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Volume 22, Issue 11

# How Conversational AI Is Moving Beyond Insights to Action

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A customer hesitates on a renewal call. Their tone shifts, the pauses lengthen, and they say they need to think it over. The agent moves on to the next call. Three weeks later, a churn report lands on a manager's desk showing renewals down for the quarter. By then, the conversation that carried the first warning sign is gone, along with the revenue attached to it.

That gap between the moment something shifts in a conversation and the moment a business finds out about it is what conversation intelligence solutions are now seeking to close. For end customers across the globe, demand is increasing for AI-driven solutions that do exactly this: going beyond compiling what happened to prescriptive advice.



The pressure to close that gap is not abstract. A Gartner survey of customer service and support leaders, published in February 2026, found that [91 percent reported pressure from executive leadership to implement AI](#), with the same research identifying improving customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and self-service success as the top priorities behind that push. This is a boardroom conversation, not a back-office one, and it is happening in the accounts CSPs are already selling into.

Using Conversational AI, businesses can answer progressively harder questions and create greater opportunities in doing so. The journey begins with the descriptive: "What happened?" It then progresses to the diagnostic: "Why did it happen?" Next is proactive: "What needs my attention right now?" And the final and most powerful is the prescriptive question: "What should I do about it?" We refer to this as the Conversational AI maturity curve.

For Communication Service Providers, this progression matters because conversational intelligence is not simply about bolting on another generic layer of AI to an organisation. Its real value comes from

applying intelligence to distinct business priorities and continuously moving from insight towards action.

## **From hindsight to understanding**

The descriptive stage is the historical baseline: the world of traditional call recording, reporting and retrospective analysis. Businesses can look back at interactions and understand what took place. This capability remains foundational. Recording provides an essential source of evidence, while reporting creates visibility across volumes, trends and outcomes. Yet descriptive intelligence has inherent limitations. By the time an organisation understands what happened, the opportunity to influence the outcome has often passed.

The next stage, therefore, is diagnostic intelligence and understanding not just what happened, but why. This is where conversational AI has already made a significant difference. By analysing conversations at scale, organisations can identify the conversational behaviours associated with successful sales outcomes, the factors contributing to customer frustration or where agents may need additional support. By reviewing far more interactions than could ever be reviewed manually, businesses can begin to understand the patterns and behaviours that sit behind their results.

The real value lies in having context. A KPI might tell a business that conversions have declined. Conversational intelligence reveals what is happening within the conversations that may be driving that decline. For a CSP, this is where the commercial proposition starts to change shape. Diagnostic capability is harder to replicate than recording or reporting, which gives a reseller a more defensible position and a stronger basis for a higher-value conversation with the end customer than one built on storage and call volume alone.

## **What needs attention now**

The third stage of the maturity curve is proactive intelligence. The question changes from "Why did it happen?" to "What needs my attention right now?"

This is where the potential of conversational AI becomes particularly significant. In highly competitive markets, waiting for a monthly report or quarterly review may be too late. The most valuable insights are the ones that give a business enough warning to change what happens next.

The strategic value here is substantial. Proactive intelligence can surface at-risk deals or emerging dips in conversation quality before they become visible in the numbers. Leaders gain earlier visibility into what is driving or blocking revenue, rather than relying exclusively on closed deals and historical sales metrics. And the business can intervene while there is still something to influence.

The same principle applies to operational efficiency. A proactive approach using Conversational AI can surface emerging patterns in customer interactions that indicate friction, process weaknesses or inefficiencies, allowing organisations to respond continuously rather than waiting for the next formal review.

The implications for people management are equally significant. Traditionally, a person's performance may be assessed based on the two or three conversations that happened to be selected, rather than the broader reality of their customer interactions. Now managers can be alerted to coaching opportunities or performance shifts as they occur, supported by evidence drawn from a much broader set of conversations.

The result is the potential for faster, fairer, and more evidence-based feedback. Coaching becomes less about discovering issues after a review cycle and more about identifying the right opportunity at

the right moment.

Compliance presents another powerful example. For those operating in highly regulated environments, a proactive approach seeks to identify compliance risk at the moment it appears. Rather than discovering an issue during a later audit, organisations can move towards continuous oversight, faster remediation and potentially smaller areas of exposure.

Once a customer relies on proactive intelligence for coaching, deal risk or compliance oversight, it tends to become embedded in day-to-day operations. That embeddedness is precisely what makes a service harder for a customer to walk away from and gives a CSP a firmer basis for retention than a purely transactional relationship.

### **From proactive insight to prescriptive action**

The fourth stage of the maturity curve is prescriptive intelligence. The question now becomes "What should I do about it?"

If we look at the whole journey, identifying an at-risk deal is invaluable. Understanding why it is at risk is even more valuable. But ultimately, the greatest value will come from recommending the action most likely to improve the outcome. However, it is important to note that this recommendation cannot be generic and needs to be grounded in an organisation's own definition of success.

This is where the concept of "no fixed KPIs" becomes important since there is no universal definition of a successful conversation. The underlying AI capability therefore needs to be shaped differently depending on the business sector and the outcome that matters most.

For a sales organisation, the relevant intelligence might centre on pipeline health, conversion and revenue opportunity. For an operations team, it might focus on enhancing processes and efficiencies. For managers, it could be to prioritise coaching opportunities and changes in individual performance. And for compliance teams, it may centre on identifying risk and enabling rapid intervention.

This suggests that the future of conversational AI is unlikely to be defined by one generic intelligence layer applied uniformly across the enterprise. Instead, the more mature model is one in which AI capabilities are trained, tuned and interpreted around the specific context of each business function.

The maturity curve is therefore not simply a technological progression, moreover an organisational one. Moving from descriptive to diagnostic requires businesses to understand the drivers behind performance. Moving from diagnostic to proactive requires them to identify which signals demand attention before outcomes are fully realised. Moving from proactive to prescriptive requires the confidence to translate intelligence into recommended action.

Of the four stages, prescriptive intelligence is the hardest for a competitor to displace, precisely because it is built around a specific customer's own definition of success rather than a generic benchmark. For a CSP, that is the point at which the relationship stops being about a product and starts being about a way of working the customer has invested in, which is the strongest position from which to protect margin and retain the account.

### **Why this matters now**

Communication service providers are working with organisations where the volume and complexity of customer interactions continue to grow, while the tolerance for inefficiency, poor experiences and compliance failures continues to shrink. At the same time, the traditional metrics used to run the business often remain fundamentally retrospective. Revenue reports show what has been achieved,

service metrics show what has already happened, and quality assessments reveal what has been observed.

Conversational AI now adds a new dimension. It provides an understanding of what is happening beneath those metrics and identifies what deserves attention before the business outcome is fully visible. Conversational intelligence becomes increasingly connected to the decisions that matter. This is particularly powerful because the conversation is often an early indicator of what the outcome is likely to become. This does not mean replacing human judgment; it means giving people better information, earlier.

Revenue can influence what happens in customer and prospect conversations. The operations leader can address friction before it becomes a service problem. The manager can coach based on evidence rather than isolated examples. And the compliance team can respond to risk while it is still manageable. For the CSP selling into all of this, the same progression tracks fairly closely onto commercial outcome: each stage further up the curve tends to carry a higher-value proposition, a harder-to-replicate service, and a customer with more reason to stay.

### **The real measure of maturity**

The most advanced conversational AI will not necessarily be the system that produces the greatest volume of insights. It will be the one that understands which insights matter to which part of the business, recognises when those insights require attention and, ultimately, helps people determine what to do next.

That is the real maturity curve. Not simply making conversations searchable, measurable or analysable, but turning them into an increasingly valuable source of business intelligence. The journey from descriptive to prescriptive is therefore not about replacing one generation of technology with another. It is about changing the role that conversation plays in the organisation.

For organisations facing constant pressure to grow revenue, improve efficiency, strengthen performance and reduce risk, that progression marks the difference between AI that explains the past and AI that actively helps shape what happens next.