STRENGTHENING DIGITAL WITH VOICE

Effortlessly Resolve Customer Needs at Pace and Scale With the Power of AI

NICE

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Introduction: Strengthening Digital With Voice

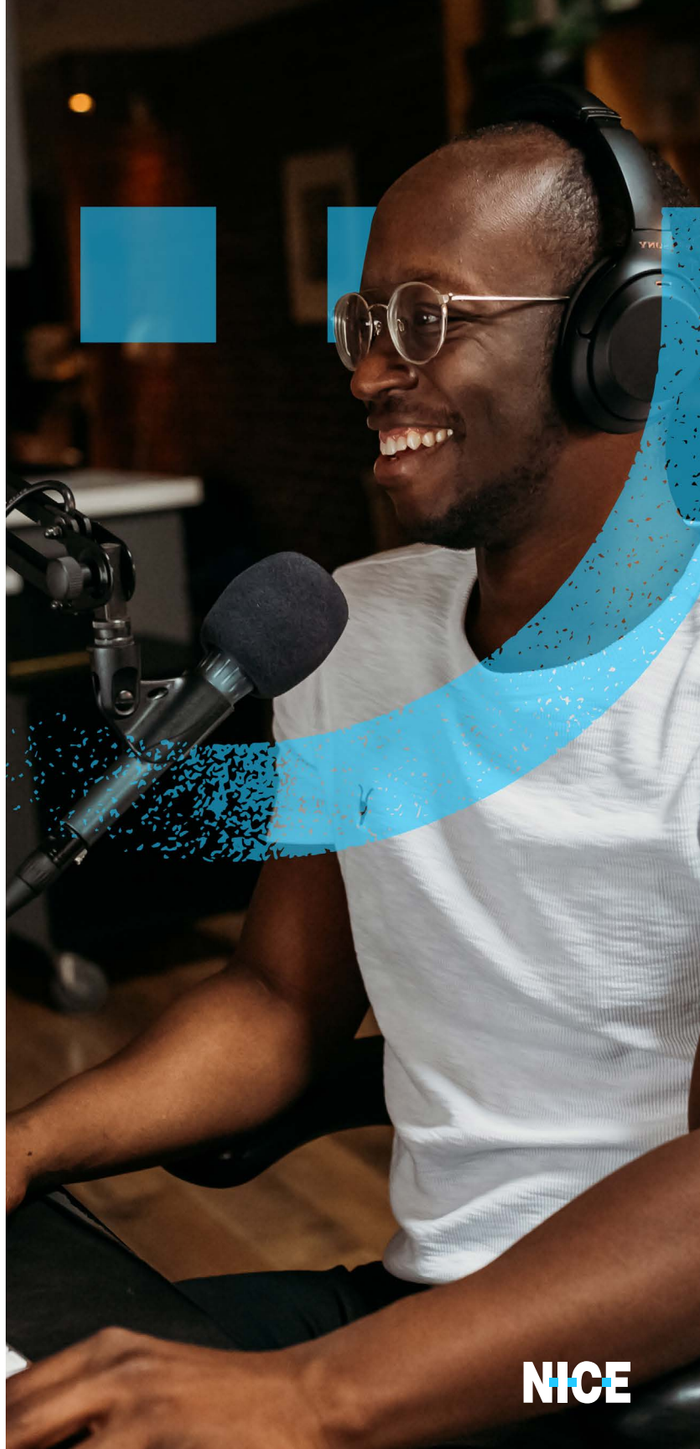
The pace of digital adoption is accelerating. As a result, consumers' expectations for instant gratification are increasing, yet voice remains a critical ingredient in the customer experience. Today, voice is strategically integrated with conversational AI, chatbots, email, and social media across a full range of complex customer journeys.

When chatbots first came into the mainstream, their limitations actually increased friction and customer frustration. And "automated" quickly became a dirty word, referring to bot interactions that felt mechanical and sterile. Today, technology has come a long way. Advanced conversational AI is driving a new era of self-service and seamless CX.

The agent experience is changing, as well, and remote working is now the status quo. The result? Both agents and customers are "everywhere," and contact center leaders must lean into this new world to stay on top. The good news is that AI offers a wealth of opportunities to solve customer challenges at pace and scale, and the technology can adapt easily to agents in distributed teams.[1]

In this eBook, we'll dive into why voice and calls are still a key part of customer service, how conversational data provides business intelligence, and what smart CX looks like today.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all content in this eBook taken from Dan Miller and Michele Carlson, "AI Made Easy: Effortlessly Resolve Customer Needs at Pace and Scale" webinar (2022).



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Self-Service and Voice

"Voice channels and contact centers are absolutely a part of self-service—the approach does not mean hands-off voice. We have to be more focused on the customer perspective and how we can create rapid recognition of customer intent through AI."

— Dan Miller, lead analyst and founder, Opus Research

Miller highlights that the essential role of "agent assist" is important to helping customers solve their problems. If your AI tools route a customer to your agent, that agent needs to be able to quickly understand what the issue is and how to solve it, based on insight from the AI. This helps customers maintain their feelings of control while ensuring they get their issues resolved frictionlessly.

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Self-Service and Voice

"The important piece here is quickly identifying the customer's intent. You can't help them finish the task unless you truly understand what they're reaching out about."

— Dan Miller, lead analyst and founder, Opus Research

Historically, saying your organization was "customer-centric" was often nothing more than lip service to a broader ideal that wasn't operationalized. If your self-service program were simply a chatbot that quickly routed you to an agent or an automated callback system, you were likely building your approach based on the idea that automation boosts efficiency. While it certainly can, exceptional self-service is about much more than automating the menial.

Instead, your voice channels and agents can be equipped with real-time data based on what customers are actually saying, helping to assist customers on their journey of self-service.

How contact centers have changed

Instead of disappearing, contact centers and the voice channel have adapted and molded to a new digital world.

Brick and mortar ----- ▸ remote/distributed

Premises-based ----- ▸ the cloud

Single channel ------- ▸ omnichannel

Voice only ---------- ▸ text, chat, web search, and messaging

Automated ---------- ▸ AI-powered

Siloed ---------- ▸ sharing

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Conversational Data is Right-Time Business Intelligence

According to research by Opus Agency, contact center data is plentiful, but it's underutilized.

Eight in 10 business leaders surveyed by Opus say they use conversational data for CX planning, the top usage among those surveyed. Feeding bots came in second place, with enabling customer support teams in third. Overall, 80% of survey respondents are transcribing and compiling conversational data, but 66% are not applying it in real time.

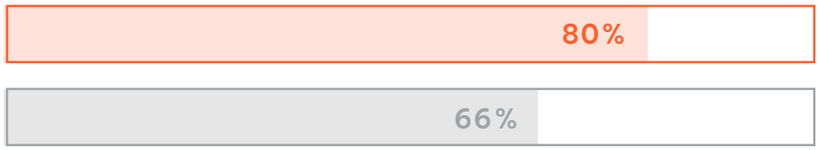
RANKING DATA USED IN CX PLANNING:

#1 CONVERSATIONAL DATA: used by 8 in 10 business leaders surveyed

#2 FEEDING BOTS

#3 ENABLING CUSTOMER SUPPORT

USAGE OF CONVERSATIONAL DATA:



80% of survey respondents are transcribing and compiling conversational data

66% of survey respondents are not applying conversational data in real time

Michele Carlson, senior product marketing manager at NICE, suggests that one significant challenge is moving from the theoretical to the practical.

"Contact center leaders need to change perspective from what AI can theoretically do and put it into daily application."

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Leveraging conversational data in real time means in-the-moment access to business intelligence. Miller says contact centers can use conversational data to boost productivity, identify opportunities, increase revenues, and create operational efficiencies. He suggests reframing how organizations view that data and its application to be more in line with emerging KPIs.

> "The metrics are going to change. Focus on level of effort for customers, not just agent efficiency."
>
> — Dan Miller, analyst and founder, Opus Research

Conversational intelligence viewed through the customer effort angle can dramatically improve CX, derive new business insights, and promote agent performance. When customers feel they have to exert little or no effort to solve their problems through self-service, this indicates that complex systems in the background are operating at a high level. CX solutions that harness conversational data, like Enlighten AI, make AI more approachable for contact centers aiming to get to that level of self-service. Building the right AI-informed self-service approach creates smarter CX.

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THE CONVERSATIONAL CLOUD

Dan Miller's concept of the conversational cloud serves as a reminder that your contact center's "operational" tools, like speech recognition, can reside in the same resources as your analytics and AI. These tools and concepts can and should play together:

CALL PROCESSING & TASK ROUTING

AUTOMATED SPEECH + NLU & ANALYTICS

APPLICATION LOGIC

(algorithm, workflows, RPA)

BIG DATA

(customer records and the sum of the world's knowledge)

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Harnessing the Real Voice of the Customer

With sophisticated integrated AI tools, your human agents can recognize sentiment automatically and accurately.

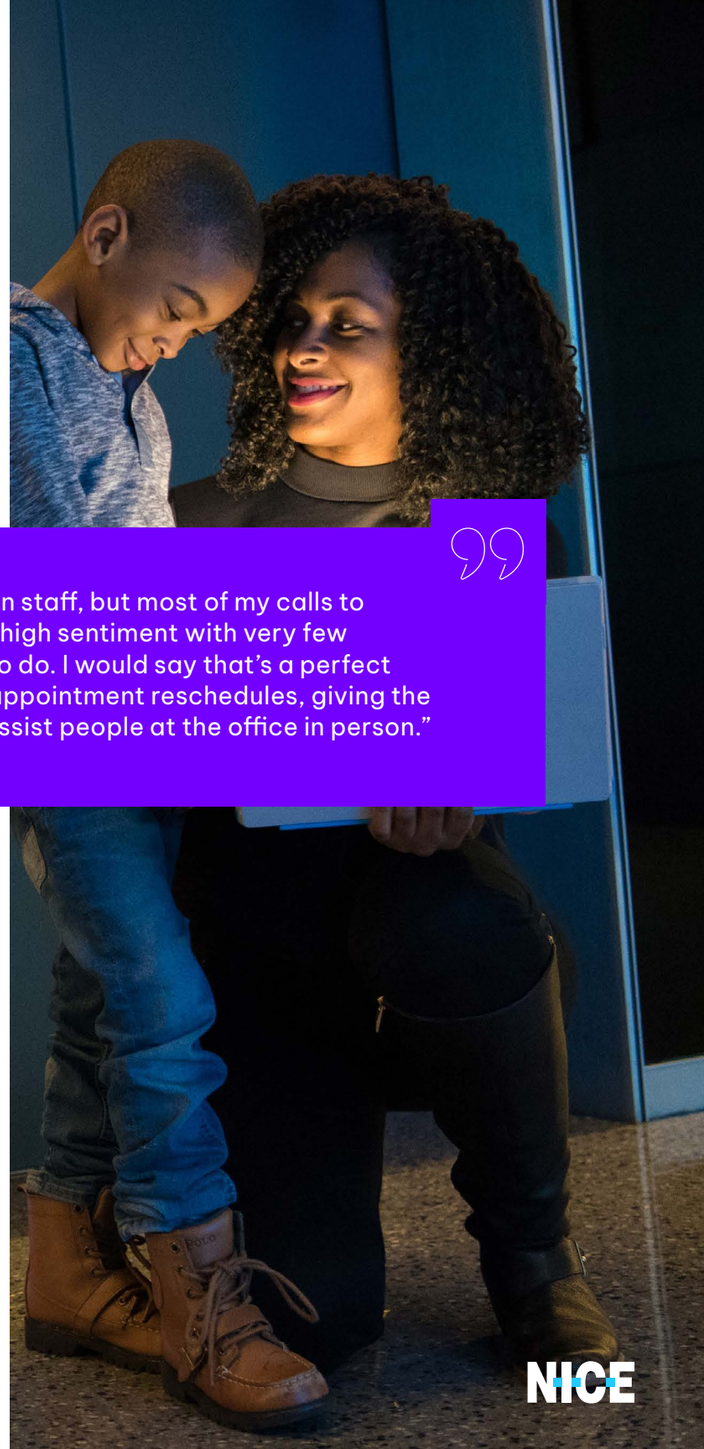
"Smart CX leverages first-party data, AKA the actual utterances of customers. The real voice of the customer is what they say, not the marketing term that refers to the byproduct of a learnings from a customer survey."

– Dan Miller, analyst and founder, Opus Research

Lessons from conversational data are continuously improving CX over time. Informed by years of conversations, self-service and agent assisted approaches can leverage lessons from multiple datasets to boost positive customer outcomes. To that end, Enlighten AI uses linguistic cues to identify intent and makes recommendations on what can be automated. Carlson shares one potential scenario to illustrate how AI-powered CX solutions can identify the best automation opportunities, optimize the ideal flow and build fast with the right data:

"I am a mom of four. I love my pediatrician's admin staff, but most of my calls to them aren't chitchat. AI can identify my calls as high sentiment with very few conversational turns and very few agent tasks to do. I would say that's a perfect candidate for automation—a bot could handle appointment reschedules, giving the patient control while freeing up admin staff to assist people at the office in person."

Smart CX is also able to identify opportunities for proactive outreach by your organization, which can be a part of a self-service approach. Carlson notes that when proactive outreach is used correctly at the right time, customers get a better experience. Leveraging your conversational data with the real voice of the customer in mind will guide your organization in correctly identifying those opportunities.



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AI's real power lies in increasing your organization's ability to respond to customer needs seamlessly—whenever and wherever they occur—in the most efficient way possible. That means empowering customers to solve their problems through self-service first but then equipping agents with the sophisticated AI tools they need to resolve the most complex issues requiring a human touch.

As your CX approach and platforms continuously learn from conversational data and get smarter over time, you'll be able to anticipate needs and guide consumers wherever they are to make their own choices along the way. As you continue to collect new data, you'll keep getting smarter with every interaction—every time.

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See what Enlighten XO can do for you →

About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud-native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered contact center software. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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Make experiences flow