

HOW AI IS RESHAPING PRACTICE COMMUNICATIONS

The Front Desk of the Future Is Not a *Desk*

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Co-founder & CEO, PupPilot

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Gary Peters

Founder & CEO, PupPilot — a communication platform for veterinary medicine with a focus in AI



UNDERGRAD

Vanderbilt

Applied mathematics & engineering

Carnegie Mellon University



MASTER'S • AI

Carnegie Mellon

Graduate work at NASA Ames Research Center



FOUNDER ×2

Stanford StartX

Two companies — both acquired



FOUNDER CEO • TODAY

PupPilot

Communication platform (phones, texting, email, fax and more) for veterinary medicine, with a focus in AI

IN VETERINARY MEDICINE



College of
Veterinary Medicine



Speaker at NAVC, VIS & Cornell CVM • team advises the AVMA on AI • research with the University of Guelph

The new front desk
has less *friction*.

Connecting a call used to be *someone's job*.

A person between the caller and the person they wanted to reach.



C&P TELEPHONE CO. SWITCHBOARDS, WASHINGTON, D.C.
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, HARRIS & EWING COLLECTION

Manual routing put a *ceiling* on communication.

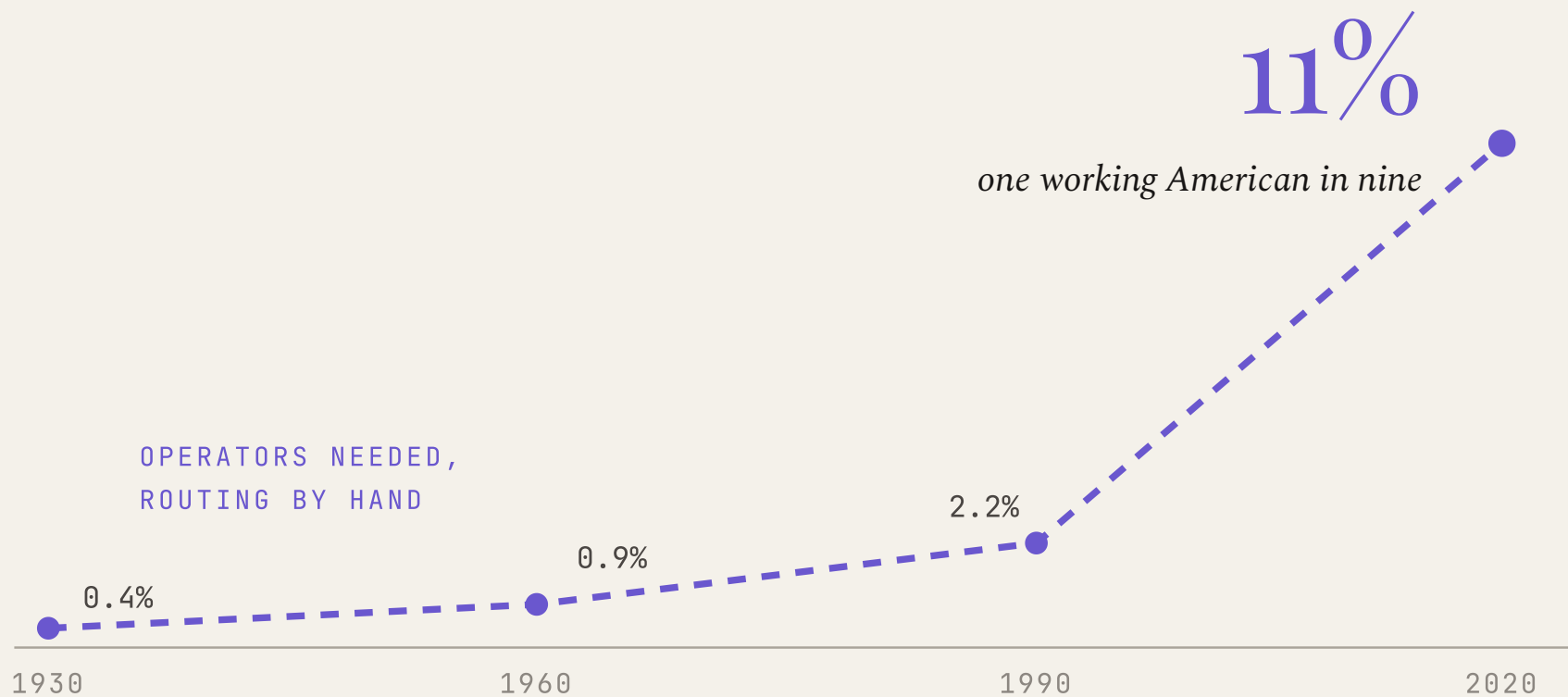
More calls meant more connections to make.

More connections meant more operator capacity.

The bottleneck was the work — *not the people*.

If nothing had changed after 1930

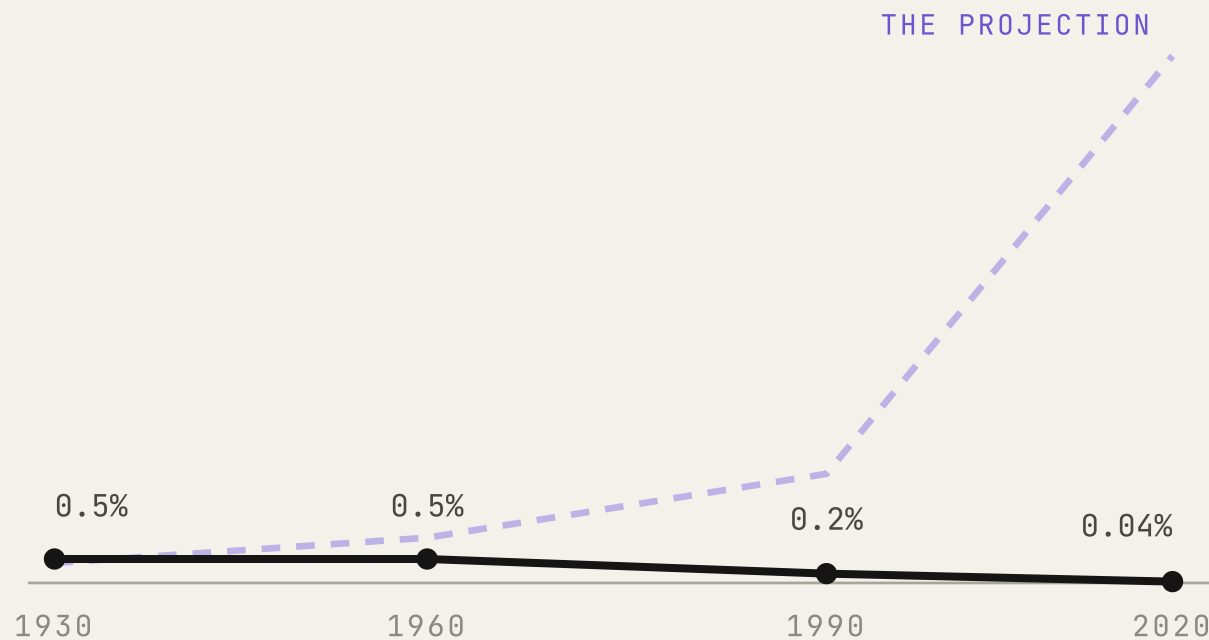
SHARE OF ALL U.S. WORKERS NEEDED AS SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS — AT THE 1930 PACE OF CALLS PER OPERATOR



A FORECAST THAT NEVER HAPPENED — DASHED LINE IS THE PROJECTION, NOT HISTORY

What actually happened

PEOPLE ACTUALLY EMPLOYED AS TELEPHONE AND SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS



MEANWHILE

247 →
8,900

*estimated contacts per person
per year, 1930 to 2020 —
routed by almost nobody.*

SOURCE — OPERATORS: US CENSUS SERIES D 351 • 1990 EEO FILE • BLS OES 2020 (TELEPHONE + SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS) • CONTACTS: HISTORICAL STATISTICS, CTIA 2021 (ESTIMATED)

And the price of a call collapsed.

THREE MINUTES, NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO, DAYTIME • INFLATION-ADJUSTED ESTIMATES FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT

1930	1960	1990	2020
\$174	\$24	\$1.85	¢ pennies



BELL INAUGURATES THE TRANSCONTINENTAL LINE, 25 JAN 1915 • IRVING UNDERHILL, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

When the line opened in 1915, the same call cost \$660.

SOURCE — HISTORICAL STATISTICS SERIES R 13-16 • FCC REFERENCE BOOK OF RATES 1997 (1990 DERIVED) • FCC CMRS REPORTS • BLS CPI-U • BASE YEAR TO CONFIRM

We automated the connection.
We expanded the *conversation*.

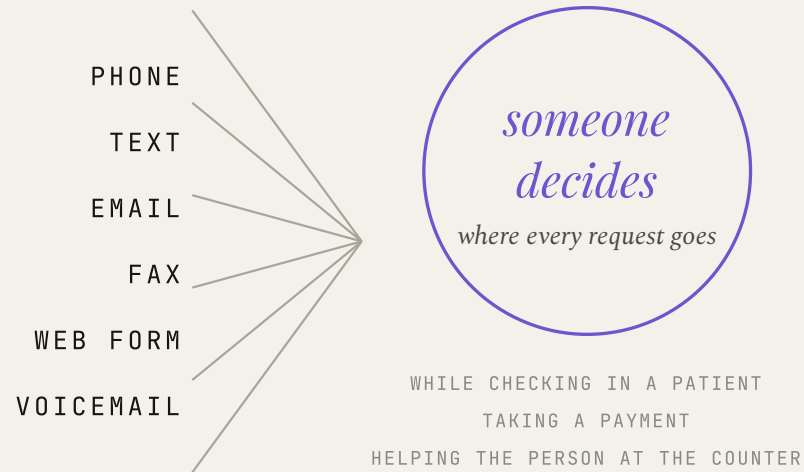
REMOVED

Less friction in making contact.

CREATED

More room for people to communicate.

Your clinic still has a switchboard. Nobody's title is "operator."



CONCLUSION

Routing is a workload inside several other roles — *not anyone's whole job.*

Most requests need a result. Not a live conversation.

ILLUSTRATIVE DAY • 100 INBOUND CALLS

When the AI is the first touch...

HANDLED BY THE AI

80

COMPLETED →

Routine requests — an answer, a booking, a records request, refill intake.

ROUTED TO A PERSON

20

→ HUMAN

Conversations — attention, coordination or judgment from a person.

Both need a good outcome. They do not need the same workflow. *An illustration, not a measured split.*

Less friction means you can *welcome* the call.

WITH FRICTION

Every request costs the team's attention — so every request competes for it.

WITHOUT IT

The routine completes itself. Attention goes where it is needed.

PAYOFF

Being easy to reach stops being *expensive*.

The new front desk
is more *relational*.

The ATM could do a teller's most *familiar task*.

A customer wants cash.

A machine can dispense it.

After this task was automated, how did that change the teller's job?



UNION TRUST BANK TELLER MACHINE, WASHINGTON,
1975 • LOC, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT
COLLECTION

The job become more relational and *branches expanded*.

UNITED STATES • 1988-2004 • URBAN BRANCHES

20 → 13

tellers per urban branch

+43%

more urban branches

500K →
550K

bank tellers employed

A lower operating burden can make expansion easier — and more relational.

Less cash handling. More *relationship work*.

THE TRANSACTION

Became less of the job.

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER

Became more of the job.

Less inbound interruption. More outbound *follow-through*.

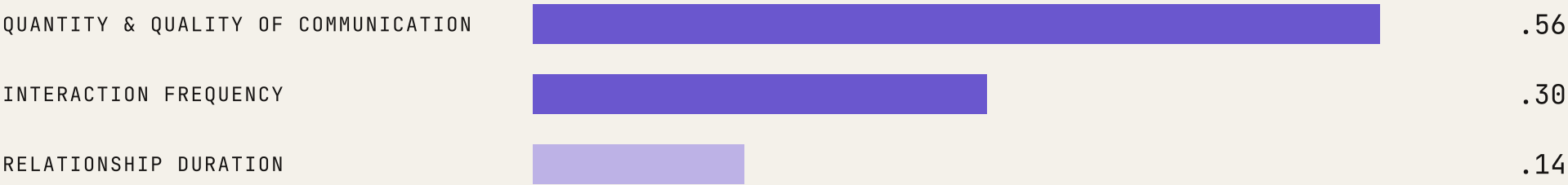
Routine inbound work	→	Completed or prepared.
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Recovered attention	→	Protected relationship work.
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Documented needs	→	Proactive contact, with a person owning the reply.
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Years on the books are not the same as *trust*.

ASSOCIATION WITH TRUST • CROSS-INDUSTRY RESEARCH



Do not mistake client tenure for a strong relationship. Communication includes the quality, amount and frequency of information exchanged.

Give the important conversation the *time it needs*.

ILLUSTRATIVE CLINIC WORKFLOW

BEFORE

The team is buried in tasks. Every conversation competes with the queue.

AFTER

The team has time and attention for the people who need it.

CONCLUSION

Same team. *Different use of attention.*

Reach the people who *never called*.

ILLUSTRATIVE CLINIC WORKFLOW • BELLA IS FICTIONAL

-
- 01 A documented recheck. No appointment booked.
 - 02 A relevant message: "*Can we help arrange Bella's recheck?*"
 - 03 A response that has somewhere to go.
-

CONCLUSION Start with the documented plan, *not a generic campaign*.

Grow without the *growing pains*.

Serve more people without every routine request becoming an interruption.

Use the recovered attention for relationships and follow-through.

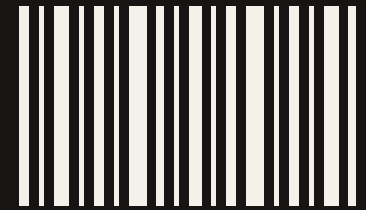
Measure completed next steps — not just shorter calls.

The new front
desk *grows your business.*

JUNE 26, 1974 • MARSH SUPERMARKET • TROY, OHIO

A pack of gum changed what a checkout could *do*.

A pack of Wrigley's gum. The first retail UPC scan.



1974

The first benefit was a *faster checkout*.

BEFORE

Manually enter the price.

AFTER

Scan an identifier and look up the item.

BUT

A faster transaction was only the *first* benefit.

The sale became *information* the business could use.

What sold.

Where it sold.

When it sold.

CONCLUSION

One routine transaction. *A reusable record.*

The information traveled *beyond the checkout*.

PURCHASING

What needs replenishing?

MERCHANDISING

What should this store carry?

MARKETING

Which offers are relevant?

Your front desk hears what a receipt *cannot tell you*.

01 What clients ask before they book.

02 What they do not understand.

03 What they are worried about.

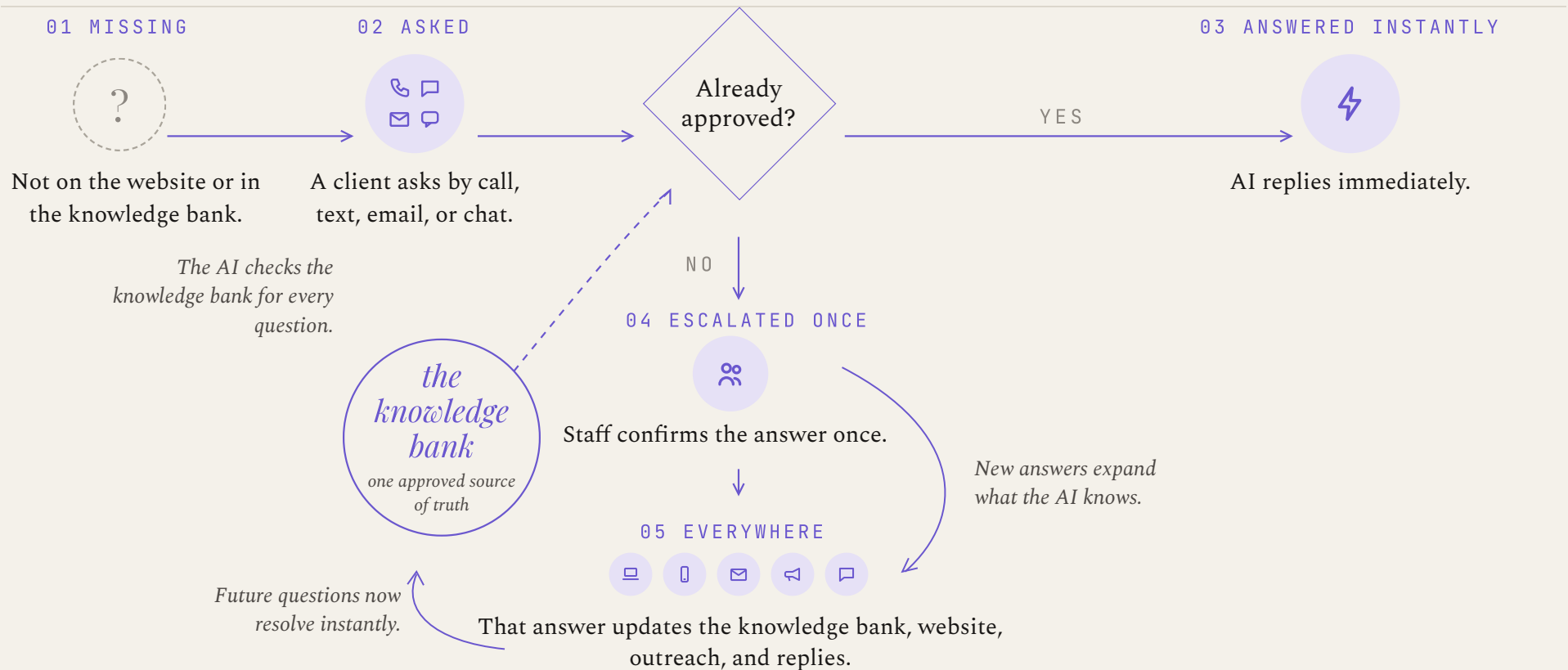
04 What they want.

The best marketer in the world would start by *listening*.

<i>What do people need to know before choosing us?</i>	<i>What do we explain repeatedly?</i>
<i>Which answers are missing from our public information?</i>	<i>Which strengths do clients actually value?</i>

Answer it once. It is answered *everywhere*.

ILLUSTRATIVE LIFECYCLE • ONE RECURRING QUESTION



The next client benefits *before they call.*

ILLUSTRATIVE CLINIC WORKFLOW • FICTIONAL QUESTION

“What is going to happen to my pet?”

BEFORE

Nothing on the public website.

Nothing in the AI's knowledge.

Held only in a few team members' heads.

AFTER

Explained on the website.

In the AI's knowledge bank.

Consistent in every reply and outreach.

CONCLUSION

A weakness becomes a strength — and a public answer is one *search engines can find.*

One answer — spoken, texted, and *published*.

ILLUSTRATIVE CLINIC WORKFLOW • FICTIONAL PRACTICE

“I need to take my dog in for surgery. What will the experience be like?”

ON THE CALL

The AI walks them through the clinic's approved surgery-day process — drop-off, updates, recovery, pick-up.

BY TEXT, MOMENTS LATER

Here's the full surgery-day walkthrough, whenever you want to reread it: yourclinic.com/surgery-day.

OWNERSHIP

The clinic owns the facts. The system keeps every surface *aligned*.

More reachable. More relational. More *informed*.

SWITCHBOARD

Make more communication possible.

TELLER

Give people time for relationships
and follow-through.

BARCODE

Turn what you hear into
improvements across the practice.

Capacity for growth. Service that supports it. *Learning that improves it.*

Grow without the growing pains.

The front desk of the future is not a desk. It is the *relationship* you finally have the capacity to build.

REVIEW THE STATS

puppilot.co/resources/statistics

GET IN TOUCH

gp@puppilot.co

Questions

01 Which routine requests should stop interrupting your team?

02 Which conversations would you protect time for?

03 What are clients asking that your website does not answer?

REVIEW THE STATS

puppilot.co/resources/statistics

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