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—— 2023

Virgin Atlantic CX Assessment

Executive Summary.

Virgin Atlantic, like many of its airline counterparts, has support channels including chatbot, email, phone, SMS, social media and other messenger platforms. In addition, many self-help portals exist for managing bookings, FAQs, and guides on its website and mobile apps.

To address the projected increase in air travel and to maintain their customer-centric business model, airlines like Virgin Atlantic need to invest in the use of comprehensive Customer Experience (CX) platforms with advanced features like NLU/NLP and an omnichannel presence. This investment will make CX its biggest brand differentiator in the airline industry.

Virgin Atlantic Scorecard.

Support Channels	Performance	Comments
Chat	5/10	Virgin has elementary conversation design and limited interactive features.
Email	7/10	Virgin has some level of automation available, but lacks modern features like intent recognition. We noticed a 3 hour response time by live agent.
Voice	2/10	There appears to be no voice activation of menus/managing flights at Virgin.
SMS	5/10	Virgin offers SMS support, however, we didn't get a response to our SMS query during our assessment.
Social Media	6/10	Virgin has a strong response rate on Twitter with live agents responding within 1hr. WhatsApp did not work for our North American team. Neither Facebook nor Instagram is supported.

ChatGPT's Executive Summary of Virgin:

Virgin Atlantic is a leading airline company known for its innovative customer-centric approach. To provide exceptional customer service, the company has developed a robust customer support system that leverages technology and human resources.

The customer support system includes multiple channels, such as phone, email, social media, and chat, to cater to different customer preferences. Customers can also access self-help resources through the company's website and mobile application.

Virgin Atlantic has a dedicated customer service team that works 24/7 to address customer queries and concerns. The team comprises well-trained professionals who are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to handle customer inquiries efficiently. The team also uses a knowledge base to access information about the company's products and services to provide accurate and timely responses.
To further enhance its customer support system, Virgin Atlantic has implemented various feedback mechanisms, including surveys, reviews, and social media monitoring, to gather customer feedback and improve its services. The company also has a customer loyalty program, Flying Club, which offers additional benefits to customers who frequently fly with Virgin Atlantic.

Overall, Virgin Atlantic's customer support system is a robust and customer-centric approach that reflects the company's commitment to delivering exceptional customer service. The system's multi-channel approach, knowledgeable and trained staff, and feedback mechanisms make it an effective and efficient tool for addressing customer queries and concerns.
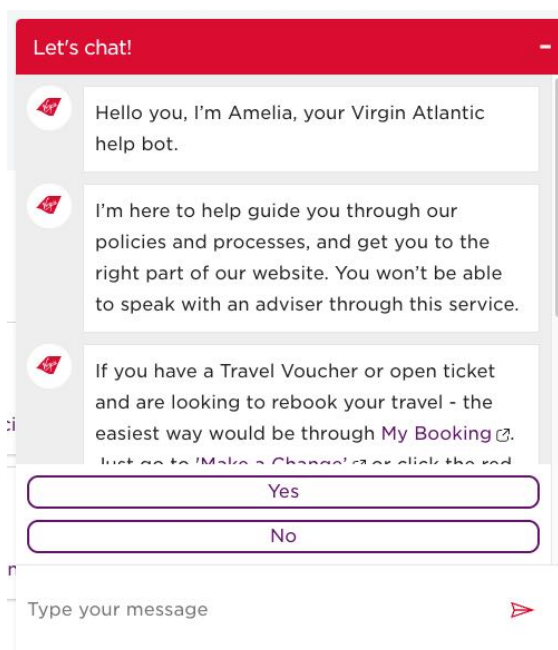
01

Overview of Current CX.

1.1 Current Chat:

Current chatbot ("Amelia"):
https://help.virginatlantic.com/gb/en/
contact-us-flow.html

**Current CX vendor (Genesys
Messenger):** https://www.genesys.com/
en-gb/customer-experience/innovations/
messaging

Screenshot of "Welcome message":

1.2 Current Email Support:

Baggage/Lost items:

baggage.tracing@fly.virgin.com

Virgin Atlantic Holidays:

feedback.backhome@virginholidays.com

1.3 Current Voice Support:

US Customer Centre:

+1 800-862-8621

1.4 Current SMS support:

Text message number (UK):
0748 133 9140
From Canada:
(011- 44) 0748 133 9140

1.5 Current Social Media/ Messaging Apps Support:

WhatsApp (UK):
0344 209 7304

Twitter: https://twitter.com/ VirginAtlantic

Facebook Messenger (unsupported):
https://www.facebook.com/ virginatlantic/

Instagram (unsupported):
https://www.instagram.com/ virginatlantic/?hl=en

Capabilities of Genesys.

Channels: voice, webchat, email, text, social media.

Used most often to route specific customer support questions to agents; i.e. session routing/queuing, agent assignment.

Multilingual: Danish, German, English, Finnish, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional).

Data analytics: Reporting & Dashboards Backend Integrations/API builders: Third-party messengers (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.).

UI: create conversation flows, drag and drop interface, configuration, mgmt, etc. See here: https://help.mypurecloud.com/ articles/web-messaging-overview.

See more here for reviews,etc:
https://www.g2.com/products/genesys-cloud-cx/reviews

Developer center:
https://developer.genesys.cloud/

02

Assessment of Current CX.

2.1 Methodology

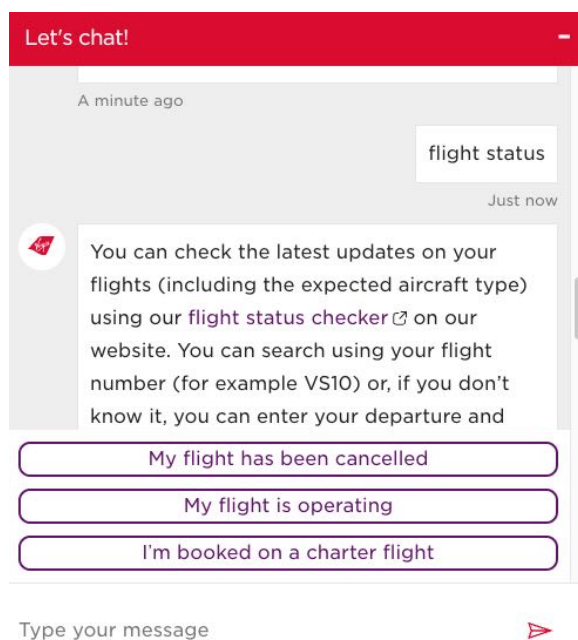12 Questions, based on different categories, were asked on different CX channels supported by Virgin Atlantic:

Question Type	Question Asked
Managing Booking	- Can you help me change my seat? - I have to cancel my flight - I want to book a flight
Preparing to Fly	- Is my flight on time? / Flight Status - What are the current Covid guidelines? - I require special Assistance
Onboard Services	- Will food be served on the plane? - Is there internet access on the plane? - Is there entertainment onboard?
Arrival	- My bag is lost - I forgot my wallet on the plane

Questions from each of these categories were asked on support channels supported by Virgin Atlantic in order to assess their current CX system. The question/responses across each channel are shown below.
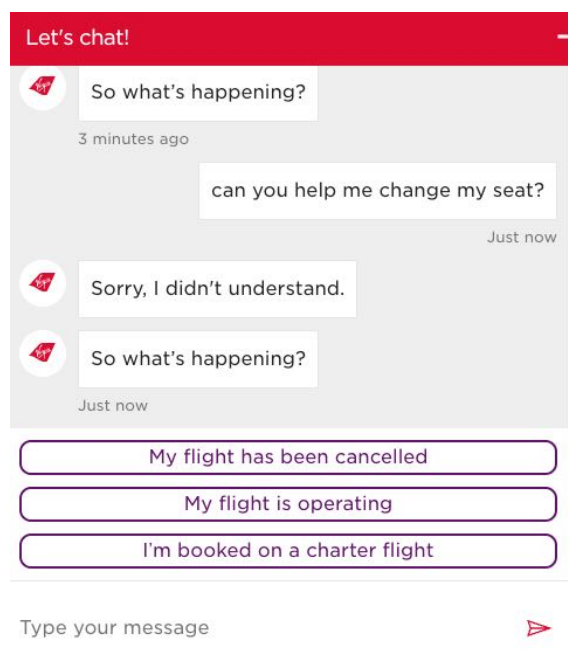
2.2 Assessment of Current Chat
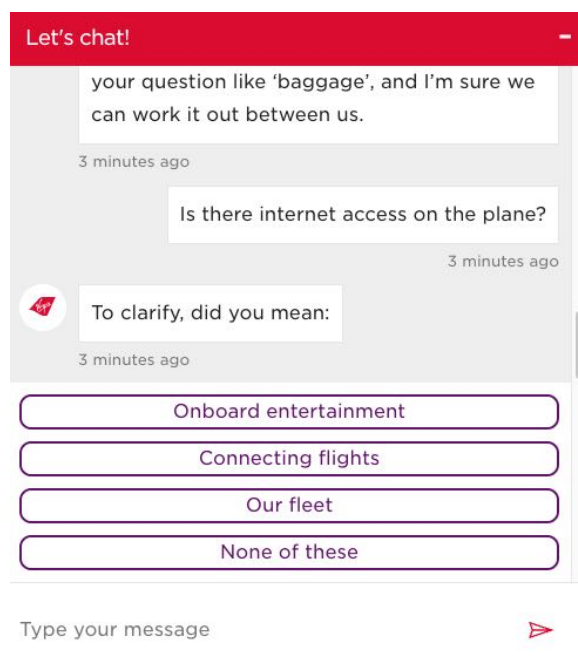
Example 1:

Checking flight status

Example 2:
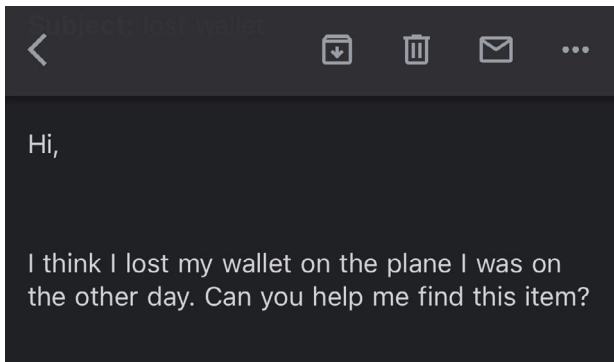
Changing Seat (asked right after Example 1)
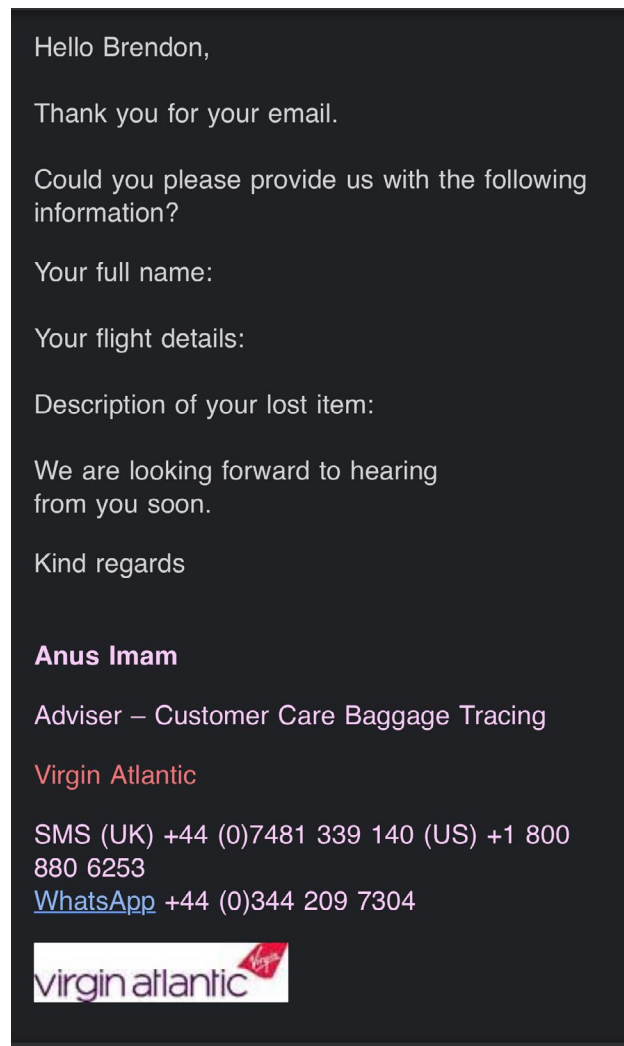

Example 3:

Internet Access on the Plane

2.3 Assessment of Current Email Support

Example 1:

Baggage/Lost items

Subject: lost wallet

Hi,

I think I lost my wallet on the plane I was on the other day. Can you help me find this item?

...3 hours later

Hello. Thank you for contacting Virgin Atlantic.

We are sorry to advise that, due to a significant increase in contact following baggage disruption across our network, we are unfortunately not able to reply to you as quickly as we would like. Please be assured that all our team members are working hard to reunite you with your baggage as quickly as possible and will contact you via email with updates every 48 hours. The reason we will only update you every 48 hours is so that the majority of the team's time can be focused on locating and reuniting baggage to our customers as quickly as possible.

If you need to give us further details about your baggage, or amend your personal details, you can do this via our self-serve portal, found here, https://mybag.aero/virginatlantic. This is also the best place to access the most up to date information about your baggage and will likely be much quicker than trying to reach us at this time.

We sincerely apologise for the disruption this will have had on your plans. and thank you for your patience and understanding while we work to reunite you with your baggage.

Kind regards
Virgin Atlantic Baggage Tracing

Hello Brendon,

Thank you for your email.

Could you please provide us with the following information?

Your full name:

Your flight details:

Description of your lost item:

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards

Anus Imam

Adviser – Customer Care Baggage Tracing

Virgin Atlantic

SMS (UK) +44 (0)7481 339 140 (US) +1 800 880 6253
WhatsApp +44 (0)344 209 7304

virgin atlantic

Example 2:

Cancel Flight

From: brendon@netomi.com
Received: 02/03/2023
To: Care - WNS Pending Queue ; Feedback Backhome; Feedbackbackhome feedbackbackhome; FeedbackBackHome@virginholidays.com; old vaa feedback backhome
Subject: cancel flight

Hi,

I'd like to cancel my flight. Can you help?

Thanks,
Brendon

_____
_____
_____

Be sure to drop by at http://www.virginatlantic.com for all the latest news and fantastic offers.

Tweet travel with us: http://www.twitter.com/virginatlantic

Join us on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/virginatlantic

View us on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/virginatlantic

...20 hours later

Hello Brendon

Thank you for your email.

Please could you reply to this email and provide us with the following information:-

- **Virgin Holidays** booking reference – it's 7 digits long and begins with 5 or 6
- Lead passenger full name
- Lead passengers date of birth

Please also ensure you contact us from the email address you registered with us at the time of booking.

Once we have this information and we are able to locate your booking, we will look into your query.

Alternatively if you booked with Virgin Atlantic directly please contact them on customer.care@fly.virgin.com

Many Thanks & Kind Regards,

Virgin Holidays Customer Service Team

Email: feedback@virginholidays.com
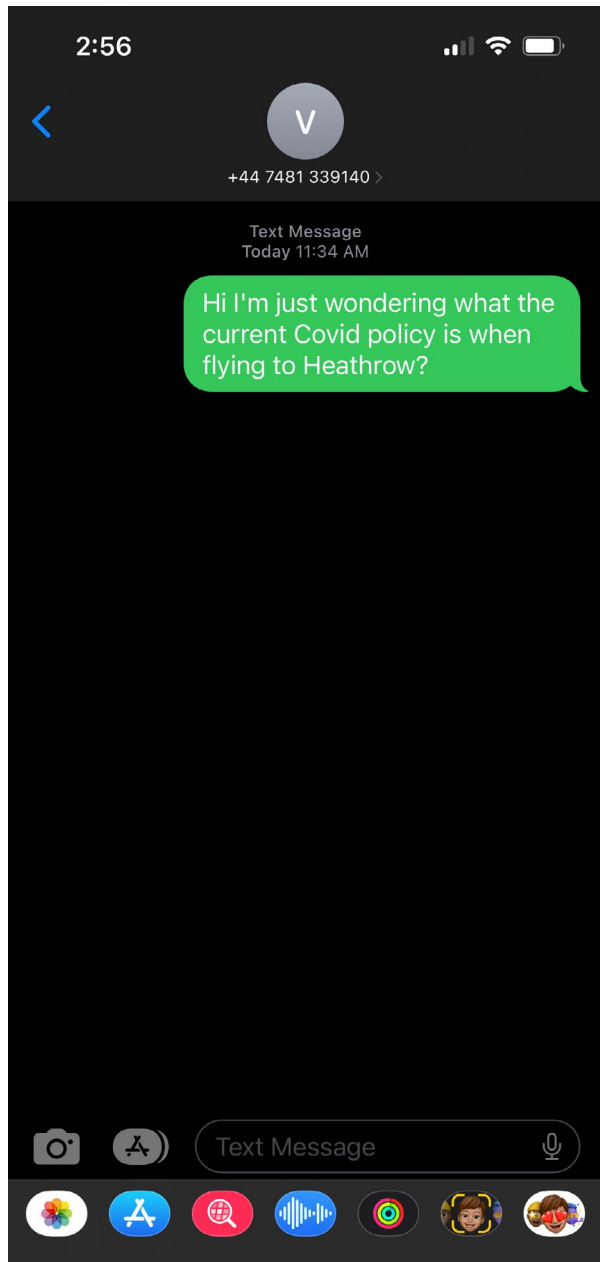
2.4 Assessment of Current SMS Support

Did not appear to respond after > 4 hours
Example:

2.5 Assessment of Current Voice Support

Does not appear there's any current voice activation support through Virgin Atlantic's US Customer Support line.

Menu items are accessed through a keypad. For example, you can access the following options by keypad only:
- Travel agents
- Amend or query booking
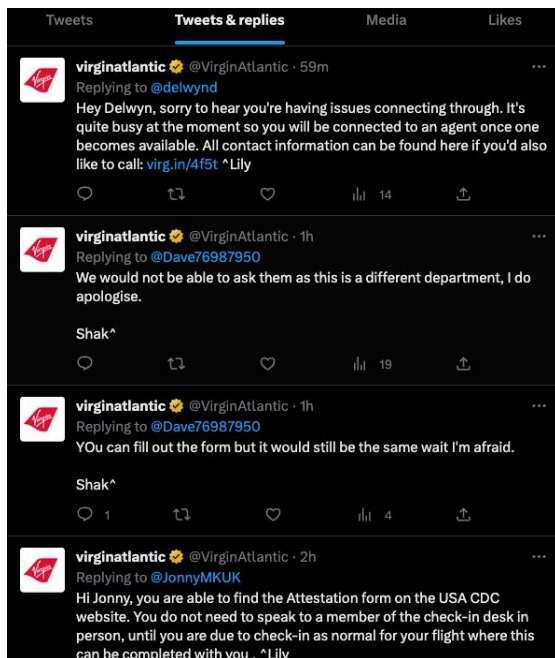- New booking
- Flying club account
- Special assistance, report lost/damaged baggage.

Virgin once had voice check-in in Australia through Alexa but it can't be found easily. https://www.airlineratings.com/news/virgin-launches-voice-check-amazon-alexa/.

2.6 Assessment of Current Social Media/Messaging

Twitter:
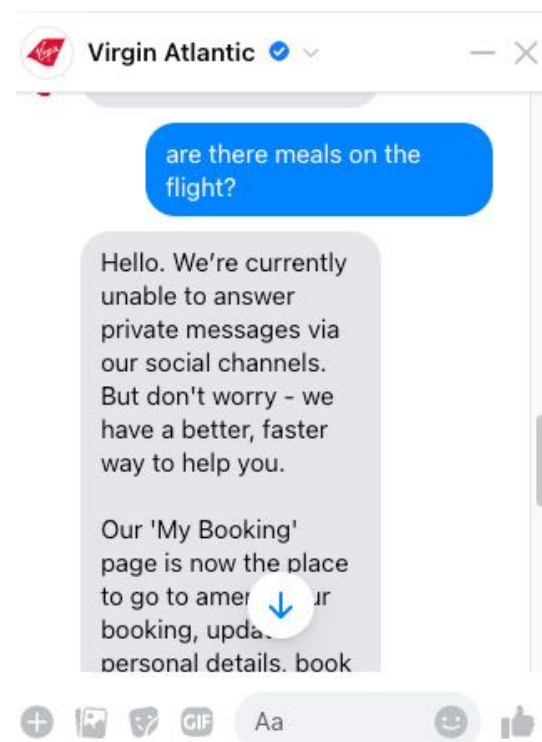Currently supported through live agents.

Instagram:
Does not appear to be supported as there was no response after > 12 hrs.

Facebook Messenger:
Currently an unsupported channel even though there's a way to message Virgin Atlantic over FB messenger.

Example question:

WhatsApp:
We attempted to text the UK number asking "Can I cancel my flight?" but received no response.

Key findings.

CHAT

- In general, it does not appear Virgin Atlantic is utilizing Genesys Messenger to its full capabilities; i.e. integrations, solving customer problems— either because of a lack of resources to implement or weaknesses of the platform of itself.

- Seems to push user to user web URL to solve issues through their website/ customer portal - not through chat.

- Chat is quite confusing to a user first landing on their Contact Us page because it makes you answer a question before you can start asking the bot questions (i.e. in SS 1.1, we have to click "no" before we can even start asking questions).

The chat does not appear to allow you to switch topics during a conversation but gets caught up trying to solve the initial ask (ie. Example 1 and 2 in SS 2.2).

- The chat has rudimentary NLP/NLU. For example, in Example 3 of SS 2.2, we asked about internet access in a clear manner, but it needed help to clarify what we meant. It requires clicking on "Onboard Entertainment" and then "In flight Connectivity" before finally getting an answer.

- Does not support rich interactive elements, user authentication, and the conversation design is elementary.

EMAIL

- Initial response from Baggage/Lost items email was automated explaining that there's a shortage of agents to solve baggage issues and they'll be in contact within 48 hours.

- After 3 hours, we received a response from a Baggage/Lost items live agent asking for full name, flight details, description of lost item.

- For the Virgin Holidays email,we still have yet to receive an email after >6 hours user authentication, and the conversation design is elementary.

VOICE

- Voice activation does not appear to work; ie. we tried saying "I'd like to amend a booking" and "Speak to an agent" when calling their US Customer Support Line but it did not understand.

## SOCIAL MEDIA/ MESSENGER APPS:

- No support for FB or Instagram currently even though Genesys Messenger appears to have API integration capabilities.

- WhatsApp did not appear to work when asking question.

- They use only live agents for Twitter.

SMS

- We received no response when texting the UK SMS number.

Where Netomi Can Help.

More languages supported: for example, Virgin Atlantic flies to Norway but does not seem to have language support for Norwegian through their chatbot. Asking "is there internet access available on the plane?" in Norwegian was not understood by the Genesys Messenger chatbot.
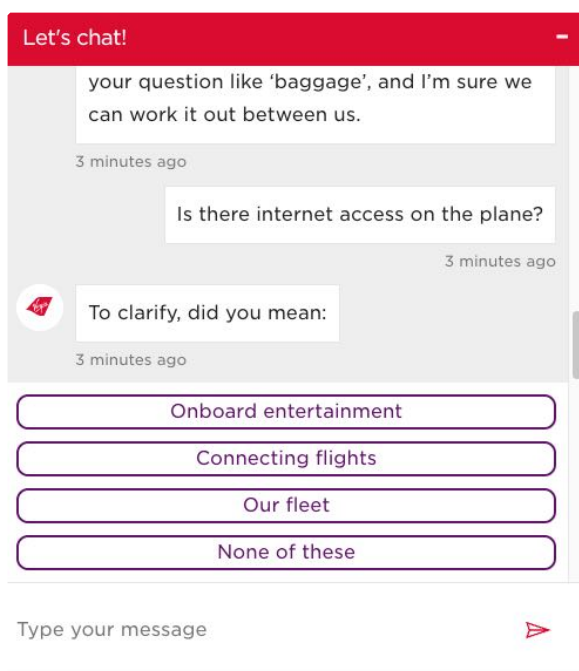
Conversation design is streamlined to support omnichannel through the same interface (AI Studio); meaning most of the queries/responses for various topics will be supported easily across channels (chat, voice, third-party messengers, SMS, email).

Embedded interactive elements made possible by Netomi chat widgets are critical for guiding customers through solving problems/executing actions in chat (i.e. form boxes, drop downs, date pickers, etc.) It becomes much more possible for end-to-end resolution paths.

Superior NLP by Netomi:

- Will help solve more customer queries without frustrating the user through asking for clarification/giving them buttons/links to click on, etc. (i.e. in SS 2.2).

- Important for multinational companies whose customer base is international and likely their native language differs from language used on CX channels. Netomi's AI can more easily decipher what a customer is asking regardless of their native tongue.

- **https://www.netomi.com/conversational-ai-benchmarking-report**

Email automation can be used to solve highly repeatable tickets. For instance, the gathering of information in response to the issue of losing a wallet (SS 2.3) could have been solved through the initial email from Virgin Atlantic using Netomi's co-pilot mode.

User authentication: it appears that to execute an action requiring authentication such as changing a flight/booking/seat/etc, users need to log in to another portal before they can speak to a live agent to do this. For instance when trying to rebook:
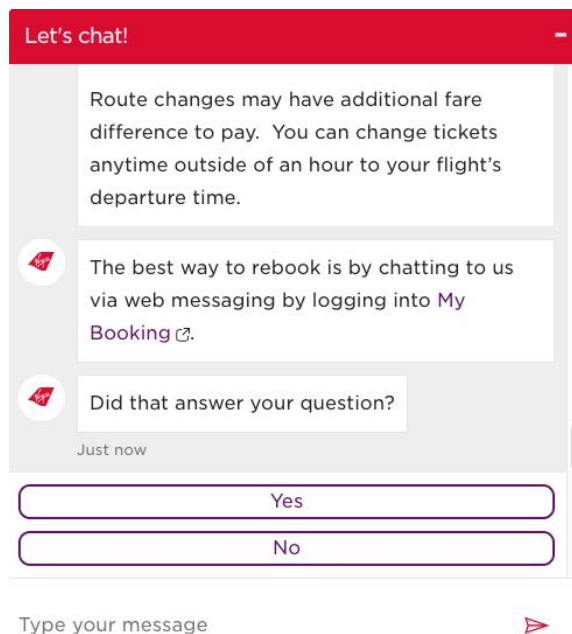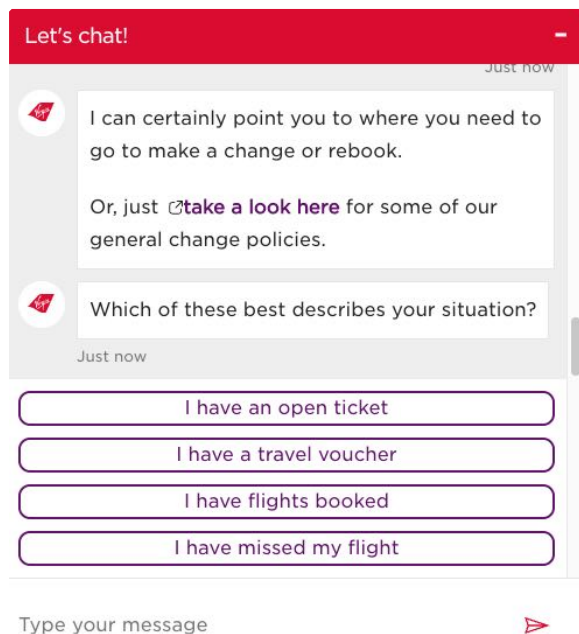
Netomi has authentication capabilities which can streamline this process/decrease frustration in users.

White glove service: Virgin Atlantic is likely able to make better use of chatbots if implemented with experts from Netomi, in conversation flow/design, etc. It looks like Genesys Messenger requires a development team in order to take full advantage of it .

Conversation OS: Narrowing– Useful when dealing with many questions that are syntactically similar, i.e. internet connection vs. flight connection.

Conversation OS: Stickiness (Beta) – Helps in ensuring a Topic's flow is abandoned consciously. Ie. will ask to see if you wanted to go back and discuss something brought up before switching topics.

Book a CX Consultation: email us airlines@netomi.com