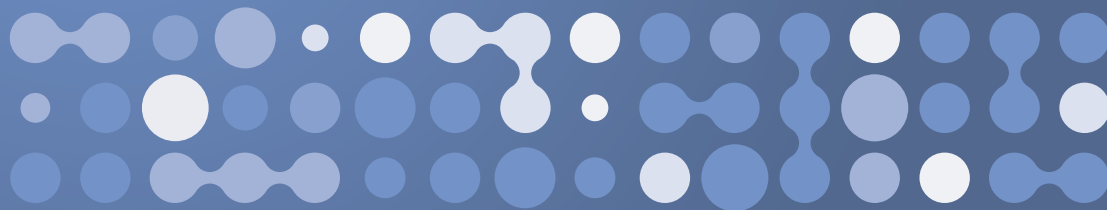
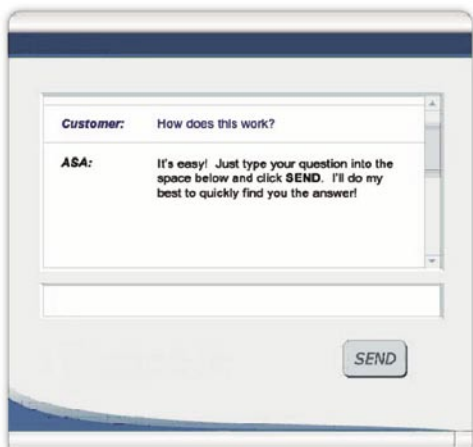




MICROSOFT® AUTOMATED SERVICE AGENT SOLUTION OVERVIEW



What is a Microsoft Automated Service Agent?



Customers now expect and demand more responsive service from companies. To acquire and retain customers, a company must be able to answer questions and resolve product support issues with prompt attention.

A Microsoft® Automated Service Agent (ASA) Solution is a virtual support representative that lives online and provides customer support around the clock, interacting in a natural, conversational style. Customers use a text-chat interface to type questions in their own words and receive immediate responses.

Microsoft Automated Service Agents stand out for their ability to converse in natural language with customers, minimizing frustration and increasing satisfaction.

Key Features of the Automated Service Agent Solution

Microsoft's ASA Solution perfectly complements and integrates with "full-circle" customer relationship management (CRM) solutions. Our corporate customers have proven that the ASA Solution yields immediate savings and a vast improvement in the quality of support currently available to their end customers.

- ASAs enable customers to articulate even the most technical questions in their own words and get direct answers, not pages of search results.
- ASAs provide your customers with round-the-clock support seven days a week.
- Microsoft's Knowledge Modules offer a comprehensive lexicon of terms and phrases related to your industry.
- ASAs maximize a customer's initial contact resolution while minimizing your costs.
- ASAs can detect high-value cases and seamlessly escalate them to attended-support solutions.
- ASAs capture customers' intentions with sophisticated reporting and analytics tools.
- ASAs help you manage company information with a full suite of knowledge management tools and integrate with your existing knowledge base.
- ASAs can help you boost the return on investment (ROI) of your existing CRM system through easy integration.



ASAs can recognize and answer questions that include misspellings.



ASAs vs. Other Forms of Self-Service

The problem with browser- and search-based self-service tools is that they force customers into unnatural modes of interaction, making it difficult for people to find the information they need. Unable to make a simple request, a customer must feel his or her way through a complex maze of topics or guess at the proper search terms to express a problem. Either way, it's an effort-intensive process with a high likelihood of failure.

Even in the unlikely case that the customer navigates directly to the right Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) category or hits upon the perfect set of search terms, he or she must still pick the needed answer from a list of possibilities potentially numbering in the hundreds—and the right answer may not be in the list at all, or may be depicted in a form that the customer fails to recognize.

In a customer service scenario, these are fatal shortcomings. A customer with a pressing product need, question, or complaint understandably has no patience for a difficult discovery process, and will quickly turn to another store, or, in the case of a service inquiry, resort to an attended service option.

Browser- and search-based self-service solutions fare even worse when you factor in lost sales opportunities. The limited interactivity offered by these tools provides virtually no opportunity to make a sales offer. If one is made, a customer is likely to dismiss it as just another piece of online advertising. Worse yet, the high levels of frustration and low levels of satisfaction typically produced by browser- and search-based self-service tools inevitably leave customers unreceptive to sales offers, even if those offers are presented in a subsequent session with a live customer service representative (CSR).

Markets Served

Microsoft's technology and ASA solution have been applied in several different industries. Microsoft maintains a set of industry-specific Knowledge Modules that represent a comprehensive lexicon of relevant terms and phrases. Knowledge Modules help engage your customers in conversations that are specific to your business.

About the Microsoft Automated Service Agent Solution

The Microsoft Automated Service Agent Solution improves the way companies serve their customers and employees by enhancing service quality at greatly reduced costs. The Automated Service Agent Solution enables users to engage in typed natural-language conversations, and delivers useful and accurate answers in real time. Many Fortune 100 companies use the Microsoft Automated Service Agent Solution to greatly improve customer service accuracy and response. Microsoft's innovations included in the Automated Service Agent Solution are protected by issued and pending patents. Microsoft is based in Redmond, Washington. For more information, please visit www.microsoft.com/asa.



ASAs improve customers' overall service experience with a company.

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