

APPLIED CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT+

REINVENTING SERVICE WITH AI

THE POWER OF AI

BUSINESS SITUATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE UNDER PRESSURE

The customer service function is at an inflection point. Companies are still struggling to meet customer expectations at a time when those expectations are both increasing and multiplying.

Frustrations with customer service continue

Regardless of investments made to improve customer experiences, companies are still receiving low Net Promoter Scores (NPS) and frustrating customers with long wait times, unhelpful representatives, redundant requests, and self-service systems that don't help.¹

Liquid expectations are real and on the rise

As digital brands extend their reach, high standards of service are becoming the norm. Customers expect companies to provide best-of-breed experiences, regardless of industry. The battleground for superiority is no longer category dominance, it is customer engagement.

The digital-physical blur creates more touchpoints

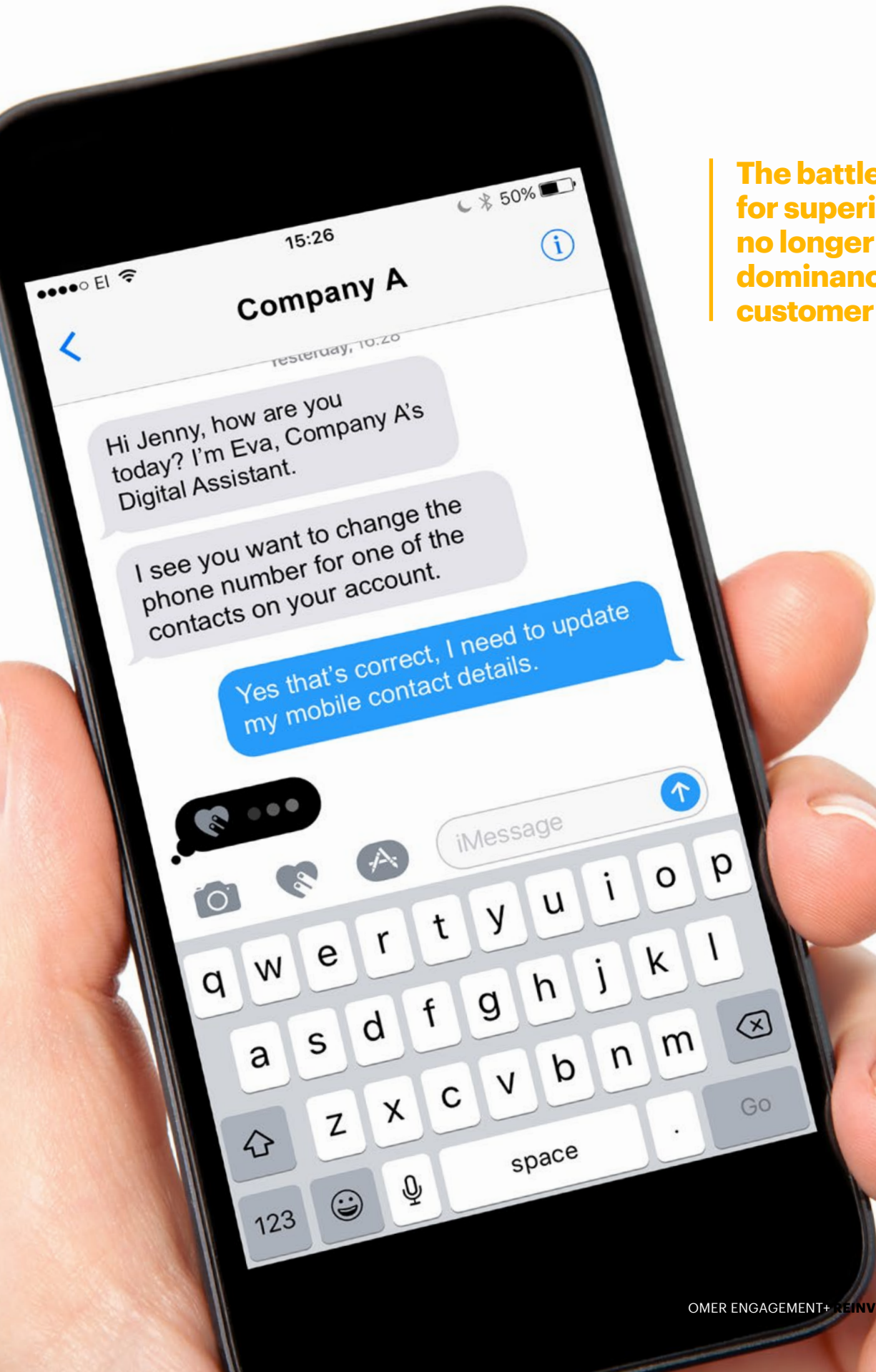
As the real world becomes more digital with wearable devices, smart objects, and augmented experiences, companies are striving to provide integrated and contextually relevant customer service experiences through an expanded network of platforms and devices.

Traditional ways of working aren't working

The volume, complexity, and immediacy of customer-to-company interactions is increasing exponentially. The current servicing approach—automation for low-complexity tasks and human intervention for high-touch occasions—isn't sufficient to service this growth or provide differentiating customer experiences.

To meet rising expectations and compete effectively, companies need to find a way to increase the scope, volume, and quality of customer service interactions.

¹ Accenture Global Customer Pulse Research (2008–2016)



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KEY TENSION

THE TRADE-OFF BETWEEN QUALITY AND COST

Historically, customer service leaders have wrestled with a fundamental trade-off: how to provide quality customer care in the most affordable manner possible.

This dilemma is amplified given the increased scope and investment required to put service at the core of the business. Companies need to develop an entirely new approach to servicing that bends the cost curve while embracing an ever-increasing number of opportunities to engage and satisfy customers.

They need to find a way to both lower servicing costs and improve experiences, providing customers with whatever it is they need, whenever they need it. This must be in their channel of choice, without the disappointments and pitfalls of current servicing systems.

Companies need to develop an entirely new approach to servicing.



INSIGHT

SERVICE IS NO LONGER A POST-PURCHASE SILO

Companies need to rethink the role and function of customer service. What was once a support and resolution capability is becoming a proactive and pervasive differentiator.

This trend will escalate as hyper-connected, intelligent products proliferate. It is central to the brand's relationship with the customer—the bridge between brand promise and brand experience—and to the future value a company can expect to derive from an engaged customer. As such, it is transforming from a cost center to a business driver.

OPPORTUNITY

MORE INTELLIGENT CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Customers who are continuously connected to the company will expect an “always-on, always-me” experience that is fueled by deep customer knowledge and broad servicing capabilities.

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has been used in customer service to drive self-service and improve internal efficiencies. But by embracing AI’s newer capabilities—from video processing to machine learning—companies can reduce costs while providing integrated, improved, and complete customer experiences.

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KEY AREAS OF VALUE:

Improving automated servicing while unlocking capital for investment

- Take a data-driven approach to look at customer intents for all interactions.
- Use AI as the new customer gateway to simplify choices and route customers to their best experience and most efficient channel for the intent in question.
- Identify use cases that can be completely automated while also enhancing customer experience (CX) (e.g. which of the intents can be served by an intelligent chatbot, or even via robotic voice-to-voice).
- Improve operational efficiency and governance by removing repetitive work and empowering employees to work in new, more strategic and proactive capacities.

Delighting customers and differentiating from competitors

- Augment customer care agents with AI to serve customers better, faster, and with increased quality. And, measure their performance based on the success of their customer interactions.
- Increase customer relevance by applying contextual information, including images, audio, videos, and location, to inform hyper-personalized interactions, offers, and recommendations.
- Utilize voice interfaces (Amazon Echo, Google Home) to be more human, intuitive, and accessible.

Enabling best-of-breed and holistic customer engagement that builds brand love

- Provide predictive, proactive care to resolve problems before they happen, and introduce contextually relevant, personalized services.
- Integrate fully with legacy systems and ecosystem partners to create frictionless, timely, and engaging experiences across all the touchpoints in the customer journey.

Pursuing the journey to Intelligent Customer Engagement requires a blend of capabilities, from design thinking, to dialog design, and knowledge engineering. By approaching change both systemically and strategically, companies can expect to meaningfully impact customer experience metrics and reduce costs by as much as 30 percent. They will develop a powerful, enterprise-wide capability to empower employees, satisfy their customers, differentiate competitively, and drive new growth in their business.

Explore how AI can transform your customer engagement capabilities. Visit www.accenture.com/ai-for-business-transformation

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