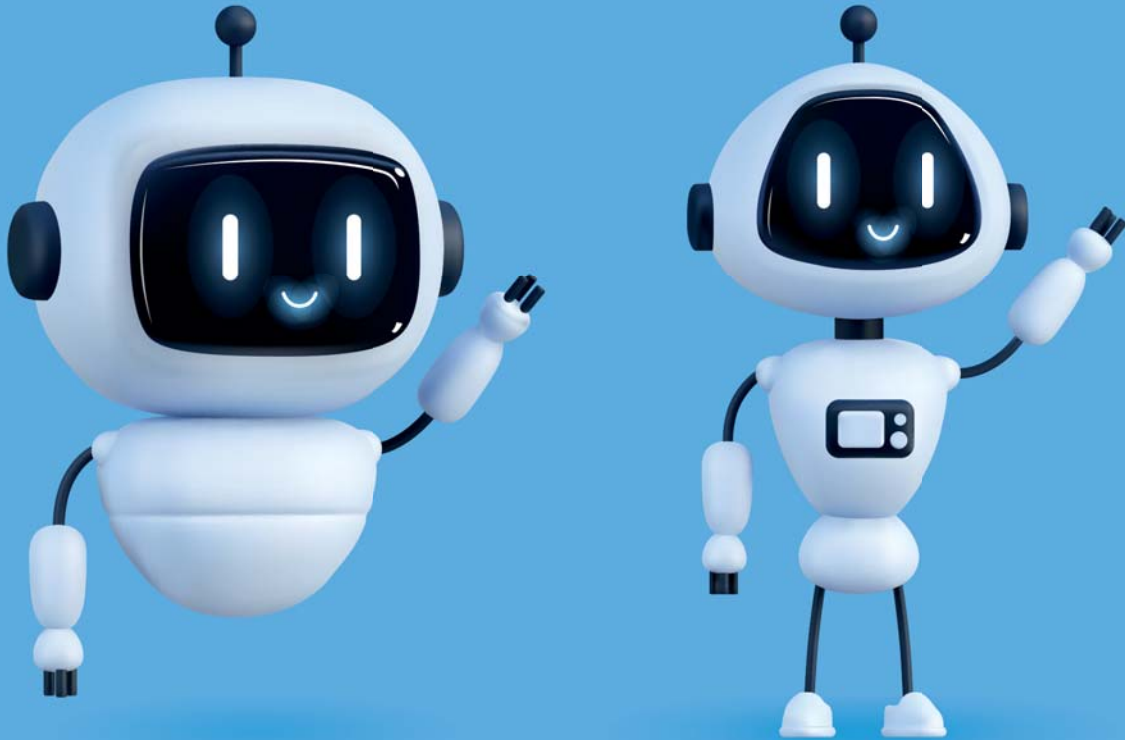


CUSTOMER SERVICE

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THE NEW AGE OF EFFICIENCY

Merilee Kern takes cognisance of the growing influence of AI on achieving customer service excellence

As the age of AI evolves, modes of customer service are also progressing at exponential rates. The era of waiting times and generic responses from call centre agents is reducing. In today's world, arti-

ficial intelligence powered business tools are transforming the support process by providing tailored, efficient and scalable solutions that surpass bygone era methods.

This change in customer service methodology marks a new and exciting chapter in AI driven support services that deliver exceptional operational assistance while ensuring customer satisfaction.

“The evolution of customer service has transitioned from traditional call centres to digital platforms,” notes Cofounder and CEO of BetterAI Angel Vossough, adding: “This shift in customer support is primarily driven

by the integration of advanced AI powered technologies that are upending and revolutionising the support experience.”

Vossough explains how next gen AI is offering personalised, efficient and scalable solutions that surpass conventional customer service approaches.

THE RISE OF AI The journey of artificial intelligence from theoretical concepts to practical applications in customer service has been remarkable.

In recent years, the adoption of AI tools such as chatbots and AI driven analytics has surged across the service sector. These tech-



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nologies have become pivotal in handling customer interactions, providing prompt responses and personalising service delivery.

AI applications in customer service range from automated response systems to sophisticated analytics that predict customer preferences and behaviour.

REAL WORLD AI One notable example of AI's impact on customer service is the implementation of chatbots by retailers such as H&M.

The fashion retailer's chatbot, powered by artificial intelligence, assists customers in finding products and checking stock availability; it even offers personalised style recommendations. And it not only enhances the customer experience but also frees up human agents to focus on more complex inquiries.

Natural language processing (NLP), which is an arm of AI, focusses on the interaction between computers and human language. In customer service, NLP is used to understand, interpret and respond to customer inquiries in a natural and human-like manner.

This technology powers chatbots, virtual assistants and AI driven support tools, enabling them to process and respond to text and voice queries.

The emergence of large language models (LLMs) such as Generative Pre-trained Transformer 4 (GPT-4) and Mixtral have taken NLP to the next level by generating human-like text based on vast amounts of data. These models can understand context, generate coherent and relevant responses, and even create content in multiple languages.

Applications of LLMs in customer service include contextual understanding, writing assistance and multilingual support, which enhance the personalisation and efficiency of the support experience.

BENEFITS OF AI The adoption of artificial intelligence in customer service brings several advantages.

There's increased efficiency because AI tools automate routine tasks, reduce response times and enable human agents to focus on complex issues.

Artificial intelligence can tailor interactions based on customer data and previous interactions, leading to more personalised services. And AI solutions can handle large volumes of inquiries simultaneously and simplify the process of scaling customer service operations.

And there's improved accuracy with advanced language processing capabilities. AI improves the precision of responses and reduces the risk of human error.

AI RELATED ISSUES Notwithstanding the numerous benefits, there are also challenges and ethical issues to consider – such as ensuring that customer data is handled securely and in compliance with regulations.

AI systems must be designed and trained to avoid perpetuating biases based on factors such as race, gender or age.

As artificial intelligence automates certain tasks, companies must prioritise reskilling and upskilling their workforce to adapt to new roles.

AI should be viewed as a complement to human agents and not a replacement.

Therefore, striking the right balance between automation and human interaction is crucial.

BENEFITS OF LLMs To harness the potential of AI in customer support, developing LLMs trained on historical case data will be a game changer. LLMs can be integrated into the support workflow to assist engineers and technicians.

By analysing case descriptions, LLMs can

automatically route cases to the most appropriate engineers based on their skills and experience.

LLMs also provide potential solutions based on similar cases in the historical dataset and speed up the response from engineers, which will save time and effort.

The insights generated by LLMs can be used to update and expand the historical knowledge base to ensure that all engineers have access to the most up-to-date information.

HUMANS AND AI While artificial intelligence can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of customer service, it is essential to recognise the importance of collaboration between AI and human agents.

Artificial intelligence should be viewed as a tool to augment human capabilities rather than replace them.

By leveraging the strengths of both AI and human agents, companies can deliver optimal customer service experiences that combine the speed and accuracy of AI with the compassion and problem solving skills of human agents.

FUTURE OF AI The future of AI in customer service looks promising with the potential integration of virtual and augmented reality to create more immersive support experiences.

By leveraging big data, AI can offer even more personalised customer interactions by understanding needs and preferences at an unprecedented level. Continuous improvement in AI algorithms will ensure that these systems can adapt to changing customer behaviour and expectations, to maintain relevance and effectiveness.

Vossough says: "As a former network support engineer at the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC), I witnessed firsthand the dedication and expertise of the Cisco team in delivering exceptional customer support."

She continues: "Cisco TAC is a hub of highly skilled engineers who are passionate about solving complex network challenges. The team's deep understanding of Cisco's extensive products and its ability to navigate the intricacies of enterprise level networking is truly remarkable."

AI powered customer service represents a leap forward from traditional support models. By enhancing efficiency, personalisation and scalability, artificial intelligence is setting a new standard for customer interactions.

However, the true potential of AI lies in its ability to complement human capabilities by offering a hybrid model where technology and humanity converge to create unparalleled service experiences.

