

IBM Study: AI-driven Virtual Agents Can Drive Customer Satisfaction and Cost Savings Amid COVID-19

Organizations like Burger King Brazil, Medtronic and The Royal Marsden are gaining value from virtual agents implemented in partnership with IBM

ARMONK, N.Y., Oct. 28, 2020 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- As many organizations across the world look to digital tools to help address surges in customer inquiries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new [IBM study](#) revealed 99% of respondents report an increase in customer satisfaction as a result of using AI-driven virtual agent technology.

The research showed organizations that are early adopters of AI and cloud technology are reaping significant benefits from AI-driven virtual agents. 94 percent of respondents defined as "leaders" – those who implemented AI-driven virtual agents early, integrated them with backend systems and trained them with many contacts – have already achieved or exceeded their expected return on investment, compared to 49 percent of others.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations are balancing the need to rapidly scale customer service to manage surges in inquiries, while still delivering a delightful customer experience – and doing it all for less," said Glenn Finch, global managing partner, Cognitive Business Decision Support, IBM Services. "The study validates what we're seeing from clients around the world: those who have adopted virtual agent technology are seeing both bottom-line and top-line results including reduced costs, higher customer and human agent satisfaction, and increased revenue as a result."

IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) is working with many clients across industries to use AI to put critical data and information into the hands of their customers and employees with AI-driven virtual agent technology, including [Burger King Brazil](#), [Medtronic](#) and [The Royal Marsden](#). An IBM-commissioned Forrester Consulting TEI [study](#) found a large organization could achieve an average cost savings of USD 5.50 per contained conversation using IBM Watson Assistant.

The [IBM Institute for Business Value study](#), titled "[The value of virtual agent technology](#)," surveyed more than 1,000 companies, spanning 12 industries and 33 countries, that have used virtual agents for just six months to over four years.

Additional study findings include:

- 44% of "leaders" reported having fully integrated cloud strategies for their service desk systems, compared to 19 percent of others
- 20% is the average contribution to human agent satisfaction attributed to virtual agent technology by responding organizations.
- Organizations using virtual agents reported a 64% average containment rate – the portion of total contacts the virtual agent technology has been trained to handle that it resolves without human agent involvement.
- For 46 percent of "leaders" in virtual agent technology, and 33 percent of other respondents, customer experience is the most important driver of virtual agent use.
- Every respondent reported that virtual agent technology has contributed to an increase in organization

revenue, the average increase being 3 percent



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