



BOTS

**What you need to know in order
to drive greater business impact.**

Chatbots have arrived and their timing couldn't be better.

Fueled by the rise of instant messaging and the blossoming of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning, a new age of automated user interaction is upon us. This intersection of AI and messaging is shaping the future of user experience, and chatbots are perfectly positioned to assist. Bots have the exciting potential to conveniently engage both customers and workforce, simplifying the user experience in support functions, sales, marketing, human resources, finance, and procurement.

The hype around bots today is powered by the promise of faster, scalable solutions at a fraction of the cost. When built and maintained correctly, chatbots are showing excellent potential to improve the user experience – but does your organization understand all that's required to successfully deploy bots for maximum business impact?

This white paper will serve as a playbook – introducing chatbots, exploring some of the main reasons behind their current popularity, and helping you understand where and when they can deliver better results. This paper will also discuss the team members required to successfully oversee a chatbot project and provide tips to keep the project moving forward post-launch.

CHATBOTS AND THE REASONS BEHIND THEIR POPULARITY

Chatbots are software application services that utilize a combination of messaging and natural language understanding to deliver information to a user (either a person or machine). Customers typically engage chatbots through messaging or chat systems such as short message service (SMS), web, or messaging applications provided by a social media platform such as Facebook or Twitter.

The popularity of chatbots today is linked to the rise and **ubiquity of messaging**. Chatbots allow businesses to communicate with customers in their preferred medium of messaging, and the future appears bright, as messaging has never been more popular. In fact, a 2016 Business Insider Intelligence survey confirms messenger apps have more monthly active users than social networks.¹

Another reason for the popularity of chatbots is quite simple – **speed**. Businesses today are differentiating by customer experience, and chatbot usage is increasing because of the need to create smarter, low-friction interactions faster than ever before. Customers are indeed excited about bots' ability to provide faster solutions with 57% of consumers interested in chatbots for their instantaneity.² Additionally, chatbots allow for near infinite scalability – such that customers may never have to experience the dreaded, “all agents are busy, you are in queue” type of message.

Versatility is fueling the explosion of bots in 2018. Many identify chatbots solely with customer support, but today's bots have become powerful enablers driving sales engagement as well as simplifying administrative tasks in the enterprise. Bots are increasing the overall effectiveness of business processes in customer support, human resources, administrative office, sales, and marketing functions – all at a significantly lower cost.

¹ Nguyen, M, (October, 2017). The latest market research, trends & landscape in the growing AI chatbot industry. Business Insider. Retrieved February, 2018 from <http://www.businessinsider.com/chatbot-market-stats-trends-size-ecosystem-research-2017-10?r=UK&IR=T>

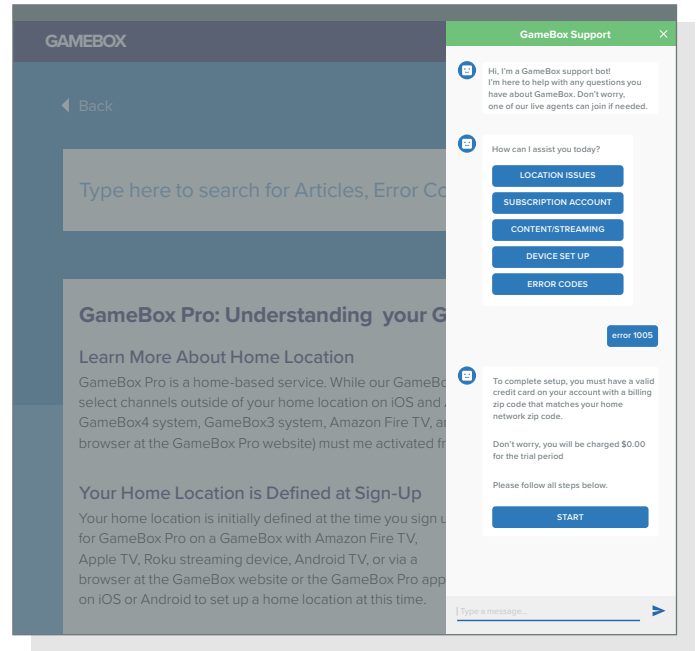
² Debecker, A, (August, 2017). 2018 Chatbot Statistics- All the Data You Need. ubisend.com. Retrieved February, 2018 from <https://blog.ubisend.com/optimize-chatbots/chatbot-statistics>

1 | BOTS IN CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Assisting with live customer support is undoubtedly a chatbot strength, and today's consumer is taking notice. 48% of consumers would rather connect with a company via live chat than any other mean of contact.³

An excellent example of bot-driven customer support success is seen with a leading video-streaming service, where consumers are serviced by an NLP-enabled digital assistant to answer customer questions or provide recommendations, all without the need to speak with a live agent. In 160 days, Sutherland helped this company's newly deployed digital assistants handle over 100,000 user flows, resolve over 17,000 support cases, and reduce aggregate cost of chat interactions by 30%.⁴

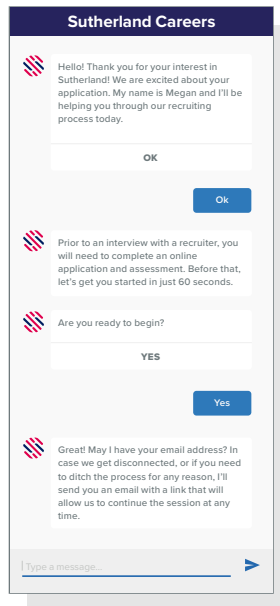
The scalable nature of this support chatbot enables the video-streaming service to expand support availability without needing to hire new staff. The AI-enabled experience is convenient to access, helps their consumers find answer faster and lessens the case volume directed to their live agents.



2 | BOTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Bots are changing the modern workplace by simplifying administrative workflows across the enterprise, improving employee experience, and reducing lost productivity. Enterprises are also using bots to connect with potential employee candidates faster and easier, streamlining their hiring process and increasing talent acquisition and recruiting productivity.

Sutherland's TASHA system is a chatbot that is integrated with online recruiting and existing HR applications, allowing the processing and screening of thousands of applicants on a weekly basis. In the first three weeks of deployment, TASHA processed over 4,200 applications while fully automating recruiting steps for over 41% of the candidates.⁵



³ An, M, (January,2017). Artificial Intelligence Is Here--People Just Don't Realize It. research.hubspot.com. Retrieved February, 2018 from <https://research.hubspot.com/artificial-intelligence-is-here>

⁴ Sutherland internal reporting

⁵ Sutherland internal reporting

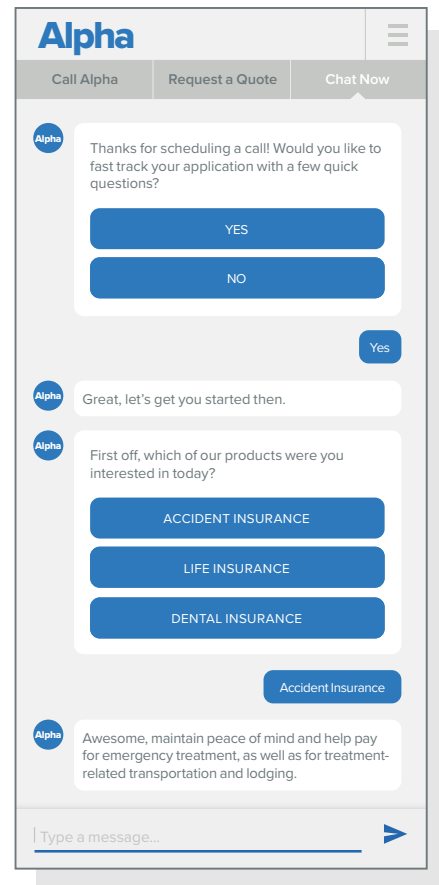
3 | BOTS IN SALES AND MARKETING

Bots have a significant impact on sales and marketing with their ability to respond immediately, reduce friction, and expediently guide customers toward buying decisions.

Chabots offer new opportunities to engage prospects that no longer respond to traditional communication channels, such as print, or email. The “always-on” capability of sales chatbots allow brands to reach prospects at the point of emotional interest. They offer greater scalability to reach prospects, and they often provide signals to help better qualify prospects. A good example can be seen with a Sutherland client that is using a mobile chatbot to educate consumers and lead them to the appropriate insurance product.

Bot-driven cost savings in the sales arena could be significant. According to McKinsey Research, 36% of sales representative positions could be automated through chatbots and other technology, with BI Intelligence equating this to 15 billion in annual savings from annual salaries.⁶

In 2018, chatbots went mainstream, with both customers and businesses taking fast notice of the many advantages that bots provide. For organizations looking to improve customer and workforce experiences, overlooking the speed, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and versatility of bots will be at their own risk. In fact, research expects 80% of businesses to have some sort of chatbot automation implemented by 2020.⁷



GUIDELINES THAT HELP SHAPE YOUR BOT STRATEGY

For all the potential benefits chatbots can provide, they are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Below are some questions your organization should ask before considering deploying chatbots:

1 | WHAT IS YOUR SELF-SERVICE STRATEGY OR VISION?

Many organizations initiate chatbot projects without a clear statement supported by the executive buy-in on an overlying vision. It's important to remember chatbots are only one part of a self-service architecture. Start by utilizing a 'jobs to be done' product and design methodology, then ask what challenges are we addressing and why will customers use our solution?

2 | HOW DO CHATBOTS FIT INTO YOUR ENTERPRISE'S OVERALL "CHAT" STRATEGY?

Many companies want to use chatbots but don't take the time to define the precise benefits or ROI of their investment in chat channels. Before adopting additional automation technologies, it's imperative to consider portfolio perspective on the multiple self-help channels, including the existing FAQ content, self-service tools, and the relationship between live and digital agent support. Until this audit is complete, there's a risk of promoting ineffective content and amplifying the gaps in the overall customer experience.

3 | WHAT OPERATIONAL METRICS ARE YOU TRYING TO INFLUENCE?

Where is your organization's improvement focus? Sales? Support costs? Employee experience? It's critical to identify your desired metrics and how they will be measured up front. Additionally, what is the current flow and user experience funnel of each desired use case?

It's also important to be able to declare what value is at stake if the organization forgoes action. Bot projects that operate as whimsical experiments not tied to measurable metrics and business outcomes inevitably end in frustration and failure.

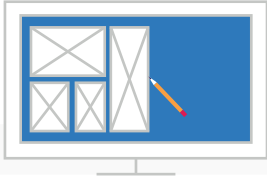
⁶ (March, 2017). Chatbot revenue is on the upswing. businessinsider.com. Retrieved February, 2018 from <http://www.businessinsider.com/chatbot-revenue-is-on-the-upswing-2017-3?r=UK&IR=T>

⁷ Debecker, A. (August, 2017). 2018 Chatbot Statistics- All the Data You Need. ubisend.com. Retrieved February, 2018 from <https://blog.ubisend.com/optimize-chatbots/chatbot-statistics>

SUCCESS FACTOR: FINDING THE RIGHT TEAM

Unlike stand-alone software applications, chatbots are learning systems, which continuously evolve, and change based on input by the user. Companies are best served by agile teams that can respond to automation opportunities and deploy changes quickly. These teams don't need to be large, but filling key roles is essential for a successful deployment.

Your chatbot project team should include:



CHATBOT DESIGNER

This team member is responsible for studying the customer journey, often through journey mapping, to develop the experience through the customer's eyes. Designers mine all customer touch points to construct a holistic comprehension of the customer's challenges, needs, and goals. Emails, phone, and chat scripts are dissected to gain a full understanding of the nature of customer questions and reasons behind the inquiries.



CHATBOT ANALYST

Analysts conduct qualitative and quantitative research from the top "contact drivers" behind customer inquiries and are responsible for the in-depth study of the data used for the improvement of systems. They utilize natural language understanding recognition, scripting, and flow analytics to improve bot performance.



CHATBOT ENGINEER

These experts encode bot platforms and natural language understanding engines as well as skillfully script the code that links bots to the back-end systems supporting business processes. Engineers are responsible for ensuring system security. They also specialize in developing NLP-based systems and design conversational user interfaces. This role is vitally important as the conversation is a critical part of the design phase and can determine the difference between the success or failure of a deployment. Additionally, they integrate into identity management systems to authenticate users and additional client back-end systems enabling self-service transactions involving billing and order management.



CHATBOT OPERATIONS EXPERT

This vital team member serves an intermediary role between chatbots and live agents. This expert understands how to merge and coordinate the workflows from bot to human-driven tasks, including agent system and CRM requirements.



CHATBOT PROGRAM MANAGER

This team leader is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all bot related activities. Program managers often serve as the primary point of contact with business stakeholders.

Each team member serves an important function, and each role is fundamental to the success of the bot project. Organizations serious about bots need to take the time to assemble the right team to ensure maximum business impact and a positive ROI.

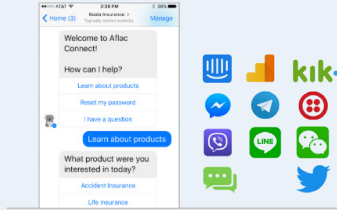
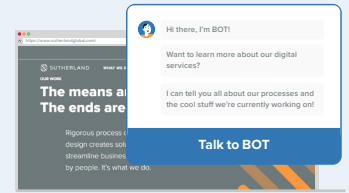
“As chatbots get deployed to support real-world situations, companies will need to manage and treat them like any other software application. Developers and analysts will need to monitor performance and utterances to improve natural language understanding (NLU) recognition, designers will need to understand usability and experience, and product managers will need to prioritize how to scale or address new use cases,” explains Philip Say, VP, Innovation Product Management at Sutherland Labs, when discussing the importance of having the right specialists to guide the project. “The good news is now there are specialists that allow you to build and deploy the best possible chatbots for your needs.”

CHATBOT AND ITS MANY FACES

Chatbots come in many different forms – your organization can use one common framework and engine to power different channels or experiences for your end users. These can include:

1 WEB NATIVE CLIENTS

These are part of a website and can be stand-alone or integrated with your existing chat system.

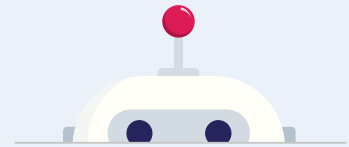


2 MESSAGING PLATFORM INTEGRATIONS

Most social networking services now offer messaging platforms where your team can connect and interact with customers on a personalized level. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram are examples of platforms that can hook into your team's chatbot backbone.

3 IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

In this case, the conversational UI (chat or messaging) is the only or predominant user experience. Sutherland's AIDEN is a working example of this type of bot deployment.



CUSTOMERS

Any Channel



SUSTAINING SUCCESS AFTER LAUNCH

Chatbots are not static systems, they are continually learning, growing, and evolving. A chatbot program's success depends on disciplined, diligent iteration. The following steps on the part of your organization are critical to ensuring the long-term effectiveness of your chatbot deployment:

1 COMMITMENT TO ANALYTICS

One considerable advantage of conversational systems is their ability to collect and monitor individual statements, or "utterances," and map them to intents. Your bot team should be equipped to break down the effectiveness of individual user paths utilizing dashboards to understand engagement points, drop off rates, and the completion rate of individual sessions. Today's toolbox offers machine learning techniques to analyze conversations, allowing teams to inform and predict future needs of the bot user. A robust commitment to leveraging the power of analytics can significantly increase the effectiveness of your bot deployment.

2 | INVESTMENT IN EFFECTIVE MICROCOPY

Skilled writing is essential to continually tune and improve individual flows, dialogues, and the overall quality of scripts. Good scripting should match the brand tone and voice of your company – it's also an excellent opportunity to display personality and build rapport. Effective scripts succeed in matching the needs and expectations of the end user. A paradigmatic support bot communicates empathy and understanding to a frustrated customer, and expeditiously guides the customer towards a solution without wasting time or energy on needless banter.

3 | ADOPTION OF BUSINESS PROCESS MINDSET

The more your team can engineer the ability to execute business tasks or processes inside a bot, the higher its potential usage and impact. Achieving this goal may take time, so it's essential to engage a partner who can deliberately move more automation into the channel.

Business process thinking will also empower your team to communicate results in terms business partners, or stakeholders can better embrace. For example, if you're building a customer support bot, it's best to translate bot-speak into conventional metrics such as average handle time (AHT) or first call resolution (FCR) that support executives can easily understand.

ABOUT SUTHERLAND DIGITAL ASSISTANT AND CHATBOT SERVICES

The success of conversational systems, like chatbots or digital assistants, hinges on the ability to find the right partner to help implement the technology; one who will understand how to optimize customer journeys and apply the right degree of design, scripting and engineering to engage your customers, and address their needs. Sutherland, throughout its 30-year history, has consistently proven the ability to apply emerging technology to better serve our clients.

As we see AI and Bots become increasingly popular tools for serving customers, businesses must evolve their conversational systems to remain on the forefront of innovation. Today, while a cadre of tools, platforms, and micro-services make it easier to present real-time information and drive new, messaging-based processes for your customers, not all chatbots are equal, even though the same set of capabilities and tools may be applied.

When done well, chatbots not only solve customer problems, they help create conversational experiences that elevate your brand and address opportunities to connect more directly with your customers. We hope this white paper provided valuable insight for you to action into your conversational systems moving forward.



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Philip leads product strategy in Sutherland. He works with our user experience, design, and technology platform teams to define new customer solutions and innovations for our clients. Over the past 15 years, Philip has applied his expertise in product management, solution marketing, analytics, cloud computing, and customer relationship management. He is a lifelong learner and maker at heart.

For more information on how we can help you transform your processes, visit us at www.sutherlandglobal.com, email us at sales@sutherlandglobal.com, or call 1-800-388-4557 ext. 6123.

As a process transformation company, Sutherland rethinks and rebuilds processes for the digital age by combining the speed and insight of design thinking with the scale and accuracy of data analytics. We have been helping customers across industries from financial services to healthcare, achieve greater agility through transformed and automated customer experiences for over 30 years. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland employs thousands of professionals spanning 20 countries around the world.