

# Superagents – 6 reasons to celebrate by Teleopti

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Rather than fear robots taking over the contact center, Nick Smith at Teleopti says it's time to harness the power of both worlds to improve the customer experience. Here he outlines six reasons to celebrate today's superagents

You often hear about the struggle between man versus machine and robots taking over agents in the contact center but it's not quite that black and white. According to Dr Nicola Millard at BT, the more likely scenario is "man plus machine", a winning combination where "smart people partnered with smart machines have the power to superpower us."(i)

Our own experience at Teleopti suggests that both human agents and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have a powerful role to play. On the one hand, AI and chatbots are simultaneously revolutionizing customer service and elevating the status of agents. For example, WeChat in China is one of the most successful pioneers of chatbots supplying 10 million businesses and enabling people to hail a taxi, order food, pay a bill and book a doctor's appointment without human intervention.(ii) On the other hand, AI is only as good as the data that fuels it and the things AI finds hard are the qualities that make humans unique: conversation, empathy, creativity, intuition and negotiation.

The silver bullet solution for today's customer journey

The combination of AI and well scheduled human agents, with the right skills, might be the silver bullet for effective customer service but are agents ready to support today's customer journey? By the time a customer gets to speak to a live agent, the chances are they have already used your mobile app, searched for answers on your website and trawled numerous YouTube clips to no avail. They are frustrated and want to speak to someone who knows all the steps they've taken, why they are frustrated and how to solve their query from one single encounter of the human kind. In short, they are looking for a superagent!

To create a team of superagents, organizations need to re-think their learning environment, capture an organization-wide talent pool in a centralized Workforce Management (WFM) solution and then add Real-Time Adherence (RTA) to re-allocate idle time to training. Through advanced forecasting, scheduling and competence management, human agents will remain more productive and valuable than robots can ever be. Let's take a closer look.

Six reasons to celebrate superagents

1. Dealing with complex conversations - counter-intuitively, digitalization has elevated the role of the contact center agent and businesses are paying a premium for this new breed of superagent. Nowadays, the calls agents handle take longer, are more complex and require moral judgment and empathy. What is more, whereas the computer "says no" humans have the power to negotiate mutually acceptable outcomes for customers leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and profitability.

2. Emotional Intelligence – being on the front line, agents have the benefit of direct contact to truly understand the emotional triggers behind what customers want. The best agents will also be able to read

through a conversation, for example with a chatbot, before picking up seamlessly with the customer. Wise organizations then blend agent intuition with the scientific evidence of speech analytics technology to improve future customer conversations.

3. Collaboration - successful agents work closely with other departments to get the answers and support they need to think outside the box and come up with their own ideas for delighting customers. Help agents engage proactively across the organization by giving them an effective set of collaborative tools such as internal chat and enterprise social media.

4. Flexibility – the beauty of the human brain is adaptability. If one solution doesn't work for a customer, agents can use all their powers of conversation, empathy, creativity, intuition and negotiation to find the right one. Then add WFM technology into the mix to produce flexible schedules and manage your precious talent and resources effectively.

5. Tact and diplomacy – this is where the human touch comes into its own because AI driven robots learn responses based on the data fed into them but humans can interpret and act on that data to deliver highly personalized customer interactions. The emergency services and organisations with a large proportion of emotional or complex enquiries will always rely on humans to accommodate their customers' specific needs and conduct sensitive, tactful and diplomatic conversations.

6. Just being Human! - good customer service starts with people rather than machines. It is your human agents who know if customers are happy and which channels they prefer and it's their human managers who will act on customer feedback, improve calls scripts and agent training and then enhance business processes that proactively manage 'predictable' situations and resolve problems quickly.

Of course, AI is radically transforming customer interactions but there is no substitute for the human touch when it comes to closing sales calls or delivering an exceptional, personal customer experience.

Nick Smith is Business Manager for UK and Ireland at Teleopti

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About Teleopti

Teleopti, is a global provider of workforce management (WFM) software, offering a WFM solution that is sophisticated, localised and easy to use. As the largest "best-of-breed" vendor, Teleopti focuses on helping contact centres, back offices and retail stores improve customer service, employee satisfaction and profitability – through optimized, automated forecasting and scheduling.

Teleopti provides everything necessary to effectively manage staff, forecast demand, create schedules automatically, develop accurate and insightful reports and improve overall customer satisfaction.

Founded in 1992, Swedish-established Teleopti has customers in over 80 countries, numerous offices around the world – from Beijing to São Paulo – and a comprehensive global network of partners. With a record of continuous net profitability for over 20 years and with high customer satisfaction ratings, Teleopti serves as a reliable partner.

For more information, please visit Teleopti (<http://www.teleopti.com>) or contact:

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(i) Botman vs. Superagent: man vs machine in the future of customer experience” – white paper by Dr Nicola Millard, Head of Customer Insight & Futures, Global Services Innovation Team at BTGlobalces Innovation Team, BT

(ii) Botman vs. Superagent: man vs machine in the future of customer experience” – white paper by Dr Nicola Millard, Head of Customer Insight & Futures, Global Services Innovation Team at BT (page 10)Global