

## Improving CX with AI

Better customer experience (CX), which leads to improved customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy, is a goal across many organisations. A good understanding of customers is the first step toward excellent customer experience, and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) can help accelerate this understanding.



Jessica Ekholm, VP Analyst, Gartner.

The areas where AI can help include sales and marketing. AI tools offer white-space analysis for sales and can recommend immediate action on opportunities.

In marketing, AI-powered solutions enable organisations to generate highly personalised messages at a scale that could not have been achieved using humans alone. Additionally, virtual customer assistants powered by AI can be used to improve the customer experience by reducing time to response.

“Among the many technology trends shaping 2019 and beyond, the adoption of AI when it comes to CX is one of the most exciting,” says Jessica Ekholm, VP Analyst, Gartner. “The use of AI technologies such as machine learning, natural-language understanding and natural-language processing can help analyse customer sentiment and customer feedback at scale, precision and speed not achievable through humans

Ekholm shares a five-step methodology for how application leaders can use AI to get faster, real-time understanding of customers.

### **Step 1. Formulate the customer experience strategy**

Before looking into what AI can do, you must have a CX vision and strategy in place. If there isn't one already, take an active part in crafting one. Application leaders should lead the CX initiative together with a dedicated CX leader, or a customer service or customer relations lead, or the chief marketing officer.

### **Step 2. Map and analyse customer journeys**

Map and analyse current customer journeys to understand the touchpoints and experiences that customer have with your brand — from discovery, presales, sales, customer service and beyond. A better understanding of how customers experience a brand provides the foundation on which AI can be used to improve customer journeys and benefit the business.

### **Step 3. Get familiar with AI solution(s) suitable for understanding customers faster and more efficiently**

Your organisation may already have a wealth of valuable data from current CX tools, customer service and sales reps, social media, Net Promoter Scores and Customer Effort Scores; however, most of this data fails to reveal rich real-time customer insight. By using AI technologies it is possible to categorise, organise and analyse customer data in real time, whether to analyse the written or spoken word, and ultimately understand customer sentiment.

### **Step 4. Decide whether to build or buy**

Application leaders must decide whether to build or buy an AI solution. Decide if there's enough skills and budget to create it in-house or if your organisation is better off buying a CX/AI solution. When buying a solution, focus on how well the vendor prioritises and how well they handle critical customer-understanding issues. Ensure the vendor will focus on this area through proofs of concepts or pilots.

### **Step 5. Track and measure success**

Measurement is the only way to answer the question “Is it working?” Find the metrics and key performance indicators to track the success of an AI/CX initiative. Aim for “early quick wins,” initiatives that can be tracked easily and have the ability to show success (or failure) fast, to build momentum for future initiatives.