Collaborative Intelligence in the Contact Center

Developing an AI-powered human + digital workforce for today's customers.
Introduction

Customers and employees have new expectations.
Loyalty, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement and retention are rooted in having a frictionless, smooth experience while engaging with customer service technology.

Today’s customers and employees expect faster, more accurate, effortless service. Every day, they experience the benefits of innovative technology with brands that have taken the lead on automation and AI-enhanced self-service experiences. They expect the same from contact centers — as consumers in need of assistance and as agents working to support them.

The key to delivering a great customer experience starts by improving the employee experience. And today, that means automating routine, transactional tasks and harnessing the power of AI while leveraging the inherent value of people.

It also means changing the way people think about artificial intelligence (AI) and creating a new workforce of the future.
Contents

The Future of the Contact Center ................................................................. 4
What Is Collaborative Intelligence? .......................................................... 6
The Need for Collaborative Intelligence .................................................. 7
Applying CI to the Contact Center ........................................................... 9
   AI-Powered Self Service ........................................................................ 10
   AI-Powered Real-Time Coaching and Assistance ................................... 11
Analytics ................................................................................................. 12
Practical AI .............................................................................................. 13
Case Study: BISSELL .............................................................................. 14
Case Study: Pilot Freight .......................................................................... 15
Take the Next Step .................................................................................. 16
The Future of the Contact Center

Contact centers have faced enormous pressure in the last few years. The pandemic instigated a global leap forward in technology maturity and usage, hitting contact centers hard. Online interactions and the complexity of issues increased — quickly outpacing the capacity of organizations to scale their teams to address the challenges. Slower response and resolution times jeopardized customer loyalty, and employee burnout worsened an already difficult retention trend.

Contact centers were caught wherever their digital transformation had brought them thus far. For many, the pandemic required a scramble to the cloud to support moving more people to remote work. It also spurred them to implement more automation in order to handle surging demands. However, not all these solutions have brought about their intended effect. Contact centers continue to struggle with technology that feels more like a hindrance to great CX, rather than a catalyst for it.

Over the past 12 months, how has the complexity of customer contacts/interactions changed?

- Increased: 55%
- Stayed the same: 46%
- Decreased: 7%

Over the past 12 months, how has your contact center’s volume of customer contacts/interactions changed?

- Increased: 29%
- Stayed the same: 47%
- Decreased: 16%

Do you believe your agent-facing applications could be more effective?

- Yes: 92%
- No: 7%
The majority of respondents plan to increase their use of intelligent self-service automation. More than a third (34%) will invest in voice-based intelligent virtual agents for customer service.

73% agree that automating more customer support tasks would help improve customer relationships and loyalty.

76% agree that automating more customer support tasks would benefit their workforce.

75% of IT decision makers agree that tools that allow them to build and manage their own applications are important to their automation strategies.

Most contact centers are pursuing intelligent self-service automation to address the increase in volume and to meet changing customer expectations. But cost, reliance on professional services, and time to development remain barriers.

Another barrier is how people perceive AI. Wary by nature of what we do not fully understand, people have long worried that AI will replace human jobs. The entertainment industry has perpetuated the fear that machines will replace and overtake us. The reality is, machines will replace some jobs, just as they did during the Industrial Revolution of the early 1900s. But machines aren’t meant to replace humans — nor the need for humans in the contact center.

To adopt automation and AI-enhanced functionality, contact center leaders need to address this perception barrier. It’s not just about allaying fears but creating a new culture that defines the human and digital workforce as allies, not competitors.

We call the blending of human and digital workforces’ strengths collaborative intelligence (CI). And we believe that CI is the best path forward for contact center leaders who are determined to deliver customer experiences that delight modern consumers while supporting modern employees.
What Is Collaborative Intelligence?

Humans have inherent strengths that machines do not have: We are creative, empathetic, have discerning judgment, and provide leadership. Machines powered by AI are computational, fast, scalable, and accurate.

Collaborative intelligence blends the strengths of people and machines to best serve the customer.

Humans harness machines and machines give humans superpowers.

Together, they deliver a seamless, efficient, and enhanced customer support experience that neither can deliver alone.

Humans harness machines and machines give humans superpowers.
The Need for Collaborative Intelligence

Scalability represents a major impetus driving automation and AI adoption in the contact center. But what began as an urgent need has broadened into a vision of how the contact center can evolve. Early AI adopters are in on the ground stages, shaping the customer service experience and, thus, customer expectations. We believe that collaborative intelligence will soon become the way contact centers deliver on their CX promises.

But it’s not just about CX. It’s also about economics. Virtual agents cost 10% of a human agent, on average. The majority of contact center work is high volume, repetitive tasks. Entrusting this work to virtual agents frees human agents to focus on low volume, higher value work, which also tends to be more complex. This is where people apply creativity, empathy, judgment, and leadership. This is also where they can deliver better experiences with real-time support from AI technology — such as with Five9 Agent Assist — and do so faster.
Human and digital agents working together using collaborative intelligence make the ideal team. Together, they can offer an optimal experience and enable the contact center to achieve its profit-center goals.

Cost Reduction: Payment Processing Example

Assume 2,000 incoming calls per hour with average handle time (AHT) of 120 seconds. With IVA, this contact center cuts service costs by a factor of eight.

**LIVE AGENTS**

- Agents required: 82
- Labor cost per month: $273,333
- Software cost @ $450 per seat: $16,400
- Total monthly cost: $290K

**VIRTUAL AGENTS**

- Agents required: 82
- Labor cost per month: $0
- Software cost @ $450 per seat: $36,900
- Total monthly cost: $37K
Applying CI to the Contact Center

There are multiple ways to deploy collaborative intelligence in the contact center. But just adding virtual agents or agent assistance isn’t enough to accomplish the overall goal.

Success requires a cultural shift.

Where to begin? Start by preparing and educating your employees. Paint the big picture of what the technology can achieve and the incremental steps needed to reach the goals. Address people’s concerns and fears. Admit that this is a learning curve for everyone involved.

Don’t forget to include customers in the AI journey. Rather than just deploying new self-service features, let them know what to expect and how they can provide feedback on their experience. This will help evoke goodwill and patience (rather than frustration) during early deployment when everyone is adjusting to new ways of doing things. Contrary to widely held belief, AI does make mistakes. It must learn and be trained. When people understand this, they’re more forgiving of errors and the process.

Overall, AI exists to make people’s jobs easier, less tedious, and to support their success. Positioning AI adoption in this light will help human agents see their digital colleagues as supportive helpers, rather than out to steal their jobs. Make sure that you don’t measure people and technology with the same metrics; each needs to be evaluated based on their unique strengths, not against each other.

Next, choose which AI solution to implement and build a strategy for how to incorporate it into — and how it will change — current workflows and KPIs. The following are places to start that offer the biggest immediate impact:

- Enabling self-service
- Providing real-time coaching and assistance
- Improving analytics
AI-Powered Self-Service

Customers look to self-service options to solve problems quickly and easily without reaching out to a person. Intelligent virtual agents (IVAs) offer conversational and engaging self-service options across voice and digital channels.

Conversational IVAs use natural language processing, speech-to-text, and machine learning (ML) to hold conversations with customers in a way that feels natural. IVAs can understand human speech in more than 100 languages and respond using human-like text-to-speech (TTS). Five9 offers more than two dozen authentically human-sounding voice avatars as well as customization options.

The most basic IVAs can simply answer a call, ask the caller if they want to maintain their place in queue, and schedule a call back. Advanced IVAs can understand multiple spoken languages; recognize intent using natural language processing; process PCI-compliant payments; and respond in multiple languages over the phone, via chat, or on messaging channels.

Use IVAs to offload simple tasks from agents such as making appointments, resetting passwords, looking up orders, surveying customers, processing payments, and answering all FAQs. With these tasks handled by AI, agents can focus on the more complex conversations that require empathy.

Because IVAs are programmed with easy drag-and-drop dialogue workflows and tasks, non-technical personnel can make changes and you can use ML to train the system.

IVAs and agents collaborate when IVAs transfer customers to a human agent. And your agents can also transfer an interaction back to the IVA to complete tasks, such as updating address or taking payments. IVAs provide a full transcript of the interaction so the human agent doesn’t miss a beat. The IVA or chatbot can also enable sentiment analysis to route dissatisfied or frustrated customers to a live agent.

Call 1-915-Five9AI to talk with a Five9 IVA.
AI-Powered Real-Time Coaching and Assistance

AI is intended to make work easier and more efficient. At its core, Five9 Agent Assist creates collaborative intelligence and uses AI to provide real-time coaching and assistance to live agents.

According to a report from IBM, agents spend 75% of a typical support call searching for data, and they spend too much time accessing multiple systems to gather relevant customer information and resolve issues.

Agent Assist uses AI and ML to analyze customer intent in real time and provide agents with relevant contextual data on-screen to help them navigate calls more effectively. Agent Assist also provides real-time guidance cards and checklists to streamline customer interactions. Guidance includes reminders, tips, and ways to increase CSAT, as well as personalized coaching tips to help improve performance. Admins can benefit by increasing compliance, script adherence, quality scores, and upsell, while accelerating new agent ramp-up.

Deploying these types of AI initiatives to automate processes can reduce employee burnout and increase job satisfaction. It improves agent productivity and efficacy, helping them to be more informed, engaged, and focused on the customer.

Overall, Agent Assist can help:
- Reduce average handle time
- Boost upsell
- Improve customer experience
- Accelerate onboarding
- Increase compliance and call quality

The advanced AI engine allows contact center teams to rapidly define, train, and deploy AI models with ease. The interface can cluster top customer and employee intents by category. The administrator or the human in the loop can provide oversight and add or remove new intents, enabling them to customize the AI behavior to suit their operational needs.

Agent Assist also helps leaders continually optimize results by providing them with the data they need to coach agents, analyze KPIs, and assess overall team performance.
Analytics

AI generates data and simplifies identification and analysis of contact center trends, which can help leaders evaluate performance in real time as well as historically. This data is valuable to the business and to improving customer experience. AI-based contact center platforms and solutions should incorporate robust analytics and reporting options to ensure that teams can turn data into actionable insights.

Five9 Analytics includes 120 easy-to-use out-of-the-box reports based on operational and business best practices as well as customizable and real-time reports with dashboards to ensure leaders can make data-informed decisions and react quickly to changing conditions.
Practical AI

AI offers many promises for the future. Contact centers need practical AI that makes an impact today. The AI that contact centers adopt to support their agent teams should be able to demonstrate ROI and make an immediate difference in productivity and customer experience. It should lower costs while improving quality.

What is practical AI? At Five9, practical AI is designed to:

• Deliver tangible business outcomes that you can define and measure immediately
• Continuously learn and improve so AI becomes smarter and handles changes
• Implement easily without a team of AI specialists or excessive cost

AI that doesn’t meet those qualifications will not deliver the results contact centers need to improve customer experience today.

The AI that contact centers adopt should lower costs while improving quality.
BISSELL is a vacuum cleaner and floor-care product manufacturing corporation headquartered in Michigan. The company is the number one manufacturer of floor-care products in North America.

Challenges
- Previous contact center was unable to support growth
- On-premises platform lacked system integrations
- Wanted to increase CSAT
- Difficult IVR configuration caused inefficiencies

Results
- Fully integrated cloud-based system
- Out-of-the-box proven features and benefits from day one
- Increased CSAT score by 9%
- 5% FTE savings with IVR queue callback and efficient agent routing capabilities

Solutions
- Intelligent Virtual Agent
- IVR
- Five9 CRM Adapter for Oracle
- Five9 Quality Management
- Technical Account Manager

“Five9 has made AI and automation our North Star.”

BISSELL
Pilot Freight Services Cuts Call Abandonment to 2%

“The Five9 IVA solution is phenomenal.... We’re amazed by the positive difference in the numbers we’re seeing.”

Mike Hess, Pilot Freight Services

Pilot Freight Services is a full-service global transportation and logistics company with more than 70 locations throughout North America and Western Europe, administration offices in the Netherlands and Spain, and a worldwide network of partners in 190 countries.

Benefits
• Lowered call abandonment rate to ~2%
• Fully resolved 45% of calls with IVA
• Achieved 44% cost savings in the contact center

Solutions
• Intelligent Virtual Agent
• Agent Desktop
• Blended Inbound Voice
• Digital Engagement: Chat, Email

Challenges
• 56% call abandonment rate
• Complex issue-resolution process
• Long hold times would lead to frustration with customers
Five9 is here to help you establish and optimize collaborative intelligence.

Five9 brings deep industry expertise in AI and automation, along with a solution portfolio that enables you to embrace collaborative intelligence. We can guide your digital workforce strategies by helping identify:

- Which conversations, tasks, and processes you should automate — and which you should not
- How to onboard and integrate a digital team into forecasting plans, skills queues, and workflows
- The customer journey across virtual and live support channels and how to eliminate silos to create a seamless, omnichannel experience
- How to align a digital workforce strategy with KPIs — such as call deflection, average handle time, customer effort score, and CSAT — to set up for quick ROI wins
- How to implement a digital workforce plan that you can continue evolving as new AI and automation capabilities become available

To learn more about collaborative intelligence and how to work with Five9, visit www.five9.com or call 1-800-553-8159.
About Five9

Five9 is an industry-leading provider of cloud contact center solutions, bringing the power of cloud innovation to more than 2,500 customers worldwide and facilitating billions of customer engagements annually. Five9 provides end-to-end solutions with digital engagement, analytics, workforce optimization, and AI to increase agent productivity and deliver tangible business results. The Five9 platform is reliable, secure, compliant, and scalable. Designed to help customers reimagine their customer experience, the Five9 platform connects the contact center to the business while delivering exceptional customer experiences that build loyalty and trust.

For more information visit [www.five9.com](http://www.five9.com) or call 1-800-553-8159.

Five9 and the Five9 logo are registered trademarks of Five9 and its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. The names and logos of third party products and companies in this document are the property of their respective owners and may also be trademarks. The product plans, specifications, and descriptions herein are provided for information only and subject to change without notice, and are provided without warranty of any kind, express or implied. Copyright ©2023 Five9, Inc.