

Supercharge Your Customer and Agent Experience with AI-Enabled Customer Journeys



Table of Contents

- Artificial Intelligence Is Fundamentally Changing Customer Interactions1
- Data is the Fuel for AI-Powered Systems2
- The AI-Enabled Customer Journey Provides Benefits for All2
- Use Cases: How Organizations Implement AI-Enabled Customer Journeys3
- Key takeaways5
- About Avaya5

Artificial Intelligence is Fundamentally Changing Customer Interactions

Improving the quality of the customer experience—the customer’s journey—has become among the most important differentiators and areas of competition for many businesses. Digital customer-facing systems have drawn the biggest investments. Nonetheless, because many of these systems feel robotic and impersonal, they have negatively impacted the customer experience and customers’ satisfaction. Finding that they have taken the wrong path, businesses are now seeking to humanize their customer interactions.

What they are finding is that technology itself is not the problem. Customer-facing systems can seem more human and feel less robotic with the addition of artificial intelligence (AI). With AI, all the information that the business has about customers and their interactions, prior purchases, recent shopping activity and previous engagements with the brand can be deployed in a way that increases intimacy and enables a more emotionally engaged interaction. Customers who interact with AI-enabled systems often feel as if the business knows them and can meet their needs more quickly. AI-based systems have better understanding of the customer, can proactively answer customer inquiries and can work jointly and interactively with your human staff. AI-powered systems that can deliver these benefits in real time and in the right context will enable success and become a competitive differentiator.

The real benefit of AI is that it can utilize huge amounts of data and find the key information nuggets in real time. Humans just can't.

Data is the Fuel for AI-Powered Systems

The quality of any AI-powered app or system is directly related to how much information it has to work with. The real benefit of AI is that it can utilize huge amounts of data and find the key information nuggets in real time. Humans just can't. Although many organizations focus on optimizing their AI algorithm, the reality is that without ensuring that there is a broad, comprehensive and accurate dataset to support it, the algorithm cannot work. Successful implementations of AI systems start with a project focused on the underlying data the system needs.

To start, organizations should leverage both public and internal data. Combining both datasets provides a much more complete picture of the individual customer, and better results. The initial design must identify all potentially useful data, even if the integration of that data may not be possible for the first iteration of the app. In addition, there must be a continuous process of identifying new data sources, both public and internal, for future use. This is essential to the evolution of AI-powered customer-facing systems.

In addition to existing data, AI-powered systems utilize data gathered in real time during client interactions. An excellent example of this is to match the incoming telephone number to data the company already has about phone numbers and then "pre-inform" the agent or system about the customer's needs. For example, before a call is connected, the agent is provided with a history of prior engagements with the customer who has used that phone number before. This eliminates the need for the customer to bring the agent up to speed on what has occurred in the customer's past interactions with the brand. More importantly, an AI-driven system can proactively deliver ways to resolve the issue or help the customer. Even as the agent is saying, "Good morning," he already knows something about the issue at hand and possibly even has a solution for it. Instead of "How can I help you?" the next thing the agent says might be, "I see you're looking for information on this specific topic. I have something that can help you."

The AI-Enabled Customer Journey Provides Benefits for All

AI systems and apps that are empowered with the right data bring benefits to everyone involved: the agents, the customers and the management of the business or contact center. That's a win-win-win. The key benefits for each are the following:

- **Agent Experience** — AI-based systems empower the agent with more useful information, from the time the phone rings to the time the call ends, and can even help reduce agent after-call work. That makes the agent more knowledgeable and confident from the start. There is no lost time with the agent searching for information while the customer listens to silence. Systems that monitor what is being said during a call can highlight courses of action, offers or input, which change the game and enable agent success.



The analytics from an AI system make it possible to more quickly identify product or operational concerns that impact customers.

- **Customers Experience** — Next-generation systems that leverage AI and broad data inputs eliminate the need for customers to educate and inform the agent before anything useful can happen. Past interactions are pulled up before the call is even answered by an agent, which reduces time to resolution. Calls that must be escalated to a manager or transferred for some other reason are not seen by customers as a setback, because they don't have to repeat information they've already provided. Moving the focus from gathering information and context to problem solving and remediating improves the engagement.
- **Business or contact center management experience** — An AI-enabled customer journey delivers both hard-dollar and less tangible benefits for the business. With enhanced agent productivity, better first-call resolution, and fewer escalations that result in price reductions or giveaways to placate the customer, expenses are lowered. Other benefits include the ability to focus agents on more complicated or difficult customer inquiries to maximize their value. The analytics from an AI system make it possible to more quickly identify product or operational concerns that impact customers. The enhanced customer journey improves brand reputation.

Use Cases: How Organizations Implement AI-Enabled Customer Journeys

AI can help to improve the customer journey as well as the customer, agent, and user experience in many ways, many of them substantial. The use cases below are broadly applicable and proven in numerous customer deployments when businesses partner with industry leaders like Avaya.

- **Enhanced call routing** — Getting a customer to the right person the first time always improves the customer experience. AI can both evaluate the customer's and agent's past behavior and assess skill sets in real time, so the call routing is optimized for best business outcome based on ideal customer-agent pairings. AI makes it possible to perform this matching at scale and in real time.

AI technologies can improve the experience.

Intelligent virtual assistants not only enhance natural-language interaction, but also provide better responses and interaction by providing the right information quickly.

- **Providing critical information before the call** — Using AI to evaluate past customer behavior and interactions makes it easy to deliver information to the agent before the call. Customers aren't forced to explain themselves or wait while the agent looks for their information. A pre-informed agent can interact at a more detailed and personalized level, increasing customer confidence.
- **Proactively delivering knowledge base information** — Both online and agent-based interactions are greatly improved when critical information is readily at hand. AI-based systems can analyze the customer and then pre-fetch the right information and deliver it in real time, which can substantially improve the customer experience. Options are presented quickly and inquiries resolved faster.
- **Intelligent virtual assistants** — Businesses have long used interactive chat and messaging to communicate with customers, but most of these tools deliver a poor customer experience. AI technologies can dramatically improve the experience. Intelligent virtual assistants not only enhance natural-language interaction, but also provide better responses and interaction by providing the right information quickly. AI delivers a virtual experience at scale that is indistinguishable from human interaction.
- **Real-time transcription of voice calls** — Perhaps the most impactful use of AI-powered systems is delivering real-time transcription of calls. Real-time call transcription provides immediate identification of emotion, potential selling opportunities and assessment of customer satisfaction. AI is essential to taking the vast amounts of data from a voice interaction and analyzing it to find critical insights. This technology can provide the agent with real-time hints about what to say. In situations where there is a sales opportunity, the system can pop up the appropriate sales script and product information at precisely the right time. Further, with an AI-based system, these actions occur consistently. AI systems learn from the outcomes of these interactions and continually refine themselves, improving results over time.
- **Improved and timely follow-up** — Many customers go elsewhere when a brand does not follow up in a timely and useful manner. Moving the onus for this step away from agents to AI-based systems results in more consistent and effective follow-up. Using AI tools to find and deliver the key information not only helps to save time and ensure experience consistency but also saves money.
- **Improved agent experience** — Using AI-powered systems that deliver information proactively, provide greater insight before the call is connected and make it far simpler to resolve the call not only benefits the customer, but also makes the agent's job much less stressful. These systems empower agents to be far more successful. Improving the "everyday" for the agent results in less turnover, greater job satisfaction, and the ability for agents to better serve the customer.



Key takeaways

AI is fundamentally changing how digital systems perform and the capabilities they deliver. Enhancing the customer journey with new, AI-powered capabilities will be among the most visible and impactful uses of the new technology. Those organizations that move quickly to adopt AI-empowered customer-facing systems will gain competitive advantage and be more successful in the marketplace.

The best results will occur when AI and humans work side by side and the capabilities of both are leveraged to enhance the customer and agent experience. Brands must focus on solutions that are synergistic, delivering better customer experiences, not just automated ones. Avaya is a leader in delivering next-generation, AI-based solutions that work along all phases of the customer journey. For more information, please visit www.avaya.com.

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.

