



How AI agents build trust and loyalty in financial services

Every customer interaction is a critical moment—a chance to win loyalty or erode trust. Whether a customer is checking their balance, disputing a charge, or reporting a lost card, if you keep them waiting, force them through confusing menus, or ask them to repeat information, you risk losing them.

AI agents eliminate these moments of friction. Powered by advanced LLM technology, AI agents understand customer intent, respond immediately with human-level reasoning, and create genuinely conversational interactions without scripts or delays. They transform how financial institutions engage customers, delivering consistently empathetic and effective service at scale.

The question for leaders in financial services isn't if they should adopt conversational AI, but how. This guide covers the five most impactful ways financial services companies are already using AI agents to deliver faster, more personalized customer experiences. It also explores the crucial elements—like customization, integrations, and security—that define an AI agent's impact in real-world deployments.

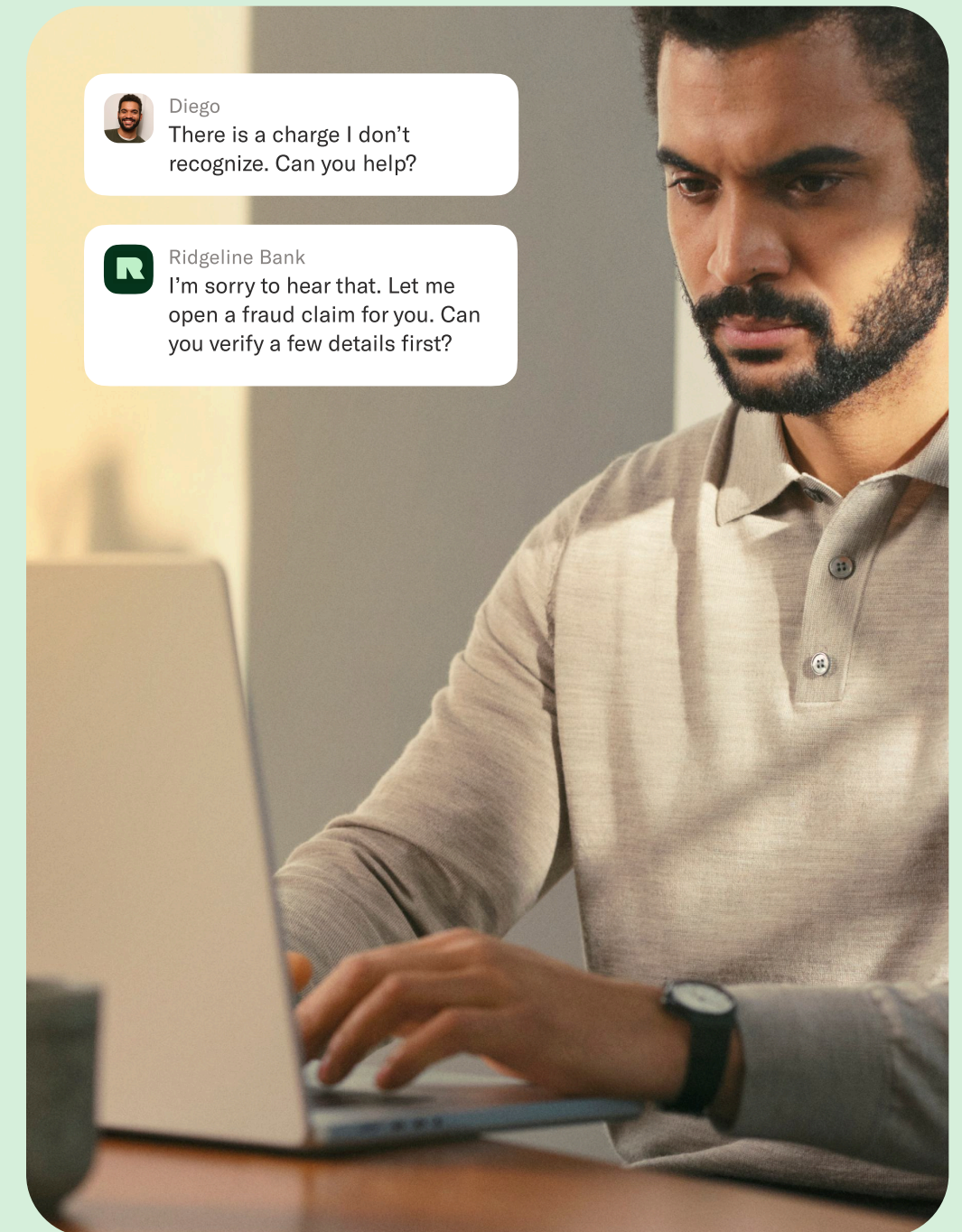



What is an AI agent?


In the past few years, AI agents have become a critical force for modern businesses—but what exactly are they?

Powered by large language models like those behind ChatGPT, these advanced forms of conversational AI interpret context, identify intent, and respond with a nuance that was once unimaginable. They're no longer bound by rigid scripts; instead, they adapt to each interaction in real time.

Years of incremental breakthroughs in AI, combined with greater computing power and easier access to cloud infrastructure, have propelled these agents into the mainstream. For financial institutions, that means delivering personalized and always-on experiences for customers on a global scale.



 **Diego**
There is a charge I don't recognize. Can you help?

 **Ridgeline Bank**
I'm sorry to hear that. Let me open a fraud claim for you. Can you verify a few details first?

Top five use cases for AI agents

AI agents are raising the bar for financial services, turning routine interactions into opportunities to build trust and loyalty. We outline five use cases—from product recommendations to dispute resolution—that show how AI agents streamline processes, personalize support, and boost satisfaction.

The result: faster service, less friction, and a stronger competitive edge.

1

Smarter product recommendations

Choosing a financial product—whether it’s a credit card, mortgage, or investment account—can feel overwhelming. After sifting through static product pages, customers can end up confused or frustrated and abandon the process.

AI agents help solve this by engaging customers directly, understanding their specific needs, and providing tailored recommendations. AI agents draw on known customer information to proactively suggest relevant products, increasing cross-sell opportunities. Advanced AI agents also allow companies to test and optimize different offers, improving recommendations over time.

This approach leads to higher conversion rates, increased customer lifetime value, and better customer retention.

2

Streamlined onboarding

Onboarding is another key moment that shapes a customer’s long-term experience. If a new customer struggles to set up an account, connect a payment method, or use key features, they’re more likely to abandon the service.

AI agents can provide step-by-step guidance, answer common questions, and even detect when a customer is stuck, offering proactive support. Instead of relying on static help pages, customers get interactive assistance that makes the process smoother.

3

Frictionless account management

Checking balances, resetting passwords, and updating contact information shouldn't require human support. Yet many financial institutions still direct these routine tasks to call centers.

AI agents solve this. Customers can effortlessly manage account tasks through simple conversations—via chat, voice, or messaging apps. “What’s my balance?” “Update my address.” “Show me my last five transactions.” No waiting on hold, no complicated menus, and no unnecessary effort.

For financial institutions, this means more than convenience; it means lower support costs, shorter wait times, and improved customer satisfaction.

4

Faster resolution of disputes and other payment issues

Payment issues are a major pain point for customers. Whether it's a disputed charge, a late payment, or confusion about fees, these interactions can be frustrating. AI agents can help by providing immediate assistance.

For example, a customer disputing a transaction can describe the issue to an AI agent, which can then pull up transaction details, explain charges, and even initiate a dispute process.

Instead of navigating complex menus or waiting for a human agent, customers get immediate support, and companies reduce the time spent handling routine billing inquiries.

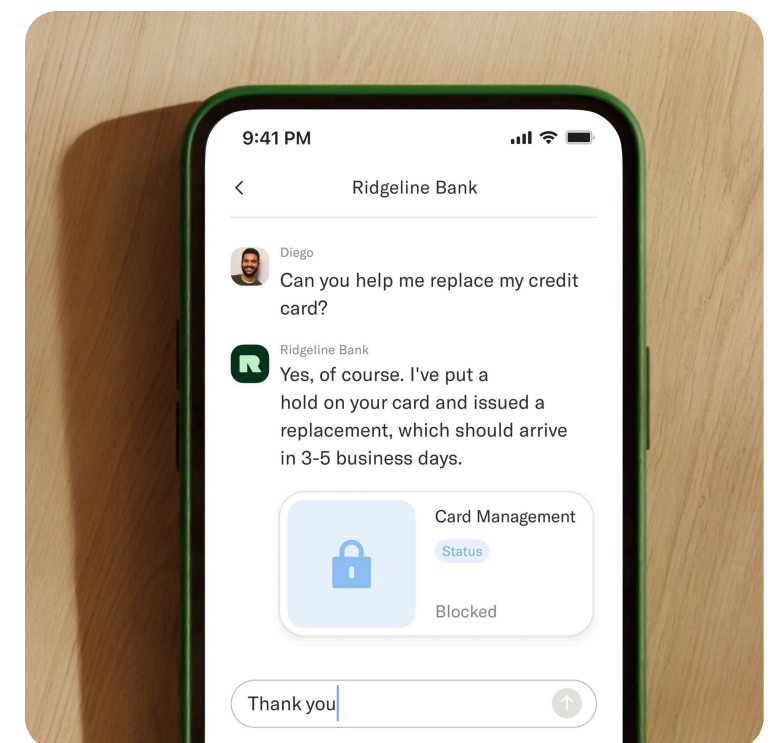
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Proactive churn prevention

When a customer calls to cancel a subscription or account, it's often because they're frustrated or feel like they're not getting enough value. This is a critical moment. Companies that handle it poorly lose customers for good, while those that respond well can turn things around.

AI agents can recognize these moments and respond accordingly. If a customer requests a cancellation, an AI agent can offer personalized retention options: a lower interest rate or an upgrade that better fits their needs. If a human touch is needed, the agent can route the conversation to a live agent, already equipped with context on the situation.

This approach isn't about making it difficult for customers to leave. It's about offering alternatives that they may not have considered—often leading to better outcomes for both the business and the customer.



Criteria for an effective AI agent


Adopting AI agents has become essential in financial services, but developing a truly effective AI agent is hard. From ensuring on-brand communication to safeguarding sensitive data, there’s a lot at stake. Below are the core criteria that make an AI agent successful in practice.

Empathetic

Customers expect more than canned responses—they want genuine understanding and context. An AI agent that accurately interprets intent, responds naturally, and seamlessly hands off complex issues to a human ensures customers feel both heard and valued.

On-brand

Whether your institution’s voice is formal, conversational, or somewhere in between, the AI agent should reflect it at every interaction. Consistency across touchpoints helps reinforce trust and strengthens your brand’s overall identity.

Secure and compliant

Trust is foundational in financial services, and security must be built into the agent from the ground up. Encryption, access controls, and clear audit trails help maintain compliance and give both your organization and its customers peace of mind.

Predictable


An effective AI agent should behave predictably and remain aligned with your institution’s brand values and objectives—avoiding off-topic tangents, inappropriate tone shifts, or even “hallucinating” false information. It must also be easy to configure, whether you’re maintaining a specific voice, keeping conversations focused, or adhering to rigorous regulatory standards.

Multichannel

Financial institutions interact with customers through phone, chat, email, social media, and more. A well-designed AI agent should deliver fast, consistent support across all these channels, preventing the need for customers to repeat themselves and enhancing brand cohesion.

Action-oriented

A truly effective AI agent doesn’t just answer questions—it also takes meaningful actions. By integrating with core banking systems, CRMs, and other internal tools, it can securely process payments, update account details, verify identities, and even initiate fraud checks.

Optimizable and adaptable

AI agents should learn continuously from new inputs and user feedback, improving their performance as conditions change. They also need to be easy to update with evolving policies, product details, or regulatory requirements, so that as your institution grows and evolves, the agent stays aligned.

Sierra for financial services

Every customer interaction shapes trust, loyalty, and brand perception. Financial services leaders know the potential of AI agents—but achieving transformative results requires choosing the right solution. **Sierra's AI platform is uniquely suited for financial institutions committed to delivering exceptional, personalized customer experiences.**

Sierra's autonomous AI agents understand customer intent, communicate naturally, and take meaningful action on behalf of your customers and your business. They integrate with core banking platforms, payment processors, loan origination systems, and CRMs for frictionless customer interactions at every touchpoint, including chat, voice, and in-app message.

Built on a constellation of AI models, Sierra's AI agents are exceptionally performant and reliable, maintaining the highest industry standards of trust, safety, and compliance, including encrypted and masked PII. And, Sierra AI agents are continuously learning and improving, with built-in quality assurance, auditing, performance management, and reporting.

Sierra isn't just a technology upgrade—it's how financial companies build lasting customer relationships. Learn more about transforming your customer experience at sierra.ai/industries/financial-services.

