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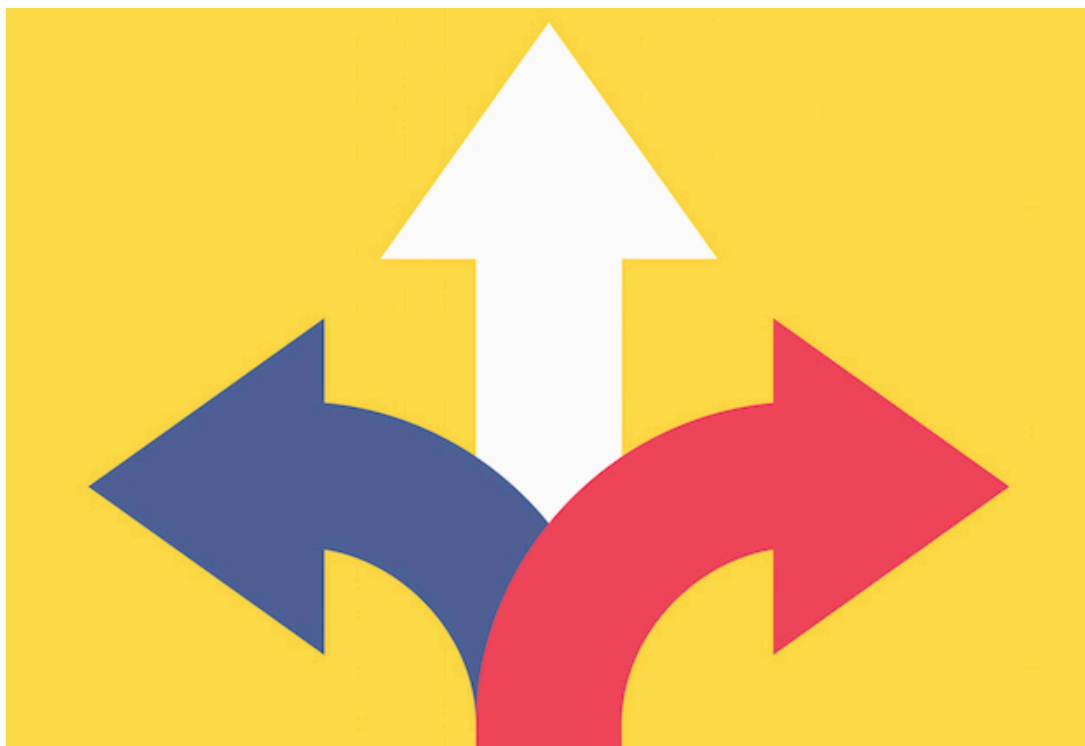
Customer engagement, Digital & messaging

Designing effortless customer journeys

Nuance Communications

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What is it like for your customers when they don't get the easy path? With the myriad of paths a customer conversation may take, good conversational design is a must-have for any customer care application today. It takes specialized skills to create customer journeys that don't encounter "secret squirrel routes". It takes Pathfinder.

Squirrel!

Last weekend I got invited to check out a new restaurant in one of the hipster neighborhoods in Seattle. Given that I don't live in the hipster scene, I typed in the address on my map app and hit the road. What came next was an overly complicated journey with difficult-to-navigate streets, hard-to-cross, busy intersections and what I would call a "secret squirrel route" that left me feeling more stressed than supported. It seems that the map app focused on speed, rather than convenience. And while the map app did its job, for me, it illustrated how the quickest, fastest path isn't always the best path.

What is it like for your customers

when they don't get the easy path?

What may seem like the best route to the people designing your applications may not be the easiest or preferred route for your customers. In customer service, the end point on the "map" may be paying a bill, or rebooking a flight, or filing a claim. Like an inefficient map, inefficient customer service can lead to consumer frustration. On the other hand, easy, effortless, convenient customer service can lead to brand loyalty. When your customers contact you, are they encountering an inefficient chatbot or complicated maze of menus, or are you providing an easy, intelligent engagement that leads to task success, customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty?

Interacting like a human takes work

With the myriad of paths a customer conversation may take, good conversational design is a must-have for any customer care application today. And while there is a plethora of technologies available today that can provide question-and-answer capability with ease, building effective conversational applications that can interact like a human requires specialized skills. Conversational design isn't simply accessing AI technology – it's an expert process of creating experiences that are human-centric, social and interactive, grounded in communication principles, regardless of mode of interaction.

Effective conversational design that can handle the complexity of human interaction takes work – a lot of it. Today, the process involves subject matter experts sitting down with conversational designers to script paths according to business processes. It's a highly manual, time-consuming and often lengthy process, prone to human error. Using our map app analogy, imagine the many ways you might be instructed by a human to get to a new restaurant across town – "Don't take the freeway", "Avoid the toll road by going this way", "Take the scenic route", or "I go down the back alley to save time". Inevitably, there are missed turns along the way, or preferences that are anecdotal that may not deliver the easiest route.

The best path forward

As consumer demands (and expectations) for intelligent conversational applications increase, organizations must find more efficient and effective ways to ensure high quality conversational design. One path forward to accelerate conversational design is a new category of conversational tools – Conversation Accelerator Tools. These tools allow organizations to leverage the terabytes of data they already accumulate today, ingest the data to discover the most helpful answers to commonly asked questions and potential problem areas, and automate the build of effective "conversation maps" for their customer care applications.

This data-driven approach results in more natural and accurate scripts, opening the door for more organizations to deploy highly intelligent assistants that consumers will love, while also providing insights that lead to opportunities for strengthening customer relationships.

No tool today can completely displace the critical need for conversational design expertise – but it sure beats the secret squirrel route approach. In the coming months, Nuance will be launching our own automated dialog design tool, Pathfinder. To learn more about Nuance technologies, visit here

Tags: Customer experience

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Learn more about Nuance Pathfinder, coming soon!

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