

Happy agents = Happy customers

How AI helps you augment live agent interactions.

Contents

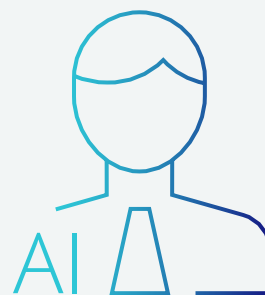
- 3 In the AI-driven world of customer engagement, it's time for organisations to step up their game
- 4 More technology doesn't mean you lose the human touch
- 5 Customer frustration leads to customer attrition
- 6 More doesn't always mean better
- 6 Behold the power of the AI-backed agent
- 7 AI is what makes that possible
- 8 How an AI-powered agent benefits the enterprise
- 9 The circle of AI life
- 9 How to get started with AI
- 10 Nuance Agent AI
- 10 What makes Nuance's Agent AI technology the better choice for contact centres?
- 11 Next steps

In the AI-driven world of customer engagement, it's time for organisations to step up their game. AI technology is raising the bar for customer experience,¹ and companies across industries are investing millions of dollars into enhancing their engagement solutions—but many are ignoring one vital part of the customer journey that could greatly benefit from that investment: the contact centre agent.

As AI grows more popular, many are wary that it'll replace people's jobs. But AI isn't here to replace human agents—it's here to make their work lives easier. It helps them find answers faster, showing them relevant, contextual information, and allowing them to focus on the customer.

In this white paper, we'll delve into:

- What AI could mean for your contact centre
 - How AI can learn from your best agents and share that knowledge with others
 - Why happier, more efficient agents mean more satisfied customers
-



A real human is your contact
centre's best resource.
So why not empower
them with AI?

More technology doesn't mean you lose the human touch



Agent interactions impact brand perception significantly

Just one frustrating interaction with an agent can make 77% of customers want to switch service providers.

But with 95 percent of US consumers using at least three channels or devices to engage with customer services,² and only 8.4 percent of organisations connecting their channels,³ many are failing to deliver the unified and personalised experience customers are looking for.

Despite the explosion of new channels, with chatbots and voice interfaces, customer service agents aren't losing relevance. In fact, McKinsey says the number of live agent interactions just keeps growing.⁴

The easier it gets for customers to engage, the higher their expectations rise. So, although AI has made customer service more efficient, customers are looking for more resolution through these automated channels—and many self-service functions aren't offering what customers want. As they bring more complex problems to the automated channels, live agents need to get involved more frequently.

According to Forrester, if organisations want to be agile enough to react to customers' changing expectations, they'll need innovative technology.⁵ But as every organisation scrambles to adopt these new technologies, those who want to stand out will need to offer a personalised, human service to differentiate themselves.⁶

It's not just the customer experience that's changing—all these new channels are bringing a huge influx of data into the knowledge base.

This is creating a far more complicated knowledge base for agents to deal with. As Forrester puts it: "they lack customer context, cannot access the right knowledge and data, and are unable to keep up with the pace of emerging issues". Now, improving the quality of the knowledge base is top-of-mind for 45 percent of organisations and represents the second most popular agent experience initiative.⁷

There are fewer opportunities for human connection in an increasingly digital and self-service world. Organisations must invest in these moments by upskilling their workforces, empowering them, and guiding them to better customer connections.

— Forrester Research⁸

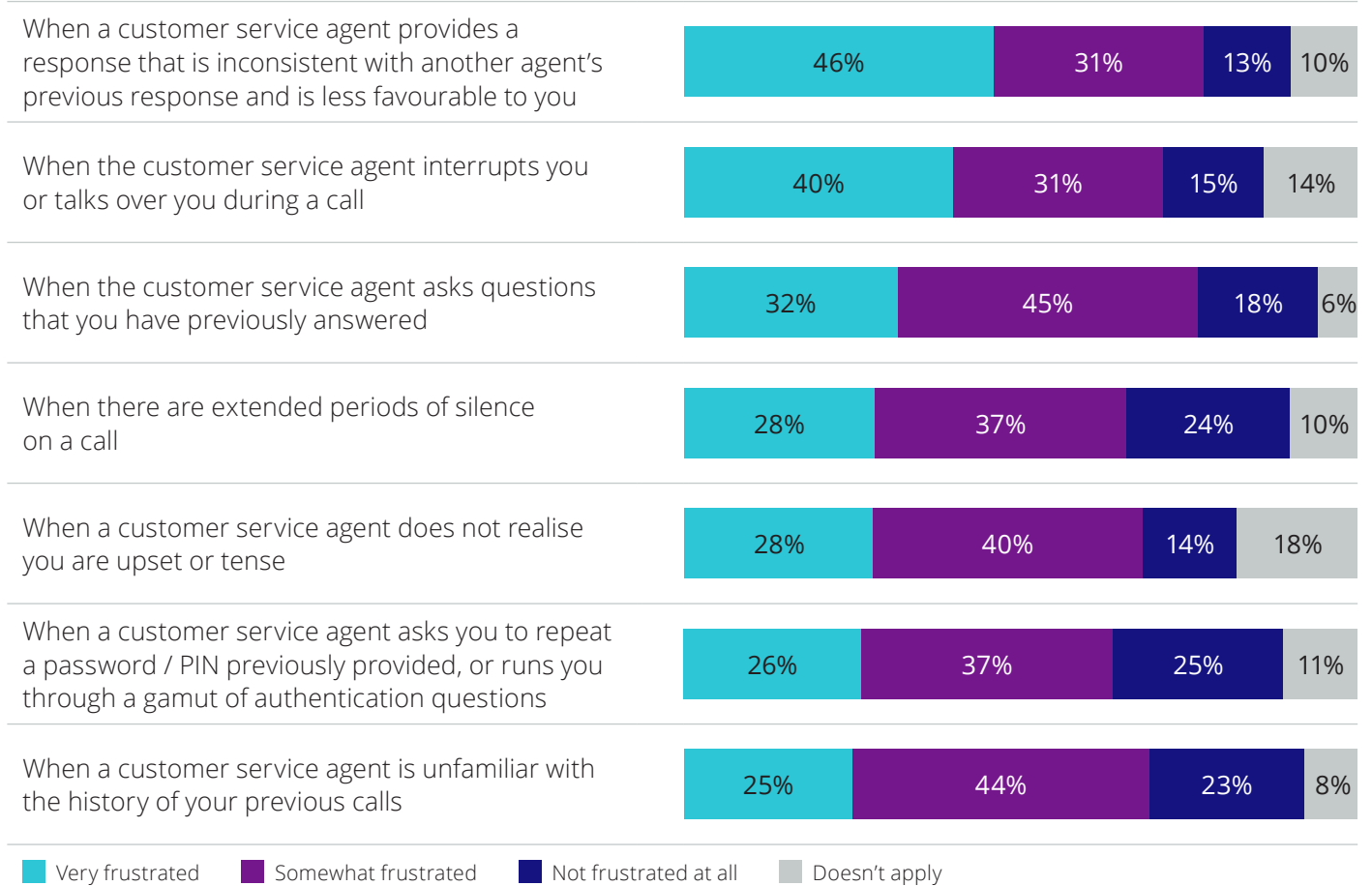
Customer frustration leads to customer attrition

Disconnected channels and an overly complicated environment for agents has led to growing customer frustration—Frost and Sullivan found that the top source of frustration is inconsistent responses (46 percent).

Potential sources of frustration

Top sources of frustration are inconsistent responses (46%) and interruptions (40%)

Asking previously answered questions (32%), extended periods of silence (28%) and when the agent does not realise you are upset (28%) are also sources of frustration



Base: All consumer respondents (n=467).

Frost & Sullivan Report Commissioned by Nuance. (2019, March). Agent AI Adoption Patterns, Preferences, and Potential Benefits: Consumer and B2B Perspectives.

Contact centres face a crucial challenge: how to deal with more channels, more data, and more interactions—without costs spiralling out of control.

If organisations don't find a better way of engaging with their customers, those customers will move on to the competition. This kind of customer abandonment could lose you serious money: in fact, it already results in \$75 billion in lost sales each year.⁹

And, you won't just lose customers to this dissatisfaction. More agents will quit due to an overwhelming workload and increased frustration on their side, too.¹⁰

Forrester's four-step approach to empowering your agents¹⁰

- 1 Build a solid tech foundation for customer service.¹¹
- 2 Maximise productivity with more efficient processes.¹¹
- 3 Improve agent effectiveness with better content and coaching.¹¹
- 4 Use data insights to understand your customers and predict next best actions.¹¹

More doesn't always mean better

Historically, organisations have simply hired more agents to handle an increasing workload. This may help for a while, but hiring and training more agents isn't cheap—and it won't solve that looming knowledgebase problem.

Others are adding AI to their IVR or virtual assistant to engage with customers more intelligently. While the tech is very effective in helping with higher-level conversations and increasing efficiency, they can't help with the more complex issues, and many customers still prefer the more personal touch they'll get from an agent.

If more organisations roll out poorly optimised chatbots, Forrester predicts there'll soon be a customer backlash—with an expected 60 percent of chatbot deployments providing ineffective escalation paths to agents¹²—which means contact centres need to have a failover strategy for when this happens.

Behold the power of the AI-backed agent

Since hiring more agents is an expensive, short-term fix, and adding more AI-powered automation isn't the silver bullet contact centres are looking to end their dilemma, what can organisations do?

It's time to focus on empowering the agents you already have.

Agents are the essence of the contact centre—they're the vital component of customer-centric experiences¹³. Don't they deserve to be empowered with a great experience, and the tools to share it with your customers? To make that happen, you need to improve the quality of their knowledgebase, make systems easy to use and ensure that your metrics are easy to understand.

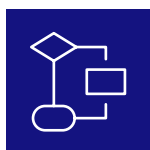
AI is what makes that possible

Here's how:



Authentication data across channels

AI shares authentication data from self-service engagements with agents, so the conversation can continue seamlessly. It'll also provide indicators to assist the agent throughout the entire interaction to ensure that they're still maintaining engagement with the customer—or let them know when to disconnect if they're talking to a fraudster.



Agent assistance

AI helps your agents access information through recommendations from an internal virtual assistant that monitors customer interactions. This allows agents to assist customers faster, without searching through an impossible amount of data, like manuals or knowledgebases. AI can provide related offers for upselling or cross-selling, next best action suggestions, and contextual information from existing data.



Real-time conversation insight

With real-time insight into conversations, AI gives agents and contact centre managers a quick overview of how interactions are progressing. Real-time indicators such as sentiment analysis, performance tracking, score cards, and authentication status help agents react faster when a change occurs and help supervisors assist their agents in their moment of need.



Agent training

AI can even help train new agents as it creates a detailed, searchable record of everything that happens during an interaction. It can automatically highlight areas for improvement, and help managers monitor overall performance. Using this data, organisations can customise the onboarding process and help new hires become productive sooner (or even help existing agents get more productive).



Conversations analysed to improve future engagements

The AI learns from insights mined from conversational data, allowing contact centres to continuously improve self-service and human-assisted interactions. For example, AI can tweak agent scripts to be more effective, based on previous dialogue flows.

And in the end, a happier agent makes for a happier customer.

How an AI-powered agent benefits the enterprise

Higher agent satisfaction and reduced agent turnover

With streamlined operations, easy-to-access information, and improved efficiency, you'll see higher agent confidence and satisfaction. As AI-powered agents are often more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to quit, you'll save on finding and training new hires.



Higher customer satisfaction and reduced customer churn

AI-powered agents deliver better customer experiences, as:

- Shared contextual information means nobody has to repeat themselves when they move between channels, and
- Customers can get more reliable answers faster, and resolve their issues sooner
- Authentication and fraud prevention mechanisms ensure security and verification throughout the interaction

All this contributes to higher CSAT scores, and higher CSAT leads to reduced customer churn.

Continuous, real-time improvement

By analysing conversations and customer journeys, and learning from the best agents, AI can identify best practises and help you replicate them across your contact centre, building a more consistent experience that improves as the AI continues to learn.

Putting AI at the core of operations will combat headcount increases and will reskill agents to address customer interactions that demand insight and analysis.

— Forrester Research¹⁴

The circle of AI life

Empowered agents don't just enhance the experience for your customers; over time, they also enhance the technology. At Nuance, we call it the "circle of AI life".

Conversations start with AI-powered automation, such as the chatbot or IVR, providing customers with information. Then, when the contact centre agent gets involved, the AI shares recommendations. The insights from these agent interactions then 'teach' the AI to make it more intelligent and confident, which, in turn, improves the answers it sends to customers and the recommendations it gives to agents.

How to get started with AI

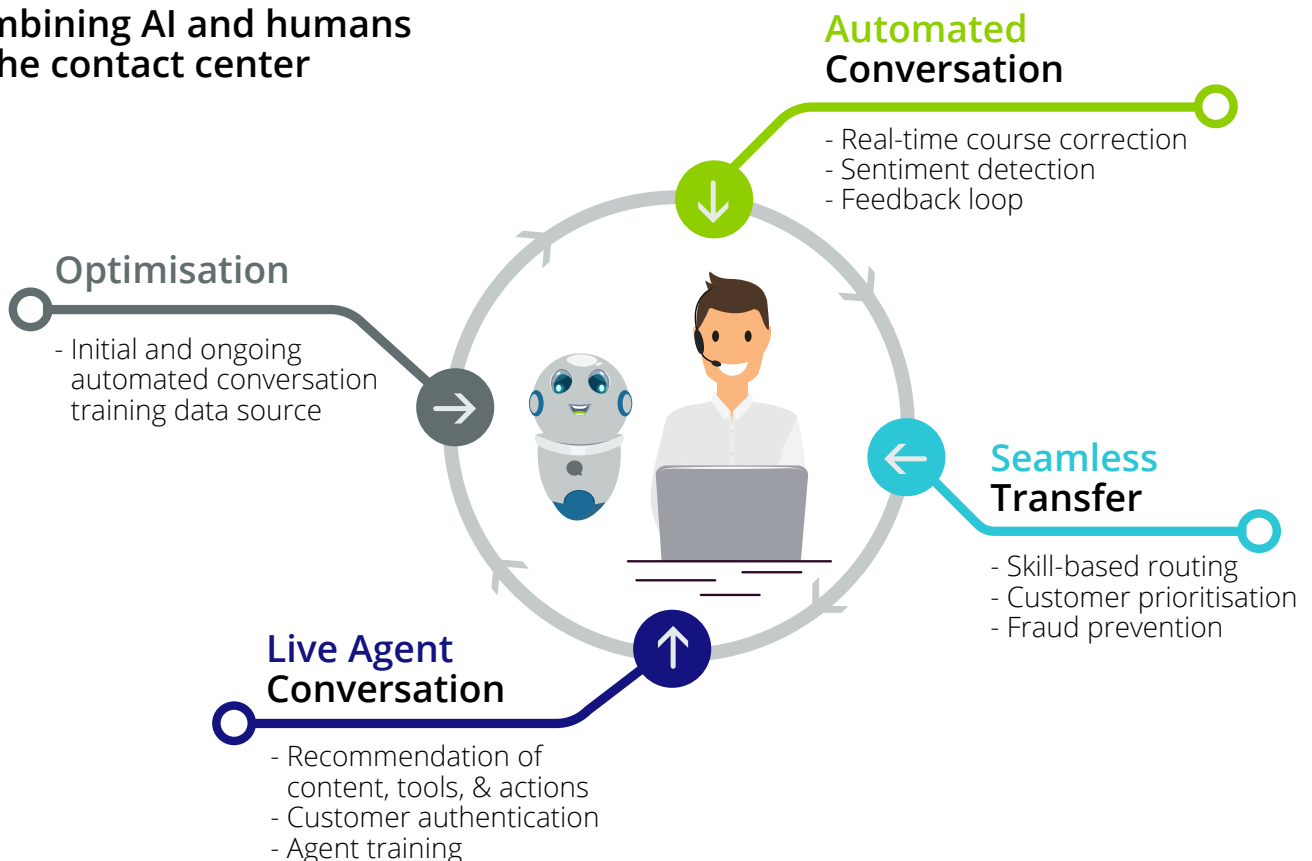
Without the right expertise, getting started with leveraging AI in the contact centre can be difficult. It's smart to work with an experienced vendor who specialises in contact centre AI—to ensure that you're getting the best deployment possible.

There are two types of customer engagement vendors:

- The ones that use AI for customer engagement, such as virtual assistants, IVR, etc.
- The ones that empower your people with AI

We do both. That way, you get seamless integration between customer- and agent-facing technology, and you'll get detailed and useful insights from both ends.

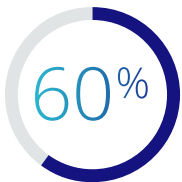
Combining AI and humans in the contact center



Nuance Agent AI

Nuance Agent AI technology combines machine learning algorithms and natural language understanding technology to augment your contact centre. It monitors active conversations and delivers relevant, real-time insights as well as proactive recommendations, which speeds up customer resolution and improves satisfaction for customers and agents alike.

Enterprises that have already deployed agent-facing AI technology with Nuance have seen impressive results:



A large US bank found 60 percent of agents reported improved job satisfaction.



A US collections agency reduced customer engagements that used 'escalation language' by 15 percent, helping prevent contentious calls from turning into complaints.



A major US utilities company increased sales conversions by 60 percent and boosted its NPS score by 84 percent.



A leading mortgage services company reduced agent call time by 60 percent and increased its daily handled call volume by 82 percent—without hiring extra agents.

What makes Nuance's Agent AI technology the better choice for contact centres?

Nuance connects the dots between intelligent, automated engagement and your infrastructure, putting AI to work to support your live agents.

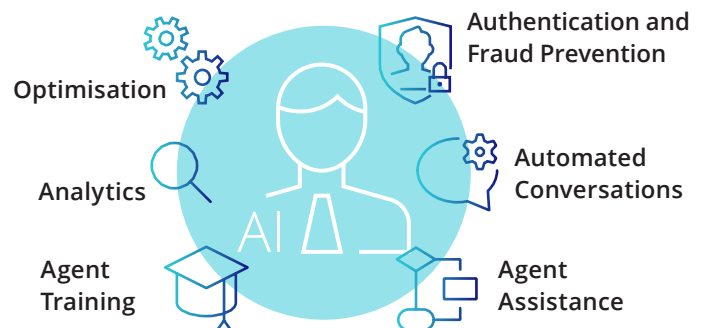
By bringing together our best-of-breed biometric, analytics, and intelligent customer engagement technologies to empower agents with real-time insights—Nuance delivers a full view of the entire customer journey, from chatbot or IVR interactions to conversations with live agents—and everything in between.

Nuance's experience in customer engagement solutions, from virtual assistants to live agent operations, means we understand what your agents need to provide meaningful customer experiences.

And we're the only vendor that can deliver these solutions for an omni-channel contact centre, including the ability to authenticate and detect fraud.

It's vital you get an AI solution that fits your individual needs and supports the entire organisation, not just siloed areas. We bring you combined technologies that help your people understand what the customer's looking for, recommend the next best action, ensure proper authentication, prevent fraud, and gather actionable insights to continuously optimise the customer experience.

AI empowering agents



Next steps

Ready to learn more?

Nuance's Agent AI technology gives you all this—and so much more. Get in touch at CXexperts@nuance.com to learn what you could achieve.

[Get in touch](#)

Watch how AI can seamlessly intertwine contact centre agents with intelligent technologies so your customer experience will never sour.

[Watch now](#)

LEARN MORE

Visit our [infohub](#) to learn how to create an efficient contact centre that supports agents and their managers with relevant real-time information.

- 1 Jacobs, Ian and Kalika, Marina. (2019, January 29). Webinar presented by Nuance and Featuring Guest Speaker from Forrester: [Customer Engagement 2019 – Top Trends, Predictions and Priorities](#).
- 2 Schoeller, Art; Hong, Daniel; Dawson, Sarah. (2018, February 23). Forrester Research. [Future-Proof Your Customer Service: Build An AI-Infused Cognitive Contact Center](#).
- 3 Allman, Rob. [Dimension Data. Customer experience trends in 2019](#).
- 4 Hage Obeid, Maurice; Neher, Kevin; Phalin, Greg. (2017, July). McKinsey & Company. [Why your call center is only getting noisier](#).
- 5 Leggett, Kate; Hong, Daniel; Jacobs, Ian; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2018, January 24). Forrester Research. 2018 [Customer Service Trends: How Operations Become Faster, Cheaper – And Yet, More Human](#).
- 6 Schoeller, Art; Hong, Daniel; Dawson, Sarah. (2018, February 23). Forrester Research. [Future-Proof Your Customer Service: Build An AI-Infused Cognitive Contact Center](#).
- 7 Customer Contact Week. [CCW Winter Executive Report: Contact Center Priorities for 2018](#).
- 8 Leggett, Kate; Hong, Daniel; Jacobs, Ian; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2019, January 17). Forrester Research. [The Three Customer Service Megatrends In 2019: As AI Eats Jobs, Agents Are More Valued](#).
- 9 Leggett, Kate; Hong, Daniel; Jacobs, Ian; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2019, January 17). Forrester Research. [The Three Customer Service Megatrends In 2019: As AI Eats Jobs, Agents Are More Valued](#).
- 10 Hong, Daniel. (2017, November 9). Forrester Research. [Predictions 2018: Blended AI Will Disrupt Your Customer Service And Sales Strategy](#).
- 11 Leggett, Kate; Hong, Daniel; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2019, January 28). Forrester Research. [How To Build A Modern Agent Desktop And Transform Your Customer Service Experiences](#).
- 12 Hong, Daniel; Kaneshige, Tom; Jacobs, Ian; Leggett, Kate; Schoeller, Art; Powers, Stephen; Shea, Mary; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2018, November 8). Forrester Research. [Predictions 2019: Customer Service and Sales](#).
- 13 Customer Contact Week. [CCW Winter Executive Report: Contact Center Priorities for 2018](#).
- 14 Leggett, Kate; Hong, Daniel; Jacobs, Ian; Dawson, Sarah; Harrison, Peter. (2018, January 24). Forrester Research. 2018 [Customer Service Trends: How Operations Become Faster, Cheaper – And Yet, More Human](#).



About Nuance Communications, Inc.

[Nuance Communications](#) (Nuance) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and 85 percent of the Fortune 100 companies worldwide, Nuance creates intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others.