



Using AI for better self-service

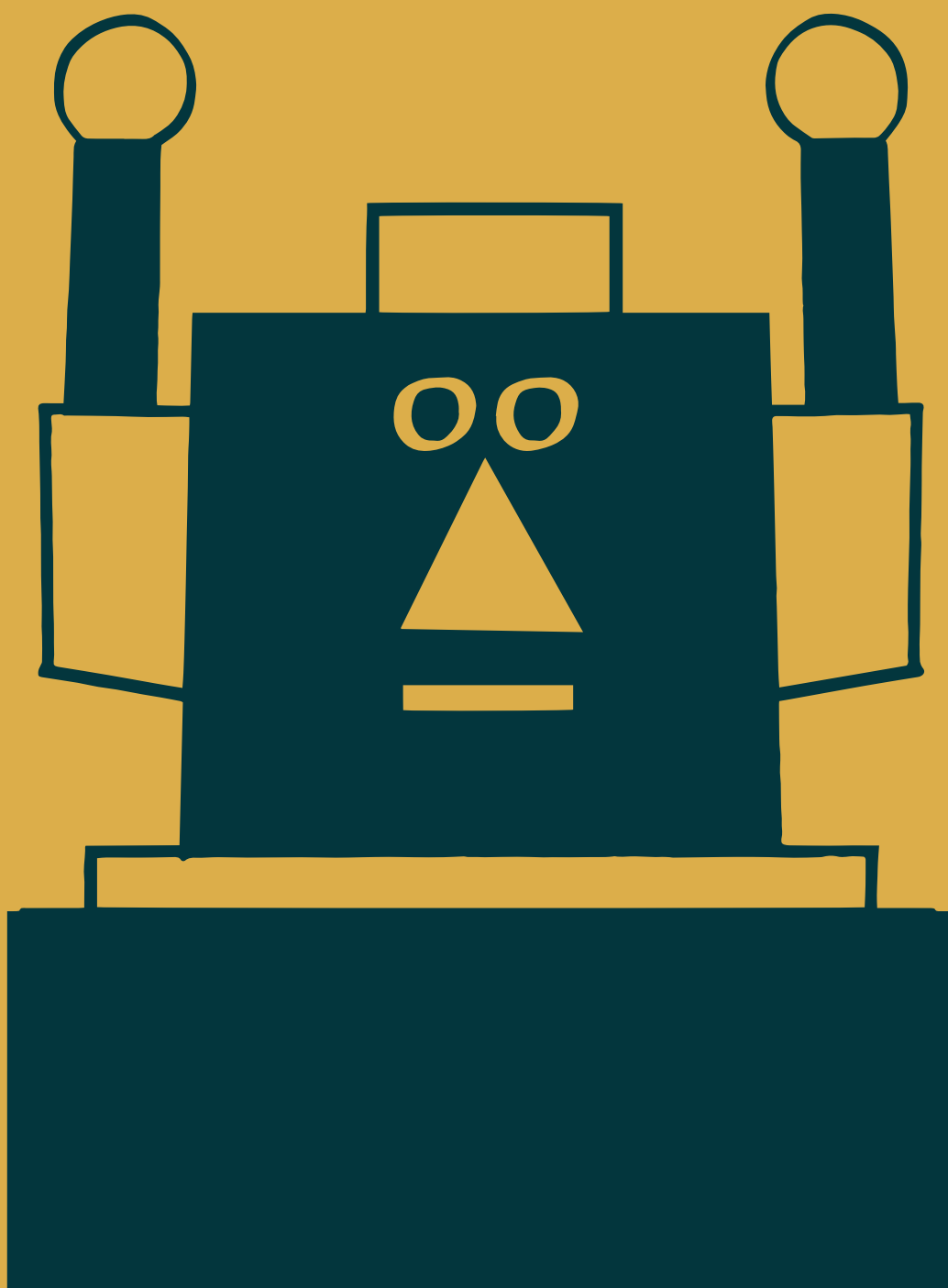


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Customer expectations have changed

It wasn't all that long ago that customers would put up with the lengthy waiting times and hurdles that came with the customer support experience, but that's no longer the case. Today's customers are groomed to expect far more from the products and services they've invested in. They want instantaneous responses from agents, fast and easy access to information, and a high-quality brand interaction throughout every step to resolution.

As a result, the terms "omnichannel" and "self-service" have become mainstays in the customer service lexicon. It doesn't matter where or how a customer seeks support; they expect a level of care and diligence consistent with the best help they have experienced. That puts a big demand on support organisations, leaving them with only two options: meet the high expectations, or exceed them.

But so has the technology that meets them

The recent advances in customer support software, cloud technologies and mobile platforms, have made it easier to meet changing customer expectations. It's now all about ease-of-use for both the customer and the agent, which is exactly what comes with the latest and greatest tech. While many have already adopted and grown accustomed to modernised systems, there's still one advance only a few have figured out: Artificial Intelligence (AI). Never mind the loads of superfluous noise surrounding AI and the potential impact it will have on businesses and employees; it's widely expected that the [most practical application of business-related AI will be for customer service](#).

With that in mind, a modern customer service organisation in an enterprise company should be capable of handling the complexities of scaling their support operations without losing sight of the customer. That means supporting the needs of the customer. Agents, support managers, outside vendors, legal team members and content owners all need to be able to work together and share data effectively. It's an ideal that many organisations strive for, but it's not always a reality.

Artificial intelligence, when done right, can help fill in the gaps that exist in today's customer service organisations. It can catch patterns that humans would otherwise miss and automate cumbersome processes to work more smoothly. This extra information and efficiency can be of great assistance to support agents and their workflows, particularly when they're trying to better understand their customers and optimise the various channels offered for help.

Applications of artificial intelligence in customer service

By streamlining operations with AI, enterprises can increase the productivity of their agents and improve the general quality of service. Those benefits are ultimately passed on to customers. Companies equipped with the latest support technologies tend to achieve faster resolution times, better process handling and greater customer satisfaction.

In the case of self-service and knowledge management, these areas can be vastly improved with the right application of artificial intelligence. Some of those improvements include:

- Identifying topics for which new help articles need to be written
- Keeping a knowledge base fresh and relevant, with content that actually helps the customer
- Making sure help articles are simple to find, for both customers and agents
- Ensuring that agents spend more time on complex enquiries rather than simple one-touch tickets
- Enabling customer service organisations to be more proactive rather than reactive

Remember: happy agents mean happy customers, and vice versa. Artificial intelligence for customer service should benefit both sides; that's the goal that we aspire to here at Zendesk. Read on to learn about our AI-powered tools for enhanced self-service and knowledge management.

Build a better knowledge base with Content Cues

If a customer reads a help article related to their problem, but the article does not specifically address their issue, what happens next? An issue that could have been resolved quickly now requires additional steps: contacting an agent, diagnosing the problem, working out what the customer couldn't learn on their own, etc. It adds an extra level of frustration but even worse, the knowledge base doesn't serve its intended purpose: helping the customer help themselves. That's why Zendesk Guide Enterprise comes equipped with an AI-powered tool for better knowledge management: **Content Cues**.

Powered by Deep Learning and Natural Language Processing technologies, Content Cues empowers Content Managers to optimise their Zendesk Guide knowledge base. Here's how it works:

1. Support tickets created in Zendesk Support are automatically reviewed by Content Cues to identify trending topics
2. Existing articles in Zendesk Guide are reviewed by Content cues to identify existing content in your knowledge base
3. Support topics identified by Content Cues are compared to existing knowledge base content to identify topics that lack corresponding articles
4. Recommendations are made for creating new articles or updating existing ones in Zendesk Guide, complete with an editing tool that makes content suggestions based on the phrases that customers are searching for

The screenshot shows the Zendesk Content Cues interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Monocambrand', 'Add', and 'Manage articles > Content Cues'. The sidebar on the left has a 'Lists' tab and a 'History' tab. Under 'Lists', there are several categories with counts: 'All articles' (34), 'Assigned to me' (0), 'Ready for Publishing' (0), 'Ready for Review' (0), 'Work in Progress' (0), 'Flagged Translations' (0), 'Content Cues' (5), 'Knowledge Capture' (0), and 'Deleted Articles' (5). The main panel is titled 'Content Cues' and contains the text: 'Boost your self-service by providing knowledge to match your customer needs.' Below this is a table with three columns: 'Support Topics', '# of Tickets', and 'First Noticed'.

Support Topics	# of Tickets	First Noticed
Wrong delivery Address	25	40 days ago
After-Pay returns	34	32 days ago
Refund order processing	10	25 days ago
Status update wanted	10	23 days ago
First order discount code	35	20 days ago

Identify gaps within a knowledge base

There can be a disconnect between what customers read and what they want to know. In the case of large enterprises, it isn't always clear where to start when addressing this gap.

Content Cues highlights the information that customers can't find for themselves. By aggregating common support tickets and the language that's used in them, support teams are able to use their customers' outreach as feedback on their self-service efforts.

Create more relevant articles

Customers are not obliged to give agents hints about what to write about. But whenever they create a support ticket, they provide many helpful details in hope of resolving their problem(s).

Content Cues leverages the ample detail in Support tickets to determine how customers are interpreting their issues. The phrasing and language in ticket descriptions are relayed back to agents. In turn, help articles can be rewritten in a way that's more relatable and relevant to the problems described within Support tickets.

Make content more easily accessible

Content Cues comes complete with an editing tool that auto-populates specific tags into the help article. These tags are determined based on the topics customers are looking for – by including them, the article becomes more easily searchable and can reach a wider range of customers (both within the knowledge base and via search engines).

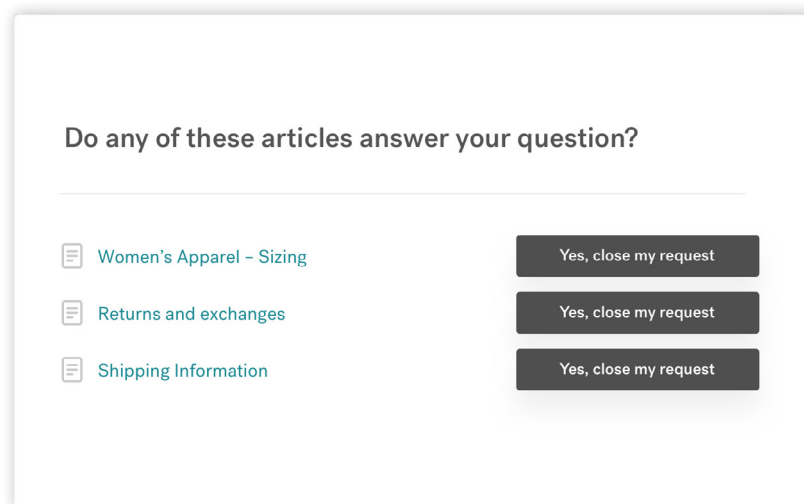
For example: if customers want to know how to get a refund, they might use the search phrases *"process refund"* or *"how long refund"*. Content Cues recognises the different ways that customers search for answers while simultaneously making them easier to find.

Automatically respond to customers with Answer Bot




Customers are often looking to self-serve whenever they can, so why not offer them a little extra assistance? Artificial intelligence powers “virtual customer assistants” (VCAs) which live on company websites. They are designed to direct users towards the help they’re looking for.

Answer Bot is a virtual customer assistant that directs enquiring customers to relevant help articles. When a customer tries to contact an agent, Answer Bot chimes in with suggestions of articles that most closely match the question being asked. Over time, the article suggestions become consistently more accurate and appropriate for complicated use cases. Answer Bot is also powered by the same Deep Learning and Natural Language Processing technologies as Content Cues.

- When Answer Bot suggests an article that **leads to a resolution**, it recognises that content of the article solved the customer’s enquiry and continues to improve algorithms based on this feedback.
- When Answer Bot suggests articles that **do not lead to a resolution**, agents follow up with customers as they normally would.



Do any of these articles answer your question?

 Women's Apparel – Sizing	Yes, close my request
 Returns and exchanges	Yes, close my request
 Shipping Information	Yes, close my request

Better help articles means better suggestions

Content Cues and Answer Bot can be an incredibly powerful deep-learning duo. By using them together, customer service teams can achieve a better automatic resolution rate by getting more eyes on their optimised knowledge base.

Here's how:

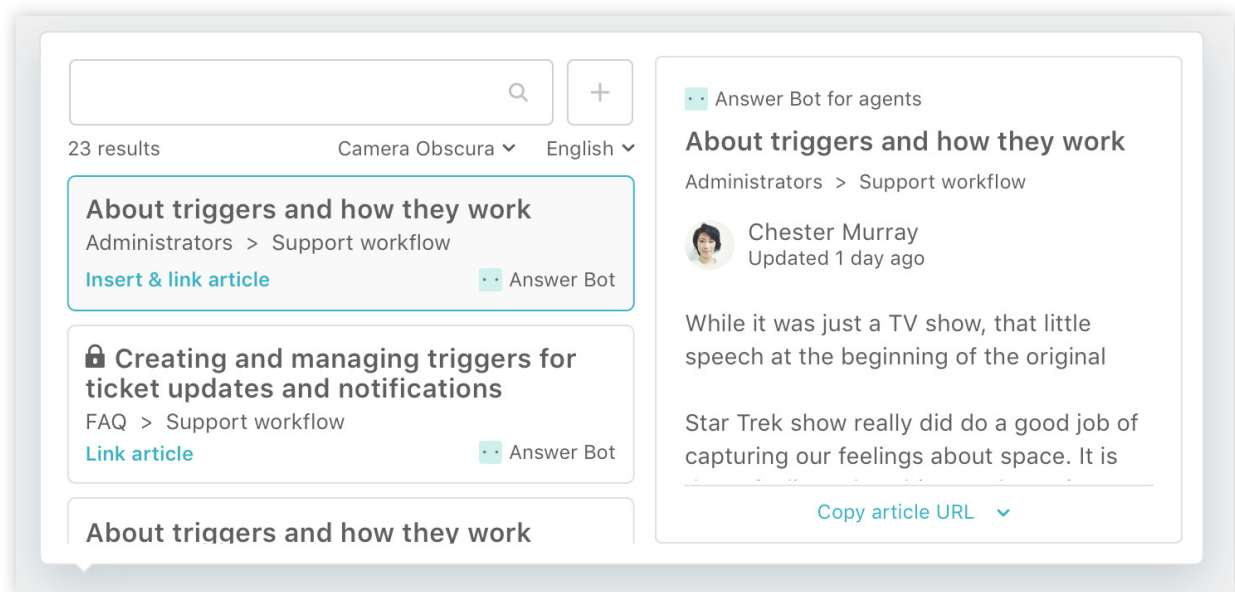
1. Content Cues provides detailed feedback on the kind of information customers are looking for and recommends topics for articles to fill knowledge gaps. Once the recommended updates are implemented, the optimised help articles become more relevant to what customers are looking for.
2. Answer Bot can recommend more relevant articles to automatically answer customer questions based on the newly created or updated knowledge base articles. This process leads to knowledge content optimisation that's better targeted for specific customer enquiries and results in a higher automatic resolution rate.

Improve Support Agent Productivity with Answer Bot for Agents

Answer Bot isn't only for customers – Zendesk Guide Pro and Enterprise customers also receive Answer Bot recommendations directly in their agent interface.

By using the same logic as it would for customers, Answer Bot automatically identifies and recommends relevant knowledge base articles to support agents within the Zendesk agent interface when they are working on resolving customer issues. This means that agents no longer need to spend additional time researching relevant content when resolving customer enquiries.

Answer Bot for Agents not only increases support agent productivity, but also makes them more aware of the help content offered to customers, giving them a more holistic view of their self-service support.



The best customer experiences are built with Zendesk

A well-crafted knowledge base is the cornerstone of a great customer service experience, but putting one together can be a daunting task. Powered by AI, Zendesk Guide enables you to quickly build a customisable help centre, online community and customer portal. Get started with a free trial now to create the self-service your customers want and get better results from your customer-service strategy:

<https://www.zendesk.co.uk/guide/>

