How AI Will Impact Customer Communication in 2026

Moneypenny CTO Predicts the Year AI Will Go from Experiential to Essential

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, December 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Moneypenny, the world's customer conversation experts, has had a front-row seat to seeing how AI is transforming the way businesses connect with their customers. Pete Hanlon, Chief Technology Officer, has helped create Moneypenny's unique blend of brilliant people and AI technology that integrate to unlock valuable opportunities for businesses, and expects 2026 to be the year AI moves from experiential to essential. In his own words, ten predictions for the year ahead include:

Pete Hanlon CTO at Moneypenny

1. AI Joins the Team
In 2026, agentic AI agents capable of taking autonomous action to complete tasks will become core for business service teams. These systems will begin to handle parts of financial, sales and marketing, and operational workflows like Moneypenny's AI Voice Agent, which handles routine conversations that free people to focus on higher-value interactions. Success will come from deploying AI in carefully chosen scenarios where reliability is assured, not in high-risk cases where mistakes carry too much weight.

2. Coding Assistants Become Colleagues
AI coding assistants will work across the full development lifecycle from planning features and designing architectures to writing, testing, deploying, and maintaining systems. Assistants like Claude Code, Codex and Cline can plan, build and manage workflows while also supporting infrastructure management and live monitoring, working alongside human engineers rather than replacing them.

3. Smaller, Smarter Models Drive Efficiency
The era of ever-larger frontier models is giving way to Micro Large Language Models (MLLs),

which will become the workhorses of enterprise AI. Compact yet powerful, they deliver reasoning and performance that rivals much larger systems making them cheaper to deploy, faster to run, and far more practical for embedding into everyday business systems.

4. Energy Becomes the Bottleneck

Even with MLLs, global demand for AI is soaring, and in 2026, energy will become a strategic resource. According to the IEA and Goldman Sachs, data center electricity demand is forecast to more than double by 2030, so expect breakthroughs in chips, cooling and renewable integration to become common boardroom issues.

5. Compliance Becomes Non-Negotiable

The EU AI Act will take effect in 2026 and will set the tone globally in AI oversight, introducing a risk-based framework that regulates how AI systems are developed, deployed and governed. Businesses that cannot demonstrate transparency, fairness and accountability will face fines and reputational damage, which is why Moneypenny was mindful to embed governance and auditing into our AI Voice Agent.

6. Content Provenance Matters

Companies will prioritize watermarking, detection and verification to combat deepfakes and misinformation. For customer communication, provenance will become critical as clients will need certainty the human or AI they are speaking to is both verified and trusted.

7. ROI Over Hype

After enterprises adopted AI at scale en masse this year, next year, the focus will shift from hype to value. Businesses will demand measurable ROI such as higher customer satisfaction scores, cost savings and improved productivity.

8. On-Device AI Takes Off

With Apple, Microsoft and Google embedding AI directly into devices, 2026 will bring a wave of hybrid architectures that run partly on-device and partly in the cloud. The benefit is lower latency, stronger privacy and smoother real-time experiences. For us, this unlocks even faster, more secure conversations between businesses and their customers.

9. Physical AI Joins the Workforce

AI will not remain confined to software as robots and autonomous systems will increasingly appear in logistics, healthcare and frontline service roles next year. Combined with conversational AI, they will enable blended human–machine teams, a shift that will reshape industries far beyond tech.

10. AI Accelerates Scientific Discovery

Finally, AI's impact in research will ripple outward. Look forward to breakthroughs in drug discovery, climate modeling and materials science that will accelerate innovation cycles. And

while these advances may feel far from answering a phone call, they will create new industries, new client needs and new opportunities for companies like Moneypenny and other business services providers to support fast-moving sectors.

Next year will be the year businesses learn to balance automation with trust, scale with sustainability, and intelligence with compliance. As it becomes more essential, AI will not be a replacement for people, but a partner that amplifies human expertise.

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