

**SUPPORT  
REPS ARE  
UNSUNG  
HEROES,  
& AI SHOULD BE  
THEIR SIDEKICK**

# INTRODUCTION

## CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES ARE HEROES

Your customer service representatives are far more than a cost center; they are your last, best defense against [customer churn](#). They often must deal with unhappy or even angry customers in a professional manner and solve problems on the fly. They are tasked with "saving the day" when your product or your process has failed.

In short, customer service representatives are the unsung heroes of your organization that must make up for every other department's missteps and recover as quickly as possible. It's a daunting job, but artificial intelligence can make it easier -- and can turn your customer support heroes into churn-busting superheroes.

# CUSTOMERS ARE TRAINED TO EXPECT ROBOTS; DON'T GIVE THEM ONE

The first thing to consider when enhancing your customer service reps with AI is that you should **not** be **replacing** your reps with AI. Customers are contacting you for fast, responsive help. Trying to placate them with a software agent can very easily increase their frustration, rather than address it.

In fact, customers are so tired of dealing with automated greeting systems that they often just **shout problems into your inbox until the software gives up** and connects the customer to a human support rep. Whatever costs you're saving with this automation aren't worth the increased customer ire.

Moreover, most customers want to solve their own problems and will only contact you when your customer-facing support systems and FAQs have failed them. If they couldn't use your support knowledge base to find an answer, odds are that having a robot read the support knowledge base to the customer won't be much help.

Perhaps most importantly, your devoted product evangelists -- the passionate fans and brave early adopters that want to brag about your solutions -- are the ones most likely to need help that FAQs and public knowledge bases can't provide. The last thing you want to give your superfans is a bad, automated-robot hassle when they're asking for help. That's how you turn evangelists into critics.

Good support requires a human touch and it can't be replaced with artificial intelligence. However, AI can help your human support representatives do their work more efficiently. Here's how.

# AI CAN BE A SIDEKICK TO YOUR CUSTOMER SUPPORT HEROES

Even when speaking to a friendly, capable human support representative, your customers want to get a solution and complete the support call as quickly as possible. Artificial intelligence can help your support reps make that happen.

First, an AI assistant for your support reps can expedite internal search functions, parsing plain-language questions into rich search queries in the same way Apple's Siri or Amazon's Alexa turn spoken instructions into complex smartphone and smart-speaker behaviors. This helps reps get to documented answers faster and makes your customers happy sooner.

By the same token, an AI assistant can automatically convert your written documentation into questions and answers, coaching a support rep through an interactive diagnosis rather than requiring them to read a rote script. This helps hone in on issues quicker and makes the human support agent (ironically) sound less robotic.

An AI support assistant can also automate much of the note-taking and ticket-generation overhead of a support call, which allows the agent to focus on the customer and clear the call faster, rather than pausing or delaying for administrative tasks during the call.

All this functionality together makes it possible to ramp up new support agents more quickly, as they don't need to tightly memorize a support script or become intimately familiar with a support knowledge base before interacting with customers. The AI agent is there to fill in the gaps as the support rep matures.

# AI IS BETTER WHEN PAIRED WITH HUMAN AGENTS

Despite the [hype](#), [artificial intelligence isn't truly ready](#) to replace humans when it comes to problem-solving or even polite conversation. AI works best today when there is a human "in the loop" of its performance.

First, AI systems don't generally produce yes-or-no answers in response to queries; they generate probabilistic outputs. An AI agent may identify three or four possible responses to a question and rate each one with a percentage chance it is correct. In some situations, a human agent may only want to share a solution that is at least 95% likely to work, while in others, a 50-50 proposition may be good enough (or as good as it gets).

Those kinds of judgement calls will likely be informed by the mood of the customer, the stakes of the problem, and other "soft" factors that no AI agent is able to sense or parse. Thus, it's best if the AI has a human interpreter between it and the customer.

Similarly, artificial intelligence has a ["flywheel" learning curve](#). The longer an AI operates, the smarter it gets. But the reverse is also true: in its early days of operation, an AI support assistant may be a little immature and not produce optimal results every time.

A human support rep can ignore these early AI quirks and "fail over" to traditional customer support methods as the AI flywheel gets up to speed. Thus, your customers -- especially your frustrated or unsatisfied customers -- aren't directly subjected to your internal AI's learning curve.

In fact, interacting with a human support rep that dismisses or corrects poor responses will decrease the learning curve and accelerate the flywheel for your AI agents. Just as an AI can shorten the onboarding cycle for a human support agent, humans can shorten the ramp-up time for an AI support agent.

Bottom line: The human touch just can't be replicated, but by pairing human support agents with AI assistants, you get the best of both worlds.

# CONCLUSION

## LET AI TURN CUSTOMER SUPPORT HEROES INTO SUPERHEROES

Pairing an advanced AI customer support agent with a human customer service representative can turn an everyday rep into a customer support superhero. AI assistants can help your human support staff shorten call time, improve customer satisfaction, and lower customer churn.

Combining AI and humans on your support team decreases the learning curve for both and maximizes the performance of the humans and the virtual agents alike. There's no better place to get your AI flywheel started than customer support.

Talla is building the **artificial intelligence that can assist and enhance your customer support team**. If you'd like to use AI to turn your support reps into superheroes, **contact Talla today**.