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Customer engagement, Contact Center AI

Facing staff and supply chain shortages and rising prices, enterprises embrace AI

Nuance Communications

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In the face of workforce shortages, supply chain chaos, and spiraling inflation, enterprises are leaning on their contact enters to keep more customers happier while spending less. AI solutions that span omnichannel journeys can help, but organizations need to take a connected approach to contact center AI that gives them the flexibility to move fast and deploy apps whenever and wherever they need them.

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Enterprises face several large, global business challenges that are making it difficult to meet revenue goals and build competitive advantage.

1: Workforce shortages are damaging the customer experience

There's a growing workforce shortage problem across industries, as millions of employees reassess their priorities following the pandemic and join the so-called "great resignation" or switch to part-time work. And with COVID-19 infections still high around the world, more staff are out due to illness.

The staffing issue is especially challenging for contact centers, where higher call volumes must be handled

by fewer agents without compromising the quality of the customer experience. With fewer agents, customers face long wait times to get their issues resolved, while employees are overworked, leading to more burnout and even higher churn.

2: Global supply chain issues are damaging revenue

At the same time, workforce shortages in raw materials, manufacturing, and logistics are creating challenges in global supply chains that depend on precise, just-in-time provisioning to meet consumer demand. As supply chain issues stack up, contact centers face a flood of additional inquiries from customers tracking down their orders. With supply chains struggling, dissatisfied customers are choosing not to buy, or switching to providers that can get what they need on time—which has a major impact on revenue.

3: Inflation is increasing the cost of doing business

Even when goods are available, rapid inflation means prices are up across the board. So, enterprises must now pay more to make their products while also paying more to attract and retain staff—a double hit on their profitability. Contact center volumes are the same or also increasing, creating challenges for organizations that can't afford to keep hiring new agents to keep with incoming requests.

What's the answer?

More and more companies are solving these growing challenges and finding immediate relief with technology, and especially AI. Enterprises increasingly see that AI can help them meet customer needs and ease workloads for their employees while reducing costs.

For example, virtual assistants (VAs) and chatbots are helping to fill the staffing gap by addressing simple customer queries such as resetting a password or checking on the status of an order. VAs help customers self-serve, keeping costs down. They free up agents for more complex questions, and intelligently route in-depth issues to the most appropriate agent or team.

Successful companies are also using automation to be proactive about reaching out to customers. For example, a company might send customers automated SMS reminders about upcoming appointments and enable them to respond in the same channel if they need to reschedule.

Currently, only one in four service organizations have fully deployed AI and chatbots. However, according to Gartner, nearly 40% of customer service and support (CSS) leaders have started pilot programs or plan to use chatbots by 2023. Around 36% of CSS leaders are doing the same when it comes to AI capabilities.

Avoiding the dangers of point solutions

Although many enterprises have deployed contact center AI solutions in some form, too often these are point solutions that solve (or hope to solve) an immediate need, but are left siloed from the rest of the organization. That limits their ability to deliver long-term value, which is why demand is growing for customer relationship hubs that are integrated into the business.

In response to the many challenges they face, enterprises are moving away from point solutions toward all-in-one capabilities with integrated data, analytics, technologies, and tools—and that trend is set to grow.

We envision a future where organizations seamlessly integrate AI and automation across their operations to deliver efficient and effective self-service and support agents with real-time insights, guidance, and recommendations. And importantly, in this AI-first future, enterprises will augment their contact center with new layers of intelligence while still getting value from their existing investments.

The power of a complete, unified omnichannel engagement platform

At Nuance, we help enterprises improve customer experiences, boost agent performance, reduce costs, and increase revenue by bringing AI-powered intelligence to every aspect of customer engagement—all on a single platform.

Our Contact Center AI solutions give enterprises access to the power of our intelligent engagement platform through cloud-native, cloud-agnostic AI services that plug into their existing customer

engagement technologies.

Whether it's adding a VA to a website or mobile app, creating a conversational IVR experience, or proactively sending notifications to prevent needless calls, our Contact Center AI solutions work on any platform and with any Contact Center-as-a-Service (CCaaS) provider.

While Contact Center AI enables enterprises to select only what they need from our conversational AI solutions (and deploy them wherever and however they want), many organizations choose to partner with Nuance to take a holistic approach that multiplies the value of their investmetns.

For example, one major US telco has partnered with Nuance for over 12 years, and recently used our open APIs to integrate VA and live chat with its other technologies, leading to a 50% increase in CSAT scores and a 38% increase in conversion rate.

> *"Flexibility is the key to our relationship with Nuance. Integrating Nuance products with our existing platforms—and new platforms we adopt—has enabled us to offer our customers a unique service that can't be found anywhere else."*
>
> *Platforms & Operations team member, major US telco*

In challenging times, flexibility is even more essential. The ability to quickly address new customer needs with advanced contact center AI solutions across every channel—and move apps between clouds with ease—is vital for enterprises to thrive now, and long into the future.

Tags: Contact center strategy

More Information

Learn more about Nuance Contact Center AI

Experience the flexibility to deploy how you want, where you want and quickly create conversational AI applications optimized for your industry.

Learn more