot	19%	"Can I speak to a human?" when the chatbot can't say where the products come from. The person reads what the customer is feeling, and steps in when AI agents deadlock.
Ahead of the problem	11%	Fix it before the customer knows there's an issue. Know why people are calling, instead of asking every caller. Spot the annual leave gap before the rota breaks.
Getting better at the job	11%	A coach listening live on a new agent's call. Self-serve coaching and skills. An AI that shapes training around how each person learns.

Touch = share of the 53 ideas that touch the theme. Many ideas span more than one theme, so touch shares total more than 100%.

What gets in the way today.

40 of the 53 ideas (75%) name something to take off the frontline's plate. Most of it is ordinary: trackers, ticket logs, searching, waiting for permission. Removing it is half the job. The other half is the authority to act once it's gone, and 3 ideas hand the agent that power outright.

Who the role serves

Serves	Ideas	Share
Customers	39	74%
Colleagues	24	45%
The business	21	40%
Vulnerable customers	7	13%
Communities	4	8%
Team leaders	0	0%

Who it serves can include more than one group, so shares total more than 100%.

Five sketches that clear the way

- Your Advisor (for whatever). Off the plate: waiting, triage, transfers, approvals**
 "No wait, no triage. No referral, no transfer, no approval." The arrow ends at one word: Autonomy. Which of those 5 steps does your process still need?
- Love my role and the customer. Off the plate: transactions, BS tasks, measures**
 Two smiling faces and a heart labelled "Love". Underneath, crossed out: transactions, BS tasks and measures. Which of your measures would survive that pen?
- 100% knowledge, no searches. Off the plate: searching records**
 Hospital, GP and patient records feed one "whole story", so the agent is "left to just care and talk". How many systems does your agent open before they can say hello?
- Customer Champion. Off the plate: waiting on a team leader**
 A "100% self-serve frontline agent" running their own coaching, performance, skills and work/life balance, with "non-reliance on TLs". If agents need team leaders less for permission, what do team leaders spend the day on?
- Remove the BS jobs, drive change. Off the plate: manual trackers, BS jobs**
 "Removing the manual jobs (trackers)." The time goes to customers, and to a circle of colleagues sharing ideas "to drive real change!"

Three choices hiding in the sketches.

- Does a human fix teach the system anything?**
 Some sketches put people closer to customers. Others put them in charge of improving AI. Imagine connecting the two: when an agent resolves something the bot couldn't, that experience improves the next interaction. What happens to that knowledge in your operation today?
- Would your best future agent hit today's targets?**
 You drew advisers who stay with customers, take time to understand their circumstances and prevent the next problem. One sketch crossed out "measures". Which of these people would look successful on your current scorecard? Which might be penalised for doing exactly what you want?
- Less permission. More support.**
 One sketch removes dependence on team leaders. Another puts a coach alongside a new starter on a difficult call. Together they suggest a different management job: less time authorising decisions, more time building the judgement to make them. What would you stop asking team leaders to approve so they could spend more time helping people improve?

Three places to point the next sketch.

Blind spot	Evidence	Reading and next sketch
Who leads the team in 2030?	No team leader's day drawn; 1 sketch designs them out.	Draw a team leader's day alongside the frontline roles you imagined. When do they coach, notice someone struggling or help the team learn from a difficult case? What needs to leave their diary to make that day possible?
Who's new?	New starters in 1 of 53 ideas	New starters appear once, in the live coaching sketch. The room drew experienced people at their best. Run the same prompt for someone in their first month and compare.
Who pays for the better day?	No sketch costs its role	The roles in this room cost time: longer relationships, home visits, lifelong advisers. What would your CFO need to see to fund one of them?

Method. 57 entries reached the portal. We removed 1 pre-event test, 2 duplicate uploads of one photo and that sketch itself, which showed no frontline role, leaving 53 ideas analysed, 12 of them sketch-only. Each idea was read, sketch and words together, and coded to one primary theme, any secondary themes, what it takes off the frontline's plate, the part AI plays and who it serves. For sketch-only ideas the reading uses the drawing. Later submissions from viewers of the recording are outside this analysis. AI expansions are the tool's elaboration and are never quoted as participant words.