

NEGOTIATION PREP BRIEFING | FRESHWORKS CUSTOMER SERVICE, FRESHDESK, FRESHSERVICE, AND FREDDY AI

Freshworks Renewal: Talking Points, Call Scripts, and Negotiation Prep

A three call playbook for sourcing teams: word for word scripts for the first, second, and third call, the mechanics behind Freshworks' side of the table, and prompts to customize every line | 27 August 2026

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READ THIS BEFORE YOU DIAL

Freshworks built its market position as the cost-effective alternative to Zendesk and Salesforce Service Cloud, and has spent the past four years moving its pricing upward toward the enterprise tier it originally undercut. The transition from standalone Freshdesk and Freshservice to the bundled Freshworks Customer Service Suite, combined with Freddy AI add-ons at separately metered rates, has created a Freshworks pricing model where the headline per-agent rate understates the total cost of the platform when AI, analytics, and premium support are included. Organizations that benchmarked Freshworks against Zendesk at signing and have not refreshed that benchmark at renewal are often paying more per agent than they would at a comparable Zendesk tier — the exact reversal of the original reason they chose Freshworks.

The second structural fact: Freshworks agent count inflation is the most consistent source of Freshworks overpayment and the least scrutinized. Freshworks agents — the licensed users who respond to Freshdesk tickets or Freshservice requests — accumulate through team expansion, organizational restructuring, and the addition of part-time or occasional users who resolve only a handful of tickets per month. The Freshworks active agent audit — agents who resolved at least one Freshdesk ticket or Freshservice request in the past 90 days — almost always reveals a meaningful gap between contracted Freshworks agent count and active Freshworks agent count. Three structured calls are how.

1. THE 2026 FRESHWORKS REALITY: FOUR SHIFTS THAT CHANGE YOUR FRESHWORKS SCRIPT

- **Freshworks platform pricing has moved upward while Freshworks positions itself as the value alternative.** Freshworks has increased per-agent rates, added premium tier requirements for features previously in standard tiers, and introduced Freddy AI as a separately metered add-on at additional cost per agent or per resolution. The effective per-agent Freshworks cost for an organization using the Customer Service Suite with Freddy AI and premium analytics is frequently higher than a comparable Zendesk or Jira Service Management deployment. Refreshing the Freshworks versus competitor benchmark before every Freshworks renewal is the most commercially precise action available.
- **Freshworks Freddy AI is the primary Freshworks upsell and the primary Freshworks cost growth vector.** Freddy AI is Freshworks' suite of AI capabilities: Freddy Self Service (AI chatbot), Freddy Copilot (agent assist), and Freddy Insights (analytics and recommendations). Each is either included in specific Freshworks tiers at a higher tier price or available as a separately metered Freshworks add-on at additional cost. At every Freshworks renewal, Freddy AI capabilities are proposed as additions to the Freshworks suite. An audit of which Freddy AI features are actively used — versus which are contracted and dormant — is the Freshworks pre-call action that prevents paying AI rates for features that are rarely invoked by agents or customers.
- **Zendesk and Jira Service Management compete directly with Freshworks at comparable per-agent pricing.** Zendesk Suite (PE-owned by Permira since 2022) competes directly with Freshdesk for customer service use cases. Jira Service Management (Atlassian) competes directly with Freshservice for IT service management use cases. Both are available at per-agent rates that are genuinely competitive with Freshworks at mid-market scale, and both are sufficiently well-known to Freshworks account teams that a formal evaluation of either disciplines the Freshworks per-agent rate more directly than general competitor references.
- **Freshworks Customer Service Suite bundling creates the same module proliferation pattern seen across this series.** Freshworks has consolidated Freshdesk, Freshchat, and Freshcaller into the Customer Service Suite, offering bundled pricing that is higher than the standalone Freshdesk rate for organizations that do not use Freshchat or Freshcaller. Organizations that use Freshdesk for email and portal ticket management but do not actively use Freshchat (live chat) or Freshcaller (cloud telephony) are paying Freshworks bundle rates for capabilities they do not use. The Freshworks capability usage audit — which Customer Service Suite capabilities have active usage versus which are bundled but dormant — is the direct reduction argument.

2. BEFORE FRESHWORKS CALL 1: WHAT YOU ASSEMBLE

- **Their calendar.** Freshworks' fiscal year ends December 31; quarters close March 31, June 30, September 30, December 31. The deepest Freshworks close is Q4 (October through December). A Freshworks renewal timed to their December quarter end concentrates Freshworks pricing authority and surfaces discounts unavailable in earlier rounds.
- **The Freshworks active agent audit.** Every licensed Freshworks agent: last ticket or request resolved date, total tickets or requests resolved in the past 90 days, and team or queue assignment. Freshworks agents who have resolved fewer than five tickets or requests in the past 90 days are

occasional users paying full Freshworks agent rates. Agents who have not logged a single Freshworks ticket resolution in 90 days are candidates for removal. Pull this from the Freshworks admin console under agent reports.

- **The Freshworks Freddy AI usage audit.** Freddy Self Service: monthly active conversations handled by the Freshworks AI chatbot versus total Freshworks conversations. Freddy Copilot: daily active Freshworks agents using Copilot suggestions versus total Freshworks agents. Freddy Insights: weekly active Freshworks admin users viewing AI insights versus total Freshworks admins. Freddy features with fewer than 20 percent active engagement rates are candidates for removal from the Freshworks committed scope.
- **The Freshworks capability usage audit.** Active Freshdesk ticket channel usage (email, portal, chat, phone, social) versus contracted Freshworks Customer Service Suite channels. Freshchat active conversations per month versus Freshworks Chat capability contracted. Freshcaller active call minutes per month versus Freshworks telephony contracted. Dormant Freshworks channels at bundle rates are the reduction argument.
- **The competitive file.** Zendesk Suite pricing for your Freshworks agent count and channel scope. Jira Service Management pricing for your Freshservice agent count if ITSM is in scope. Intercom pricing if live chat is the primary Freshworks use case. Each is a specifically named Freshworks alternative for a specifically evaluated Freshworks capability.
- **One voice.** Route everything commercial through sourcing. Customer support and IT service management teams embedded in Freshworks workflows are resistant to re-evaluation, and Freshworks account teams maintain direct VP Support and VP IT Operations relationships. Every side conversation confirming Freshworks platform irreplaceability removes Freshworks negotiating leverage.

CALL 1: THE FRESHWORKS FRAMING CALL

T MINUS 9 TO 6 MONTHS

Goal: establish the Freshworks renewal as a competitive event, refresh the per-agent Freshworks benchmark against Zendesk and Jira Service Management, put the active agent audit on record, name Freddy AI usage as a separately evaluated decision, and put the capability usage audit on record. You are not negotiating on this Freshworks call; you are setting the conditions every later number lives inside.

OPEN WITH THIS

"Thanks for making time. We are starting this Freshworks renewal early because we run it as a formal sourcing event alongside a Zendesk evaluation for the Freshdesk workload and a Jira Service Management evaluation for our Freshservice scope. All commercial communication routes through me. Today I need three things from Freshworks: our active agent count — agents who resolved at least one ticket or request in the past 90 days — confirmed from your platform, every Freshworks product and Freddy AI add-on quoted as a separate line at our active counts, and the per-agent Freshworks rate at our active agent count confirmed in writing before anything else."

Ask these five Freshworks questions, in this order

1. "Can Freshworks confirm our active agent count — agents with at least one ticket resolution in the past 90 days — from your platform telemetry, and does that match our Freshworks admin console data?"
2. "What is the per-agent Freshworks rate at our active agent count, and what does the Freshworks discount schedule look like at different agent tier commitments?"
3. "Which Freddy AI capabilities in our Freshworks agreement have active usage evidence in the past 90 days, and what is the separately stated per-agent or per-resolution cost for each Freddy feature?"
4. "What annual Freshworks uplift is embedded in the renewal proposal, and is it negotiable?"
5. "When does your Freshworks fiscal quarter close relative to our renewal date of [date]?"

FRESHWORKS INSIDER NOTE

Question three — asking for Freddy AI usage evidence and the separately stated per-feature cost — is the question that most Freshworks customers never ask and that reveals the AI cost growth embedded in Freshworks suite pricing. Freshworks account teams typically present Freddy AI as included or as a modest add-on to the suite rate. Asking for the per-feature cost breakdown and the active usage evidence forces the account team to reveal how much of the Freshworks suite rate is attributable to Freddy features that may or may not be actively used. Organizations that discover Freddy Copilot has a 5 to 10 percent agent adoption rate are paying AI rates for a feature used by a small fraction of the agent population. That usage data is the Freddy AI scope reduction argument.

Deflect these Freshworks deflections, word for word

- They argue the Freshworks Customer Service Suite is better value than individual products: "Bundle value is assessed against active capability usage. Quote each Freshworks capability separately at our active usage count before we discuss the suite total."
- They push Freddy AI adoption as the growth opportunity: "Freddy AI adoption is a deployment decision. Quote Freddy features at our current active usage, not at projected adoption. We pay for what is deployed today."
- They argue Zendesk pricing is comparable to or higher than Freshworks: "Provide the Freshworks per-agent rate at our active count and we will compare it directly to the Zendesk quote we have for the same scope."
- They offer a Freshworks platform optimization or Freddy AI adoption review: "After the Freshworks commercial baseline is agreed. Technical and commercial Freshworks tracks are separate."

CLOSE WITH THIS

"Action items: active Freshworks agent count from your platform, each Freshworks product and Freddy AI feature quoted separately at those actuals, the per-feature Freddy AI usage evidence, and the Freshworks uplift mechanism in writing, all within two weeks. Our next Freshworks commercial call is [date]. Anything sent to anyone else on Freshworks commercials comes back to me unanswered."

CALL 2: THE FRESHWORKS DECONSTRUCTION CALL

AFTER THE FIRST FRESHWORKS QUOTE, T MINUS 4 TO 3 MONTHS

Goal: reduce Freshworks agent count to active agents, remove dormant Freddy AI features and unused bundle capabilities, challenge the Freshworks per-agent rate with Zendesk and Jira benchmarks, eliminate the Freshworks uplift, and force Freshworks pricing authority into the room. Never react to Freshworks numbers in the meeting where you receive them.

OPEN WITH THIS

"We have reviewed the Freshworks proposal against our active agent audit and our capability usage data. Our active Freshworks agents — those with at least one ticket resolution in the past 90 days — are [n] versus [m] contracted. Our Freddy AI active usage rate is [X] percent across the agent population. Walk me through each Freshworks line against those actuals."

The six moves of Freshworks Call 2

- **Reduce Freshworks agent count to active agents.** “Active Freshworks agents with at least one ticket resolution in the past 90 days are [n]. Agents with zero resolutions in 90 days and agents who access Freshworks only to view dashboards without resolving tickets are removed. The Freshworks renewal is [n] agents. Take that as a lower Freshworks invoice, not as credit toward Freddy AI or other Freshworks additions.”
- **Remove dormant Freddy AI features.** “Freddy [feature] shows [X] percent active agent engagement in the past 90 days. At [X] percent engagement on [n] agents, we are paying Freshworks Freddy rates for a feature used by [n times X percent] of the agent population. Remove Freddy [feature] from the Freshworks committed scope. We evaluate it separately when active adoption is confirmed.”
- **Remove unused bundle capabilities.** “Freshchat active conversations in the past 90 days average [n] per month versus [m] included in the Freshworks Customer Service Suite. We are paying Customer Service Suite rates for a chat capability that handles [n] conversations per month. Remove Freshchat from the Freshworks bundle and quote Freshdesk as a standalone Freshworks product.”
- **Put Zendesk and Jira Service Management on record against Freshworks.** “For the Freshdesk workload, Zendesk Suite has quoted [amount] per agent for equivalent ticket management, self-service, and reporting at our active agent count. For the Freshservice ITSM scope, Jira Service Management has quoted [amount] per agent. The Freshworks per-agent rate needs to reflect those alternatives.”
- **Kill the Freshworks uplift.** “The Freshworks annual escalator closes at zero or at a cap of [1 to 2] percent in the Freshworks order form. A customer service platform that positioned itself as the cost-effective alternative to Zendesk cannot carry an uncapped annual escalator that closes the price gap it built its market position on.”
- **Summon Freshworks pricing authority.** “For the next call, bring whoever owns Freshworks pricing authority on this account. I do not run final Freshworks rounds with people who cannot approve.”

CLOSE WITH THIS, AND ONLY THIS

“No Freshworks counteroffer today. If the active agent count lands with dormant Freddy AI features and unused bundle capabilities removed, and the Freshworks uplift capped, we can discuss the Freddy AI adoption roadmap for the next term. You now know the Freshworks order of operations.”

HOW THE FRESHWORKS SIDE OF THE CALL IS PAID, AND WHY IT IS YOUR LEVERAGE

Freshworks AEs are paid on ARR and are operating under pressure to defend both the enterprise transition and the AI upsell narrative simultaneously. A buyer who reduces Freshworks agent count to active agents, removes low-adoption Freddy features, eliminates dormant bundle capabilities, references Zendesk (which Freshworks built its growth story against), and caps the Freshworks uplift is compressing every Freshworks metric simultaneously. The Zendesk reference is particularly effective because Freshworks account teams have been trained to position against Zendesk since the company's founding; facing a buyer with an actual Zendesk quote for the same agent count requires a desk-level response that the account team cannot handle with general positioning.

Know what is cheap for Freshworks to give: additional Freshworks collaborator seats (read-only access) at nominal rates, Freshworks Academy training credits, Freshworks professional services hours, and extended Freshworks data retention. Know what is expensive at Freshworks: the per-agent rate on Freshdesk and Freshservice and the Freshworks annual uplift elimination. Trade cheap Freshworks concessions for expensive ones on every call.

Goal: convert Freshworks leverage into signed paper inside Freshworks' October through December quarter. Everything lands in the Freshworks order form; the desk honors paper only.

OPEN WITH THIS

"We are prepared to sign the Freshworks renewal inside your quarter if the remaining items land. Here is the complete Freshworks list. Nothing gets added by either side after today, including by us."

The Freshworks final asks checklist, read it out loud

1. Freshdesk at [n] active agents, per-agent rate reflecting the Zendesk alternative at our active count, as its own Freshworks order line.
2. Freshservice at [p] active agents if in scope, per-agent rate reflecting the Jira Service Management alternative, as its own Freshworks order line.
3. Freddy AI features at their actively used scope only; dormant Freddy features removed from the committed Freshworks footprint with their own separately contracted decision dates.
4. Annual Freshworks uplift capped at [0 to 2] percent for the full term, written into the Freshworks order form, not referenced from a Freshworks schedule.
5. Unused Freshworks Customer Service Suite capabilities (Freshchat, Freshcaller) removed from the committed Freshworks scope if active usage is below [threshold] per month.
6. All Freshworks products co-terminated to one date; any mid-term Freshworks addition inherits this per-agent pricing and this end date.
7. A pre-agreed short Freshworks extension at current pricing as fallback, so their December deadline is theirs alone.

TWO FRESHWORKS TRADING LINES THAT WORK

"A multi-year Freshworks commitment closing inside your fiscal year, from an organization that has received Zendesk and Jira Service Management quotes at our active agent count, is a retention story your Freshworks account team can take upstairs. What does that combination buy us on the Freshworks per-agent rate and the uplift cap?" And when it stalls: "The Zendesk evaluation has a decision date. The question is whether the Freshworks per-agent rate and the Freddy AI scope land before it does."

3. THE FRESHWORKS TIMELINE, END TO END

WHEN	WHO	WHAT HAPPENS
T minus 12 to 9 months	You	Freshworks active agent audit, Freddy AI usage audit, capability usage audit, Zendesk and Jira Service Management quotes gathered, Freshworks uplift history documented, single voice announced.
T minus 9 to 6	Freshworks Call 1	Freshworks framing call. Zendesk and Jira on record, active agent count demanded, Freddy AI usage evidence requested, bundle capability usage demanded, Freshworks uplift mechanism disclosed.
T minus 6 to 4	Freshworks	Freshworks proposal arrives with contracted agent count, Freddy AI included, suite rate. Acknowledge, do not react, price each Freshworks line against the active audit and competitive file.
T minus 4 to 3	Freshworks Call 2	Freshworks deconstruction. Agent count reduced, Freddy features removed at low adoption, bundle capabilities removed, Zendesk and Jira on record, Freshworks uplift challenged, Freshworks pricing authority summoned.
T minus 3 to 2	You	Written conditional Freshworks counter at active agent count. Freshworks admin console confirms the agent and usage audit.
Final 6 weeks	Freshworks Call 3	Freshworks close aligned to Q4 (October through December). Complete Freshworks list on the table, extension pre-agreed as fallback, nothing new from either side.
Signature	Both	Every Freshworks concession in the order form: agent count, per-agent rates by product, Freddy AI scope, bundle capability exclusions, uplift cap, co-termination date confirmed line by line.

4. CUSTOMIZE THE FRESHWORKS SCRIPT TO YOUR SITUATION

IF THIS IS YOU

CHANGE THIS IN THE SCRIPT

Freshdesk as primary customer support platform	Zendesk Suite is your most direct Freshworks Freshdesk alternative. Both PE-owned (Zendesk by Permira since 2022) and publicly traded (Freshworks NASDAQ: FRSH), they compete at comparable per-agent rates for the same customer service use case. Obtain a Zendesk Suite quote for your active Freshdesk agent count and channel scope before Call 2. Zendesk is the competitor Freshworks has defined itself against since founding; an actual Zendesk quote for the same scope at your scale is the most specific Freshworks rate anchor available.
Freshservice as primary ITSM platform	Jira Service Management (Atlassian) is the most commercially compelling Freshservice alternative, particularly for organizations already using Jira Software for engineering issue tracking. Jira Service Management integrates natively with Jira Software and Confluence, providing incident management, service catalog, change management, and CMDB at per-agent rates competitive with Freshservice. Atlassian's volume discounts for organizations with existing Jira Software licences make Jira Service Management particularly attractive at scale. Obtain a Jira Service Management quote for your active Freshservice agent count before Call 2.
Freddy AI features recently added at renewal	Freshworks has been adding Freddy AI capabilities to renewal proposals — either embedded in tier upgrades or as separately priced add-ons. If Freddy AI was added in the most recent Freshworks renewal, audit its actual adoption rate now: what percentage of agents use Freddy Copilot at least three times per week? What percentage of self-service interactions are handled by Freddy versus human agents? If Freddy adoption is below 30 percent of the agent population, the Freddy AI feature does not justify its per-agent rate at the contracted scale. Remove it from the scope at renewal and re-evaluate when adoption evidence supports the commitment.
Freshworks Customer Service Suite (bundled)	If your organization uses Freshdesk but not Freshchat or Freshcaller, the Freshworks Customer Service Suite rate is paying for capabilities not in active use. Request a Freshdesk-only quote from Freshworks in Call 1 alongside the suite quote. The delta between the suite rate and the standalone Freshdesk rate is the cost of the dormant Freshchat and Freshcaller capabilities. That delta belongs in the capability usage argument in Call 2.

5. FRESHWORKS QUICK REFERENCE: THE ONE PAGE YOU BRING TO EVERY CALL

PRINCIPLE	THE LINE OR THE RULE
Active Freshworks agents, not contracted agents	"Quote every Freshworks product at our active agent count — agents with at least one ticket resolution in the past 90 days." Contracted Freshworks agent counts include inactive and occasional-use agents who should be removed or downgraded.
Never react live to Freshworks numbers	Freshworks numbers and proposals received in a meeting get acknowledged, never answered. Respond on your clock, in writing, days later.
Zendesk is the Freshworks anchor	Bring a specific Zendesk Suite quote for your Freshworks active agent count to Call 2. Zendesk is the competitor Freshworks has positioned against since its founding; an actual Zendesk quote for the same scope requires a desk-level response.
Their calendar	Freshworks fiscal year ends December 31; Q4 runs October through December. Final Freshworks asks land six weeks before December 31, not six days.
Freddy AI usage evidence before commitment	Ask for per-feature Freddy AI usage evidence before Call 2. Freddy features with fewer than 20 percent active agent engagement are candidates for removal from the Freshworks committed scope.
Bundle versus standalone comparison	If Freshchat or Freshcaller are in the Freshworks Customer Service Suite but not actively used, request a standalone Freshdesk rate. Pay bundle rates only for capabilities with active usage above [threshold].
Cap the Freshworks uplift	Freshworks annual escalator capped at zero to two percent in the Freshworks order form. A platform whose founding value proposition was cost advantage over Zendesk cannot sustain an uncapped annual escalator that erodes that advantage.
Freshworks paper only	The Freshworks order form. Freddy AI roadmap presentations, customer service benchmark reports, and platform optimization reviews are conversation, not contract.

FIVE FRESHWORKS SENTENCES THAT REPRICE THE DEAL AGAINST YOU

- "Freshworks is still significantly cheaper than Zendesk." This may have been true at signing. Refresh the comparison before accepting it at renewal. Freshworks has moved its pricing toward the enterprise tier it originally undercut. Produce the current Zendesk quote for the same scope at your current agent count and compare it directly.
- "The Freshworks Customer Service Suite includes Freshchat, which adds value." Freshchat adds value when it is used. At [n] active conversations per month, the Freshchat inclusion in the Freshworks suite is paying for a capability with negligible usage. Remove it and pay the standalone Freshdesk rate.
- "Freddy AI is the future of customer service and the investment is worth it." Future investment is paid for when the future arrives and the usage evidence justifies it. Freddy AI at [X] percent agent adoption is a current cost, not a future value. Commit to Freddy AI when adoption evidence at the contracted scale supports the per-agent Freddy rate.
- "We need the contracted agent count for seasonal peaks." Seasonal peak capacity is managed through the pre-agreed Freshworks agent addition rate in the order form. Paying for contracted agents year-round to cover seasonal peaks is a capital inefficiency, not a commercial necessity.
- "The Freshworks uplift reflects platform investment and AI development." AI platform investment is priced through Freddy AI at a separate rate. The core Freshworks per-agent rate escalator is a commercial decision. Challenge the contractual basis and cap it in the Freshworks order form.

6. WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE AT FRESHWORKS SIGNATURE

A well run Freshworks renewal closes with active agent counts for each product, per-agent rates benchmarked against Zendesk and Jira Service Management, Freddy AI scoped to actively adopted features only, unused suite channels removed, and the annual Freshworks uplift capped in the order form. Zendesk and Jira Service Management are standing competitive references refreshed at each Freshworks renewal.

It delivers the position that compounds: a Freshworks account team that knows every renewal begins with an active agent audit, a Zendesk quote, and Freddy AI adoption evidence. Against a vendor whose market position was built on cost advantage but whose pricing has moved toward the tier it undercut, the buyer who audits the agents, requests the Freddy AI usage data, and brings the Zendesk quote is the buyer whose customer service spend reflects what is actually delivered.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

Fill every [bracketed item] before the Freshworks call. Pull the active agent count and Freddy AI usage data from the Freshworks admin console before Call 1. Obtain Zendesk and Jira Service Management quotes before Call 2. If the conversation leaves the script: "Let us come back to the active Freshworks agent count, the Freddy AI usage evidence, and the Zendesk benchmark first."