BIZCOMMUNITY

Combining online chat with human agents transforms customer support online

Poor customer service now costs South African businesses R625bn, as customers switch providers. Most companies still do not make it easy enough to do business with them, offer enough convenient options for engagement or resolve issues fast enough.

By combining online chat with human agents, bot-driven interactions with smart machine learning, and workflow automation, Clickatell believes it is possible to transform customer support online, as part of an omni-channel strategy. It has created a new messaging platform that makes it simple for companies to digitalise their customer communications.

Deon van Heerden

"Clickatell Touch is the evolution of 15 years-worth of insight into the complexities of business to consumer communications," says Deon Van Heerden, CEO at Clickatell Messaging. "Customers have shifted the way they engage in the digital world. However, until now, there was a gap in how big business was connecting with its mobile customers. Touch not only closes that gap, it allows real-time, always-on connections which is transforming customer care."

Consumers are used to communicating with one another in real time through a myriad of available messaging apps. However, the majority of live business-to-consumer (B2C) communications are still conducted through voice calls to call centres, business offices and agents.

"Customers dread the long wait times, tedious self-identification processes, dropped calls and other negative experiences. For businesses, this negative customer experience translates into poor customer satisfaction scores, higher abandonment rate, increased churn and ultimately, missed revenue. Yet the solution to this lies in the hand of every customer. While we used to speak about mobile first, we should be thinking mobile always."

Three layers of technology

The cloud-based solution incorporates three layers of technology. Firstly, the Touch Chat platform allows agents to conduct three or more simultaneous chat interventions, resulting in a marked increase in agent efficiency, especially at peak call times. Although it is designed for mobile, it also provides a web-based interface.

Secondly, bot support, incorporating machine learning and AI technologies, sits beneath the chat platform. This allows immediate responses for first-line, routine queries. It also allows the bot to self-learn, as the interactions increase over time. The trickier, edge cases, will still be pushed to agents. However, the bot will keep monitoring the agent conversations and may even suggest interventions.

This technology enables up to one million simultaneous customer interactions, massively reducing the time between customer query and resolution.

Finally, Touch Cards, based on proprietary company technology, allow for the creation of business flow mini applications. These appear in the chat stream to enable a transaction. Examples of transactions would include appointments, invoicing, selecting products or features, cost estimation, downloading collateral and completing a purchase. Touch Cards are like small mobile or web applications. Either the agent or the consumer, to enable digital self-service, can activate cards.

"Together, these three services form a powerful layer over the existing enterprise applications, such as CRM and ERP

Nirmal Nair

systems. Touch Cards can also be customised based on an enterprise's existing workflow requirements," says Nirmal Nair, head of products, SVP Marketing & Digital Sales.

"This is not a rip and replace installation. The company works with our clients to integrate the system, ensuring it augments the complete customer support ecosystem within the organisation. Trials and testing have indicated up to a 60 percent reduction in call centre costs over the first three years of operation."

Enterprise clients as first target

Clickatell Touch will initially target enterprise clients and is currently available in India and South Africa, with some sizeable enterprise clients already working with the company to roll out the offering.

The technology is designed for rapid, lightweight deployment and low ongoing operational costs with no in-house software or hardware necessary. Its integration requires a one-time, on-boarding charge. There is no upfront capital investment. The service allows for unlimited seats, chat streams and analytics with monthly billing based on per-active customer pricing.

"Messaging is now the preferred platform for communication. Touch is a mobile front office, which integrates into your existing back office. It replaces traditional support methods with real time communication and intelligent workflow communication.

"Clickatell has harnessed more than a decade of insight into digital communications and blended the best technical advancements to create a truly transformative communications solution. Clickatell Touch will bring enterprises closer to their customers through digital experiences entirely focussed on resolution and client satisfaction," concludes Van Heerden.

For more information, go to www.clickatell.com.

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