From Vendor to Value Creator
The New Scorecard for CX Partnerships

Bryan Gray is **Chief Commercial Officer** at **TLCx** — a veteran-owned leader in **customer experience solutions**.

Human-First. Tech-Powered. Results-Led. Adaptable by Design.

I've sat across the table from hundreds of procurement and CX leaders over the past two decades. And there's a conversation I've had more times than I can count — one that usually starts with something like:

> "We need to know how you'll hit our SLAs."

It's a fair question. In a traditional outsourcing model, SLAs are the contract. Miss them, face penalties. Hit them, get renewed. The entire relationship is built around that loop.

The Problem with Obsessing Over SLAs

But here's what I've also observed in those same rooms: the organizations that obsess over SLAs often have the **flattest CX outcomes**. Meanwhile, the brands pulling ahead — the ones actually growing loyalty, reducing churn, and building resilient customer operations — are the ones that stopped treating their CX partners like vendors a long time ago.

They didn't just raise the bar on their outsourcer. They changed the game entirely.

> The question isn't whether your partner is hitting your metrics. It's whether they're helping you **set the right metrics in the first place.**

The Old Model

SLA compliance as the primary value exchange — labor arbitrage, cost containment, staffing to volume, keeping handle times down.

What CX Leadership Demands Today

- Reduce customer effort across a nonlinear, multi-touch journey
- Understand where AI augments agent performance vs. creates friction
- Define what loyal customer behavior actually looks like
- Adapt CX operations in real time when the market shifts

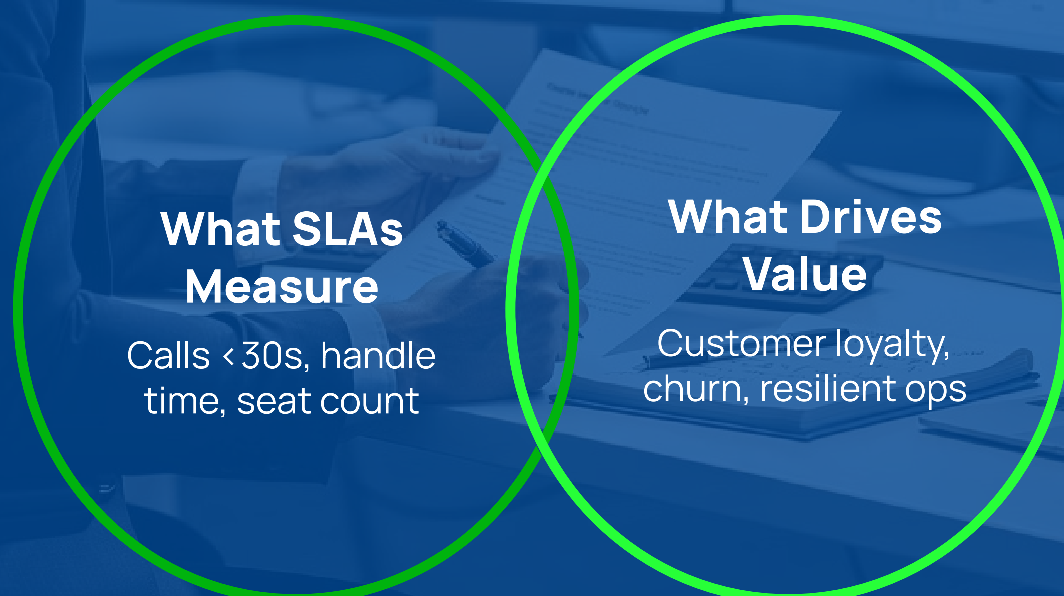
The Limits of the SLA Contract

Service Level Agreements were designed for a different era of outsourcing — one where the primary value exchange was labor arbitrage and cost containment. You needed agents. You needed seats. You needed a partner who could staff to volume and keep handle times down.

That model still has its place. But it was never built to answer the questions that define CX leadership today.

> An SLA can tell you whether calls were answered in under 30 seconds. It can't tell you whether the experience that followed that answer made your customer more or less likely to stay.

The gap between what SLAs measure and what actually drives business value is where most CX partnerships quietly fail.



This gap is not a minor inefficiency — it is the structural reason why so many CX programs plateau despite hitting every contractual target.

What Co-Creation Actually Looks Like

Over my career — across stops at some of the largest BPO organizations in the world — I've seen what separates transactional vendor relationships from genuine co-creation partnerships. It comes down to a few core differences.

AI in CX isn't a cost lever. It's a **capability multiplier** — but only when the partner deploying it understands your business well enough to know where to point it.

Vendor

Roadmap Ownership

Executes your roadmap.

Problem Resolution

Problems are escalated.

Governance Cadence

QBRs are where the hard conversations happen.

AI Philosophy

AI deployed to reduce headcount and lower your invoice.

Co-Creation Partner

Roadmap Ownership

Helps build it — bringing forward-looking intelligence on what's changing in your vertical, where AI is creating new leverage, and what top-performing programs are doing differently.

Problem Resolution

Problems are caught early and resolved together — because both sides have visibility into the same real-time data and share accountability for what it shows.

Governance Cadence

Those conversations happen continuously — because the governance model is built for ongoing alignment, not periodic check-ins.

AI Philosophy

AI deployed to amplify the quality and consistency of human interactions — because that's what actually moves the metrics that matter.

An Enterprise Partnership Story: From Billing Support to Strategic Transformation

I want to ground this in something real, because the co-creation framework I'm describing isn't theoretical — we live it every day with enterprise clients across the industries we serve.

Consider a partnership we've built with one of **North America's most recognized home security brands** — a Fortune 500 company managing millions of customer relationships across a complex, high-stakes billing environment. What started as a focused billing support engagement in Q2 2022 has grown into something fundamentally different: TLCx is now their sole billing vendor, their AI transformation partner during a major IVR overhaul, and a key driver of their enterprise cost savings objectives.

That evolution didn't happen because of a contract clause. It happened because of **trust capital built through consistent, measurable execution.**

$527K

Credit Spend Reduced YoY

$3M+

Cumulative ACH Savings

1.84M

Annual Calls Handled

26.5%

Improvement in Credits Per Call

Achieved while call volume grew by over 18,000 contacts year-over-year.

That's the kind of result that only happens when a partner is embedded deeply enough in your operations to drive behavioral change at the frontline level, not just report on it after the fact.

Enterprise Adaptability in Action: The AI IVR Overhaul

The financial outcomes are only part of the story. The more revealing proof point is what happened when the client introduced a new AI-driven IVR system — a major contact architecture overhaul that would have destabilized most vendor relationships.

What a Vendor Does

Treats the rollout as a disruption. Waits for instructions. Reports on performance degradation after the fact.

What TLCx Did

- Proactively redesigned agent workflows
- Recalibrated quality frameworks (TLCx QI)
- Adapted routing response patterns to complement AI-driven decisions
- Maintained performance stability across every key metric throughout the transition

And when TLCx analysts began mapping full customer journeys — tracking a single customer moving through tech support, billing, escalation, account management, and back to billing again — they didn't just flag the experience as problematic. They built a governance response: **callback tracking frameworks, detractor segmentation, cross-function information alignment protocols.**

> They gave the client the intelligence to fix a systemic issue, not just the isolated interaction. That's governance maturity. That's the difference between a vendor who handles your calls and a partner who helps you understand *why* customers are calling in the first place.

Case Study in Focus

📄 CASE STUDY

A Case Study in Excellence: Transforming Billing, Reducing Cost, and Improving Customer Outcomes for a Fortune 500 Home Security Enterprise

TLCx's partnership with a leading Fortune 500 home security enterprise demonstrates what enterprise outsourcing can achieve when it's built on **performance accountability, governance maturity, and genuine strategic alignment.**

The full case study covers:

- Credit reduction methodology
- ACH enrollment optimization
- AI IVR adaptation
- Customer journey intelligence
- Digital channel expansion

→ Download our related article at tlcx.com/insights

The New Scorecard: 10 Dimensions That Separate Vendors from Value Creators

The framework below reflects what I look for when evaluating whether a CX partnership is operating at the level your business actually needs — and what I believe every CCO, CPO, and sourcing leader should be asking when they evaluate or re-evaluate their partnerships.

Dimension	Vendor Mindset	Value Creator Mindset
Success Metric	SLA compliance	Business outcome achievement
Relationship Model	Client → Vendor	Co-creation partnership
AI Role	Automation of tasks	Intelligence + human amplification
Governance	QBR contract review	Continuous shared KPI dashboards
Talent Model	Staffing to headcount	Skills investment & upskilling
Innovation	Reactive to SOW	Proactive roadmap co-ownership
Risk Posture	Minimize liability	Shared accountability
Transparency	Reporting on demand	Embedded visibility
Value Horizon	Contract term	Multi-year transformation arc

This isn't an exhaustive audit checklist. It's a directional compass. The goal isn't to score your current partner — it's to start a different kind of conversation with them. Because if your partner can't engage with these dimensions, that tells you something important.

Notice that **"AI Role"** is one of the ten. That's intentional. The AI conversation in CX outsourcing has become dominated by cost narratives — how many agents can we deflect, how much can we reduce headcount. The partnership story above shows a different path: AI as a contact quality enhancer, a routing intelligence layer, a complexity sorter that lets human agents focus on the interactions where empathy and judgment are irreplaceable. When AI is deployed with that philosophy, performance improves and satisfaction holds. The numbers bear it out.

Why This Matters Now, Specifically

We're at an inflection point in the CX industry. Generative AI has moved from pilot to production faster than most predicted. Customer expectations have been permanently reset by the experiences they've had with digitally native brands. And the competitive gap between organizations with excellent CX and those with adequate CX is widening.

> In this environment, a vendor who can hit your handle time target is table stakes. What you need is a partner who can help you answer the harder question: what does "excellent" look like for your customers, in your market, with your product — and how do we build an operating model that reliably delivers it?

That's not a question you can answer alone. And it's not a question any vendor can answer for you. It requires genuine partnership — **shared data, shared risk, shared accountability for outcomes.**

TLCx LaunchPad™ is designed to evolve with you from AI-powered guidance to trust-enhancing quality intelligence and 360° customer insight, each module activates a new layer of performance—built on human-first design, powered by tech.

- **TLCx Engage AI™** — real-time agent guidance, embedded workflows, and generative summaries that reduce handle time during active calls
- **TLCx Customer 360™** — unified customer profiles with predictive intent modelling, giving agents behavioral context before they say hello
- **TLCx QI™** — 100% call QA via AI with automated coaching prompts and compliance alerts, replacing sampled manual review

TLCx LaunchPad™ Platform

Not just a technology deployment — it's a co-creation infrastructure.

QI Framework

Not just quality monitoring — it's a continuous alignment mechanism. 100% of calls reviewed by AI — not a sample

People-First AI

Not a slogan — a design principle that shapes every decision about where automation belongs and where human expertise is irreplaceable.

A Challenge to CX and Procurement Leaders

If you're currently evaluating your CX partnerships — whether you're renewing, exploring new options, or simply trying to get more from what you have — I'd encourage you to resist the pull of the familiar procurement playbook.

- Don't lead with the SLA scorecard. **Lead with the business outcomes you're trying to drive.**
- Don't ask your partners to defend their performance metrics — **ask them to co-author your next-phase strategy.**
- Don't evaluate on cost per seat — **evaluate on value per interaction.**

> The difference between a vendor who can pass your RFP and a partner who can transform your CX program isn't found in the contract. It's found in the conversations you have before the contract is written — and in whether both sides are willing to be accountable for what happens after it's signed.

Ask harder questions. Expect real answers. That's where the value creators reveal themselves. Schedule a 30-minute partnership audit with our team.

About Bryan Gray

Bryan Gray is **Chief Commercial Officer** at **TLCx** — a veteran-owned leader in **customer experience solutions**.

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With more than **20 years** driving CX excellence, Bryan has led high-impact initiatives that fuse intelligent automation with genuine human empathy—delivering seamless, personalized journeys that boost loyalty, slash friction, and fuel sustainable growth for global enterprises across healthcare, retail, finance, and beyond.

Book a conversation with Bryan: bryan.gray@tlcx.com I Read our insights tlcx.com/insights