IBM Watson Engagement Advisor

*Transforming the way people and organizations interact
over the lifetime of their relationships*

IBM

Introduction

Organizations across industries face higher expectations than ever from their constituents whether that means their clients, employees, partners, citizens or patients. Shifting demographics, changing social patterns, and proliferation of personal technology have redefined the rules of engagement and individuals now drive the relationship. Along the way, these individuals (who see themselves as customers) have become increasingly frustrated with impersonal, generic interactions and the inability to engage wherever, whenever, and however they choose. They want quick answers and easy access to insights to help them make informed decisions and move on with their lives.

People are increasingly on the go and are using over six billion mobile devices like smart-phones and tablets. They're sharing more insights about themselves through surveys, registrations and the 2.5B active accounts on the top three social media platforms alone[1]. These actions are contributing to the 2.5 quintillion bytes of new data generated every twenty-four hours[2]. Meanwhile, 10,000 US baby boomers retire daily[3] while millennials will represent 48% of the workforce by 2020[4]. This brings a very different level of digital comfort and expectation into the mainstream.

These forces change how customers wish to engage, interact, and structure relationships with organizations. Fully engaged customers deliver a 23% premium in share of wallet, profitability, revenue, and relationship growth[5]. But despite these many opportunities, most organizations are not taking advantage of today's unprecedented customer access and availability of data to meet the changing needs for engagement.

A one-point change in customer satisfaction is associated with a 4.6% change in market value

Relying on traditional contact centers to fully engage customers isn't working effectively. Half of calls typically go unresolved or require escalation[6]. Yet, 61% of the time, the failed calls (which inevitably erode customer satisfaction) could have been resolved with better access to information[6]. Meanwhile, a single point change in customer satisfaction corresponds to a 4.6% change in market value[7]. Organizations need a new approach.

IBM Watson at work

Although the customer experience today lacks personalization, timeliness, trust and accuracy, there is good reason for optimism. IBM Watson has the potential to redefine what it will take to step forward in bridging the gap between expectations and service. It could help companies and their customers build stronger relationships in a way that scales with the needs of the business.

Engage under-engaged customers by listening, learning and applying understanding

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IBM Watson represents a bold new step into a new era of computing and has the potential to transform the way people and companies interact over the lifetime of their relationships. The unique combination of natural language processing, hypothesis generation & evaluation, and machine learning of IBM Watson is being applied to customer engagement.

A transformed experience

Building on successes in other fields such as healthcare, IBM is expanding the application of Watson into new areas. Individuals can interact with Watson in plain English, directly or through an agent. Watson can deliver personalized responses to questions and give users actionable insight with supporting evidence and confidence to help create the experiences customers expect. As just one of many examples, a bank might offer Watson directly to customers to help them understand the types of available savings accounts and facilitate the opening of the appropriate account

Other organizations may choose to give their contact center agents access to Watson as an assistant as they personally interact with customers. This can help improve their productivity, accuracy, and consistency. For example, a telecom firm could arm their agents with Watson to help troubleshoot a problem such as synchronizing email with a mobile device. Combining use of Watson for both direct customer self-service as well as agent assistance can help create the kind of engagement experiences that delight customers.

The Watson Engagement Advisor can help meet growing expectations that companies know their customers based on their past history, engage them wherever, whenever, and however they choose, and empower them at the point of action. This can help lower barriers of outreach to un-served and under-engaged customers which, in turn, can help reduce customer turnover, create opportunities for the individual and organization to engage in a meaningful way, and drive advocacy and endorsement for the organization.

Transforming the way people and companies interact over the lifetime of their relationships

For the same reasons many people are happy to get driving directions from a GPS but are unwilling to ask another person for help, the IBM Watson Engagement Advisor can provide an approachable option for people looking for guidance or an answer to a question.

Know me
Leverage profile data for personalized insight into customer wants and needs to contextualize experience

Engage me
Dynamic, evidence-based omni-channel experiences that adapt to customer preferences

Customer

Empower Me
Interactive, informed natural language dialogue that enables insights at the point of action
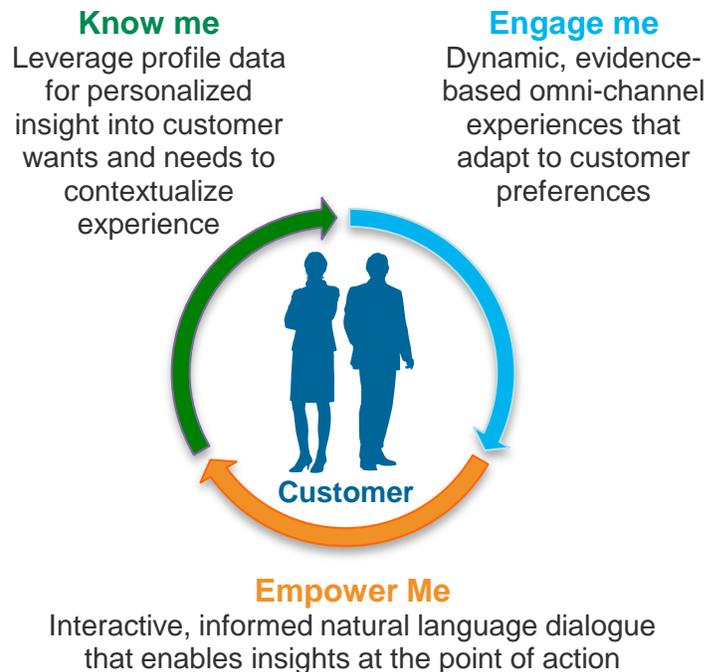
Figure 1: The Watson Engagement Advisor can help organizations know, engage, and empower their customers.

Built for business

While results will vary, the Watson Engagement Advisor is designed to be up and running fast: in a matter of weeks. Deployment is expedited by leveraging Watson's language vocabularies and capability for natural, familiar interaction. Its semi-automated ingestion of organization-specific documents and other information also helps slash set-up time. This can help lead to a return on investment in months rather than years.

__Know__ based on history
__Engage__ with interaction
__Empower__ to take action

The Watson Engagement Advisor is designed to integrate with existing systems, complement existing processes, and guide users through a consistent user experience. It can be deployed in a variety of configurations including software as a service. Costs are scalable with a subscription or managed service based model – driving value not overhead.

A new approach to engagement

IBM Watson gained widespread attention in 2011 by beating two of the all-time champion human contestants on the TV quiz show, *Jeopardy*! Since that time, IBM has put Watson to work in ways that benefit society and change the way our world thinks, acts and operates.

The era of cognitive systems is dawning and building on today's programmatic computing era. Once-futuristic capabilities are becoming mainstream. Natural language interaction will make user experiences more intuitive and help extract knowledge and insight from data. Machine learning will help systems improve with usage and evolve with expanding information and changing user needs.

The potential for widespread access to a personalized digital advocate acting as a pocket-sized "humble genius" ready to assist millions of individuals is truly a groundbreaking possibility. Watson Engagement Advisor has the potential to bring the era of cognitive systems to the masses. Watson could help transform the way people and organizations interact over the lifetime of their relationships

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