Artificial Intelligence: Driving the Future of CX

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High expectations driven by innovation

Consumer expectations for on-demand experiences have never been higher — consumers want to transact and connect with companies, 24/7, on the channels they choose. All but the most innovative and disruptive companies are struggling to keep up with that demand.

The innovators are the ones who created the demand in the first place. When a consumer can use their mobile device to order a car to their door within minutes, access an entire studio's worth of content streaming to their TV, and control every device in their home with voice commands...their expectations grow. And they transfer those high expectations to every touchpoint they have with every company they interact with.

So how do the innovators drive and win — and what can be learned from them? The common thread isn't just industry-disrupting ideas: it's the way they've used the power of data and artificial intelligence to move light years ahead of the market and deliver better CX.

[1] Wired: Covid-19 brought about years of digitalisation in just a few months. Will it last? (2021)

[2] McKinsey: The new digital edge: Rethinking strategy for the postpandemic era (2021)

[3] Gartner: Newsroom - Press Release (2021)

THE PANDEMIC HAS ALSO DRIVEN EXPECTATIONS HIGHER

The twin drivers of digital business transformation and customer digital demand peaked amid the pandemic. Businesses leaned on digital to drive costs down. Consumers leaned into digital to drive convenience up. This digital expectation equation will either resolve — or become a greater divide.

70MM more people across Europe used digital services for the first time from November 2020 through April 2021.[1]

64% of business leaders surveyed say their companies need to build new digital businesses to help them remain viable into 2023.[2]

70% of customer service and support employees want to continue working from home after the pandemic ends. [3]

"76% of CIOs report increased demand for new digital products or services during the pandemic, and 83% expect this demand to increase."

– GARTNER

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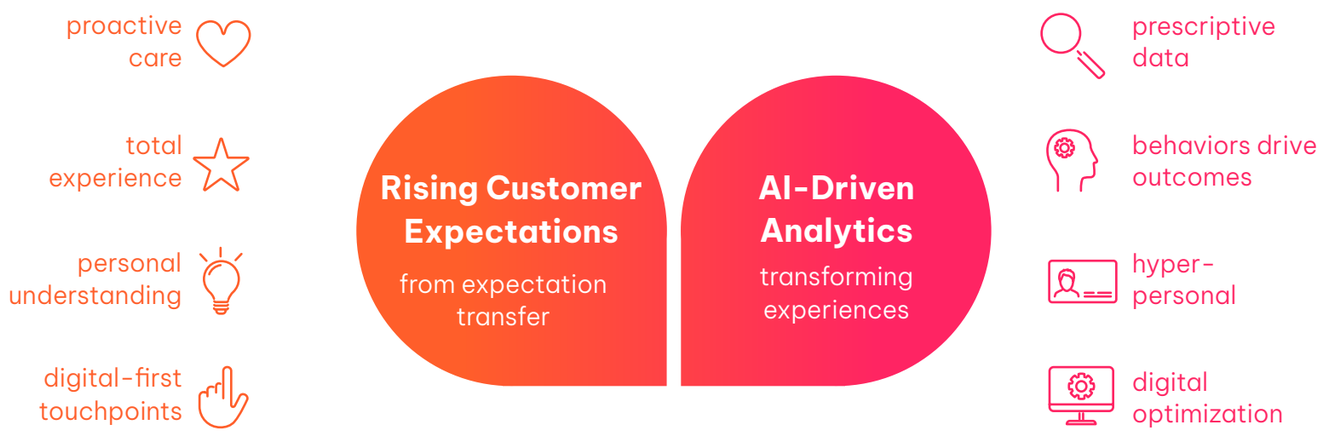
The evolution of data in the contact center

Like other industries and aspects of business, the contact center has been on a journey toward using data to be more effective.

Relying on legacy analytics leaves the contact center bound to experiences that are reactive, solely outcome-focused, one-size-fits-all, and limited to single or siloed channels — falling far short of the high customer expectations driven by the innovators.

Imagine a world where artificial intelligence informs interactions in the contact center, allowing businesses to be proactive, personalized, and optimized for the cross-channel, digitally centered ways today's customers expect to interact — allowing the contact center to join the innovators.

RISING TO THE CX CHALLENGE WITH ARTIFICIAL INELLIGENCE



1990s.
Aggregated data like statistics indicate what happened in the past.
Descriptive data.

2000s.
Patterns shed light on why something happened in the past.
Diagnostic data.

2000s to today.
Forecasts, with the introduction of machine learning, tell what will happen in the future.
Predictive data.

Today and beyond.
Machine learning and AI define what action should be taken in the future.
Prescriptive data.

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Reap the benefits of data with a holistic approach

The promise of a data-driven future with AI is real, but AI models are only as good as the data that goes into them. The good news: contact centers are awash in data — about customers, agents, and business priorities. Yet sometimes, that data is siloed, fragmented, and organized around business owners rather than customer intelligence.

What would be possible with a holistic approach to driving data into customer interactions? Consider taking in the wide range of available intelligence:

- Customers' unique preferences and expectations
- Agents' skills and performance
- Volumes of interaction data across channels

DATA CHALLENGES ARE NOT UNCOMMON

61% of shared services and outsourcing executives face fundamental data readiness challenges (siloed data, standardization, etc.) [4]

23% of executives attribute that lack of readiness to data silos and lack of standardization. [5]

17 Companies have, on average, 17 different technology applications leveraging customer data, with an average of 28 different data sources used for generating customer insights and customer engagement. [6]

[4,5] SSON Survey (2021)

[6] Forrester (2021)

"We have reached a pivotal moment when technology and data have begun to shape nearly every facet of the customer experience."

– MANU STEIJAERT
CMO, MCDONALD'S

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AI-driven CX in action

In looking at how leaders are using AI to change the game in customer experience, three key areas stand out.

Smarter Routing

More Personalized Customer Touchpoints

Improved Agent Coaching

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Smarter routing improved human interactions

Smart omnichannel routing intelligently connects customers to service and creates hyper-personalized experiences.

The world of CX has moved from what was once a voice-only interaction between customers and agents to an explosion of digital channels that include SMS, chat, and social. Digital channels saw double-digit adoption gains in 2020 compared to 2018, according to the 2020 Salesforce State of Service report, and there's no turning back. In a survey by NICE, 95% of businesses are seeing a growth in self-service requests, with the #1 request from consumers to improve self-service capabilities to digitally address more complex tasks than are currently being handled..

At the same time, consumers expect organizations to know their individual preferences and shape their experiences accordingly. AI helps organizations accomplish this by tracking, analyzing, and understanding the entirety of the customer journey to shape and perfect experiences from start to finish.

AI ensures that organizations have a rich understanding of customer preferences and matches them with the most suitable agent on the customer's preferred channel, using AI to predict emotion and intent. It also helps organizations anticipate what the customer wants, and when, and proactively reach out to them with a highly customized experience. Overall, AI is working to ensure that every customer interaction with an organization is better than the last.

95%

of businesses are seeing a growth in self-service requests

– NICE GLOBAL BENCHMARK SURVEY

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Creating smarter digital customer connections

Digital customer connections ensure a seamless journey, from self-help to human-assisted channels.

It's not uncommon today for a single customer interaction to involve multiple channels; research by *The Contact Center Executive's Agenda 2021* survey shows that one out of two contact centers use at least 9 channels to serve customers[7]. Yet these cross-channel journeys can be problematic for both the customer and the contact center. For the customer, moving from one channel to another often happens because they fail to resolve their issue in the first few channels they sought, with the hand-offs requiring them to repeat information and avoid dead-ends. For the contact center, those hand-offs represent churn and put CSAT at risk.

AI helps solve this problem by allowing organizations to seamlessly manage interactions from any channel, so the customer can resolve an issue as quickly and effectively as possible in the channel that is most appropriate, experiencing as little friction as possible along the way.

Today's customers are more likely to seek out a digital self-service channel first, yet only 9% of digital self-service contacts get resolved in that channel. AI can be used to more accurately determine intent so that chatbots can be more effective. AI can also prescribe when a digital self-service channel is unlikely to work, send the customer right to a human interaction, improving outcomes. The result is that the less expensive contact center channel to support touchpoint (digital self-service) is used to its best advantage, and the most expensive (voice) is reserved for when it's best.

Not only can AI prescribe what channel is best, it allows contact centers to weave the learnings from every channel back into each other — what can be gleaned from human interaction can improve digital interactions, and vice versa.

AI can inject intelligence into every touchpoint, starting by bringing in the context of a customer's web search, and paint a more refined picture of intent and likely outcome with every interaction.[8]

[7] Aberdeen and NICE: AI in CX: (June 2020)

[8] Gartner: Newsroom - Press Release (2019)

"Across industries, fully 81% of all customers attempt to take care of matters themselves before reaching out to a live representative."

– HARVARD BUSINESS REVEIW

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Improve outcomes and agent engagement

AI delivers best practices, coaching, and feedback to agents in real time.

The agent plays a critical role in customer experience, so their performance, satisfaction, and engagement are key. Imagine being able to analyze and model the activities and behaviors of the highest performing agents and share that with the rest of the workforce — in real-time, in any channel. AI makes it possible, allowing organizations to pinpoint and share best practices and coaching in real-time. Real-time prompts empower agents to understand how to alter their behavior to improve the customer satisfaction outcome during an interaction and reinforce the skills they have learned in a coaching session. And because they measured customer sentiment continually, they got a more accurate and fair view of agent performance (as opposed to listening to a handful of calls as examples of agent performance). This more accurate assessment improved employee engagement.

CASE STUDY

CONTACT CENTER IMPROVES NPS, AGENT SATISFACTION, AND EFFICIENCY.

By measuring agent behaviors that have a direct impact on customer sentiment metrics — "demonstrate ownership," "active listening," and "build rapport" — a contact center was able to apply that data in a quality management program to improve outcomes. And because they measured customer sentiment and agent behaviors on every interaction, they captured a more accurate and fair view of agent performance, which improved employee engagement.

THE RESULTS

28% increase in transactional NPS

25% improvement in employee satisfaction

10% reduction in agent attrition

50% improvement in operational efficiency

"I love being measured for all of my work, not just six calls a month!"

– AGENT

"It used to take me an hour to prep for a coaching session, but now…I'm having a meaningful conversation with my agent in just a couple of minutes."

– TEAM LEADER

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AI has the potential to transform the contact center by improving every interaction with every consumer, every time.

With Enlighten AI for CX, every second of every interaction is analyzed to identify the successful behaviors that drive extraordinary experiences. NICE has been working with customer experience data for more than 30 years. The result is unmatched, ready-made universal AI models for all the major CX use cases. Enlighten AI includes an AI framework that makes every application and process smarter across the NICE portfolio. A suite of innovative CX solutions operationalizes these insights, accelerating action, and turning customer service into a real competitive differentiator.

Learn more about how Enlighten AI delivers a complete, objective, and automatedanalysis of every interaction, for truly next-gen CX »

“The CX programs of the future will be holistic, predictive, precise, and clearly tied to business outcomes.”

– MCKINSEY

Make every interaction count

Read more at nice.com/websites/enlighten-ai

About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud-native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered contact center software. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform — and elevate — every customer interaction.

www.nice.com