zendesk

Using AI for better self-service

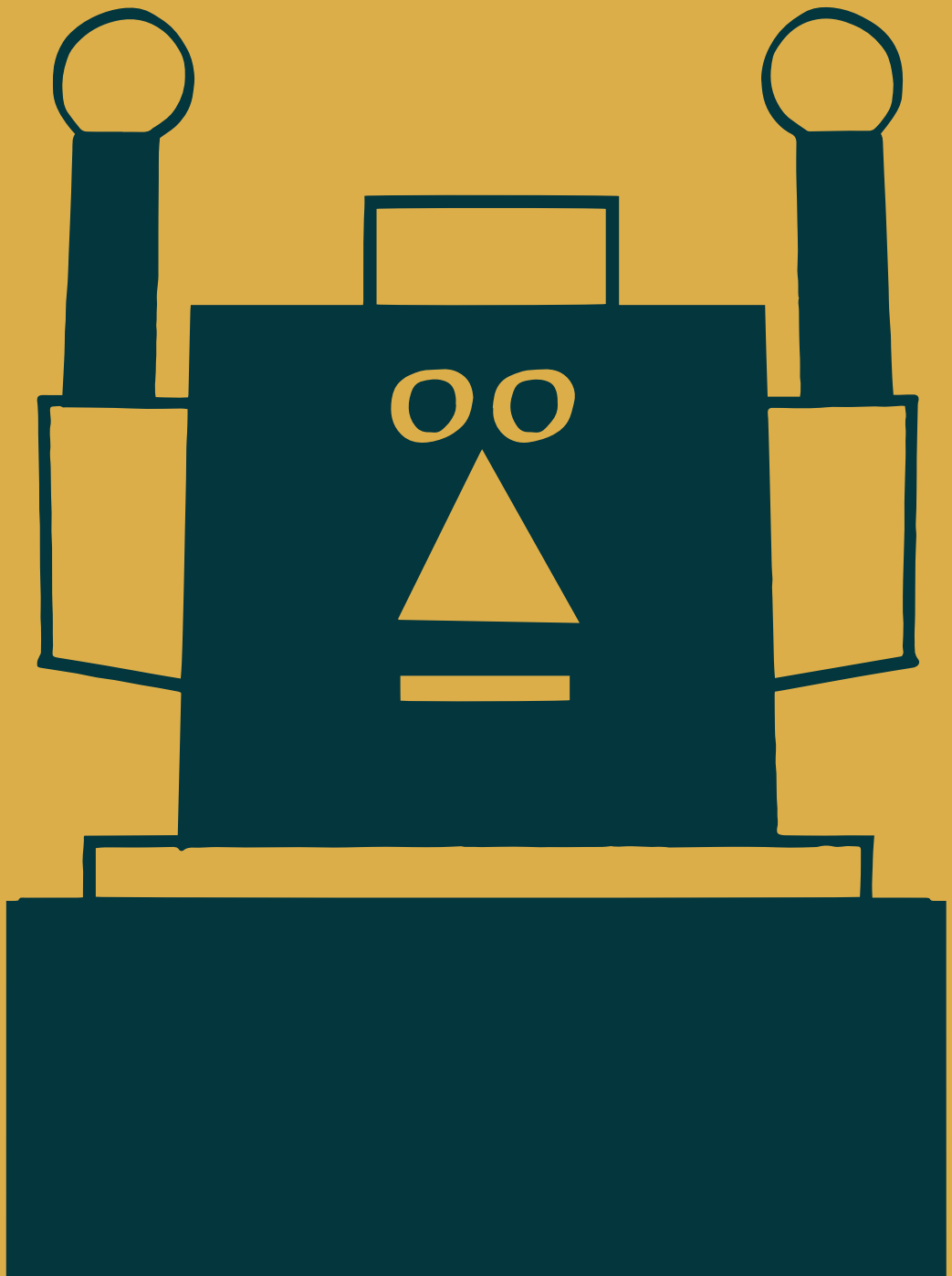


Table of Contents

01 **Introduction**

Customer expectations have changed

02 **Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Customer Service**

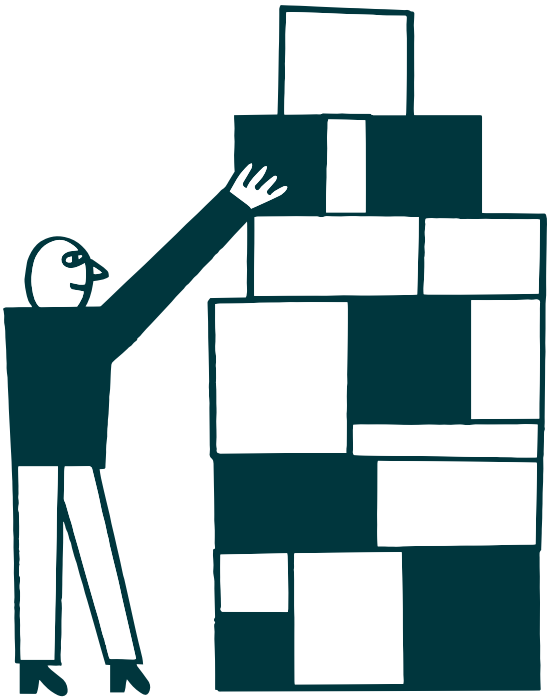
Build a better knowledge base with Content Cues

Automatically respond to customers with Answer Bot

Improve Support Agent Productivity with Answer Bot for Agents

03 **The best customer experiences are built with Zendesk**

Customer expectations have changed



Customers have caught on that support interactions are getting better. When they reach out, they've come to expect an instant response that says "we're here for you". When they want information, it's expected to be accurate, up-to-date, and easily accessible. Essentially, they come to expect efficiency during support interactions.

As a result, businesses are becoming more cognizant of their self-service offerings. Customers want to be left feeling empowered; it's even better when they can do so on their own. Self-service saves time for agents, cuts down on organizational costs, and leaves the customer with a positive outlook of a brand.

And technology won't stop changing

Advancements in customer support software, cloud technologies, and mobile platforms have changed how we meet the customer's expectations. Exploring how different interactions can be optimized has continuously raised the bar for customer support. But while most modernized systems share similar features, there's still one advancement that only a few have figured out: **artificial intelligence (AI).** Never mind the superfluous noise surrounding it; what's important is that customer service is widely expected to be the most practical application for business-related AI.

So how can modern support organizations, with all of their inherent complexities, leverage AI to scale their support operations? How can they do so without losing sight of the customer? These questions ring particularly true for enterprise customer service. For them to support the needs of their customers; agents, support managers, outside vendors, legal team members, and content owners all have to work together and share data effectively. It's an ideal to strive for, but a difficult one for large companies to achieve.

The good news is that artificial intelligence, when done right, can help fill in the gaps that exist in customer service organizations. It can do so by catching patterns that humans would otherwise miss. It can automate cumbersome processes to work more smoothly. It can provide extra information that will be of great assistance to support agents and their workflows. And, most importantly, it's becoming more practical for complex organizations.

Applications of artificial intelligence in customer service

AI-enhanced tools are designed to increase agent productivity. They do so by enabling faster resolution times and better process handling. This ultimately leads to greater customer satisfaction.

In the case of self-service and knowledge management support, agents can utilize artificial intelligence to improve these responsibilities:

- **Identifying topics that require new help articles to be written**
- **Keeping a knowledge base fresh and relevant, with content that genuinely helps the customer**
- **Making sure help articles are simple to find (for both customers and agents)**
- **Ensuring that agents spend more time on complex inquiries instead of simple one-touch tickets**
- **Enabling support organizations to be proactive rather than reactive**

Remember: happy agents mean happy customers, and vice versa. Artificial intelligence for customer service is successful when it's benefiting both sides.

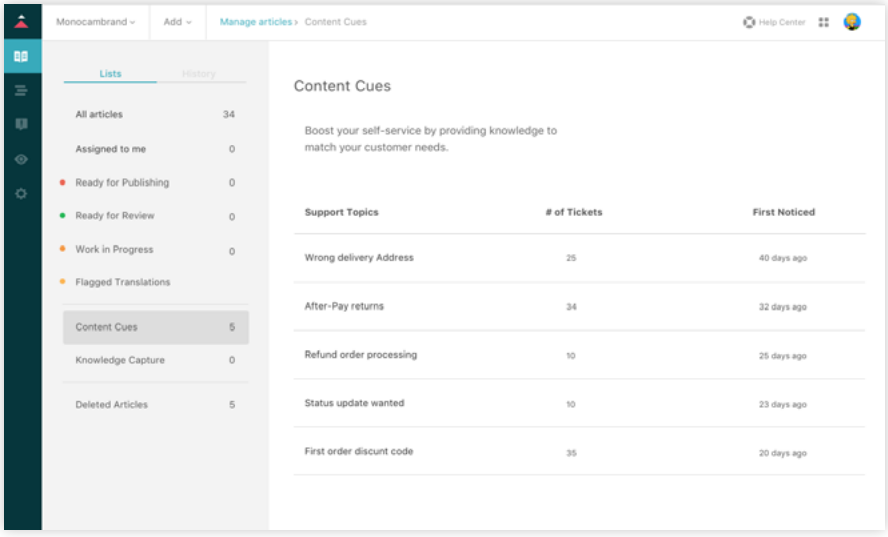
Build a better knowledge base with Content Cues

Here's a scenario: a customer reads a help article related to their problem, but it doesn't specifically address their issue. What happens next?

There are now extra steps involved: contacting an agent, diagnosing the problem, and perhaps looping more agents in. Frustration ensues. To ensure a knowledge base is accurate and capable of helping customers self-serve, Zendesk Guide Enterprise comes equipped with an AI-powered tool for better knowledge management. It's called **Content Cues.**

Powered by deep learning and natural-language processing, Content Cues empowers support content managers to optimize their knowledge base in Zendesk Guide. Here's how:

1. **Tickets created in Zendesk Support are automatically examined to identify trending topics**
2. **Existing articles in Zendesk Guide are reviewed to see if they're relevant with the trending topics**
3. **Content Cues recommends if new articles should be written or if existing articles should be updated, complete with an editing tool that provides the phrases that customers are searching for**



Benefits of Content Cues

Identify gaps within a knowledge base

There can be a disconnect between what agents think customers want and what customers actually need. This is especially true of large enterprise organizations.

Content Cues highlights the information that customers are looking for. By aggregating similar support tickets and the language used within them, support teams can more easily utilize customer inquiries as feedback for self-service content.

Create more relevant articles

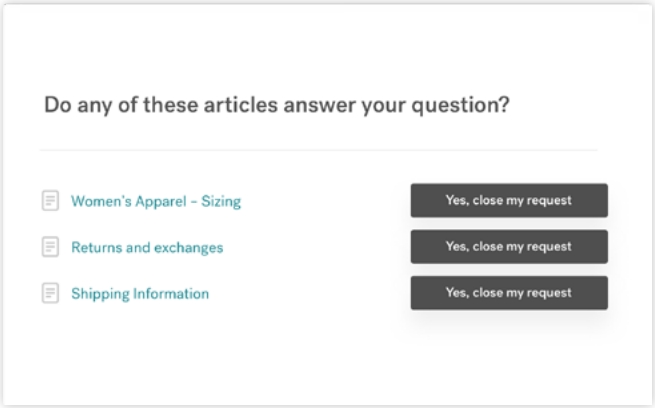
Customers aren't obligated to give agents hints about what to write about. But luckily, they tend to provide plenty of helpful details when they create a ticket. Content Cues leverages the ample detail in Support tickets to learn how customers communicate their issues.

It does so by providing agents with content suggestions based on the phrasing and language found in ticket descriptions. This helps agents rewrite or create articles that are more relevant (and relatable) to their target audience.

Make content more easily accessible

Content Cues includes an editing tool that auto-populates searchable tags into the article. These tags are determined by the topics customers want to see - by including them, articles can reach a wider range of customers (both via the knowledge base and search engines).

For example: if customers want to know how to get a refund, they might use the search phrases *"process refund"* or *"how long for a refund"*. Content Cues recognizes how customers search for answers and makes them easier to find.



Automatically respond to customers with Answer Bot

Customers are often looking to self-serve whenever they can, so why not offer a little extra assistance? **Answer Bot** is a virtual customer assistant that automatically responds to a customer's question with help articles from Zendesk Guide.

When a customer creates a ticket, Answer Bot's AI determines which help articles will be relevant to their inquiry. Over time, Answer Bot learns from the success of the suggestions and becomes even better. Answer Bot is powered by the same deep learning and natural language processing technologies used in Content Cues.

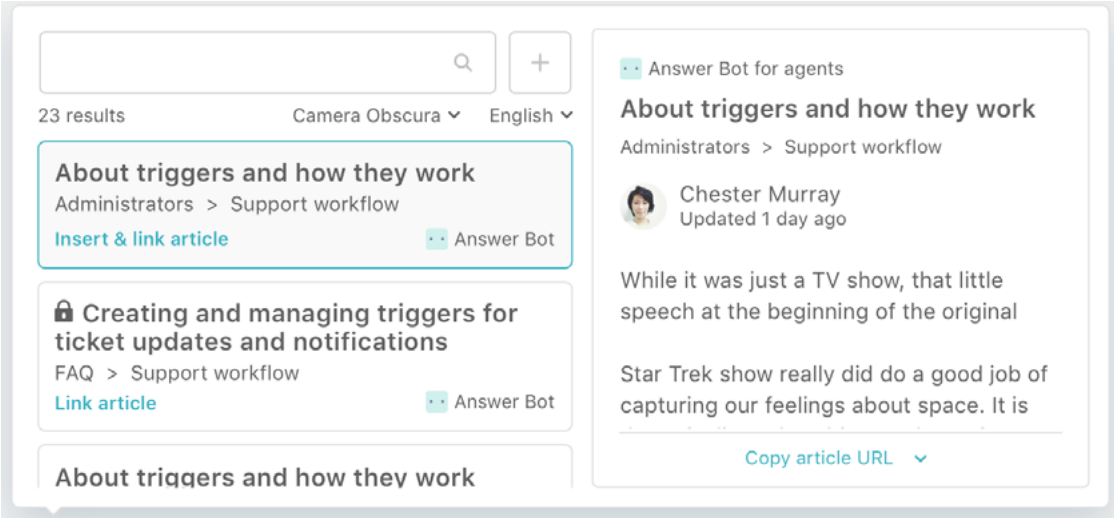
Here's what happens when Answer Bot appears:

- Answer Bot suggests an article that **leads to a resolution.** It recognizes that the article's content was helpful for the language that in the customer's ticket. It uses this feedback to improve its algorithms and assist customers with similar issues.
- Answer Bot suggests articles, but they **don't resolve the customer's inquiry.** Agents follow up with customers as they normally would.

Better help articles means better suggestions

Answer Bot can help direct more customers to help articles optimized by Content Cues. Here's what happens when both tools are used:

1. **Content Cues gives detailed feedback on what customers are looking for. Once the articles are updated, they're more relevant to what customers need help with.**
2. **Answer Bot does a better job suggesting articles for specific inquiries, now that they include the language and logic that customers commonly use. This can result in higher automatic resolution rates.**



Improve agent productivity with Answer Bot for Agents

Agents that use Zendesk Guide Pro or Enterprise also receive article recommendation from Answer Bot.

When an agent opens a Support ticket, Answer Bot identifies and recommends relevant help articles (like it would for a customer). If an agent needs to review an article related to the customer's inquiry, it's directly in their agent interface.

This can help speed up the resolution process (since agents don't have to go rummaging through the knowledge base), and make support agents more aware of their help articles. It's a great way for agents to have a more holistic view of their self-service support.

Chatbots for self-service

AI-powered self-service can be incorporated into other support channels as well, including real-time channels like chat. Chatbots can create more customized, personalized self-service experiences for businesses that want to automate conversations and offer immediate help to their customers.

Here are a few examples of how chatbots can help customers with self-service:

- **They automate straightforward and repetitive tasks, such as retrieving information like account balances or order statuses.**
- **They proactively collect information from visitors, so agents can better understand their needs and provide more accurate responses to their questions.**

Zendesk Chat customers have the flexibility to integrate AI-powered bots into the customer experience with our Chatbot API. The API can be used in conjunction with pre-built chatbots developed by third-party bot experts, or with bots created by customers themselves.

The best customer experiences are built with Zendesk

Providing great self-service means empowering customers to educate themselves. Zendesk Guide enables teams to create their own customizable help center, online community, and customer portal. Get started with a free trial and learn how to build a better self-service strategy:

https://www.zendesk.com/guide/

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