Auto Casualty

Will We See Human Interaction Disappear with AI in Insurance?

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to profoundly impact the insurance industry. Although I would be challenged to explore all the potential use cases for it in a single blog post, I do want to take a look at how it is changing the way consumers interact with their insurance company and the ability of insurance companies to deliver optimal claims experiences—and ultimately, better outcomes. And as someone who really believes in the value that a caring workforce brings to the claims journey, all this has me wondering what impact AI will have on the people it is intended to support.

Powering More Personal Customer Interactions with AI

Today, consumers own an average of 3.64 connected devices each, and it's a given that they expect a seamless digital experience, whether on a phone, tablet, laptop or desktop. Interestingly, Gartner predicts that by 2020 there will be a 20 percent decline in mobile app use—while we're more connected than ever, app saturation is beginning to set in. Fortunately, AI provides a couple of new ways for consumers to connect that do not require an app—chatbots and voice-first interfaces.

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First, let's take a look at chatbots. Like their name suggests, chatbots allow people to chat online, via phone or computer, with a "bot"—essentially a computer program that uses a type of AI called natural language processing to understand and respond to customer inquiries. In many cases, the experience is so authentic—so efficient—that the customer may believe they are interacting with a human. Chatbots have the potential to deliver a better customer experience, and perhaps an even more personal one, than a human. Voice-first

interfaces—think Google Home and Amazon Echo—are also powered by AI and use natural language processing. They enable people to ask questions or deliver commands out loud and get answers without ever having to log onto a device or into an app. The use of voice-first devices is on the rise: Gartner predicts that by 2020, 30 percent of web browsing will be done without a screen at all. And in much the same way that the ubiquity of mobile connectivity drove the demand for a seamless, multi-device digital experience, it may only be a matter of time before consumer expectations drive demand for voice-first interfaces. I anticipate their use in the enterprise as well, because they are, after all, consumers, too.

Providing More Personalized Outcomes

Machine learning is a type of AI that allows computers to analyze large amounts of data, extract meaning, and actually learn from it, without explicitly being programmed to do so. Companies across verticals, as well as throughout the insurance ecosystem, are turning to it to deliver advanced analytics. And advanced analytics, when applied throughout the claim lifecycle, enable insurers to make better, more informed decisions around claims—a win for both insurers and their customers.

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But for every place in the claims journey where advanced analytics can be applied, it's important to understand what better outcomes means. For insurers, it may mean cost savings, increased speed of claim resolution, identifying bad actors, targeting providers and treatment plans that are most likely to result in optimal outcomes, etc. For customers, it may mean getting themselves on a path to recovery. At this point, finding the right places for advanced analytics in the claims journey and determining how best to implement them, are still very much a human endeavor.

What Does This Mean for Humans?

With AI powering both better customer experiences and claims outcomes, will human interactions become a thing of the past? Or perhaps we'll see a premium placed on them? Clearly, AI has much to offer in terms of streamlining customer experiences and the claims journey. But to know that there is a person on the other end of that technology—an adjuster, a nurse case manager, even a software provider, who cares about the process and the outcome—well, there's no replacing that.

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There is no substitute for picking up the phone or meeting with someone in person and getting one-on-one feedback. On the other end of those interactions and that data are individuals—people—and people for whom better outcomes are highly individualized and who will always have the need for personal, human connections.



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