



# THE ROLE OF HUMAN TALENT IN A DIGITAL-FIRST WORLD

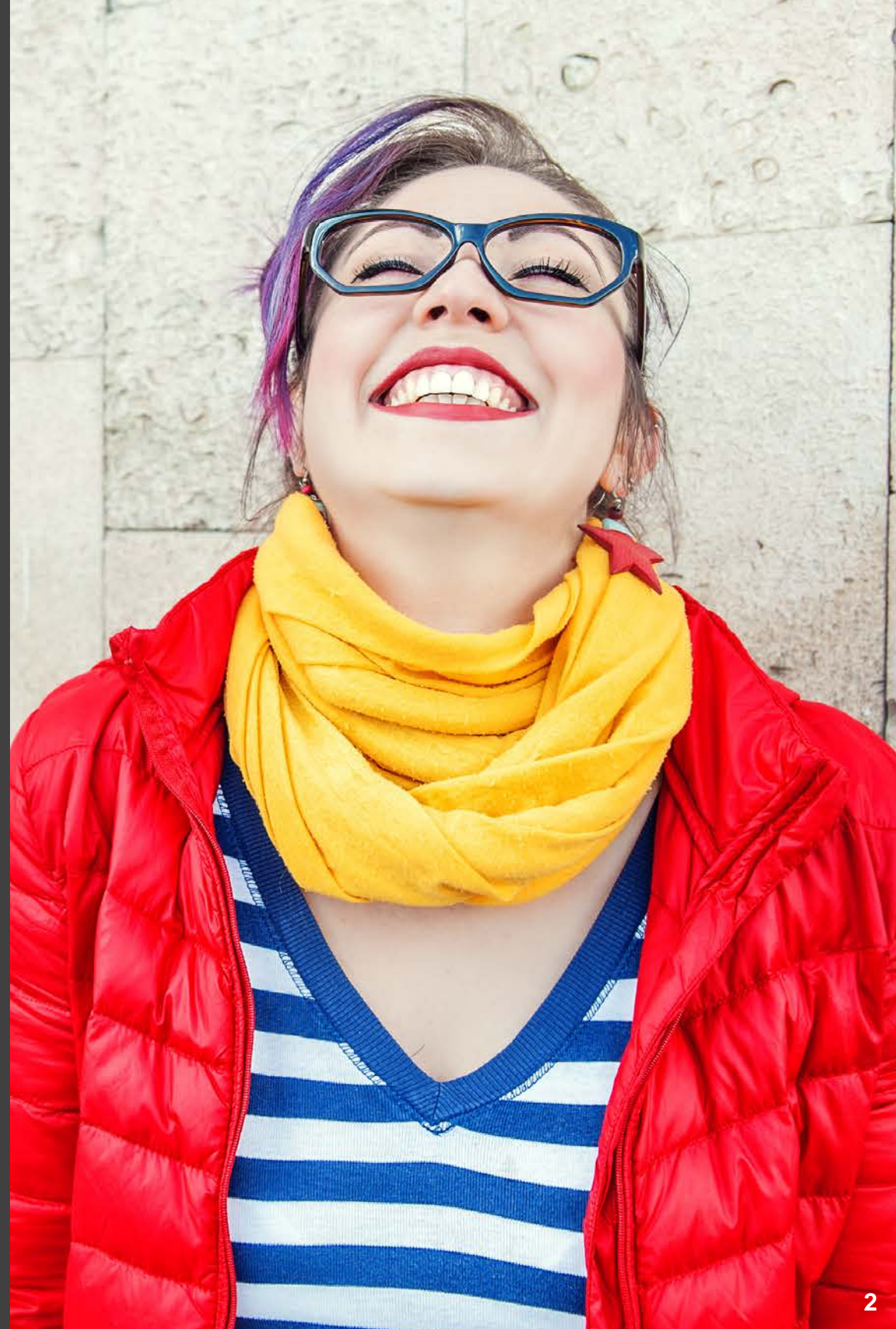




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# Our digital-first world has changed how companies must do things in assisted-support channels.

As more and more of customers' simple needs are being addressed with digital self-service, human support interactions are becoming centered on more complex tasks.







“TRANSACTIONAL PROCESSES SUCH AS ORDER MANAGEMENT, BILLING QUERIES, AND REFUND PROCESSING ARE INCREASINGLY GETTING AUTOMATED DUE TO THE REPETITIVE AND SIMPLE NATURE OF THE QUERIES.” <sup>1</sup>

– EVEREST GROUP, 2018

**Most companies right now are dealing with an unruly mix of digital and human interactions across the customer experience, and contact center leaders are left to try to make sense of how to manage it all.**

In this e-book, we look at seven high priority actions for making digital technologies and human talent work in harmony.

<sup>1</sup> The Evolving Customer Experience Management (CXM) Talent Model: The Rise of the Super Agent, Everest Group, 2018.




# 1

## REVISE THE AGENT SKILL SET WITH A FOCUS ON HUMAN SKILLS

As simple transactional interactions increasingly become handled through automation and self-service, you need to plan not just for the changing volume of agent-assisted support interactions, but also the changing nature of this work. It will be more complex and judgment-intensive, requiring a broader range of agent skills.

Agents will spend their time dealing with customers encountering complex problems that are unsolvable by digital self-service automation. Human emotions will play a more dominant role in these kinds of interchanges, and customers will need agents to meet their emotional needs.

**For companies, this means that the focus on agent skill sets must expand from primarily product- or sales-based to include vitally important human skills such as empathy, flexibility, listening, and conversational skills.**



"CHATBOTS AREN'T SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO HOLD UP THEIR END OF A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP."<sup>2</sup>

– FORRESTER, 2018

**Failing to make a personal connection with the customer when their emotional needs are heightened may overshadow or even block the agent's attempts to solve the problem. You'll need agents adept at human skills to give your customers what automation can't.**

<sup>2</sup> AI is Ready for Employees, Not Just Customers, Forrester Research, Inc., March 27, 2018.

# EXAMINE AND OVERHAUL YOUR RECRUITING AND TRAINING METHODS

The increased need for human skills, problem-solving, and situation-specific judgment calls means companies must know how to attract the right agent profile right at the front end of the recruitment process. It is the only way to hire, train, and up-skill candidates that are most likely to thrive in a changing, highly demanding role.

**For many companies, this will mean a complete overhaul and redesign of recruitment and training methods.**

**It also means that the agent recruiting practices of your contact center vendor partners must never be a black box to you.**

One very simple question to pose to your vendor partner (and also internally) is:

***“How are you (we) innovating in your (our) recruitment methods?”***

## See what this investigative question uncovers.

You're looking for visibility into recruitment methodology, multiple examples of innovation, and proof of how these methods translate into measurable, beneficial outcomes, such as high agent performance of retention. Concentrix, for example, has made innovations in candidate screening which help us better identify the specific skills of agile-thinking and problem-solving.

Another innovation is our talent development program, which is designed to identify agents who demonstrate exceptional human skills, so they can be the first agents trained on new client programs where calls are of higher complexity.



# USE AI TO SUPPORT AGENTS, NOT JUST CUSTOMERS

Part of the changing role of agents is to develop proficiency in working with artificial intelligence (AI) technologies designed to enhance the customer experience.

Bots and chatbot technologies are deployed on the customer-facing digital channels to enable self-service and automation. However, the same technologies should also be used to assist your *agents* by automating menial and repetitive agent tasks, such as finding answers in a knowledgebase.

Far more than that, however, AI technologies can give agents a level of real-time assistance they've never had before, including:

1

Understanding a customer's web and phone channel presences and history, so the agent knows where the customer is on the journey

2

Suggesting a resolution path for the agent that is most likely to solve the customer's issue

3

Predicting what a customer is likely to ask next, and provide the agent with the answer in advance

4

Combining data from various sources, and serve agents with suggestions on how to personalize the interaction

5

Providing cross-sell or upsell offers that the customer is likely to accept





## CASE-IN-POINT

### Virtual Assistant Reduces Agent Workload and Improves Speed and Quality of Customer Experience

A global technology manufacturer uses an agent-facing virtual assistant solution from Concentrix to help agents deliver fast, accurate answers to customer queries spanning a broad range of topics.



### THE VIRTUAL ASSISTANT HAS MADE THE AGENTS' ROLE EASIER BY:

1

#### Allowing agents to ask questions

in natural language, and  
returning the simple,  
concise, correct answer

2

#### Offering agents related questions

that customers are likely to  
ask, thereby improving first  
call resolution and next  
issue avoidance

3

#### Providing agents with the ability

to rate quality of  
response and send  
feedback, for ongoing  
quality improvement

The solution also allows for a federated search of Google and other sites, increasing the agents' ability to help, even when the customer question is outside of the scope of the company's product offering.

### Early results of this pilot program include:



7% improvement  
in FCR



10% decrease  
in AHT



8% lift  
in NPS



Reduced training time  
for new and current agents

## INVOLVE AGENTS TO HELP BOTS

**Agents can be used to help bots perform better as well. AI technologies are not “set it and forget it,” in the sense that these technologies need a certain amount of human supervision after they’re inserted into the customer experience.**

Agents are in the perfect position to help bots succeed at their intended purpose of improving the customer experience because agents will either directly catch any errors and shortcomings of the technology, or they’ll hear about them from customers.

Your agents can then play a central role in filling in the service gaps. They can update knowledgebase content themselves and/or report technical or business process issues to supervisors. Machine learning capabilities in today’s CX technologies are designed for this, enabling bots to get smarter over time. This is great for agents, who will see how their contributions to the bots’ learning are resolving problems in the system.

When your agents benefit from the assistance of bots *and* feel like they have a hand in shaping how bots perform and improve, then agent and bot collaboration—an inevitable requirement for the future of CX—unfolds harmoniously in your contact center.





# KEEP PACE WITH VOICE INTERACTION OR GET LEFT BEHIND

Voice-based interactions with technologies like Siri, OK Google, and Alexa are now the norm.

This level of sophistication is the new standard by which your IVR experience will be measured. Most companies are woefully deficient here, as evidenced by poor containment rates and escalations from IVR directly to the agent-assisted voice channel.

However, IVR experiences are relatively easily transformed by technology that allows customers to speak their needs naturally, and not be forced to adjust their natural speech behaviors or navigate through one numbered menu command at a time.





## CASE-IN-POINT

### Conversational IVR Lets Customers Solve Problems Using Voice

A leading insurance provider used Concentrix's Intelligent Voice Portal to make IVR interactions more conversational.

The technology delivers a human-like virtual assistance experience by allowing customers to say what they need in their own words, completing tasks using Amazon Echo™ and Google Home™, and provides a real-time conversational chatbot on Facebook Messenger to resolve customer questions.



The client decreased their number of repeat callers by 80%...



and improved CSAT 20% by providing a new conversational voice experience to its members.

Giving callers the ability to speak in their own words is not only faster, but also helps them get to the information they are looking for the first time.

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THE SOLUTION DROVE A  
**25% REDUCTION**  
IN THE TIME CUSTOMERS SPENT  
IN THE IVR CHANNEL DUE TO THE  
NATURAL LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE.



# HELP AGENTS UNDERSTAND CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL JOURNEYS

**Your agents need a deep understanding of the digital customer experience as well. There are portions of the customer journey that your agents may never directly participate in as customers, but they need to be well versed in what those experiences look like and feel like.**

Concentrix's experiential learning labs are dedicated training spaces where we simulate the customer lifecycle for agents, and allow agents to become familiar with how customers purchase and use our clients' products. This cements a context-based understanding of why customers call. Agents can then relate to customers more deeply, and quickly.

THE CREDIT FINANCIAL LAB IS A TRAINING FACILITY WHERE WE SIMULATE THE CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE FOR OUR LEARNERS IN COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE TRAINING (CCT).



Application



Activation



Purchase



Billing



Payment



Fraud/Dispute



## DON'T GIVE UP ON COST CONTAINMENT

Some companies have responded to the increased complexity of calls by scaling back on their offshore customer care operations. The assumption is that cultural differences will automatically add a layer of difficulty to already demanding work.

**We are finding, however, that this is not the case with the right resources and supports.**

With the experiential learning labs described on the previous page, we are able to provide offshore agents with a simulated experience of the customer journey through the eyes of the customer. Agents who have completed this experiential training are successfully handling complex interactions in real-world programs. Thus far, we've had success with offshore agents handling client work in the financial services, retail, and technology industries, with a new healthcare deployment in progress.



**Before making adjustments to your offshoring mix that will have a big impact on your cost model, it pays to understand more about how complex calls can still be handled by your dedicated offshore workforce.**





# GET STARTED. MORE CHANGE IS ON THE WAY.

As Peter F. Drucker famously observed,

**“The only thing we know about the future is that it will be different.”**

For companies, the future will bring new channels, innovations, and methods of interacting with customers. Each one will require customer care leaders to expend significant attention as they evaluate, explore, decide, implement, monitor, and optimize new ways of doing things. Acting on those new opportunities will be next to impossible, however, if you're still working through the list of changes that should be set in motion today.

TAKING ACTION NOW IS AS  
MUCH ABOUT RESPONDING TO  
A FAST-CHANGING WORLD  
TODAY AS IT IS ABOUT  
CREATING THE CAPACITY TO  
ACCOMMODATE AN EVEN  
FASTER ONE DOWN THE ROAD.



# Get Help Meeting the New Demands of Human and Digital Customer Journeys

Striking the right balance between digital and human assistance is easier than you think. Get expert help in strategy, planning, and execution from Concentrix.

To learn more about how our approach to the challenges of today's digital-first world is helping global companies improve the customer experience while driving down the costs of support, contact us today.

+1 800-747-0583 | [www.concentrix.com](http://www.concentrix.com)

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