

**VERINT.**

# The Complete Guide to Conversational AI-Powered Agents and Virtual Assistants for Customer Service

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With customer service solutions powered by conversational AI, companies can quickly respond to inquiries using a chatbot or intelligent virtual assistant (IVA) on voice or digital interactions

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**Virtual Assistants have helped  
Verint® customers:**

- **Save \$1 million** on how-to inquiries in just one year
- **Handle 80%** of all customer requests with an intelligent virtual assistant
- **Contain 48%** of inbound volume in the first month of deploying a conversational AI solution

## What is conversational AI?

Conversational artificial intelligence (AI) has quickly become one of the most impactful technologies that's used across industries to more quickly connect people with the information they need. This could be a customer using a chatbot on their health insurance website or a traveler booking a flight over a voice-enabled virtual assistant or a contact center agent using an automated assist tool to track down account details for a banking customer.

Today's most sophisticated conversational AI adds humanlike conversations across every engagement channel a customer or employee may choose, delivering effortless, personalized experiences. Conversational AI is the technology that powers these interactions through [intelligent assistants](#).

Conversational AI combines cutting-edge natural language processing, machine learning, and robust analytics working within customers' existing application ecosystems to automate more customer and employee interactions.







## What is agentic AI?

When looking at how conversational AI works, especially within a customer service setting, it's also important to understand the impact of agentic AI.

Agentic AI is an advanced form of AI that possesses a degree of autonomy to solve complex, multi-step problems. Unlike more traditional AI models – which rely on predefined rules and data – agentic AI can independently analyze challenges and then initiate actions and make decisions.

While automated self-service conversations are one popular agentic AI use case, this isn't the only way agentic AI can augment your contact center.

The role of agentic AI is to act on behalf of a business (or an agent, in the case of a contact center), streamlining processes for real-time situations based on pre-set goals and data.

## Agentic AI is:

### **Outcome-oriented:**

Persistently works toward a defined business target to achieve a specific outcome

### **Autonomous:**

Acts on its own to take independent actions without needing supervision or detailed instructions

### **Capable of learning:**

Improves performance over time through interactions and consuming more data

### **Proactive:**

Can identify opportunities and potential issues before they arise



## Why brands need IVAs

Customer expectations are higher than ever, and contact centers are feeling the pressure. In Verint's recently published "The State of Customer Experience Report," we found 73% of customers now prefer to solve issues themselves using digital channels, and 86% say they see real benefits from AI-powered customer service – especially when it saves them time and resolves issues faster.

But the cost of handling inbound customer service calls keeps rising. With volumes increasing, these costs add up quickly. That's where intelligent virtual assistants (IVAs) come in. IVAs can handle routine questions, resolve issues instantly, and free up your agents for more complex work.

### In short:

IVAs help brands deliver the fast, effortless service customers want – while keeping costs under control



# What are the best customer service uses for virtual assistants?

Delivering a great conversational customer experience is key for any company that wants to mitigate contact center costs by allowing customers to self-serve on their own schedule and on their own terms. By using AI-based chatbots and intelligent virtual assistants, organizations can free up their contact center agents to perform more high-level tasks by reducing average handle time and deflecting calls through self-service.

Here is what a conversational AI-powered intelligent virtual assistant, like Verint Intelligent Virtual Assistant™ (IVA), can do for customers across industries:

- Make transactions and offer new purchasing opportunities.
- Help pay a bill.
- Help reset a password or username.
- Book a flight or train ticket.
- Find information about a medication.
- Ask about local government services.

- Find a medical provider.
- Schedule an appointment.
- Ask for roadside assistance in an emergency.
- Find details about an insurance policy.
- Deliver proactive information about a travel schedule.
- And much more...

# What modern features make for a quality virtual assistant?

Intelligent virtual assistants can perform an array of tasks that were previously handled by live agents. This helps boost containment rates and can drive big savings within the contact center. It can make your live agents better at their jobs by giving them context about the customer's needs and their past service journey. Today's virtual assistants need to do more than just talk to customers; they need to deliver a seamless, multi-channel experience that provides the desired outcome and the right information at the right time.

## Here are some hallmarks of a winning virtual assistant:

### Works across channels:

Assistants like Verint IVA work between voice, text, digital, and social channels. For example, if your customer is on the phone with the virtual assistant about a warranty issue, that assistant should also be able to text the customer appropriate documentation.

### Understands multiple requests:

In the past, a customer saying, "I need help finding a doctor in my insurance network and I need to know my co-pay" would confuse a basic chatbot. Today's virtual assistants are trained in multi-intent recognition so they can handle both of those requests during the interaction.

### Provides advanced service via image recognition and processing.

Fast track the customer service experience by allowing customers to upload photos. Image processing can enable the virtual assistant to identify the model of product and, for example, find replacement parts.

### Is your best salesperson:

A good virtual assistant can make a sale, letting customers know about new services, discounts, or other information that allows them to perhaps make a new purchase or add on to the services they're already receiving.

# How can a company ensure that their virtual assistant always provides the right information?

Companies can't afford for their virtual assistants to provide a customer with inaccurate or misleading information. Doing so hurts customer loyalty and leads to a decrease in containment rates.

This is why it's vital that today's virtual assistants are trained on – and have access to – the right sources of information. Whereas open

large language models like ChatGPT might access vast amounts of information to carry on a conversation or compose a document, your company needs to make sure that the information relayed to a customer reflects your policies, is in compliance with regulations, and is reflective of your brand, products, and mission.

## Here are a few things to know about how a virtual assistant finds the right answer:

### Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG):

With RAG, the virtual assistant can search approved knowledge sources to find the right information. Verint IVA uses RAG within its functionality to ensure that any answer is from an approved and up-to-date source. For example, this allows a hotel's virtual assistant to provide a customer with the cancellation policy for a specific property.

### Generative AI:

A virtual assistant relying wholly on open GenAI models would produce erroneous information about your company. But GenAI can be used to gather information from your knowledge management systems, and Verint IVA uses GenAI to help parse the intent of customers' questions.

### Industry-Specific AI Agents:

To jump-start your deployment, Verint has industry-specific agents – ranging from hospitality to healthcare to financial services – ready to go. They're trained on hundreds of past use cases, know industry terms, and are compliant with industry regulations. Your company-specific knowledge sources are then layered into the models.



## How do you deploy a virtual assistant? And can you do it quickly?

Deploying a virtual assistant used to be a long, expensive, and risky investment.

While there are still some frustrating experiences out there, at Verint we've become a market leader in time to value and ROI when it comes to deploying a virtual assistant. Our experience in this field allows us to get a virtual assistant up, running, and serving your customers in a matter of weeks, not months.

Verint's hybrid architecture and low-code bot-building, management, and tuning environment, Verint IVA Studio™, allow companies to quickly deploy a virtual assistant and enable even non-technical employees to work on the virtual assistant without any coding.

### Verint IVA Studio:

- Provides users with consistent, personalized, AI-powered conversations, through both digital and voice channels.
- Uses pre-built, out-of-the-box natural language understanding (NLU) models specific to your industry so you can quickly identify customer intentions and provide the best responses.
- Easily connects to a wide variety of business applications, data streams, back-end systems, and channels for faster time to market.
- Delivers insights into customer interactions to proactively identify new, unknown, or unmet customer expectations.

Want to see Verint Intelligent Virtual Assistant in action?

[Watch here](#)





## A Case in Point:

Amtrak, America's national passenger railroad, serves over 30 million riders each year and welcomes hundreds of thousands of daily visitors to its website. To make booking and travel support easier – without overwhelming its contact center – Amtrak introduced “Ask Julie,” an intelligent virtual assistant powered by Verint.

Ask Julie acts as a digital customer service rep, instantly answering questions, helping travelers book tickets, and even assisting with hotel and rental car reservations. There's no waiting on hold – just fast, accurate help.

With Ask Julie, Amtrak delivers instant, reliable support for travelers while reducing call volumes, improving efficiency, and driving more revenue.

Want to learn more about Verint Intelligent Virtual Assistant? We'd love to build a bot with you – [just fill out this form](#).

### The results:

- **Over 5 million** questions answered by Ask Julie every year
- **32% increase** in self-service containment (more customers helped without a live agent)
- **8x return** on investment in the virtual assistant
- **30% higher** revenue per booking when customers use Julie



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