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Best Practices for Better Conversational AI

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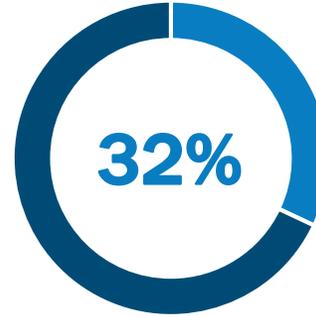


Conversational Assistants

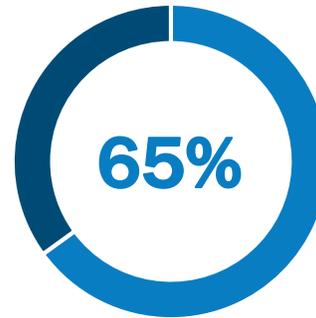
What is a conversational or digital assistant?

A Conversational Assistant is a chat or voice assistant that is meant to enhance, rather than replace the skills and functions of the person it's assisting. It creates opportunities for the person to make better use of their time and skills.

They are a critical part of the customer service landscape, where stellar customer experience is becoming progressively more critical.



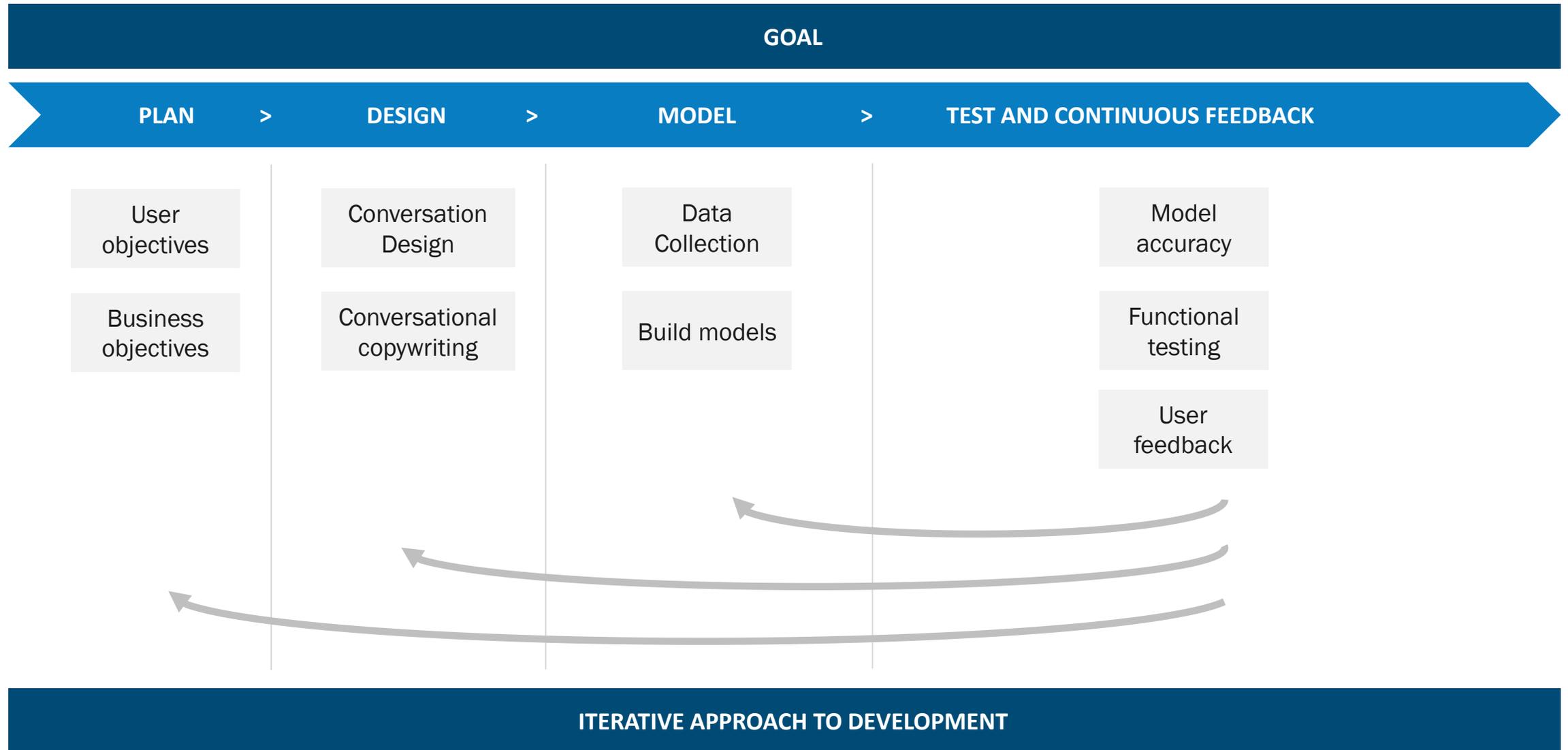
One in three consumers (32%) say they will walk away from a brand they love after just one bad experience.



65% find a positive experience with a brand to be more influential than great advertising.*

*<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/advisory-services/publications/consumer-intelligence-series/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-customer-experience.pdf>

Your Strategic Plan for Building Better Conversational Assistants



Plan

User objectives

- What does the user need and want?
- How useful is the product?
- Is the user task better solved with a conversational approach?
- What other channels are available? Are those more useful and usable?

Business objectives

- What are the KPIs? How will success be measured?
- What about the competition?
- Is this digital assistant in line with company direction?
- Which technology platform(s) to use?
- Is the necessary investment in tech and people and the effort understood? Is there a commitment?



Ingredients for success

- Think before you build.
- Involve designers, researchers, AI trainers and NLP engineers, developers and testers from day one.

Design

Conversation designers

- Understand the use cases and functionality
- Create sample dialogues for the happy path
- Design the long tail and repair conversations
- Create flows and intents
- Gather user feedback and iterate

Conversational copywriters

- Create a bot persona that reflects your brand and resonates with your audience
- Write copy that is natural and brief
- Write copy that reflects the type of assistant, e.g. helpful for customer service, persuasive in sales situations



Ingredients for success

- Designing for conversations is a specialized skill.
- Engage conversation designers and conversational copywriters early.

Model

Data Collection

- Collect data that represents real user interactions in real environments
- Actively identify possible biases and collect data to counteract
- A language model can only be as good as the data that goes into it

Build models

- Requires specialized tools
- Requires specialized knowledge
- Accept that developing conversational AI applications is an iterative process



Ingredients for success

- Collecting training data is more difficult than expected. Enlist a partner to do it right and on time.
- Invest in this area, as it is crucial to the success of your application.

Testing and Continuous Feedback

Test

- Accuracy of the model. Is what the user says correctly recognized?
- Functional testing. Is the correct next step taken based on what the user says?
- User feedback. Is the information accurate, usable and useful?

Continuous Feedback

- Any AI system requires continuous monitoring and updating based on live information
- Review new utterances and map them to existing intents or create new intents. Refactor intents if needed, or create additional bots
- Gather additional data to better cover areas of the app that shows gaps or bias



Ingredients for success

- Test, monitor and update the model, design or strategy based on your findings.
- Remember that this is an iterative exercise.



Key Takeaways

- Plan before you build
- Get the right people involved and use specialized tools
- Educate your organization
- Building conversational AI applications is an iterative process
- Still, do all you can to make your minimal viable product the best it can be to ensure success

Resources

- [Introduction to digital assistants](#)
- [Event listings](#)
- News
 - [Voicebot.ai](#)
 - [VUXWorld](#)
- [Best practices guide](#)
- [Courses and certificates](#) in conversation design, conversational copywriting and AI training
- [The future of Conversational AI](#)
- [Applause AI training and testing](#)
- [Applause Voice Testing](#)
- [outriderUX](#)

An aerial, top-down view of a city street grid, rendered in a dark, monochromatic teal color. The streets form a complex pattern of rectangles and curves. A solid teal horizontal bar is positioned at the very bottom of the image. The word "APPLAUSE" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font. A small blue circle is placed to the right of the letter "E".

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