Conversational AI Glossary

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Agent Occupancy
This is the percentage of time agents are actively engaged in customer interactions in relation to their available or idle time. As a statistic, it's used to calculate call center productivity. Agent occupancy considers only live logged-in time, while agent utilization considers total time at work — including logged-out time such as training.

Agent Utilization
Agent utilization represents the percentage of time agents spend on handling calls and other customer interactions as well as related work. These rates can be used to calculate agent efficiency. Agent utilization considers total time at work — including logged-out time such as training — while agent occupancy considers only live logged-in time.

Average Handling Time (AHT)
The amount of time an agent is occupied on an incoming call.

Average Hold Time
This is the average length of time a customer is put on hold before interacting with a call center agent. It's typically calculated using a large volume of data over a specified period of time.

Call Time
Call time, also known as "talk time," is the amount of time a call center agent spends on a call with a customer. It is a key performance metric used in contact centers and call centers to measure agent productivity and efficiency.

Customer Effort Score (CES)
A measurement focused on service interactions in contact center environments. It provides a way to measure how customer centric channels and touchpoints are in their design and management, and how they promote ease of use, simplicity and effortless interaction.

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
A measurement that determines how an organization meets the expectations of its customers based on satisfaction. Customers are asked a question following a transaction about their satisfaction with the company, which is then rated from one (very dissatisfied) to five (very satisfied).

First-Contact Resolution (FCR)
The ability to address the customer's need the first time they call or connect with an agent, thereby eliminating the need for the customer to follow up with a second interaction. Contact center managers carefully monitor follow-up calls because follow-up calls create an overall increased call volume which, in turn, requires more agents. In general, a contact center manager will accept an increase in talk time, as long as the first call resolution rate increases as well. Follow up calls can also be an indication of customer dissatisfaction. Also referred to First Call Resolution.

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Talk Time
The average time an agent spends on each call, a common call center performance metric. In general, fast talk time averages are desirable. However, fast talk time averages accompanied by poor first call resolution rates are a sign that customer calls are not being answered satisfactorily.

Technologies:

Auto Dialer
An auto dialer is an outbound call center solution that automatically dials customer telephone numbers and can deliver important information through an automated message, or can connect a customer to a live agent once the call has been answered.

Automatic Call Distributor (ACD)
An automatic call distributor (ACD) is a telephony software system that answers incoming calls and routes them to a specific agent or department within a company. The system intelligently routes a call to the most appropriate agent based on the caller's needs.

Echo Cancellation
The process of making the channel quiet enough so that the system can hear and recognize Natural Language inputs during the prompt.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR)
A system that uses responses from a touch tone telephone to gather and store data. An IVR is automated telephone information system that speaks to the caller with a combination of fixed voice menus and data extracted from databases in real time. The caller responds by pressing keys on the telephone keypad or speaking words or short phrases. This can also be used for voice self-service which can used to escalate customers to human-assisted service. It uses a human voice to read back. When set up with voice recognition software, data can be gathered through voice instead of touch tone.

Machine Learning (ML)
Machine Learning is a subset of artificial intelligence (AI) that involves the development of algorithms and statistical models that enable computers to learn and improve performance on a specific task without being explicitly programmed. In other words, it allows systems to automatically learn and improve from experience without being explicitly programmed.

Natural Language Processing (NLP)
Natural Language Processing is a branch of artificial intelligence (AI) concerned with the interaction between computers and humans through natural language. It involves the ability of a computer program to understand, interpret, and generate human language in a way that is both meaningful and useful. NLP techniques enable computers to analyze, understand, and derive meaning from human language, including text and speech.

Natural Language Generation (NLG)
Natural Language Generation is a branch of artificial intelligence (AI) that focuses on the generation of natural language text or speech from structured data. NLG systems take structured data as input and produce human-like language output, allowing computers to communicate information in a way that is easily understandable by humans. NLG is often used in applications such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and automated reporting systems to generate human-like text or speech based on underlying data or information.

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Outbound IVR
An Outbound IVR is a contact center solution used to proactively distribute communications to customers. This technology allows an organization to automatically engage customers through multiple channels such as automated voice calls, SMS messages, email or social media posts using personalized notifications.

Predictive Dialing
Predictive dialing is a method of making several automated outbound calls without using agents. Answered calls are then passed to agents. A computer makes dialing decisions based on certain algorithms to support business objectives.

Softphone
A softphone is a software application that allows you to make phone calls over the internet. This type of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) software is installed on an internet-connected device and doesn't require a traditional telephone.

Speech Analytics
Speech analytics uses artificial intelligence (AI)-powered natural language understanding (NLU) to analyze voice recordings or live customer calls. The analysis can spot topics or key phrases; identify customer intent and sentiment; and help contact centers assess both agent performance and drivers of inbound interactions.

Text-to-Speech (TTS)
An optional feature that allows an application to play speech directly from ASCII text by converting that text to synthesized speech.

Voice Platform
A voice platform executes the commands and logic specified by a voice application, provides speech processing capabilities (e.g., speech recognition, text-to-speech, voice authentication) and enables application creation. They also interface with back-end systems (e.g., databases, CRM applications, legacy systems) and call center infrastructure (i.e., computer telephony integration), and provide system management and administration capabilities.

Voice Response Unit (VRU)
A software system that uses responses from a touch tone telephone to gather and store data. It uses a human voice to read back. It is sometimes referred to as the Interactive Voice Response.

Voice Print
A set of features extracted from a sample of a person's voice that are stored in a speaker authentication system.

Contact Center Workforce Optimization
A customer experience strategy that integrates contact center technologies and processes in order to deliver seamless omnichannel customer journeys in a multi-channel workforce.

Workforce Management
Workforce management is the process of strategically optimizing the productivity of employees, ensuring that all resources are in the right places at the right times. A workforce management strategy typically includes scheduling, forecasting, skills management and employee empowerment. Complexity increases with the need to ensure that customer service supports omnichannel customer engagement.

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Contact Center Shrinkage
Contact center shrinkage refers to the amount of time that call center agents are not available to handle customer interactions, even though they are scheduled to be working.

Contact Center Workforce Planning
Contact center workforce planning is the process of aligning the strategic and operational elements of a contact center workforce with organizational objectives.

Dialog Systems
AI systems that engage in conversational exchanges with users, often employing a combination of NLP, machine learning, and rules-based approaches.

Inbound Call Center
An inbound call center is a customer service function dedicated to receiving incoming calls from customers or potential customers. The inbound call center handles a variety of customer calls, ranging from product questions to technical support to sales inquiries. Customer service representatives who understand the company's products and services — and can provide helpful advice and solutions — typically staff inbound call centers.

Intelligent Virtual Agent (IVA)/AI Virtual Agent
Intelligent virtual agents (also known as "intelligent virtual assistants", "IVAs" or "virtual agents") are AI-powered software that can engage with customers in a conversational way. They're essentially digital assistants that can understand human speech and respond the same way a person would, especially when it comes to simple, repetitive requests.

Outbound Call Center
An outbound call center is a central point where call center agents contact current or prospective customers on behalf of an organization. Outbound calls are conducted for many purposes, including but not limited to: sales calls to prospective customers, debt collection, customer surveys, or for proactive customer service.

Customer Experience and Engagement:

Customer Engagement
The ongoing relationship a customer has with an organization based on relevant, personalized experiences and the anticipation of the customer's evolving needs.

Customer Experience (CX)
CX is made of individual customer touchpoints. The sum of all experiences a customer has with a company over the lifecycle of their relationship is called a customer journey.

Customer Interaction Analytics
Customer interaction analytics is the process of turning unstructured data found in email, voice, chat and more into structured data that can be searched and analyzed.

Customer Journey
The customer journey consists of multiple touchpoints and key interactions each customer or prospect has with a company—including messaging, employees, processes, products or services. Single or multiple interactions can be considered a customer journey and are part of a holistic customer experience lifecycle.

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Omnichannel Customer Service
Omnichannel customer service consists of numerous interactions across multiple touchpoints between a customer, or prospective customer, and product or service provider during the time of sale, and throughout the customer lifecycle.

Sentiment Analysis
Sentiment analysis, also referred to as opinion mining, is the process of analyzing speech or text to identify the emotional tone. The process uses artificial intelligence (AI)-powered natural language processing (NLP) to determine how the customer feels throughout an interaction. This information is an important component of Voice of the Customer (VoC) analysis.

Other AI Terms:

Chat Messages
Allows agents and supervisors to communicate during a contact. Reduces hold times and increase first and final contact resolution.

Experience Orchestration
Experience orchestration enables you to coordinate technology based on the experience you want your customers to have across all channels of engagement. Businesses use it to build deeper, more loyal relationships as part of a guided process for consistent service. It also helps derive valuable context for the business. It works by using automation to create real-time insight about customer interactions. You can use this for proactive decision-making, taking action when it will be most impactful and appropriate.

Journey Analytics
Customer journey analytics is the science of analyzing customer behavior across touchpoints and over time to measure the impact of customer behavior on business outcomes.

Journey Mapping
Journey mapping is the process of visually illustrating the actions and perceptions customers take or have as they achieve their goals throughout a relationship with your company. Journey mapping helps cross-functional teams align on ideal journeys that can improve the customer's experience.

Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN)
Public Switched Telephone Network. The public telephone network to which telephones, ACDs, and PBXs are connected.

Prompt
A message played to a caller that gives the caller a choice of selections in a menu and asks for a response.

Quality Management Calibration
A quality management calibration is a process used by call center quality management teams to ensure consistency and accuracy in the evaluation of customer service interactions.

Screen Pop
A method of delivering a screen of information to a telephone operator at the same time a telephone call is delivered. This is accomplished by a complex chain of tasks that include identifying the calling party number, using that information to access a local or remote ORACLE database, and pulling a form full of information from the database using an ORACLE database utility package.

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