Avoiding Burnout

Eight Clear Benefits of Artificial Intelligence in Call Center Operations

Solvvy + fcr

There isn't a busier person in any profession.

Meet the typical contact center operations manager. You won't find a busier person in any profession. They are tasked with the monumental responsibility of churning out reports and managing overflowing support queues all while keeping their support teams staffed, engaged, scheduled, productive, and trained. Though I think these folks secretly get a thrill from the daily (and often nightly) whirl of activity, they also live right on the edge of burnout.

Any company that wants an operations manager to push the pause button on all of that and demo some newfangled technology, had better make it worth their while. This tool needs to be effortless to install and use without significant technical resources, reasonably priced, and not yet another thing for the time-strapped manager to maintain.

The capabilities of artificial intelligence are fascinating. Applied to customer service, the benefits are numerous and already yielding a number of win-wins for both company and customer.thing for the time-strapped manager to maintain.
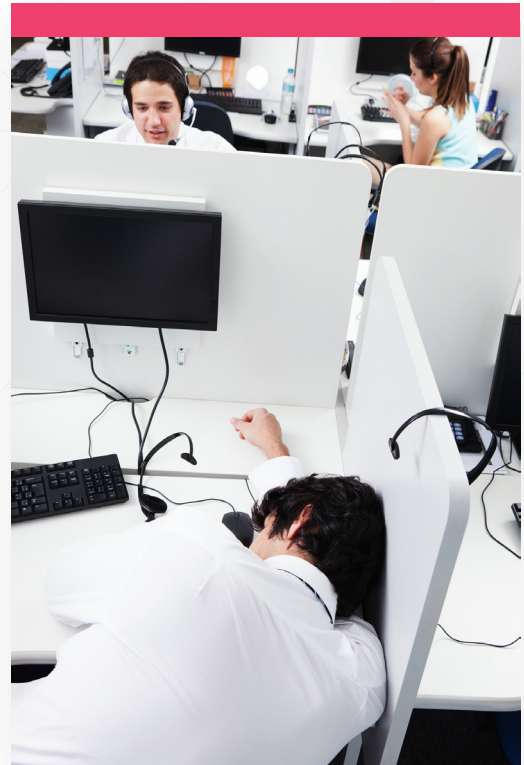
My appeal today is to the operations manager. This e-book will highlight some of the ways a self-service solution with AI can make life a whole lot easier.

Solvvy and FCR present the eight clear benefits you can expect with AI and how it impacts the metrics management really cares about.

Benefit 1: Increase Contact Deflections via Self-Service

Year after hear, the phone call ranks as the most expensive support channel in the contact center. Text-based channels offer some savings because they can either be handled more quickly or with multiple conversations concurrently. By far the least expensive support channel, however, is self-service. Where a typical phone conversation to the contact center might cost the company $6-12, a self-service query costs just a fraction at $0.10.

Placed in the right spots in the customer's journey, self-service options can be presented to customers before contacting support. This enables you to track the number of contact deflections from other support channels. If you know your cost per contact, you can quickly quantify the savings by solving more interactions with self-service.
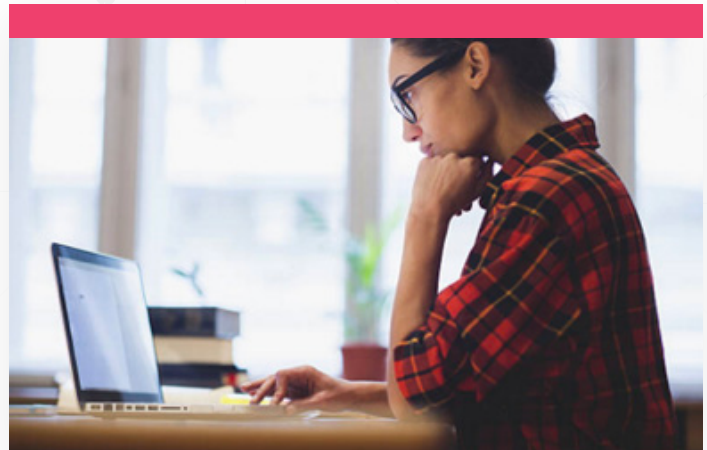
Solvvy can add an additional layer of ticket resolutions by sitting at the point of ticket submission for the user. It uses NLP to understand the user's question and via machine learning pulls the 2-3 sentences from your knowledge base that answers the question. Companies using Solvvy resolve 15-20% of incoming tickets from the minute its live.

Impact on KPIs:
Contact Deflection & Cost per Contact

Benefit 2: Reduce Agent Training Time

Hiring new customer service staff is time consuming and expensive. When you take into account recruiting, vetting, interviewing, hiring, and training, the costs begin to add up quickly. The typical onboarding process for a contact center agent can take somewhere between two and four weeks, but the time to become fully proficient can take upwards of three to six months.

A self-service platform powered by AI isn't just a great tool for customers, it's also a critical tool for your customer service team. Rather than dumping as much information as possible on new agents in training classes, companies can instead show them the basics and train them to use the self-service tool as a reference to quickly solve problems.

Impact on KPIs:
Training Time, Time To Full Proficiency

Benefit 3: Decreased Floor Support

In the contact center, a huge part of the job for managers and supervisors is supporting agents as questions arise. This certainly detracts from the amount of time they have to spend on other important activities — like managing their staff, focusing on engagement, and monitoring quality. Also consider that every time agents place customers on hold to get help, they are extending the time it takes to resolve issues, increasing the cost of each interaction.

Impact on KPIs:
Cost Per Contact, Average Handle Time, Hold Time

Benefit 4: Increased Accuracy

There's no bigger customer service buzz killer than inconsistent service. The culprits for inconsistency vary. One of the top reasons is the inability for agents and customers to access the right answers to their questions in a central location. Customers who receive wrong or incomplete answers either have to call back or they may choose to take their business elsewhere — neither of these options being good for business. A self-service platform solves this problem, ensuring that customers and agents are working from the same base of information to consistently provide the right, most complete answers.

AI takes this a step further by understanding the question, sifting through the knowledge base, and presenting the right answers quickly and efficiently. The system also provides valuable analytics to gain understanding of the top issues customers encounter so companies can continuously fine tune their documentation.

Impact on KPIs:
First Contact Resolution, Quality

Benefit 5: Career Pathing Opportunities

As a customer service leader, positive agent attrition (where they are promoted within the organization) is often viewed as a success. Agents often begin their journey with a company in customer service and as their cultural fit is established and product knowledge and abilities grow, they are promoted to other roles both inside and outside of the support organization. These internal hires are a major win for the organization, enabling them to retain top talent.

I've seen a number of instances where a self-service platform creates opportunities for growth for agents. Your best agents can spend at least a portion of their time analyzing the most common issues customers encounter and managing and fine-tuning the platform to respond accurately. I like to view this as a way to move our best agents from working with customers on a one-to-one basis to a one-to-many — increasing their impact.

Impact on KPIs:
Negative Attrition, Quality

Benefit 6: Increased Customer Loyalty

Whether your company tracks Customer Satisfaction (CSAT), Net Promoter Score (NPS), or Customer Effort — and you should track at least one — great customer service has been correlated many times over to the likelihood of customers continuing to do business with you. Your self-service platform minimizes customer effort by connecting them with the right answers more efficiently, reducing the amount of time, and the number of interactions with customer service.

According to The Effortless Experience, customers are 96% more likely to return when great customer service occurs.

Impact on KPIs:
Customer Satisfaction, Customer Effort, Net Promoter Score

Benefit 7: Richer Customer Connection

When customers contact support, they often have two problems to solve. The first is the issue with the product or service. The second, often overlooked one, is the issue where they're upset and their trust in your company is damaged. This second problem is the reason that customer service agents are so critical to your business. The ability of human beings (your agents) to connect with other humans (your customers) can not only restore customer trust, it has the ability to forge lifetime bonds.

Agents are more free to make these connections using skills like empathy, ownership, and empowerment when they have the right tools in place to support their performance. A self-service platform backed by AI can help diagnose issues and present the right solutions so agents can quickly and effortlessly solve both problems.

Benefit 8: Increased Customer Insights

The customer service department is a precious, and often untapped resource in any organization. This team interacts with customers all day, everyday and possesses many of the keys for improving the customer experience and the overall business. The question is, what's the best way to access those customer insights in a meaningful way that drives real improvement?

The right self-service tool will provide you with the insights to understand what customers are most frequently asking about. The goal for companies shouldn't simply be to answer those questions but to prevent customers from having to ask them in the first place. Starting with the top issues will have the greatest impact on your business.

Impact on KPIs:
Customer Loyalty, Quality

Impact on KPIs:
Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction
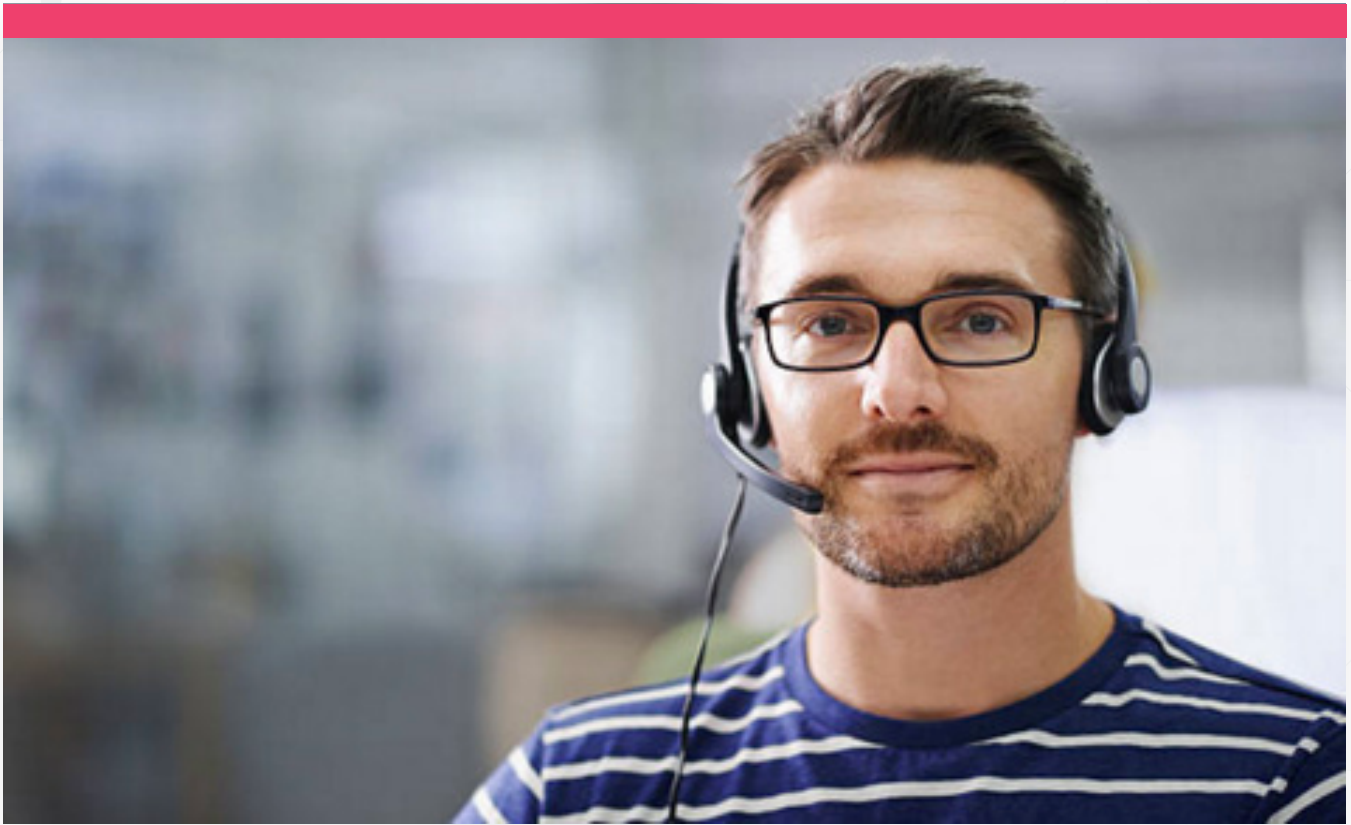
Artificial intelligence will make your life easier.

For the customer service leader also saddled with the responsibility of selling a self-service platform to company leadership, they need not look at this as an added expense. When you look at reduced training and attrition costs, less contacts to customer service, and reduced customer churn, the right tool will pay for itself — and fast. Not to mention the fact that it takes that frazzled operations manager and transforms them, their team, and their company into a success.

Contact Solvvy today to learn more artifical intelligence can transform your customer experience and drive efficiencies for your support organization.

About the Author

Jeremy Watkin is the Head of Quality for FCR, a high-quality, domestic-based provider of contact center and business process outsourcing solutions. Their mission is to provide innovative support for innovative companies. Many of FCR's customers use Solvvy. Contact FCR today to innovate your customer service.

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