Digital Experts offer customers unassisted self-service across multiple digital channels

To support a growing customer base, a national Telecommunication's company offering an extensive walk-in branch network, as well as a 24/7 customer care centre staffed with 1450 agents. This centre fielded both retail staff and direct customer sales and support queries. Due to the complexity of the products and services, these agents were divided into specialized teams. Intelligent IVR was used to direct each call to the right agent.

Despite significant investment in agent training, as well as the provision of a unified desktop that simplified system actions, customer satisfaction ratings remained stubbornly low. First call resolution (FCR) was also poor, and branch staff and customers had to endure multiple call-backs before their requests, queries, issues or complaints were resolved.

Due to a greater adoption of smart devices, and an increased reluctance to use walk-in centres, demand for digital self-service grew exponentially. And while initially this was served via live chat, the costs of this assisted service offering was too high.

As a result, the Telco executive prioritized the adoption of unassisted self-service.

The challenge

- The significant range of products and services, and the frequency of changes, meant that customers were overwhelmed by choice. Simply offering an info-bot that suggested product information was not the answer

- Many customers asked for product or service advice. This requires the ability to analyse their needs in context, and then identify relevant and related solutions. This level of expert logic could not be delivered using knowledge, decision tree or code-based logic

- Most service queries are technical, complex and contextual. To resolve them, you need to be able to analyse the underlying need of root cause before you then process required

actions. This cannot be done using prediction, as the data required typically sits with the customer

- Many of the core systems were not integrated, making it difficult to automate self-service requests

- Customers were using multiple digital channels – the website, the mobile app and WhatsApp. The logic powering the self-service capability needed to be able to support all three in the same way.

- The IT team had resource constraints. The self-service capability needed to be built and maintained by business teams, not coding teams

The business requirement

- Offer customers a one-touch digital self-service via the website, mobile app and WhatsApp channels

- Increase the number of sales and support requests, queries, issues and complaints handled via unassisted digital self-service channels

- Increase call deflection

- Improve customer satisfaction ratings

- Increase sales, especially cross and up sales, via digital channels

- Reduce the total cost to serve

The solution

A CLEVVA-powered Digital Expert was built, one that could replicate the contextual logic current sales and support specialists apply when resolving all known customer requests, queries, issues and complaints.

To achieve this, a small team of hand-selected Subject Matter Experts was chosen by the executive to work with the automation team and to 'download' their expert logic.

This process involved a series of knowledge elicitation sessions where all known query types were defined, the context variables identified, and the business rules validated.

Within a couple of weeks, the first version of the digital expert was available for testing, and over a number of agile sprints, the team enhanced the logic and accuracy until everyone was comfortable that the digital expert could handle the scoped service query types at the level of an expert.

The team then looked to integrate the digital expert with the various digital self-service channels and back-office systems.

Within the website, a customer web interface was built off CLEVVA's front end API to serve customers via the Troubleshooting page. In addition, CLEVVA's configurable pop up interface was used to offer customer sales advice, much like a super-charged chatbot.

This configurable interface was also embedded within the mobile app, while the same digital expert was connected directly to the WhatsApp channel to offer customers unassisted sales and support.

From a back-office system perspective, digital workers were used to fetch data and process required actions.

Agents were also given access to the same digital expert to improve their capability.

The results

Improved Unassisted Service

- 2.5 million customer service requests, queries, issues and complaints handled by digital expert

- Consistent customer journeys offered across all digital self-service channels

- All digital sales and support engagements were compliant, with detailed reports to prove it

- Rich structured data gathered on every digital conversation across all channels provided deep insights and shaped product offerings

Improved Assisted Service

- More consistent average handling times (an increase of 4%)

- Improved net promoter scores (8% lift)

- Improved first-call resolution (9% lift)

- Improved talk time (3% lift)

- Customer dissatisfaction mentions were significantly reduced (decrease of 50%)

The benefits

The digital expert not only enabled customers to self-solve their sales and technical support requests, queries, issues and complaints via any digital channel, it also enabled the Contact Centre team to deliver a consistent, compliant level of service to all customers without the historic risk of varying agent knowledge and experience. No matter who answers the call, the customer will be asked the same questions, be offered the same answers, and experience the same outcomes.

The deployment of the digital expert as the 'brain' that drives digital customer self-service, with the help of digital workers to perform all back-office system work, meant that more customer service engagements could be processed straight through. This reduced call volumes and lowed total cost to serve. It also improved the company's ability to adapt rapidly to ongoing product, policy and procedural changes.

Specialist agents now perform as universal agents, answering the more complex calls and the calls where customers are looking for human empathy and engagement. This means the Contact Centre can now recruit conversation specialists instead of technical specialists, with most of the known service requests now being taken care of by the digital expert.