

**COGNIGY**

**GUIDE**

# **Building Next Generation**

# **Self-Service at Scale**



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# Introduction

Self-service today is loved by companies, hyped by vendors, and tolerated by customers. This is because self-service has failed enterprises and their customers due to an overall mix of empty promises, poor execution, and immature technology.

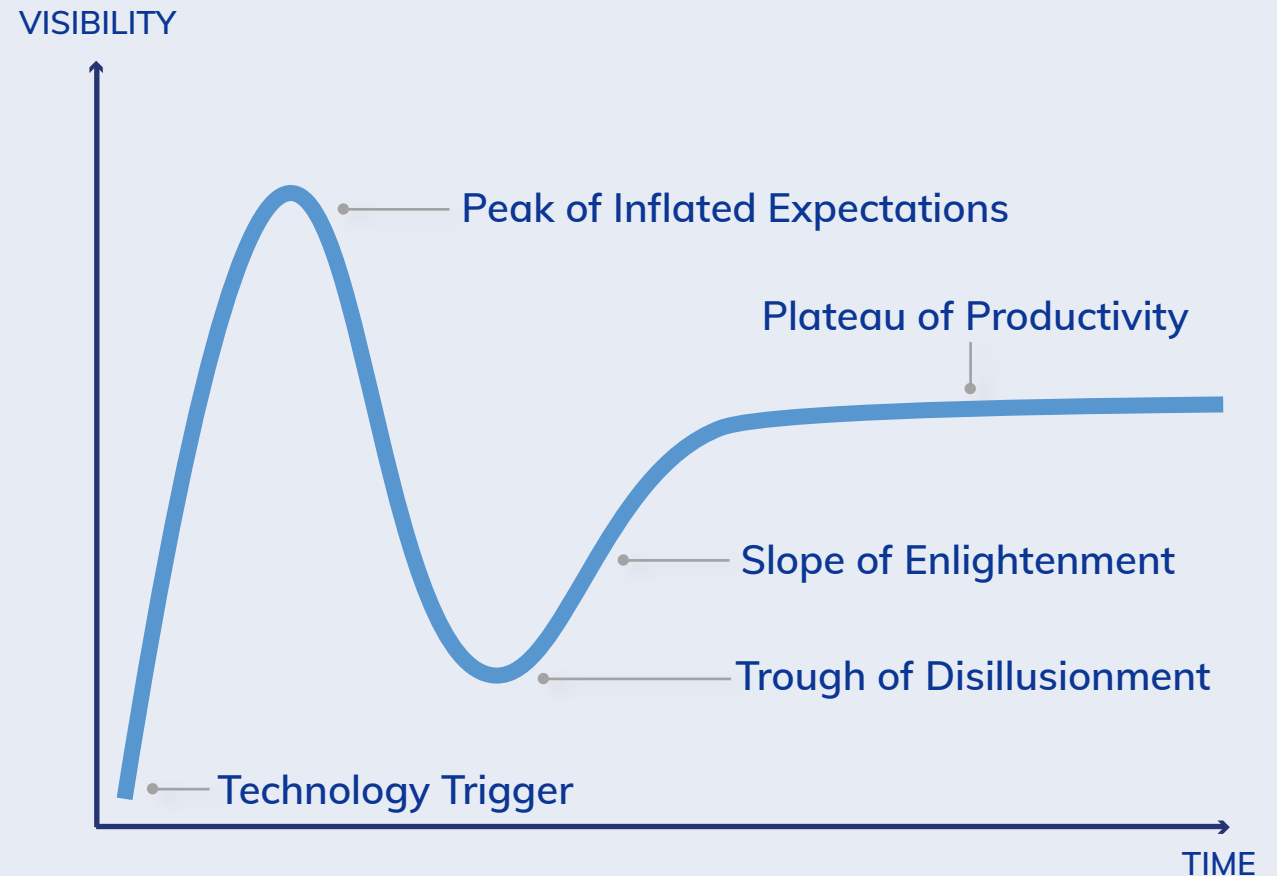
After years of inflated self-service expectations and time spent in the trough of disillusionment, this guide will discuss how to achieve self-service that works and how it can:

**1** Exceed customer expectations

**2** Boost productivity with true end-to-end automation

**3** Improve agent satisfaction and productivity

**4** Increase business agility and responsiveness



# Why Self-Service has Failed

So far, self-service has failed and often defeats customers by giving them a worse experience than simply not having it.

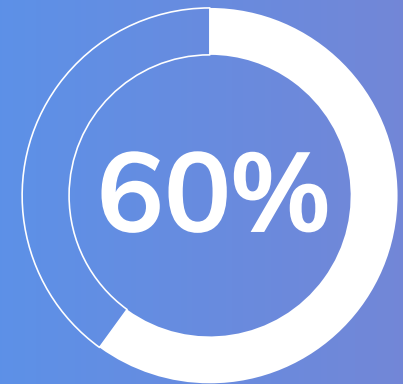
The reasons include:

- 1 Too much content and too little management
- 2 Companies hide contact opportunities and content to push self-service
- 3 Rigid linear processes
- 4 Added friction and complexity for customers and business users
- 5 Inconsistent processes and outcomes across channels
- 6 More channels lead to more contacts

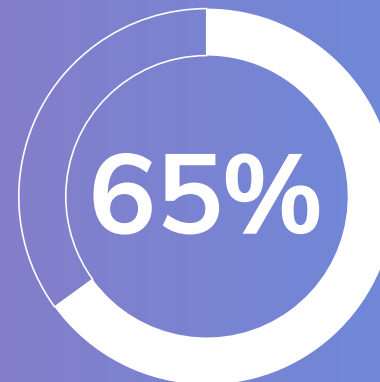
Customers are demanding self-service, but previous experiences are insufficient



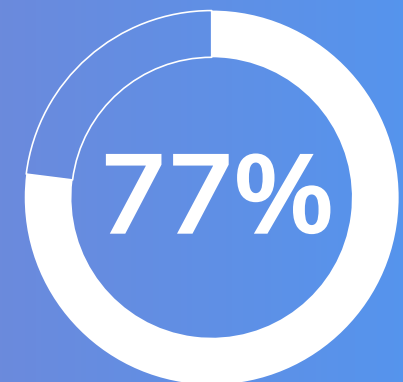
have confidence in chatbots



endure long wait times



do not feel that contact center agents know enough to solve their problem



expect access to agents for most or all their issues

Data provided by CCW

## Hype and Broken Promises

When the first chatbots hit the market, hype and expectations were fueled by the launch of dozens of chatbots, including those from Microsoft with “Tay” and Facebook with its “M.”

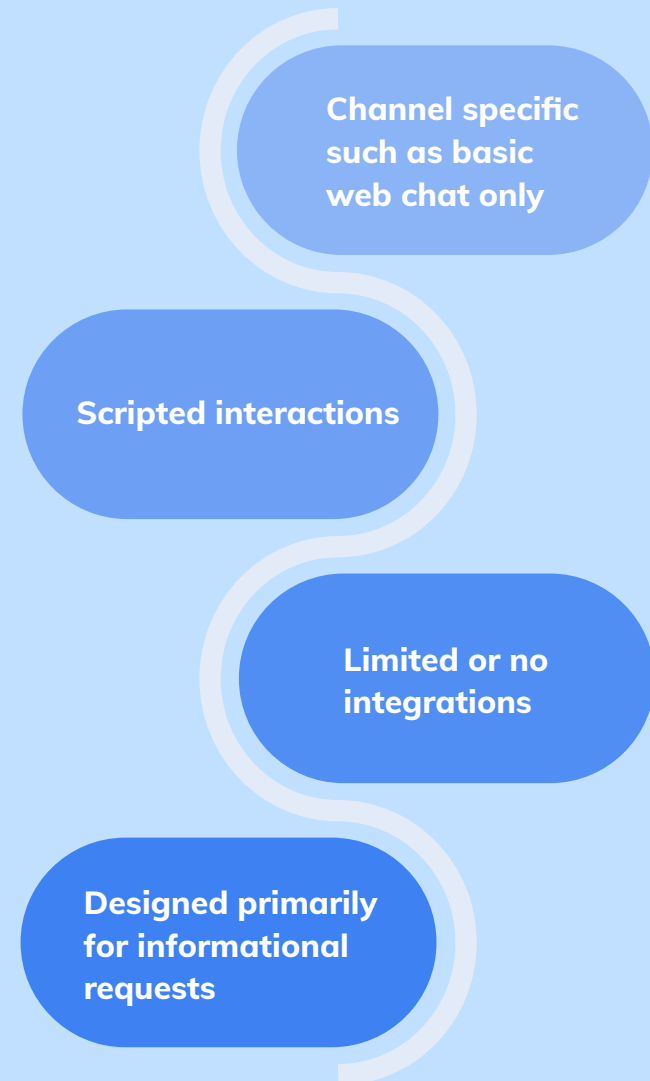
Chatbots promised to:



It soon became clear that these early chatbots were unable to understand most human language, identify simple and complex intents, or connect to other systems to carry out tasks. In short, chatbots offered a glimpse into the art of the possible but were not yet technologically advanced enough to deliver on the promises the vendors made.

They were typically siloed, focused on a single channel or use case. Examples include simple web-only chatbots, FAQ pages and web-based knowledge articles, legacy tree-based IVRs, or the ubiquitous password reset option on every website today.

Legacy self-service can be characterized by:



# What Should you Expect from Next Generation Self-Service Solutions

1

	EXPLANATION	CONTACT CENTER OUTCOMES
Channel agnostic	A build once, deploy anywhere model to create processes and automations that can be used in multiple channels in both voice and text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fewer resources to build and maintain</li><li>• Consistent performance across channels</li></ul>
Seamless orchestration	The ability to automate processes between multiple applications including accessing, using and sending data between different systems and channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• End-to-end self-service</li><li>• Handle repetitive inquiries within self-service</li><li>• Increase agent productivity</li></ul>
Language independent	Both the Natural Language Understanding models (NLU) and platform should be able to understand and quickly add and support any language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easily serve multiple languages and markets</li><li>• Consistent service across all digital channels</li><li>• Rapidly add to and adapt to needs</li></ul>
AI and machine learning	AI is a prerequisite for understanding the complexity of human language and intents (single and multiple), learning over time and personalization and scaling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easily scale as volumes increase</li><li>• Personalization all channels</li><li>• Reduced AHT and self-service that works</li></ul>
Voice and text capable	Key to a consistent service across all channels and to avoiding silos, duplicate processes and maintenance effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easily enable and offer cross-channel service</li><li>• Consistent service across all channels</li><li>• Lower maintenance effort</li></ul>

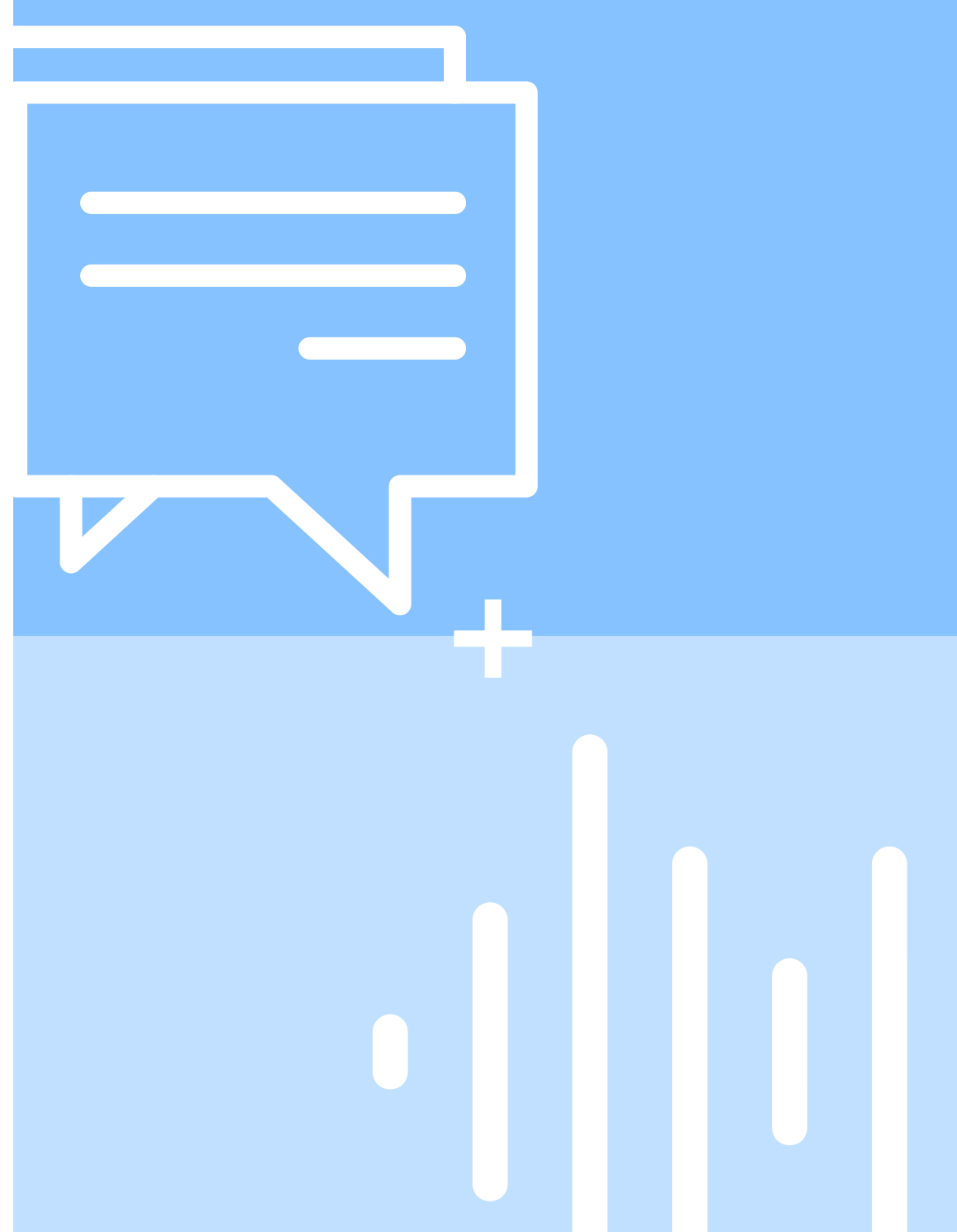
# What Should you Expect from Next Generation Self-Service Solutions

	EXPLANATION	CONTACT CENTER OUTCOMES
<b>Extensive integrations</b>	A requirement for self-service is the ability to connect multiple applications such as CRM, reservation system or case management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More self-service options</li><li>• Reduced agent workload</li><li>• Increased agent productivity</li></ul>
<b>Contact center integration</b>	The solution must seamlessly connect with existing on-premises, hybrid and CCaaS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost effective with no rip and replace</li><li>• Faster deployment of new systems &amp; channels</li><li>• Minimal additional training required</li></ul>
<b>Low/no code, ease of use</b>	Designed for business users and does not require regular IT involvement, reduces maintenance burden and avoids bottlenecks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faster time-to-value for customers and agents</li><li>• No technical skills needed</li><li>• Fewer IT resources required</li></ul>
<b>Unrestricted choice</b>	To scale and work with existing systems, solutions should use additional third party Natural Language Understanding (NLU), Text to Speech (TTS) and Speech to Text (STT).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create best-of-breed solution</li><li>• Lower costs of switching technology</li><li>• Future proof and no vendor lock-in</li></ul>

# Game Changing Technology

The first “chatbots” were merely an early method of implementing a higher-level technology, namely Conversational AI. This game-changing technology creates a natural language interface for various applications.

Conversational AI is the ability to interact with software applications using natural language like voice or text, instead of a screen, mouse, and keyboard. It should be clear now, virtual agents or assistants are not the chatbots of the past, and not even chatbots at all, but an entirely new AI driven technology that speaks your language.





## Augmenting the Contact Center

**Many contact centers are restricted by their own software choices, creating a negative chain reaction for the business. This has led to customer and employee frustration, an inability to automate, and a lower volume of inquiries that can be deflected and handled via self-service. Moreover, many teams lack autonomy and the ability to maintain solutions themselves.**

Conversational AI accelerates access to better experiences via a central point of coordination and automation instead of legacy silos. With easy to use low-code environments and simple drag-and-drop graphical user interfaces, business users can build, maintain, and launch their own virtual agents. This gives departments the autonomy and flexibility to quickly meet their needs without relying on IT resources and developers.

Finally, Conversational AI powered self-service means a dramatic reduction in first level support, i.e., the repetitive low-value work that degrades the agent

experience and prevents them from focusing on the complex issues that require emotional intelligence and a human touch.

With today's call scripts, focus on AHT goals and limited resources, we've become stuck in a world where humans act like machines and machines like humans. Conversational AI enables agents to put their real skills to work dealing with people. This means higher agent satisfaction and retention rates.

Automated self-service does not replace the agent, rather it augments the customer experience and takes care of repetitive tasks and transactions. While it is employed to manage and resolve initial customer inquiries it will also ensure a fast and frictionless path to the agent when needed. At this time, customers arrive verified, authenticated and with context, which gives the agent a head start and time to focus on the customer.

**The most direct path toward improving agent experience is to make it easy for agents to do their jobs.**



# Conversational AI in Your Contact Center

Conversational AI has often taken the form of text-based chatbots and to some extent voicebots or virtual assistants. Yet, these are hardly the only incarnations of Conversational AI technology. Let's look at how it can be used in contact centers today to enable a satisfying self-service environment that works for customers and that augments the agent's working day.



## Conversational IVR

Conversational AI lets the customer get straight to the point, as they would with a human agent. The software understands the intent such as “exchange an item”, “cancel my order” or “change my flight” and directly kicks off the relevant flow or process.

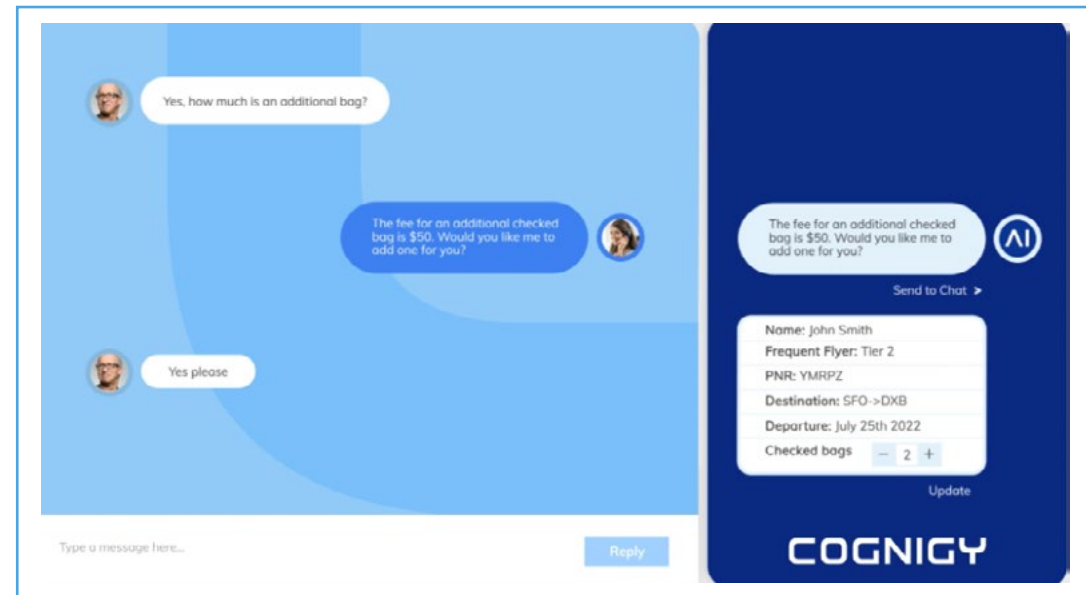
The beauty is that a Conversational AI solution can be integrated into existing on-premises, hybrid or cloud contact center infrastructure and all the necessary backend systems to actually get things done. This enables the customer to carry out actions directly and solve their problem versus just choosing menu items and waiting on hold. It also means that the business does not have to rip and replace any of its existing systems to be able to offer customers a working self-service environment.

The result is calls that are answered at once, more power to solve problems in customers’ hands, and agents reclaim time from repetitive tasks to invest in higher-value work. With more calls handled by self-service and the rest to agents, you can deliver a smoother customer first experience on the phone.



# Agent Assist

While many use cases revolve around customers, agents can rejoice as the power of Conversational AI isn't only reserved for customers. Conversational AI technology supports agents too and in real-time. In the next generation of customer self-service agent assistance comes in two different forms.



## Proactive Agent Assistance

Using natural language understanding and automation, Conversational AI can actively help agents by listening to conversations in the background, analyzing and understanding them, and then offering proactive suggestions for agents such as documents (e.g., an airline's baggage policy), links to web resources, and responses. Think of it as digital shoulder taps. But that's not all.

When integrated into backend systems, agents can even directly carry out tasks from the chat, such as upgrading customer accounts, all without leaving the chat.

Best of all, this applies to both voice and chat meaning an agent on the phone will get the same proactive help as in live chat.

## Agent Support Bots

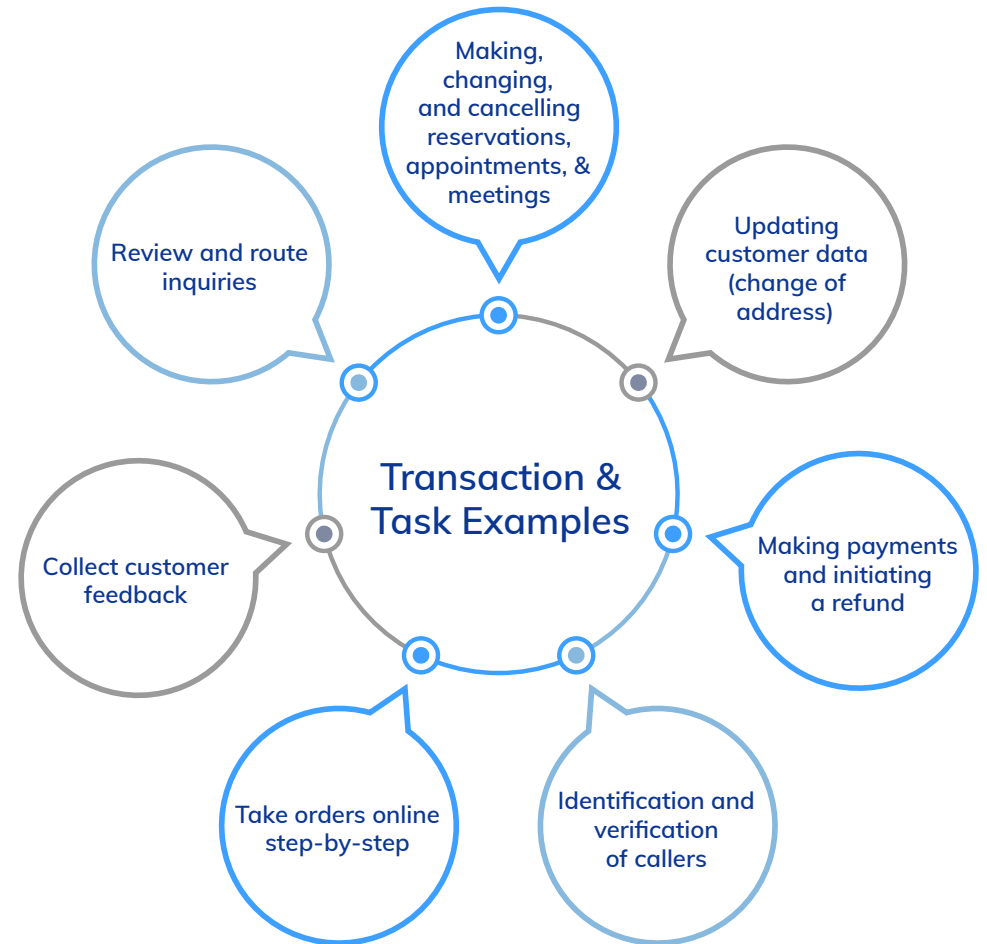
We often think of bots or virtual agents as customer facing, designed for the end user. But why should they have all the fun? On top of proactive assistance, Conversational AI delivers virtual assistants designed for agents specifically. This provides direct access to essential systems and resources at every step of customer-agent interactions, so they can deliver high-quality support at speed.

With agent support bots, your service agents can fetch knowledge articles, carry out direct tasks in integrated systems or ask for help when working remotely.

# Virtual Agents

Last but not least, the most common and often very first use case for Conversational AI are virtual assistants (not chatbots!). In the past, they were typically subdivided into voice and text based which reflected the limits of earlier technology and the tendency to view everything through channel-based silos. Today's Conversational AI-powered virtual assistants are channel agnostic, meaning they can handle a voice call, WhatsApp chat, live chat and so forth.

Virtual assistants, or virtual agents in a customer service environment, are focused neither on conversation nor language. Those are merely a means to an end. **The goal is getting things done!** That means solving problems directly, carrying out transactions and tasks and using automation to create seamless, productive experiences across channels.



## Business Outcomes

Before:

Excessive wait time + manual handling by human agents



After:

**Instant & 100% automated conversation**



# The Big Conversational AI Picture


So, what does Conversational IVR, Agent Assistance, Live Chat and bots look like when skillfully woven together:




**Conversational IVR**  
Intelligently recognize and route customer requests



AI



**Smart Self-Service**  
Automatically handle common requests with virtual agents



**Agent + Assist**  
Route advance requests to human agents and assist them with AI

These are the most common use cases and incarnations of Conversational AI today. But instead of getting carried away, let's look at how Conversational AI integrates into your contact center in terms of technology and architecture.

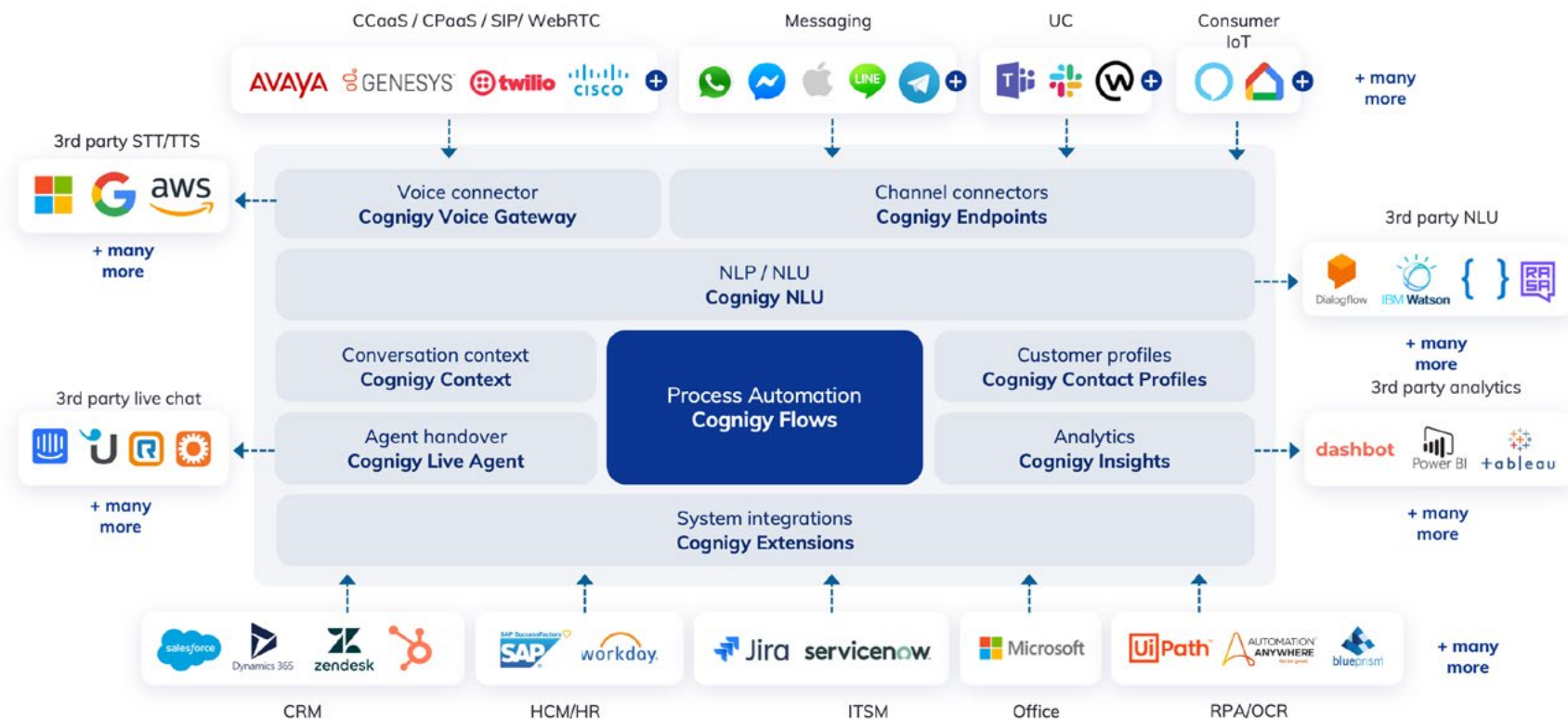
# Contact Center Architectural Fit

We don't want to delve into the deeply technical here but a basic understanding of how Conversational AI fits into your contact center is helpful for orientation, not to mention realizing the vast opportunities it opens.

While the artificial intelligence and conversational interface features often take the spotlight, it's the behind-the-scenes integration and automation capabilities that give Conversational AI its power. Ultimately, ignoring NLU and

AI, Conversational AI opens new ways of interacting with and orchestrating existing systems. That is its true power.

Let's head up to the 30,000-foot view and see how it all comes together first.

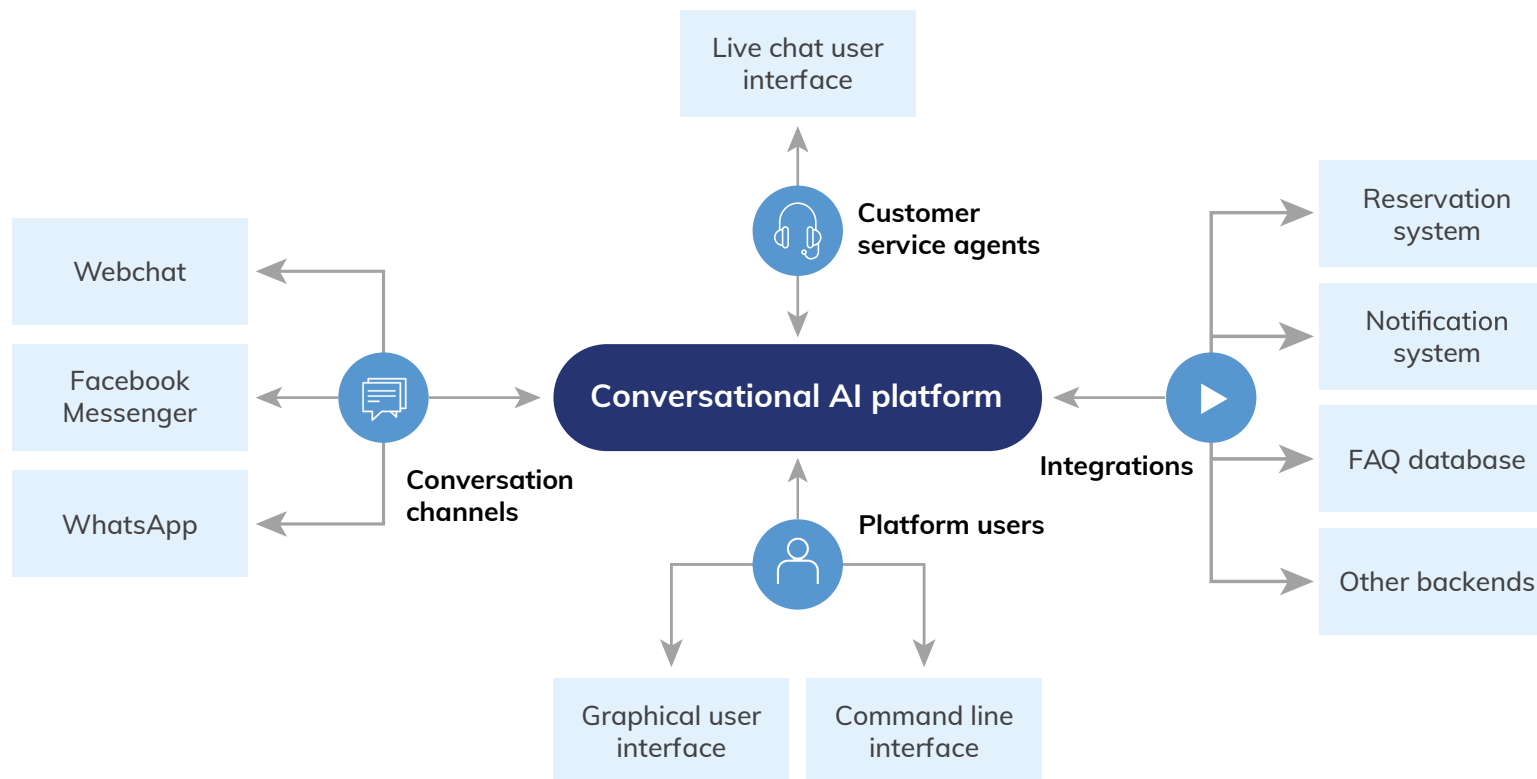


# Automation Powered by Natural Language

As you see, the heart of Conversational AI is process automation powered by natural language. By centralizing your self-service processes in “flows” (i.e., decision tree like processes), the input and output become unimportant, whether they are in voice

or text form or any of the channels you serve. This creates a single source of truth for your processes which are faithfully executed independently of how, when and where.

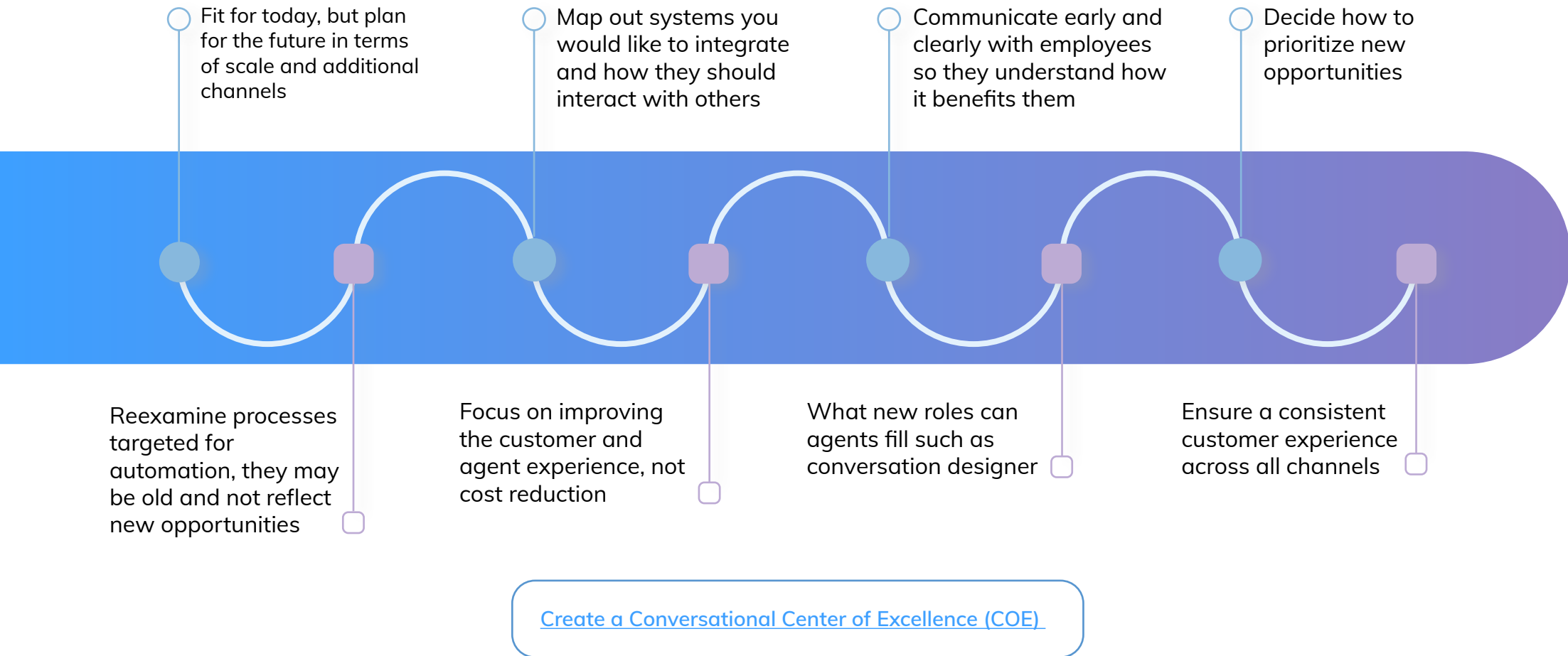
Below is a customer example from their production system, using Conversational AI as the focal point of their customer service strategy.





# Customer Self-Service Conversational AI Strategy

When planning your self-service Conversational AI solution, keep the following best practices in mind:



# Conversational AI RFI table

In order to maintain your focus on customer experience, yet still keep business needs and requirements in mind, it may help to create a table such as this one.

[Download RFI template](#)

USE CASES:	Reduce Customer Churn	Reduce Agent Turnover	Increase revenue per Customer	Reduce cost to serve	Increase Agent Satisfaction
<b>Omnichannel Service</b> Consistent support across all channels with the ability to move across channels	✓		✓	✓	
<b>Improve Self-Service effectiveness</b> Enable customers to carry out tasks and get results	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Personalization</b> Offer contextual, personalized support, products, content and services	✓		✓	✓	
<b>Proactive Agent Assistance</b> Offer agents proactive support to increase accuracy and consistency of service and reduce training costs	✓	✓		✓	✓

# Exceed Customer Expectations and Drive Agent Satisfaction with Cognigy.AI

Cognigy, a leader in Conversational AI, Powers Up enterprise contact centers to exceed customer expectations, improve agent satisfaction, and rapidly respond to market changes. The Cognigy.AI platform enables next-generation customer service for always-on, personalized experiences at scale.

Over 500 brands worldwide trust Cognigy



LUFTHANSA GROUP



Mercedes-Benz

## What Sets Cognigy.AI Apart?

### Delight Customers

Deliver the best customer experience possible with frictionless, personalized self-service across all channels. Automate conversations and provide consistent support anytime, anywhere.



### Integrate & Elevate Systems

Integrate Cognigy.AI with your existing contact center infrastructure and speed up issue resolution with real-time transactional data. No rip and replace necessary.



### Empower Agents

Deploy a digital workforce that enables agents to focus on high-value support and gives them the tools they need to handle complex tasks faster and smarter.



### Deliver Faster Time-to-Value

Increase your contact center flexibility to keep pace with unpredictable business and market dynamics. Keep your brand resilient today and tomorrow.



## Real-World Business Impact



+30% CSAT improvement



15% shorter average handling time (AHT)



99.5% faster response time

## The next steps

We hope that this guide is of value to you. To define the steps you need to take to move customer service forward in your organization, use our [action plan](#).

If you are ready to take the fast track [book a demo](#).

Watch on demand

## Next Generation Self-Service MasterClasses

[cognigy.com/powerup](https://cognigy.com/powerup)