

Editorial: *Human and Digital Transformation and the Future of CX, Being People-Centered*



It is well-known the successful involvement of the National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, in the major strategies (1990, 1995, 2000), by pointing out significant visions (Chivu, Ioan-Franc, 2018; Pop and Ioan-Franc, 2022), being people-centered so as to ensure our biological and spiritual existence. We all know that under the pressure of the current reality dynamically adapted to the new normal a good conversation stimulates minds, reflecting and acting accordingly, considering the importance of changes that only education can induce, with adequate speed, in the social base and decision makers (Romanian Distribution Committee, 2023).

Eleven years ago, the successful Entrepreneur and Professor at the reputed Vlerick (Leuven Gent Brussels) Management School (with triple accreditation: EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA), Steven Van Belleghem, wrote a challenging book entitled *“The Conversation Company: Boost Your Business Through Culture, People and Social Media”* (Kogan Page, 1st edition, May 29, 2012). Two years earlier, focused on CX future, Steven Van Belleghem challenged us with *“The Conversation Manager”* (Lannoo Publishers, September 16, 2010).

In December last year, a report by Opus Research (Top and Miller, 2022) underlined the real need for product development, marketing, sales, and customer support to improve outcomes by valorizing the rich source of insights coming from conversations between customers and businesses, the content of these stored and managed insights being called *“Conversational Intelligence”* – CI. There are significant benefits of CI for sales, marketing, and support, as shown in figure below. Key to augment solution providers’ business and improving their operational efficiencies was considered the judicious implementation of CI, including by making CI consumption more pleasant (for instance, attractive names and logos such as: Siri, by Apple; Alexa, by Amazon; Watson as *“AI for smarter business”*, by IBM; Einstein as *“AI for CRM”*, by Salesforce and so on).

<p>SALES</p> <p>Conversational Intelligence has important roles to play in qualifying leads and increasing the productivity of salespeople. Pre-sales and sales assistants provide important functions for live reps, such as scheduling sales calls, composing and delivering follow-up emails and other activities to transform leads into qualified customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expand pipeline and grow revenue ➤ Improve business processes and accelerate opportunities ➤ Make appointments ➤ Minimize repetitive tasks and improve job satisfaction ➤ Identify what customers, prospects are talking about ➤ Improve sales outcomes / sales performance ➤ Competitive differentiation ➤ Optimize sales approach to deliver better CX ➤ Decrease in the percentage of follow-up calls ➤ Provide B2B sales coaching
<p>MARKETING</p> <p>Firms offer technologies that enable companies to capture conversations and detect the "triggers" that inform marketing or sales personnel to help each individual along the continuum – from search and discovery to the selection of items and brands, and, ultimately, to checkout.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enable predictive routing ➤ Provide insights into marketing & advertising efforts ➤ Create a personalized, cross-channel customer experience ➤ Support data-based decisions to improve digital marketing performance ➤ Show which channels, campaigns, and creative driving high value ➤ Surface new customer insights, proactive notification ➤ Deliver insights into business processes, platform performance and ROI optimization
<p>CUSTOMER SUPPORT</p> <p>Many large, sophisticated enterprises and brands have invested computing resources that monitor customer interactions (call center recordings, chat transcripts, etc.) to detect patterns that correlate with successful interactions or detect when companies must take remedial action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enable improvements in customer experience, retention, operations ➤ Interpret VOC feedback ➤ Accelerate and improve automation (e.g. inputs/training for bots, IVR flows, call dispositions/summaries) ➤ Detect root cause analysis of failures ➤ Provide real-time or near-real-time input for better outcomes, reduced agent training ➤ Enable supervisors, trainers, coaches, and analysts to populate forms, annotate transcripts ➤ Transition from viewing CSAT results to listening/reviewing recordings or transcripts ➤ Provide insights to contact center personnel, analysts and other company team members.

Figure no. 1: Benefits of Conversational Intelligence for Sales, Marketing, Support (Opus Research)

Source: Top, D., Miller, D., 2022. 2022 Conversational Intelligence Intelliview: Evaluating 15 Leading Solution Providers Who Surface Insights from First-Party Conversational Data. [pdf] Opus Research, Report, December 2022, p. 5 (work cited)

Coming back to Steven Van Belleghem, it is also worth remembering three other significant books written by the distinguished author: “*When Digital Becomes Human: The Transformation of Customer Relationships*” (Kogan Page, 1st edition, April 28, 2015); “*Customers the Day After Tomorrow: How to Attract Customers in a World of AIs, Bots, and Automation*” (Lannoo Publishers, March 8, 2018); “*The Offer You Can't Refuse: What If Customers Want More Than Excellent Service*” (Lannoo Publishers, November 24, 2020). In his opinion (Van Belleghem, 2015), there is a clear linkage between companies’ human relations transformation and digital transformation, digital and human coming together to reconfigure the customer relationship (as shown in figure below), success being achieved through linking the perfection of the first with the emotion of the second, a greater success depending on a stronger

emotional relationship. And there is no doubt about the continuous revolution of CX in the digital world of customer-oriented companies.

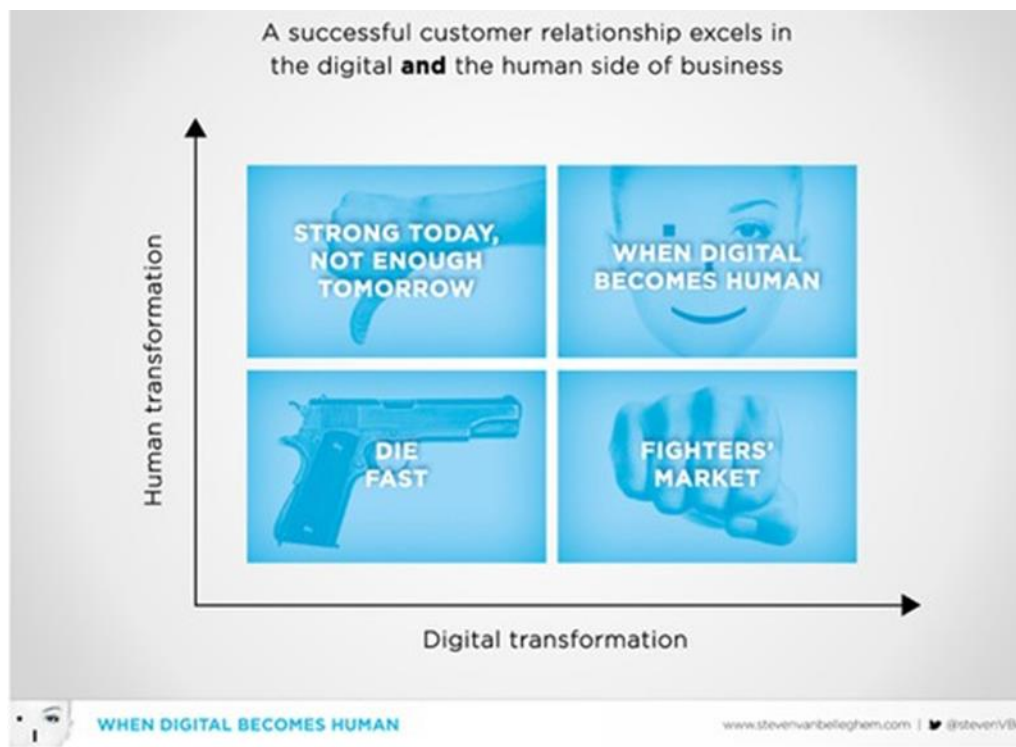


Figure no. 1: Two dimensions in the reconfigured customer relationship

Source: van Belleghem, S., 2015. *When digital becomes human*. *J Direct Data Digit Mark Pract* 17, p. 3 (work cited)

Very recently, Steven Van Belleghem (2023) expressed precisely and clearly: “*Every digital transformation calls for a human transformation first*”. And with the real challenge being the human part, while the easy one is the digital part, he is recommending for today’s world of automation to differentiate as a human company by considering both investment in AI, and investment (as energy and time) in fixing company’s human system. To reach this conclusion, he considered what will humans do and where will they shine, as well as where will be their added value (as employees for an organization, but also for its customers) within the context of the increased use of generative AI tools (such as: Bard, ChatGPT, Midjourney, Dall-e).

In February this year we highlighted (Purcarea, 2023), for example, significant aspects regarding benefits and risks of using ChatGPT. And as we are at the beginning of the generative AI era, trying to understand this technology’s benefits and risks, let us reflect on some questions raised by McKinsey’s research (Chui et al., 2023), such as: “*How concerned should individuals be about the advent of generative AI? While companies can assess how the technology will affect their bottom lines, where can citizens turn for accurate, unbiased information about how it will*

affect their lives and livelihoods? How can individuals as workers and consumers balance the conveniences generative AI delivers with its impact in their workplaces? Can citizens have a voice in the decisions that will shape the deployment and integration of generative AI into the fabric of their lives? ”.

The important thing (to paraphrase again our famous Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi) is not to forget... the essence of things, and remain People-Centered.

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