

RESEARCH UPDATE

Kodak Alaris Launches AI Foundry to Deliver Artificial Intelligence-Based Solutions for the Contact Center

Summary

On November 9, 2015, Kodak Alaris announced the creation and launch of AI Foundry, a business dedicated to using proprietary artificial intelligence (AI) technology to solve the business challenge of processing unstructured data in the enterprise. AI Foundry's flagship offering, the Info Insight Suite, uses natural language processing to read and understand unstructured data such as e-mail, web chats, text messages, e-mail attachments, and social media content. Beyond traditional rules-based text analytics solutions, Info Insight relies on linguistics to interpret unstructured data and route the communication to the best qualified person to respond given each person's skill level, availability, time zone and other qualifications.

Artificial intelligence enables AI Foundry's Info Insight to continually learn and, in essence, get smarter over time. The algorithms driving Info Insight enable such capabilities as the smart routing described above as well as enabling decision-making and providing customer support without manual human intervention. The net result is increased agent productivity, reduced handling times, cost control and the increased probability of achieving first contact resolution.

Info Insight can be deployed as an on- premises solution or delivered via the Cloud as a Software as a Service (SaaS) model. Info Insight is available for immediate delivery.

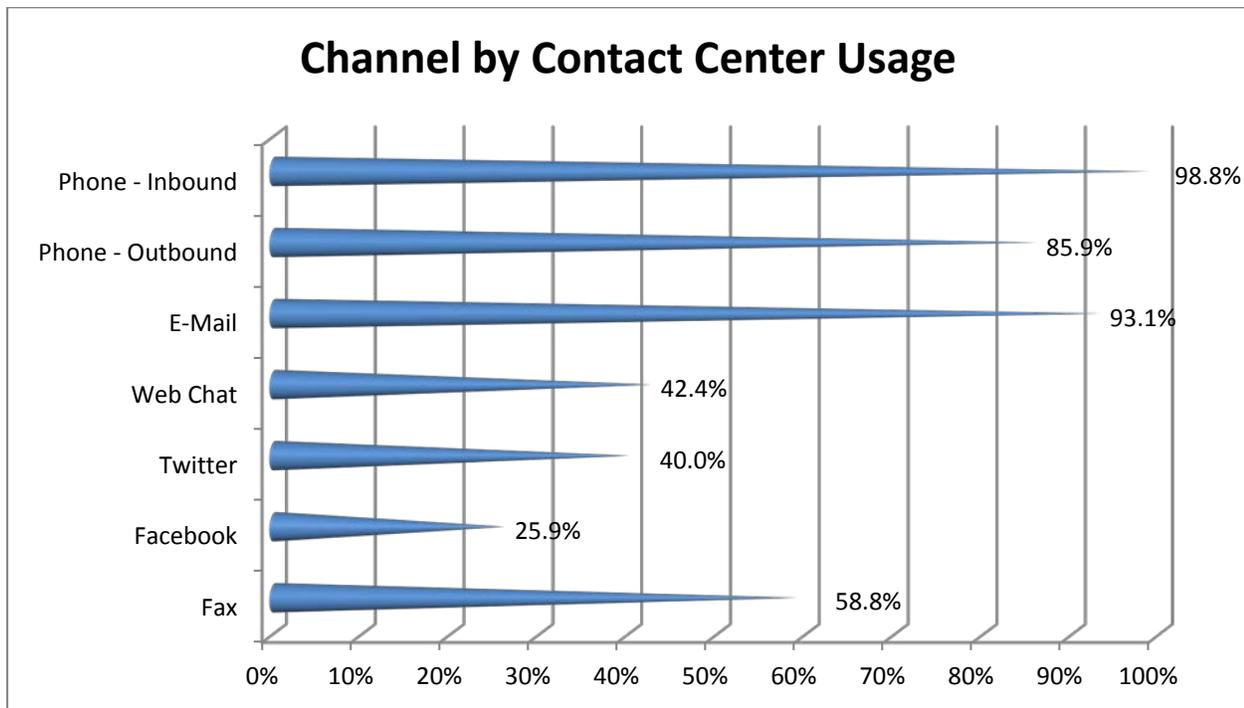
The View from The Saddle

The Kodak brand is universally known and respected throughout the world, but there is an important distinction that should be recognized with this announcement. Kodak Alaris is an offshoot of Eastman Kodak and operates as an independent company that licenses the Kodak trademark and trade dress from Eastman Kodak Company. That being said, Saddletree Research believes that the Kodak name will be an important factor in the successful launch of AI Foundry in the U.S. contact center industry. We believe the familiarity and trust associated with the company name will serve to overcome many of the objections that often hinder a newcomer with an eye toward breaking into the wary and conservative contact center industry. In addition, Kodak Alaris is a \$1 billion company, so the fact that AI Foundry is backed by a stable company with a proven track record in business process management will also help with their market efforts.

It is also important to recognize that Info Insight is not a new product to business, only a new product to the contact center industry. The technology underpinning Info Insight has been successfully deployed in a number of vertical markets, including health care, financial services, and retail. In these markets, it has proven its mettle in applications heavily dependent upon unstructured customer communications as previously defined. Kodak Alaris has now chosen to bring the power of artificial intelligence to the contact center community.

Unlike rules-based or zoned text analytics solutions, which typically rely on forms and other structured data for interpretation, artificial intelligence can interpret data through natural language processing, apply reasoning and knowledge to any given text-based communication and take action on that communication. Workflows are automated through environmental perception, and actions that maximize the chances of success can be taken without human intervention. Info Insight continues to learn with each customer interaction, continually refining its ability to process information and growing in efficiency over time.

In the contact center, text-based communications are rapidly closing in on voice communications in terms of the number of customer contacts received. According to research conducted among contact center professionals by SaddleTree Research in conjunction with the National Association of Call Centers (NACC) at The University of Southern Mississippi, support for text-based customer communications in the U.S. contact center is growing. The figure below illustrates this growth by listing the communications channels supported by U.S. contact centers based upon penetration in 2015.



Source: SaddleTree Research

As text-based customer communications continue to close in on voice customer communications, we believe the demand for analytics solutions for both structured and unstructured data will accelerate. Info Insight offers a competitive alternative to rules-based text analytics for structured data but where this solution rises above the competition is in its ability to create a business process or workflow based upon its understanding of unstructured data.

AI Foundry enters the U.S. contact center market with what Saddletree Research believes are two distinct advantages. First is the familiarity with, and trust in, the Kodak brand. Although Kodak Alaris is not Eastman Kodak, we believe there is a familiarity in the corporate brand that will resonate with potential buyers. Second, the company's foray into artificial intelligence in the contact center has the potential to be a game-changer. While artificial intelligence itself is not a new concept having been used in many other markets since mid-1950s, it is only now finding its way into contact center applications. Solutions that become smarter with each customer contact will not only increase customer service efficiency, they could be the catalyst for the evolution of intelligent customer contact solutions in the future.

Eastman Kodak pioneered photographic imaging when it was founded in 1888. Kodak Alaris' AI Foundry is pioneering artificial intelligence in the contact center through its innovative ability to process unstructured digital data and get smarter with each transaction. Although a century and a quarter stands between Eastman Kodak and Kodak Alaris, it is clear that the Kodak legacy of innovation is alive and well with the proof being the launch of AI Foundry.

