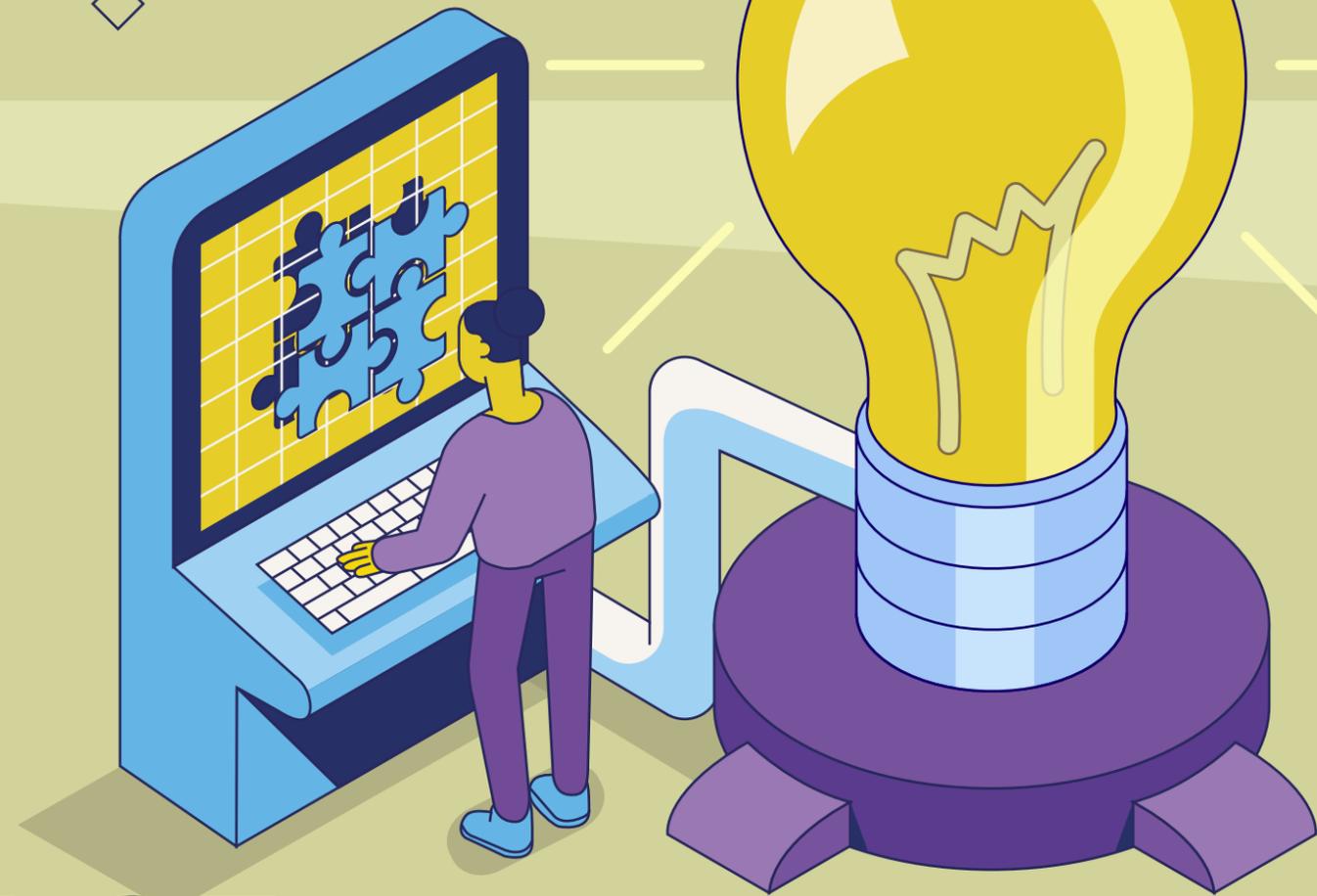




# DIGITAL FIRST: THE RE-INVENTION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



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# INTRODUCTION

The rise of Digital First engagement has driven the re-invention of customer service, with consumers now expecting the brands they deal with to offer instant access to low friction, always-on commerce and full lifecycle services.

And customer expectations aren't standing still. People have become used to the kind of fluid and dynamic interactions they receive when contacting digital natives – and they're now wanting the same levels of service from everyone else.

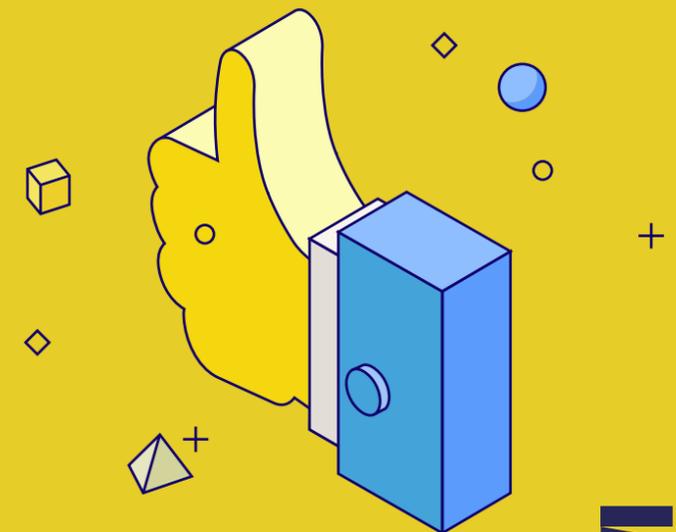
We're also seeing continued innovation in the technologies and channels that are supporting Digital First growth. While brands already have a range of online and mobile chat and messaging options available to them, there's also a move towards more proactive engagement innovations. These include automatic notifications, appointment reminders, contextual knowledge and live support – all combining to introduce more personalisation and less friction into digital customer journeys.

The transition to Digital First – particularly during lockdown – saw a massive increase in overall digital interaction levels. At Sabio when we surveyed our clients for our **CX Realities research** during the pandemic we found interactions on some non-voice channels were up between 400-600% on two years before. And many customers report that their day-to-day contact volumes still remain higher than pre-pandemic Black Friday peaks.

Despite the rush to digital, voice interactions haven't gone away. The overall number of calls into the contact centre might have fallen, but their length and complexity have increased as self-service options and automation now handle most of the simpler customer interactions.

The result is that average call handling times in contact centres are getting longer and longer. Advisors are left to deal with the inevitable frustrations felt when Digital First engagement doesn't perform to expectations.

That's why it's essential for CX teams to ensure that their digital service initiatives are fully integrated into joined-up customer journeys. Lack of integration between Digital First engagement and agents working in the contact centre not only leads to customer frustration, but also places pressure on the advisors who are left to fix outstanding customer issues.



# FIXING THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN DIGITAL AND ASSISTED SERVICE

Brands following a Digital First strategy will need to address a number of key challenges if they are to successfully transform customer engagement. Digital First needs to support both the self-service and assisted-service aspects of customer journeys, enabling a truly integrated, end-to-end process from initial digital interactions through to resolution either online or with contact centre involvement.

So, it's critical that advisors are equipped with all the support and answers they need to manage these interactions. Without this, the burden of integration is left with the advisor. It's hardly surprising that call duration is increasing when resolving a customer issue often requires advisors to 'toggle' their way through multiple screens and applications just to source the information they need to help. To avoid this kind of scenario, CX teams need to meet a number of key challenges to empower their advisors to deliver excellent CX:



## RECOGNISE THAT THE ADVISOR'S ROLE IS NOW MUCH HARDER

Automation has taken away most of the 'easier' calls. Interactions with customers have become more complex, and require new levels of support.



## ENSURE CONTINUITY BETWEEN DIGITAL SELF-SERVICE CHANNELS AND THE CONTACT CENTRE

How can advisors fully address unresolved Digital First interactions unless they have access to the extended communications history that may extend across multiple channels? Integration has to work both ways.

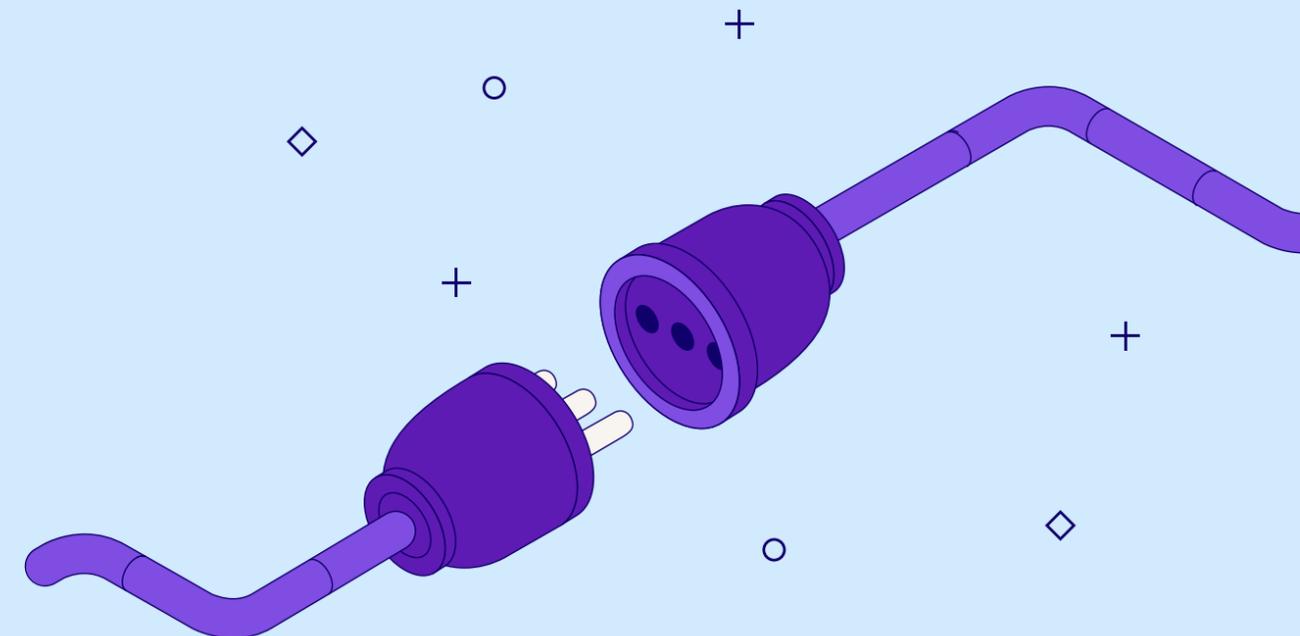


## START THINKING OF VOICE AS A DIGITAL CHANNEL

If CX teams are serious about Digital First then they can't exclude the wealth of data that's exchanged between customers and advisors in the contact centre. Digitising voice means that all of that unstructured data in the voice conversation is now accessible and can be surfaced and actioned wherever needed.

## ★★★ RETHINKING THE ADVISOR EXPERIENCE

Job market changes, the shift towards hybrid working, and heightened Digital First consumer expectations are all combining to cement the advisor role as a critical part of the equation. Successfully balancing the management of CX costs with the need to deliver better outcomes for customers is more important than ever.



# DIGITAL FIRST INTEGRATION IN ACTION WITH SABIO

Sabio Group works with a broad range of organisations to ensure that their Digital First and automation activities integrate closely with their core contact centre and assisted service activities.

## EXTENDING SELF-SERVICE CAPABILITIES TO VOICE FOR BGL GROUP

A core component of BGL Group's customer service proposition is to enable customers to self-serve. However, BGL also wanted to ensure that there was a human touch available for high value moments for the customer, while also improving customer/advisor conversations with technology. Sabio and BGL work together to improve customer experience and deliver operational efficiencies across the customer service function.

“

Our focus is on providing customers with the ability to self-serve when it's the best option for them and for our business. This allows our contact centre advisors to spend more time on conversations that require a human touch.”

– Barry Webb, Technology Strategy, BGL Group

## BETTER PREPARED FOR MORE COMPLEX CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS AT WELSH WATER

Customers of Welsh Water had indicated through surveys and consultations that they wanted the option for more self-service functions. The business introduced an online customer contact platform that enables customers to pay bills and make general queries, with the result that 48% of interactions are now handled across digital channels. At the same time, Welsh water has also changed its advisor training programme, focusing on problem solving and using internal knowledge-based articles enabling advisors to be better prepared for more complex customer interactions.

“

We've seen a reduction in the total number of contacts we've had in the last three years, which we attribute to our expanding digital footprint. However, while we recognise that digital innovation and AI can drive considerable cost improvements and efficiencies – more investment also needs to be made in people to bring them up to the same level as the technology.”

– Rebecca Price, Head of Contact Centre Operations, Welsh Water

## REDUCING PRESSURE ON THE WORKFORCE AT HOMESERVE

HomeServe reduced the pressure on its 800-strong agent workforce through the introduction of a customer self-service hub platform. The multinational home maintenance insurer now ensures its agents deal with higher-value requests and not basic repetitive tasks – with 70% of 6,000 calls per day now routed through an automated voice assistant.

“

We've gone from 6% of all claims being fully automated in our last financial year, to 20% this year – a huge improvement! In light of changing interactions with customers, we've had to rethink the experience for agents. We're trying to adjust our processes to present the most relevant information to agents when complex calls come in.”

- Phil Jordan, Head of Contact Channel Automation at HomeServe

# EMPOWERING CONTACT CENTRE ADVISORS TO SUPPORT DIGITAL FIRST

Recent research indicates that while digital service channels – particularly apps, live chat and social – are being used more than before the pandemic, half of the consumers surveyed felt that empathy, a quick response and only having to explain themselves a single time are all much more critical elements of the customer journey.

That's why at Sabio we believe that it's time to support contact centre advisors with the technology and solutions they need to deliver the experiences that customers increasingly expect. Key examples that help advisors take full advantage of Digital First advances include:



## AGENT ASSIST

An AI solution that's designed to improve advisor operational efficiency. Agent Assist provides continual analysis of customer/advisor conversations, surfacing key information to equip advisors with real-time insights so that they can give expert answers quicker and come to a resolution faster.



## ENABLING VOICE AS A DIGITAL CHANNEL WITH SERVICE CLOUD VOICE

Service Cloud Voice takes Digital First to the next level by accelerating the deployment of agile cloud telephony that's fully-integrated with your CRM and digital channels. Merging voice, digital channels and CRM data in one single view gives advisors a much better experience with 360-degree customer views that help ensure that each advisor is ready and fully-equipped for each interaction.



## AGENT DESKTOPS

If your advisors are still toggling between different platforms and interfaces, deploying a cloud-based advisor desktop can bring applications together and surface relevant interaction data so that there's no waiting on hold while advisors search. Sabio accelerator programmes built from years of best practice also shorten 'time to benefit' from agent desktop deployments, while also ensuring full support for hybrid advisor working.



## INTENT CAPTURE & ANALYSIS (IC&A)

For Digital Insight to be truly successful it's essential to know exactly why customers are getting in touch so you can identify patterns and trends to highlight where service can be optimised. **IC&A** unlocks the voice of the customer by capturing contact intents and categorising the reasons for calling. This enables brands to accelerate self-service opportunities, freeing up advisors to spend more time on conversations that require a human touch.

# UNLOCKING CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE VALUE THROUGH DIGITAL FIRST

Digital First is about much more than just engaging with customers across a range of online channels – in fact it’s an acknowledgement that excellent customer experience is now one of the few key corporate differentiators.

Simply resolving issues and delivering customer satisfaction is no longer enough. Consistently offering a great customer experience can deliver huge strategic value for a business and, as recent Watermark Consulting research has demonstrated, success here ‘helps build value, while a poor customer experience erodes it’.

This places an increased emphasis on Digital First customer and employee journeys – not just in terms of frictionless digital engagement, but also through the quality of contact centre operations and the performance of skilled advisors representing your brand.

For organisations that are able to unlock the power of Digital First while also leveraging digital innovation to modernise their advisor experience, the potential value can be transformational. Advances include:



 **IMPROVED ADVISOR EFFECTIVENESS**  
With far less repetitive tasks, engaged advisors can focus on higher value requests with less pressure than before, leaving them free to really deliver for customers

 **SUPPORTING HYBRID WORKING MODELS**  
Digital First adoption means people can benefit from the full advisor experience regardless of where they’re working

 **IMPROVED EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE**  
Supporting advisors with relevant content, advice and next best action recommendations helps improve engagement and better outcomes for customers. Engaged employees = happier, more loyal customers

 **BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**  
Offering frictionless engagement, with no disconnects between channels means far less frustration as customer interaction details and history are always available

 **INTELLIGENT CUSTOMER CHOICES**  
Customers get to engage with your brand whenever and however is most convenient for them – with their choices and preferences captured where applicable

# WHY SABIO?

Sabio Group is a digital customer experience (CX) transformation specialist with major operations globally. Through our own technology, and that of world-class technology leaders we help you optimise your customer journeys by making better decisions across multiple contact channels.

Sabio offers a full portfolio of solutions and services to support contact centre advisors as they adapt to a world of longer and more demanding conversations. Here are some of the ways we do that:



## WE'RE TECH-AGNOSTIC

Having lots of partners means we have a broad technology stack, allowing us to supply more appropriate solutions tailored to match your requirements. First, we help you to identify the challenges you need to solve, then we'll suggest the solution that best fits your business. And because we have specialist teams for each technology, you'll always be dealing with experts.



## WE'LL EMPOWER YOU

Rather than keep our knowledge to ourselves, we prefer to share our expertise with our clients to enable them to grow their own capabilities and become more self-sufficient based on our invaluable knowledge of CX best practice. If, for example, you're looking to integrate all your key digital channels and data into a more integrated CX strategy, we can offer you a flexible engagement model based on your current capability and future state. Sabio can develop, build and optimise your Digital First infrastructure for you, enable you with all the tools and knowhow you may need, or we can find the right balance in-between.



## ONLY THE FEATURES YOU NEED

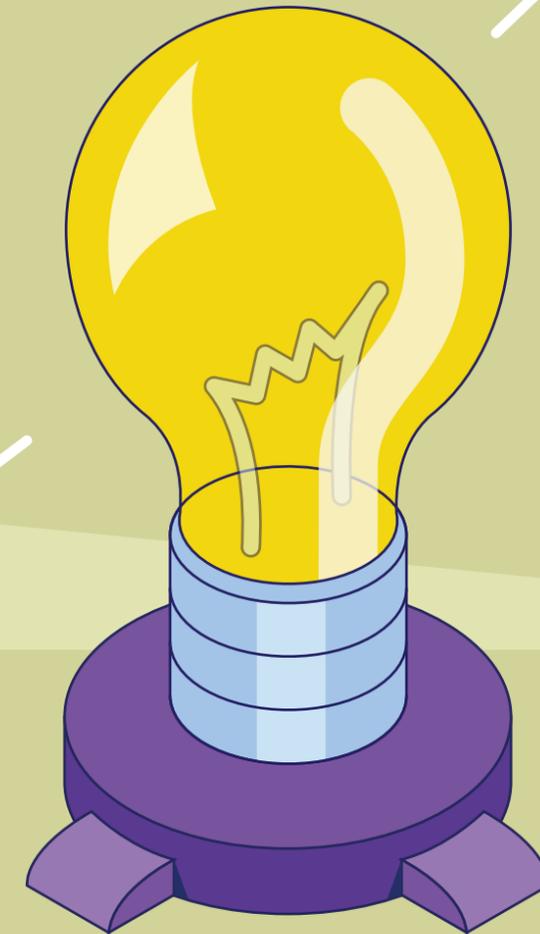
Because we're data first, we only propose features or new technologies when the level of data supports it. Rather than suggest the biggest scale solution, we often do a small piece of work with clients – then use the data to expand the business case together. Our wider technology portfolio means you will always have a range of options, allowing you to select only the features needed for your specific solution.



## MANY INDUSTRIES, MANY PARTNERS

We're dedicated to providing excellent Digital First solutions through innovative technology. We do that by working with world-class technology partners such as Avaya, Verint, Genesys, Twilio, Google, Salesforce and Amazon Connect. Plus, we have deep and wide industry specific knowledge covering Banking, Insurance, Housing, Travel & Leisure, Utilities, Telcos and Retail.

# LET SABIO RE-INVENT YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGH DIGITAL FIRST ENGAGEMENT



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