



In the spotlight with Sharon Melamed, Matchboard



10th Annual CX Week Australia 2017
<http://customerexperienceevent.iqpc.com.au>

In the Australian customer experience world, what product/service solutions are trending and who is responsible for purchasing them?

*Ahead of **CX Week Australia 2017**, we thought there's no-one better to ask than Sharon Melamed at Matchboard – an online marketplace for customer solutions with more than 2000 clients.*

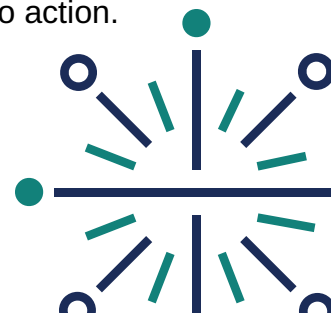


What customer experience products and services are emerging as “hot” for 2017?

Matchboard is seeing Analytics and Automation as the two hottest categories. For example, from 2015 to 2016, we saw a 93% growth in **speech analytics** as-a-service requests, and a 122% rise in demand for virtual agent software.

Virtual agents, also known as chatbots, replace humans with robots for online customer service. The software is so smart and “human-sounding” that often customers will not realise they’re interacting with a robot, and the inquiry is resolved quickly and accurately.

Speech analytics as a service has only just started to take off in Australia. Put simply, it allows a company to upload a mass volume of call recordings and get customer insights back from the service provider, ready to action.





It's the "in thing" in sectors like financial services and utilities, which have strong regulatory and compliance requirements. Equally it's appealing to organisations looking to uncover broken processes and ways of improving sales conversions.

What sort of solutions are your clients tapping to capture the Voice of the Customer?

Customer survey platforms are the top solution for Voice of Customer programs. The demand is for platforms that unify multiple channels including phone, SMS, email, social media and web chat. Mostly we find clients are seeking cloud-based solutions - for all the usual reasons, such as agility, flexibility, low level of capital expenditure, easy integration, and no need for internal IT resources.

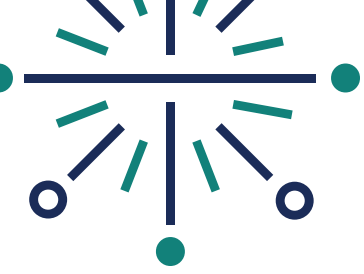
24x7 social media monitoring is also increasing as a way of capturing customer sentiment and addressing time-sensitive, brand-impacting posts.

Finally, analytics is booming across text as well as speech as a way to understand customers better.

In this Age of the Customer, are companies realigning their contact centre footprint onshore/offshore?

Boardroom focus on customer experience has triggered a re-set of contact centre strategy in many businesses. What we're seeing is that companies are becoming smarter about what types of contacts are best handled where to get the desired customer experience outcomes.





Against this backdrop, countries such as **Fiji**, South Africa and New Zealand are challenging the historical bastions of BPO, India and the Philippines, for a slice of the Australian market. Fiji is pitching its 60% cost advantage, friendly customer service workforce and neutral English accent, while New Zealand appeals with its strong language and cultural similarity and 25-30% savings.

Thanks to anchor Australian tenants such as iiNet, South Africa is also challenging in niche areas including premium customer service, sales and retention, and a pricepoint between New Zealand and Fiji. The Philippines is still the largest BPO market, however the country's political direction is making some buyers cautious.

Do you see a change in the sorts of job titles that are requesting customer experience solutions on your platform?

Job titles with the word “customer experience” have really only become commonplace in the last 5 or so years. What we’re seeing is that beyond the Customer Experience Manager or Director, there is a large variety of roles with responsibility for customer experience outcomes who are buying customer experience products and services.

This includes leaders in contact centre, marketing, digital, analytics and I.T. We see category managers in procurement becoming more educated in CX and more involved in the process as well



INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Join Sharon at the **10th Annual Customer Experience Week 2017**, the #1 CX event in Australia and NZ.

For more information click [here](#) or email enquire@iqpc.com.au

*Sharon is a digital entrepreneur with 25 years' experience in contact centres and customer experience. In 2012, she launched **Matchboard**, a free website where companies can enter their needs and find "right-fit" vendors of solutions to match.*

*In 2014, she launched **FindaConsultant**, an online portal of business consultants. In 2013, Sharon was awarded LinkedIn's PowerProfile status for having one of the 50 most visited profiles in Australia. She holds a double honours degree from the University of Sydney, and speaks five languages.*

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