



Let's Chat!

Brands Spark a Conversation With Artificial Intelligence

Do you ever type “please” when performing an internet search? Of course not. But if you’re like a lot of people, you may find yourself using polite phrases when using voice commands. In fact, shoppers regularly use “please” and “thank you” when asking Siri a question, or when Alexa plays their favorite tune. It’s not because they are fooled into thinking a real person is fulfilling their request - it’s because conversations trigger a human, emotional response.

Smart Brands Keep the Conversation Moving

Recognizing the power of voice interactions, brands are building experiences that engage and delight customers.



Domino's Pizza - Amazon Alexa Skill:

“Alexa, open Dominos and place my Easy Order.” Leading up to the 2016 Super Bowl, [Domino's was the first big-name food seller](#) to join the ranks of Alexa Skills, allowing consumers to pre-set easy orders, place previous orders again, and get order status and tracking information.



My Starbucks Barista:

Recognizing that consumers are speaking through their mobile wallets, [Starbucks recently launched a voice ordering app](#) - an “innovative conversational ordering system” that leverages AI technology for mobile orders. It’s like calling ahead to your personal barista, who will prepare your exact order when you arrive at the cafe. Customers love the convenience, and Starbucks gains efficiency.



Pizza Hut Japan Introduces Pepper:

Customers in Japan can soon order their pizza from a robot. [Pepper, a friendly humanoid robot](#), is more than just an ordering kiosk. It uses conversational language, can read facial expressions and respond to customer sentiment, and even decide when - or if - to suggest a meal add-on.



Campbell's Soup Company - Watson Ads:

With the goal of getting information - and Campbell's brands - in front of consumers wherever they are, [Campbell's Soup Company is leveraging voice interactions](#) in online advertising. The ads, powered by IBM Watson, appear on The Weather Channel's mobile app and website and ask customers to suggest ingredients and build new recipes.

You Can Say That Again

The opportunity for businesses to converse with customers through AI-powered interactions is incredibly exciting, but can come with challenges. Early forays haven't always been successful – think Tay, Microsoft's Twitter bot which was quickly corrupted by trolls. To avoid similar disappointments, marketers must overcome these four common obstacles:

- **Data Pool:** The more experiences algorithms are exposed to, the more likely they will engage in natural sounding conversations. However, obtaining a large, relevant pool of data upon which the AI engine can learn is not always easy.
- **Voice Control:** Modulating tone of voice is a very human-specific skill. Training AI applications to notice nuance, such as sarcasm, takes specialized programming and some patience.
- **Privacy Concerns:** The more information consumers provide, the more authentic an experience brands can deliver. However, balancing privacy concerns and avoiding the “creepy” factor is a delicate dance that's challenging to get right.
- **Barriers to Discovery:** How do consumers discover content? It can often be difficult for consumers to find what they're looking for. For example, while consumers can add tons of features to Amazon's Echo via third-party apps called “Alexa Skills,” with over 10,000 skills to choose from, discovery can be challenging.

Speak to the Future

Artificial intelligence is not only here to stay; the pace of adoption is startling.

By the end of 2017, [Gartner predicts](#) that virtual assistants like Siri, Allo, Cortana, and Alexa will be conducting more than 50 percent of all mobile search queries, and more than 10 million homes will have a screenless device such as the Amazon Echo. Just three years later in 2020, Gartner further predicts most commercial interactions will be done via virtual agents.