

THE TIMES

Special Report

How Artificial Intelligence Gives Your Business A Critical Edge

Building AI capabilities into your business model that engage your customers and ensuring it's the solution they demand.

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This special report looks at how a unified help and support strategy can cut costs, reduce basket abandonment and increase sales per customer.

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The following article appeared in a special supplement in The Times newspaper (London edition), on 15 December 2015. The full report can be obtained by contacting us; or [downloaded from the Artificial Solutions website](#).

HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GIVES YOUR BUSINESS A CRITICAL EDGE

Everyone's talking about artificial intelligence, but what's the next step? How do you build AI capabilities into your business model that engage your customers and, more importantly, ensure it's the solution they demand? **Lawrence Flynn**, chief executive of Artificial Solutions, considers the issues

ARTIFICIAL SOLUTIONS

Artificial intelligence or AI has moved from the realms of fantasy to reality and is rapidly becoming a critical success factor for the customer experience. Businesses that address this demand not only strengthen faltering customer relationships, but also realise unexpected revenue opportunities.

But most organisations aren't geared up to take on the complexities of delivering a Siri-like AI application, even though they can clearly see the advantages.

Key to the success of artificially intelligent applications is a seamless interface between the user and the application. Fundamental to delivering this flawless experience is ensuring the application understands the user's natural language input, whenever or wherever it's given. But understanding is only half the story as consumers expect technology to do more, to meet their needs and get things done. It's so much more than just providing a smart answer.

Unibet, one of Europe's largest and fastest growing online gambling operators, has developed an artificially intelligent natural language interaction (NLI) capability that it believes will transform the betting experience for its customers. The app makes it simpler and more intuitive, while eliminating some of the current barriers,

such as finding the particular wager they want among the many thousands on offer.

Customers can simply use everyday language to place a bet – "I want to place a tanner on Hobson's Choice at Newmarket tomorrow" or "a fiver on Liverpool to win" – and the app intelligently analyses the request and responds appropriately. If there is any ambiguity, the app will either make some safe assumptions or ask the customer to clarify. By using natural language, the app

removes some of the traditional frictions and complexities in what can be a complicated and even intimidating environment.

"Using natural language removes the rigid and impersonal barrier between us and our customers," says Will Mace, head of strategic development at Unibet. "The simple, intuitive manner of the

interaction makes for a really positive and easy experience. Customers are making increasing demands on their service providers. They expect a seamless experience, and quite rightly they are less and less tolerant of clunky or complex interactions.

"Early forms of digital interface are being replaced with more sophisticated AI technologies such as NLI. This is driven by technological development certainly, but primarily by customer demand. Customers like easy and intelligent experiences."

Technology that understands you, not the other way round



The rise of the digital assistant
Major players are already investing in intelligent, speech-enabled digital assistants to achieve strategic differentiation



Why it's only the first step
Tomorrow's digital assistants will no longer be confined to single devices. They will be deployed on multiple platforms and devices



A platform that covers every angle
Delivering artificially intelligent applications requires a platform that is scalable, multilingual, device-independent and offers seamless integration



Questions are never asked in isolation
AI-based apps need to address many factors including context, memory, intelligent understanding and the ability to react appropriately



One that's easy to use
To avoid lengthy development timescales, escalating costs and highly complex computational linguistics, it must also be intelligent and automated



Hear every conversation
Capture, interpret and use the conversational data of every interaction of every customer across every channel to deliver the ultimate customer experience

Building this level of applied AI into an application is no mean feat. Developing just the simplest of NLI applications in-house can take an army of highly skilled computational linguists, engineers and developers. Choose the wrong technology and the end-result may well be nothing more than a long, tortuous and costly white elephant project.

In contrast, Unibet built its app using Artificial Solutions' patented NLI technology platform Teneo, which is designed expressly to develop and deploy advanced AI solutions. It applies the principles of artificial intelligence in the development of applications, shortening design time, and eliminating the need for extensive and expensive technical resources.

Teneo is a single integrated platform that covers every aspect required to create applications for business, it takes the human-machine interaction far beyond responding to simple speech commands and can even act as an interface to the deep-thinking of cognitive computing, all on a cross-platform, cross-device and multilingual basis.

But these natural language-based applications aren't just about delivering a vague future customer engagement strategy or business process management im-

provements. As Unibet know, they fulfil a very real need today and will future-proof their business as they steal a march on their competition.

However, this is only one of the considerations. As consumers increasingly move their lives online, the once direct relationship businesses had with them has floundered. Businesses are now struggling to connect with their customers, leaving both sides with nothing more than a series of disparate transactions.

Introducing an intelligent conversational element to customer interactions brings back that connection in several ways. People reveal a huge amount of information in conversation – why they are searching for something, particular features of interest, the reason they are hesitant to purchase. All this information can be analysed in real time, enabling the organisation not just to study trends, but to react immediately and personalise the interaction, ultimately securing the sale.

But relying on the technology goliaths like Apple, Google and Amazon to solve this is a risky strategy. Even if they were to open up their application programming interfaces or APIs, they'd undoubtedly still be hugely restrictive and prescriptive in terms of user experience, in how they

handle, or not, cross-platform requirements, and even how they treat your organisation as a customer.

Further, your customers don't restrict themselves to one platform or technology so you also need a solution that works across multiple platforms, devices and channels. All this aside, the biggest question remains over who would have access to, or even own, the goldmine of "voice of your customer" data that is generated. The real risk may be that despite all your investment, your business has no more information than it did when you had nothing but a point-and-click website.

Artificial intelligence is here. As a key component, natural language interaction will be critical as humans increasingly use natural, everyday language, gestures and more to control apps, online services, devices, cars, mobiles, wearables and the internet of things. They now expect technology to understand them and simplify their lives.

The critical point then is how enterprises respond to the AI imperative facing them and use it to gain a competitive edge.

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About Artificial Solutions

Artificial Solutions® is the leading specialist in Natural Language Interaction (NLI). The company's patented technology enables people to converse with applications and services running on computers, mobiles, wearables and other electronic devices in a humanlike, intelligent manner.

Called Teneo, it is the first complete platform to enable enterprises to rapidly develop and analyze natural language applications that embrace artificial intelligence through the use of machine learning and implicit personalization.

Teneo allows business users and developers to collaborate on creating sophisticated natural language applications in record time that run on any operating system, in 35 languages, without the need for specialist linguistic skills. Teneo also unlocks the knowledge held in immense volumes of natural language conversations, delivering unprecedented levels of big data insight and true 'voice of your customer' understanding.

Artificial Solutions' technology is deployed by hundreds of public and private sector organizations and used by millions of people. For more information visit www.artificial-solutions.com
