



AI

Augmented Intelligence
in Customer Service





According to Forrester, improving customer experience is the top priority for 72% of businesses. A popular study from NewVoiceMedia reveals that companies lose more than \$62 billion due to poor customer service.

Even with improvements in customer support technologies, most customers find it frustrating to get the right service within the stipulated time from customer support executives. High quality of customer service has become a lifeline, especially for B2C companies, as today's customers can take to the internet to complain about service brands.

The good news is that the use of AI technologies can transform customer service operations, while reducing operation costs and meeting customer expectations. AI enables convergence of human-centric and machine-centric intelligence, resulting in improved business agility, operational excellence, and resilience, and brings about better customer service experiences. Google is pushing the use of cloud-based AI platforms for its customer service. According to Gartner, non-voice interactions in customer support are likely to rise from 55% in 2015 to 85% by the year 2020.



Benefits of using AI in Customer Service

AI technologies can transform customer service by providing the following benefits:

- Reducing operating cost by maximizing the available resources.
- Enabling ease of availability whenever the customer needs assistance.
- Delivering a constant and consistent experience to each customer.
- Evolving from a transaction-based interaction to a relationship-based interaction.



Predicting Customer Behavior

An increasing number of customers prefer self-service, instead of having to talk to a human customer support representative. With the use of AI, most common customer queries can be prevented by understanding what your customers want before they turn to customer support. Companies can create a better customer support environment by offering digital solutions that can proactively predict customer needs and offer it before the customers recognize their need. Financial companies such as ABN Amro and HDFC Bank are using Humanoids and Chatbot technologies to provide a seamless user experience in customer service.



Use of Customer Analytics with AI

Customer analytics tools provide all details of customers including their demographic data, individual preferences, buying patterns, and other useful data. Based on the customer analytics data, businesses can offer personalized products to the customer, along with cross-selling activities. AI led customer service ecosystems can identify issues and correlate them across multiple parameters in real time and provide proactive resilience. While customer insights are valuable for any business, such insights must be followed with NBAs (or next best action) to derive business benefit from the analytical data. This can be provided only by using AI technologies. AI-based customer service solutions, can indicate customer emotions, intentions, and other signals during real-time customer calls, thus improving the customer and agent satisfaction levels.



Revenue generation through cost reduction

Companies that deliver a seamless experience tend to retain their customers, get more incremental purchases from their customers, and generate additional revenue. To achieve this, companies need to invest in advanced analytics solutions to surface new patterns and context to influence their customers' purchasing decision. AI helps understand your customer's next best action and drive additional revenue. They also provide intelligence into customer propensities and issues resulting in enhanced experience and new business opportunities.

These factors can improve revenue through cost cutting and product upselling, while adding to the satisfaction levels of both customers and customer service agents.



Empowering the human customer service agent

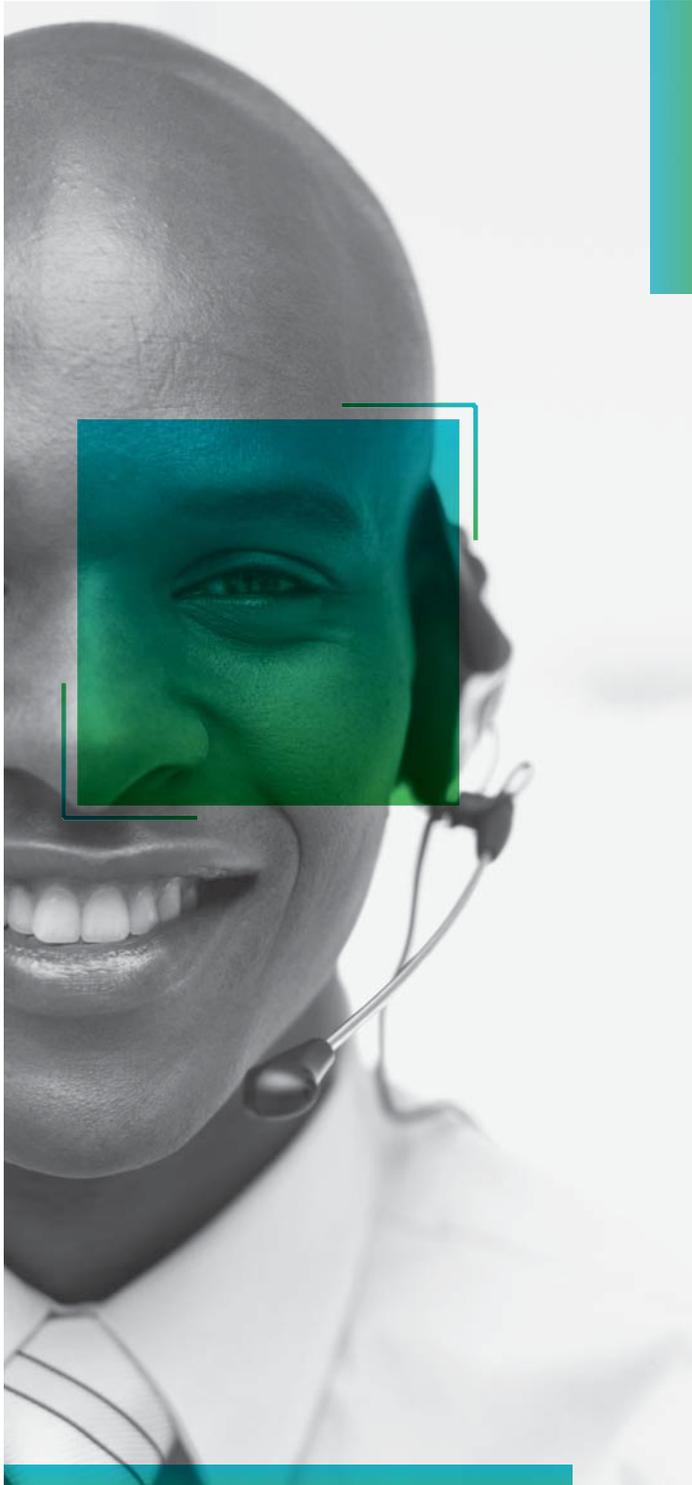
A common business concern with the use of AI in customer support is whether it will replace the human agent. AI can also be more efficient than the traditional service agents not only in resolving customer queries, but also in making new suggestions, based on the customer's profile.

Despite their sophistication, error rates in AI-based solutions such as Alexa are still very high, especially when implemented in the customer service front. Customer service platforms that have fully automated interfaces, can create a poor customer experience, along with a negative perception of the overall brand. It is critical that the AI solution should be used in sync with the human agent. The conversational skill of the AI solution can also be optimized when used in conjunction with humans, resulting in effective and continuous machine learning. For example, Amazon recently announced Amazon Connect, a cloud based customer service solution that allows enterprises to set up their own support operations in minutes and onboard agents. Amazon helps companies to build natural language contact flows using Amazon Lex, an AI service resulting in augmented intelligence.

At the bottom line, AI-based customer care solutions can be used to handle most customer complaints and queries, while freeing the customer support personnel to think about sophisticated solutions and problem resolution. Unlike the human customer care agent, AI-based customer care solutions can scale much better over time to offer smarter problem solving, improved diagnosis of the customer issue, and increased loyalty.

Business enterprises can use advanced, self-service, AI-based solutions that can reduce the burden of customer service agents. Customer service agents must also be trained to make full use of AI systems that can help them provide better responses to customers' questions.

For now, digital channels in customer support can be used for simpler or predictable customer requirements, while more complex problems do require human touch or intervention.





Conclusion

The adoption of AI technologies in customer support platforms is happening, and is here to stay. AI Solutions, if used intelligently, can not only assist the customer support representative, but also offer self-service solutions directly to the customer. This can result in a positive customer experience (CX) for the brand and the overall company. As a future technology, AI can assist in improving customer perception of the brand, and contribute towards revenue growth of the business.



About the Author

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Sunil is a passionate sales executive with more than 18 years of IT industry experience and spectacular track record of partnering with clients, creating & winning advisor led deals and building teams & businesses. He is an expert in developing new markets, selling new service lines in existing accounts and winning new logos. As the CSMO at CSS Corp, Sunil is responsible for driving business growth focusing on Technology Support Services, Application Services & Infrastructure Management Services.



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