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Trusted by Over 1,000 Customers

Why Your Next Contact Center Agent Should Be a Bot

Reduce Agent Costs by 40% or More

The last two years marked a monumental shift to digital automation as employers successfully redefined the remote and hybrid work environment for people working in an office.

Healthcare quickly followed suit transitioning to at-home virtual care via telehealth for select services to embrace the digital lifestyle.

Contact centers now face their turn embracing digital omnichannel engagement to elevate the patient experience and to differentiate themselves along with retention of highly valuable customers.

Likewise, they are looking to innovate to empower their employees to work more efficiently amid the current worker shortage.

Contact Center Challenges

The impact of the pandemic, worker burnout and the Great Resignation have converged to create critical staffing shortages throughout the healthcare industry. The following challenges are problematic given that expectations for the patient experience are at an all-time high.

- **Call volumes are out of control.** Employees at contact centers are under pressure to handle unusually higher than normal volumes of patient calls.[1]

- **Worker shortage and high turnover:** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the healthcare sector has lost nearly half a million workers since February 2020.[2] Contact centers are seeing turnover rates of 58 percent.[3]

- **Agent attrition is costly.** The cost of contact center attrition coupled with the impact on key performance metrics can reach astronomical rates.[4] A McKinsey & Co. study reveals the average attrition cost per call center employee is $10,000 to $21,000, including $4,000 to $7,000 in upfront training and $5,000 to $10,000 in lost productivity getting new hires up to speed.[5]

Tackling real issues together with a renewed focus on the patient experience will help uplevel how contact centers modernize.

Meeting Customer Expectations Is Mission-critical

Patients who interact with contact centers are smarter, more skeptical, and have more options in healthcare than ever before.

Their expectations are exceptionally high as reflected in these key stats:

- **Patient preferences matter.** Patients can shop around for other providers to meet their needs and the factors influencing their

choices are complicated.[6] Case in point: 43 percent of Millennials compared to 20 percent of Baby Boomers are likely to switch practices in the next few years.[7] Paying attention to generational differences is important to patient retention.

- **Subpar customer service.** 50 percent feel that there is a major need for improvements in the customer service and support offered by most companies.[8]

- **Long wait times.** Not surprising, waiting incessantly on hold is the No. 1 reason for customer dissatisfaction. Research shows 44 percent of people report being annoyed, irritated, or angry if forced on hold 5-15 minutes.[9] In fact, 88 percent of healthcare appointments are still scheduled via phone calls.[10]

- **Low proactive patient outreach.** Consumers' expectations of Amazon-level convenience is disrupting fundamental parts of care delivery.[11] Personalized, proactive outreach that automates interactions between episodes is a differentiator.

Your practice and hospital contact centers are critical links between your patients and your physicians, providers and administrators. Providers who lose patients because of poor customer service feel a direct hit on revenue and, ultimately, on the bottom line.

Why Increasing Your Patient Lifetime Value Matters

The traditional contact center, while historically thought of as a cost center, offers tremendous potential as a catalyst for health system growth.

Today, 82 percent of patients say quality customer service is the most important factor they consider when choosing healthcare.[12] For this reason, an important financial incentive to consider is the **patient lifetime value** reported to be in excess of a million dollars per patient at a health system – with the potential to generate more.

If you want loyal patients to be part of your sustainable growth strategy, contact centers must offer top-notch customer service and support that personalizes every patient's touch point.

Digital care services can help maintain long-term relationships with your patients through ongoing engagement and communication while providing superior care. Happy patients expand your practice and profitability.

Taking Your Contact Center to the Next Level of Customer-centric Digital Transformation
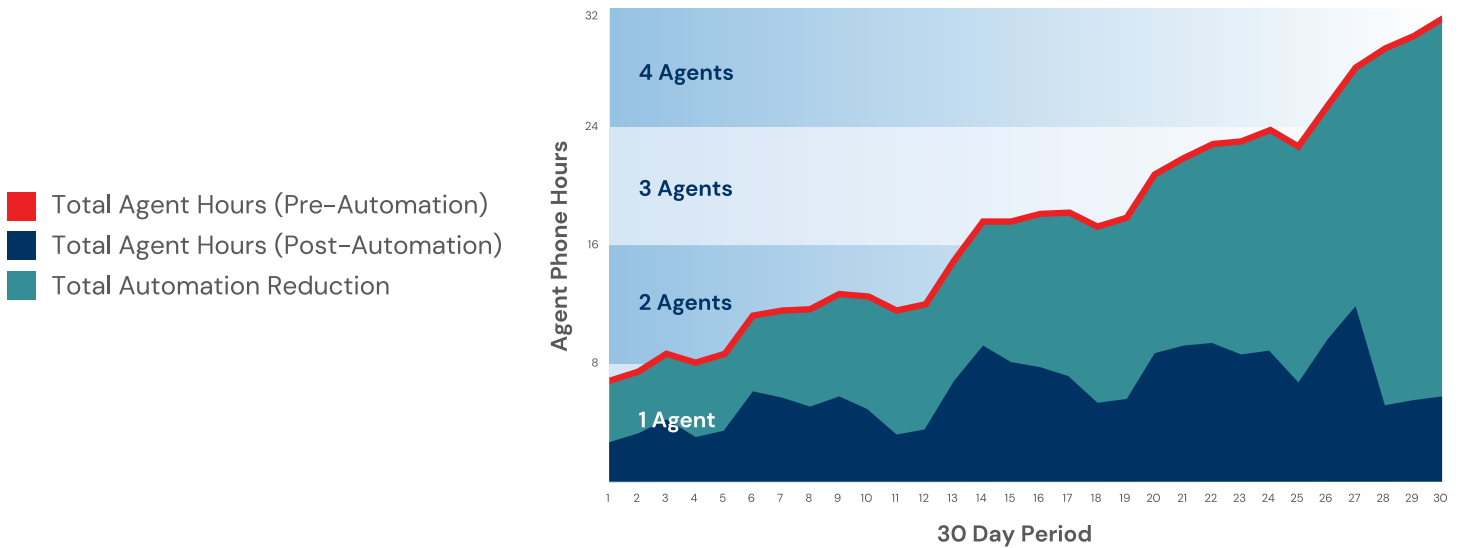
We offer a better way to humanize the contact center – and offload heavy staff workloads.

Agent and caller frustrations can be alleviated quickly by providing convenient self-service options to divert routine, administrative calls – such as making or canceling an appointment – to an AI-powered digital experience by QliqSOFT.

Contact centers ready to expand beyond their digital front door can easily integrate automation capabilities into their IVR and scheduling systems. These human-assisted channels manage the volume of inbound calls either to a digital chatbot or an audio chatbot that leverages AI and natural language processing to mimic a person-to-person conversation.

As patients are redirected to a choice of use case chatbots specially tailored to your intake and clinical environment, call center performance and employee satisfaction significantly improve delivering a frictionless and personalized user experience.

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Chatbots Can Reduce Your Need for Call Center Staff by 40% or More

Agent Phone Hours vs **30 Day Period**

Legend:
- ■ Total Agent Hours (Pre-Automation)
- ■ Total Agent Hours (Post-Automation)
- ■ Total Automation Reduction

Chart bands: 4 Agents, 3 Agents, 2 Agents, 1 Agent

To succeed for tomorrow, contact center leaders must now build lasting digital strategies that meet dramatically increasing consumer demands.

In this scenario, the graph below shows how the volume of contact center agents increases in parallel with the volume of patient callers increasing. It also presents how the application of digital automation transforms operations dramatically lowering the number of agents from 900 to 300 or 30 to 80 percent to handle the same volume.

By investing in the right AI digital health solutions, contact centers can generate increased savings while simultaneously optimizing every patient interaction to better leverage live agents, serve patients, and improve their position as a strategic business asset contributing to the growth goals of the organization.

Sources

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