

How intelligent automation can increase contact centre efficiency



Contact centres are always under pressure. Customers want a more responsive service. Advisors hope for a better working experience. And managers are always looking for ways to run their end-to-end customer service more efficiently. Factor in the challenges of increasing contact volumes, accommodating working from home, and difficulties in finding skilled contact centre staff, and it's clear that finding new ways to unlock contact centre efficiencies has never been more important.

In this CCMA Good Practice Guide we'll look at how applying a more integrated approach to automation can lead to optimised performance across the end-to-end customer journey - while also helping organisations to drive contact centre transformation.

Signs that you may need a more integrated approach to automation

Despite sustained investment across a range of technologies and initiatives, keeping up with customer demand for services remains a challenge. Typical signs that customer journeys aren't working optimally include:

- Customers expressing frustration at being kept on hold for too long.
- Solutions such as digital self-service channels, conversational automation, chatbots and AI-enabled next best action support still relying on advisors to integrate processes that aren't fully seamless.
- Advisors finding it hard to respond to customers as they have to spend so much time screen jumping between systems to get the answers they need.

Helping advisors to improve the customer experience

Organisations typically have multiple solutions and digital channels in place to support the customer journey. Because of this it's becoming harder for advisors to gain a true 360-degree view of the customer. Contact centres need to take steps to remove this problem for advisors if they're serious about improving both the customer and the employee experience. Enabling automation is key to improving the advisor experience, helping to avoid:

- Disruptions to the customer journey. This leads to longer handling times and lower customer satisfaction that in turn impacts advisor performance.
- The need for advisors to provide the 'glue' between omnichannel customers and essential back-office information.
- Volumes of repetitive manual work that can contribute to advisor frustration and high attrition rates.

Complete automation across the contact centre

Robotic Process Automation (RPA), with its ability to automate repetitive contact centre tasks, delivers significant benefits in terms of shortening the time it takes advisors to address key steps in the resolution process. Deploying a complete automation layer across your contact centre ecosystem effectively frees advisors to focus on what they do best - delivering live, personalised calls where they can be their most productive, responsive, empathetic and engaging.

An Intelligent Automation approach based on RPA allows organisations to deploy a set of robots that act as digital workers supporting both contact centre advisors as well as digital customer service channels. Typical RPA functionality for driving contact centre transformation includes:

- Enabling RPA bots to interface with data sources from across the business, including back-office legacy systems, unstructured data in forms, or information logged across other digital channels.
- Freeing contact centre advisors from the complexity of logging into multiple systems and screens - leaving them to focus on personalised customer interactions at scale.
- Equipping advisors with an intuitive, single screen interface that is populated by pre-fetched data to support each interaction, and adapts as the interaction evolves with dynamically generated content.
- Supporting both contact centre advisor interactions as well as virtual channels to accelerate true digital customer service.
- Providing a complete automation platform to eliminate the need for repetitive, direct systems access. RPA can collect customer records automatically, and automates time-consuming activities such as call wraps to significantly reduce handling times.

Transforming contact centre performance with your own digital workforce

When looking for a contact centre automation solution, it's important to differentiate between basic RPA bot offerings and more comprehensive 'digital workforce' approaches.

Rather than simply replicating current advisor functions, the latest digital assistants work in parallel with advisors.

By collecting data, presenting context-specific information to help during interactions, and handling interaction administration, valuable advisor time is saved.

Organisations can also unlock significant efficiency savings thanks to multiple digital assistants working in parallel. Additionally, providing a dynamic advisor experience ensures that contact centre team members always have the right information in front of them.

Quantifiable benefits for customers, advisors and contact centre management

Adopting an Intelligent Automation approach translates directly into quantifiable operational and financial benefits. Working with digital assistants helps to secure improvements in customer satisfaction and reductions in advisor attrition while also cutting overall costs. Key benefits include:

- **Improved Customer Experience** – with the potential for more than 50% reductions in average handling times, and more engaged advisors thanks to the support of digital assistants, customers will benefit from an improved experience leading directly to better customer satisfaction scores and retention.
- **Improved Employee Experience** – effective automation helps make life easier for advisors, removing boring tasks and reducing the risk of errors while freeing up more time to engage with customers and resolve their concerns. Lowering advisor frustration and enabling improved performance makes for happier employees leading to a positive impact on advisor attrition.
- **Increased Contact Centre Efficiency** – organisations adopting contact-centre-wide Intelligent Automation programmes quickly secure benefits around average call time reductions, error reduction, customer satisfaction improvements, drops in advisor attrition and onboarding times as well as the ability to scale their new digital workforce to manage fluctuations in demand.

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