Digital healthcare providers

Taking extra care of customer experience

- An Advisory Services PoV

CGI

We are a growing, aging and ever-demanding population that relies on healthcare providers (HCPs) to help us stay healthy. Nevertheless, resources are stretched and staff spread thin, and in many cases, the technology that is supposed to make a HCP's work easier is actually unfit for purpose and therefore causes problems.

Most HCPs have gone through some form of digital transformation in the last decade, whether that be the centralisation of digital patient records or launching trials of wearable technology that monitors the vital signs of cancer patients. Whilst most had previously undergone implementations of technologies based upon long roadmaps to perfect their strategy, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need to quickly rollout digital healthcare technology.

However, the quality of digital tools and communications is not currently hitting the mark, with 41% of people saying that improving these areas should be a top priority for HCPs. The NHS themselves are aware of how important this need for digital transformation is, and in their long term plan state that in 10 years "the NHS will offer a 'digital first' option for most" in order to free up time for clinicians to focus on those in most need of care.

Looking at digital solutions alone will not fix all of the problems that healthcare customers face. Whilst the pandemic started an accelerated digital transformation journey across HCPs, it also caused a surge in contact demand, for example, it was reported that NHS 111 saw a 400% increase in calls. This demand (although naturally reducing) has not fully disappeared, and with staff shortages prevalent, we are seeing longer waiting times with more people struggling to access support.

Quite often, the support needed might be for basic queries (such as finding out hospital visiting times or booking and cancelling appointments), and on other occasions those requiring more niche support may get through to someone lacking the soft skills or clinical skills to provide the help required.

Additionally, the broad demographics of customers across HCPs creates an important consideration in regards to delivering exceptional customer satisfaction.

There is a broad range of stakeholders interacting with HCPs, from patients, to family members, to the general public seeking information, and the support provided must therefore satisfy everyone: the younger, more tech-savvy person, to the older person who may prefer more traditional contact channels, like voice or face-to-face. Considerations also have to be made for people from different cultures (where English will not be their first language) and people with disabilities, where the challenge of providing fully accessible and flexible services is crucial.

These stakeholders have also become more demanding, with higher expectations when it comes the services they receive. They receive great services elsewhere in their lives from other industries, and expect the same from their HCPs, especially when healthcare becomes the area where they need the most support.

So how can we help HCPs overcome the challenges of the digital contact world?

Digital transformation

As with many industries, HCPs have looked to digital transformation in order to keep pace with customer expectations and demands. However, many are simply interchanging the term 'digital transformation' with 'technology adoption', and are therefore falling short in realising the multitude of customer experience benefits as well as a maximised return on investment.

Furthermore, digital transformation isn't just about the technology; it is also about culture and behaviour. Stakeholders need to be properly informed and fully on-board with the journey, and the right communication and training throughout is therefore just as essential as implementing the best technology solutions.

Excellent customer experience is critical and relies upon a complete transformation in how HCPs approach their patients, staff and other key stakeholders: but this is where CGI can help.

Omni-channel strategy and solutions

People expect their questions and issues to be addressed in a convenient and efficient manner. They should be able to get the answers they need whenever they want, on whatever channel they prefer. An omni-channel strategy and cloud-based contact centre as a service solution is therefore critical, as an on-premise contact centre solution is not fit for purpose.

With the right solution in place, your organisation will have a tool that can flex to scale when you need it, particularly at times of high demand. We provide an omni-channel contact solution which seamlessly blends the available contact channels.

An agent can handle a call, email, webchat or a social media post all using one single user-interface, and by linking this to your customer record management (CRM) platform, the agent has a 360-degree view of the customer and their full journey in order to provide the highest quality service.

The platform not only enables choice for the customer, but also for the agent, with the ability to effortlessly shift between channels. As an example, imagine a patient contacting their HCP on their smartphone, looking to talk to a doctor about a rash. The doctor could easily send a link to the patient to shift the call or chat to a video session, so they could fully assess the issue and ensure the right steps are followed to resolve there and then, improving the customer satisfaction and first contact resolution.
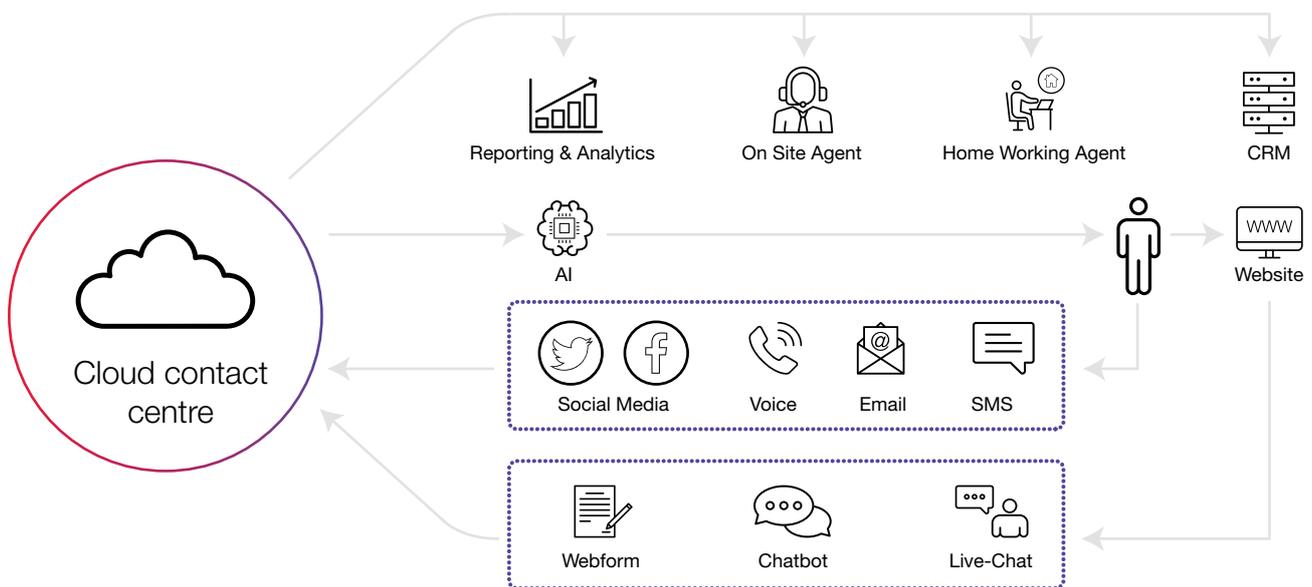
One of the key benefits of our solution for HCPs is a powerful queue management and interactive voice response (IVR) tool. This tool can route calls using traditional DTMF tone selections from the customer, and also uses natural language processing (NLP) and speech recognition to enable customers to explain why they are calling so they can be routed accordingly. This also allows HCPs to make audio file announcements to customers whilst they wait, for example, with expected waiting time announcements. For queries that are not urgent, the tool can also be configured to give customers the option to receive a callback without losing their place in the queue.

Furthermore, the simple drag and drop creation feature could easily enable HCPs to overflow calls with rules in place to different wards or teams where needed, and once a customer has informed the HCP of why they are calling, the tool enables prioritisation of the most urgent queries and uses skill-based routing to direct the contact to the individual, a voice mail or automated service required.

Self-service, automation and artificial intelligence (AI)

The volume of contacts experienced by HCPs is increasing every year, which provides a complication: how can your organisation afford to continually add more people in to handle the service?

Customers want effective responses quickly and efficiently, and often waiting in a queue for support will not work. Self-service and automation methods have therefore become essential to both reduce the cost to serve and keep stakeholders happy. Your organisation must therefore make sure that the right tools (such as your website) and knowledge hubs are in place to empower customers with self-service wherever possible. Giving stakeholders access to a strong knowledge hub would enable processes such as booking appointments online via a fully customisable and brandable platform. The knowledge hub also connects customers with the information they need faster and more effectively by using intelligent AI-powered search tools to automatically rank and present the most relevant articles based upon their interaction history and conversation context.

Virtual agents are an AI-powered customer assistant bot, handling multiple languages for voice and digital interactions to deliver the answers that customers need whenever they need them. Voice virtual agents are powered by speech recognition technology and conversational AI that uses natural language processing (NLP) and natural language understanding (NLU) to accurately comprehend customers' needs, providing answers via an automated human voice response.

These digital virtual agents can also work with various chat channels (such as webchat and SMS) and make sense of typos and misspellings to identify customers' needs and provide instant answers.

These are effective in helping patients or family members get simple answers to questions without involving a human, for example, queries such as "what time are visiting hours?" can easily be resolved through automation. Where a query is more sensitive or complicated, virtual agents can efficiently route customers to the right person to address the issue, for instance, this could be utilised for basic triaging of a patient's symptoms before routing them to the relevant team or 999 where appropriate.

Utilising a proactive communication strategy will also greatly benefit HCPs. By harnessing data on why and when in the lifecycle stakeholders are contacting you, your organisation can use automation to help prevent reactive contact wherever possible. For example, if you know a patient's next of kin details and that they are likely to contact you with questions about their family member, it is important that where possible, you use SMS and email to automatically send them information such as the patient's ward, bed number and visiting hours. This can also be used to digitally send patients communications about appointments, and where two-way communication is enabled, customers can cancel by simply texting a word, then leaving robotic process automation to deal with this on behalf of your team.

In 2020, Drift noted a 92% increase in the use of chatbots from the previous year, making this the brand communication channel with the largest growth.* This truly highlights the growing importance of implementing customer interactions that involve emerging technologies and machine learning, and as a result we have seen an increasing number of HCPs using virtual agents to communicate with stakeholders, for example 111 online.

Reference:
* Drift, 2020 State of Conversational Marketing report.

Empower your teams

With the power of AI and automation tools, you will relieve some of the pressure on your existing agents so they can allocate time to deal with more complex enquiries and vulnerable stakeholders who may need additional support. Furthermore, HCPs need to empower their teams with the right tools to effectively solve queries, in order to improve agent efficiency and first contact resolution.

One way that your organisation can do this is through knowledge management and agent assist tools that use AI and machine learning to provide agents with automated assistance, real-time contextualised recommendations and next best actions whilst they are dealing with a stakeholder. For example, a customer has already informed the virtual agent that they need to speak to someone about their loved one who has mental health issues and is missing, the virtual agent could then prioritise this contact making sure it is picked up first in the queue. When reaching the agent, they are already aware of the reason the person is contacting them, and the assist tool can provide them with scripts and instant access to all the relevant services they can offer, such as arranging support or other mental wellbeing services, and also suggesting best actions they should follow, such as recommending they call the police. The tool could then allow the agent to send this information directly to the customer via an email or SMS in one simple step.

Understanding the sentiment and feeling of an interaction is also a key indicator of customer experience. With a speech analytics platform, sentiment is tracked and shared with the agent in real time using speech-to-text transcription and best-in-class language technologies. This allows agents to understand if they are showing the relevant level

of empathy and soft skills, and suggests the right remedies during the call. This information can also be used historically, allowing large volumes of voice calls to be analysed, searched and grouped by positive and negative keywords and phrases. This is a powerful tool that enables agents to deliver a better customer service, which is especially important for HCPs where the person answering calls needs to have the right skills to respond appropriately to customers.

Quite often in the case of HCPs however, the best way to empower staff is by getting them off the phones and back to what they do best: providing quality patient care. CGI is also able to provide support in this scenario, by managing an outsourced or out of hours contact function on behalf of the HCP.

Our Contact Centre Advisory team takes a fresh approach to working with clients, helping them to provide user-focused, cost efficient solutions that are underpinned by sustainability.

Why CGI?

The user experience landscape has changed significantly in recent years, and having a team with their finger on the pulse of this industry is therefore key.

Our consultants have been recruited from the contact centre and customer experience industry, all with a proven track record in delivering and leading world-class operations for the largest, best-known organisations both in the UK and abroad. Having worked across a broad range of industries, our consultants stand out for their passion for the industry and genuinely care about delivering the highest quality experience for the customers of our clients, and our clients themselves.

We are not technology "resellers", and we are not tied to any one vendor. Instead, we have identified a panel of vendors who offer the best solutions for our clients, but do not let that limit our capability. We know the industry market and on occasions where our panel may be unable to provide you with the optimum solution, we will work with you to source technology that meets your exact requirements.

To completely understand your desired outcomes and challenges, we follow our consultative approach:

Meet with the client to understand the challenges, requirements and desired outcomes.

Assessment discovery

2

Define what we are going to do as a project, create a proposal.

Deliver/ implement

4

Review the project and decide next steps.

1

Identify requirements

Discovery session to understand operations and assess opportunities.

3

Plan project

Implementation and delivery phase.

5

Review

We don't make compromises, and we wouldn't expect you to either. Our approach is therefore to completely understand the outcomes you are seeking, and advise you accordingly on what is possible. Every step along the way, we clearly define what your solution should look like and the benefits it will deliver.

We approach each project with a set of fresh eyes, collaborating with our clients to achieve their visions of providing customer-focused, cost efficient solutions that are underpinned by sustainability. We help our clients to maximise their return on investment and solve genuine problems for their customers, which is why we achieve over 93% in terms of our client satisfaction.

Additionally, we deliver world-class contact centre support to over 180 clients from our award-winning UK service desk, where more than 380 analysts handle over 2.5 million contacts per year with a 95% first time fix rate for resolvable issues.

We operate a mature, standard set of processes across all our services, tailoring them where necessary to align with specific client needs. We will bring this practical experience to deliver a range of quick wins for your organisation, with tactical and strategic initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your service for the benefit of your stakeholders.

We also offer advisory services across what we call the "three pillars" of customer experience: people, process and performance. Using our consultants' vast expertise and up to date knowledge on the evolution of customer experience, contact centres and technology, our consulting services cover:
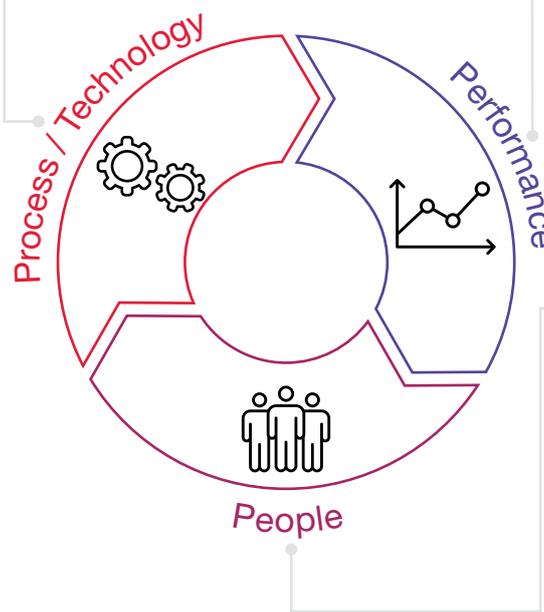
Process I Technology

- Digital transformation
- Customer journey mapping
- IVR design
- PCI DSS solutions
- GDPR compliance / management
- Future proofing customer contact
- Contact centre development / design
- BPO — onshore / offshore
- Home / hybrid working solutions
- CRM / API integration
- AI / Bot implementation
- Live chat
- Social media management
- Customer self-service design
- Customer experience management
- Reporting automation
- Industry insights
- Process automation
- Change management
- Unified communications
- Technology / IT consulting
- Communications (tone of voice) shaping
- Supplier RFP / procurement / management
- Disaster recovery / BCP

Performance

- Sales conversion improvement
- KPI / SLA strategy
- Voice analytics
- Contract performance validation
- Contact centre benchmarking
- Compliant diagnosis
- Customer retention improvement
- Security audit
- Communications (tone of voice) audit
- IVR optimisation
- Workforce management

People

- Incentive development
- Gamification
- Resource / capacity planning
- Training
- Recruitment support
- Team engagement / experience / retention
- Knowledge management
- Management / team leader development
- Best practice design
- HR advisory

Our offerings:

| Managed services | Service implementation | Technology procurement | Contact centre consultancy | Operational health checks |

About CGI

Insights you can act on

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments.

Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

Learn more at cgi.com/uk

For more information enquiry.uk@cgi.com

CGI