



Transforming  
the Telecom  
Customer  
Experience  
(Finally) With  
**Conversational  
Service  
Automation**





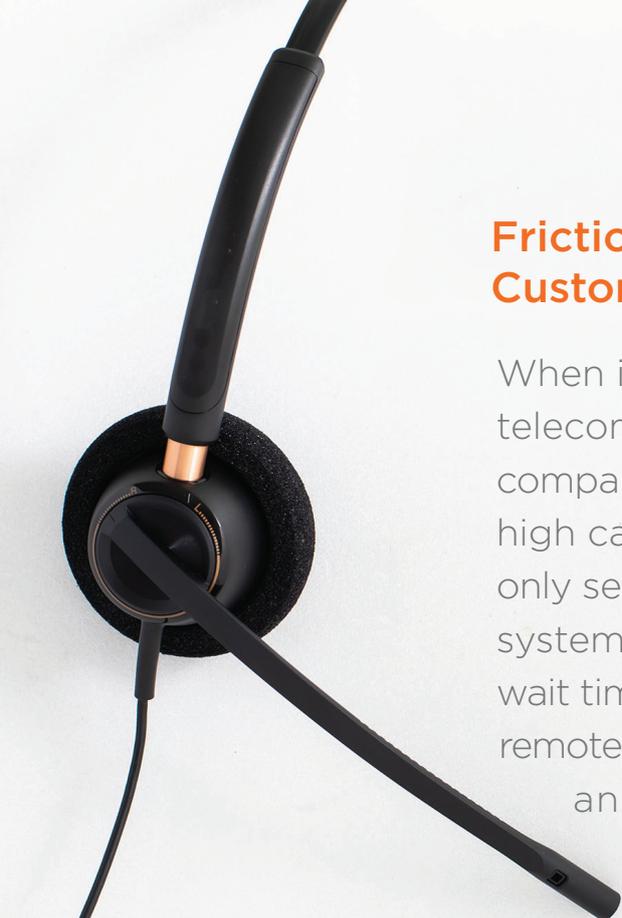
When you think of industries that have been critical to helping people during shut-downs and stay-at-home orders, the telecommunications sector might not be your first thought. But without the connectivity that telecom companies deliver, many people would not have been able to maintain their ability to work, shop, stay socially connected, get healthcare, learn, and more during the pandemic.

However, despite the growing global dependency on reliable and fast connectivity, downward trends that have impacted telecom companies for years continue to impact their present performance and hinder their ability to emerge stronger after the crisis. Slow growth due to industry saturation, declining ARPU (average revenue per user), competitive disruptions, customer churn, and the need to achieve a return on investment into 5G and other technologies, all continue to impact the telecom industry.

For example, according to Bain & Company, the COVID-19 crisis has caused a rapid, sharp reduction in new customer sign-ups. A Comlinkdata analysis cited by Bain found that activations of the latest smartphone models decreased by more than 40% in the US after the first physical-distancing guidelines were issued in mid-March.

More than ever, telecoms need to transform the customer experience to reverse the long-term trends of poor customer satisfaction, low loyalty scores, and high churn rates. In the last five years, according to Bain, no leading telecommunications, cable, or satellite company in the Americas or Europe has sustained a Net Promoter Score—a measure of customer loyalty—above 50, a threshold that indicates a company is “beloved” by a majority of its customers.





## Friction in the Telecom Customer Journey

When it comes to the customer experience, many telecommunication service providers are laggards compared to nearly every other industry, and the high call volumes generated during the pandemic only served to accentuate the state of the archaic systems and processes in the contact center. Long wait times, slow resolutions, and the challenges of remote work combined to frustrate both customers and agents trying to support them.

In a survey conducted by Uniphore in April 2020,

nearly **80 percent** of people polled want to speak with an agent.

Yet more than **33 percent** of callers waited more than 30 minutes on hold,

with **5 percent** saying they waited more than **2 hours**.

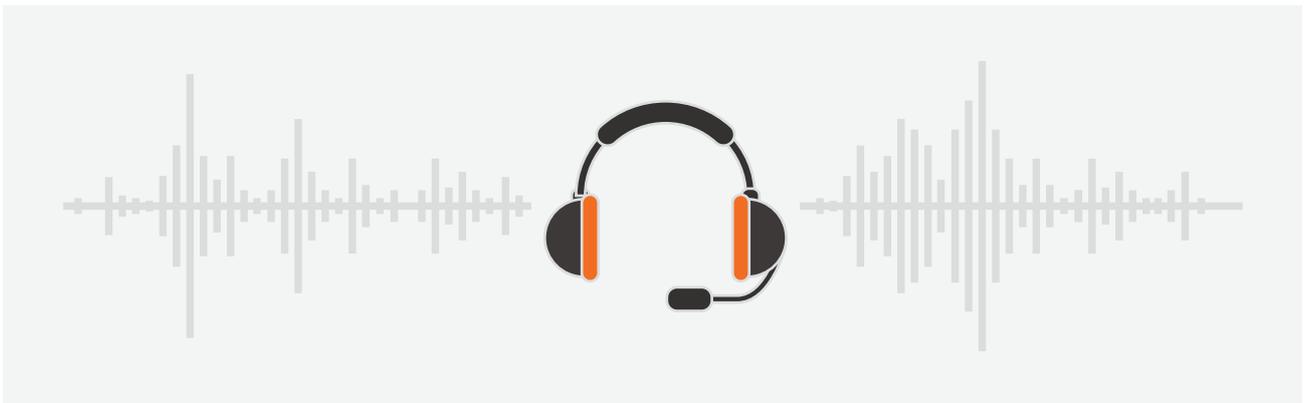
### Customer patience has its limits:

**72 percent** of survey respondents say they ended the call while still waiting to speak with a live person, and of those who got through to an agent, **43 percent** said they felt angry, annoyed, or frustrated because they were put on hold.



## AI and Automation Can Remove Friction

Effective artificial intelligence (AI) and automation solutions finally provide telecom companies with a way to move from the laggard position in customer experience to a place among the leaders. To become a customer satisfaction and experience leader, telecom companies must use these technologies to deliver a frictionless customer experience anywhere along the end-to-end conversation—from self-service channels (mobile, web, and IVR) to live agent interactions.



Boston Consulting Group (BCG) believes that AI technologies will “accelerate the rethinking of customer interaction to improve the customer experience.” Citing examples of AI usage within telecom companies, BCG reports that “At a challenging time for customer service staff and field forces, AI has helped decrease the time employees spend on simple tasks and refocused them on the most pressing issues.”

Yet, while some telecoms have deployed point AI or automation solutions, they haven’t been able to create the much-needed frictionless, end-to-end experience for customers. For example, many self-service channels still don’t understand the customer sentiment or intent nor transfer this context as conversations move between channels. Agents have limited in-call coaching guidance or lack immediate access to customer information, such as customers’ current equipment, which increases average handle times and creates delays in order fulfillment. That’s because point solutions don’t cover the entire conversation and instead create additional silos within the customer journey.



In comparison, a conversational service automation (CSA) platform uses conversational AI, robotic process automation (RPA), and workflow automation to bridge humans and machines and back office and front office operations throughout the customer conversation and across digital and voice channels.

## Customer-centric Telecom Experiences with CSA

Telecoms can deploy CSA to meet the new needs of customers with empathy and understanding, help agents be more effective and productive whether they are working from home or in the contact center, and deliver a high-quality experience at a lower cost. By using CSA to automate and transform the customer journey, telecoms can remove the friction that frustrates their customers:



### Conversational Self-service:

Automate telecom journeys such as paying bills, inquiring about services, upgrading current services, tracking usage, and more. Conversational AI helps telecoms understand customer sentiment and intent to drive self-service automation rates, thus reducing contact center costs. Should a customer need agent assistance, CSA passes the context from self-service to agents to create a frictionless interaction and a lower average handle time.



### Agent Co-pilot:

Use CSA for real-time analysis of customer context including sentiment and intent to help co-pilot agent performance with in-call coaching alerts, giving agents the insight to be more empathetic as well as improving upselling or cross-selling. For example, the AI could suggest that the agent offer a triple or quadruple play bundle when a customer already has more than one service, which helps increase ARPU. Automate after-call work and call disposition across high-value telecom journeys such as opening new accounts to ensure higher accuracy and reduce average handle time, which shortens wait times for customers.

### Post-call Analytics:

Automate post-call analytics on 100% of customer interactions including voice, email, and chat to understand reasons for customer churn and sales effectiveness, drive 100% compliance, and identify other core, customer- and agent-centric experience areas for planning and operational improvements. Telecoms can also get insight into how customers are using channels such as self-service as well as identify potential points of friction in the customer journey to optimize the customer experience.



Conversational Service Automation (CSA) is the only platform that addresses the entire conversational experience for both customers and agents, using conversational AI, RPA, and workflow automation to blend front-office and back-office operations.

## **Understand Customer Conversations to Build Stronger, Lasting Relationships**

As consumers navigate their way through these challenging times, understanding and acting on the customer conversation will be critical for telecoms to drive measurable and sustainable improvement in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Automation helps telecoms deliver the kind of frictionless experiences that consumers today demand, while reducing operational costs.

Automating and improving the entire conversation—self-service, human-to-human, and after the call—using CSA is the best way for telecoms to overcome their immediate challenges and emerge stronger in a post-COVID world.

Transform your telecom customer experience with CSA and Uniphore.

**Contact Us**