# Global Survey of Speech Analytics & Conversational Service Automation:

## *Destination 2020*

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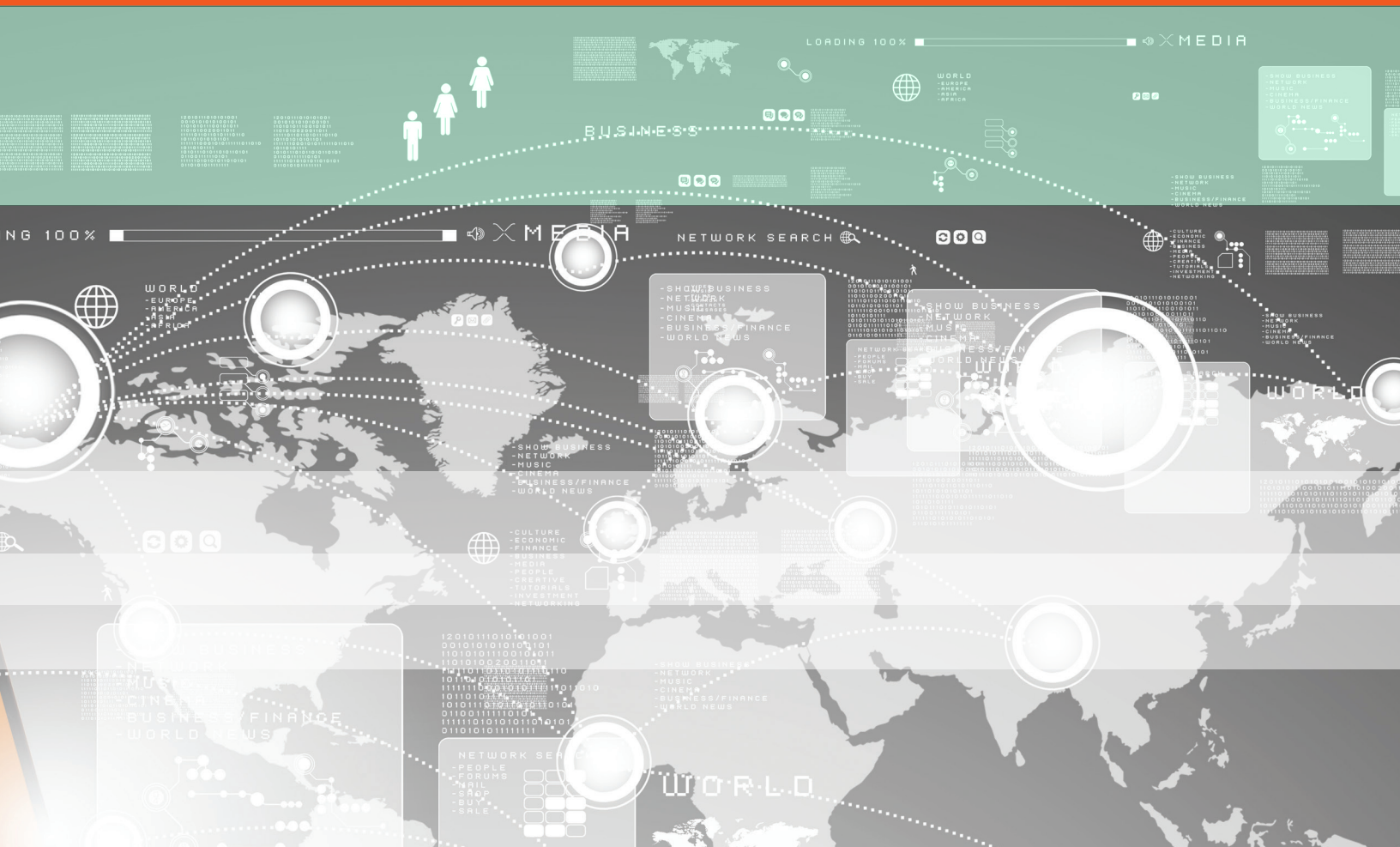

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# Global Survey of Speech Analytics & Conversational Service Automation:

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**An Opus Research four-year global survey documents the business impact of Speech Analytics technologies to enable a path to digital transformation and address immediate customer issues. Customers show growing interest in real-time customer journey orchestration and intelligent assistance, adding elements of Artificial Intelligence (Natural Language Understanding, Machine Learning) to improve customer experience, bolster employee productivity, and enable operational efficiencies. The new generation of Speech Analytics is moving to Conversational Service Automation and becoming a well-understood, broadly adopted core technology with enterprise-wide impact.**

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# Survey Methodology and Summary Findings

For the past four years, in a tracking survey, Opus Research has surveyed enterprise decision makers about their experience and expectations for Speech Analytics and related technologies. The research results depict a fast-growing percentage of companies in a variety of vertical industries pursuing a course from point-solutions employing Speech Analytics into a more comprehensive, transformational business applications.

This year, as part of the study commissioned by Uniphore, Opus Research conducted a survey of 400 decision-makers (Director, VP, C-level) in contact center operations, customer experience, and contact center management of firms with revenue of more than (U.S.) $50 million. Issues under investigation closely parallel surveys conducted in 2016 to 2018, giving Opus Research the opportunity to observe year-to-year changes and draw conclusions about the implications for companies as they contemplate the potential of speech analytics solutions to support their customer care and general business objectives. In addition, the 2019 global survey featured illuminating findings for contact center efficiencies, bottom-line business impacts, Conversational AI and Analytics, and omnichannel customer care as described exclusively in this report.

The 2019 global survey includes selected countries in North America (U.S. and Canada), South-East Asia (Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam) and United Kingdom. Opus Research also sought respondents representing a mix of vertical industries with the following:

- **Banking / Financial Services**
- **Business Process Outsourcing**
- **E-Commerce**
- **Government/Public Sector**
- **Health Care Services**
- **Insurance**
- **Retail**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Travel & Hospitality**

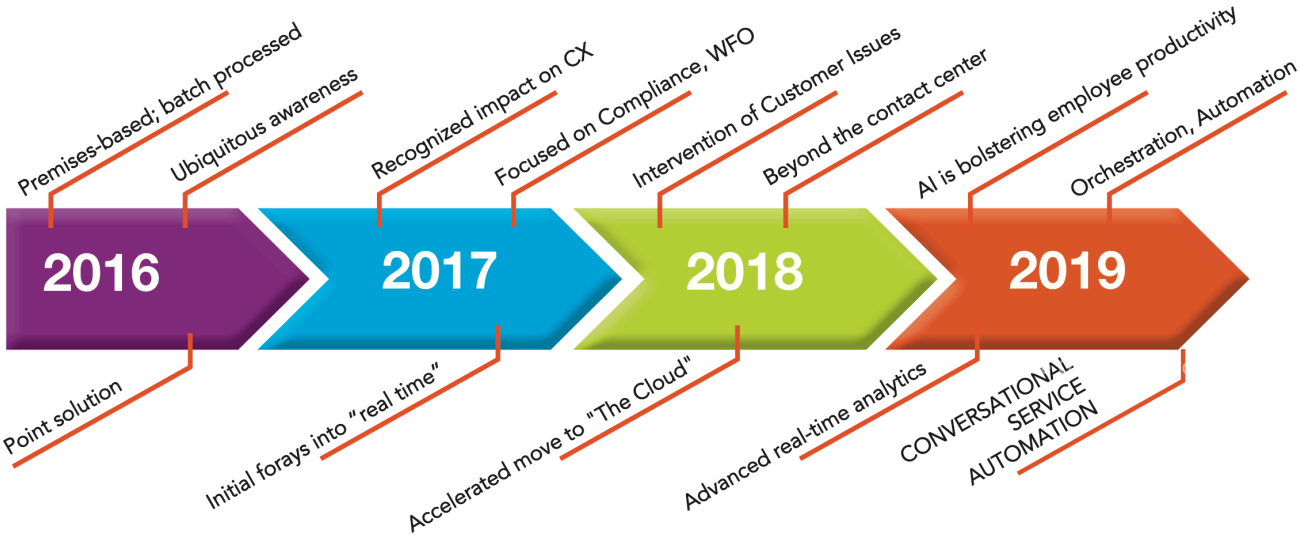
## What We Learned Over the Past Four Years

Opus Research's study began with a study of perception and plans to implement speech analytics among global brands. The study became the baseline for an annual survey that provides a research-based foundation for tracking the evolution of Speech Analytics technologies.

At the highest level, respondents reflected a change in motivation and investment from traditional metrics for incremental operational improvements in the contact center to emerging automation-driven metrics addressing enterprise-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

In Figure 1 below, we see the migration of deploying Speech Analytics as a point solutions for workforce management, agent training, and remediation, moving to real-time customer journey orchestration, intelligent assistance, and, ultimately, Conversational Service Automation (CSA). CSA platforms integrate elements of artificial intelligence (AI) with real-time processing power, dramatically improving customer experience and bolstering employee efficiency. These solutions delivers digital transformation and business outcomes that result in impressive return on investment.

## Figure 1: Path Towards Conversational Service Automation

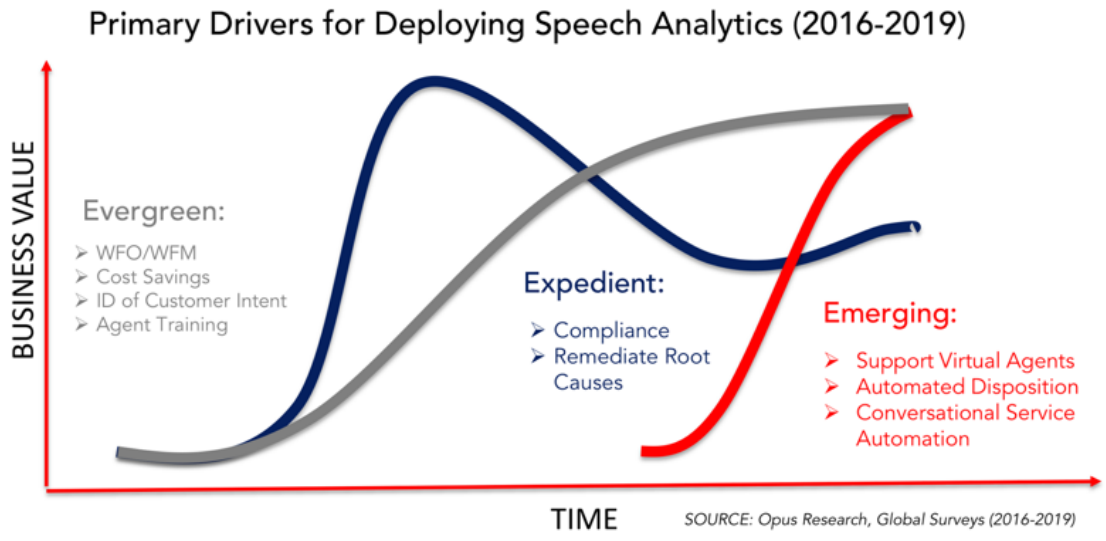



### Global Survey on Speech Analytics: Path Towards Conversational Service Automation

Today, global enterprises can be located on a continuum that starts with treating speech analytics as a point solutions with a limited number of applications and culminates, in 2020, as Conversational Service Automation. Companies move farther along the continuum as they deploy Speech Analytics resources for cost savings and efficiency while constantly expanding integration points beyond the contact center to improve customer experience, promote innovation, enable organizational efficiencies and, ultimately, enhance revenue.

Conversational Service Automation is an emerging category of solutions that leverages the power of AI to help enterprises deliver transformational customer service experiences. It achieves that through an intelligent combination, in real time, of conversational analytics and automation. The underlying analytics layer delivers real-time actionable insights to drive both automated human to machine conversations, as well as superior calls with human agents. Automation then delivers a seamless customer experience by reducing handle time and improving resolution rates while expediently addressing the customer' service queries. Automation gives customer service agents improved quality of conversation, with live-agent coaching, automating agent tasks, automatic disposition capture and after-call work. With CSA, companies can simultaneously achieve cost efficiencies while improving customer service.

## Figure 2: Opus Research Index of Acceptance (Primary Drivers, 2016-2019)




### Key Drivers for Adoption Have Changed

In the beginning, contact center managers held sway when deciding when and how to use Speech Analytics. They called upon computer resources to comb through voluminous amounts of recordings or transcriptions and surface issues that required their attention. Even though it was often an overnight process, it made it possible for supervisors to identify the agents who needed training or instances where scripts or guidelines could be tuned to shorten calls and help control costs.

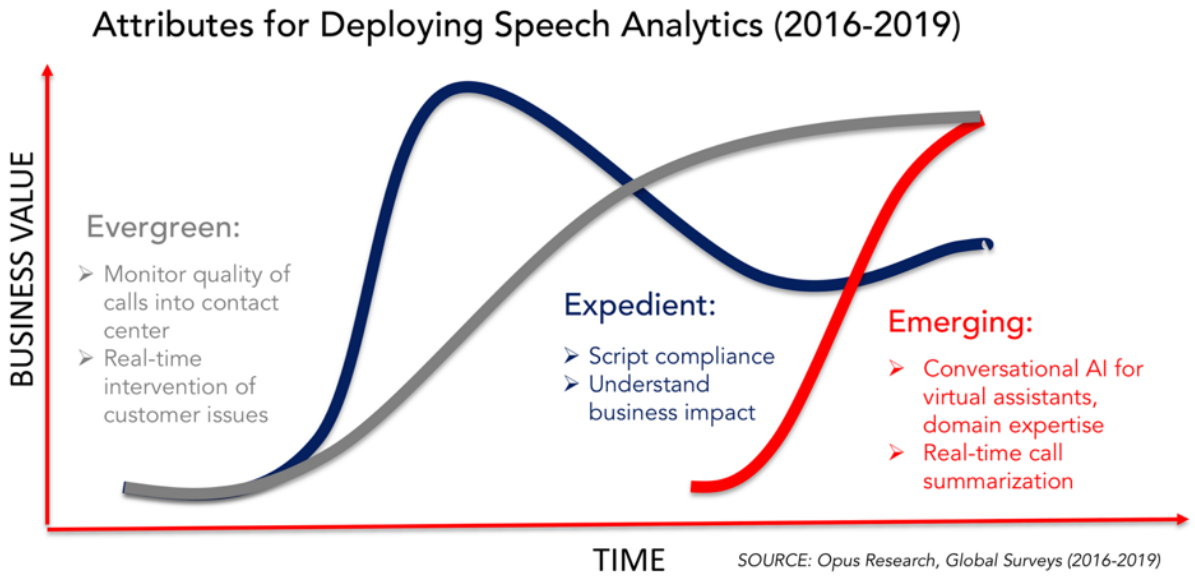
In Figure 2 above, we refer to these applications for Speech Analytics as "Evergreen" because these applications (agent training, workforce optimization, identification of customer intent) are perennial sources of value and cost savings, as indicated in our tracking study.

During the course of the study, these baseline drivers were accompanied by a more volatile category that we call "Expedient." Chief among them was "compliance", which saw a huge spike in interest as brands were counseled to monitor conversations between their representatives and advisors, especially in Financial Services and Healthcare, where it is important for agents to use specific wording in the course of carrying out transactions. Interest was also exacerbated in anticipation of the enactment of privacy laws like General Data Privacy Regulations (GDPR) in Europe. Another example of an Expedient is the rapid "remediation of root causes" an application that led to business outcomes with a direct impact on operations, marketing, sales, customer retention and general satisfaction.

Finally, the "Emerging" category illustrates citations of applications for real-time Speech Analytics and adjacent technologies to break through into "Evergreen" status. These include supporting Automated Virtual Agents by

providing insights and suggesting next-best actions in real time and combining real-time analytics and Natural Language Generation (NLG) for automated preparation of post-call disposition reports. These two use cases are real-world examples of Conversational Service Automation.

## Figure 3:
## Opus Research Index of Acceptance (Attributes - 2016-2019)

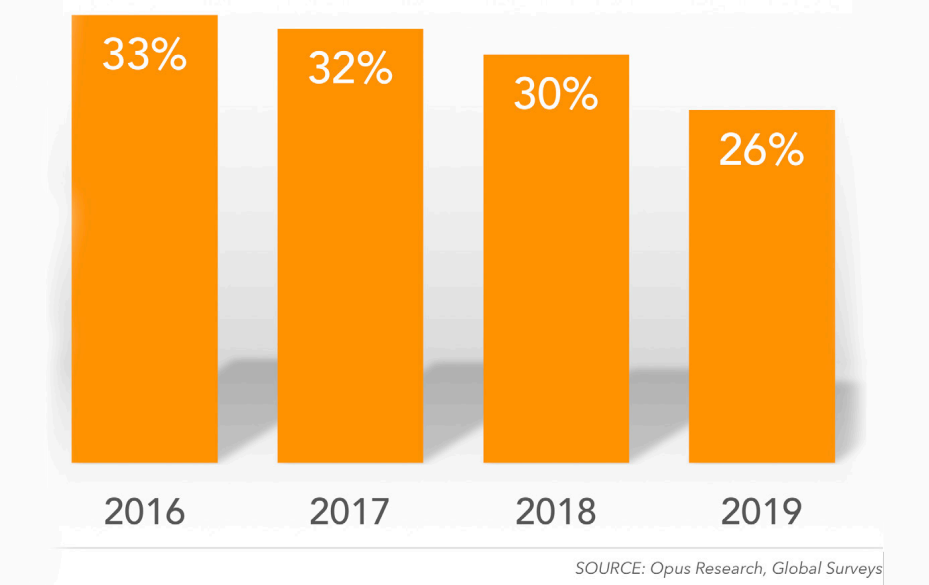



The "attributes for speech analytics" depicted in Figure 3, above, reflect features and functions embodied in speech analytics-based solutions that support decision makers' objectives. Today real-time monitoring has become a must while great attention is being paid to "script compliance" and an appreciation of the impact on business performance measures which may change from quarter-to-quarter. Finally, we witnessed the emergence of expectation that the output of a real-time speech analytic engine can inform automated virtual agents and prove their value by lending understanding to a growing list of business processes that augment agent performance. More dramatically, we see the use of NLP, specifically Natural Language Generation, freeing up agents for their next call while providing businesses with deeper, and more accurate insight into the purpose and resolution of a complete call.

### New Applications Drive Down Adoption Barriers

In the first year of the study, we found high awareness of Speech Analytics. The biggest barrier against broader adoption was the perceived lack of specific applications. As shown in Figure 4 below, while "limited applications" is still considered a barrier, each year concern over lack of applications declined as prospective implementers saw the value of real-time analytics and conceived of new ways to apply results to support business objectives.

## Figure 4: "Limited Number of Applications" as Barrier to Deploying (2016-2019)

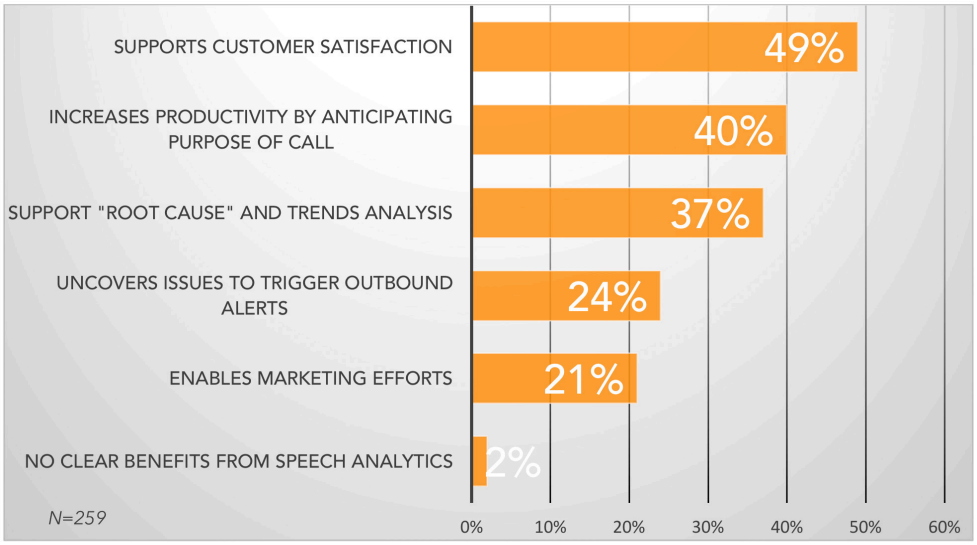



*SOURCE: Opus Research, Global Surveys*

**Speech Analytics is Must Have Technology**

In this year's study, Opus Research found Speech Analytics is getting to be a "must have" technology with specific "efficiencies" and entails little risk. Figure 5 below looks into perceived benefits into utilizing speech analytics within organizations that have already deployed these solutions.

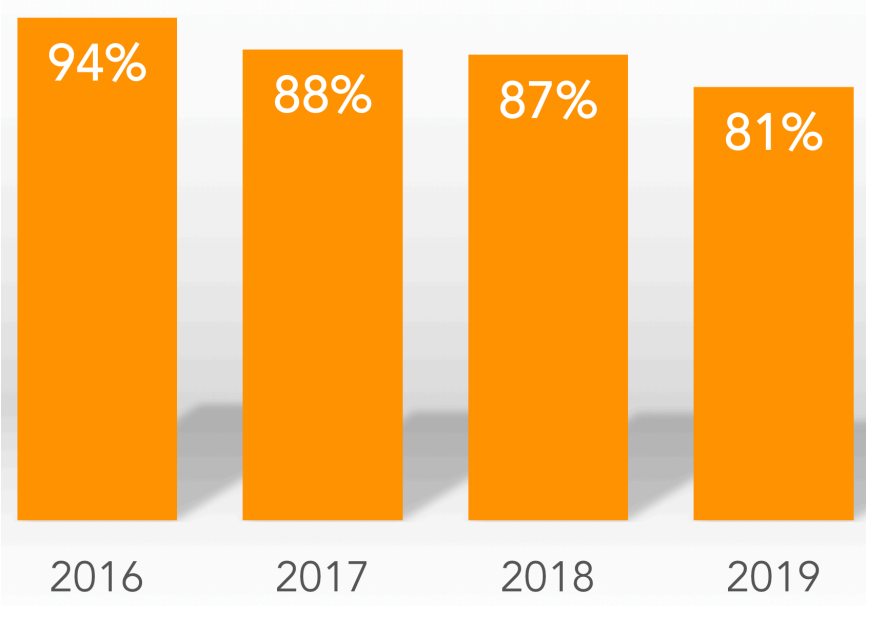
## Figure 5: Business Efficiencies Achieved by Speech Analytics (2019)




*SOURCE: Opus Research, Global Survey (2019)*

Indeed over the four-year study, the survey found speech analytics to be a "must-have" technology linked to strong return on investment (ROI) and business value. While the technology is seen as affordable and valuable, the study found a slight yet consistent drop in the percentage of respondents who achieved an ROI in the first 24 months, starting with a high of 94% in 2016, dipping to 81% this year (Figure 6 below). While there are many variable factors in this trend, Opus speculates that new metrics might be needed to better measure value and emerging applications like Conversational Service Automation will play a part in proving business needs.

## Figure 6: ROI for Speech Analytics Deployments (2016-2019)




*SOURCE: Opus Research, Global Surveys*

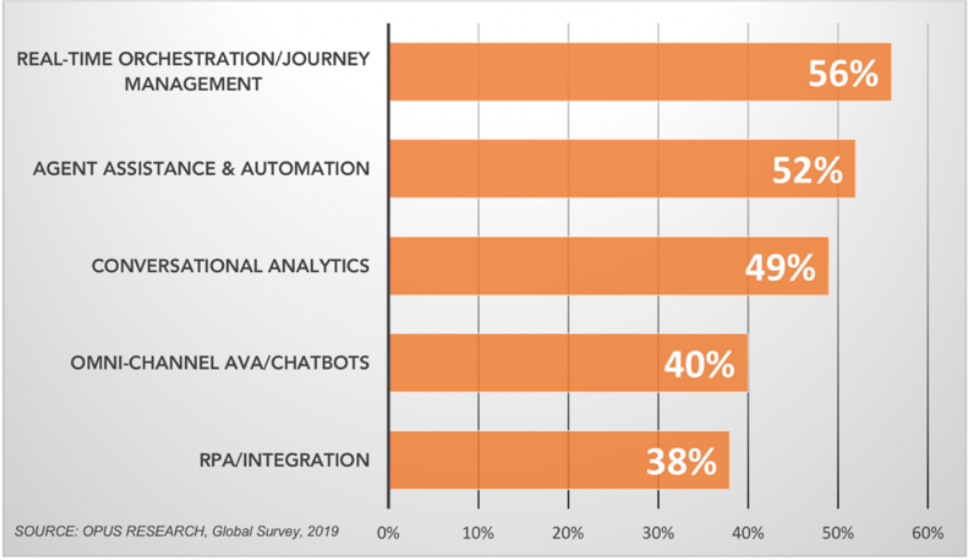
### Enabling Real-Time Customer Journey Orchestration

Leading-edge companies are looking for what's next to improve contact center efficiency – in the figure below, we see more organizations are using real-time processing in the cloud, supporting automated virtual agents.

Figure 7, on the following page, responses reflect current levels of appreciation for Speech Analytics to improve Contact Center efficiency, including the foundational applications of Conversational Service Automation. Over half of the respondents see its value in improving customer experience through "orchestration" and "journey management." Almost as many see the impact on "agent assistance" and automation of routine tasks.

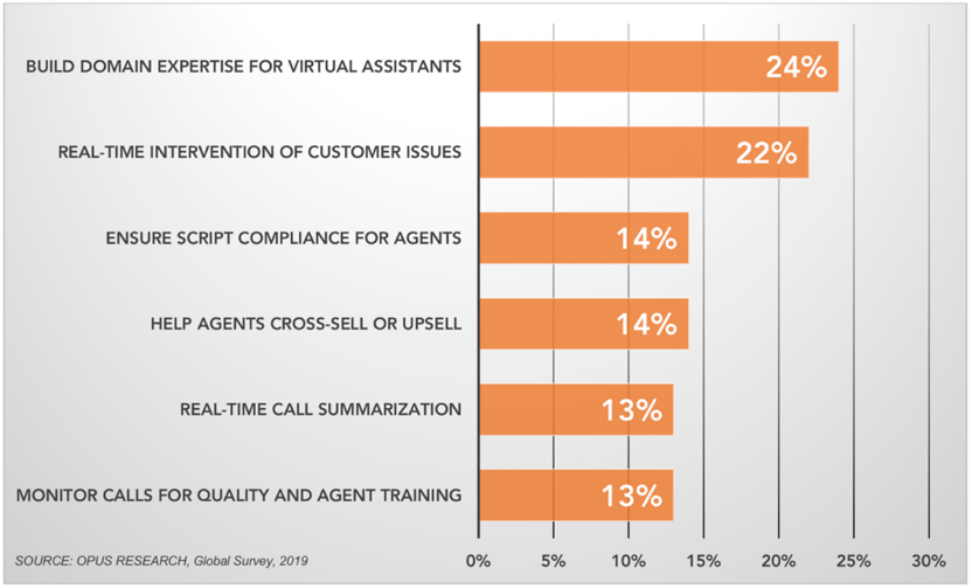
Of special note is that high percentage of respondents (2 in 5) acknowledged the value of using the output of speech analytics resources to inform chatbots over multiple channels. An equal number saw speech analytics tools as an important bridge to support Robotic Process Automation (RPA), meaning the application of computer systems to reduce repetitive activities among contact center personnel, such as call disposition summarization.

## Figure 7: Features for Improving Contact Center Efficiency (2019)




And the lightbulb has gone on for firms that have deployed in their omnichannel plans with Conversational AI making an impact on bottom line (Figure 8, below). There's a high level of irony in this chart. Respondents were permitted to cite only one factor as most important. Informing automated assistants was in a statistical tie with real-time intervention with customers. All other factors were in a statistical tie at 13-14%, putting the core "Evergreen" factor (monitoring calls for quality and agent training) at the same level as "Real Time Call Summarization," an emerging service offering

## Figure 8: Speech Analytics Attributes with Greatest Bottom Line Impact (2019)

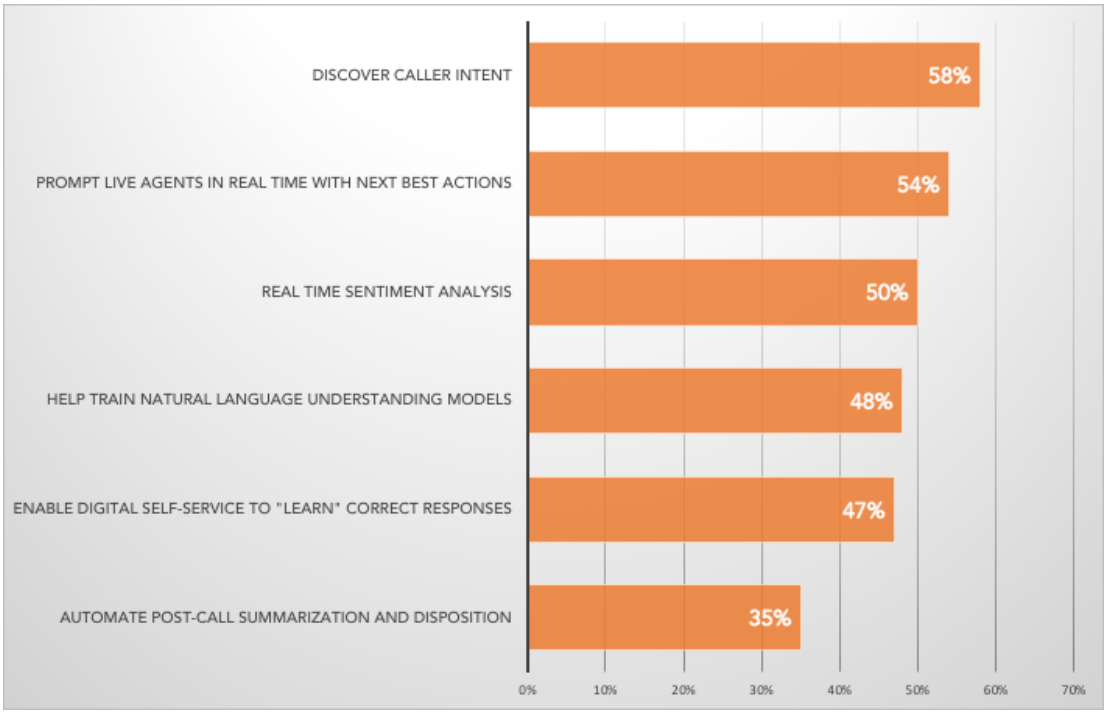


### Laying the Foundation for AI & Automation

Now, in 2019 and beyond, organizations are on a path to give the "customers their voice" and defining steps for rapid recognition of customer intent and of sentiment. It is clear innovative firms are looking at how to enable AI and Speech Analytics for call summarization, orchestration, and automation.

For those who've already deployed speech analytics, the 2019 global survey found interest in Sentiment Analysis, training NLU models and even automating the process to summarize conversational content with post-call disposition in order to maximize the value of investments in speech analytics journey. See Figure 9 below:

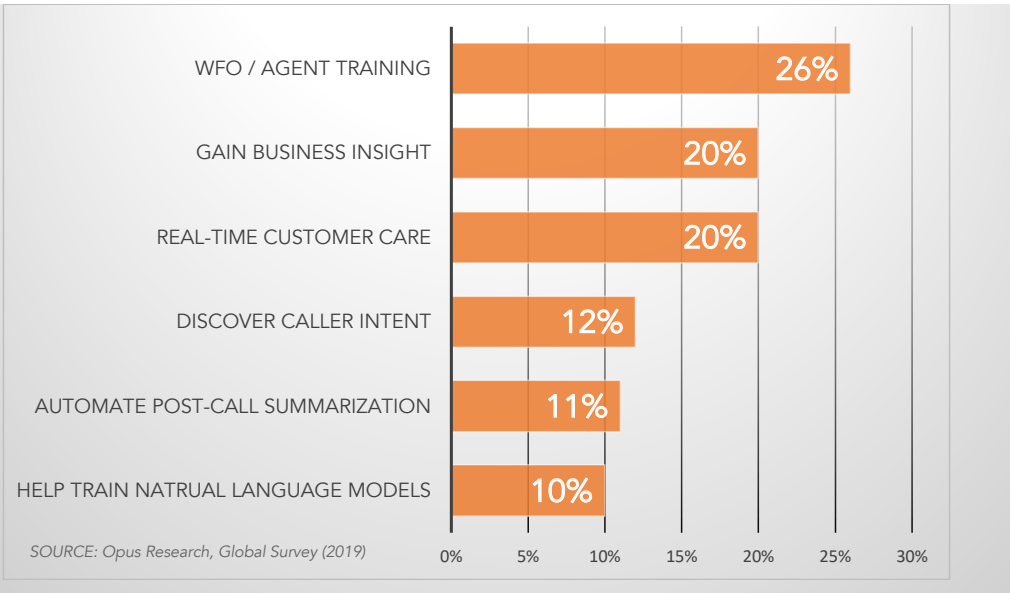
## Figure 9: Next Steps in Maximizing Investment in Speech Analytics (2019)




### Perceptions for Those Yet to Deploy Speech Analytics

The survey also include a subset of responded who haven't deployed Speech Analytics [n=123]. These respondents were asked what they consider to be the biggest opportunity if they were to deploy these technologies. In Figure 10 below while the most popular opportunity for Speech Analytics is in the evergreen drivers for workforce automation and agent training, we see surprising similar interest in automation and AI for training natural language understanding models.

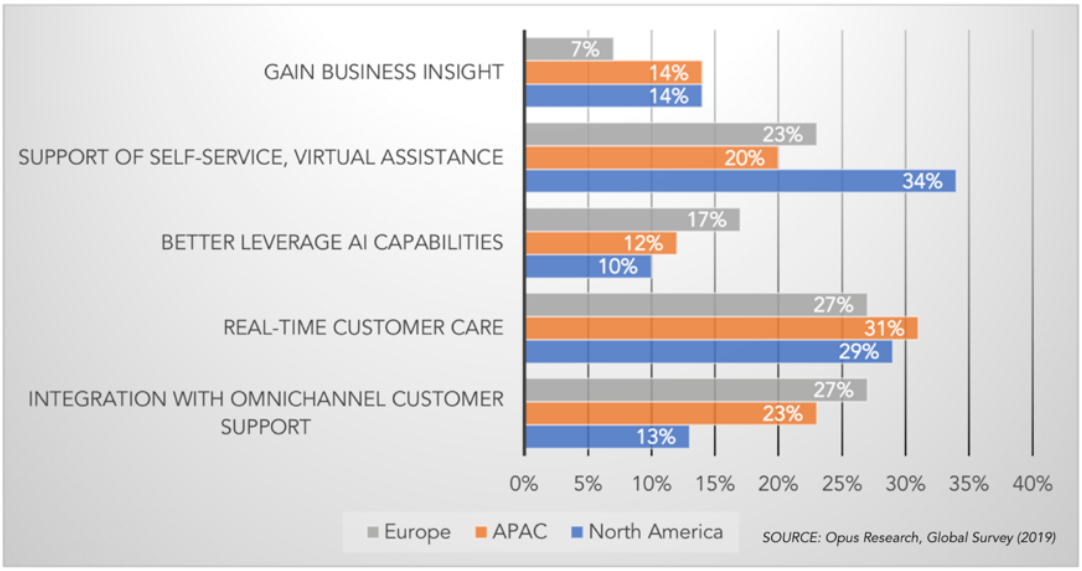
## Figure 10: Biggest Opportunities for Those Yet to Deploy Speech Analytics (2019)




### North America Embracing Virtual Assistance and Conversational AI

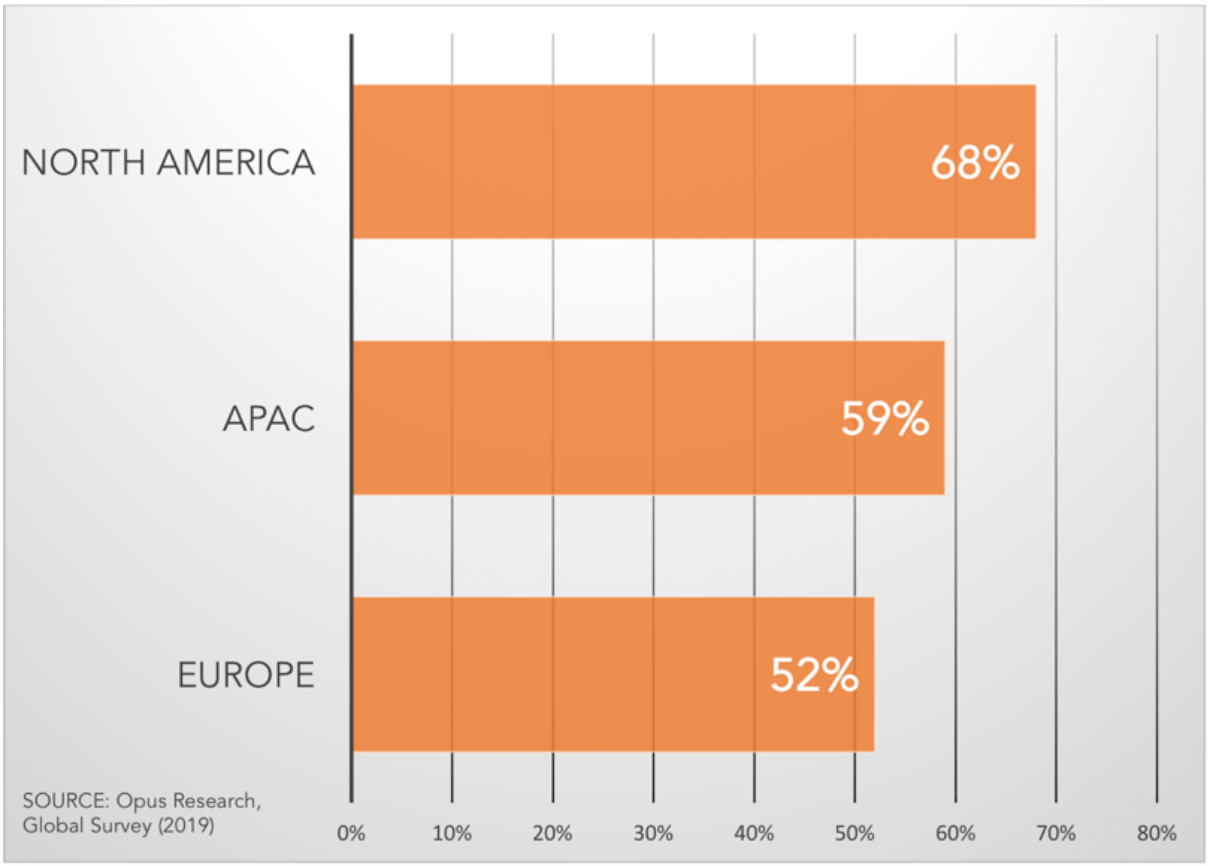
When it comes to regional differences, we see North America finds the biggest opportunities for deploying Speech Analytics in supporting self-service virtual assistance and real-time customer care. European respondents were more interested in integration with omnichannel customer support and learning how to better leverage AI capabilities. APAC with solid interest in real-time customer care.

## Figure 11: Opportunities for Deploying Speech Analytics (By Region, 2019)



To get an understanding of regional differences specific to growing interest in “Conversational AI,” the survey asked, “would your company rely on advanced search and analytics to discover the most impactful applications for Conversational AI?” In Figure 12, we see a strong showing of support from North America (68%), with APAC second in line (59%) while Europe is still considering the prospect of relying on advanced conversational technologies (52%).

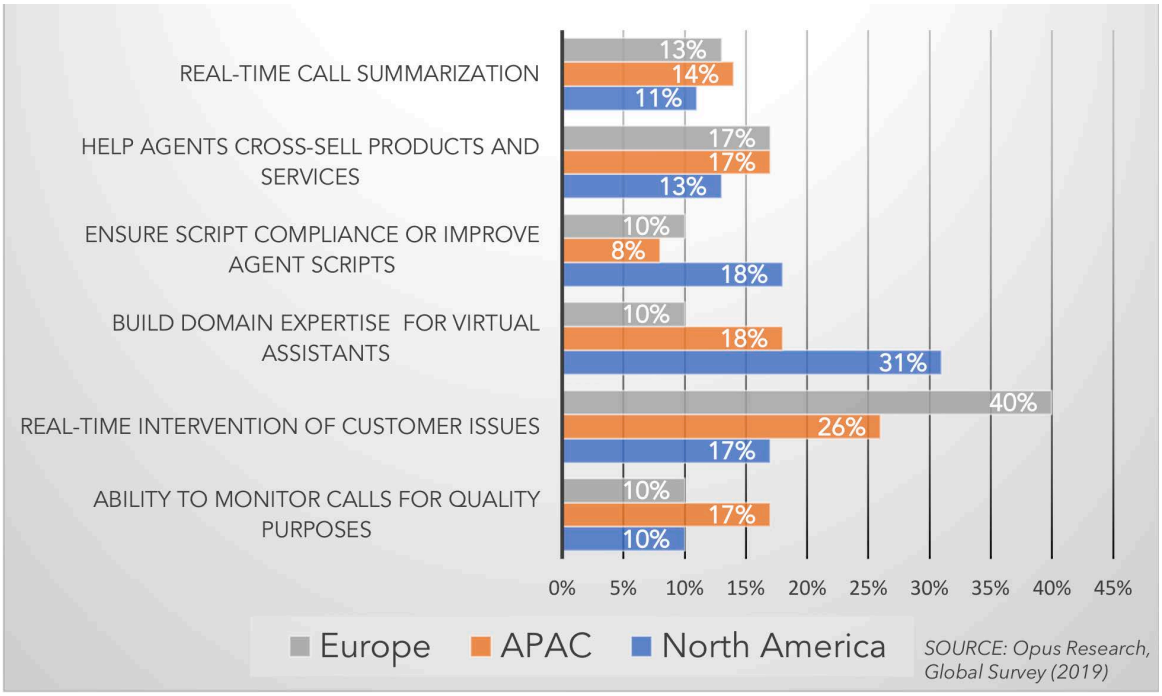
## Figure 12: Interest in Analytics and Applications for Conversational AI (By Region, 2019)



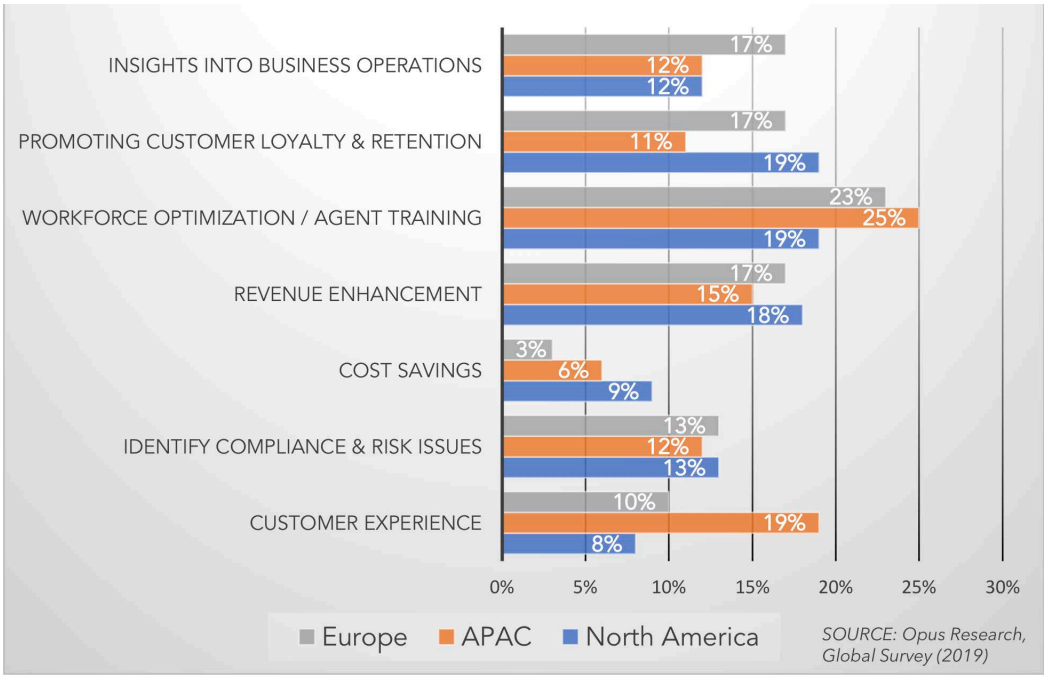

**APAC Shows Interest in Real-Time Intervention, Customer Experience, WFO/Agent Training**

Some interesting regional insights develop when asked about Speech Analytics attributes that have the greatest bottom-line impact (Figure 13, next page), with APAC and Europe attaching greater importance to "real-time" feedback, while North America perceives greater interest in ensuring compliance and building domain expertise for virtual assistants. In Figure 14 (next page), we see APAC's primary reasons to deploy Speech Analytics based on customer experience, workforce optimization and agent training.

## Figure 13: Speech Analytics Attributes With Greatest Bottom-Line Impact (By Region, 2019)




## Figure 14: Primary Drivers for Deploying Speech Analytics Technologies (By Region, 2019)

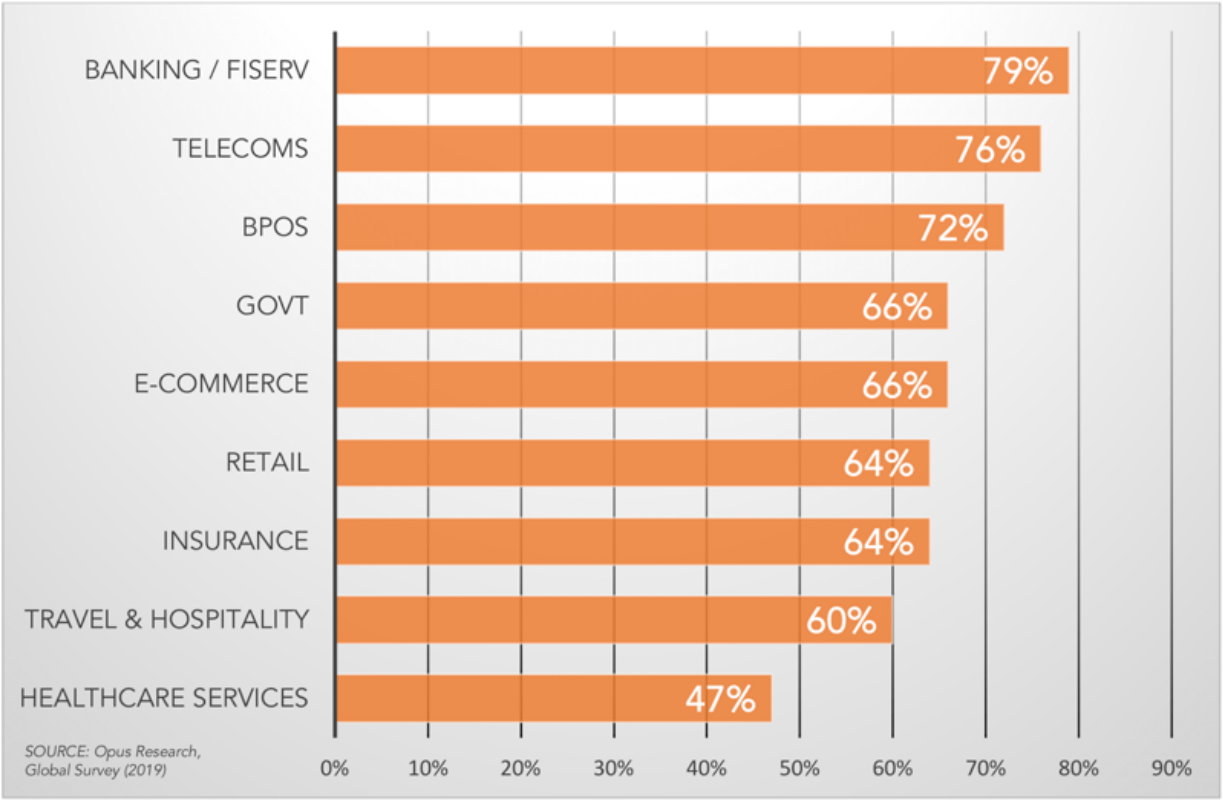


### Banking and Financial Services Lead the Way for AI and Analytics

As look we at the growth of Artificial Intelligence and Conversational Analytics becoming commonplace in enterprise customer support environments, the Opus Research survey found an illuminating trend as to which industries are more favorable to AI.

When asked the question, "AI will relieve my employees from doing repetitive, uncreative tasks" the highest majority of respondents within banking & financial services, telecommunications, and business process outsourcing were significantly more likely to says "yes" to that question. [Figure 15 below]

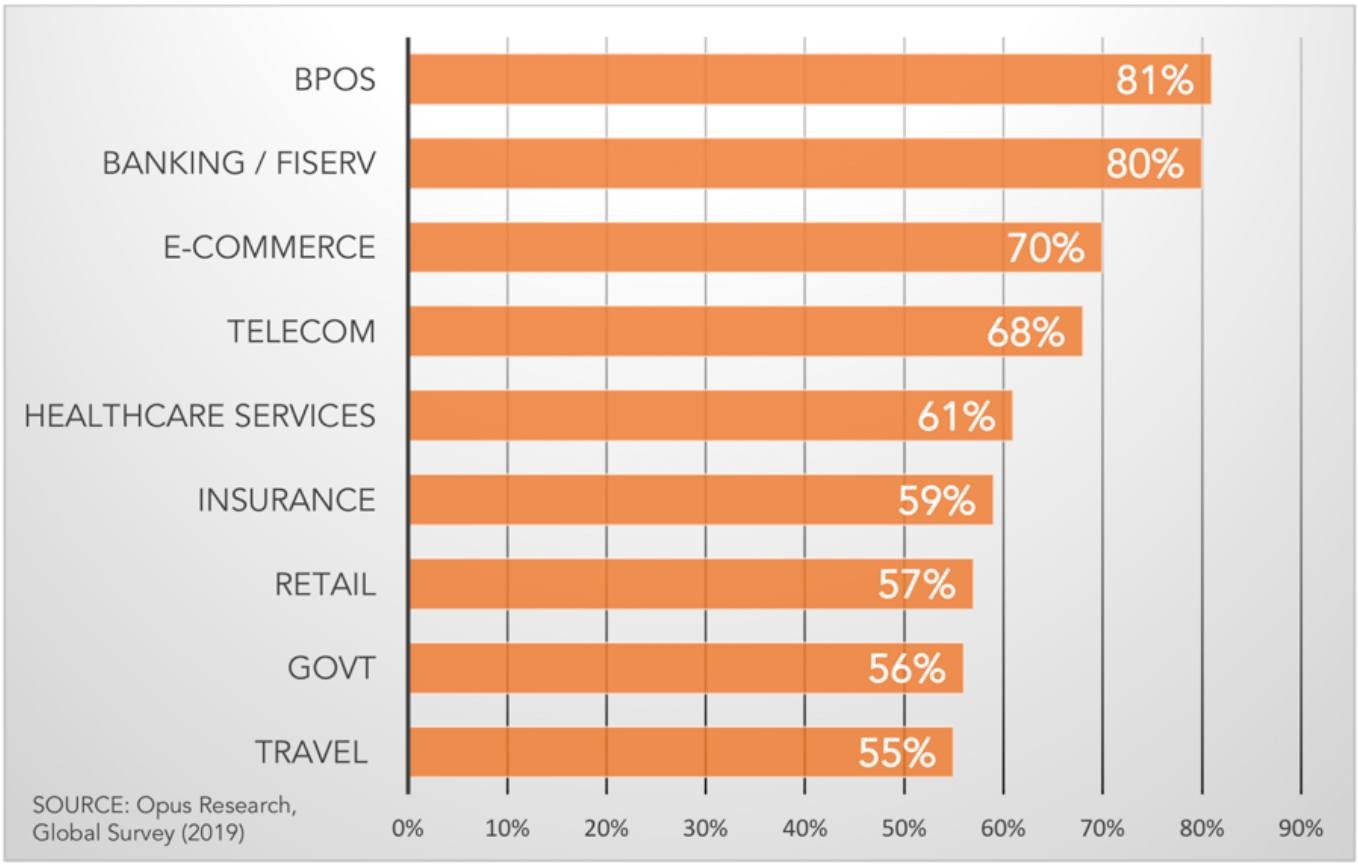
## Figure 15: Interest in AI Performing Business Tasks (By Industry, 2019)




Even more, some leading-edge enterprise firms are recognizing the value of listening to customer conversations including the integration of analytics to add insights from text-based channels (e.g. chat, email, and social media) to develop a comprehensive view of the customer.

When asked the question "Have you integrated Speech Analytics software platforms to your multichannel customer care contact center platforms?" we see firms in Business Process Outsourcing (81%) and Banking & Financial Services (80%) as the most fervent supporters of integrating customer conversations in to comprehensive solutions, with E-Commerce (70%) and Telecommunications (68%) also embracing the trend (Figure 16, next page).

## Figure 16: Value of Conversations for Multichannel Customer Care (By Industry, 2019)




## Destination 2020: Full-Scale Conversational Service Automation

Given the results of this Opus Research study, it is strongly evident that enterprises around the globe are on the cusp of Conversational Service Automation "self-realization." A critical mass of innovative companies, starting with the usual suspects of Financial Services and Telecoms as well as horizontally through Business Process Outsourcers, have already made investment in precursor technologies including speech analytics, robotic process automation and "Conversational AI."

### ROI Improvements Accelerate with CSA

Respondents exhibited increasingly high regard for the business benefits of investments in Speech Analytics and adjacent technologies. They told us of measurable ROI and payback that was the product of greater agent efficiency, reduced average hold times and faster detection of root cause. CSA takes ROI up a notch by further increasing agent efficiency, for example, by automating the process of call summation and reporting. More profitable use cases are waiting in the wings.

### CSA is Redefining User Experience

Conversations are emerging as the ideal model for customer engagement and companies that deploy CSA will be the major beneficiaries. They are already listening to customer conversations in real-time in order to understand intent and match objectives and requests with the sources of data and metadata relevant to the individuals involved in the conversation.

### Applying CSA to Experience Orchestration is the Obvious Next Step

Enterprises are counting on CSA for orchestration of repetitive, yet rewarding tasks. This applies to both employees from help desks and service desks executive suites. Think of CSA as RPA on steroids with implications and potential impact felt across HR, resource management, supply chain, marketing, sales and operations. It is a unified approach to transforming the way business gets done efficiently and profitably.

- An Opus Research four-year global survey documents the business impact of Speech Analytics technologies to enable a path to business transformation and address immediate customer issues.
- Customers show growing interest in real-time customer journey orchestration and intelligent assistance, adding elements of AI, NLU, and Machine Learning to bolster employee productivity, and enable operational efficiencies.
- The next generation of Speech Analytics is moving to Conversational Service Automation and becoming a well-understood, broadly adopted core technology with enterprise-wide impact.

## About Opus Research

Opus Research is a diversified advisory and analysis firm providing critical insight on software and services that support multimodal customer care. Opus Research is focused on "Conversational Commerce," the merging of intelligent assistant technologies, conversational intelligence, intelligent authentication, enterprise collaboration and digital commerce.

**For sales inquires please e-mail info@opusresearch.net or call +1(415) 904-7666**