uniphore

2020:

Delivering Happiness in Dynamic Contact Center Space

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The emergence of the "automation paradox" will transform the Contact Center space, producing tangible changes in 2020. Machine learning and data & information used to train natural language processing (NLP) algorithms continue to grow- decreasing the ability to distinguish between AI vs. a human. Deep learning and semi-supervised models result in algorithms that will match our speech patterns and recognize caller intent [Forrester]. AI will soon be able to fool us faster than we think.

The change of scenery within the AI Space will not only improve customer experience, but will bring new innovations to the ever increasing necessity that is often forgotten when one thinks of Contact Centers- the satisfaction of the agent. The back office staff and processes are important when integrating complex calls and difficult cases with a singular solution to assist the customer facing call agent. So far in the current call center AI field, a focus has been on the back-office innovations. The satisfaction of customer facing agents revolves around Front Office Automation and Employee Engagement, which plays a vital role regarding the increasing complexity of questions and situations they face. The focus in 2020 will be empowering the agent to retain not only customer satisfaction, but employee satisfaction as well.

NECESSITY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The next decade will mark the beginning of the rise of Employee Engagement and satisfaction. Although Chatbots and virtual agents seem to have proprietorship of the "AI Trends changing the Industry", a lesser known aspect is of importance within the contact center space. These solutions have no doubt altered the way contact centers handle their customers by allowing Chatbots/Virtual agents, self-help, and crowdsourcing to handle less complex inquiries.

These methods inadvertently leave the high breadth, multi-step, and longer length calls for the agent to contend with. As the questions and related answers increase in complexity, it may require agents to work in tandem with other agents or SMEs. The work will require more engagement, empathy/emotional input, and time from the agents.

Balancing the increase in effort from the agents side with job satisfaction is vital to prevent high attrition rates and incorrect responses to the customer.

Focus on the foundation people

Practice open door policy - it works

Give your employees the voice

Act on the information obtained

"**According to QuestionPro:** The foundation of people is dependent on acting on information obtained about their current work experience. Based on the need to provide the employees a voice, allow a work environment where the employees have a safe space to voice any complaints or suggestions (ex. Open Door Policy etc.)"

Components of Employee Engagement:

Attrition Levels

Feedback between QA and agents

Ability for agent to provide suggestions (ex. Open door policy)

Agent Performance

Insights into employee satisfaction

Periodically reward agents to portray their importance and boost confidence levels

Leadership/managers should be highly involved in mental wellbeing of employees - requires empathy combined with strong leadership skills

INCREASING COMPLEXITY DECREASING COMPENSATION

"US brands will be **spending $8 billion more** on US customer service **agent salaries**"

Within call centers space, the average handle time increased 10.99% from 2013 to 2016 and has only continued to increase [Forrester].

RPA & AI produces longer ACW (after call work) and MTTR (mean time to resolve). This as well as external factors including inflation, rising minimum wages, and pseudo-monopolies of giant companies (ex. Amazon) requires an increase in agent compensation.

Experienced agents will be in higher demand, resulting in high attrition rates and available job opportunities for experienced (tier 2 and 3) agents. This trend will hit the customer service in 2020 and impact many experienced agents and how they will make career decisions.

# NEW STARTUPS & SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS COMPLEXITY

As complexity of calls expand, sufficient support is needed to bolster call agents in order to provide a full and accurate response to elaborate customer inquiries. Whether internal or customer facing, the ability to handle compound situations is dependent on the agent's access to aides on the agent desktop. For example, integrations with Knowledge base so the agent can type in a keyword and the results show possible answers or methods to solve the issue. Another example is the integration with CRM, so the history of the basic customer information and customer journey can be seen by the agent. These in conjunction with implementing RPA will allow small tasks to be taken care of leaving a reduced time the agent keeps the customer on hold.

Improvements in these solutions, as well as new startups & products will drive the satisfaction of customers derived from agents who are less stressed or preoccupied with looking for information to relay to the customer. In turn, the agent is able to focus on providing empathy and quickly closing the high-pressure issue at hand.

"Talk Desk is an innovative startup which provides AI driven skill based routing, so customers are paired with agents who are more likely to be able to answer their questions. [PitchBook]"

Last Post Valuation
$1.00B

Last Deal Type
Series B

Talk desk

"BGL provides the agent desktop with a price comparison platform, so as to provide agents with the ability to easily view multiple options for customers to find life insurance.[PitchBook]"

Last Post Valuation
$3.16B

Last Deal Type
PE Growth

BGL Group (UK)
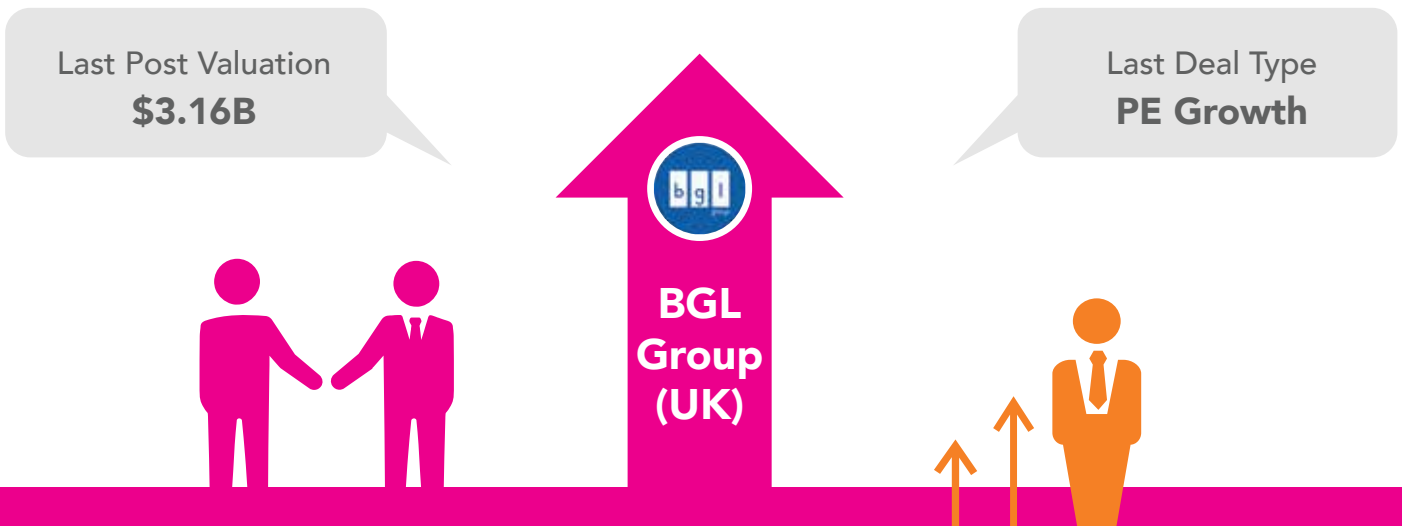
REVERSE-SHORING

Chatbots, Virtual Agents, RPA, and Speech Analytics are already disrupting global service labor. Predictions show a trend of moving offshore jobs to onshore sites may be a possibility. Frustration is a common symptom of customers dealing with offshore agents due to language barriers and accents (such as India and the Philippines). These agents were beneficial when dealing with simpler issues.

In this new era of elaborate and complicated calls, the benefits of bringing call centers closer to home- with stronger cultural similarities and language- will allow agents to provide more valuable service with ease.

South America (Colombia and Mexico) will most likely be set up for US. Other European companies may set up call centers in Ireland or Poland. One limiting factor to note will be capacity in these regions, as agent numbers quickly tap out [Forrester].

ATTENDED RPA BOOM

So far RPA adoption has taken ground in the US and Europe. The next contenders are Australia, India, and Japan who are also seeing development and expansion.

Attended RPA refers the the front office automation bots that work alongside a human. Attended RPA bots performs a portion of the process and still requires human involvement.

The future need for RPA services within contact centers will accelerate RPA into production. The RPA services market will eventually reach $12 billion in 2023 [Forrester]. Governance and operating models will be required to be set in place as RPA takes hold.

"In 2020, the **market for RPA services will reach $7.7 billion.**[Forrester]."

Robotic Process Automation

According to Forrester:
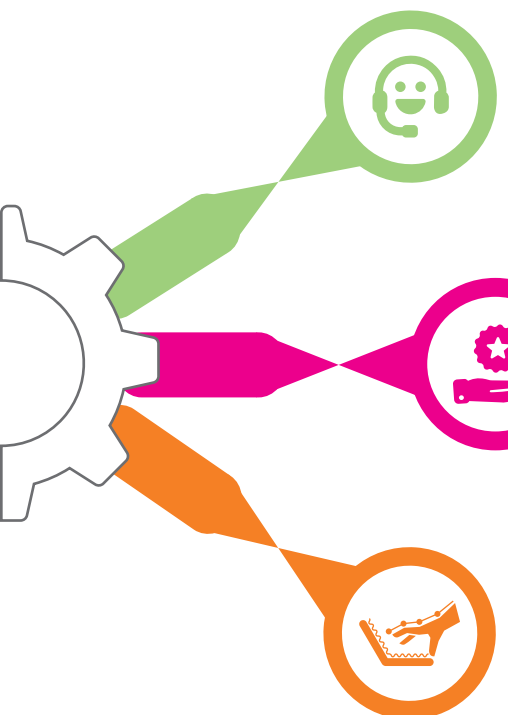
67% of contact center will implement **robotic process automation (RPA)** using it to handle one out of five repeatable tasks within customer services organizations [Forrester].

40% of contact center assurance (QA) tasks will be automated. Contact center leaders should focus on coaching their QA teams for **empathy** and **problem-solving, leaving** and tedious elements of the work to automation.

35% of the companies are planning to implement **agent-facing AI bots in 2020.**

ACW INCREASE

Majority of time taken up by agents consists of After Call Work: writing out the call summary, performing the open action items requested, etc.

Average Handle Time (AHT) refers to Average Talk Time (ATT) in conjunction with After Call Work (ACW). During the last decade, AHT has increased. Now that bots are handling the low complexity tasks, the higher complexity tasks required of agents results in longer ACW time.

A response to ACW increase would be solutions that provide transcription, Speech Analytics, and call summary automatically produced by AI. This will significantly reduce the ACW time and benefit the agent.

Another result of this will lead to QA teams reducing by 40% [Forrester]. QA teams will bear the brunt of job transformation, either being reassigned to other roles or eliminating the jobs completely. The task of the QA staff to measure quality of an agent's ability to master problem solving and empathy skills will not be able to keep up with the shift in AI and RPA.

> **"11% growth in average handle time** reflects that agents are being asked to manage more challenging customer issues [Forrester]"

"2020 Customer Experience," Forrester website

https://www.forrester.com/report/Predictions+2020+Customer+Experience/-/E-RES157589?utm_campaign=predictions_2020&docid=157589&utm_source=forrester_blog&utm_medium=web&utm_content=blog_manning

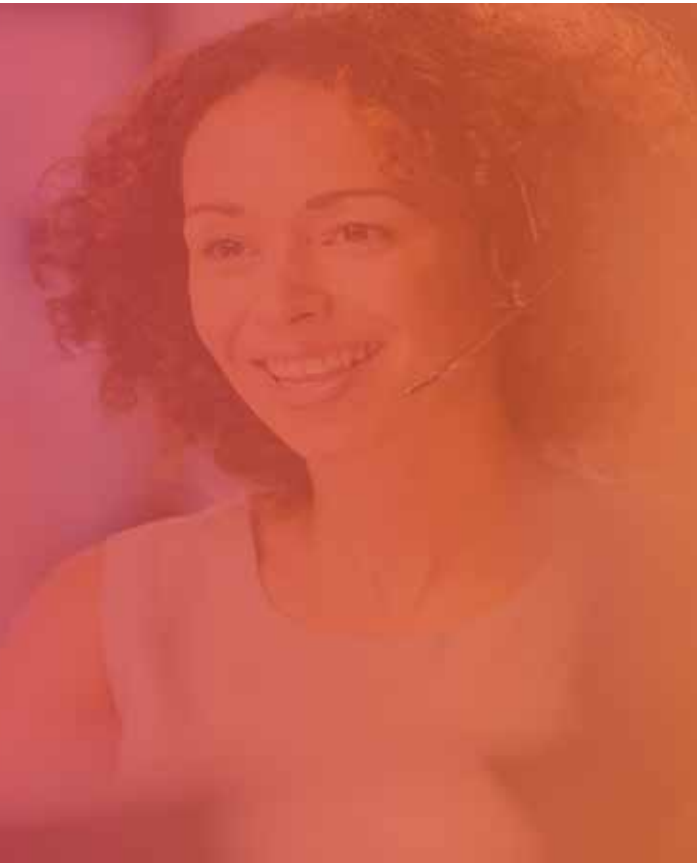### "2020 Automation Predictions," Forrester website

https://www.forrester.com/report/Predictions+2020+Automation/-/E-RES157591
https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/analytics/assets/pwc-ai-analysis-sizing-the-prize-report.pdf

PitchBook

https://my.pitchbook.com/dashboard/new

Conversational Service Automation

Now each customer voice is heard

ABOUT UNIPHORE

Uniphore is the global leader in Conversational Service Automation with offices in the U.S., India and Asia. The Company's vision is to disrupt an outdated customer service model by bridging the gap between human and machine using voice, AI and automation. So that every voice, on every call, is truly heard.

Uniphore enables businesses globally to deliver transformational customer service by providing an automation platform where digital agents take over transactional conversations from humans, coach agents during calls, and accurately predict language, emotion and intent. All in real-time. Conversational Automation & Analytics, Conversational Assistant and Conversational Security elevate how enterprises support and engage their customers, build loyalty and realize efficiencies.

For more information on how Uniphore delivers business value using Conversational Service Automation technologies, please visit **www.uniphore.com**