PART I

2017 ASPECT AGENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Aspect Software, in partnership with Conversion Research, conducted a national study of 500 Active Customer Service Representatives aged 18-55 years old to uncover the attitudes, preferences and behaviors reps have about their jobs.
Project overview & objectives

The objective of this specific study was to investigate, from a variety of different perspectives (age, gender, size of customer support center, levels of engagement) the differing and similar attitudes, preferences and behaviors reps have regarding contact management software, the use of chatbots in customer service, workplace priorities and perceptions.

Survey Methodology

- A custom-crafted online study with a minimum aggregate sample size of 1,000 Americans, aged 18-65, regionally representative and divided by gender as per most recent census projections (with ~25% oversampling of those aged 18-34)
- Survey fielded online to match the behavior and expectations of this population
- This study took place in March, 2017
The State of Agent Satisfaction

62%

The number of agents who said they are satisfied in their current customer service role.

Takeaway
Agents who feel engaged and empowered are notably more satisfied.

Q. How satisfied would you say you are currently with your job as a customer service representative? (1-5 scale)
And a healthy number of agents plan to stay where they are currently employed. Surprising no one, millennials are the greatest flight risk in contact centers.

The longer agents stay, the less likely they are to be looking to leave.

Takeaway
However, agents are not very optimistic about their career opportunities in the contact center where they work.

41%

The number of agents who are optimistic about opportunities for advancement in the contact center where they work.

Takeaway

The smaller the contact center, the fewer the perceived opportunities for advancement.

Q. Do you feel there are opportunities for you to be promoted and/or advance in your career at the customer support center or customer service center where you are currently working?
And then come the chatbots to steal their jobs
Analysts predict chatbots will be replacing most customer service jobs:

- The use of virtual customer assistants (chatbots) will jump by 1,000% by 2020.

- Bot interactions in the banking sector (those completed without human assistance) will move from 12% currently, to over 90% in 2022.

- It’s the end of the contact center agent as we know it. Or is it?

Analysts’ gloomy outlook doesn’t take consumer preference into complete consideration.

Takeaway

Many consumers have a growing appetite for automated interaction in customer service

66% Of consumers feel good about both the company and themselves when they solve a problem related to that company without having to talk with an agent.

61% Of consumers think chatbots will allow for faster resolution/question answering.

What kinds of questions do agents WANT to get on an average day?

10 pts
Agents desire to handle moderately complex questions is 10 percentage points higher than the total they currently receive.

Task Type Breakdown

Q. What percentage of questions that you receive in a given week would you say are “easy”, “moderate” and “complex”?

Q. Based on your experience as a customer service representative, what ONE type of question or issue do you prefer to handle – easy, moderate or complex?
How easy/hard are the questions customer service agents get on an average day?

**EASY**
A question that can be answered or issue resolved in 2-3 minutes and is a single issue call.

**MODERATE**
A question that can be answered or issue resolved in 3-10 minutes and needs some discovery on customer history and company policy, and contains multiple questions/ concerns.

**COMPLEX**
A question that takes 10 minutes or more to be answered or issue resolved and takes troubleshooting and/or the assistance or several company resources to be handled.
The larger the customer service center, on average, the fewer easy customer questions

Q24. Thinking about the total number of customer questions and issues you handle in a typical week as a customer service representative, what percentage would you say are “easy”, “moderate” and “complex”?

- 100 person or smaller contact center: 54%
- Contact center between 100 – 1,000 agents: 45%
- Contact center over 1,000 agents: 40%
The larger the contact center the more agents are up for handling challenging questions

61%
Of agents in large contact centers are more likely to want to handle complex questions vs. agents in small/medium sized contact centers.

Takeaway
36% of all agents said handing complex tasks make them feel more committed and satisfied in their work.
How do agents feel about their contact center using chatbots for customer service?

50%

Of millennial agents feel they would feel a greater sense of commitment and satisfaction if they were given more complex questions to handle.

Q. Please tell us how likely you feel each of the following results would be if the customer support center or customer service center where you currently work started to use chatbot technology to help handle the most frequently asked.

- I'll be handling less mundane questions and applying my intellect: 44%
- I will feel more satisfied and committed to my job: 36%
- Will give me a certain degree of autonomy and responsibility: 35%
Customer service agents feel chatbots will indirectly lead to improving their value to the organization:

- **79%** Feel that handling more complex customer issues improves their skills
- **72%** Makes them feel that they are having a bigger impact in the company
- **64%** Will enable them to provide more personalized service experience for customers
- **59%** As employees, they feel more satisfied in their jobs and more committed to the company
Engaged employees vs. the average

Giving complex customer service questions to engaged agents to handle presents the greatest opportunity for development, impact.

Q. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about handling more complex customer questions or issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generational Breakdown on Handling Complex Customer Service Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen Z</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Most likely to feel it helps them make an impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Most likely to feel it puts them more in touch with customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>- They feel better, more satisfied/committed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Most likely to feel it will improve prospects for advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>But…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Makes them feel frustrated because they are measured for speed.</td>
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| **Millennials**                                               |
| - Feel it improves their skills                              |
| - Believe it provides an opportunity to provide a more personalized customer experience |
| - See it as an opportunity to shine for management           |
| But…                                                         |
| - Least likely to feel better, more satisfied/committed       |
| - Least likely to feel they are making an impact              |
| - Least likely to feel it helps them make an impact           |

| **Gen X/Boomers**                                            |
| - Most likely to say it improves their skills                |
| - Group most likely to feel it makes work more diverse and interesting |
| - Least likely to get frustrated                             |
| - Feel it provides an opportunity to give more personalized service for customers |
| But…                                                        |
| - Least likely to see it as an opportunity to shine for management |

Q. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about handling more complex customer questions or issues.
Consumers still want real people to handle complicated questions

42%

Of consumers said they want live agents to help them handle complex questions and requests.

Takeaway

71% of consumers feel that chatbots would not be good for complicated trouble shooting.

*According to the 2016 Aspect Consumer Experience Index*
Here is where agents and chatbots come together: Consumer preferences indicate that personal assistance is still in demand for complex issues:

- 61% of consumers feel chatbots will allow for simple to moderate requests to be handled more quickly but 42% said they prefer live agents to help them handle complex questions and requests.

- An overwhelming majority (86%) of consumers feel that they should always have an option to transfer to a live agent.

- Only 29% of consumers feel that chatbots would be good for complicated trouble shooting and just 32% felt automated interaction would work well in solving a complex request.

- The majority of agents see a number of opportunities for growth and contribution when handling a larger number of complex customer requests.

Chatbots and customer service agents working together present growth opportunities for the employee, improved customer satisfaction for the consumer, and improved efficiency for the organization.