Meet Jetstar Airways' virtual assistant.

48% of customers engage with Jetstar through Jess.

Challenges
– Address customer demands for an enhanced self-service experience
– Upgrade Jess capabilities to deliver seamless omni-channel assistance
– 30% growth in contact center queries
– Reduce high call volumes during spike call periods

Solution
– Deployment of Jess as first point of contact
– Enhanced virtual assistant
– NLU, enhanced dialogue and resolution – enables Jess to be digital concierge
– Jess's contact points expanded to website, mobile, messaging

Results
– 82% virtual assistant success rate
– 10.4+M conversations (2018)
– 48% of customers engage with Jetstar through Jess
– Jess triages customers to most suitable channel
– ROI tracking at 270+%
– IVR call volume down 17%
– Virtual assistant contact volumes up 50%

Background

Jetstar Airways is the fastest growing airline brand and one of the largest low-cost carrier airlines in the Asia Pacific region. Its mission is to offer low fares to enable more people to fly to more places, more often. Since launching in Australia in 2004, the airline has carried more than 200 million passengers, operating more than 4,000 flights a week to more than 75 destinations.

Committed to ensuring a contemporary digital experience to its increasing and highly mobile customer base, Jetstar embraces leading customer experience technology.

Nuance and Jetstar have enjoyed a long and trusted relationship for many years in addressing customer communication needs through the implementation of innovative technology. Identifying that Nuance's depth of expertise in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Natural Language Understanding (NLU) and conversational technology met the company's needs, Jetstar's virtual assistant, Jess, was deployed in 2013 using a Nuance Virtual Assistant. It offered access to customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week to assist with multiple queries. Jetstar was the first airline in the Asia Pacific region to deploy a virtual assistant in multiple countries and in different languages for improved customer service.

"The goal then, as it is now, was to support customer self-service, boosting customer engagement and loyalty. This is the real differentiator for organizations in today's competitive environment in terms of retaining existing customers as well as acquisition of new customers," said George Goucher, Jetstar's AI, Robotics and Emerging Technology Performance Manager. "Paradoxically, although most individuals today want to perform tasks through self-service, there's a clear desire for the self-service to be human-like, allowing a relationship to be established with your customers."

Challenges
Jetstar's success in the market has resulted in ongoing expansion throughout Australia, New Zealand and Asia, increased customer reach and increased customer queries. The company attracts approximately ten thousand new passengers per month, putting pressure on its contact center. The airline's expanded network of highly mobile travellers wants Jess to be able to deliver more while they travel; to be accessible to them on whatever device they are using. And, increasingly, it's the mobile channel.

The contact center was facing a 30% growth year-on-year in customer queries. In addition, dealing with the spikes in contact center demand during times of natural disaster and aircraft engine problem impacts on flights were taxing the contact center staff. And those travellers far away from home are in no position to wait up to an hour to speak with an agent due to inordinate global roaming charges.

Growing expectations by customers interacting with Jess meant her skill set needed to be expanded. Working closely with Nuance, in addition to developments in AI and virtual assistant technologies, Jess's communications with travelers were augmented. Her go-to-help competencies were enhanced, as were her skills to understand fully contextually raised queries.

Solution
Deploying Nuance's latest linguistic engine technology, a revitalized Jess understands more contextually and learns more rapidly, enabling greater and faster assistance to Jetstar's passengers. Through leading edge AI, machine learning and NLU technology, she fast tracks her own learning. Customer numbers deflected to either live chat or phone agents is reducing due to the high percentage of customers being contained by Jess's ability to answer all their queries.

Jetstar launched into Facebook Messenger in New Zealand, Australia and Singapore in November 2017 in response to the increasing trend of messaging customer enquiries. From November 2017 to June 2018, there were over 37,000 conversations with Jess on Facebook Messenger assisting more than 8,000 customers.

"2017 Jess is the focal point of contact for all customer assistance – whether via website, mobile or Facebook Messenger. Jess is a triage service. She directs the customers to the best point of value to meet their travel needs. You could say Jess is a digital concierge, supporting self-service on messaging platforms, mobile apps and web-based assets. All the while delivering a human-like, conversational experience to our customers."

George Goucher, Jetstar's AI, Robotics and Emerging Technology Performance Manager

Today, Jess is learning new phrasing, delivering rich content and responding to jargon and even emojis while providing seamless integration with the reservations systems, baggage allowance and customer profile. Jess retrieves customer bookings, resends itineraries and adds baggage to bookings, amongst a range of other 'smart' features, delivering a truly personalized assistant experience. A phone call to have an itinerary resent costs $5, whereas Jess does it for 50c.

"Jetstar's Facebook page has on average 1,500 daily visitors and now Jess is able to assist those customers with enquiries quickly and conveniently. She has already assisted more than 8,000 customers with their enquiries, including 3,000 customers during the significant disruptions in Bali caused by Mount Agung," said Goucher.

Unlike any other virtual assistant on Facebook Messenger, there is a seamless integration between Jess and the agents. Jess is resolving 33% of customer queries, allowing the social team to get their response time down from 17 hours to 0 minutes. Jess is also on the Jetstar App which uses the Web interface but tailored for Mobile.

Learnings from customer conversations are constantly fed back into the system. Today, Jess can answer
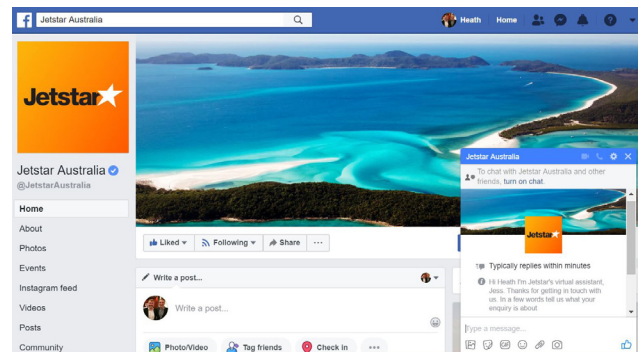
hundreds of questions across a range of categories – including changes and delays in flight schedules, baggage issues, lost flights, illness and so on. The virtual assistant's ability to evolve and hold contextual conversations with customers grows daily with each communication. Jess is consistent across all contact points. Using NLU, conversational dialogue and advanced resolution techniques, her nuanced understanding tailors her responses to each customer.

Jess offers innovative options for customers, using the shortest path to find a resolution whilst providing personalized responses across all platforms.
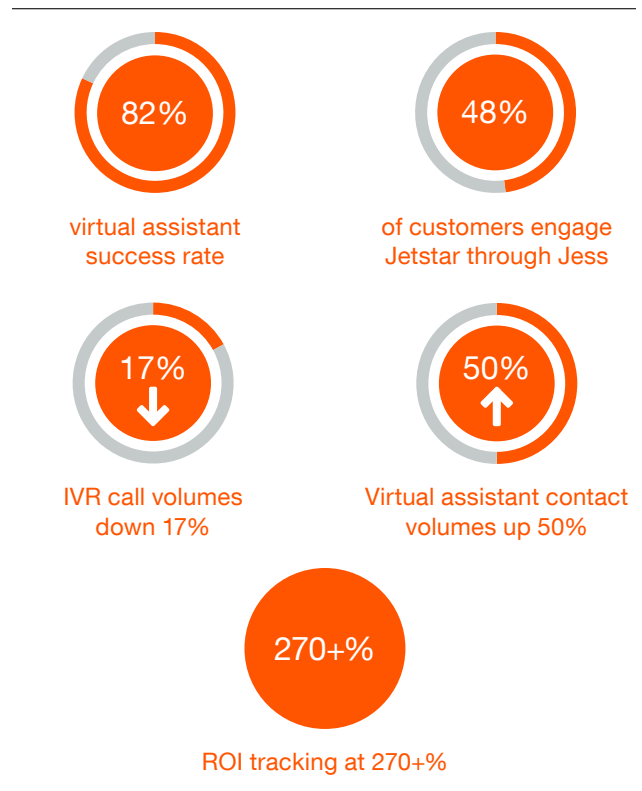
Business benefits

Jetstar forecasted that by 2020 Jess would handle 35% of all customer conversations, Jess now (June 2018) handles 48% equating to 250,000 conversations per month. To date Jess has managed over 10.4 million conversations with Jetstar customers and enjoys a virtual assistant success rate of 82%. Jetstar has experienced a 20% reduction in calls to the contact center per 1,000 passengers. She is enabling increased time for contact center staff to spend addressing more complex customer queries that must be resolved through human hands.

Results highlights

Jetstar continues to build out Jess, increasing her functionality and omni-channel presence to ensure she continues to meet her multi-modal customer base needs. In the near future, Jetstar is looking to utilize Jess's expansive and up-to-date knowledge internally as a repository to assist all staff, whether in the air, on the ground or within the contact center environment, in enabling more accurate information and communications with customers.

"Calls to our call centers have decreased as enquiries through Facebook Messenger become more prevalent, and this is likely to continue now that Jess has extended to messaging," Goucher concluded. "Jess continues to learn. This year we're hoping she'll learn Chinese and how to solve more questions. We're expecting that within the next two years she'll be a key channel for our customers. For example, we're looking to combine Jess with software robotics to allow her to carry out more actions normally conducted by agents."

In 2016 Jetstar's Jess won the Gold Stevie Award for the Innovative Use of Technology in Customer Service for its successful implementation of Nina.

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About Nuance Virtual Assistant

Nuance intelligent omni-channel Virtual Assistant, delivers personalized, effortless customer service via a human-like conversational interface. Nuance's natural language technology enables the virtual assistant to understand complex sentences, multi-string words, abbreviations, slang, misspellings, fragments, and all things that make up a real human conversation.

About Nuance Communications, Inc.

Nuance Enterprise is reinventing the relationship between enterprises and consumers through customer engagement solutions powered by artificial intelligence. We aim to be the market leading provider of intelligent self- and assisted-service solutions delivered to large enterprises around the world. These solutions are differentiated by speech, voice biometrics, virtual assistant, web chat and cognitive technologies; enabling cross-channel customer service for IVR, mobile and web, Inbound and Outbound; and magnified by the design and development skill of a global professional services team. We serve Fortune 2500 companies across the globe with a mix of direct and channel partner selling models.

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