AI & Live Chat: a winning combination

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Customers expect immediate results but they also crave the personal touch. Abbie Heslop of EBI.AI discusses how artificial intelligence (AI) can help to achieve the right balance.

Changing expectations are driving the need for a faster, more personalised and memorable customer experience (CX). Therefore, organisations are looking to implement an innovative mix of channels and technology to make it happen. Those that come up with the right formula can expect extra sales, greater customer loyalty, better utilisation of frontline staff and reduced costs.

This search for alternative methods of response is one of the reasons why live chat is growing exponentially, quickly overtaking voice calls, social media and email as the preferred method of communication. According to Techjury, 75% of people prefer live chat over any other channel.(i) Statistics tell us that customers choose chat for convenience and shorter wait times, unlike voice calls. Customers also say they are able to better engage with the brand, outline concerns and get immediate outcomes using live chat. What is more, the average customer satisfaction rating for a live chat service exceeds 87%.(ii) What better incentive for organisations wanting to differentiate themselves in a challenging and highly competitive world?

So where does Artificial Intelligence (AI) fit in? At a time when frontline agents continue to be flooded with queries and customers expect a fast, personalised service, AI offers an opportunity to take customer experience (CX) to a whole new level. Based on machine learning, it has the ability to sift through and analyse unlimited amounts of data in real-time to provide quick, accurate responses. At the same time, it can respond using natural language to add warmth and empathy to every single customer interaction.

Good for customers, good for agents, good for business
Here are the top 3 ways Artificial Intelligence can enhance human experience:

• Seamless customer interactions – today's AI solutions are perfect for giving customers choice and for improving the effectiveness of popular communications methods such as live chat. Whether an organisation offers a bot response or live chat service, AI guarantees that all enquiries are answered concisely, smoothly and in a way that is seamless to the customer.
For example, AI bots can quickly be trained to answer generic questions such as 'is my local store open as usual?' and 'do you offer a click and collect service?' meaning they can be added to the front end of a live chat service to save customer and agent time. For more complex questions, the bot simply hands over to a live agent while simultaneously imparting valuable intelligence such as customer sentiment and previous interactions, so agents have all they need to deliver satisfying conversations every time. Thanks to Natural Language Processing (NLP), AI has many human qualities that bring automation to life. This means that behind the scenes, the bot is able to capture and save every element of the blended bot/human conversation to provide a complete transcript of the interaction.

• Virtual concierge for agents – with many frontline staff working from home, AI solutions are an agent's new best friend, offering them their very own virtual concierge or dedicated personal

assistant. Using Natural Language Processing (NLP), AI tools quickly understand a customer's initial query then pass this valuable information to the live agent who already knows what the customer is enquiring about. Agents can even ask their virtual concierges questions while in conversation with a customer to deliver fast, accurate and highly personalised responses. This boosts agent confidence and performance while humanising the overall customer service experience.

• Remove barriers between man and machine - AI technology has broken down traditional barriers by combining the best of technology and live agents to increase efficiencies while using real customer interactions to elicit emotionally intelligent, human responses. Artificial Intelligence in all its forms, for example, a virtual assistant sitting on the front of an IVR menu or at the beginning of a live chat box - has the potential to increase the volume of conversations contact centres and customer service organisations can conduct and support around the clock. This boosts productivity and improves response times while taking immense pressure off organisations with growing contact volumes and shrinking teams that are often restrained by the limitations of a 9-5 Live Chat service. What is more, thanks to machine-learning, the more AI tools are used, the better they get, making them a valuable and strategic addition to an organisation's corporate CX and sales strategy.

Good for customers, good for agents and good for business, AI is helping to enhance the human experience and find the right balance between immediate results and personalised customer experience. For more ideas and information, visit www.ebi.ai

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About EBI.AI
Established in 2014, EBI.AI is among the most advanced UK labs to create fully managed, Enterprise-grade AI assistants. These assistants help clients to provide their customers with faster and better resolutions to their queries, and liberate front-line customer service agents from the dull, repetitive and mundane.

EBI.AI selects the best AI and cloud services available from IBM, Amazon, Microsoft and others, combined with bespoke AI models to deliver its AI communication platform, called Lobster.

Combined with it over 19 years of experience working with big data, analytics and systems integration it has successfully implemented AI assistants that now handle hundreds of thousands of conversations a year across Transport & Travel, Property, Insurance, Public and Automotive industries.

For more information, please visit EBI.AI (http://www.ebi.ai)

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(i) Techjury (https://techjury.net/blog/live-chat-statistics/)

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