

Is your business taking the wrong approach to urgent customer conversations?

 By Ryan Falkenberg

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Urgent customer conversations are critical in most businesses. You might, for instance, need to cancel your card immediately after a theft. Or you may have missed a payment that the business needs to remind you about.



Photo by Tima Miroshnichenko via www.pexels.com

Many contact centres struggle to take the right approach to urgent conversations. Some simply lack the resources to rapidly ramp up and deal with increased call volumes. Others face customers who don't answer calls from numbers they don't recognise. Yet the business still needs those conversations to happen.

If the traditional approach isn't working, how can companies ensure that they reach the customers they need to as fast as they need to?

Instantly scalable?

Before answering those questions, it's worth examining why call centres struggle to scale quickly. A good example that I've seen first-hand involved a bank promoting its insurance products by handing out leaflets at a taxi rank at the end of the month.

In and of itself, that was a good strategy. It was the right target market for that specific insurance product and the bank was meeting its customers in their daily lives. Importantly, by timing the marketing to just after payday, the bank reached those customers when they had money and were willing to spend it.



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The trouble was, the bank's contact centre simply couldn't keep up with the volume of calls that came in as a result of the campaign. Although the bank anticipated it would need additional contact centre agents, scaling up and back down as quickly as it needed to simply wasn't practical. Putting aside the difficulty of finding enough contact centre agents, getting them trained up to the level where they could field any queries associated with the incoming calls was impossible.

The bank likely missed out on a lot of prospective customers as a result. After all, how many times would you contact a business with the intention of making a purchase before giving up and moving on?

Those same scalability issues can arise in all sorts of situations and affect both outbound and inbound conversations. That means that contact centres must think differently when it comes to urgent conversations.

Automating conversations

With rapid scaling such a challenge for contact centres, what approach should they take instead? A good start is to automate as many conversations as possible.

In the example above, the bank could have printed a QR code on the leaflet alongside the contact centre number. After scanning it, the prospective customer would have been connected instantly to a virtual agent. These AI-powered digital experts can have immediate conversations with customers. Where relevant, the virtual agent will hand off to a human agent to complete the engagement.

Virtual agents stick to rules, so every conversation is consistent, compliant and hyper-personalised. They handle the urgent, repetitive, rule-based work so human agents can focus on higher value work - like figuring out where to drop the next lot of leaflets.

ABOUT RYAN FALKENBERG

Ryan Falkenberg is co-founder and CEO of software company Qevva.

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