

Contact Centre AI, Customer engagement

New from Ecosystem: 5 strategies for delivering exceptional experiences with contact centre AI

[Nuance Communications](#)

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Contact centres in Australia and New Zealand are under pressure from all sides. Customers demand hyper-personalised experiences that go far beyond simply greeting them by their preferred name. Internally, agents increasingly expect to be offered hybrid or remote working, tailored development plans, and AI support. And leaders have to keep customers and agents happy while keeping costs under control. To better understand the challenges faced by CX leaders, and how contact centre AI can help, Microsoft and Nuance commissioned new research that reveals five key strategies—all underpinned by contact centre AI—that will deliver exceptional CX.

Contact centres in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) have a series of challenges to overcome if they're to deliver secure omnichannel experiences that build brand loyalty. But, with increasing customer expectations, the problem of agent retention, and the ever-present threat from fraudsters, it can be hard to know where to start.

However, there's also a deeper appreciation that customer experience is directly related to success; 56% of organisations in ANZ are setting CX-related KPIs for their entire business.

But, with so many areas to focus on, how can CX leaders choose the right approach?

Microsoft and Nuance sponsored new research by Ecosystem, [Delivering Exceptional Customer Experience](#), which reveals the challenges that matter most to CX leaders in ANZ. In this blog, we'll explore the strategies that successful companies can follow, and how they can take advantage of the latest in contact centre AI.

Strategy #1: Build your contact centre around AI

When AI is built into the fabric of the contact centre, it supports the experiences of customers from the very first interaction.

Ecosystem's research highlights that half of ANZ contact centres already deploy [virtual assistants \(VAs\)](#), which often act as the first line of support for customers. When they're powered by conversational AI, they can become a key self-service resource, providing friendly, personalised support that's fast, convenient, and available 24/7.

When more routine interactions can be resolved by VAs, it frees up agents to work on interactions that demand the skills and empathy only a human can provide. And, [when agents are supported by AI](#), interactions with customers are enhanced by proactive onscreen support such as next best action recommendations or customer sentiment analysis. Almost half of ANZ contact centres take advantage of this feature to alert agents when dissatisfaction reaches a level where they need to step in or escalate.

But it's not just customers and agents that benefit from AI. Detailed analytics can also provide leaders with the information they need to optimise contact centre performance, finding new efficiencies and ensuring they're getting full value from their agents and technology.

Strategy #2: Deliver hyper-personalised omnichannel engagements

In ANZ contact centres, 70% of interactions occur across asynchronous messaging, social media, and web chat, but, while customers are becoming increasingly digital, traditional channels are still required for complex discussions.

However, if there's a poor connection between digital and non-digital channels, it can provide a disjointed, frustrating experience for customers and agents.

Ecosystem's research reveals that loss of insights is one of the biggest challenges faced by contact centres. And, without seamless omnichannel support, agents cannot provide hyper-personalised experiences.

[Agent AI provides customer insights](#) such as purchasing history or previous interactions and supports them in providing personalised upsell and cross-sell opportunities, making it an important source of revenue for contact centres.

Strategy #3: Use APIs to create the ideal contact centre

Ecosystem's survey found that 67% of CX leaders will focus on cost optimisation in 2023. One vital strategy to achieve this is to use the flexibility of application programming interfaces (APIs) and software development kits (SDKs).

These allow IT and CX teams to efficiently implement new capabilities such as video-based live support or in-app payments. Crucially, they offer a modular approach that can be more cost-effective than in-house development. And, when these tools are cloud-based, they can be easily scaled without the need for extra hardware or software licences.

By building AI into your workflows, you ensure all your engagements are personalised across APIs—from SMS notifications to social media product recommendations—and keep your brand consistent across channels.

Strategy #4: Retain your talent through great agent experiences

While contact centre attrition rates have traditionally been higher than other occupations—up to 40% isn't uncommon—leaders must keep improving the working environment for agents.

[Innovations such as chatbots](#) have taken some of the routine work from agents' shoulders, but remote working could create a disconnected workforce of agents who feel unsupported to deal with complex enquiries that cannot be resolved by self-service.

Ecosystem's research predicts contact centre leaders will need a renewed focus on creating an inclusive

and empathetic culture, as well as empowering agents through the deployment of the right technologies.

Investing in AI technologies that provide agents with real-time support during difficult customer interactions will be a critical strategy for contact centres seeking to retain key employees.

Strategy #5: Ensure contact centre security

Recent security breaches in Australia have put security under the spotlight and brought [increased scrutiny from the press](#).

Organisations collect a vast amount of customer data, and during interactions with a contact centre—from initial contact to making a payment over the phone or on a website—many aspects of a customer's identity are exposed.

Fraudsters prey on human error and understand that busy, under-resourced agents can be targets for social engineering as much as customers. It's no wonder that more than two-thirds of CX leaders in ANZ who responded to Ecosystem's survey said they were concerned about agents accidentally breaching confidentiality.

[AI-powered security technologies, such as voice biometrics](#), can verify customer identities while limiting the amount of sensitive information such as passwords or personal details that agents need to handle. And, because they work in the background, it's convenient for agents and ensures the customer experience is unaffected.

The next step in the evolution of contact centre AI

The strategies identified by the Ecosystem research are all ones that CX leaders can follow today, in order to improve CX in 2023. But CX leaders should expect further developments in the evolution of contact centre AI that have the potential to be truly game-changing.

Large Language Models (LLMs), [such as those used by Open AI's GPT-4](#), are expected to bring significant innovation in conversational AI, and drive the next generation of solutions to support agents. And, when LLMs are [augmented by natural language processing capabilities](#), Agent Assist solutions can search for knowledge in real-time to add value to interactions—and improve the experience for customers.

Wherever you begin your contact centre evolution, it's essential to develop an AI and data strategy that puts the customer at its heart.

For more insights on the strategies you can use to achieve this, read the full Ecosystem report, [Delivering Exceptional Customer Experience](#), and discover all the key findings from the survey.

Tags: [Customer experience](#), [Contact centre strategy](#), [Personalisation](#)