

Building Conversational AI Teams



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Foreword

At Georgian Partners, we have been watching the conversational AI space for some time. We're excited to see more sophisticated products coming to market and more businesses making conversational AI part of their strategy. As a primary investment thesis, we're convinced that conversational AI has the power to deliver personal experiences at scale and transform the way that everyone does business. But there's much more work to be done.

The promise of conversational AI hasn't always been widely recognized. I've spent most of my career working on different aspects – from speech synthesis to discourse analysis, and even deception detection. It's been a long journey, and for many years, much of the work in the field has had limited commercial impact.

This is due in part to an emphasis on a narrow set of research questions and availability of only small, hand-crafted data sets. However, we are beginning to see real momentum. We're seeing data flow from an array of speech- and language-enabled devices. At the same time conversational technologies advance, a wider set of industry-specific problems are solved, and viable businesses are formed.

As a result, conversational AI is moving beyond the text-based, trigger-response customer support use cases that we saw in the early days. These types of interactions will remain important, and will no doubt continue to evolve. But I'm eager to see more vertical-specific, contextually aware systems that deliver personalized experiences.

I think this is beginning to happen. Personal assistants and natural language-based coaching applications are capable of a more holistic understanding of the discourse context, the environment, and their users. They can anticipate needs, proactively make recommendations and solve problems. Transactional AI is becoming truly conversational, with assistants that can automatically schedule a meeting, block a stolen credit card, or secure your home.



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These experiences deliver more value, because they are driven by a practical model of user intents and behaviors, and make use of situational awareness. Over the last year we've also seen the number of skills available via voice explode. This broadens the range of signals — like intonation, prosody, and emotion — that are available to build more personalized experiences.

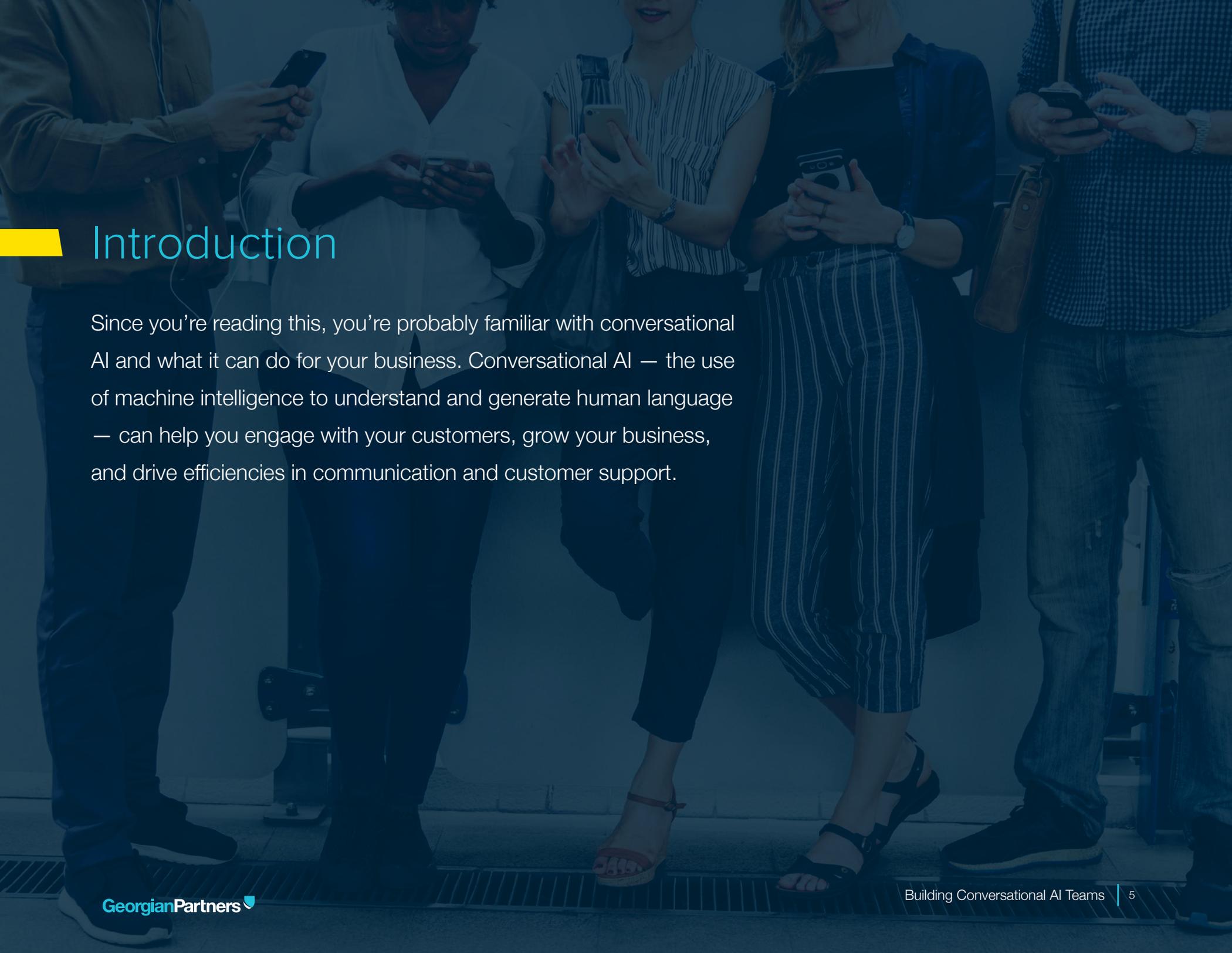
But these systems will not build themselves (yet). Startups that focus on conversational AI need teams that can articulate an inspiring and differentiated product vision. They'll need to design experiences that are effective, memorable and delightful, and train high-performing machine learning and natural language processing models.

People with these conversational skills are in high demand and short supply. Where do you begin? Is conversational AI even a profession yet?

With more business models and product avenues available, nuanced strategies are emerging for different conversational objectives. A company focused on growth will aim to acquire users quickly, whereas a company focused on engagement and LTV will need to deliver subtle, meaningful interactions with users before scaling. Each of these strategies will require a different set of skills and a different type of conversational product team.

To win the war for talent in this space, it's important to develop a clear plan for how you are going to build your team. If done right, you'll be able to leverage the shortage of conversational talent to your advantage and deliver unique experiences that increase engagement and further your competitive advantage.

We wrote this guide to help you understand some of the most important roles in a conversational team. It shows how to prioritize your hires so that you can deliver on your product vision. It's designed to be practical, with sample job descriptions and interview questions in the appendix. We'd like to thank our friends at Finn AI for their valuable input and advice while writing this guide. I'd love to hear from you as you build your team, and how we can improve this document.



Introduction

Since you're reading this, you're probably familiar with conversational AI and what it can do for your business. Conversational AI — the use of machine intelligence to understand and generate human language — can help you engage with your customers, grow your business, and drive efficiencies in communication and customer support.

Consumers want easy, quick, and seamless interactions with companies. An estimated 2.5 billion people are already using voice or text chat platforms,¹ and that number continues to grow. At the same time, half of US consumers use digital voice assistants², and 30 to 40 percent of consumers say messaging is their channel of choice for engaging with businesses³.

Not surprisingly, businesses are answering the call. By 2021, investment in chatbots will outpace investment in mobile apps in half of businesses⁴. Meanwhile, 55 percent of medium and large companies will have implemented conversational AI technology by 2020⁵.

To make sure that your company is best positioned to reap the benefits of conversational AI, you will want to be strategic and intentional about building the right team. However, you're likely under pressure to deliver results and have

questions about the best way to quickly build and enable high-quality conversational AI teams.

Build a Conversational Roadmap

Creating a conversational vision, strategy, and product roadmap will allow you to solidify your approach. You should consider whether you plan to buy, build, or take a hybrid approach. Even if you decide to outsource most of the work, you'll likely find it beneficial to keep some roles in-house.

Before you hire, identify where you'll have the greatest impact. You'll need to map out how your customers interact with your business and products through all channels across the organization and identify where there are opportunities to improve through the use of conversational AI.

Next, conduct an exercise to assess these opportunities and prioritize them based

on what is strategically important to your business. Use this to map out a plan for conversational AI. This will help you decide how to grow and evolve your team, and set a path to maturity. You can learn more about this process by reading our [9 Principles of Conversational AI](#).

With your plan in hand, there's good reason to focus on your team next. Without the right skills and team as part of your organization, it will be difficult to achieve the promise of conversational AI, opening the opportunity for faster moving competitors.

Moreover, poorly structured or mismanaged conversational teams usually result in inefficiency, missed deadlines, and poor products. If the problems persist, high-quality employees often leave. Fixing problems once they've begun can require reorganizations or restructurings that, while necessary, divert employee and executive focus from business goals.

1 "Bots, the next frontier," The Economist, April 9, 2016.

2 Kenneth Olmstead, "Nearly half of Americans use digital voice assistants, mostly on their smartphones," Pew Research Center, December 12, 2017.

3 "More than a Message: Messaging Means Business," Facebook IQ, December 1, 2016.

4 "Gartner Top Strategic Predictions for 2018 and Beyond," Smarter with Gartner, October 3, 2017.

5 "Chatbots Will Appeal to Modern Workers," Smarter with Gartner, March 28, 2018.

What's in This Guide

This guide explains how to avoid these negative outcomes and build a successful conversational AI team. You'll learn what the common roles and structures of a conversational team are, how to prioritize these roles based on where you are in your conversational AI journey, and the do's and don'ts of keeping your team working together smoothly.

Because demand for talent is so high, this book also addresses how to attract or acquire and retain the best people. Specifically, it covers:

- Deciding to upskill your current team or hire externally
- Acquiring the right skills for your team while balancing budgets
- Tips for writing a strong job description that will bring top-tier talent in the door
- Where to source talent, including the best nontraditional options
- Interview questions to help you identify the highest-potential employees
- Developing a culture and compensation strategy that will retain your team and keep them happy and productive

At a time when conversational AI adoption is skyrocketing, and your ability to leverage it could make or break the success of your company, being able to build and manage a successful conversational team is essential. If you'd like to skip straight to sample job descriptions and interview questions, you will find them in "[Jumpstart Your Team Search](#)."





How To Build a High-Performance Conversational Team

Whether you're starting from scratch or adding to an existing team, there are a few key things you'll want to know: what positions are included in a conversational team, how to prioritize hiring given your conversational AI strategy, and what the recruiting and hiring process looks like. This chapter covers each of these topics.

First, let's go over the roles that make up a typical conversational AI team. This section covers specific positions and how they'll help advance the goals of the team. It also suggests possible reporting structures for your conversational AI employees.

	Position	Responsibilities	Reporting structure	Higher-level skills	Career development path
Product Strategy	Conversational Product Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap/strategy development Development process coordination Defining and analyzing success metrics 	Report to Head of Product / Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing other PMs Owning increasingly large product areas Leading cross-functional projects 	Senior / Lead / Principal
Product Design	Conversational designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue flow, persona design, conversational repair For voice: voice, prompt, and earcon design 	Report to Head of Product / Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing other designers Owning increasingly large product areas 	Senior / Lead / Principal
	Script writer	Writing amazing content that is consistent with your persona and furthers business goals	Report to Head of Product / Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing higher-profile content Contributing to persona design 	Senior / Lead <i>May also lead to a UX or copywriting position</i>
	Audio designer/engineer (voice only)	Recording prompts and voice fonts, designing audio artifacts, music, and earcons	Report to Head of Product / Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing others Owning increasingly large product areas 	Senior / Lead / Principal <i>May also lead to a conversational design position</i>

	Position	Responsibilities	Reporting structure	Higher-level skills	Career development path
Engineering — Implementation	Data engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data aggregation and cleaning to use in conversational AI applications Logging and archiving conversational records 	Report to Head of Engineering / CTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with increasingly large volumes of data Owning increasingly large product areas 	<p>Senior / Lead</p> <p><i>May also lead to another engineering position</i></p>
	Integration engineer	Integration with messaging, voice, and conversational AI APIs and development platforms	Report to Head of Engineering / CTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owning increasingly large product areas Growing expertise on toolkits/environments 	<p>Senior / Lead</p> <p><i>May also lead to another engineering position</i></p>
Engineering — AI	Data scientist	Using conversational data to answer questions or solve problems, e.g., user segmentation, error analysis, understanding context, and usage patterns	Report to Head of Data Science, Head of Research, Head of Product, or Head of Engineering / CTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing other data scientists Working with increasingly large volumes of data Owning increasingly large product areas 	<p>Senior / Lead / Principal</p> <p><i>May also become an ML/NLP scientist</i></p>
	Taxonomist	Creating a framework for organizing user requests and system responses, intent mapping, taxonomy maintenance and refactoring, and analysis of conversational logs	Report to Head of Product, Head of Engineering / CTO or Head of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architecting taxonomy Making build vs buy decisions Leading cross-functional products 	<p>Senior / Lead</p> <p><i>May also lead to a computational linguist or product position</i></p>

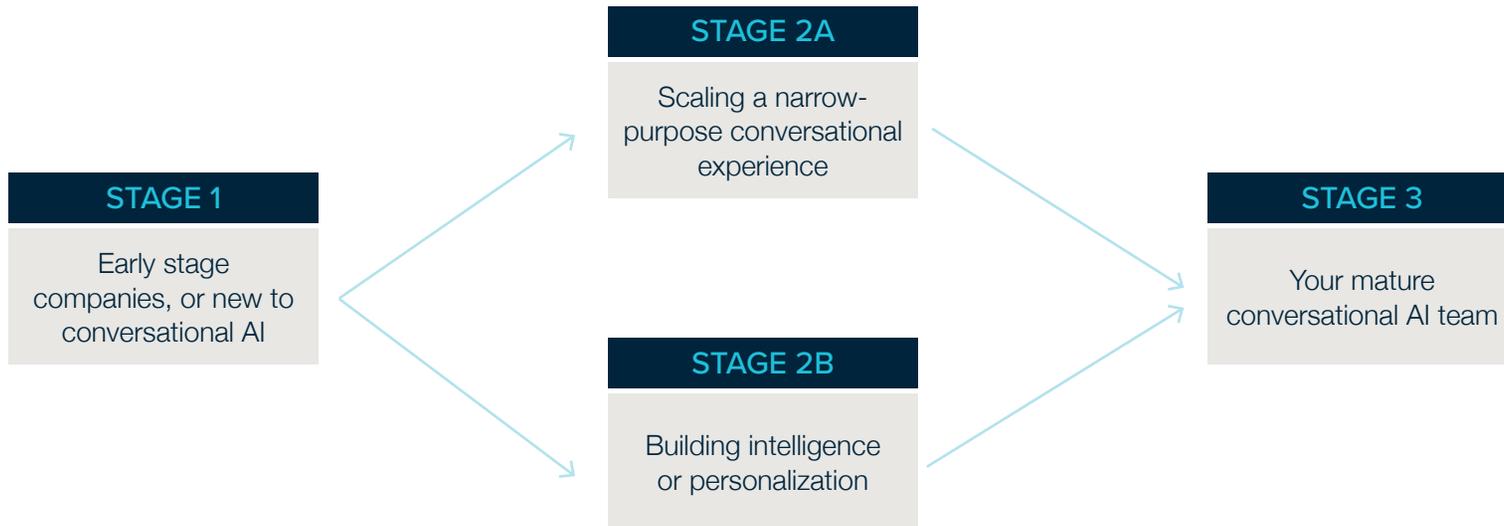
	Position	Responsibilities	Reporting structure	Higher-level skills	Career development path
Engineering — AI	Computational linguist / NLP scientist / Machine learning scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building classifiers that help conversational AI applications understand users and make decisions about what to say, and where to say it Text classification, entity extraction, intent parsing, sentiment analysis For voice: Text-to-Speech tuning and speech recognition optimization 	Report to Head of Engineering / CTO or Head of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing others Owning increasingly large product areas Architecting ML solutions Leading cross-functional projects 	Senior / Lead / Principal
	Data annotator (often contract resources)	Producing labeled training data to train machine learning models	Report to research, product or engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing others Overseeing annotation quality, data sampling, collection, and cleaning 	Annotation Manager <i>May also lead to a taxonomist or conversational design position</i>
Product Deployment & Customer Success	Customer success manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and onboarding customers Documenting key processes Identifying proprietary content for conversational AI interactions, training humans in handoff procedures Understanding customer needs and product requirements, and feeding them into the product development process 	Report to CEO, COO, Head of Customer Success, Head of Sales, or Head of Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing others Developing scalable processes Taking on high-profile customers Opportunity identification and upsells 	Senior / Lead

Matching Hires to Priorities

An experimental-stage team doesn't need to have all of these roles covered to get started. You'll need product management, design, and engineering for any project, but it's possible to make headway using more generally trained resources that are willing to come up to speed on basic conversational AI best practices. That said, adding experienced conversational AI specialists early will help maximize your chances of success. Prioritize these depending on your maturity and product goals.

As your product evolves, the mix of skills you require will change with it. We have described below how your team might be structured as it matures through three stages. Regardless of which stage you're in, you'll need to make decisions about how to balance resources and budgets to meet your objectives, using full-time, contract and consulting staff.

Paths to Conversational AI Maturity



Acquiring a Conversational AI Team

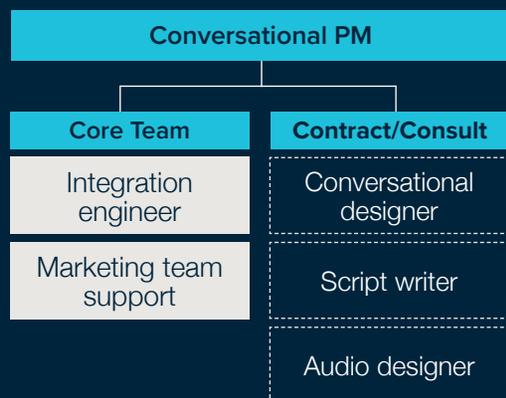
Hiring a team from scratch is not always the best route to conversational AI success. Acquiring an existing company for their team can be expensive up front, but may make sense for a few reasons. Early conversational AI startups often consist of close-knit, cross-functional teams that arrive with existing working relationships, processes, and practical conversational AI experience — especially helpful if they focus on the same industry that you are working in.

Moreover, these startups may have already completed the painstaking work of developing training data, domain-specific taxonomies or models that can be used in your application. In this case, you can save on running separate recruiting and onboarding processes, and build a team (and product) more quickly than you likely could by hiring individuals.

Cost aside, there are a few disadvantages to consider. First, building a team from scratch allows you to make sure it's well-rounded in all the ways that you need — for instance, if your conversational AI application will use both text and voice, you'll want experience in both. If you are building for a specific platform or using a particular set of APIs and machine learning tools, you'll want to hire talent with compatible experience.

Depending on their previous focus, employees acquired as a team may not have the required breadth of expertise, and may require a lengthy onboarding period. Acquisitions can be challenging culturally, so you'll want to make sure you pay special attention to melding elements of the acquired team's culture into your own.

STAGE 1



Product Milestones

- 📅 Produce vision and roadmap
- 📋 Gather requirements
- ★ Develop MVP
- ✓ Validate product-market fit
- 🔗 Set up data flows
- 👤 Define persona

Early Stage Companies, or New to Conversational AI

At this stage, you're developing your product vision and roadmap, gathering requirements and developing the foundation for your initial conversational experience.

Your focus is on getting a basic experience up and running on a single platform. This will allow you to start gathering data and user feedback, and validate your product-market fit at a high level. Because you need to build an end-to-end experience, you'll get a lot of value out of a generalist who has a high-level understanding of the full spectrum of conversational AI development. Usually, a conversational Product Manager is the best choice for meeting these needs.

To start building a product, you'll also need to hook up your bot's plumbing and set up data flows. Because of the maturity of existing NLP/speech technology frameworks such as Google's [Dialogflow](#), bringing on an integration engineer to take advantage of these is one of the most efficient ways of moving forward.

Once you've taken care of the plumbing, think about the experience.

A poorly defined or executed persona can prevent an otherwise solid conversational experience from gaining traction. To avoid this, you'll likely want to consult with conversational designers, script writers or audio designers under the supervision of your marketing team to make sure this persona reflects your brand and flows through your conversational interactions.

STAGE 2

Taking an Existing Conversational Experience to the Next Level

As a next step, you will likely prioritize either the scale or intelligence of your product, depending on your goals. This will determine which path you take to a mature conversational team.

Scale - bringing your product to a larger user base

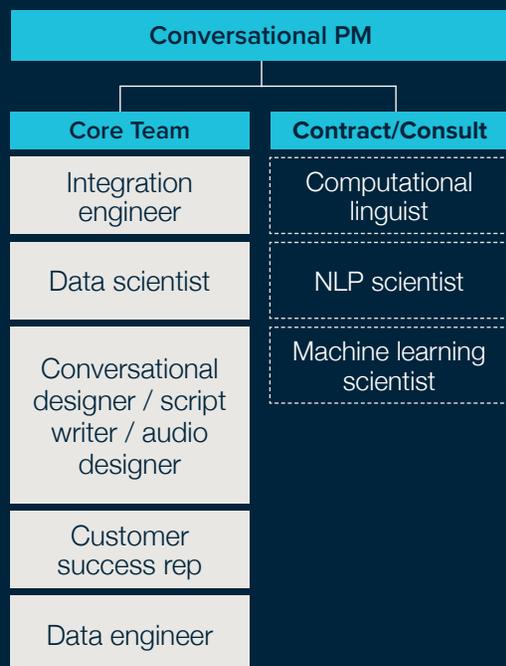
This will not only drive value for more people, but will also get large data volumes flowing through your product to drive further improvements. This path is best for companies whose focus is rapid growth and strategic acquisition of users.

Intelligence - increasing the range and sophistication of use cases your product can handle, or providing highly personalized experiences

This path is best for companies focused on building long-term, trusted relationships with customers and executing on a business model that prioritizes engagement and customer lifetime value.

For instance, if you are building a customer service chatbot, you might want to automate a handful of the most common interactions and roll that out to a large user base, then focus on adding additional functionality afterwards. If you're building a trusted virtual assistant that requires a high degree of intelligence to add significant value for users, you'll want to build out a robust set of functionality with a smaller user group before attempting to scale.

STAGE 2A



Product Milestones

- ↔ Expand to new channels
- ✂ Improve & optimize core use cases
- 🔍 Use data to prioritize improvements

Scaling a Narrow-Purpose Conversational Experience

On this path, your aim is to reach additional user groups. You could move from your initial conversational platform to a broader set of channels – for instance, if you started on Facebook Messenger, you may want to add WhatsApp and Kik. If you started with voice, you may want to expand to text-based chat.

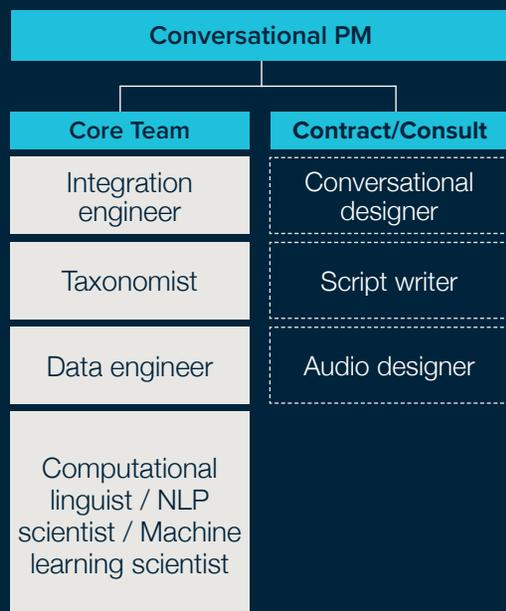
Additionally, you'll be doubling down on the quality of your experience – addressing intents that produce errors, getting the use cases that are part of the product right, and creating a successful, memorable, differentiated user experience. You'll want to add full-time design resources as you optimize each part of the experience.

Consider adding customer success team members as your user base grows, so that you can incorporate their feedback into the product.

A data scientist can help you get a really thorough understanding of the user data flowing through your system so that you can rigorously prioritize improvements, and a data engineer will help you make sure you're capturing rich conversational data in a way that can be used to drive improvements.

You may still rely primarily on commercial NLP and off-the-shelf APIs, but may want to engage computational linguists or machine learning experts to maintain and customize some of the models.

STAGE 2B



Product Milestones

-  Expand use cases
-  Develop personalized user models
-  Add domain-specific models
-  Determine how taxonomy should grow

Building Intelligence or Personalization

To build an intelligent and personalized experience that inspires user trust, you'll focus on more sophisticated interactions that take advantage of rich contextual data.

You'll want to go beyond standard features available in common APIs, such as Dialogflow or IBM Watson, and develop proprietary features and models. For instance, you may need to develop personalized user models, add domain-specific models to understand ambiguous words, or track all the different ways users might refer to the same entity across a conversation.

To build proprietary NLP/NLU components and domain-specific or user-level models, you'll want to add some NLP scientists or similar resources to your team. They will define an applied research roadmap, conduct experiments, and hand off new features to engineering.

To expand the use cases your application can handle and determine how your taxonomy should grow, you'll want to consider bottom-up user data alongside your top-down product strategy.

Bring on a dedicated taxonomist to maintain, organize, analyze and extend the taxonomy. Your taxonomist will work closely with NLP scientists to improve the underlying NLP and technical features of the platform to support the identified taxonomy changes and evolve the intelligence of the system.

STAGE 3

Your mature conversational AI team

Conversational PM (2+)	
Core Team	
Conversational designer	Taxonomist
Script writer	Computational linguist / NLP scientist / Machine learning scientist / Data scientist (2+)
Audio designer	
Integration engineer	
Data engineer	Customer success

Product Milestones

-  Expand users and intents
-  Expand use cases to adjacent steps in the business process
-  Deliver a compelling persona & personalized experiences

If you chose scaling first in stage 2, stage 3 focuses on building intelligence, and vice versa. As you focus on both of these priorities, you'll need a combined team that is strong in both areas to support a thriving conversational system.

This team should be equipped to support an expanding set of users and intents, expansion of use cases to adjacent steps in the business process, a recognizable and compelling persona, and increasingly personalized experiences.

Your product is complex enough to require more than one PM to manage different aspects of the system and more than one person in the machine learning / NLP / data science realm. Depending on your circumstances, you may also want to add additional members in the other roles listed above.

Usability Testing and QA for Conversational AI

Because of their open-ended nature, conversational interfaces can require more complicated quality and usability testing than traditional web or mobile interfaces. While you might not need to hire dedicated team members in these roles, here are a few considerations to keep in mind:

- Since conversational AI systems rely on machine learning models under the hood, be sure your testing teams are ready to assess the performance of your system quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Accept that your system will have errors, and define an acceptable threshold of errors to tolerate. Refine the set of usage and performance metrics that you collect and analyze as the system evolves. You may need to recruit more participants for usability testing than you would for a less open-ended UI to maximize the chances of catching major issues. Your data scientist or NLP scientist may also need to be heavily involved in the QA process for machine learning components.
- Make sure your team understands the objective of your conversational AI product and defines what constitutes a usability problem. For instance, a long conversation with a task-focused chatbot might be undesirable, but could indicate desired high engagement for a conversational marketing application.
- Have your team familiarize themselves with toolkits specifically for conversational AI — for instance, [botmock](#) for designing and prototyping conversational flows or [chatbottest](#) for developing your set of tests in specific areas such as personality, error management, and onboarding.
- Assume that you'll need ongoing iteration and testing after you've launched, as more real user data starts flowing through your system. You might want to launch to a smaller set of users first, and then expand after a few improvement cycles.
- Have your team test user perceptions to determine whether the experience comes across as intrusive or creepy, as these are risks for conversational AI that can undercut trust and damage your brand.

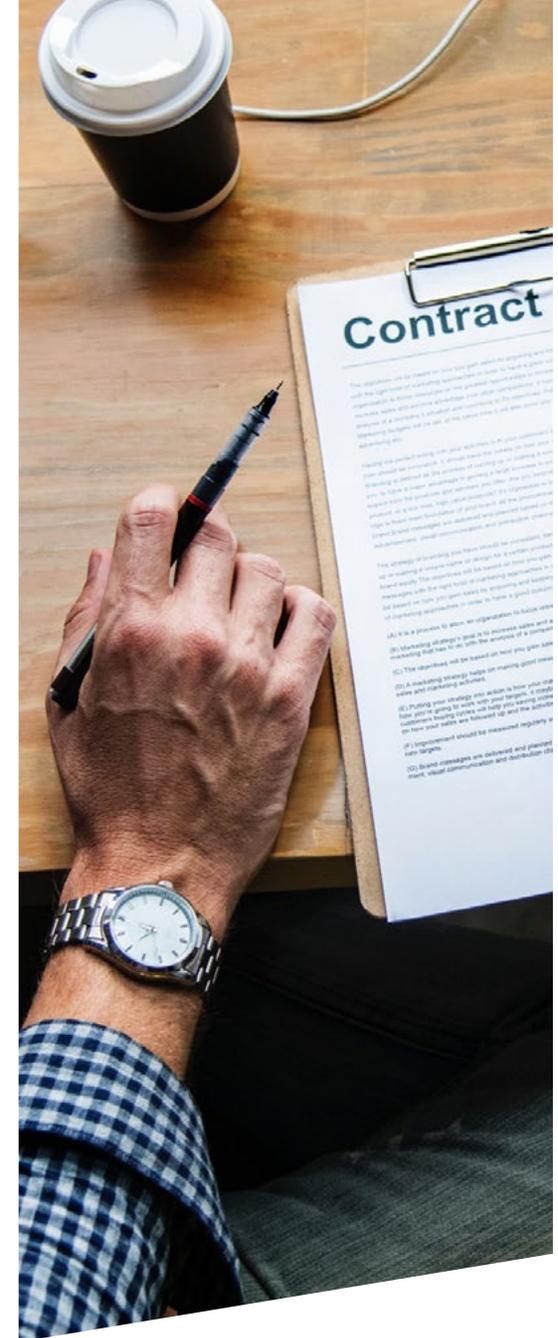
Acquiring A-Players

To get the right people in the door, the first thing you'll need is a clearly articulated job description that also highlights your conversational AI strategy and how the role fits in. A few tips:

- Lead with the problems your company is solving with conversational AI and how this role contributes to the solution.
- Be honest about your company's stage and level of conversational AI maturity to appropriately set candidate expectations.
- Be sure to use accurate and up-to-date industry terminology in your description. If you are just getting started in conversational AI, use an outside adviser or consultant to vet your language.
- Be sure to highlight the ways in which the role relates to others. Because AI teams tend to be cross-functional, stress the need to work collaboratively
- Don't shy away from mentioning specific conversational AI techniques and platforms you are currently using, as this will make your job description more discoverable.

Diversity and inclusion are important goals for any team, but they are particularly key to conversational AI. Diverse AI teams are less likely to launch projects with unexpected consequences and help engender user trust. In the job description, consider being flexible on requirements such as degrees and years of experience, since many strong candidates enter conversational AI from other areas.

Be sure to mention cultural draws, including those that we call out later in this guide (See "[Keeping Your Conversational Team in Top Shape](#)"). If your team includes members who are already highly skilled in conversational AI, mention that, as high-performing candidates will usually be excited to join colleagues from whom they can learn.



Working with Recruiters

When you are hiring for conversational AI skills that are rare and in-demand, it can be useful to work with a specialist recruiter.

- Find a recruiter who specializes in AI, and preferably conversational AI. This will allow them to screen candidates and save you time by interviewing only the best.
- Work with the recruiter to draw up a list of companies and competitors who have brought conversational AI products to market. Ideally, look for companies within the same vertical as yours. These candidates may come at a premium, so be clear on the value proposition of your company and the challenge they will be helping to solve.
- Be sure the recruiter understands which skills are most important for your roadmap and which you would be able to develop in-house.

To find high-quality candidates, nothing beats a strong local network of professionals. Over time, you will learn which local schools and companies develop high-caliber alumni.

Different types of candidates have advantages and disadvantages, and it takes different strategies to reach them.

Experienced Conversational AI Professionals

On the plus side, these candidates typically come with deep knowledge of NLP frameworks, chat / voice platforms and design criteria. Because they've contributed to and launched actual conversational products, their conversational intuition and understanding of best practices can be easier to assess.

For instance, you could ask a product manager candidate to explain how they chose Facebook Messenger over Kik, an NLP scientist candidate why they use [scikit-learn](#) instead of [spaCy](#), and a conversational designer how they conduct user research.

On the other hand, because you'll pay a premium for experienced candidates, make sure the experience is directly relevant. Ideally, they should have worked in the same mode (text, voice or both), industry, and conversational AI use case (conversational marketing, support automation) that you're targeting.

Make sure that they've taken the time to stay current with new conversational AI developments and platforms and have knowledge beyond the practices of their current employer.

If you have the budget, a marquee hire

could help you to attract other experienced professionals who want to work with a respected market leader. To find these candidates, the most promising sources are LinkedIn, industry meetups and contract recruiters.

Candidates From Academia

Candidates coming directly from Ph.D. or Master's programs in natural language processing, machine learning or AI will bring deep and up-to-date knowledge, research skills and contacts in the field. Make sure that they can speak to a range of conversational AI topics outside of their research focus.

For instance, an NLP scientist who wrote a thesis on word sense disambiguation should also be comfortable talking about different approaches to sentiment analysis.

Look for candidates who have worked on end-to-end conversational AI products via internships, summer jobs or side projects. Make sure they have a successful track record of collaborating with others as part of a research team or in another capacity.

Screen candidates for interest in business and design aspects of conversational AI in addition to theoretical considerations, and prepare to mentor them in your business

area, particularly if they don't have previous full-time industry experience.

Source these candidates by doing direct outreach to relevant programs, posting on university job boards or academic mailing lists, or having representation at academic conferences.

Nontraditional Candidates

Conversational AI teams can benefit from nontraditional entrants. Not only may they be easier to source given the competitive hiring landscape, but they can bring diverse perspectives that can improve your product.

Look for candidates who truly care about the potential of conversational AI, are avid users of conversational AI products, have strong intuitions about what makes a successful conversational interaction, and have built promising conversational AI applications as side projects or as part of coursework.

Expect to provide ongoing mentorship and training as they deepen their expertise. You can source these candidates from certificate programs or bootcamps. You might also consider [hosting a challenge](#) on Kaggle to identify top performers.

In addition to bringing new talent in from outside, keep in mind that you can round out a team by upskilling current high-performing employees that are new to conversational AI. If you take this approach, be sure to source a few key experienced employees that can help provide overall strategic direction and mentorship on the specifics of conversational AI.

As you move candidates into the interview stage, see "[Jumpstart your Team Search](#)" for recommended competencies to assess against, and interview questions for, each role.

Your interview panel should be cross-functional to make sure the candidate will

be successful in working with the diverse range of stakeholders in a conversational AI project. If you have team members without a conversational AI speciality on the interview panel, make sure they understand relevant aspects of conversational AI. For instance, the interview panel for a conversational PM should be aware that significant post-launch iteration is the norm for conversational projects.

Finally, don't be shy about recruiting technical interviewers from outside your company if you don't already have a conversational AI team. Many professionals or academics would be happy to do interviews or review interview homework in an advisory capacity. Leverage the network of your board members and strategic investors to make these connections.

Thinking Outside the Box: Nontraditional Hire Profiles

Top conversational AI professionals come to the field through a variety of paths. If you're open to a nontraditional candidate, here are some possible profiles to keep in mind.

- **Taxonomists:** librarian/library scientist, content manager, linguist, customer support engineer
- **Writer or bot trainer:** film and television writer, copywriters/publicist, communications manager, content strategist, content marketing manager, call center agent, customer support rep, language instructor, teacher
- **Conversational designer or PM:** UI/UX designer, VUI designer, creative director, podcast/webcast producer, linguist, psychologist, sociologist, behavioral scientist, digital marketer
- **Audio designer:** sound or voice-over engineer, audio producer
- **Data scientist:** computer scientist, engineer, physicist, statistician, business analyst

Onboarding Your Team

In addition to the standard employee onboarding process, you should cover topics unique to conversational AI to set your hires up for success.

Because of the complexity of conversational AI development and the rapidly evolving nature of the product, your team will rely on skills from across the organization. Help your new hire understand how they fit in among diverse team members, how handoffs take place, and how data flows work. Especially if your new hire is the first in their role – for instance, the first data scientist hired – get team members together to revise processes to better leverage the skills the new addition brings.

Regardless of your employee's role, they should understand your system from end-to-end at a high level. Introduce the problems you are trying to solve with conversational AI and what a successful interaction looks like.

At the next level of detail, cover your persona, the conversational channels you've chosen and why, how your intent system works, and how the taxonomy is structured and updated.

New employees should understand what conversational data is collected, how to access and analyze it, and data privacy policies and safeguards. Once your new hire understands the system itself, teach them about your users and the typical customer journeys within the product. Customer onboarding is particularly crucial in conversational AI and worth covering in detail.

Because conversational AI systems will always have errors, introduce new hires to the types of dialogue errors they can expect, how error rates are measured and what the recovery experience is like, including any human-in-the-loop process flows.





Keeping Your Conversational Team in Top Shape

Whether your talent is homegrown or newly hired, you'll also want to think about how to keep them happy and productive by creating a great conversational AI culture. There are five key elements to consider.

1 **Compensation strategy** is a particularly acute concern given the war for AI talent. Set competitive compensation and be prepared to exceed what you may pay less specialized talent at the same experience level. Set expectations with new team members about how often they will have their compensation reassessed. At a minimum, aim to do this at least every six months, and benchmark against industry norms at least once a year. Don't overlook other supplementary benefits, such as equity, vacation time or flexible or remote scheduling opportunities.

2 The more **autonomy** you can grant your conversational AI team, the happier and more invested they are likely to be. Teams should have ownership over their own success metrics and be able to choose which frameworks and APIs best suit their needs. On the process end, respect that your team's development cycles might look different from other software development at your company. For instance, they may need less up-front planning and more iteration post-launch once data is flowing through the system, and may need cycles to refactor their taxonomy frequently in response to new data. Allow space for risk-taking, creativity, and failure to encourage innovation.

3 **Professional development** is key. Conversational AI is a rapidly evolving field. The opportunity to stay at the cutting edge will be critical to satisfaction and retention. Your company will also benefit from keeping their skills and networks up to date. Consider sponsoring memberships to professional organizations such as [The Association for Computational Linguistics](#), [The Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence](#) or [The Association of Voice Interaction Design](#). To send the message that you value employee growth, provide team members with a budget for professional development, academic or industry conferences, and an allowance for books or journal subscriptions. Mentorship programs and dedicated time for R&D are also attractive incentives. Involve employees in defining a career path for their role so that they have a milestone to work towards.

4 Give your team opportunities to **showcase their innovative work** by encouraging them to publish their work, submit papers to conferences, and apply for awards. This has the added benefit of raising your company's profile with future candidates. You might also consider founding or hosting a local meetup group to provide a forum. Hosting these events exposes your team to thought-leaders and allows you to build a pipeline of potential future hires.

5 Create an environment where employees can truly have **pride** in their work. Use conversational AI to increase customer value, and build long-lasting relationships built on trust. Openly discuss user privacy, algorithmic bias, and other ethical considerations. Adopt or exceed industry best practices. For instance, you'll want to be transparent to your users about when they are interacting with a conversational AI system vs a human. Your team might benefit from joining one of the many industry groups working on AI ethics, such as the [IEEE Global A/IS Ethics Initiative](#).

Prioritizing these five pillars of a strong conversational AI culture will set your team and your conversational AI products up for success.

Developing Your Current Team

If you have a high-performing team member with interest but not much background in conversational AI, you might consider investing in their skills through one of many programs designed for working professionals.

Some offerings to consider here are MIT's [Professional Certificate Program in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence](#) or Microsoft's [Professional Program for Artificial Intelligence](#). For a more specific conversational focus, the University of Washington's [Certificate in Natural Language Technology](#) might fit the bill. [General Assembly](#) offers data science courses in several cities or online.

Jumpstart Your Team Search — Putting Theory into Practice

As conversational AI continues to make waves in how businesses communicate with their customers and employees, you need to ensure your team keeps pace to be successful. To help you get there, you've learned about common conversational AI team roles, how to prioritize them, and what you can do to source, train, hire and retain an all-star team.

Let's get ready to start the conversation at your company about how to take the next step in conversational AI.

Here are a few easy ways to get started:

- Map out the roles in your conversational team and compare them to our list of common roles for your company's stage. Think about which additional hires could add value and when, or whether it makes more sense to upskill your current team.

- Start building your network. Get connected to local meetups or industry groups. Prioritize a few academic or business conferences to have your team attend.
- Ask your current conversational team to self-assess on the five cultural pillars of a successful conversational AI team. Where do you have room to improve?

We hope this guide has helped you understand how to build your conversational team. We'd love to hear your stories or questions as you embark on this journey: [@GeorgianPrtnrs](#)

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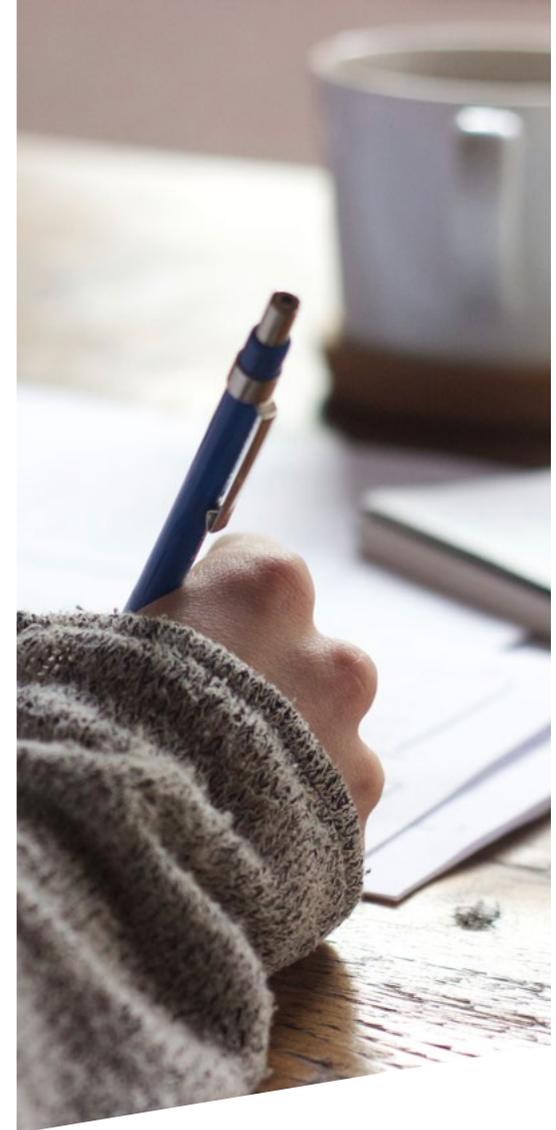
Appendix: Job Descriptions and Interview Competencies

For all of your job descriptions, be sure to include the following elements in addition to responsibilities and qualifications:

- 1 **Description of your team.** Describe in plain but compelling language (without internal jargon) what your company does, and the role of the team the employee will be joining.
- 2 **Diverse workforce statement.** Many companies find it helpful to add a sentence specifically stating that they welcome diverse applicants, and highlighting any programs or statistics that exemplify their commitment to diversity.
- 3 **Benefits and compensation.** Describe your company's compensation strategy and highlight any benefits you have, including flexible working arrangements, if available.

One of the most crucial pieces of each job description is an exciting description of the problems your company is solving, and the specific problems the employee in this role will get to tackle. Highlight what is technically interesting, as well as your real-world impact. Place this section at the beginning, before getting into a description of specific job activities and qualifications.

For specific suggested responsibilities, qualifications, competencies and interview questions by position, read on. Note that the fewer qualifications you mark as required, the greater will be the size and diversity of your applicant pool.



Conversational product manager

Job description

What you'll do

- **Chart our product's course:** You'll develop and communicate a roadmap, strategy, and success criteria for our conversational products. You'll be in charge of helping the team prioritize the new possibilities opened up by conversational AI to improve our customers' experiences.
- **Turn data into strategy:** You'll make sense of usage data, user inputs, the broader landscape and technology advances to inform where we should take our product.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome team of designers and engineers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You have experience defining and launching compelling conversational products.
- You know the ins and outs of leading teams collaboratively through all stages of the development and launch process.
- You love digging into both quantitative and qualitative data to uncover the unexpected.

Bonus qualifications

- You know the chat and voice platform ecosystem well – especially (name your team's specific platforms).
- You're well-versed in linguistics, natural language processing or AI.

Competencies and assessment strategies – Suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Strategic ability (question): Tell me about some of the top tradeoffs you had to make in the roadmap for your current product, and why you made the decisions you did.

Analytical skills (exercise): Share some raw data from your conversational product. Ask the candidate to spend some time with it and come to the interview ready to share their top takeaways based on the data.

Conversational intuition (exercise): Present a sample conversational interaction between your product and a user. Ask the candidate to tell you what they see and how the conversation could be improved, looking for solid intuitions about what makes a good conversation.

Communication (question): Who are the important stakeholders in a conversational product, and how do you develop consensus among them? Tell me about a time when you had to communicate a complex concept in a compelling way. How did you do it? If you had to do it again, what would you change?

Collaboration/leadership (question): Walk me through the most challenging leadership situation you've faced, how you handled it, and what you learned.

Conversational designer

Job description

What you'll do

- **Bring our product to life:** You'll design conversational experiences that feel natural, engaging and efficient – from developing the right persona for our conversational agent to figuring out how to repair a conversation that's gone off track.
- **Go deep on user needs:** You'll become an expert on our customers' needs and motivations, and use this knowledge to steer our product in the right direction.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product and engineering team to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You have experience designing for conversation (including voice design, if your team builds voice product).
- You're passionate and knowledgeable about user-centered design.
- You thrive in a collaborative and cross-functional environment.

Bonus qualifications

- You know the chat and voice platform ecosystem well – especially (name your team's specific platforms).
- You're well-versed in linguistics, psychology or other behavioral sciences.
- You love writing and have copy- or script-writing experience.

Competencies and assessment strategies – Suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Persona design (question): Tell me about the process you'd use to design a persona for a new conversational agent. What questions would be top priority to answer and who would you ask?

Conversational flow design (exercise): Share a sample conversation from your product and a diagram of the underlying conversational flow. Ask the candidate to spend some time with it and come back with some potential improvements to the conversational flow.

Audio design - voice applications only (question): How is designing for speech different from designing for text? What are the risks and opportunities? What steps would you take to transform a chatbot dialogue flow into a speech application?

User-centered design skills (question): Walk me through how you'd go about prioritizing features for a product – feel free to use a real example if you have a process that works for you.

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a time when you had to communicate a complex concept in a compelling way. How did you do it? If you had to do it again, what would you change?

Writing skills (exercise): Ask the candidate to share a few examples of writing they're particularly proud of. If the candidate does not have a portfolio, you can ask them to write a few pieces of dialogue for your application, given some background information about the persona and the task the application is accomplishing.

Data scientist

Job description

What you'll do

- **Automate delightful conversations:** You'll take lots of data, including natural language data, and use it to build automated systems that support an awesome conversational experience for our users.
- **Ask and answer interesting questions:** You'll use product data to discover insights about what our users are doing, what they want and how we can serve them better.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You've successfully automated processes and answered strategic questions with data.
- You have experience with a broad range of data science, statistics and machine learning methodologies and toolkits.
- You're not fazed by messy or incomplete data, and you're excited to build models based on multiple data sources.

Bonus qualifications

- You've worked with conversational data before and have built models to support personalization.
- You know the chat and voice platform ecosystem well – especially (name your team's specific platforms).
- You're interested in human language and its quirks, and well-versed in NLP or linguistics.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Technical data science knowledge (exercise): Have the candidate walk you through their process for building an intent classifier – or provide them with some sample data and ask them to build one. How would you improve this classifier over time?

Conversational knowledge/intuition (exercise): Provide a few sample conversations, and ask the candidate to brainstorm with you about possible textual or linguistic features that might be relevant to answering a specific question for your product (for instance, sentiment analysis, dialogue act classification or product extraction).

Ability to handle messy data (question): Tell me about 3 times you've had to handle data that was messy or incomplete. What strategies and specific techniques did you use to clean it? How did you determine whether those techniques were successful?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a time when you've had to educate other team members about what was or wasn't possible to do with data. What was the issue, how did you approach it, and what were the results? What did you learn from this experience?

Data engineer

Job description

What you'll do

- **Make our conversational AI product tick:** You'll ensure the data that supports personalized, compelling user experience is usable, available and accurate.
- **Get data in top shape:** You'll figure out how to aggregate data across multiple public and private sources, clean, augment and transform it so it is maximally useful, and determine the most efficient way to store and access it.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and data scientists to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You've architected and maintained data storage and processing pipelines for lots of data, both structured and unstructured.
- You've teamed up with data scientists or research teams to extract maximum value from both structured and unstructured data.
- You're well-versed in large-scale databases and big data infrastructure (name your team's specific platforms).

Bonus qualifications

- You're excited about the potential of conversational data and have a portfolio to prove it.
- You love to nerd out about NLP or linguistics.
- You've experimented with and deployed data generation techniques in past projects.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Experience with large-scale data management (question): Walk me through your process for designing a data aggregation, cleaning and management system – which tools/platforms would you use, how would you make the decision, and how does everything work together?

Ability to cope with conversational data (exercise): Show the candidate some example conversational data. Ask them how they would store it, which attributes they would extract, and how.

Familiarity with data analytics techniques (question): Imagine that the data science team would like to establish a feedback loop so that the chatbot can learn from conversations and improve over time. What analytical processes would you need to support with the data? What could go wrong and how might you address it?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a challenging cross-functional project you took on. Who were the stakeholders, what were their needs, and how did you work to define and deliver on the project successfully? Is there anything you would do differently for a similar future project?

Computational linguist aka NLP (natural language processing) scientist

Job description

What you'll do

- **Build intelligence into our conversational AI application:** You'll work on conversational design and optimize NLP classifiers (text-to-speech/speech recognition if you're a voice company) that make our conversations natural and enjoyable.
- **Personalize our experience:** You'll help use natural language data to understand our users and provide them with conversations that speak to them as unique individuals.
- **Launch cool things:** you'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You have a deep academic or industry background in NLP/machine learning – you're comfortable with intent parsing, named entity recognition, entity tracking, sentiment analysis and dialogue act classification. You're familiar with reinforcement learning, deep learning, GANs and other advanced machine learning techniques.
- You've got the software skills to develop NLP models that will shine in production.
- You're well-versed in NLP and machine learning toolkits and infrastructure (name your team's specific platforms).

Bonus qualifications

- You've previously launched a conversational product.
- You've published papers and given conference talks you can share.
- You have experience in language data annotation projects.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Experience with NLP toolkits (question): Walk me through a project in which you relied on major NLP toolkits/frameworks. Which ones did you choose and why? What type of customization or tuning did you apply to the modules you used? Would you use the same system next time? Why or why not?

Familiarity with NLP techniques (exercise): Show the candidate some example conversational data and ask them to design a sample intent classifier, showing which techniques they would use and how they would train and evaluate the model.

Software skills (question): How would you develop a semantic model to represent conversational topics that could be used for classifying dialogue turns? What tools would you use, what integrations would you need to establish, and what would it take to get it into production?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a challenging NLP problem you took on. Who were the stakeholders, what were their needs, and how did you work to define and deliver on the project successfully? Is there anything you would do differently for a similar future project?

Integration engineer

Job description

What you'll do

- **Get our conversational AI product up and running:** You'll choose leading conversational toolkits and messaging/voice platforms to integrate with in order to help us deliver a natural, personal experience for our users.
- **Solve complex problems:** When things go wrong with our integrations, you'll dig in to diagnose the problem and propose and implement solutions.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products .

What we're looking for

- You have previous experience integrating with leading NLP frameworks and messaging platforms (name your team's specific platforms).
- You're excited about helping to design and iterate on our tech stack by keeping up with the latest developments in the space.
- You're comfortable interfacing with our technical partners to troubleshoot issues and represent our needs.

Bonus qualifications

- You love to nerd out about NLP, linguistics or machine learning.
- You have experience in both text and voice platforms.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Experience with machine learning toolkits (question): Walk me through the landscape of machine learning toolkits/frameworks you're familiar with. What are the pros and cons? Which ones would you prefer to work with here?

Experience with messaging/voice platforms (question): Walk me through the landscape of messaging/voice platforms you're familiar with. What are the pros and cons? Which ones would you prefer to work with here?

Problem-solving ability (question): Tell me about a challenging technical issue or bug you encountered while working with messaging platforms. How did you investigate and diagnose the issue? What was the resolution?

Software skills (question): Your team has decided to deploy a bot on multiple messaging and voice platforms. What are the technical challenges that this could create, and how would you address them? How would you manage a significant increase in traffic on these platforms?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a challenging interaction you had with a technical partner. What was the issue and how did you approach it? Is there anything you would do differently for a similar future situation?

Script writer

Job description

What you'll do

- **Be the voice of our conversational AI application:** You'll become an expert in our users' needs and our application's personality, and bring conversations to life by writing clear, helpful and fun content that simultaneously reinforces our business goals and our brand.
- **Train our AI to be more intelligent:** You'll review conversations and user feedback to understand where we can improve, and help shape the product accordingly.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You have a portfolio of engaging writing in a variety of voices to share, with a particular emphasis on conversational or social media interactions.
- You're excited about the nuances of human language and the potential for conversational AI to take advantage of how we most naturally interact.
- You have experience in [industry of company], particularly customer-facing experience.

Bonus qualifications

- You're a heavy user of conversational AI products and messaging or voice platforms.
- You have a background in marketing, linguistics, or psychology.
- You've previously written for a conversational agent

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Writing ability (exercise): Provide the candidate with a sample conversation and a description of your product's persona, and ask them to rewrite your bot's responses to better reflect the persona

Conversational knowledge/intuition (exercise): Provide a few sample conversations, and ask the candidate to brainstorm with you about possible improvements to make the conversation more efficient and engaging

Persona development ability (question): Tell me about a few of your favorite products/brands that have really compelling personas. What are the key things that make them so successful?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a time you had to solve a problem with a cross-functional team. What was the issue and how did you approach it? Is there anything you would do differently for a similar future situation?

Audio designer/engineer

Job description

What you'll do

- **Design a compelling voice experience:** You'll record, edit, and iterate on our prompts, earcons, and other audio artifacts until they are perfect.
- **Lead the audio design process:** From requirements gathering to managing voice talent to recording prompts and voice fonts, you'll be in charge of getting all the moving pieces together.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You have a portfolio of diverse content you've created.
- You're experienced in the end-to-end audio design and recording process.
- You have a deep background in audio production (and perhaps linguistics), including familiarity with industry toolkits.

Bonus qualifications

- Previous experience creating content for a conversational AI system or IVR.
- You're a heavy user of conversational AI products and messaging or voice platforms.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Audio engineering skills (question): Walk me through the process for a recent audio artifact you created. What were the requirements? What process did you follow, which tools did you use, and why? How did you assess the success of the project? Is there anything you would do differently next time?

Linguistics/speech processing background (question): What linguistic considerations are important when directing voice talent and recording prompts? How do you maintain consistency across recording sessions? How is recording prompts for pre-recorded playback different from recording voice fonts for text-to-speech synthesis?

User-centered design skills (exercise): Walk the candidate through some background on an upcoming piece of audio you want to create. Ask them to outline a process to gather requirements, work with voice talent, and develop and produce recordings.

Communication/Collaboration (question): Our work is highly cross-functional. Tell me about a time when you were working with diverse stakeholders who disagreed. What was the issue, and how did you handle it? What takeaways did you have from the experience?

Taxonomist

Job description

What you'll do

- **Keep our conversational AI product in top shape:** You'll analyze our taxonomy's usage, develop metrics to track success, and identify gaps and hot spots to guide refactoring and optimization.
- **Train our AI to be more intelligent:** You'll be the expert on how conversations actually take place in our system. You'll work closely with our NLP and data science teams to identify and prioritize broader improvements to our underlying technology.
- **Launch cool things:** You'll work with our awesome product managers, engineers and designers to develop and iterate on products.

What we're looking for

- You're well versed in all things conversational AI – you understand the different components that make a conversational AI system tick, from intent classifiers to entity extraction and dialogue mapping.
- You have strong opinions about how to organize a taxonomy, evaluate its health and improve its structure.
- You love making sense of unstructured data and producing both qualitative and quantitative insights from it.
- You have experience in [industry of company], particularly customer-facing experience.

Bonus qualifications

- You're a heavy user of conversational AI products and messaging or voice platforms.
- You have a background in linguistics, data science or software engineering.

Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Taxonomist experience (question): Tell me about the largest/most complex taxonomy refactoring you've worked on. What were the challenges? Why did you choose to refactor, and how did you measure your success?

Conversational knowledge/problem-solving ability (exercise): Provide a few sample conversations, and ask the candidate to identify errors and suggest possible ways to investigate the root cause of issues in the conversational AI system, metrics to track the frequency of such problems, and possible solutions

Analytical skills (exercise): Share an outline of your current taxonomy and any related metrics you have. Ask the applicant to brainstorm with you about insights or takeaways, including further questions they'd want to investigate and how they would enhance the taxonomy evaluation process.

Communication/Collaboration (question): Taxonomists work cross-functionally with a variety of other functions, from engineering to customer success. Tell me about how you defined swim lanes and collaborative processes with diverse stakeholders in previous positions. What were the challenges? Is there anything you would do differently for a similar future situation?

Customer success manager

Job description

What you'll do

- **Guide our customers to success:** You'll be at the forefront of helping our customers adopt conversational AI, setting goals, and leading them through the planning and execution phase of projects.
- **Bring the customer voice into the development process:** You'll be the expert on our customers and their needs, and will work closely with our product, design and engineering teams to make sure their perspective is a key part of our product strategy.
- **Drive continuous improvement:** You'll develop and iterate on support processes to serve our customers throughout the lifecycle and help identify and pursue strategic opportunities.

What we're looking for

- You have a strong track record helping customers to successfully adopt new technology through your empathy, technical knowledge and strategic insight.
- You're well versed in all things conversational AI – you understand the different components that make a conversational AI system tick, from taxonomies to dialogue mapping to human-in-the loop protocols.
- You're excited to educate and inform customers about the latest possibilities enabled by conversational AI.
- You have experience in [industry of company].

Bonus qualifications

- You're passionate about the conversational AI space and have a solid understanding of players and new developments.
- You're a heavy user of conversational AI products.

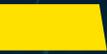
Competencies and assessment strategies – suggested interview questions or practical exercises

Customer empathy (question): Tell me about the customers you work with now. What are their needs? How do you get to know them and stay in touch with them? What hurdles have you helped them overcome?

Conversational AI knowledge (question): What are some new developments in conversational AI you're particularly excited about? How do you think they have potential to impact customers in our industry? What challenges do you foresee in driving adoption?

Process efficiency (question): Tell me about a process you've improved. What were the success criteria, and how did you go about it? Were there any trade-offs when making the shift?

Communication/Collaboration (question): Tell me about a situation you've faced in which customer requests were at odds with the top-down product strategy. How did you handle the situation, and what was the outcome? Is there anything you'd do differently next time?



Glossary

NLP

NLP stands for “Natural Language Processing,” and refers to using computers to produce and understand human language.

A subset of NLP, Natural Language Understanding (NLU), focuses on analyzing a piece of natural language and extracting information to help a machine understand and act on it. For instance, you might want to understand whether the user is asking a question or making a statement (dialogue act classification), is expressing a positive or a negative feeling (sentiment analysis), or is referencing particular places, people or things (entity extraction).

Persona

Your persona is your conversational AI product’s identity, usually including a name, gender and appearance, and a distinct personality. The persona is key to getting your user interaction right.

A customer service chatbot in healthcare, for example, may want to project a professional and warm persona, while a shopping chatbot might be playful and fun.

Intent

An intent is a user’s desire to accomplish something when using your conversational AI application.

For a financial chatbot, the set of possible intents might include checking a bank balance or ordering new checks. For a shopping chatbot, a user’s intent might be to explore products or make a purchase.

Intent taxonomy/ontology

Taxonomies and ontologies are frameworks for organizing the set of possible intents in your conversational AI application, usually in a hierarchical fashion.

For example, you may have two top level groups of intents for a healthcare chatbot: clinical questions and administrative issues. Under each of these, you might have additional subgroups of intents (e.g. administrative issues could include billing questions, address changes, and ordering medical records). Additionally, taxonomies and ontologies can be used to map intents and entities to specific actions, such as responding in a contextually relevant way or triggering a back end process.

Dialogue flow

The dialogue flow maps the back and forth between your conversational AI application and the end user. Key components of your dialogue flow include how you start and end conversations, and what happens if your conversational AI application can’t understand what the user wants.

Specific intents may have their own associated dialogue flows: for instance, if the user is looking for a product recommendation, you might first ask a series of questions to gather more information, then return with the recommendation, then ask if they are satisfied or would like another.

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Founded by successful entrepreneurs and technology executives, at Georgian Partners we leverage our deep software expertise to directly impact the success of our portfolio companies. That expertise spans areas as diverse as machine learning, analytics, deep learning, cryptography, linguistics, natural language processing, differential privacy, software engineering, information security and cloud computing.