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Thought leadership

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Why banks, traders and insurance companies are going 'Conversational-AI first' with Chatbots

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Chatbots are solving everyday customer service problems organizations have faced for a long time. With them, you can unify multiple entry points from a customer into an organization. If you're a corporate customer today, you go to the corporate part of the website, and if you want to phone someone you call the corporate phone line, and they have their own team. With a chatbot at the initiation of that process, the human natural language element can be used as a single entry point with the logic to route you to the right people, at the right time, and make the customer experience entirely more streamlined and personal.

Financial institutions looking to build innovative customer experiences should think about how chatbots, virtual assistants and voice recognition play into their enterprise artificial intelligence (AI) programs. The technology is here, now, and there is a definite appetite for it, so when thinking through applications, businesses should keep these points in mind.

- While there are several frameworks available to build your own bot, that does not mean that a company should get a bot and drop it on their website to start engaging. Chatbots need to be worked into the operational fabric of the business, and therefore, a clear application for it needs to be defined. We're seeing some businesses interested in bots for insurance that can collect information needed across multiple claims forms, bots for bankers to screen information needed for mortgage or student loan applications and bots for traders that allow them to enhance the customer experience and automate certain processes that would enable them to ask a bot to crawl a database of investment research in order to facilitate their trade decision-making.
- Chatbots need to be combined with machine learning, natural language processing and sentiment analysis to make consumers feel like they are not just interacting with a machine but an emphatic assistant that they can talk to as if it were a human that understands the emotion and intention behind their questions or commands. Businesses need to

move away from the automated voice prompting systems which have provided such a poor customer experience and cause such frustration for consumers.

- Conversational AI is a way to better engage in a society where "Messaging-based applications are beginning to be the norm among users, particularly millennials... and voice (both speech-to-text and text-to-speech) [has] grown significantly since 2Q14." (Gartner, Conversational AI to Shake up your Technical and Business Worlds, September 2016). This indicates consumers don't want to talk to a human, but they also don't want to talk to a machine. They might, however, want to talk to a machine that feels like a human. The same report predicts "Conversational AI-first" will supersede "cloud-first, mobile-first" as the most important, high-level imperative for the next 10 years."