How to Win with AI and Bots in Your Customer Service Operation
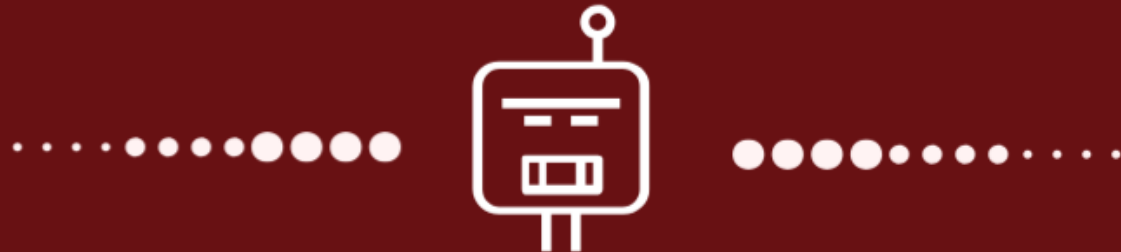
INTRODUCTION

AI and bots are the latest rage. But how do you get started?

Key Takeaways:

- Consumer expectations and the gap companies are facing
- Key stats from industry analysts
- Five tips for bots and humans working as one

Customer service leaders are jumping all in to the latest craze: chatbots. Gartner has noted that contact centers using Virtual Customer Assistants (VCAs) will increase from 2% in 2017 to 25% in 2020. But ironically, Gartner predicts that 40% of those deployed in 2018 will be decommissioned.

So we have seen huge growth, but nearly half the virtual assistants deployed this year are expected to fail. What's behind this, and how can you ensure your company comes out ahead with the latest tech trend?

Let's look at some ways to win with chatbots and drive better customer experiences.

5 KEYS FOR SUCCESS:

1. No Silos for Bots and New Messengers
2. Humans and Bots Working as One
3. Digital Channels of Choice
4. Digital Conversations for a Mobile World
5. The Cloud Customer Service Platform Is a Key Enabler

1

NO SILOS FOR BOTS AND NEW MESSENGERS

Forrester is predicting an increase in average channels from 9 to 11, driven largely by new channels like bots and messengers (e.g., Facebook Messenger, LINE, Telegram, etc.), yet Gartner's Gene Alvarez is predicting many will fail. Another study conducted in late 2017 found that only 14% of chatbots today are extremely effective.

Why? Bots deployed in a silo can lead to CSAT issues. So we are at a crossroads: consumers want new channels like bots and messengers, yet companies are struggling with integrating them into their service or sales and marketing initiatives in a manner that actually helps customers versus frustrating them.

How do we bridge the gap between consumer expectations and companies' ability to deliver? The good news is the technology is now available to bridge the way forward to a world where humans and all channels, including bots, can work as one.

The first strategic takeaway is to make sure that the next shiny object is not deployed as a new silo that adds to customer friction and frustration. Instead, integrate that shiny new bot into a seamless continuous conversation of bots and humans working as one—what Forrester has termed "blended AI."

Tips to Win:

- Don't deploy bots or new messengers as new silos, independent from your existing channels, or CSAT will decrease as friction increases.

- Make sure your customer service platform can easily incorporate bots or messengers of your choice. Be open to any bot or messenger, whether it's your own bot or a bot from providers like Alterra or IBM Watson.

- Make sure your platform can incorporate Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, or other popular messengers.

Are chatbots effective for customer service?

Fifty-three percent of the 3,000 respondents to a Chatbot.org survey conducted in late 2017 found chatbots to be "not effective" or only "somewhat effective."

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● Very Effective	14	● Effective	33
● Not Effective	10	● N/A	43

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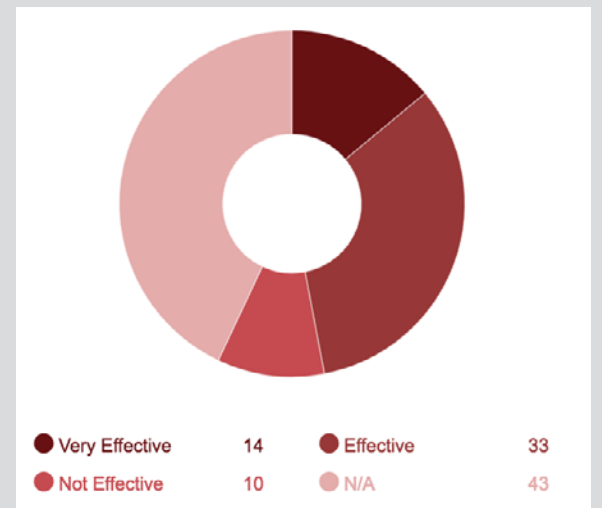
HUMANS AND BOTS WORKING AS ONE

Years ago, Gartner talked about the "rise of the robots" at its largest event where key tech and business trends are unveiled for the coming year. That day has now come. But there remains a lot of confusion and noise about bots replacing humans. Luckily the situation is actually a positive one for humans. Bots and humans can work together.

Tips to Win:

• Let bots do what they do best, and let humans do what they do best. Bots are great for triaging basic information or simple self-service.

• Make sure that interactions with bots that are then passed to a human have all context from the bot conversation passed. The following screenshots show a seamless conversation from customer Nick's point of view (on left) and the contact center's (on right) with Bri, the bot, interacting with the customer and agent Alice connecting.
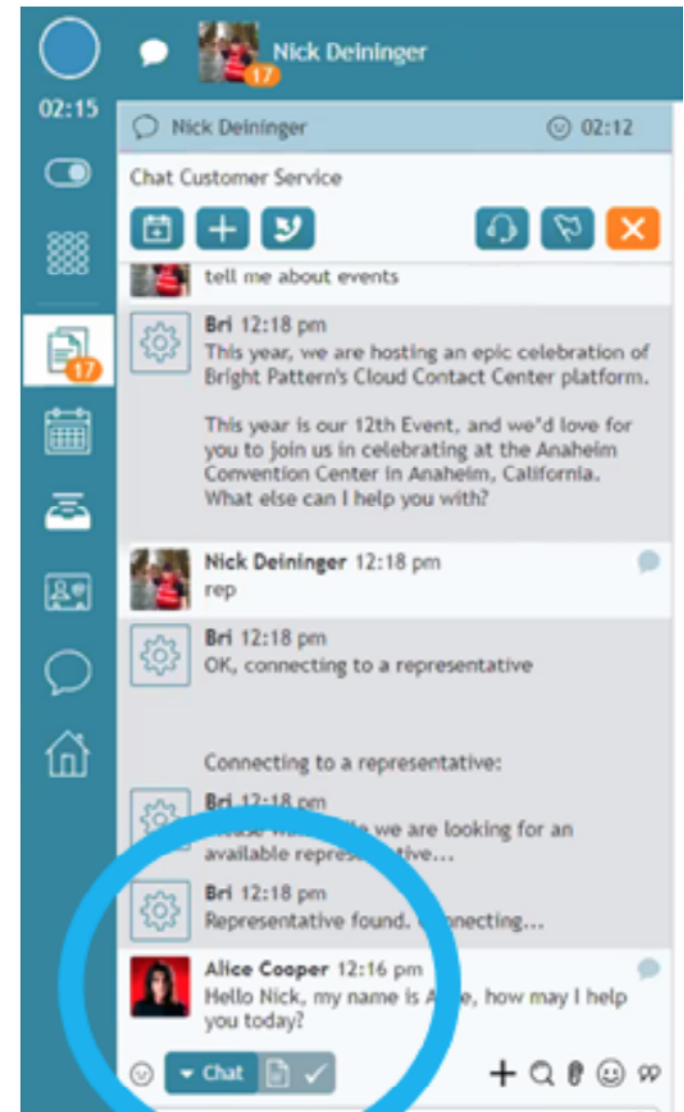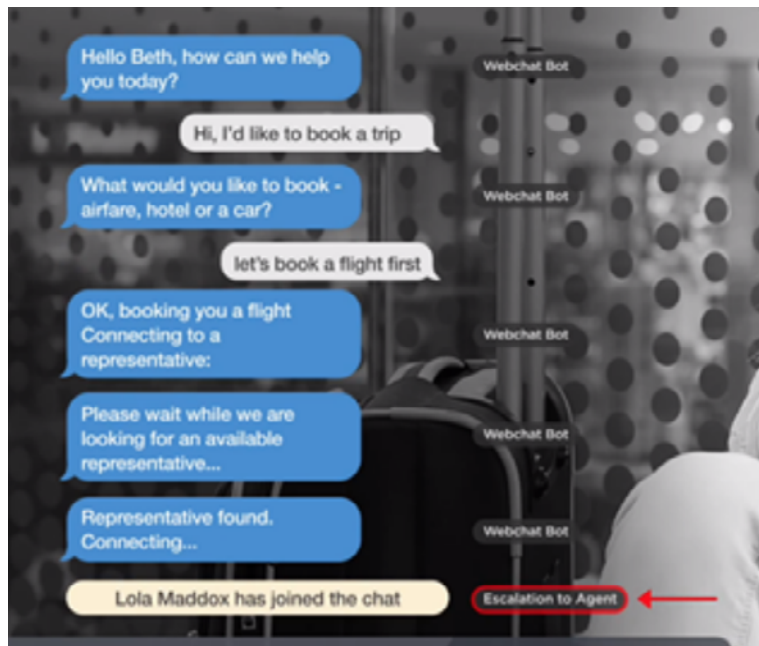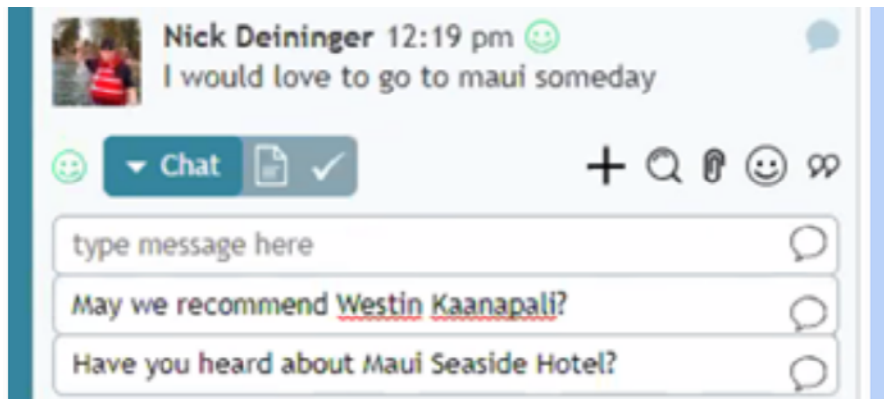
2 HUMANS AND BOTS WORKING AS ONE

Remember that robots serve humans—and that includes agents! Let AI suggest responses for agents to use in their voice, chat, email, or other interactions. In the example chat shown, the customer mentions "Maui" and Natural Language Understanding and AI provides some suggestions to the agent to respond to the chat.


Send your bots to school—agents or supervisors may be their teachers! The best bots will be "brighter bots" that are experts at particular tasks. You may end up deploying an army of specialist bots for different use cases. Determining what tasks and use cases customers want can be determined by agents or contact center managers reviewing journey histories that can then be used to create or train bots for specialized use cases.

3

DIGITAL CHANNELS OF CHOICE - SEAMLESSLY CONNECTED

To stay relevant, it is key that your company expand its channel lineup with all the digital channels that your customers are on. The modern contact center is high-tech, convenient, and nimble, able to connect with customers easily on every channel: voice, chat, email, SMS, bots, messengers, video, and more.

Chat has been the fastest growing channel, but experts predict new messaging channels will overtake chat in the next wave. Agents need to be trained to communicate over these new channels and be able to hop across them if they have the right skills.
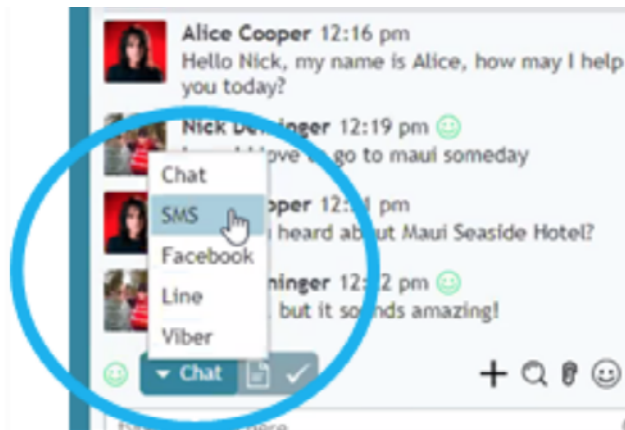
People have never been as connected as they are today. Your contact center needs to be ready to provide service solutions in the ways your customers expect, and that means offering their digital channel of choice, both classic and emerging.

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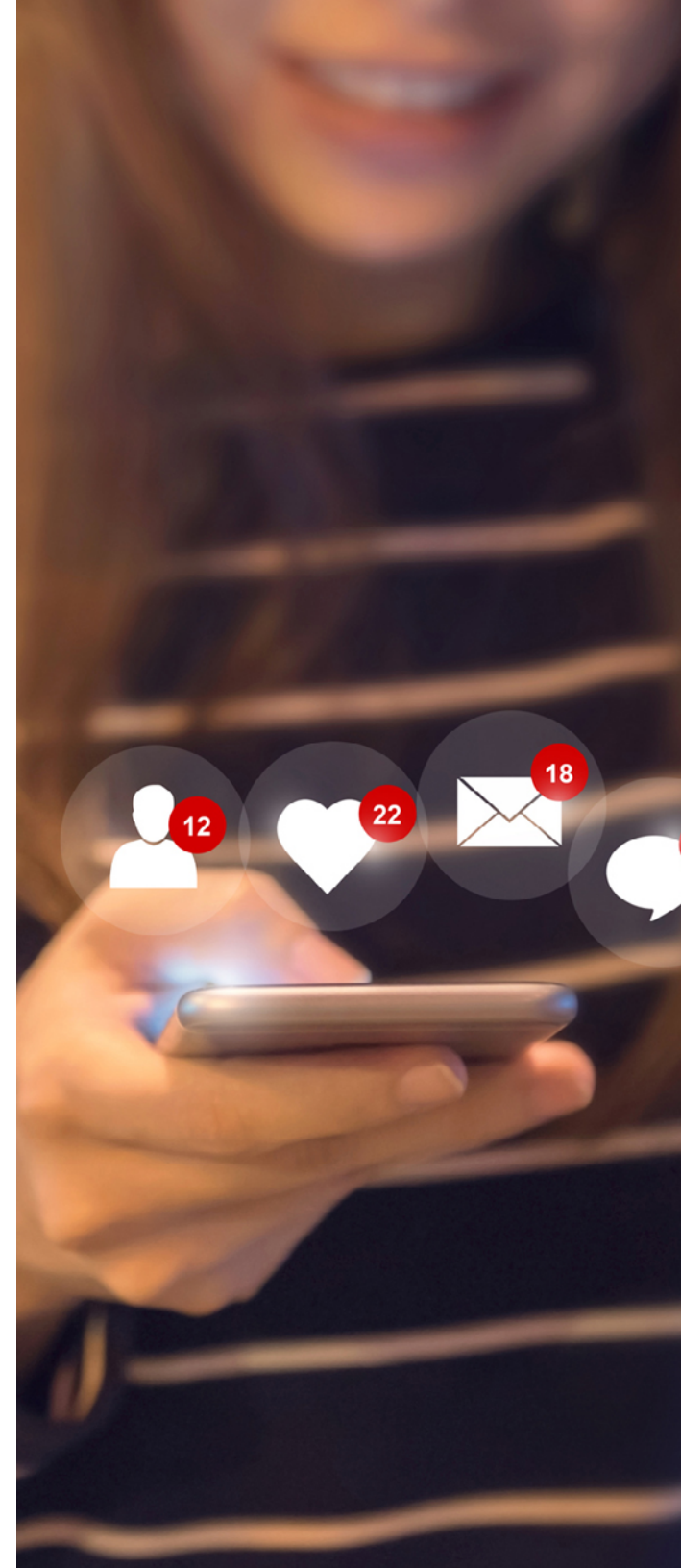
DIGITAL CONVERSATIONS
FOR A MOBILE WORLD

In addition to unifying bots and humans and offering new channels, it is also important to communicate with people where they are. In our super-busy, high-tech world, people are often looking at their mobile phone on trains, planes—and all too often—their automobiles. People are on the go. COPC recently reported that mobile care will increase 41% in 2018.

Banks were the first to have some of the most useful apps when they first created the deposit-by-picture feature. Yet, when you hit the "contact us" button in most apps in other industries, you are routed to a general phone number where an IVR asks you what language you speak rather than offer personal service. Instead, make sure that the bots and channels previously discussed can be integrated into mobile conversations wherever the customer may be.

In the example shown, text or chat is integrated into an app where the agent can even share a map or document with the customer. Bright Pattern, for instance, allows in-app chat, file sharing, video chat, and more.

Key takeaway? Companies should take a mobile, personalized approach to their communications. Put the conversation where people are—and that is on the go.
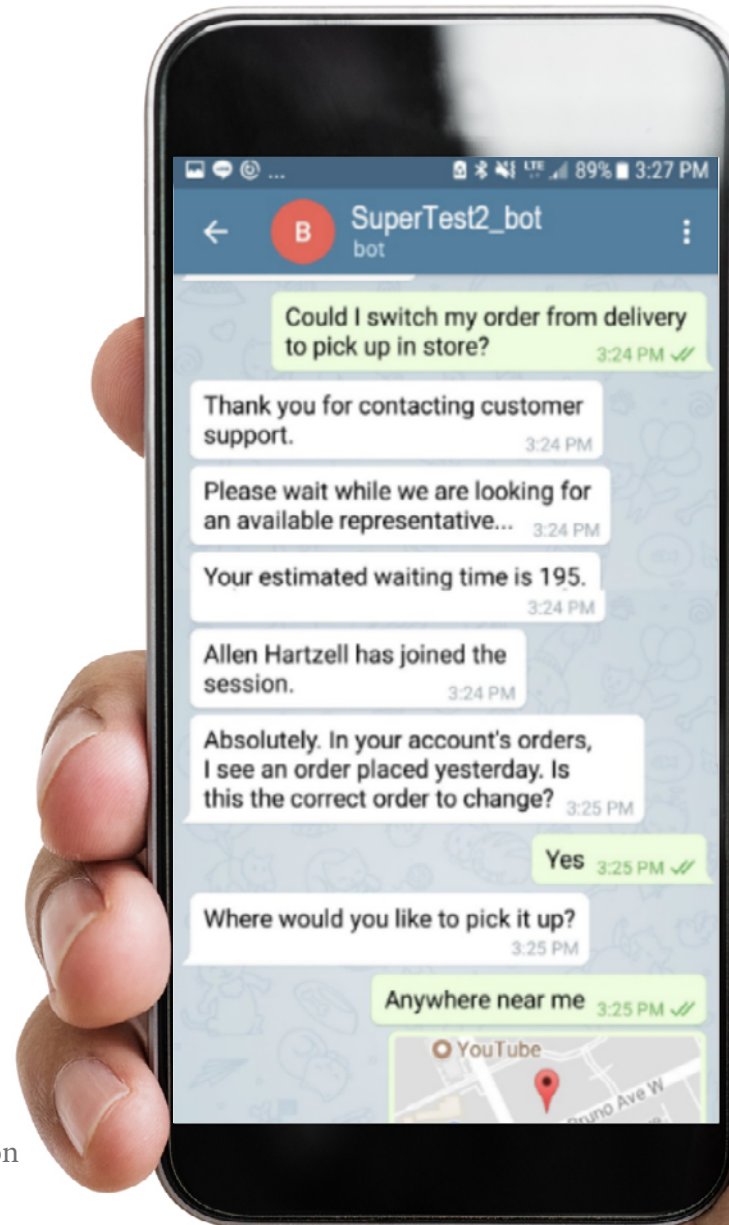
5 CLOUD CUSTOMER SERVICE IS A KEY ENABLER

So how do you do all this—add digital channels like bots or messengers, communicate seamlessly across them with a true omnichannel conversation. Look to the cloud. A true "born from the cloud" customer service architecture where all channels are native versus bolt-on can give you a nimble platform in which you are the disruptor versus the disrupted.

Cloud-first architecture is a truly agile, flexible platform because it doesn't rely on legacy technology ported from old on-premises solutions. A cloud platform approach will break down the silos and deliver a simple solution that business users can make changes to without requiring costly IT and professional services.

A true omnichannel cloud contact center will bring bots and humans together to deliver customer service that is both effortless and more personal. Perhaps the rise of the robots isn't as scary as originally thought.

Your Digital Transformation Starts Now!

We have discussed the current era of digital disruption, how effortless personal omnichannel can help you win, and the five keys to make it happen. At Bright Pattern, we are here to give easier, brighter customer service to companies of any size. It's a revolutionary cloud contact center that is easier and more modern than any other solution on the market. It's simple yet powerful.

About Bright Pattern

Bright Pattern's cloud contact center software simplifies omnichannel customer service for customers, agents, and contact center managers. Bright Pattern's cloud contact center solutions are used globally in over 26 countries and 12 languages by companies of all sizes.

BRIGHT PAT·TERN
cloud contact center software

> " Bright Pattern is a true **omnichannel ACD**, built for the **modern contact center**.
>
> As our **business matures** and our customers' needs **evolve**, we need a contact center infrastructure that we can rely on to **evolve with us**."
>
> -   Roger Meader,
>   Co-Founder of TruSource Labs

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