

Why companies struggle with digital self-service

 By [Ryan Falkenberg](#)

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Digital self-service should be a no-brainer for any company operating in today's business environment. It is, after all, what customers want and research shows that more than two-thirds of customers prefer self-service over talking to a customer representative.



Ryan Falkenberg, co-CEO of Clevva | Image supplied

Allowing customers to help themselves over web, mobile and social channels also means that organisations can better focus their human resources. Additionally, it means that customer queries are resolved faster, more accurately and at a much lower cost. Covid-19 has only accelerated the need for digital self-service, taking it from a nice extra to a must-have.

The trouble is many organisations struggle to do digital self-service effectively. We know this first-hand. Our own research shows that banks, insurers and telcos struggle to offer fully automated self-service.

For most queries, issues and complaints, a live agent still needs to be brought into the loop. If large enterprise-scale companies struggle with digital self-service, we can assume their smaller competitors are also far from getting this right.

The context matters

One of the major challenges businesses face here is that every customer need and situation varies. This means you have to be able to adjust to each variable and context while applying the right business rule. Frequently asked questions (FAQs), decision trees, dynamic forms and chatbots are not designed to cope with the millions of possible and changing journeys. They are more comfortable asking generic questions and giving generic answers.

Customers don't want to be treated in a generic way. They want you to hear their specific situation, consider their particular needs and shape the resulting experience accordingly. They expect this irrespective of whether they engage with you via your website, WhatsApp or mobile app channels.

As soon as you channel them into a generic journey, they will resist and exit, looking for a human that can do this for them. The result is that while many engagement journeys may start digitally, most end up being handled by a human expert.

This is not only costly, but it is also difficult to sustain at scale around the clock. Plus, it traps your human experts into the automation loop and prevents them from adding new value to your business.



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Digital experts are changing this

Fortunately, companies are now able to build digital experts capable of operating just like human experts. These digital experts consistently ask the right questions, offer the right answers and trigger the right actions, so your customers get their query, issue or complaint resolved immediately without having to be connected to a live agent.

While they are mainly used to engage directly with customers via digital self-service channels, they can also help contact centre and in-store agents handle complex or regulated queries without error.

For example, a financial services company could build a digital financial advisor capable of analysing every customer's needs before guiding them to compliant, context-relevant solutions in real-time. They can also build digital support experts able to help customers resolve specific queries, issues and complaints immediately. No waiting to be connected to a human who then needs to hear everything explained over again. Simple, immediate and impactful self-service at everyone's fingertips.

Liberating staff to do more

By allowing customers to self-serve and self-solve, digital experts allow experienced staff to break out of the automation loop. This lets them focus more of their efforts on handling complex, high-value engagements and adding greater value to the customer relationship.

By shifting more rule-based work to a digital workforce, it frees the human workforce to focus more on relational and creative work. A win-win for both customers and staff.

ABOUT RYAN FALKENBERG

Ryan Falkenberg is co-founder and CEO of software company Clevva.

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