The Conversational Intelligence Gap,

And What to Do About it

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The Importance of Both Employee and Customer Satisfaction

Enterprises value technologies that build customer loyalty and result in direct, top-line benefits. More than ever, Chief Executive Officers are acknowledging the critical role of both EX (employee experience) and CX (customer experience) in increasing revenue and profitability. Engaged employees across the business (in all functions) who know they are valued, enjoy their job, and have the tools to make their customers happy (these are employees who are enjoying great EX) -- thus, they are equipped and willing to deliver great CX.

This realization is accelerating a movement among business leaders to seek out new and better sources to help them identify, understand, and solve these core customer issues, improve business operations, and drive employee engagement. This not only attracts and retains employees, but also empowers them to successfully do their job (while also delivering significantly better CX). This increases customer satisfaction, avoids frustration on both sides, and increases customers' willingness to do business with them, remain loyal, and deliver increased lifetime value.

These business benefits can only be accomplished when organizations scale real-time, dynamic, and continuous Conversational Intelligence in production systems with the speed and accuracy required to make it truly actionable.

Much Ado About Data

Like every person on earth, businesses are awash with data. Whether operating in B2C, D2C or B2B environments, they have invested billions of dollars in technologies that capture data in order to glean the marketing tactics and customer support efforts that are working, as well as what's not working, and why. Gaining intimate understanding of these factors is the essential element defining basic strategy, prioritizing key initiatives, and garnering operational improvements.

Businesses recognize that intimate understanding of customers and their intents is the "North Star" of all data collection and analytics. Yet many companies have become their own worst enemies in their attempt to accumulate and curate the best data possible. Instead, they have managed to assemble a complex assortment of data sources, but each with its own limitations, challenges, and biases. As a result, their top execs are forced to make decisions without the information or insights required to optimize outcomes.

Today, the mainstays of Martech are technologies that track individuals' behaviors and accumulate data from third-party sources purporting to reflect a customer journey. The raw material includes click-streams, cookies, search terms, and other "indicators of intent" that are aggregated into customer data platforms (CDPs) and treated as the "single source of truth" regarding customer intent, as well as a predictor of future behavior and buying practices.

Real-Time Customer Conversations: The Most Robust Source of Insights

In Opus Research's "2022 State of Voice Technology" survey, customer care professionals across a number of industries observed that companies are realizing that truly understanding the voice of the customer (VOC) can only be done by listening to the verbal interactions of the customer with your company.
Contact center managers and CX professionals have long known that they are not able to listen to every call and understand what each customer is telling their agents. Everyday millions of voice and chat agents interact with their customers. Each one has something so important to say about a company's offering that they stopped

what they are doing, hunted down a (well-hidden) phone number, and then waited on hold or waited for a callback. For the next six minutes (on average) they verbally share – often with critical details and context – the issues that triggered their call and how they feel about it.

These conversations contain a real-time treasure-trove of customer data including:

- **True customer insights** – Including what's working, what's not, and why.
- **Transformational indicators of customer preferences** – Providing robust visibility into each and every customer and what's important to them as they change over time.
- **Emotional signals** – Promoting empathy required to deliver exceptional customer engagement and personalized experiences.

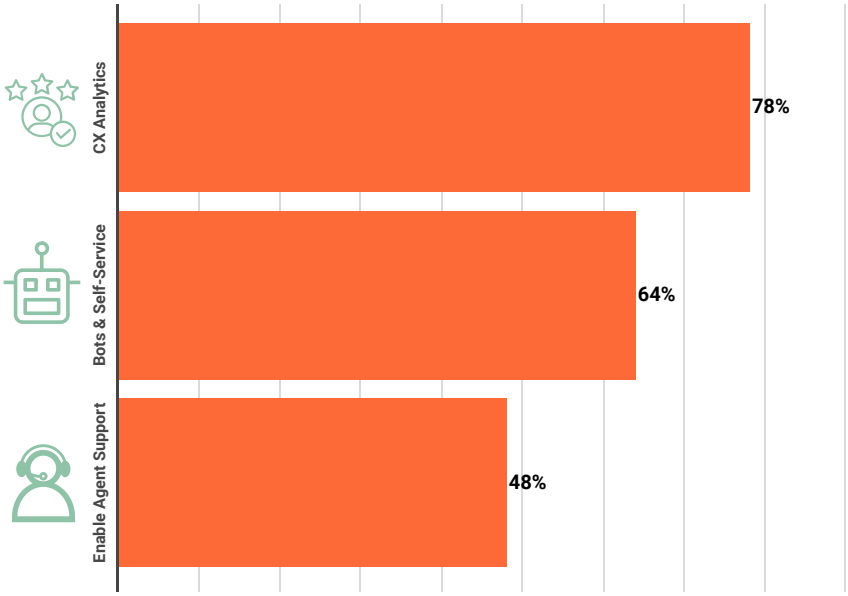
These are the essential elements required to drive trust, loyalty, and revenue-generating opportunities across every enterprise. However, until now, brands have been unable to tap into this insight because of the sheer size, scale, and complexity of analyzing ongoing conversations.

Mind the "Conversational Intelligence Gap"

The existence of massive data sets consisting of first-party data has created a "Conversational Intelligence Gap" that CX specialists, customer care administrators and C-Level executives in charge of digital transformation acknowledge. Additional findings from Opus Research's "2022 State of Voice Technology" survey showed that the two most impactful use cases for voice technology according to respondents were customer care analytics and self-service enabled by Conversational AI. Contextual understanding of the full omni-channel path of the customer communication with the company is imperative to enabling the employee to make the right decisions in proactively caring for the customer.

Respondents' concerns reflect recognition that firms must listen better to the words they receive directly from their customers in order to stay competitive. More importantly, the research shows that top managers now recognize that improving customer experience is the main motivation for employing automated voice technologies. That includes deriving insights from conversations in near real-time and sharing perspectives across sales, operations, support, and post-sales departments.

Figure 1: Most Impactful Use Cases for Conversational Data

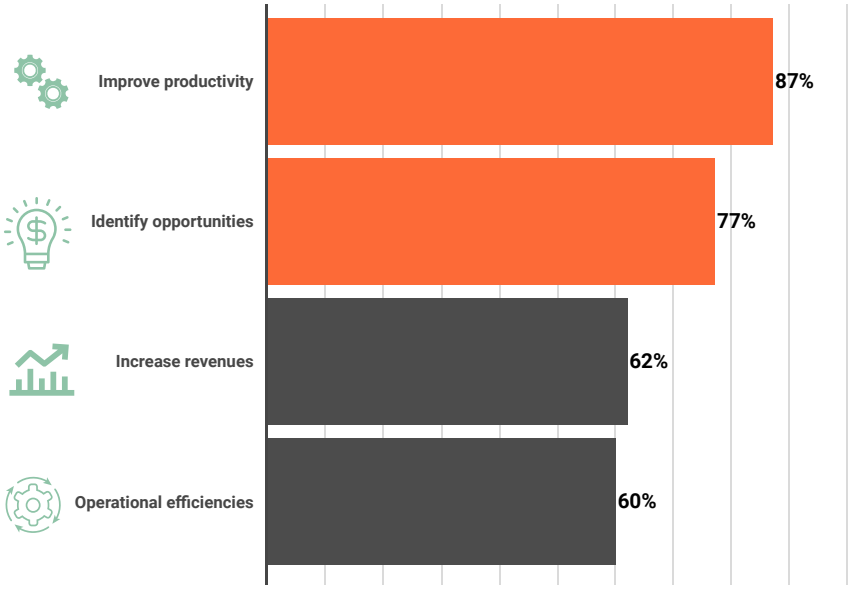


(Source: 2022 State of Voice Technology, Opus Research)

- 78% of respondents say "Customer Experience Analytics" most impactful
- 64% Bots and Multi-channel Self-Service
- 48% Support Agent Enablement

Another emerging trend (not reflected to this degree in last year's survey) is an appreciation of the criticality of voice technologies. 99% of respondents view voice-enabled experiences as a critical part of their future strategy enterprise-wide. While there's a clear differentiation between which departments are using voice tech, and which aren't, the reasons that organizations have decided to adopt it are very consistent:

Figure 2: Reasons for Implementing Voice Technologies



(Source: 2022 State of Voice Technology, Opus Research)

Better Listening, at Enterprise Scale

Today, competitive enterprises are putting extra effort into identifying technologies that understand their customers and prospects in a deeper and more robust way. They understand that technology has enabled dramatic acceleration of change, affecting everything from how consumers think to how they live out their daily lives. They no longer want to depend on information gleaned from "second parties" (the trackers) or sold to them by "third parties" (brokers who aggregate static personal data). Instead, they recognize that the ultimate sources of accurate insights into each customer's intent come from the thousands of daily interactions that they carry out with their customers.

The problem that enterprises have to address is that their employees (as mere humans) cannot analyze and categorize so many conversations to identify and prioritize what's important or how their customers are changing over time.

Employees and customers alike benefit by employing AI-powered machine learning technology to accelerate the processes involved in ingesting massive amounts of input and automatically analyzing it to cull out important insights to share across multiple departments to improve customer experience and employee performance.

Some look to pre-built models to try and achieve this, however, pre-built models can't pick up those changes as they occur. This is why dynamic, automatic models and algorithms that use actual, ongoing customer conversations are critical (i.e. not pre-built using a static view of customers), because they are able to identify changes as they occur.

One company that is gaining significant traction in this space among industry leaders and systems integrators is Talkmap. Talkmap is a Conversational Intelligence company whose models and algorithms utilize 100% of ongoing customer conversations as they occur to gain accurate and timely visibility into customers and how they change over time. Importantly, because Talkmap's models are not pre-built, but rather are trained by actual customer conversations, their accuracy, value, and actionability are all demonstrably improved and is what enables it to work on an ongoing, sustainable basis. As customers change, Talkmap's models identify it. Resulting use cases are broad, typically impacting multiple areas across an organization, including CX, EX, and operational improvements. Talkmap improves employees' ability to deliver timely and informed interactions, resulting in an engaged and exceptional customer experience. The insight that Talkmap delivers at scale is critical for the employee experience whether they are in a virtual call center, in person in a retail store, or in a customer facing field operations role.

In Search Of: The Ubiquitous Accelerator

Brands have already recognized their core need for Conversational Intelligence and insights. Now they see that speed is of the essence. They look to technology providers that can fulfill the demands of increasingly sophisticated and impatient customers, not to mention shareholders, by providing a wide range of capabilities – if not in "real-time" – at least in the course of a contemporaneous conversation.

Their checklist of desired capabilities will inevitably include:

- Automatic & continuous discovery of customer intent: Ingest, analyze, categorize at scale with great speed
- Attention to compliance: Automatic detection/redaction of PII
- Content enrichment: Agent prompts, call disposition/summarization
- Visualization/Forecasting: Depict trends, predict customer actions
- Share "signals": Churn risk, upsell opportunities, cross-sell opportunities

Successful solutions will provide state-of-the-art technologies and enabling features, including:

Core Resources:

- Natural Language Understanding (NLU)
- Speech to Text (STT)
- Conversational AI – Voice
- Conversational AI – Text
- Search /Insight Engine
- Speech Analytics and Mining
- Text Analytics and Mining
- Data Labeling and Annotation for Natural Language Generation (NLG)

Enhancements:

- Automatic conversation enrichment, including utterance level labeling of client goal, agent intent, topics, and turns
- Incremental customer goal and agent intent discovery (i.e., "what's new?")
- Conversation detail with turn-by-turn label confidence scoring
- Redaction & anonymization of PII
- Conversation priority flow diagrammer
- Client goal and agent intent; co-occurrence visualization
- Compare volume trends of client goals and agent intents over time
- Configure alerts based on signals and events in conversation data
- Identification of initial client goal and agent intent appearances in conversation data
- Chatbot/VA training data (CSV)
- Connectors for automatic import of training data to industry leading bot platforms
- Configurable and automated downloads of enriched conversation data
- Ability to import enriched conversation data into CRM, BI tools, etc.

"Talkmap ingests 100% of raw, ongoing conversational data. It then automatically and continuously analyzes, structures, organizes, labels, and visualizes these data to be used in a variety of applications across an organization that transforms an enterprise's CX and EX, ranging from identification of new revenue-generating opportunities to operational improvements."

Conversational Intelligence: The Future of CX, EX, and Customer Care

The beneficiaries of Talkmap's technology recognize that conversational data is the true voice of the customer. They also understand the significant role that technology has played in dramatically accelerating change in all of our daily lives and activities. This has amplified their realization that prevailing methods for assessing customer satisfaction, sentiment, and agent feedback are limited in accuracy and timeliness, and subject to bias and ambiguity. Companies never know with certainty whether a low Net Promoter Score (NPS) is the result of an agent's handling of a call or the implementation of a poorly conceived company policy or script.

Unlike existing solutions, Talkmap takes an approach by which the AI/ML models automatically train themselves based solely on customer conversations. They are not biased by a team of employee's applying the parent company's view of its customers at a given point in time. Instead, the solution focuses on understanding the customers' dynamic, changing view of the world by ingesting ongoing, raw conversations and enabling those conversations to be analyzed, structured, organized, labeled, and visualized in real-time across every area of an organization.

Existing solutions and language platforms have attempted to fill the perceived gap between collecting customer data and deriving true customer intent. However, because they do not carry out initial discovery and categorization automatically, they must be pre-programmed, involving both time and personnel expense. Importantly, companies don't really know what their customers want, need, think, or dislike about an offering, or how they are changing over time, thus making these elements impossible to identify and pre-program. Their inability to auto-detect intent, preferences, and sentiment at scale prevents companies from being truly customer-driven.

The Solution to the CI Gap: Unsupervised Learning, At Scale, In Real-Time

Talkmap takes 100% of each company's calls and chats and transforms them into actionable customer intelligence in real time with better-than-human accuracy. These processes happen quickly and affordably, representing unsupervised and automatic learning, at scale. With the introduction of Talkmap 7.0, its solution integrates seamlessly with existing CRM and other data platforms to support customized experiences throughout an organization.

Enterprises now see a direct causal line between deploying technologies that support real-time capture and analytics of conversational data and measurable improvements in employee and customer experience, customer loyalty, and topline results. Talkmap also provides non-technical users tools to develop custom natural language models via configuration of existing libraries and templates.

Talkmap 7.0: The Latest Version of the Talkmap Platform

The latest release of the Talkmap platform responds to the emerging needs of brands and enterprise customers to support better CX and customer efficiency across a broad base of enterprises and brands. The company refers to Talkmap 7.0 as a resource to support robust, timely, and dynamic understanding of customers as the "North Star" of all enterprise data and business intelligence.

The features and enhancements in Talkmap 7.0 are organized as follows:

- Speed to deploy – with auto-recognition of intent baked in at scale
- Speed to execute – including out-of-the-box implementation of such functions as auto redactions and ease of integration into existing systems, and the ability to set up custom alerts to inform specific users when triggered by increases or decreases of specific call types
- Integrations with contact center, CRM, systems of record
- Rapid identification of "best practices" in agent scripting that optimize outcomes across multiple areas (i.e. sales, retention, tech support, service, etc), including as offers or compliance codicils across functional areas
- Tools for visualization and forecasting (e.g. priority flow diagrammer) – making it easy for administrators to prioritize highest volume topics and based on contemporaneous understanding of customer intent
- Call segmentation and scoring capabilities

These are essential elements required to drive trust, loyalty, and revenue-generating opportunities across every enterprise.

However, until now, brands have been unable to tap into this insight because of the sheer size, scale, and complexity of these ongoing conversations. Talkmap is experiencing rapid implementations by many world-leading brands because they have developed proprietary AI-powered machine learning technology, combined with massive computing capabilities, that is now not only making ongoing, dynamic, and automatic Conversational Intelligence possible, but they are also delivering APIs to integrate it seamlessly into enterprise tech stacks.

Talkmap's patented AI-powered machine learning technology ingests 100% of a company's ongoing, raw, unstructured, customer calls, and chats with contact center agents, then analyzes, structures, organizes, labels, and visualizes them with better-than-human accuracy, in real-time, at scale.

This level of dynamic Conversational Intelligence provides enterprises with unprecedented, real-time visibility into their customers as they change over time…enabling them to dynamically and continuously improve their customer experience outcomes at a scale and speed required by real-time, event-driven architected call centers and contact centers.

About Opus Research

Opus Research is a diversified advisory and analysis firm providing critical insight on software and services that support digital transformation. Opus Research is focused on the merging of intelligent assistance, NLU, machine learning, conversational AI, conversational intelligence, intelligent authentication, service automation and digital commerce. **www.opusresearch.net**

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