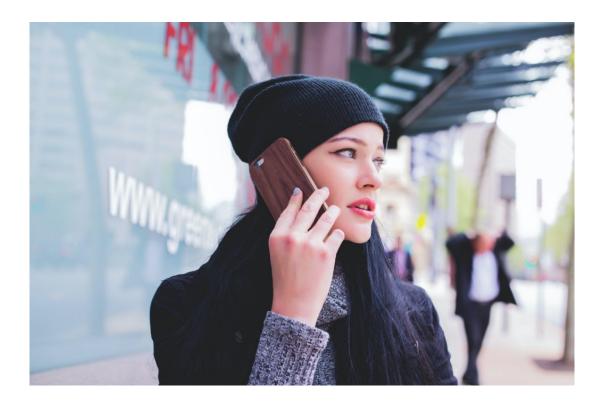**NUANCE** | **WHAT'S NEXT BLOG**

Contact Centre AI, Customer engagement

The tech wishlists of UK contact centre leaders

Sebastian Reeve | EMEA Director of Product Management and Marketing

4 December 2020

New research suggests legacy technology is a major obstacle for contact centre and CX leaders in the UK. But the same study also sheds light on what they're doing to overcome it – with details of the techs they intend to implement over the coming 12 months. We count down the top three and explore the likely impact on contact centre operations and customer experience.

Do you feel like your software and systems are stifling your CX? If so, you're in good company. In a recent study of UK customer experience and contact centre leaders, approaching half (44%) rated their CX technology as either 'poor' or 'average', when asked about their organisation's support for customer experience programmes.

What's more, 73% of respondents agreed that legacy software was, to some degree, holding customer experience back.

So, what are they doing about it? ContactBabel's study also reveals the technologies UK contact centres intend to implement within the next twelve months. Here are the three techs topping their wishlists for 2020-21

AI

Almost a third (31%) of UK contact centres are planning to implement AI within the next 12 months.

AI can support the customer experience in many ways, but perhaps the most immediately visible is as the intelligence behind brands' increasingly versatile virtual assistants (VAs).

At the moment, VAs still come in all shapes and sizes. Some are simple chatbots which support simple customer needs, expressed in the most common ways. Others have already invested in more sophisticated VAs, that support more complex intents, articulated in hundreds of different, natural ways, across both website and social media messaging channels.

The most advanced VAs? They're now helping customers through transactional interactions – like booking an appointment or paying a bill – without leaving the engagement window.

With AI such a focus for UK contact centres in 2020-21, it's fair to assume that this kind of cutting-edge customer experience will only become more common. But the case for AI isn't just about CX – there are, of course, the operational benefits too. In the first year following her launch, Jetstar's enhanced VA, Jess, handled over 10.4 million conversations across its website and Facebook Messenger.

Web Chat

The next most wished for tech is web chat. 25% of the CX and contact centre leaders surveyed are aiming to implement the channel across 2020 and 2021.

While web chat remains a comparatively minor element in most brand's channel mix – it currently accounts for 3.6% of inbound interactions – ContactBabel's research shows that it's on the rise. 39% of the professionals it spoke to believe that the number of web chat interactions will 'greatly increase' in the next year, almost double the proportion that expect to see a similar increase in social media, its nearest rival.

The benefits of a great web chat experience are well documented. At Nuance, we've helped a major telco achieve a 2x year-on-year increase in CSAT through the channel, and a major bank a 46% boost in incremental sales revenue. And that's not to mention live chat's impact on contact centre efficiency, due to the simple fact that a live chat agent can handle multiple conversations simultaneously.

The most forward-thinking brands are extending their use of live chat beyond reactive customers service, and leveraging its ability to engage customers proactively at crucial moments in their online journey – for example, when they pause in the middle of a purchase – and, if necessary, co-browse them to conversion.

Interaction analytics

Whether it's generated from voice, email, messaging, virtual assistants, web chat, social media, or another channel, few modern contact centres should be short of interaction data. The challenge is turning it into actionable insight – and it's a challenge that many UK contact centres look set to address.

Indeed, interaction analytics place third on our list, with implementing the technology being on the agendas of almost a quarter (24%) of ContactBabel's respondents.

This is excellent news for UK contact centres and customers alike, since even small advances in analytics capabilities can have a broad impact on operational efficiency and customer and agent experience. For example, let's say a brand develops its ability to crunch conversational data, and understand the most mentioned products and issues. CX leaders are suddenly empowered to identify agent training needs like never before, and update self-service resources to provide convenient answers, and minimise contact volumes.

Another great analytics use case is understanding how agents actually spend their time. One mortgage services company used Nuance Analytics to analyse its processes before, during and after calls. This led to it simplifying its manual data input process – which, in turn, led to a 60% reduction in AHT, and an 82% increase in the volume of calls handled each day, with no increase in agent headcount

Wishing for integrated technologies and seamless

experiences

AI, web chat, analytics – these are all transformative technologies in their own right. But the brands who get the most from them will be the ones which use them to support a smarter, end-to-end customer experience.

That means using AI to identify customer needs in self-service channels, and route them intelligently, using channels like web chat to continue those interactions seamlessly, conveniently and efficiently. And using analytics to drive a culture of ongoing optimisation.

Encouragingly, this type of holistic thinking is already on the agenda for many UK brands. Indeed, the majority of those surveyed by ContactBabel identified omni-channel as a top priority for the next two years.

Deliver omni-channel engagement with Nuance

Ready to make siloed experiences a thing of the past? Nuance helps businesses deliver world-class, differentiated, omnichannel experiences – powered by AI, and focused on their customers.

Tags: Retail

About Sebastian Reeve

Seb Reeve is a customer experience industry leader who is always seeking to provide thought-leadership, lateral-thinking and decision-support for Fortune 1000 Enterprises who are both his customers and partners. Reeves has more than fifteen years of experience in deploying technologies to improve the user experience. In his current role at Nuance as EMEA Director of Product Management and Marketing, he is responsible for defining and evangelizing the Nuance customer care proposition across Europe, the Middle-East and Africa – sharing how companies can create extraordinary automated experiences which their customers actively choose to use rather than simply tolerate and complain about, promoting best practices in AI and Machine Learning to the world of Customer Experience.

View all posts by Sebastian Reeve