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WE SPEAK CUSTOMER

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Financial Services CX Trends 2026

What customers said in public about 10 major US banks, card issuers and financial firms, and where trust breaks down.

9 of 10
companies draw complaints about reaching a person when something goes wrong

8 of 10
draw complaints about frozen accounts and held funds

20%
of bank customers moved money away from their primary bank in three months (J.D. Power)

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THE SHORT VERSION

When something goes wrong, customers can't reach their money or a person

Bank satisfaction has stopped climbing. J.D. Power's 2026 study puts it at 657 out of 1,000, up just 2 points and leveling off, while 20% of customers moved money away from their primary bank in the past three months, up from 17% a year earlier. Public complaints show where that drift starts, and they cluster in four places across the 10 companies we read.

01 **Getting a person on the problem.** Long holds, phone trees and chat assistants that loop, and callbacks that never come. Nine of 10 companies show it.

02 **Locked out of your own money.** Accounts frozen or closed with little explanation, and deposits held for a week or more. Eight of 10.

03 **Fraud and dispute decisions.** Legitimate activity flagged as fraud, real fraud claims denied, and investigations that end without an answer. Eight of 10.

04 **Digital changes and outages.** App migrations that remove features customers relied on, and outages that cut off access to balances and transfers. Seven of 10.

> Credit reporting errors appear less often, but they are the hardest to undo: customers describe late marks and fraud flags that follow them long after the issue is resolved.

START WITH WHAT'S WORKING

What customers credit

Praise is rare in public reviews of financial services, and where it appears it is almost always about a person, not a process.

- **Individual bankers and representatives.** Customers name the branch banker or phone agent who untangled a dispute or explained their options clearly.
- **Mobile apps for everyday tasks.** Quick transfers and balance checks draw positive mentions, even from customers unhappy with service.
- **Trading platforms that just work.** Active investors credit established trading tools even when they criticize the support around them.
- **Better problem resolution at the largest banks.** J.D. Power found problem-resolution scores at national banks rose 49 points since 2024, while midsize banks fell 27.

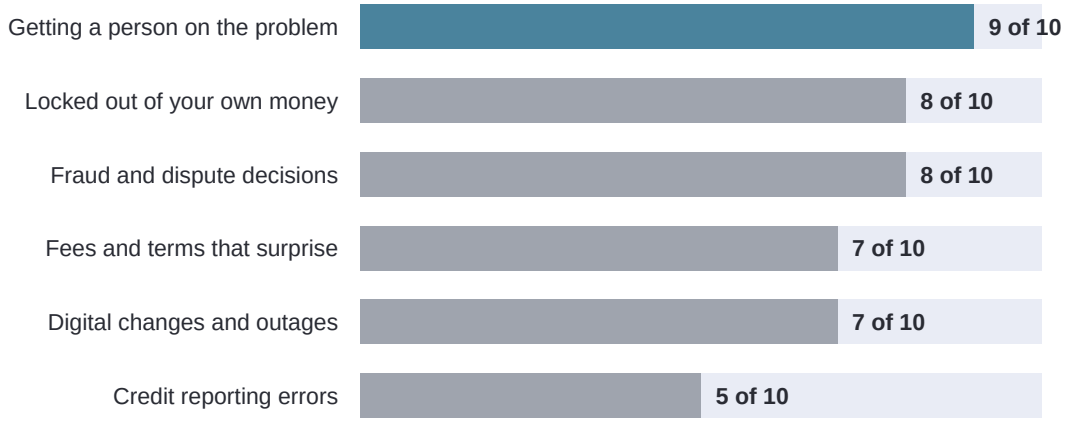
WHAT WE'RE SEEING

Six friction trends across financial services

We read public reviews for 10 large US financial services companies across six segments: national banks, super-regional banks, card issuers, a digital bank and auto lender, a brokerage and a credit bureau. A theme counts for a company when it recurs in that company's reviews, not from a single post. Business impact names where the friction lands: cost to serve, retention, loyalty or acquisition.

Reaching a person is the most widespread friction

Number of companies, of the 10 we read, where each theme recurs in public reviews



Source: Andrew Reise read of public reviews and complaints, November 2026 · 10 large US financial services companies

Five of the six themes show up at seven or more of the 10 companies. The pattern is less about any one product and more about what happens when something goes wrong.

1. Getting a person on the problem · Retention, cost to serve

The most common complaint everywhere. Customers describe holds of 40 minutes or more, phone menus and chat assistants that loop back on themselves, offshore agents who can't resolve the issue, and supervisors who never call back. J.D. Power's 2026 study found satisfaction with personal service interactions falling, and named it a warning sign for quiet switching.

2. Locked out of your own money · Retention, loyalty

Accounts frozen or closed for suspected fraud or unusual activity, often during routine deposits or payments, with weeks or months before funds are released. Customers also describe checks and transfers held for 10 days or more with conflicting explanations. At a national bank, a local news investigation found customers waiting two weeks to three months for frozen balances. At a brokerage, investors report access frozen for weeks during verification.

3. Fraud and dispute decisions · Retention, cost to serve

Two complaints in one: legitimate charges flagged as fraud, and real fraud or scam claims denied or left uninvestigated. Customers describe peer-to-peer payment scams charged back to them, disputes that seem to favor the merchant, and decisions delivered without an explanation they can act on.

4. Fees and terms that surprise · Loyalty, acquisition

Monthly fees customers say weren't disclosed, bonuses denied on conditions they didn't see, rate changes learned about late and, on store cards, deferred-interest promotions where minimum payments were set too low to clear the balance before retroactive interest kicked in. The common thread is a term the customer only discovered after it cost them.

5. Digital changes and outages · Cost to serve, retention

Integrations and platform migrations are a recurring source of friction. After one card issuer moved customers into a new app in mid-2026, a review analysis found complaints jumped to about a third of weekly negative reviews for four weeks, led by a missing running balance and a changed sign-in. A network switch left some debit cards declined at small businesses and unable to link to payment apps. On November 16, 2026, a software bug at one large bank disrupted online access across several others.

6. Credit reporting errors · Loyalty, cost to serve

Customers of lenders and card issuers describe late payments or fraud markers reported after an issue was resolved, and bureau disputes that go nowhere. The scale is large: CFPB complaints doubled to about 6.6 million in 2025, and 88% concerned credit reporting. A ProPublica analysis found the share of complaints resolved in consumers' favor fell sharply at two of the three major bureaus in 2025.

BY SEGMENT

Friction by financial services segment

The 10 companies fall into six segments.

Segment (companies read)	Getting a person	Locked out of your money	Fraud and disputes	Fees and terms	Digital changes	Credit reporting
National banks (3)	●	●	●	○	○	○
Super-regional banks (2)	●	●	●	○	○	○
Card issuers (2)	●	○	●	●	●	○
Digital bank and auto lending (1)	●		○	○		○
Brokerage (1)	○	●			●	
Credit bureau (1)						●

● a leading theme in that segment · ○ present but secondary · blank: not a recurring theme in what we read

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Where financial services CX leaders should look first in 2027

The costliest friction sits in the moments when a customer's money is at risk and they can't get an answer. Four places to start:

1. **Put a person on frozen money.** When an account is restricted or a deposit held, give the customer a named case owner, a timeline and a status they can check. The restriction may be necessary; the silence isn't.
2. **Make fraud and dispute decisions explainable.** Customers accept a "no" more readily than an unexplained one. Plain-language reasons and a clear next step cut repeat contacts and complaints to regulators.
3. **Treat every conversion as a CX launch.** App migrations, network switches and platform moves need the same testing and phasing as a new product, with the features customers rely on carried over before the old version goes away.
4. **Design out surprise.** Fees, rate changes and promotional terms should be visible before they cost the customer, not discovered on a statement.

The same analysis can be run for any single company, side by side with its peers, with the cost of each friction point sized to its own numbers.

METHOD AND SOURCES

We read public customer reviews and complaints for each company from roughly the past 12 months on Trustpilot, ConsumerAffairs and the Better Business Bureau, plus consumer and trade press, and set them against J.D. Power's 2026 banking study and CFPB complaint data. Themes were counted when they recurred across reviews, not from single posts. Customer language is paraphrased; no individual is quoted or identified.

Two limits to keep in mind. Review sites skew negative, because unhappy customers post more than satisfied ones, so this shows where friction concentrates, not how most customers feel. And the CFPB has said it will no longer publish complaint narratives, which makes outside reads like this one harder to do. Counts will firm up as the same sources are collected continuously.

Sources: J.D. Power 2026 U.S. Retail Banking Satisfaction Study · CFPB Consumer Response Annual Report 2025 · Orrick: CFPB complaint volume doubled in 2025 · ProPublica: credit report disputes · American Banker: CFPB complaint narratives · Al Jazeera: November 2026 online banking outage · Public reviews and complaints on Trustpilot, ConsumerAffairs and the Better Business Bureau, plus consumer and trade press.

SEE WHERE YOUR COMPANY SITS

The industry pattern is a starting point. Your customers tell the rest.

Andrew Reise runs the same read for a single bank or financial firm, side by side with the peers you choose, and sizes what each friction point is costing in cost to serve and retention, with every assumption shown.

Talk with a senior CX consultant

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