# The correct use of AI can bring value to your CX strategy

By Neville Quinton

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During discussions with several of our contact centre customers, the topic of AI and its impact on call centres and CX strategies is often raised. Various articles have been published relating to AI, machine learning (ML) and bots replacing humans in contact centres, focusing on the advantages that AI brings when compared to having people servicing customers and more.



Neville Quinton, practice lead - CX and specialised solutions at Altron Systems Integration. Image supplied

Although AI will have an increasing role to play in how organisations improve customer service, it will remain unlikely for the foreseeable future that AI will have the ability to completely replace humans. There are, however, significant gains to be had by supplementing contact centre agents' efforts with AI rather than looking at replacing the human touch.

Ultimately, organisations are increasingly adopting a variety of technologies as an enabler, and it is no different with AI, which in this case acts as an enabler to support organisations on their drive to better service their customers. Just like with any other technology, AI will only add value if it has been thought out properly and implemented correctly.

**Scalability, cost efficiency and insights**

A major benefit for organisations is that AI-powered solutions can handle a large volume of customer interactions simultaneously, enabling them to scale their operations without significant increases in costs. With AI handling routine tasks, fewer human agents are needed, which can result in cost savings.

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In turn, businesses can allocate their human resources more strategically, deploying them where their expertise is most valuable, such as handling complex queries or providing empathetic support.

AI technologies can also analyse vast amounts of customer data in real time, identifying patterns, trends, and customer sentiment. Integrating AI into contact centre operations can provide organisations with valuable insights into customer preferences, behaviour, and pain points.

These insights can be used to improve products, services, and processes and train AI systems and human agents to deliver more personalised and effective customer interactions.

**Blending AI and humans for enhanced CX**

By combining the strengths of AI technologies and human agents, companies can deliver a more personalised and efficient CX. AI can handle routine and repetitive tasks, such as answering common inquiries or providing basic information, freeing up human agents to focus on complex or high-value interactions.

This blend allows for faster response times, improved accuracy, and consistent service across different channels, leading to higher customer satisfaction.

One should remember, however, that despite their advancements in natural language processing, AI systems still struggle to fully comprehend the emotional nuances and context of customer queries.

Empathy, understanding, and emotional intelligence are essential in many customer interactions, particularly when dealing with sensitive or complex issues and human agents are better equipped to handle these situations.

Customer queries can often be unpredictable and involve unique situations or edge cases and as such, AI systems - which are designed to handle common scenarios and frequently asked questions - may also struggle to grasp the full context of the query, especially when it involves ambiguous or complex information, and provide generic or inaccurate answers, which can further frustrate customers.

Furthermore, AI systems operate based on predetermined rules and training data, and if there are changes in customer behaviour, industry trends, or regulations, they may struggle to adapt without human intervention.

On the other hand, a blended approach ensures that human agents can use their experience and judgement to interpret and clarify customer needs, ask relevant follow-up questions, and provide accurate and personalised responses. In essence, human agents, through their training and experience, can adapt to unfamiliar situations, think critically, and provide creative solutions.

They can also quickly learn and adapt to new information, policies, or customer preferences, ensuring that customer queries are handled effectively even in dynamic environments.

It should be noted however, that AI-powered systems can learn from interactions and adapt over time. AI can continuously improve its performance and accuracy by leveraging machine learning and natural language processing capabilities. The data generated from AI interactions can be used to train the system, refine its responses, and enhance its understanding of

customer needs.

And human agents can in turn learn from AI recommendations and feedback to improve their own skills and knowledge.

**Building trust with customers**

It is crucial for organisations to understand that customer interactions are not just about providing information or solving problems; trust is a critical factor in customer relationships, and human agents can establish rapport, show empathy, and engage in friendly conversations, leading to stronger customer relationships.

In addition, customers may prefer interacting with a human agent for certain queries or concerns.

Relying solely on AI for customer interactions may lead to instances where customers feel unheard, misunderstood, or dissatisfied with the service and this can negatively impact a company's reputation and erode trust with its customers.

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Combine the strengths of both human and machine capabilities, resulting in improved customer experiences, scalability, cost efficiency, intelligent insights, continuous learning, and the ability to handle complex queries effectively.

This blend also demonstrates that an organisation values personalised interactions with their customers and that they are committed to addressing their needs, which can enhance customer loyalty, brand reputation and overall customer satisfaction.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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