Customer experience in Telecom

Powering a better customer experience with AI and automation
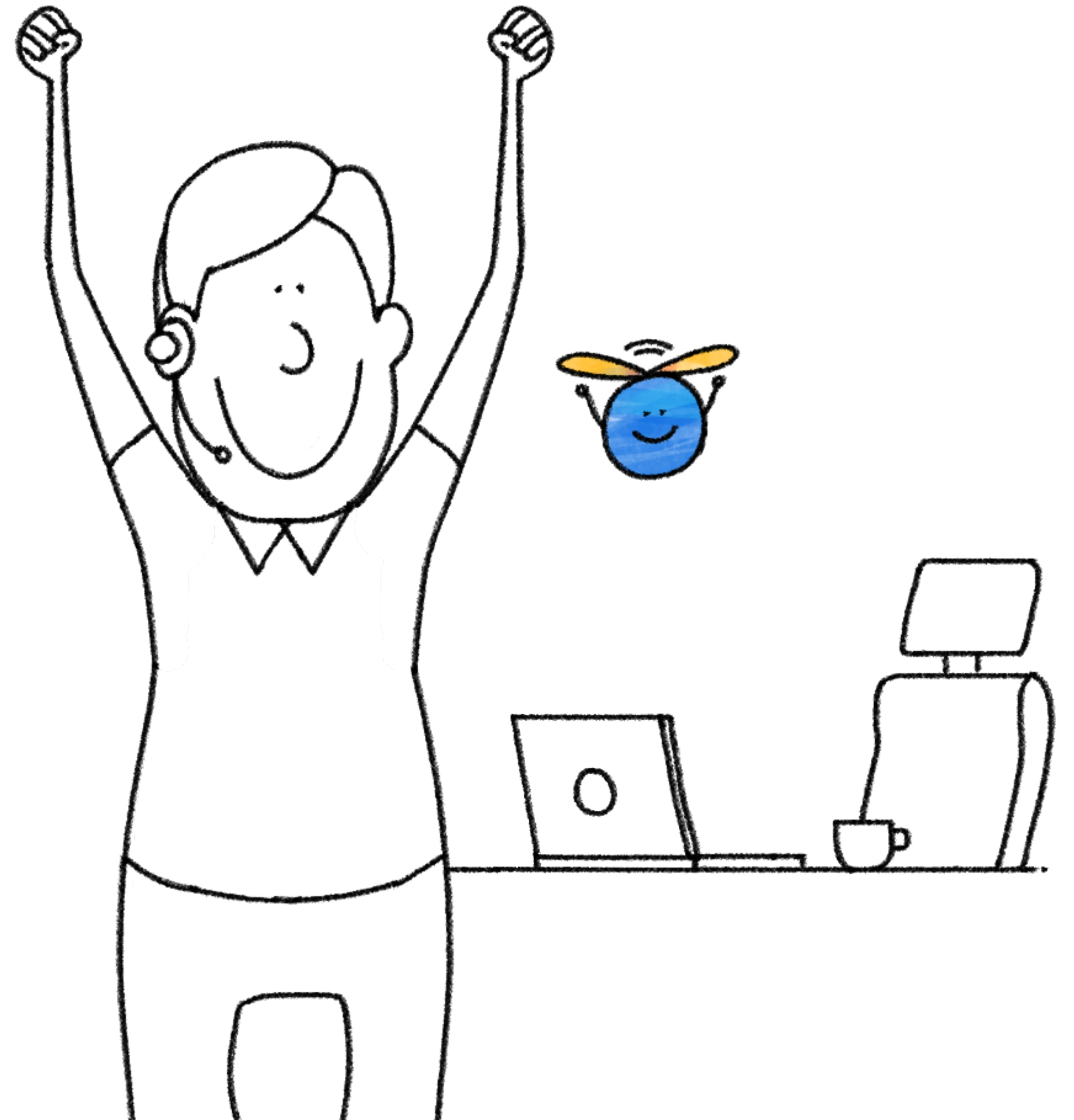
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When customer experience drives competitive excellence

In the effort to attract and retain customers, telecom providers tend to focus various factors, including network coverage, choice of plans, prompt resolution on queries, and bundled services. That's no surprise. The telecommunications industry is a crowded and competitive market, and even a slight edge in one of these areas can tip the scales in favor of one telecom over another.

But telecoms are finding that the way they do business—especially the experience they provide—can be just as important to winning and retaining customers as network speeds and data plans. And innovative telecoms are discovering that AI-powered automation is the key to providing a rich, personalized customer experience at the scale they need across every channel of engagement.

AI and automation combine to transform self-service, empower contact center agents, and ensure the operational efficiency that's the groundwork of stellar customer service. They help telecoms anticipate customer sentiment, reduce churn, improve agents' job satisfaction, and transform back-office processes that fuel better customer experiences.

In short, AI-powered automation enables telecoms to turn their vision for a better customer experience into an everyday reality. Let's take a closer look.

Making it easier for customers to help themselves

Telecom customers tend to have a lot of questions. They need help starting an order. They may not understand a line item on a bill. And they always want to know when and why service is disrupted.

Answering these questions quickly and accurately is the cornerstone of a great customer experience. It's not a "nice to have." Customers expect it. After all, a telecommunications company should be good at communicating.

But staffing a contact center with enough knowledgeable agents to effectively respond to customers is a challenge. Call volumes are unpredictable. When they spike, customers can be left waiting on hold. When they're low, agents can be left watching the clock. And no agent looks forward to answering the same questions from frustrated callers day after day—which is one of the reasons turnover rates are on the rise.

Automating self-service for better experiences

In a market where telecom customers have a choice of providers, the quality of the customer experience can mean the difference between healthy growth and lackluster performance. That's why so many telecom providers are turning to AI-powered automation to help their customers help themselves with a rich lineup of self-service capabilities.

Elisa

A customer-driven approach to automation

Finland-based Elisa serves more than 2.8 million B2C and B2B customers— and the company has amassed a wealth of transaction and customer data that provides insight on how to use AI-powered automation to improve the customer experience. Elisa's initial efforts in automation targeted the order-taking process. The efficiencies helped reduce error and eliminate the bumps and inconsistencies that customers encounter—creating a solid foundation for innovation across the enterprise.

Get the full story →

With the combination of Generative AI and automation, telecoms can offer customers intelligent virtual assistants across existing channels such as email and live chat. These self-service assistants can access multiple systems and deliver the information to answer customer queries at the first point of contact—and they can walk customers through the completion of many account- and order-related tasks.

Similarly, AI-powered automation can help streamline some of the most common service processes for customers. For example, communications mining uses state-of-the-art AI to accurately extract requests, sentiment, and important data from messages such as emails and chats. Robots can act on the extracted data, update systems, and complete even complex requests. Communications mining helps automate tasks like moves, adds, and changes as well as order processing and updating customer information from end to end. Customers receive faster resolution and employees are freed up to focus on customer care and more complex requests.

AI-powered self-service capabilities empower customers to get fast answers via any channel— online and phone—whenever they want. Service is always available and personalized to the customer's needs. UiPath analysis shows that expanding self-service improves NPS by 5 points at 1/20th the cost. And what's good for customers turns out to be good for the telecom. Empowering customers through automation-driven self-service helps reduce traffic at call centers, while driving down operating costs and improving overall customer satisfaction and retention. That's something that customers and telecom leaders can both love.

"We currently have the highest ever levels of customer satisfaction from both our B2C and B2B customers. We must be doing something right."

TOMI KORPELA
Head of Customer and Online Solutions
Elisa

Self-service automation use cases →

Giving agents the tools and time to deliver better support

Research shows that 40% of telecom customers say that they're dissatisfied with their providers due to lengthy wait times and complaint resolutions. For the agents at work in the contact center, that dissatisfaction is more than a statistic. They're the ones on the front lines managing those frustrated callers. And they're likely frustrated themselves.

In the course of a day, agents are taking orders, addressing complaints, answering calls about service and status—they have to be ready for anything. They're trying to navigate multiple, incompatible systems to build the context they need so they can guide the customer to a solution. And they're under pressure to reduce average handling times (AHTs) and improve first call resolution (FCR) rates.

When the right information is hard to find, it makes the work experience worse for the agents on the front line. So, it's not surprising that agent turnover rates are nearing 40%. But it doesn't have to be that way.

DNA

Taking manual tasks off the agent's to-do list

Over the past two decades, DNA has grown rapidly to become the third-largest full-service telecommunications provider in Finland. But the company knew that to sustain that growth, the quality of customer experience had to match the quality of its services. A pilot automation project for processing changes for B2B customers showed how automation can help DNA enhance service quality even as it grows by relieving agents of mundane data-entry tasks and freeing them to work directly with consumers and businesses.

Get the full story →

Providing context and insight, reducing administrative workloads

AI-powered automation can give agents the insight and guidance they need to make every call smoother and shorter. Robots can provide immediate next-best action suggestions based on the customer's needs and history. Agents also have real-time access to customer data and insights from every interaction to reduce handling and wait times. And robots can reduce the administrative workload so agents have more time to interact with the customer and deliver personalized service. Telecoms can use automation to summarize customer notes and payment, billing, and order histories—while detecting anomalies and potential red flags.

At the end of the interaction, AI and automation work to summarize the engagement, generate follow-up emails, close cases, and escalate issues to managers. AI-powered automation can also streamline data transfers to other departments and their systems. In other words, they can take over a lot of the administrative work that used to be the agent's job.

Today's telecom customers have a lot of choices. And the quality of service that agents provide can be the decisive factor in customer retention. AI-powered automation turns good contact center agents into great ones—while creating the work experience that helps retain a skilled and motivated workforce.

"Manual processing was beginning to impact some of the delivery processes for our B2B customers. We felt RPA was a good fit because it allowed us to maintain the same level of resource and still be able to deliver better services faster and more reliably than ever before."

JUHA VIIKKI
Head of Quality, Process and Automation
DNA

Agent support automation use cases →

Building efficiencies behind the scenes

Many telecoms are on a mission to reinvent themselves as customer-driven enterprises. In today's market, customers have choices. So, when telecoms see customer churn rates on the rise, they know they have to act. But there's more to the equation than what customers see. The way a telecom does business behind the scenes is just as critical as the customer experience. In fact, you can't separate the two.

Sometimes, though, the telecom's mix of disparate systems is the barrier to better service. Critical data is housed in systems that weren't designed to work together. Processes that cross operational boundaries don't flow smoothly and seamlessly, because different departments can't easily collaborate and share information. Manual tasks and workarounds interrupt workflows, causing delays and increasing the potential for error. The bottom line is that even the best customer-facing systems can't hide back-office dysfunction.

NTT

Streamlining procurement for better service

The leaders at NTT know that things the customers never see—like contract and payment processes—ultimately affect the quality of the customer experience. That's why the company chose the procurement cycle for its first foray with UiPath automation. The smoother the process ran, the fewer delays and miscues that disrupted customer service—and the more time everyone in the enterprise had to focus energy and effort on better service. It's a mindset they're embracing as they scale their automation program to a broader set of use cases.

Get the full story →

Enabling a sharper focus on the customer

AI-powered automation gives telecoms the insight they need to anticipate customer churn by analyzing customer inquiries, sales patterns, complaints, billing disputes, orders in progress, campaign response, and other metrics. It also offers recommendations on the best course of action to address emerging issues and keep the organization on course and focused on customer needs.

Even the best-performing telecoms can experience spikes in customer complaints. And automation can help by identifying issues and escalating cases that are approaching SLA breaches. With the analytical horsepower of AI and machine learning, telecoms can zero in on root causes and spot the historical trends that enterprise leaders may not even be aware of.

AI-powered communications mining gives telecoms complete oversight and visibility across their service channels. Every customer message can be measured and tracked for sentiment and intent. Not only does this help surface issues and automation opportunities, it also allows telecoms to build a real-time picture of the quality of service they provide to customers. The impact of change initiatives can be accurately monitored, giving unprecedented insight into the quality of the customer experience provided and the steps needed to improve it.

In this way, the combination of AI and automation can also help telecoms embrace predictive issue resolution and maintenance. They can identify and address potential service and infrastructure problems before they affect the customer experience. They can be predictive instead of reactive. In addition, generative AI can streamline communications with customers on issues such as planned outages and scheduled maintenance.

"We will be able to collect new types of data from within and outside the company, link it to AI, and analyze it for new business ideas. This is one example of how we want to work together to do more with RPA and advance even more as a company."

KATSUNORI YAMASHITA
Senior Vice President and Head of Procurements
NTT Communications

CX ops automation use cases →

Because telecoms generate so much data on customers, markets, transactions, and competitors, AI-powered automation will play an essential role in the knowledge management that's the foundation for personalized service. Telecoms will be able to better predict customer needs and offer the exact bundle of services that best serve those needs—ultimately boosting retention rates and NPS.

Taking the static out of the customer experience

Automation is the mechanism for turning AI's capabilities into real-world solutions. For telecoms, AI-powered automation opens up new possibilities for the customer experience. It expands self-service capabilities and makes automated channels such as chatbots more relevant and satisfying. It frees contact center agents from the administrative workload that keeps them from providing better service. And it streamlines the behind-the-scenes supporting processes that are essential to a smooth and seamless customer experience.

Leading telecoms know that engaging, seamless customer experience shouldn't be an afterthought. It's now a competitive necessity. AI-powered automation can help telecoms make CX the foundation for sustainable market leadership.

For more on UiPath solutions for telecoms, visit us online →

The big map of automation use cases

Self-service

- Customer order enquiry response
- Payment and billing enquiry
- Service delivery moves, adds, and changes
- Service outage or disruption

Agent support

- Customer interaction summarization
- Bill summarization
- Order entry assistant
- Corporate escalations

CX ops

- Predictive churn
- Predictive networks maintenance
- CX quality of service monitoring
- Knowledge management

The UiPath and AWS partnership

Running UiPath on Amazon Web Services (AWS) is a smart move for customer experience and contact center leaders.

AWS' cloud-based infrastructure offers scalability and flexibility, adapting to changing demands. UiPath AI-enabled automation, paired with services like Amazon Connect and AWS Contact Center Intelligence, streamlines customer interactions and enhances satisfaction.

Integrate the UiPath AI-powered Business Automation Platform with the AWS enterprise-ready cloud infrastructure, AI services, and cloud contact center solutions. Spin up development, test, and production environments quickly in the cloud.

UiPath is an AWS Advanced Technology Partner in the AWS Partner Network.

UiPath with Amazon Connect

The challenge:

Interactive voice response (IVR) systems are often the first point of contact for customers. IVRs can struggle to provide 'self-service' solutions for customers as most are only capable of connecting to systems accessible via API. Many contact centers have some systems that are not API-accessible. As a result, many customer requests are redirected to human agents, overwhelming agent capacity, increasing average handling time, and lowering customer satisfaction.

The solution:

Deploying UiPath unattended robots alongside Amazon Connect helps resolve customer issues with more effective self-service, improving the utilization of human agents by reducing call volume by up to 50%. UiPath integration with Amazon Connect enables a zero-touch customer experience, so you can reduce call volume and free up agents to work on complex customer issues.

The result? Improved customer and employee experiences, enhanced accuracy, reduced average handling time (AHT), and an acceleration of customers' digital transformation initiatives, resulting in a rapid return on investment.

Contact Center Intelligence powered by AWS and UiPath

The challenge:

Contact centers juggle many technologies, often using a mix of modern, legacy and homegrown systems across their front offices and back offices. Disconnected systems mean agents must manually toggle multiple systems for any given service process, and customers can't resolve issues in self-service. As a result, many agents experience bottlenecks, directly impacting the customer experience.

The solution:

UiPath + AWS Contact Center Intelligence delivers more customers enabled for self-service and agents empowered with the tools needed to support customers.

The result? A reduction in average call handling time, improved customer satisfaction, improved employee satisfaction, and therefore improved contact center employee retention. All these factors reduce costs in contact centers and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Get started with UiPath on AWS

Find out how UiPath and Amazon Connect can help you deliver better experiences for both customers and agents.

Download our white paper →

Learn more about our partnership on the UiPath-AWS page →

About UiPath

UiPath (NYSE: PATH) is on a mission to uplevel knowledge work so more people can work more creatively, collaboratively, and strategically. The AI-powered UiPath Business Automation Platform combines the leading robotic process automation (RPA) solution with a full suite of capabilities to understand, automate, and operate end-to-end processes, offering unprecedented time-to-value. For organizations that need to evolve to survive and thrive through increasingly changing times, UiPath is The Foundation of Innovation™. For more information, visit www.uipath.com.