

Practical ways to digitalize the customer experience, the latest blog from Teleopti

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Teleopti's Product Manager Jeremy Hamill-Keays explores the brave new world of digitalization and takes a look at three innovations worth watching

Digitalization is revolutionizing the way we work and interact with each other and is even influencing the type of goods and services organizations sell. We are in the grip of what some experts call a state of 'digital disruption', the all-consuming period of change that occurs when new digital technologies and business models affect everything we do.

Call them what you will, Digital Add-ons such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Chatbots, speech recognition, natural language understanding and machine learning are no longer science fiction and have a powerful role to play in this brave new world. Although we are some way off fully functional talking robots, the impact of AI, for example, on everyday tasks (via Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, Google Now and Microsoft's Cortana) is clear and at work in the customer service sector and contact centers.

Today, digital add-ons are used primarily in the back office to capture, analyze, cross-reference and share data to help enhance the customer service experience. Increased efficiencies and improved productivity are two other benefits enjoyed by contact centers which have invested in new digital technology. Automation is transforming manpower by performing simple, common tasks leaving highly skilled, experienced human agents to handle the more complex, sensitive or emotive issues. Starbucks is one example of how a company is integrating chatbots into its customer experience. Starbucks makes it ridiculously easy to place and order your favorite drink or snack, whether you prefer using voice commands or text messaging. The chatbot will tell you when your order will be ready and the total cost. The news agenda is full of why we should be using these Digital Add-ons but it doesn't necessarily explain how to use or introduce them. Let's get started on some practical ways to digitalize customer interactions.

Step up your digital culture

Digital transformation is making its mark across organizations everywhere. New roles are being created specifically to operationalize the intent of becoming a digitally competent organization. A quick scan of Google reveals a plethora of new job titles such as digital strategist, chief digital officer and digital engagement manager. Digital marketing managers have been around for some time, as electronic communications overtook traditional print media as the favored promotional channel. Today, there are even digital finance and digital supply chain managers.

This shift in the world of work is having a profound impact on HR departments which are increasingly forced to re-evaluate their existing human capital and talent as well as revise the skill-sets required of new employees coming into the organization to support the business. One effective mechanism is to make digital tests an intrinsic part of the recruitment process. According to Deloitte Consulting "soft skills trump technical knowledge in driving digital transformation" so the first place to start is to look within. Take a close look at your team's make up and strengths. Leaders should be forward-thinking and have a transformative vision whilst employees need to up their game in terms of

technical literacy and strategic thinking. Both leaders and employees need to be highly adaptable or 'change-oriented'. How do yours measure up? Take advantage of advances in automated Workforce Management (WFM) to capture agent skills in an instant and identify digital skills gaps to support relevant and effective onboarding, specialist training and ongoing coaching programs.

Reassess your technology

Once you have the right culture in place, then it is time to innovate and find the right technology. According to West Corporation, almost a third (31%) of participants in its recent study said the use of speech recognition, natural language understanding, machine learning and AI to create virtual assistants in contact centers would be a future trend. Stay ahead of the curve by deploying digitalized technologies such as Chatbots, voice analytics and video chat.

Chatbots - computer programs that mimic conversations with people using artificial intelligence – are transforming the way people interact and are an important part of today's multichannel contact center environment. Combine them with the latest WFM solutions to make direct consumer to business connection easier; achieve unprecedented customer reach (1.2 billion people use Facebook Messenger alone every month) and deliver a fast, streamlined, personalized customer experience. Chatbots, like fine wine, improve with age – their unique machine-to-machine learning means the more you use them, the better they get.

The right solution is out there

There are many solutions appearing in the market that claim to digitalize the customer experience, and which is best most often depends on who is using it. To give you a spring board for further research here are 4 interesting companies offering support for your contact center's digital transformation:

1. Facebook Spaces – part of the giant's corporate plans to take virtual reality (VR) mainstream, Spaces is a new VR application that enables this social media giant's 1.3 billion users to hang out with friends in a fun, interactive environment as if they were in the same room. Similarly, Facebook Spaces could easily be deployed in the contact center as part of an integrated WFM solution to build highly interactive customer interactions that boost customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2. Lucky Orange – encourages users to take a peek behind the digital curtain to see how visitors use their website and then help turn them into customers and clients. The company's complete 'conversion optimization' package includes a real-time digital dashboard, daily email insights, dynamic heat-maps, live visitor recordings, conversion funnels, form analytics, feedback polls and interactive chat. Imagine if these analytics could be linked to agents' dashboards in the contact center? They could become a powerful tool in delivering the right information - and experience - to the customer at the right time.

3. Digital Genius - aims to combine the best of human and machine intelligence to deliver on increasing customer expectations. The technology allows machines to do what they do best unlocking valuable time for human agents to create superior experiences for customers across multiple channels. One such company using the technology is KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. It is taking the next step in what it calls 'social servicing' by testing AI to help answer common customer questions. A dedicated team of 235 social media service agents working for the airline engage in 15,000 conversations every week on Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, WeChat, KakaoTalk and VKontakte.

4.Reevoo – helps to turn customers into your best sales people. Ratings and reviews from customers keen to share their views can help boost SEO ratings and insights contained in reviews provide valuable information for product development, customer service and marketing plans. Customers soon become brand advocates and any negative reviews or customer queries can be dealt with quickly and transparently to keep customers onboard and keep prospects in the loop.

The moral of the story is if you can overcome your own organization's period of digital disruption by fostering the right cultural change and deploying the right technology, Digital Add-Ons are a powerful weapon for competitive advantage. Make the most of new WFM innovations to blend people skills with technology and drive a successful digital transformation. Your organization will be rewarded with infinitely higher levels of agent productivity and customer engagement.

To find out more, visit TELEOPTI.COM (<http://www.teleopti.com>)

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About Teleopti

Teleopti, a top, global provider of workforce management software, offers a world-class WFM solution that is sophisticated, localized and easy to use. As the largest "best-of-breed" vendor, Teleopti focuses on helping contact centers, back offices and retail stores improve customer service, employee satisfaction and profitability – through optimized, automated forecasting and scheduling with cutting-edge features to empower and engage employees.

Founded in 1992, Swedish-established Teleopti has customers in over 85 countries, offices in Sweden, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia, United Arab Emirates, China, Germany, Brazil, South Africa, the Philippines, Finland and Norway – and a comprehensive global network of partners. With a record of continuous net profitability for 25 years and with high customer satisfaction ratings, Teleopti serves as a reliable partner.

For more information, visit www.teleopti.com

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