



[24]7.ai

EBOOK

2019 CX

Predictions:

Unleashing AI's  
True Potential



---

## CONTENTS

- 01 PREDICTION ONE**  
Bot Experimentation is Over **4**
- 02 PREDICTION TWO**  
Bots and Agents: The CX Power Couple **8**
- 03 PREDICTION THREE**  
Predictive Analytics in CX:  
Autocomplete Customer Journeys **11**
- 04 PREDICTION FOUR**  
VPAs: Overqualified and  
Underappreciated **13**
- 05 PREDICTION FIVE**  
Messaging is the New Norm **15**
- 06 PREDICTION SIX**  
Time for a New Metric in  
CX Measurement **17**

Digital transformation is still top of mind for most companies, which means the digital customer experience (CX) will stay in the spotlight for the year ahead.



While businesses understand the need to use automation to elevate CX and meet their customers' ever-rising expectations, the reality of delivering on that goal can be a challenge.

To help brands bridge the gap between what they need to do for customers and what they need to do to keep the business running, let's look at the top trends that will impact AI-powered CX in 2019 so you can set a course for success.



---

PREDICTION ONE

# Bot Experimentation is Over

## PREDICTION ONE

As chatbots gained popularity in 2017 and 2018, we saw many companies testing the waters, often without creating a coherent strategy for their chatbot initiatives. In some cases, this meant a siloed, single-channel implementation, and in others it included multiple side-by-side implementations being handled independently. Customers who interacted with these “pilot bots” may not have had the best experience. In fact, over half of consumers who responded to a recent Forrester survey said they expected their next chatbot experience to be “very negative or negative.”<sup>1</sup> In 2019, it’s time to change their minds.

# 71%

of consumers find **impersonal experiences frustrating**. As companies get better at personalization and consumer expectations continue to shift, businesses should expect this number to get even larger.

Source: Segment’s 2017 State of Personalization Report

## Chatbot investment is on the rise

# 73%

using, piloting, and testing in 2017 for website



# 86%

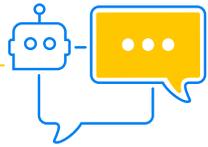
using, piloting, and testing in 2017 for messaging



Source: Forrester’s H2 2017 Global Mobile Executive Online Survey

## PREDICTION ONE

We are predicting this year will be a tipping point, with chatbot implementation hitting the mainstream. Customers today expect effortless service, and the C-suite knows chatbots are the best way to deliver. According to Gartner, 38% of enterprises are planning or actively deploying chatbots.<sup>2</sup> Businesses will start treating chatbots like any other core software tool, investing considerable upfront spend followed by ongoing maintenance and improvement.



As chatbots reach maturity, brands will take a more unified approach to implementation with a “build once, deploy anywhere” model delivering the best operational efficiency as well as a consistent CX. Integrating a chatbot tightly with other channels and collaborating across departments is key to making CX seamless and effortless.



## How to avoid creating a bad bot:

1. Don't deploy a bot on its own—think **cross-channel**
2. Be **transparent**—don't pretend it's human
3. Always **escalate to an agent** at the right time
4. Be sure to keep content **relevant and up to date**

## PREDICTION ONE

### Meet the emBot

While most consumers have become comfortable with chatbots, it's important to make it clear that they are interacting with a virtual agent. A chatbot should be human-like, but companies should never try to pass it off as human. This is a matter of trust, and is also important because sometimes customers will need actual human assistance. Not all interactions can (or should) be handled by a chatbot—knowing when to escalate to a human agent is part of ensuring an excellent CX.

So how does a chatbot know? Consumers express frustration in many ways, from the obvious, such as using expletives or exaggerated punctuation, to the obtuse, for example, sarcasm. Don't expect a chatbot to take action when a human touch is needed, but it should be able to understand and act empathetically. This can be as simple as connecting a customer to an agent as soon as the AI model detects frustration. These "emotional bots" (emBot for short) will help brands forge the human connections they may be struggling with in the digital age, and the importance of emotional intelligence will continue to grow in 2019.



### Vertical bots know your business

In addition to thinking about what they need to do with the bot, companies should think about what the bot can do for them. Vertical chatbots will gain momentum in 2019 because they can provide industry-specific tools that have a huge impact on CX. Vertical intent libraries help the chatbot determine what customers want to do, so look for a vendor with a pre-built library for your domain. Pre-built dialogue snippets enable brands to configure conversations around repetitive tasks without having to start over every time. Out-of-the-box capabilities for common tasks such as making credit card payments and entering an address save companies from having to start from scratch, enabling faster deployment and adoption. Having the right tools can make (or break) the bot experience.



PREDICTION TWO

# Bots & Agents: The CX Power Couple



## PREDICTION TWO

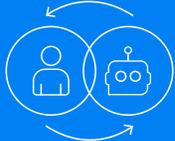
When AI and chatbots first came onto the scene, many thought they would replace the customer service agent—inspiring fear in agents and unrealistic expectations in companies. But that idea has had its day. In 2019, companies will focus on figuring out where agents and bots can best learn from each other to boost productivity and efficiency, while helping to maintain the quality of self-service. The real benefit of AI is not in replacing agents, but in augmenting them.

As automation in customer service increases, so does the volume of interactions. With bots automating simpler tasks, agents are now free to handle more complex issues that require more time, more thought, and more skill. In addition to improving the CX, this new state of affairs can also have a positive impact on agent satisfaction and retention.



Organizations should plan for a **sybiotic, not separate, agent and chatbot relationship.**"

—Forrester



The real benefit of AI is not in replacing agents, but in **augmenting** them.



## PREDICTION TWO

Bots and agents can work together in multiple ways, including:



### Agent assistance

When a chatbot monitors an agent-customer interaction and provides suggestions to help guide the conversation and improve the outcome—for example, suggesting what to say next or what product or service to recommend. The bot can make these recommendations based on intent prediction or customer profile information, which it can access and analyze infinitely faster than an agent. This type of blending can help new agents get better quickly, and help experienced agents handle challenging issues.



### Agents training bots

Many companies don't realize how labor intensive (and therefore costly) it is to keep AI up to date. Agents can help. Having agents tag customer intents helps companies tune models in real time. Agents can supervise a bot that's still learning or help train a bot by having it stay in a conversation after escalation, increasing productivity on both sides.



### Chatbots up front

For complex issues that chatbots are unable to resolve, they can still help increase efficiency and accuracy by doing things like authenticate the customer's identity, determine their intent, and gather information then pass it off to the right agent for faster resolution. Making sure the bot passes off the right amount of information is key—too much will slow the agent down, but not enough can leave the customer feeling frustrated if they have to repeat themselves.

In 2019, we'll see AI and human assistance intermingling at various points throughout the customer journey, as companies get better about combining them for the best possible experience and outcomes. It's really about understanding which journeys to automate and which to augment.

PREDICTION THREE

# Predictive Analytics in CX: Autocomplete Customer Journeys



2015 Predictions



## PREDICTION THREE

Predictive analytics is not a new tool, but in 2019 it will take on a new role: helping companies shift from providing reactive customer service to being proactive. This will have a big impact on CX, because today's customers expect brands to know them better than ever before. AI-powered predictive analytics gives companies the ability to know who customers are, understand what they want to do, and act on that information in real time. Machine learning can determine a customer's demographics, personality type, and behavior profile, so brands can create a customized and dynamic interaction and really wow customers.

In some cases, predictive analytics can help companies determine ahead of time which customers should be immediately escalated to a live agent—for example, if their behavior suggests an opportunity to upsell or cross-sell. Predictive insights enable companies to crunch hundreds of thousands of data insights in milliseconds and personalize interactions, progress journeys, and improve outcomes—in real time, and at scale. It's all about making interactions more meaningful and helping customers get things done, fast.

Customers today are asking,

**"Do you know  
who I am?"**

With machine learning,  
companies can answer

**"Yes, we do."**

“

Companies that use predictive analytics are almost **twice as likely** to generate year-over-year customer lifetime value.”

— Aberdeen Group



---

PREDICTION FOUR

# VPAs: Overqualified and Underappreciated

## PREDICTION FOUR

When virtual personal assistants (VPAs) like Alexa and Google Home made their appearance a few years ago, they rapidly gained popularity—and market share. Gartner predicts that the VPA-enabled wireless speaker market will reach \$3.52 billion by 2021. The simplicity of using voice commands to carry out interactions led some to believe that consumers would soon move everything to VPAs. But that idea is losing steam. What we're seeing is that consumers use VPAs to complete fairly simple tasks, such as checking the weather or playing music, but not for more complex tasks that would involve longer conversations. For now, the function of VPAs follows the form.

We predict that this will change over time. Consumers will use VPAs to get information and complete daily tasks, just like a personal assistant. It may take a while to get there but eventually the form will flip to follow the function, with VPAs evolving to become highly personalized and combining voice, visual, and touch interchangeably. This will allow consumers to do more with the VPA, because there are some things people don't want to say out loud or sit and listen to—for example, comparing products, which would require listening to long explanations. That's why the ability to choose voice or touch to select and checkout is so powerful, and why enterprises will integrate VPAs for specific use cases.

Voice-enabled smart speakers have become some of the industry's **best-selling products;**

in 2018 alone, according to a report by NPR and Edison Research, **their prevalence in American households grew by 78%.**

Source: Wired





---

PREDICTION FIVE

# Messaging is the New Norm

## PREDICTION FIVE

Consumers love messaging, and companies are starting to catch on. According to Forrester, 63% of North American consumers are using more than five messaging platforms on average.<sup>3</sup> Brands will continue to ramp up their efforts to meet customers where they are by investing in messaging, which includes any interaction where a consumer can start the conversation, leave, come back at a later time and pick up where they left off. Messaging is done via popular platforms like Facebook Messenger, WeChat, WhatsApp, and SMS, as well as inside a native mobile app.

In 2019 messaging will continue to grow across channels. SMS is making a comeback thanks to Apple and Google's introduction of business use. If your business is listed on Apple Business Chat, when a customer looks you up on Google Maps or Safari, they have the option to message you instead of calling. This is great for consumers who prefer messaging, and allows companies to deflect calls to a lower cost channel that still enables a rich conversation and even payment processing.

### Messaging is the future of digital transformation because it:



Is accessible anywhere



Preserves conversational context



Enables brands to push proactive notifications



Allows users to pause and pick up later





PREDICTION SIX

# Time for a New Metric in CX Measurement

## PREDICTION SIX

Companies need to measure all the ways that consumers interact with them, which are constantly evolving. Adding chatbots, virtual agents, and asynchronous messaging to the mix has made average handle time (AHT) a bit outdated. That's why there are a few new metrics in town, which will gain popularity in 2019.



### Total Customer Interaction Time (TCIT)

measures the total time it takes a consumer to complete an interaction, from initiation to successful resolution.



### Net User Satisfaction (NSAT)

becomes the most important measurement when a bot is handling all or part of a conversation, along with automation rate as captured by TCIT.

As the impact of AI and deep learning continue to grow, the most sophisticated, conversational virtual agents can now measure intent and will soon be diving deeper into user sentiment and leveraging that in their models, too.



By 2022, more than 50% of all people collaborating in Industry 4.0 ecosystems will use virtual assistants or intelligent agents to interact more naturally with their surroundings and with people."

— Gartner

## In 2019, technology will become more human

As consumer expectations continue to rise, companies need to invest in technologies that will help make the digital CX effortless and more effective while also feeling less digital. Brands need to make the human connections their customers want. Figuring out how technology and humans can work together to the benefit of both will be a critical part of AI-powered CX in 2019. Companies need to think about their ability to hit consumers with just what they need, right when they need it. From getting strategic about chatbots, to blending artificial and human intelligence, to teaching your bot when to hand-off a contact to an agent, the focus for the year ahead will be on making AI-powered interactions more human, and more meaningful.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Webinar, "CX Predictions 2019: The Year of Investing in Humans... As Chatbot Backlash Begins"

<sup>2</sup>Source: Gartner 2018 CIO Survey

<sup>3</sup>Source: Forrester Analytics Consumer Technographics NA Survey, 2018



Technology's greatest strength is in its growing humanity. Tools that interact with people, learn from those exchanges, and adapt for future interactions make the experience of using them all the more human."

— Accenture, "Technology Vision 2017"

To learn more about 2019 CX trends, watch the webinar replay now.

WATCH NOW

Let [24]7.ai help your organization achieve extraordinary results. Contact us today.

[www.247.ai](http://www.247.ai)

[queries@247.ai](mailto:queries@247.ai)

USA +1 855 692 9247

UK +44 0 207 836 9203

CA +1 866 454 0084

AUS +61 2 90025780

About [24]7.ai

[24]7.ai is a customer experience software and services company that is redefining the way companies interact with consumers. We help businesses attract and retain customers, and make it possible to create a personalized, predictive, and effortless customer experience.

For more information visit: [www.247.ai](http://www.247.ai)