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Digital

Smart Contact

Next generation customer service and the operating model of the future

Introduction

It doesn't seem long ago that all anyone was talking about in customer service was 'omni-channel'. Organisations who had invested in providing multiple channels for their customers were, and still are, making further investment in integrating those channels, allowing customers to move seamlessly between them. While omni-channel continues to deliver a more 'joined up' experience across channels, as an industry we are now moving into a new phase of channel optimisation, the Smart Contact age. Smart Contact is about aligning our operations with the changing nature of customer interaction, driven by new technology and the behaviours of the connected customer. We have identified four key themes central to the Smart Contact agenda, which together have the potential to revolutionise customer service:

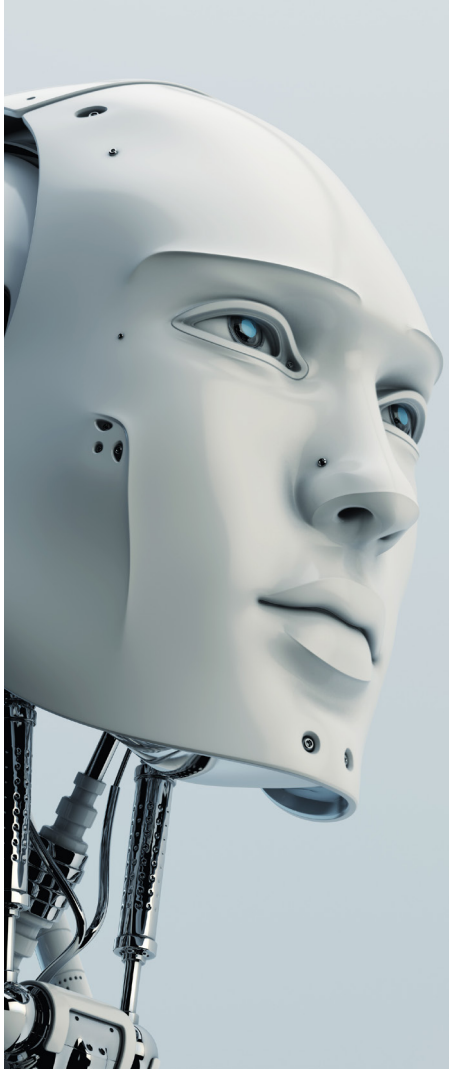
1. ***The move towards digital interaction***
   As digital behaviour continues to move to mobile and consolidates into fewer apps, as customer service professionals we need to be where our customers communicate, and this is increasingly through social and messaging applications. In parallel, the growth of personal assistants and smart, connected technologies are creating new channels where humans could be out of the equation altogether.

2. ***The rise of the bot – realising the promise of self-serve***
   The digitisation of contact offers up the possibility of finally delivering effective, customer-friendly self-serve. Web-based 'frequently asked questions' tools and customer portals haven't achieved the adoption rates we'd all hoped for. Part of the problem is that logging on to or searching a website for an answer isn't always convenient, particularly as customers are using smaller, mobile devices. Chatbots and artificial intelligence can do the hard work for the customer, searching for the answer to their question or even completing a process on their behalf. Messaging and data-based communication channels, such as personal assistants, allow automation to be built in to our service model by default, provided we are honest with the customer about it.

3. ***Making personal connections – a new place for people***
   Humans aren't out of the customer service equation just yet. While bots are going to take on increasingly complex tasks as they continue to develop their capability, they may never be able to connect with us in the way that a human can. A robot can't apologise and sincerely mean it. It can't share in your joy at a large new purchase such as a car and it can't empathise with you and genuinely make an effort to fix things when your benefit payments are delayed. While AI will get better at appearing to do all of these things, we are a long way from humans accepting robot sincerity in the way that they do human. The agent of the future will deliver the moments that matter emotionally.

4. ***The agile operating model – crowdsourcing, mobile working and the 'gig' economy***
   As more contact moves to text and data channels and bots begin to handle much of its traditional work, the contact centre is going to change. At the most basic level, 'tier one' inbound frontline teams are going to get smaller. The less predictable nature of the new channels will place a strain on traditional methods of demand management, which are largely built around voice contact and more agile, flexible solutions will be required to handle these contacts. Crowdsourcing customer service through the 'gig' economy, with agents managing responses from their mobile devices, gives companies access to a genuinely flexible workforce which can handle some of the enquiries that the bots can't. The experienced workforce within the contact centre can then be properly utilised to proactively handle higher risk, higher value contacts.

Ultimately, Smart Contact is about getting the right contacts to the right resolver, whether that's human or otherwise. The potential scale of change can seem daunting, but we should all start taking our first steps into this new world. Small, incremental change is the right place to start, however this needs to be seen in the context of a potentially much bigger transformation over time, and shouldn't detract from having a more ambitious vision to meet the needs of the customer of the future and genuinely deliver next generation customer service.



Changing channels – the move towards genuine digital interaction

Customer service organisations have been adapting to different channels since the contact centre first made centralising customer contact possible. As customer behaviour has changed, so too has the range of channels that contact centres handle, with organisations supplementing traditional forms of contact such as telephone with more 'online' channels such as email, webchat and web and mobile self-serve. This digitisation of channel reflected changes in customer behaviour as first the e-commerce revolution of the early 2000s, and then the mobile and smartphone revolution of this decade took hold.

One of the big promises of digitisation was to help deliver efficiencies for the organisation and convenience for the customer through better online self-serve. Websites helped customers find the information they needed while webchat agents helped them make decisions on what to do with it. As smartphones and mobile technology took off, these online service channels got even closer to the customer through personalised mobile apps on their devices, and the future for customer service looked increasingly digital.

Digital service has recently hit a number of headwinds, however. With so many things competing for space on our smartphones, getting customers to download our apps is getting harder and harder. For most people, even in the 18 – 24 year old group, 20 apps is the limit to what they will download,* which means that unless you are someone they regularly need to interact with, such as a bank, it's going to be difficult to drive contact through your mobile app. While mobile websites help, accessing detailed customer service information on a smaller screen or trying to conduct a webchat with the mobile signal dipping in and out are still challenging.

Webchat and mobile apps will continue to have a place in the eco-system of contact channels, but the challenges they face mean that something else will be needed to fully realise the promise of digital. Webchat and mobile, just like email and telephone before them, are things that we provide to the customer – we own the technology and we own the numbers and email addresses. They are about getting the customer to come to us, which isn't always convenient for them. What's interesting about emerging customer contact channels is that they are about us going to where the customers are, and where our customers are is increasingly on social media.

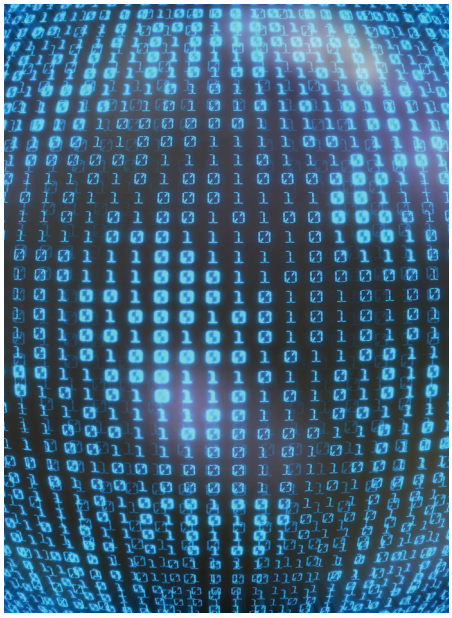
Using social media to handle customer contact is not new. What started for most as a reactive add-on to a brand's social media marketing presence has developed over the last few years into a channel of choice for many consumers. The way in which contact has been handled, however, often picked up from customers' public posts, has always seemed a little awkward and has perhaps held the channel back from widespread adoption. With the opening up of platforms such as Messenger and WhatsApp to customer service organisations, consumers now have a way of interacting with organisations in a controlled and consistent way on a platform they own and are used to using.

Instant messaging has the potential to transform the way we talk to organisations, finally dragging consumers away from the phone and into the digital age. It has this power because it is so well-aligned with how we communicate today in our everyday lives, just as the telephone once was. The number of voice calls we make with our smartphones is declining every year while digital, written communication continues to grow. While email is still popular and the industry expects it to continue growing, messaging aligns with the way people, particularly in younger age groups, spend their time communicating. Part of the reason for email's enduring popularity, in spite of very poor response times from organisations, may lie in its convenience to the customer.

Email is not as intrusive and demanding of our time as webchat and telephone are, as customers can send emails and read responses when it is convenient for them. Messaging offers them the same benefit.

What's different is customer expectation. Customers have grown to see emailing as a replacement for writing formal letters largely because customer service organisations have set the response bar so low. A five day delay in responding will never be acceptable for messaging, if it ever was for email. This has important implications for our contact centres. Customers will expect a quicker response from us, while not necessarily providing an instant response back, and this could seriously disrupt how contact centres work. Also, our opportunity to ask for more information from a customer will be limited, meaning the ability to pre-authenticate our customers and use diagnostic analytics to resolve their enquiry at the first point of contact will become increasingly important.

Instant messaging has the potential to transform the way we talk to organisations, finally dragging consumers into the digital age.



*Source: Deloitte Mobile Consumer 2016

Figure 1. Voice is declining

Smartphone users who make standard voice calls weekly (%)

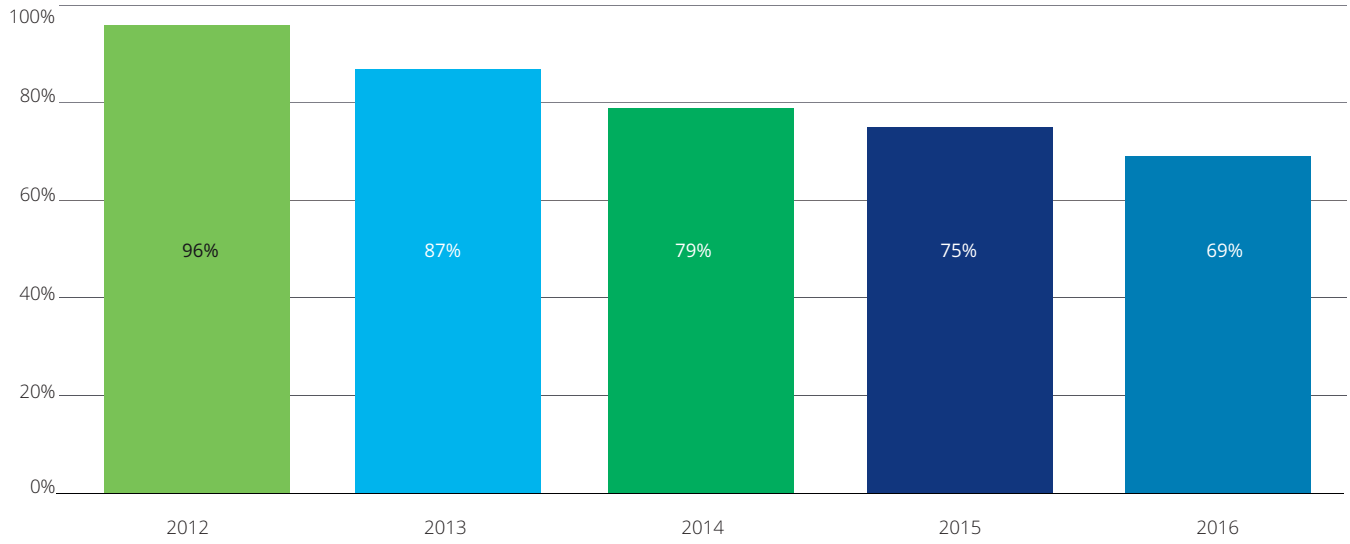
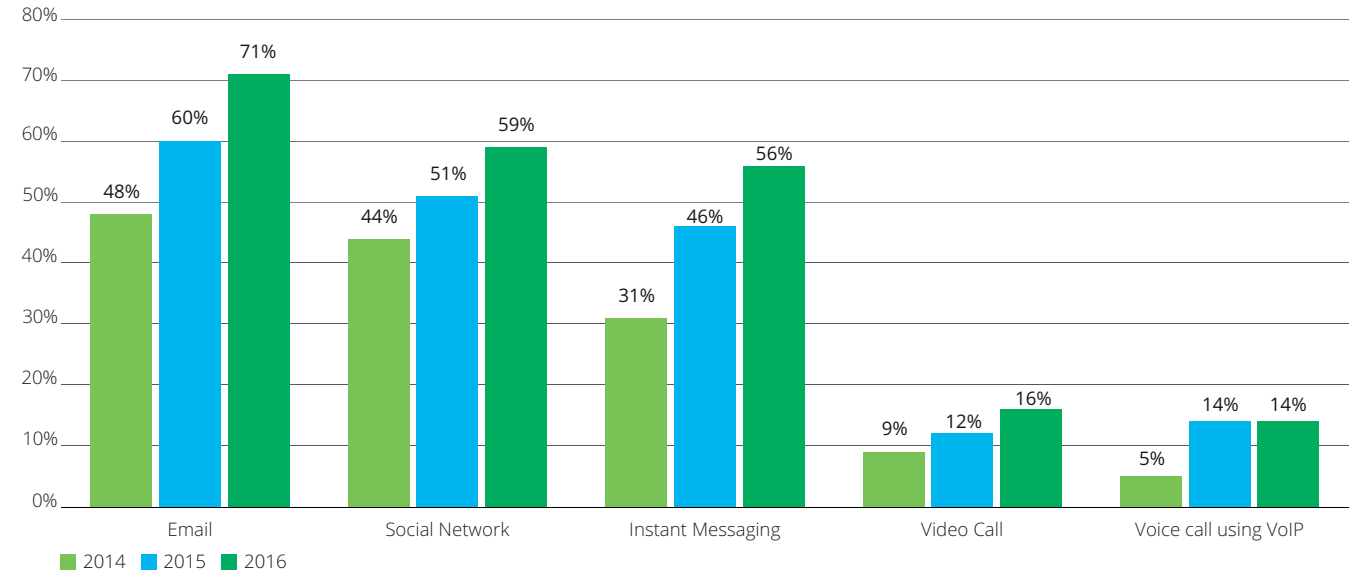


Figure 2. While data is rising

Smartphone users who use data communication services weekly (%)



Source: Deloitte Mobile Consumer 2016

The development of messaging is an exciting prospect offering both challenges and opportunities, which we'll explore later. It's an example of how consumer technology can easily transform our perception of what constitutes a customer channel in the first place. A customer channel doesn't necessarily have to be voice or text and as machine-to-machine interaction begins to take off, organisations might find their opportunities to speak to an actual customer increasingly limited.

There are two emerging technologies which might help to drive this. The first is the digital assistant. Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa and Google Home are already beginning to transform the way we interact with organisations, performing tasks for us like ordering a taxi or a pizza – traditional self-serve interactions. There's no reason why in the future we shouldn't start asking our digital assistant to ask questions on our behalf and report back to us on the answers it gets. These could be as simple as asking if a payment has gone through or as complex as querying an amount on a bill. Our assistant could also provide information back to the organisation, depending on what we give it access to. Trying to type while on the move can be difficult, and at the very least the digital assistant offers the customer a great way of combining the ease of using our voice with the convenience of being able to send and receive messages at times that suit us, rather than getting into a live dialogue.

One of the questions organisations will need to address as this potential resurgence in voice develops is whose robot the customer will be talking to. Organisations are able to build robotic interfaces linked to their business processes, which can solve issues quickly; however as a customer, my digital assistant has familiarity with me and the way I communicate and can interpret more effectively what I want. If consumers decide to effectively outsource communication to a digital assistant, digital identity management and verification will become an ever more important consideration.

The second driver of machine-to-machine interaction is the Internet of Things. Connected devices in and outside of the home are giving people more control over things like their heating, lighting and cars. With the right access to the information these devices can deliver, the need for some types of customer contact could be eradicated altogether. Smart meters are today communicating meter readings back to energy and utilities companies without the need for human intervention. In the future, a broken Smart TV might be able to co-ordinate with the calendar your digital assistant maintains and arrange an engineer appointment on your behalf before you even know it is broken. Another application for this technology is in assisted living, where sensors within the connected home are already transforming care for the vulnerable.

While many of the use cases for these new channels are still emerging, and the technology for some of them is far from perfected, the important thing is that we start to think of them as customer channels that are already in use and are likely to grow. We also need to recognise that these channels are all built around text and data coming into our organisations, rather than a live human voice, and this has important implications for how we handle them.

Smart meters are today communicating meter readings back to energy and utilities companies without the need for human intervention.

The rise of the bot – realising the promise of self-serve

The emergence of new text and data-based channels presents a significant opportunity for customer service organisations. Over the last ten years, most industries have tried to 'help the customer help themselves' by developing their self-serve channels. These have ranged from automated speech recognition to mobile apps and online virtual agents. What's been difficult for many organisations has been driving adoption of these channels, with customers often stubbornly refusing to change their behaviour even when heavily incentivised to do so. Much of this inertia comes down to customer convenience – the benefits do not always outweigh the hassle of searching for things and filling in details on a website or the loss of valuable space on a smartphone for an app. With the growth of messaging, the potential is there to provide a more convenient conversational interface with these self-service tools, facilitated by the rise of the service bot.

Robots in customer service are not new. Virtual agent technologies, through which customers can ask questions using natural language and get a response from a frequently asked questions database, have been around since the turn of the 21st century and have been a successful self-serve tool for many organisations. As standalone applications on a website, however, they relied on customers making an active choice to self-serve, and many enquiries still ended up being handled by an agent. What's different now, as customers start to move to text, is that virtual or automated responses can, where appropriate, be built in by default.

Robots and automation have the potential to realise the promise of self-serve and transform frontline customer service into a more proactive, value-delivering activity.

Simple, self-serve enquiries can be picked up and responded to by the chatbot in a natural way, through the channel the customer has chosen.

This opportunity is something that Facebook recognised when they launched Messenger Bots in April 2016, encouraging businesses to communicate with nearly one billion registered users worldwide and providing them with the ability to build bots through the platform. Messenger Bots are simple to set up (the platform claims you can have a simple bot working in 10 minutes) but employ advanced technology, through Facebook's wit.ai Bot engine, to provide both a natural language conversational interface and ongoing training of the bot through a form of machine learning. Travel brands have been early adopters, with airlines launching messenger bots to help you book and manage your flights and travel agent bots helping you decide where to go in the first place. Big fashion brands have also moved into bots on other messaging platforms, helping their customers choose and shop for outfits.

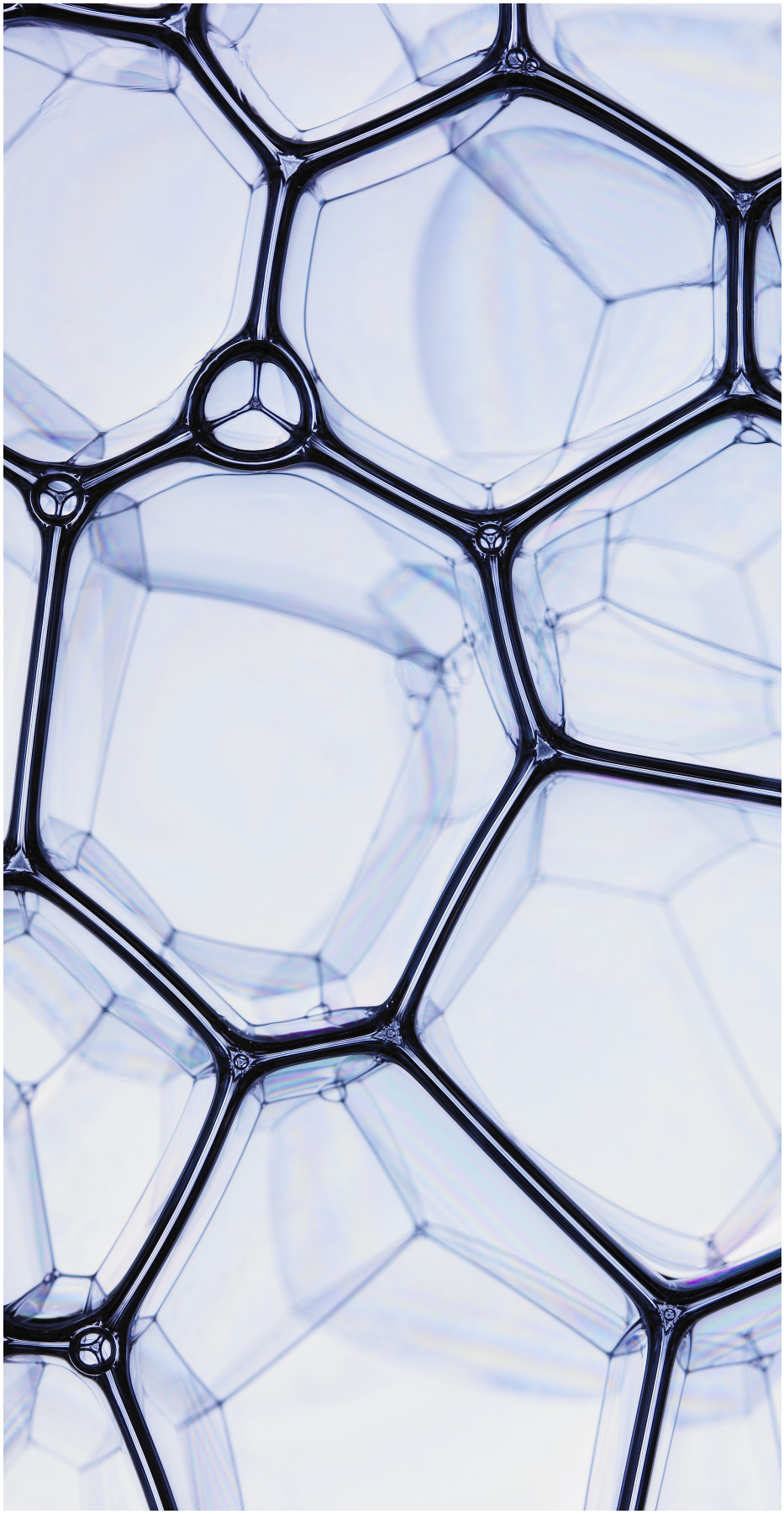
Many of these early use cases have been focussed on automating the shopping experience, which reveals something about the maturity of bot development in the customer service world. The most obvious use for bots is as a new, more conversational interface with self-serve processes, and searching for things and ordering them through a website is a good example of this. Finding your way around a customer service organisation is another example of a simple process that bots can easily help with, providing a friendlier, text driven alternative to the automated menu systems which customers so dislike.

However, there is no reason why bots can't go much further than this, and many organisations are now looking to build interfaces which are integrated with CRM and other systems and can look up information not just from a generic knowledge management system but from a customer's account. Bots can do more than just answer simple 'question and answer' enquiries; they can actually be employed to handle some of the more complex enquiries which require a conversation with the customer. Network fault diagnosis teams, for example, use decision trees to help diagnose and fix issues, asking the right questions depending on the customer's response – something which bots can replicate. Theoretically, any repeatable process where it's possible to pick the right answer for a customer can be automated, and for many organisations these processes represent a significant proportion of their work. As bots develop further through machine learning, the complexity of the tasks they undertake will continue to increase.

It's not just frontline customer service that can benefit from bots. Robotic process automation is already transforming the back office for many organisations. Repetitive, repeatable administrative processes have traditionally been outsourced or offshored to reduce costs and free up experienced internal resources to concentrate on more value-adding processes. Process robots are able to perform functions such as data entry, transfer and manipulation across multiple systems at up to 1/9th of the cost of an onshore FTE.

While in an ideal world these processes would be automated through core systems, the reality for most organisations is that updating those systems to accommodate change can be a costly and lengthy process and customer service staff are often left to fill the gap. Robotic process automation allows organisations to employ a robot to do the same job, quicker and more reliably, allowing the human employee to focus on more valuable work. With the growth of data feeds from connected devices, back office robots will become even more important and will start to deliver value beyond lifting the administrative burden from staff. As more and more information flows into the organisation, manually processing and acting upon it will not be an option.

The Connected Home is a good example of where robots might be able to take the data from the customer's appliances, combine it with billing information and use analytics tools to generate recommendations on how best to reduce spend, all with limited or no human intervention. Robots and automation, when used appropriately, have the potential to both realise the promise of self-serve and transform frontline customer service into a more proactive, value-delivering activity.



Making personal connections – a new place for people

So where does that leave humans? Well, firstly robots won't get it right all the time. Human beings have the advantage of years of conversational experience which can help us understand things like the context of a customer's request and other subtle differences between what we say we want and what we really need from our customer service representatives. In the early days of automation, using this intuition and 'common sense' to help the machines pick the right answer for the customer is a fairly basic but highly important role for the customer service agent, acting as the guardian of the customer experience and helping the machines to learn.

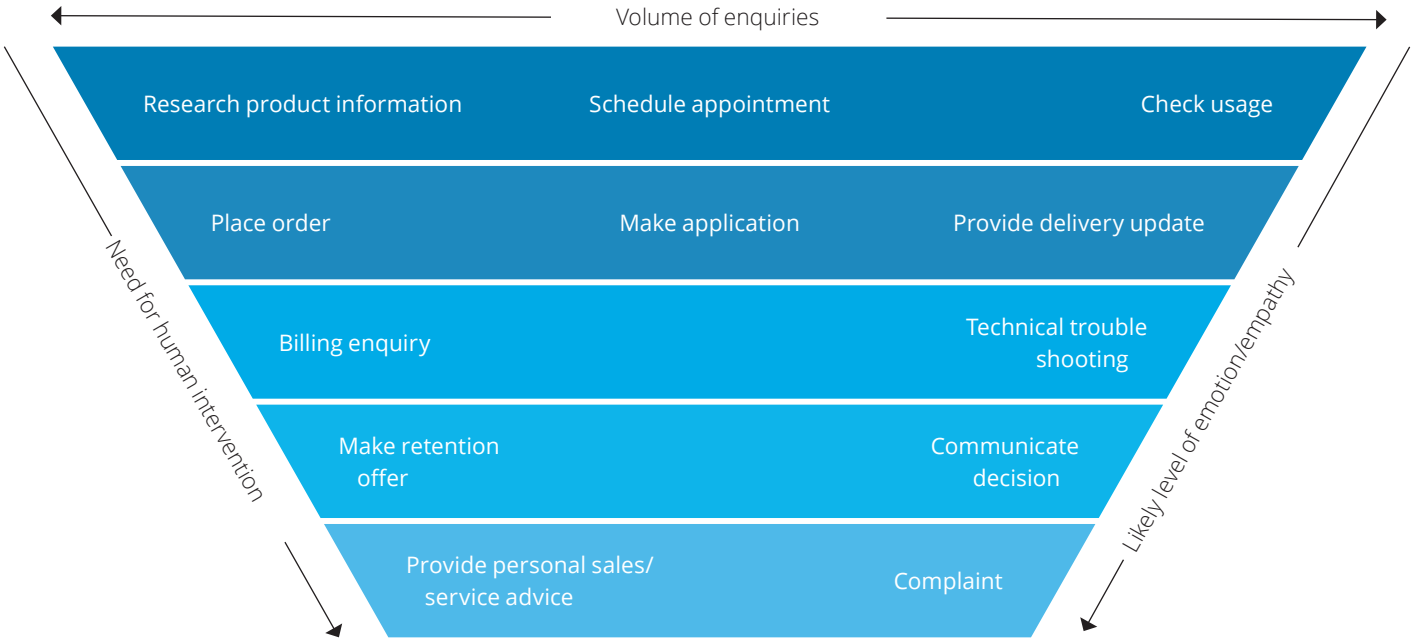
Some bots build in a 'degree of confidence' rating to the answers they choose, with those below a certain threshold pushed through to an agent for verification. As the bots get better at resolving things themselves, however, the human 'moderator' role will be required less and less. Machine learning allows bots to improve without being programmed, while cloud computing means that they potentially have access to learnings from across a network of millions of other service bots, improving their capabilities exponentially. There's no reason to believe intuition and common sense can't be learnt, even if it is a long process to get there.

There are also areas where humans have a longer term role to play. Every organisation has 'moments that matter'; points within customer journeys that define the customer's experience of your brand, and not all of these moments necessarily require a human interaction. As customers continue to adopt and demand self-serve, digital moments can be just as important as human ones. However, there are certain 'personal connection points' that require a level of emotion and empathy that customers are unlikely to accept from artificial intelligence. Complaint management is the most obvious of those points. Robots can't say they are sorry and really mean it, as anyone who has heard an automated train delay announcement can testify.

We need to feel valued and know that we are talking to the organisation, not a machine, when things go wrong. We also need to feel that the representative is at least capable of empathy and has some level of 'shared' experience with us. Customers applying for emergency benefit payments from the government need to feel assured that the person they are interacting with understands their situation and will do what they can to resolve it.

Rather than marginalising people, technology can actually help to place them right at the centre of an improved customer experience.

Figure 3. Example enquiry types and likelihood of human intervention



When making a large purchase like a car or a holiday we often need a different type of re-assurance; that we are doing the right thing and that someone else shares the emotional connection with what we are buying. Only humans, who buy these products and connect with them themselves, can provide that assurance and recommendation and there are enough of these moments in most customer lifecycles to allow for a central role for humans in delivering customer service going forward, even if its scale is reduced.

The key thing driving the need for human interaction isn't so much the complexity of the enquiry – robots can be trained to look across multiple systems to find out what's gone wrong and can do it much quicker than humans. It is more the importance of personal relationships and communication in getting things resolved. What this could mean is a higher value role for the agent, utilising their communication skills in 'grey' areas, where we need to negotiate something or 'feel our way', either with the customer or internally.

This could be an agent entering into dialogue with the delivery team to really get to the bottom of why things keep arriving late, or negotiating a new deal with a customer at the end of their contract.

The focus for agents in the future will be less about performing a process than actually understanding and changing it, and less about handling an enquiry than managing a customer. To do this they will need to have not only communication skills, but also analytical and problem solving capabilities and be genuinely empowered to help change things for the customer. Agents will become the true 'voice of the customer' within the organisation, rather than the outward facing 'voice of the organisation' they have often been in the past.

Just as there are roles for humans in supporting the robots, there are also plenty of opportunities for robots to support agents in their new roles, helping them complete processes or make decisions. Organisations with multiple legacy IT systems are employing robots to help their agents remove needless process steps, such as 'tabbing' between systems to get information, reducing handle time and improving the customer experience.

'Next best action' technology has been available for a number of years, using real-time analytics to help agents make relevant offers to the customer at the right point in the conversation. Properly deployed alongside agents and managers, bots and automation technology should enhance the customer experience by helping deliver what's right for the customer, whether it's a robot's quick and efficient resolution or an agent's empathetic personal service. Rather than marginalising people, technology can actually help to place them right at the centre of an improved customer experience.

The agile operating model – crowdsourcing, mobile working and the gig economy

What does this all mean for the customer service operating model of the future – who will do what, and where, with the move to text and rising levels of automation? What we've established is that bots will play an increasingly important role in resolving the types of customer enquiries that don't require a 'personal connection', while our agents will increasingly be focussed on those personal interactions. Meanwhile, our customers will be moving more and more of their communications to written, digital forms of contact. As the distinction between enquiry types becomes less about 'simple' and 'complex' and more about 'functional' and 'personal', and the way in which contact is delivered to our services teams changes, the organisational and sourcing models we have relied upon in the past may no longer be appropriate.

One area that is likely to change is the size of the contact centre itself. As bots provide a more accessible route into self-serve it's likely that adoption will rise and that we will finally be able to tackle unnecessary contact, which for some organisations can be up to 40% of what they receive. This will almost certainly have an impact on what we have traditionally called 'tier 1' of the organisation – the teams handling the 'simple' enquiries that are often given either to an outsourcer or less skilled and lower paid internal resources. However, if we accept the argument that robot technology is already more advanced than the applications we are using it for and will continue to develop, the impact will go far beyond tier one. As the focus shifts from simple and complex to functional and personal, more and more of the enquiries we're used to solving through our experienced in-house resources are going to be resolved by machines.

As we outlined earlier, robots won't eradicate human contact altogether. However, the other technological shift we've identified, the move to text communication, may well undermine our ability to handle enquiries using traditional customer service models. While it isn't a perfect science, workforce management for voice contacts is a mature capability. The same cannot be said for written communication. Organisations still struggle to find a way of scheduling staff for contact channels whose demand profile is usually very different to the telephone. For many organisations, non-voice has been used to fill downtime when the phones aren't busy, and it isn't uncommon to see SLAs of five days for answering emails because of this. With the growth of messaging, against a backdrop of growing customer expectations on response times, this problem is only going to get worse. The industry may need to look beyond the four walls of the contact centre for a solution.

Homeworking has been technically possible for a number of years and, while there are examples of companies successfully employing it, it hasn't taken off in the way many had hoped. The promise of homeworking is that it delivers benefits to the both the organisation and the agent, saving money on fixed costs, tapping into new pools of labour and providing a better level of resource flexibility which suits both parties. With staff able to log on from home rather than travel to a site, it offers up the possibility of calling on people at short notice to work shifts covering spikes in demand, which could go some way to helping address the shortcomings of the traditional contact centre model in dealing with non-voice enquiries. Homeworking is largely still based around employing a finite pool of people to work pre-defined shifts, however, which limits its capacity to manage unpredictable volume.

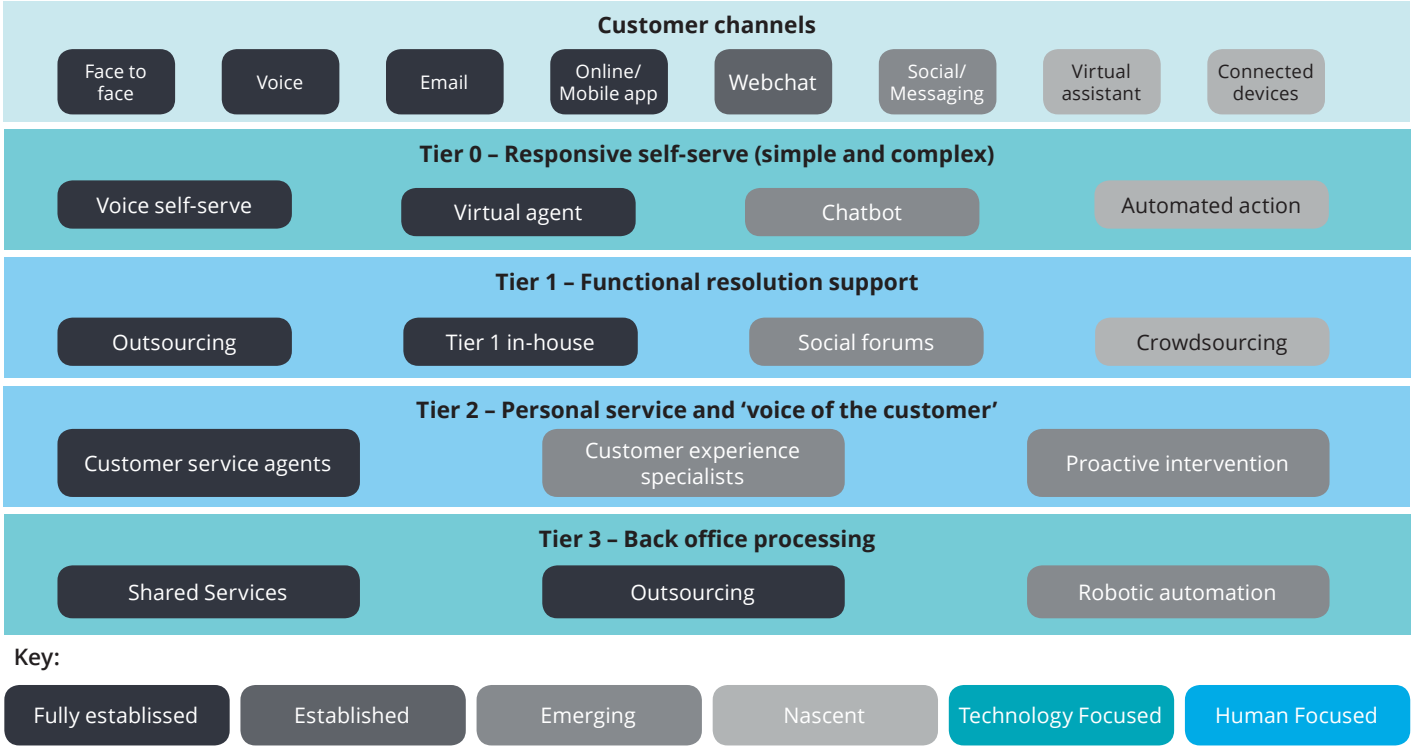
For many companies, homeworking is still built around the models and systems we use to manage inbound call traffic. Three developments are helping to address this; crowdsourcing, the 'gig' economy and mobile working.

While crowdsourcing, getting a large number or 'crowd' of people to undertake work for you, has been around as a concept for a long time, the rise of high quality internet access over the last ten years has helped to accelerate its use as a viable sourcing strategy for all kinds of organisations. More recently, customer service organisations have started to employ crowdsourcing to solve customer questions. The most famous example is GiffGaff, the mobile phone network which uses its members as the first port of call for resolving customer enquiries through an online forum. Members are rewarded for helping other members by earning points, which they can claim as money off their bill or cash. Other organisations have done similar things, using communities to help reduce the volume of simple enquiries coming through to their agents.

For most members, however, this has not been seen as a major source of income. Where customer service crowdsourcing is now developing is in being able to use routing and mobile technology to systemise the delivery of enquiries to a big pool of customer advocates, achieving the volume and quality of response required to professionalise and industrialise the solution. This allows organisations to access pools of people, very often their own customers who know their products better than anyone, and motivate them to manage and own responses to other customers' enquiries. It also offers a different level of flexibility to traditional homeworking.

Homeworking is still largely based around employing a finite pool of people to work pre-defined shifts, however, which limits its capacity to manage unpredictable volume.

Figure 4. The operating model of the future



Having a big enough crowd means that customer advocates don't need to work fixed shifts and are able to choose when to answer as many or as few questions from the queue as they want to. They can manage it alongside other work as part of the 'gig economy' and can also take advantage of the fact that communication is text based and mobile to do it from wherever they want, whether that's the kitchen table or the bus to work.

Crowdsourcing customer service isn't the complete solution to the changing nature of customer contact, but it could play an increasingly important role in an operating model which incorporates chatbots alongside mobile workers and digitally-enabled contact centre agents. The contact centre still has an important role, but it is likely to be quite different from the one it plays today. More 'first contact' enquiries will be handled and resolved by chatbots and mobile workers, whether simple or complex.

The enquiries that are escalated out of these channels to an in-house resource could be those that are more sensitive and require the most personal method of communication – a conversation, either over the telephone or face to face.

This new role for the service agent will also change the way we manage our human to human interactions, and it might be that outbound contact is about to make a comeback. Whilst 'omni-channel' routing provides the technology to move contacts seamlessly between channels and teams, the operational reality of doing this has been harder to achieve, with customers often landing in a second queue or being offered a call back when they've already invested time in calling in the first place. Offering customers using text channels a conversation with someone at a pre-arranged time could be seen as a positive customer experience enhancement, however.

Having a more focussed, outbound contact centre, freed up from handling high volumes of inbound contact, could also help organisations realise the promise of proactive contact, using predictive analytics to identify customers who would benefit from a conversation and contacting them.

Of course, there will always be some people who prefer to use their voice rather than their fingers to interact, and the contact centre will continue to play an important role in managing them as customers, at least in the short to medium term. The interesting question, with the rise of personal digital assistants and better voice recognition, is what proportion of them actually need to speak directly to a human. If the technology that is emerging and already with us today takes off in the way many expect it to, the customer service operating model of the future could look very different, combining automation and re-organisation to transform the way we talk to our customers.

Making it happen

Where and how do you start your journey towards the operating model of the future? The technology can seem daunting and predicting what customers will and won't be using in five years is fraught with danger. Planning for the future is always really difficult when you don't know what the future will look like. All of this makes it imperative that you evolve the way you do things rather than jump into dramatic change. We have put together five guiding principles to help you on your journey:

1. ***Think big, but start small***
   It's actually easier to be sceptical of the hype than it is to truly understand what new technology could mean for your business. Just because something doesn't deliver everything it could today doesn't mean that, with the exponential growth in power that computing usually experiences, it won't someday very soon. We may be at the start of the journey in areas like robotics and AI, however having a sense of where that journey might lead will help you take the early steps in the right direction, so it's worth doing some serious strategic thinking and identifying the things you'd like to start developing. When you do start that development, don't try and do too much too soon. Picking a number of small 'proof of concept' trials will help you work out what's going to be successful in the short, medium and longer term. These could be based around distinct technologies, customer groups, contact types or a combination of all three things. The important thing is to start, however.

2. ***Start with the customer..of tomorrow***
   Being 'customer-centric' has become a cliché for many people, but where there are multiple new technologies in play, having a clear view of where they might actually be deployed helps avoid the pitfall of solving problems that aren't really there. Customer journey and experience mapping, personas and service design approaches all have a role to play here. The danger here is that we design for the customer of today, who in many cases will be yet to recognise the use cases that this new transformative technology could deliver. Few customers in the 1990's would have recognised that the short messages they were starting to send each other would by 2017 be the default mode of communication for some, or that the mobile phones they had in their pockets would become so powerful and pervasive. Designing for the customer of tomorrow means understanding how technology might transform their lives and how their attitudes might change as a result.

3. ***Be agile and adaptive***
   Given how much of these developments will be a trip into the unknown for most organisations, learning as you go is really the only option. Being agile in your approach means going beyond just using agile techniques to deliver technology change. Everyone involved in the proof of concepts and beyond needs to be able to learn quickly and adapt what they are doing to take maximum advantage. Some of this is attitudinal, while some of it is about having access to the data and insights through analytics capability which helps you understand and interpret the results you are getting. Both technology and people need to be set up to learn and adapt, whether that's your chatbot building its capabilities through machine learning or your crowdsourced service agents getting better at responding to customer enquiries.

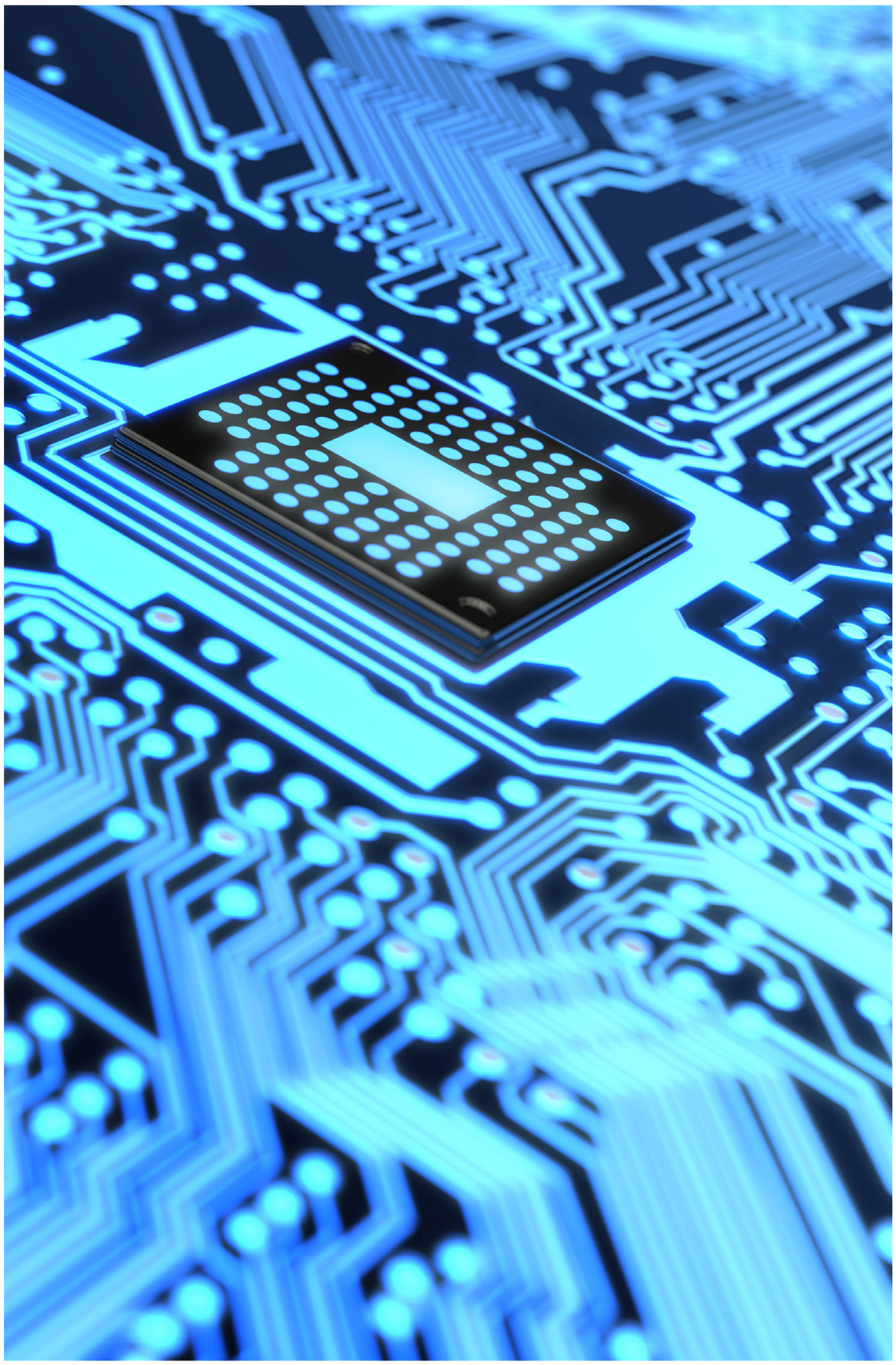
It's actually easier to be sceptical of the hype than it is to truly understand what new technology could mean for your business.

4. ***Be ready***
   Handling bad processes with new people and technology will not make them better processes. In many cases automation and new ways of working will actually amplify old problems. Use the opportunity of change to fix the fundamental issues, but don't spend so long re-engineering process that you don't ever get to try out your new technology and resources.

5. ***Be honest***
   Changing the way you manage your interactions with your customers always involves an element of risk. Being honest with them and genuinely listening to what they tell you will help you keep them onside through the process. Much of the resistance to chatbots that early adopters have experienced has come from organisations pretending that they are something that they are not and then getting found out. Customers will be much more accepting of the limitations of either the technology or your new sourcing model if you are honest with them and make it clear that you will share the benefits with them, whether that's a more efficient route into self-serve or cost savings that you can share with them.

However you get there, the operating model of the future is an exciting prospect for both organisations and the customers they serve. Even if your operation is eventually turned on its head, that's not where you need to start from. Incremental change accompanied by open thinking and a bold vision will help you transition into the new world without risking what you have today.

Being honest with customers and genuinely listening to what they tell you will help keep them onside through the process.



Contacts

Deloitte Digital helps organisations across multiple sectors to transform customer service and experience. If you would like to discuss how some of the changes we've identified might impact your organisation, please contact us through the channels below.

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