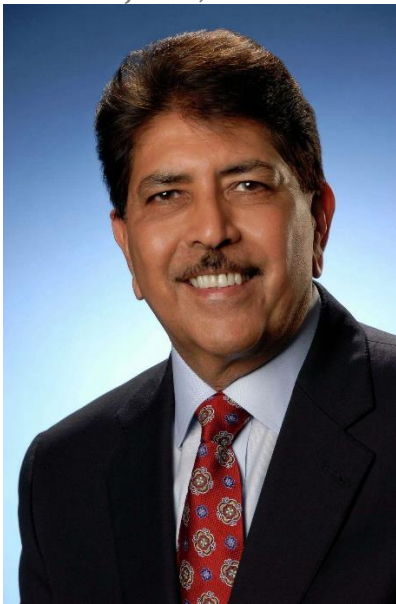


OPINION

## Today's Business: Elevating service, slashing costs are AI's dual power

Arvin Chaudhary, Contributing Writer  
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Arvin Chaudhary  
Contributed photo

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not just a fleeting trend; it's a robust tool reshaping the landscape of customer service. It has the power to transform frustration into delight.

The narrative that reaching out to customer service is an ordeal filled with long waits and monotonous on-hold music is becoming a thing of the past. With AI, a call to customer service can transition from a dreaded task to an efficient experience, bolstering a company's image and relationship with its customers.

Companies, regardless of their size, are finding that AI is a game-changer in enhancing customer satisfaction while simultaneously cutting costs and boosting revenue. It's no longer the exclusive domain of giants like Amazon or Google. Any business with a customer service component can harness AI to deliver a solid, efficient customer experience.

One revolutionary application of AI is in personalizing customer interactions. Machine learning algorithms can analyze previous conversations, purchase history, and customer preferences to provide service personnel with actionable insights, allowing for highly personalized engagement. This isn't just about getting the customer's name right; it's about understanding their needs and preferences to tailor the service accordingly.

The "Communication Channel Silo" often causes customer dissatisfaction when interactions across email, web, chat, social media, or phone are disjointed. A sophisticated AI-based contact center solution remedies this by allowing smooth transitions between channels, maintaining conversation continuity, and improving the overall customer experience.

Moreover, AI can significantly enhance the capabilities of call center agents by providing them with immediate access to a customer's interaction history, enabling them to offer solutions and products that may not have been the initial reason for the call but are relevant to the customer's needs.

Outbound calls are often overlooked, yet they're a critical touchpoint. AI can ensure that these calls are more effective, reducing the chances of them being dismissed as spam. For instance, a smart AI system can inform customers in advance when they're about to receive an important call, such as a delivery scheduling notice, ensuring that the call is expected and received.

Beyond the traditional call center, AI is elevating the digital customer experience. Companies may not have Amazon's deep pockets, but they can still achieve a competitive edge by deploying AI to capture and analyze customer data promptly. This enables them to provide a personalized digital response, making each customer feel uniquely valued. Whether it's adjusting recommendations seasonally or even daily, AI empowers companies to respond dynamically to customer behavior.

While there's no one-size-fits-all, businesses with substantial customer interactions and data — like those with annual sales over \$50 million — are well-positioned to implement AI strategies effectively. Starting with existing customer data, companies can develop strategies to gather additional real-time insights. After all, data is the lifeblood of AI; without it, the technology's potential remains untapped.

The applications vary across sectors: an insurance company might use AI to refine risk assessment and customer engagement, while an aerospace manufacturer might deploy AI for predictive maintenance and parts inquiries.

AI is here to stay, and ignoring its potential is akin to the hesitance some had toward computerized record-keeping decades ago. Not leveraging AI is not just a missed opportunity; it's a step backward.

*Arvin Chaudhary is chief executive officer of the technology services company Nadicent Technologies. He can be reached at [Arvin.Chaudhary@Nadicent.com](mailto:Arvin.Chaudhary@Nadicent.com) or 203-274-8466. Free email alerts about scams and spam at: <https://www.nadicent.com/securitynewsandalerts>.*