

Conversational Marketing: Engaging, Understanding and Enhancing Customer Connections

Sonakshi Garg

Research Scholar, Sangam University, Bhilwara (Raj)

Dr. Mukesh Sharma

Associate Professor, Sangam University, Bhilwara (Raj)

Abstract:

Conversational marketing is captious when it comes to converting visitors to leads, leads to opportunities, increasing customer engagement, qualifying leads for better understanding and enhancing customer connection, making it a significant tool for marketers. Technologies that power conversational marketing undoubtedly will be among the most significant tools to go forward, provide the best way to start real-time conversation with buyers and customers. Conversational interfaces allow people to direct devices and programs through natural dialogue. Chatbots (which integrate with messaging apps like Facebook Messenger, Instagram Messenger, whatsapp business accounts etc) and virtual assistants (including Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa) are examples of conversational interfaces that have made an appearance in recent years. As adoption of conversational interfaces increases it will also increase the opportunities for marketers for better utilization of interface and meeting consumer needs. This paper highlights the trends driving the rise of conversational interfaces, identifies the types of conversational 'jobs to be done' for customers, and discusses the implications of conversational data for marketers.

Keywords: Conversational Marketing, Conversational Interface, Chatbots, Virtual Assistant

Introduction:-

Conversational Marketing is the process of having real-time, one-to-one conversations to capture, qualify, and connect with leads – while they're on your website – using targeted messaging and intelligent chatbots instead of lead capture forms. It is a feedback-oriented, personalized, one-on-one marketing practice. It uses two-way communication to identify interests of potential customers and communicate with them using offers and information relevant to them. The communication aims at knowing what the customer wants directly from the brand compared with following traditional methods such as demographic study and usage tracking. Marketers want to have one-on-one conversations with their customers to learn what they are looking for, and develop a stronger, long-term relationship with them. These make conversions easier, faster and boost brand loyalty.

From the moment you stepped foot in the store, you were treated like a VIP. A personal shopper guided you from one department to another. A stylist helped you pick out clothes. After you made a purchase, instead of sliding your bag across the counter, the salesperson walked around and personally handed it to you. When you were in one of their stores, everything was about you, the customer. Wherever you went, an employee was there for you – whether it was helping you get a garment tailored, return an unwanted purchase, or unwind with a cold beverage. This customer-centric revolution isn't limited to physical retailers. Brands like Netflix, Spotify, and Amazon have raised expectations and redefined how consumers interact with brands online. Today, people want an experience that isn't just frictionless, but enjoyable. When a customer visits your site, they expect the same type of experience they'd get from visiting the store. To keep up with skyrocketing expectations, you need to remove

friction and give customers what they want at the exact moment they want it. In other words, your business needs a model that focuses on the customer first. That's where Conversational Marketing comes in. Conversational Marketing creates instant and personalized engagement with customers and buyers. It accelerates business revenue by removing friction from the customer experience. Build conversational experiences and design conversations that accelerate your business's revenue and make buying more enjoyable. Customers now expect personalized experiences, 24/7 support, and instant access to the brands they do business with. As buying journeys grow more complex, removing friction from your digital channels is essential. Companies that rise to meet these consumer expectations — while differentiating themselves from competitors — will become leaders in their markets. And many of these companies are looking to Conversational Marketing to improve their digital customer experience today.

Literature Review:-

Conversation is defined by the Cambridge English Dictionary (2020) as a dialogue between two or more people in which their views, feelings, and ideas are conveyed, questions are asked and answered, and news and information are shared. We see that data is communicated and that there is symmetry in that the initiative may correspond to both parties at various stages of the conversation.

"Markets are conversations" is the first premise of the Cluetrain Manifesto (Locke et al., 2001), a book about business-customer interaction in a networked environment. At the beginning of the book, there is a statement that "the very earliest markets were populated by persons, not abstract concepts or mathematical analysis; they were marketplaces in which supply met the demand with a handshake." For a bigger audience, the current research's primary target is to determine how this market of dialogue could be achieved by human-computer interaction instead of human-to-human connection.

The term "conversational marketing" refers to marketing that communicates with customers. This can be accomplished via live chat, chatbots, voice assistants, and other types of conversational agents. These experiences can be delivered through websites, social media channels, paid advertising, and even in-store or linked smart home devices.

Conversational marketing is highly relevant to customer relationships, especially for customer engagement (CE), as CE has been found to boost loyalty (Leckie et al. 2016; Maslowska et al. 2016; Hinson et al. 2019) and customer satisfaction (Hollebeek, 2011; Calder et al. 2016; Israfilzade & Babayev, 2020), all of which lead to higher sales (Kumar et al. 2010), assistance for peers or community members (Hinson et al. 2019; So et al. 2020), and giving a new approach of regular communication with customers. Conversational marketing tools enable marketing and sales departments to understand better what is happening on the web page and develop personalised interactions with the most qualified customers through lead reports, instant feedback from chatbots, live chat, and embedded voice calls (Akerkar, 2019; Ashfaq et al., 2020). Chung et al. (2018) investigate chatbots and customer satisfaction in the context of luxury brands and summarise that using e-commerce chatbots increases customer satisfaction with the brand, as chatbots may communicate with the customer and provide adequate customer support.

To understand Conversational AI, we must first understand the concept of AI, which enables human-machine interaction to take place in a fundamentally new way. Artificial intelligence has been around for decades, but there is still room for improvement. The simulation of the human mind by computers designed to think like people in order to mimic their actions is referred to as intelligence.

As a result, some elements distinguish conversational marketing from other customer-centric marketing tactics. Conversational marketing may sound like the current marketing effort of a particular company, with several channels and interactions with the audience. The essential difference, though, is with whom the customer is

interacting. In most cases, the current customer-centric marketing technique necessitates human involvement throughout communication between the firm and the client. In the case of conversational marketing (Cancel, Gerhardt, & Devaney, 2019), however, the one-on-one human presence is substituted by machines (Ai or non-Ai conversational agents) in interacting with potential customers with individualised product/service suggestions or offers.

(Copulsky, Jonathan on Jan 1, 2019) examines the evolution of conversational platforms. Over the next three to five years, the technology will likely evolve rapidly, allowing conversational platforms to move beyond established customer service use cases to applications that facilitate more informed customer decision-making and create more immersive brand engagement experiences. Marketers will need to sort through the legal, regulatory and brand trust issues associated with the Big Data generated by conversational platforms, as well as integrate conversational platforms into their user experience roadmap, data strategies and marketing technology stack.

Objective of study:-

1. Highlights the trends driving the rise of conversational interfaces,
2. Identifies the types of conversational ‘jobs to be done’ for customers
3. Discusses the implications of conversational data for marketers.

Research Methodology:-

A qualitative conceptual research approach is performed to answer the research objective. The goal of this research is to foreground the trends driving the rise of conversational interfaces like mobile messenger chatbots as the interface. For this, many literature , journals, articles, research papers will be used to gather data. This section will elaborate on identifying the types of conversational ‘jobs to be done’ for customers , highlighting the trends giving the rise of conversational interface and implications of conversational data for marketers.

Conversational Marketing:-

Conversational Marketing is a process of interacting with website visitors and converting leads via dialogue-driven activities. This style of inbound marketing focuses on interactions with the consumer, not simply one-way communication by the brand.

Sales and marketing professionals are constantly striving to beat the algorithms and drive traffic and revenue. So it gets strenuous for them to provide leads and customers with a personalized experience among all the bustle.

Over the last few years, conversational marketing emerged as the perfect solution for sales and marketing worldwide. Almost 5 out of 10 businesses in a survey by HubSpot have implemented conversational marketing in their marketing efforts.

As a result, you don't have to wait for long hours or days to get a response to a ticket you raised or a form you have filled. With conversational marketing, the lines between human-to-human conversations and human-to-computer conversations get blurred through chatbots, live chat and targeted messaging.

Tools for Conversational Marketing:-

1. Facebook Messenger Chatbot : It is an effective customer service tool for various brands. According to Accenture, 57% of businesses state that chatbots deliver higher ROIs with less effort. With Facebook Messenger, you can provide shopping facilities, customer service support, order tracking, and many more.

2. Instagram Messenger:- Previously Instagram account with more than 10k followers were able to create a chatbot but starting from August 2021 all brands can now easily integrate their Instagram messaging chatbot with their technology stack. This help brands on Instagram to drive more meaningful conversations.

3. **Google Business Message:-** Today 75% of consumers prefer to engage with a brand over private messaging channels versus traditional channels. That's why Google enables you to directly start a conversation via Google Maps, Search, and brand websites, creating a frictionless path to purchasing.
4. **Whatsapp Business App:-** WhatsApp can become one of the most important marketing channels." If you want to be accessible to your customers, then we highly recommend using WhatsApp for your business. You can use WhatsApp Business for more than customer support. For instance, when you have a new product or collection, you can promote it on WhatsApp as well.
5. **Apple Business Chat:-** customers can find your brand and start conversations with you from touchpoints like Safari, Apple Maps, Search, and Siri. Similar to other messaging apps, they can then get support, schedule appointments or make payments with Apple Pay.

Trends giving rise to conversational marketing:-

chatbot technology has fared so far and the conversational marketing trends that we can expect to see at present and beyond –

1. **Messaging Platform:-** Interactive messaging platforms like whatsapp leveraging chatbots because an interactive environment encourages continuous engagement with real time interactions.
2. **More businesses will adopt chatbot:-** Chatbots are quite helpful in turning anonymous traffic into a prospect by identifying potential leads, initiating their interest in products, and cultivating customer and brand relationships.
3. **Customer Experience will be Highly Optimized:-** Today, priorities for companies have moved towards providing the best customer experience.
4. **Growing Demands for Voice-Driven Interfaces:-** Voice-enabled chatbots work similarly to traditional text-based chatbots. The only difference is instead of typing your question or entering your input, you speak directly to the chatbot.
5. **Artificial Intelligence:-** artificial intelligence will be one of the sectors that will open up vast opportunities for companies over the next few decades. AI and machine learning can analyze the customer's behavior and search patterns. An intelligent chatbot is one of the examples of AI in practice. In the coming years, AI-backed conversational marketing will be the driving force of customer acquisition and retention for many businesses.
6. **More Focus on Customer Data:-** Conversational AI can assist businesses to reimagine the overall user engagement process, even in absolute basic transactions, and collect data to assist in future interactions.
7. **Network of Knowledge:-** Marketers and customer success teams can deploy AI to harness repositories of knowledge to provide absolute personalization for the end-user. With bots being interconnected and having access to vast data pools, businesses can deliver personalized engagement in real-time that connects with the user to provide real value.

Types of conversational ‘jobs to be done’ for customers:- An effective conversational marketing strategy should be designed to help with the following customer service aspects.

1. Improve customer satisfaction through personalized conversations

By leveraging conversational marketing, your company can improve user satisfaction by delivering a consistent, purposeful experience at each digital touchpoint. Additionally, by providing a chatbot, you can increase consumer engagement, confidence and loyalty by empowering users to interact directly and on-demand with your brand.

2. Deepen the customer relationship

Trust takes time to build. By listening to consumer needs and addressing problems in real-time, your organization

can begin to build this for a stronger customer relationship. Consumers who are frustrated with unresponsive brands on social or email have grown 5.7 times since 2019. However, many brands struggle to deliver these interactions at scale. Differentiate your brand by using AI tools such as natural language processing to showcase your voice authentically and create a sense of empathy with users.

3. Assisting Customer to Select Products on an E-Commerce Website

Customers are easily overwhelmed when shopping online because of the abundance of options but no way to get close to the products in reality before making a purchase. Take the example of an online clothing store. Customers may not know what kind of jeans would be the best for their unique size, height and weight. Chatbots can solve this problem by asking customer-specific questions like their favorite colors, weight and size before providing options of jeans tailored for them.

4. Promote Blog and Video Content

Often, website visitors land on the website to learn something about your brand's niche. Maybe they are there to learn how to make noodles from your noodle shop instead of ordering a pack. In such cases, conversational marketing can market your blog posts on videos on making noodles to these customers, thereby increasing rapport and brand engagement.

5. Affiliate Marketing

In the era of large and micro-influencers, affiliate marketing is taking giant strides. If you are an influencer, marketing a product to your followers may consume a lot of time. With chatbots, influencers can automate responding to basic queries from their fans and jump in for consultations through the bot only in particular scenarios.

6. Keeping Fans Informed

Sports teams like the football club Manchester United have millions of fans across the globe. Attending all the messages of their fans on social media and websites in real-time is not practically possible. Hence, they use chatbots to naturally converse with their fans and keep them updated on all events.

Implication of Conversational data :-

Businesses are aware of the key role that chatbots can play in enhancing customer experience. Therefore, despite the current limitations in conversational AI, the future for chatbots is bright.

At present, the most common use of conversational artificial intelligence in businesses is in the form of chatbots, virtual assistants, and in social media platforms. Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a subfield of artificial intelligence, which enables machines to understand human language in the way it is written. Today, deep learning models have made it possible to translate a language, summarize text, and even analyse sentiments. With businesses looking to deploy chatbots and virtual assistants to strengthen customer service, the market adoption of the technology is on the rise.

Conclusion

Looking beyond 2022, it is high time that businesses incorporate conversational marketing systems in their everyday marketing mix to provide an unparalleled, omnichannel and personalized experience to customers without breaking the bank. Conversational Marketing leverages what we've learned from both inbound and outbound marketing. But Conversational Marketing is NOT about blasting messages outward, or forcing people

to take an action; It's about answering questions, listening to feedback, and uncovering ways to help.

Limitations:-

There are several drawbacks in chatbots and other communication tools, which is causing obstruction to the adoption of conversational AI at scale like basic assistance, lack of human context, high installation costs, decision making or the lack of it, reputation , no empathy etc.

References:

Adam, M., Wessel, M. & Benlian, A. (2020). AI Based Chatbots in Customer Service and Their Effects on User Compliance. *Electronic Markets*, 1-19.

Johansson, F. and Kroger, F. (2019). Conversational Commerce - A Quantitative Study on Preferences towards AI-fueled C-Commerce Platforms among Digital Natives in Sweden and Germany, Jonkoping University.

Akerkar, R. (2019). Artificial Intelligence for Business. SpringerBriefs in Business. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-97436-1

Ashfaq, M., Yun, J., Yu, S., & Loureiro, S. M. C. (2020). I, Chatbot: Modeling the determinants of users' satisfaction and continuance intention of AI-powered service agents. *Telematics and Informatics*, 54, 101473.

Atiyah, A., Jusoh, S., & Almajali, S. (2018, July). An efficient search for context-based chatbots. In 2018 8th International Conference on Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT) (pp. 125-130). IEEE.

Kumar, V., Aksoy, L., Donkers, B., Venkatesan, R., Wiesel, T., & Tillmanns, S. (2010). Undervalued or overvalued customers: capturing total customer engagement value. *Journal of service research*, 13(3), 297-310.

GNEWUCH, U., MORANA, S., & MAEDCHE, A. (2017, December). Towards Designing Cooperative and Social Conversational Agents for Customer Service. In ICIS.

www.engagebay.com

www.impactplus.com

www.whisbi.com

www.drift.com