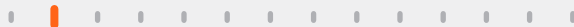


EBOOK

# How to Improve Agent Experience with Conversational AI **(AND TIPS ON HOW TO GET YOUR AGENTS ON BOARD)**





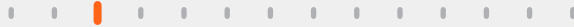
## INTRODUCTION

Your contact center agents are the front line of your brand. And, these brand ambassadors are often the only connection that your customers have with your company. However, research shows that 61% of consumers say that they have stopped transacting with a business after a poor service experience.<sup>1</sup> Agents have a direct impact on your brand perception and loyalty—and yes, even on your bottom line.

Despite training efforts and agent investment, the contact center is a difficult space to retain talent. With an attrition rate of 30-45% and an average tenure of only one year,<sup>2</sup> employees revolve in and out, removing the longevity needed to create a loyal workforce who takes pride or feels like they have a stake in your company. In addition to this high turnover, the need for contact center agents is growing at a higher rate. Research shows that contact center agent jobs are set to grow by 36% from 2016 to 2026.<sup>3</sup>



1 [State of global customer service report](#). (2019). Microsoft.  
2 Reynolds, Penny. (2015). [Exploring Call Center Turnover Numbers](#). Quality Assurance & Training Connection.  
3 Saboo, Neha. (2019). [Working in a Call Center: Here's What You Need to Know](#). Glassdoor.com.

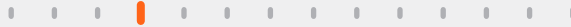


With exceptional customer experience being a key differentiator for companies, improving agent experience is essential to a brand's success. Today, many companies are turning to Conversational AI applications, such as virtual assistants or virtual agents, to automate tasks and offer the opportunity for customers to self-service. Doing so not only can improve customer experience, but can also remove many common pain points from the agent experience equation. The result is a happier, more motivated worker who upholds your brand integrity and wants to stay with you, along with reduced attrition rates and operating costs.



Companies that can keep service agents on the job longer not only **reduce operating costs** but also **improve customer satisfaction**.<sup>4</sup>





## AGENT EXPERIENCE IS THE NEW CX

There's no doubt that customer experience has been a huge focus for most brands in the recent years. However, good customer experience is reliant on agent retention which is a constant struggle for contact center management. Since longer-tenured agents have more expertise and institutional knowledge to bring to customer interactions, improving employee retention also has a direct impact on the quality of customer care.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons departing employees cite most often for leaving include a lack of challenging work, inadequate recognition, limited career paths, and too little flexibility. Failure to improve and retain talented employees can result in:

**Increased operational costs,  
including training and recruiting**

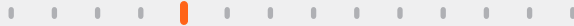


**Negative impact on  
customer satisfaction**



**Lost productivity  
during ramp up**



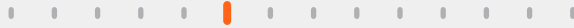


Great customer experience focuses on providing an efficient and effortless way for customers to get things done. Why not extend this model to help create great agent experience? Automation with Conversational AI applications can support both your customer and agent experience by offering an easier and more productive way for both your customers and agents to complete their tasks.



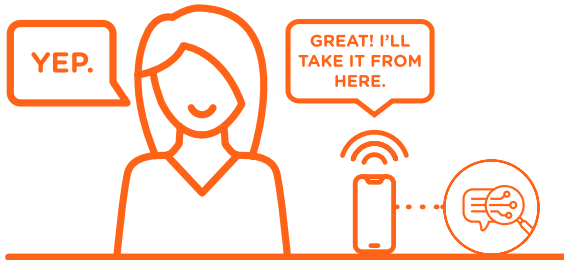
**EMPLOYEE ATTRITION CAN ERODE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WHILE INCREASING OPERATING COSTS.<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> Gretz, Whitney. Jacobson, Raelyn. (2018). [Boosting contact-center performance through employee engagement](#). McKinsey & Company.



## WHY CONVERSATIONAL AI APPLICATIONS?

Conversational AI applications like virtual assistants, are being implemented by many businesses to automate tasks while bringing benefits like improved customer satisfaction, decreased costs, and increased revenue. In addition, many businesses are also seeing the additional benefit of improved agent experience.



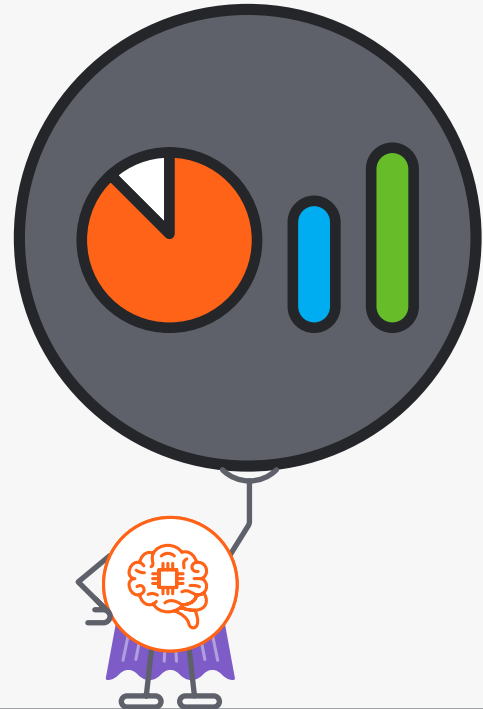
**CONVERSATIONAL AI IS THE SET OF TECHNOLOGIES BEHIND AUTOMATED MESSAGING AND SPEECH-ENABLED APPLICATIONS THAT OFFER HUMAN-LIKE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN COMPUTERS AND HUMANS.**

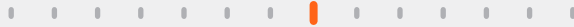


Virtual assistants offer a more conversational and natural way for consumers to interact. Consumers are not limited to typing or speaking in a certain way or using specific words or text to solicit responses. The result is a more effective and productive interaction that mimics a conversation with a real human and an excellent CX.



On the agent side, a virtual assistant can take over the data-driven, complex, transactional conversations, so human agents can focus on tasks that need their expertise and special training or in other words, the more interesting work. In instances where upselling and cross-selling are involved and rewarded, this can provide the agent with more opportunity to do so. In turn, this can help improve your agent productivity and reduce agent churn. Virtual assistants can also help provide your live agents with the information and data they need, so they can be more efficient in handling the situation at hand.

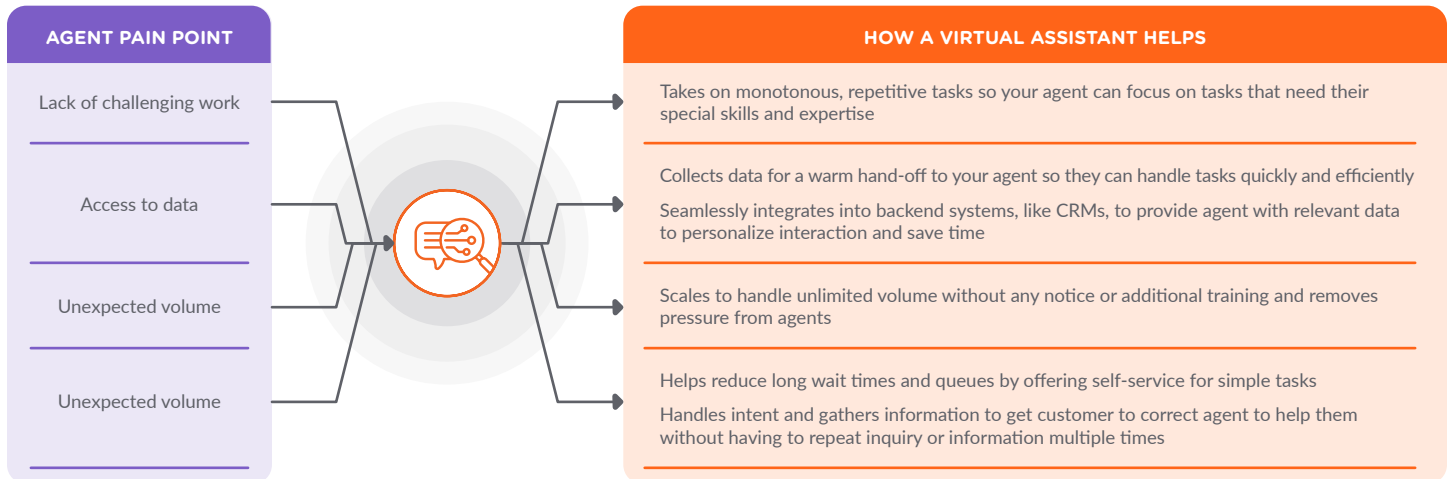




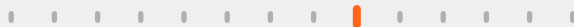
## A VIRTUAL ASSISTANT: YOUR AGENT'S NEW BEST FRIEND

A Conversational AI application like a virtual assistant can alleviate the many pain points associated with contact center attrition including monotonous work, the pressure to keep up with the pace while maintaining numbers, and of course frustrated customers.

### AGENTS AND VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS WORKING TOGETHER







## TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR AGENTS ON BOARD

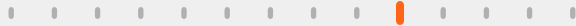
Despite the fact that virtual assistants and your live agents working together can actually improve their experience, some may fear that this type of automation may actually put their job at risk. If you do decide to implement a Conversational AI application, follow these tips to ensure that your agents are not only aware of what is going on, but also feel part of the process, comfortable, and valued.

### Be open and consistent with communication

Be open and honest with your agents about how a virtual assistant will improve their work through regular communication to them starting at implementation. This will ensure that there is no misinterpretation or misconceptions about what is going on and how it will affect their day-to-day work. Make sure to outline the benefits clearly so they know that this new technology is being implemented to help better support them in their role.

### Offer education and training

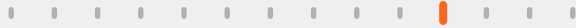
Work with your Conversational AI application vendor to put together a series of educational events and training for your agents. As you add new business rules or expand capabilities to new channels, make sure your agents are fully trained and comfortable working with the technology. If your agents understand how the application works, then they will feel more confident receiving information and warm hand-offs from it.



## Ask them for feedback

Since your agents will be working side-by-side with the application, they will have valuable insight on how everything is working or not. Listening to agent feedback can give great understanding into parts of the conversation design that can be improved, especially when the application is first launched.



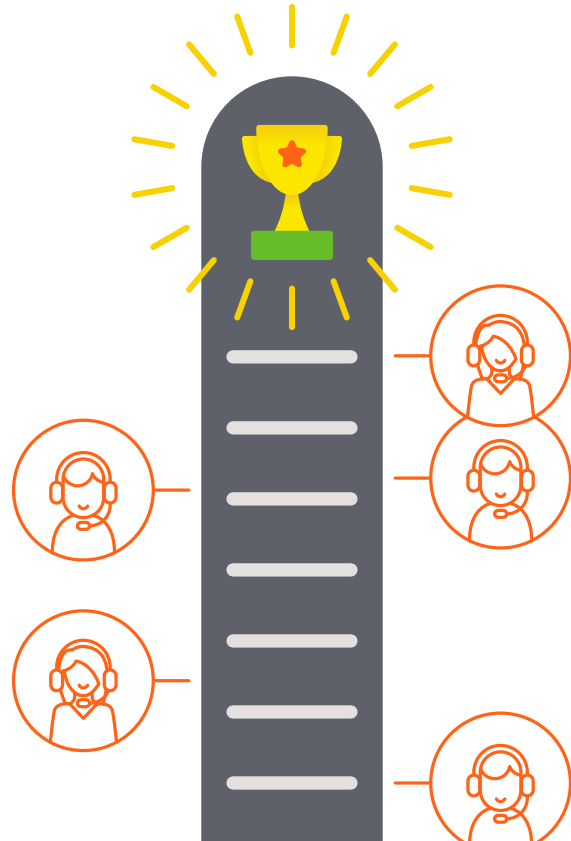


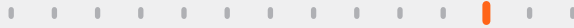
### Associate KPIs with the application

Many businesses that associate some of their agent KPIs with the use of the application, see a quicker acceptance of it. For example, if the virtual assistant takes information from the customer and passes it to the agent, the agent must learn to trust that information and not ask the customer to repeat the information since that would affect the efficiency and experience.

### Recognize and reward exemplary service

Now that your agents will be taking on more complex tasks and dealing with conversations that require their special area of expertise, make sure to thank and reward them for their good work with these more complicated matters.

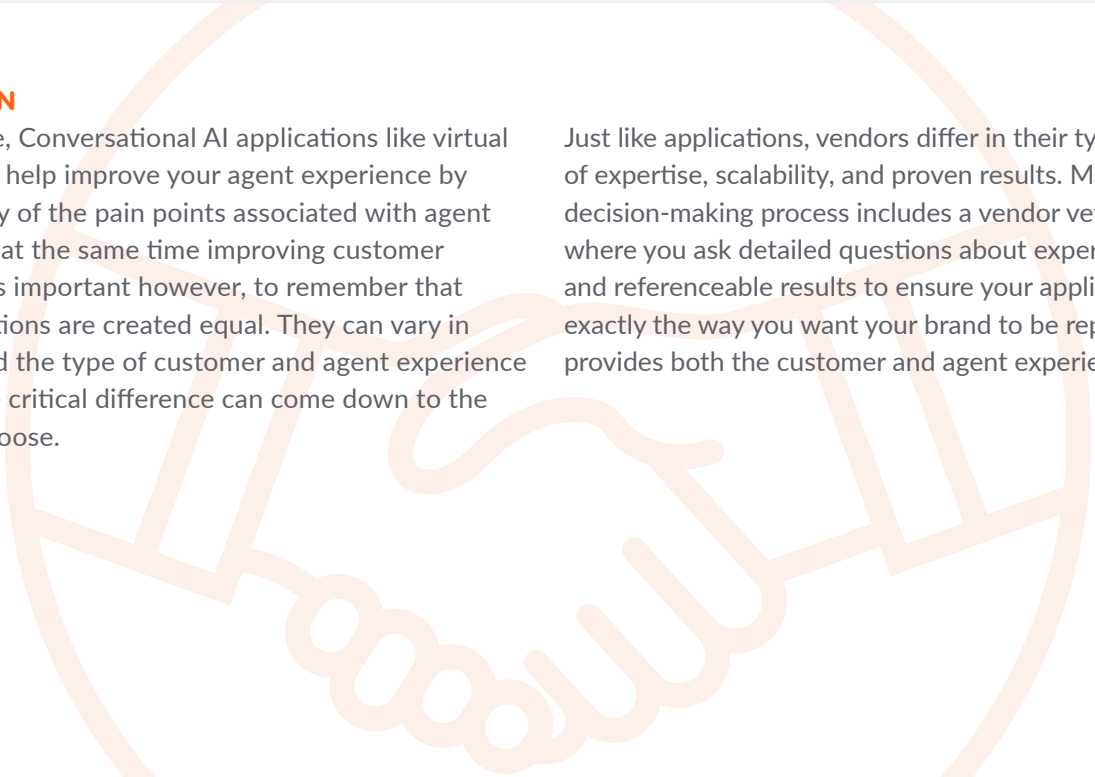


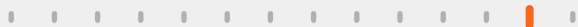


## CONCLUSION

As you can see, Conversational AI applications like virtual assistants, can help improve your agent experience by removing many of the pain points associated with agent attrition while at the same time improving customer experience. It's important however, to remember that not all applications are created equal. They can vary in complexity and the type of customer and agent experience they offer. The critical difference can come down to the vendor you choose.

Just like applications, vendors differ in their type and area of expertise, scalability, and proven results. Make sure your decision-making process includes a vendor vetting process where you ask detailed questions about experience, design, and referenceable results to ensure your application works exactly the way you want your brand to be represented and provides both the customer and agent experience you seek.





## About Interactions

Interactions provides Intelligent Virtual Assistants that seamlessly assimilate Conversational AI and human understanding to enable businesses to engage with their customers in highly productive and satisfying conversations. With flexible products and solutions designed to meet the growing demand for unified, omnichannel customer care, Interactions is delivering unprecedented improvements in the customer experience and significant cost savings for some of the largest brands in the world. Founded in 2004, Interactions is headquartered in Franklin, Massachusetts with additional offices worldwide.

For more information about Interactions, contact us:

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