



Markerstudy transforms the IT service desk experience



All user-raised tickets now come via Virtual Agent (VA)



24/7 support available to customers



26 topics automated by Virtual Agent

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Thanks to Virtual Agent, we were able to focus on getting everyone set up at home within two to three weeks.

Vicky Taylor, M-TEC Service Operations Manager, Markerstudy Group

Fast-growing insurance leader

Markerstudy is an accredited Investor in People - Gold, with more than 5,000 employees.

Established in 2001, the group includes the UK's largest MGA, Markerstudy Insurance Services Limited, which supports over 1,000 broker partners and protects in excess of six million policyholders with a comprehensive range of products, from standard screen-rated to the very niche and hard to place manually underwritten risk.

Industry:

Financial Services

Location:

Sevenoaks, United Kingdom

People:

5,000+ employees

Products:

- IT Service Management Pro
- Virtual Agent

In 2020, Markerstudy acquired Co-op Insurance's underwriting business and commenced a 13-year partnership to provide home and motor insurance products under the Co-op brand.

In 2021 it acquired BGL Insurance, a leading distributor of insurance to 3 million customers, and Lloyd's broker, Clegg Gifford.

Other sectors within the group include the Markerstudy Broking division, which comprises a number of brands including Brightside Insurance and Insurance Factory – one of the UK's largest pet insurance platforms – and complementary businesses Auto Windscreens, VisionTrack and Vision Vehicle Solutions.

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ServiceNow appealed to the business because it combines so many different options and modules together into a single platform.

Mark Van Loock, Continual Service Improvement Manager, Markerstudy Group



Supporting growth through modernization

In 2020 the group became the UK's 6th largest motor insurance provider after completing the purchase of the Co-op Insurance underwriting business and commencing a 13-year partnership to provide home and motor insurance products under the Co-op brand.

This expansion was only the latest step in Markerstudy's long-running and highly successful growth strategy – but it marked a turning point for its internal IT service desk, which is responsible for supporting the IT needs of all Markerstudy brands. With the new acquisition in the pipeline, the organization realized that demand would soon outstrip its capacity.

Markerstudy's desire to engage with new technologies, coupled with a belief that many employees and customers were becoming more comfortable with using them, led the business to start searching for a 21st-century IT support solution that would improve self-service capabilities. The desire was to utilize AI and machine learning to engage with users for routine and simple IT support, leaving experienced staff to focus on more complex work.

Vicky Taylor, M-TEC Service Operations Manager at Markerstudy, explains: "There's an overarching goal throughout Markerstudy to move with the times and see what new technologies can offer us. Within the service desk, there was a desire to shift away from traditional, call-based support and enable more self-service. It was an opportunity to both reduce costs and become less wasteful of both our teams' and customers' time."

Building an automated chatbot

The Now Platform was already on Markerstudy's radar as a strong contender to address challenges in other areas of the business. So when the group realized that ServiceNow IT Service Management (ITSM) could also deliver service desk automation, it sealed the deal.

Mark Van Loock, Continual Service Improvement Manager at Markerstudy, comments: "ServiceNow appealed to the business because it combines so many different options and modules together into a single platform. It's one central source that links everything together."

ServiceNow Virtual Agent (VA) gave Markerstudy the ability to build a chatbot with a wide array of topics to fully automate first-line service. After a brief exploration period, VA's potential became clear; a few weeks later the Lumi chatbot was born.

"Most machine learning-based chatbots we looked at relied on volume of tickets to train the AI model," notes Michael Greveson, Senior M-TEC Technician at Markerstudy. "Because we had a very stable service, we were only getting high volume in certain areas. ServiceNow was perfect because it let us build the chatbot from scratch using our own knowledge."



Having the 24/7 service in place makes such a difference. It's invaluable in enabling modern ways of working and supporting people's work-life.

Vicky Taylor
M-TEC Service Operations Manager
Markerstudy Group



First-line automation ahead of schedule

ServiceNow VA enabled Markerstudy to leverage its team's knowledge to build a fully automated chatbot capable of receiving – and often resolving – tickets, initially for nine topics. Markerstudy initially planned to slowly phase out traditional channels in favor of the new chatbot, but when COVID-19 lockdowns began, the group made a bold decision: to cope with the massive surge in service desk demand, Markerstudy simultaneously disabled phone, emails, and live chat, making Lumi the first line of service for all tickets.

"All of a sudden, we had to help the entire organization transition to working from home," recalls Vicky. "Thanks to VA, we were able to focus on getting everyone set up within two to three weeks. If we'd been taking phone calls as well, it wouldn't have been possible." Data-driven service improvement.

Following the initial VA deployment, Markerstudy has worked continuously to expand the scope of the chatbot, utilizing ServiceNow User Experience Analytics to make targeted improvements based on usage data. Today, the service offers 26 topics that cover the full range of customer requests.

In some areas, the chatbot even automates issue resolution, as Claire McInnes, IT Automation Manager, explains: "We use PowerShell to interface ServiceNow with some of our other tools. For example, customers can use the chatbot to trigger a script that will automatically handle a password reset or VM session kill. From the user perspective, it's all one seamless experience. These are processes that used to take up a lot of technician time, so enabling customers to fully self-serve is a game changer."

Adding value instead of wait times

Although shutting off the service desk phones was a bold strategy, the customer experience has improved. Now users no longer need to wait for an agent, submitting a ticket is significantly faster, and the service is available 24/7. What's more, many issues can now be rapidly resolved entirely via self-service, as VA can trigger a range of newly automated processes or direct users to the relevant self-service guides.

Vicky comments: "Having the 24/7 service in place makes such a difference. It's invaluable in enabling modern ways of working and supporting people's work-life balance."

For the service desk team, the transformation is just as apparent. Technicians that used to spend most of their time on first-line service can now focus on high-priority issues rather than answering phones, and the time savings are allowing the team to support its growing customer-base.



An intelligent future

Looking ahead, Markerstudy has plans to further utilize usage insights from User Experience Analytics to improve Lumi's natural language capabilities, as well as ServiceNow Predictive Intelligence to allow the chatbot to intelligently categorize and route requests that haven't been preprogrammed.

The group is also taking advantage of the Now Platform to automate procurement processes, and it is exploring the use of additional ITSM modules in areas such as vendor management, and enhancing incident management, and problem management.

