

CCW Vegas 2019 - Ada



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Ruth Zive, Head of Marketing, Ada, discussed the benefits of the company's easy-to-implement chatbot technology. The company focuses on providing businesses with a platform that allows non-technical CX professionals to build, manage, and track the automated experience.

How did you come up with the company name?

We're named after Ada Lovelace who is widely regarded as the person who wrote the first line of code. We're very proud of that and love the idea of aligning ourselves with a strong female leader in the software space.

What do CX professionals need to know about the solution?

At the highest level, Ada is an AI-powered chatbot solution. The word 'chatbot' often evokes a lot of feelings in people but we're not the early generation chatbots that were straightforward decision tree, FAQ response bots. Rather, we see our platform, as do our clients, as the underpinning of a company's customer service strategy. We always recommend an automation-first strategy so that customers can self-serve in a truly meaningful way. Our platform drives efficiency and increased customer satisfaction. Ultimately, our vision for our clients is that they transform their customer support organization from a cost center to a profit center.

When you say "automation-first", are you referring to the fact that the customer can help themselves? How smart can Ada be?

Very smart, indeed. Not only do we enable baseline table stakes automation where we can respond to frequently asked questions, Ada also allows for sophisticated, highly personalized interaction with the users. For instance, for clients in the travel industry, we can enable their customers to upgrade reservations, purchase tickets, change seats, check on baggage, etc. We can get very highly personalized with the ability to plug into backend systems and Ada can understand, from the customer's past behavior and past history, what their needs and interests might be.

You are presenting here with one of your customers. Can you tell us a little about what they're doing?

We're proud to be working with Air Asia, which has experienced great success with their automated virtual assistant, which ironically, they refer to "AVA" (AirAsia Virtual All-Star). Inside of 30 days, they were able to bring down customer wait time from over an hour to under a minute. They shared today that Ada is automating somewhere in the area of millions of conversations.

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The way it was characterized was that through Ada, they are now able to do the work of 600 support agents with one sophisticated chatbot. Beyond the amazing improvement in efficiency they've seen their customer satisfaction scores just soar as a result of providing this self-service access on demand, round the clock in the language of their customer's choice.

Talking about rising customer satisfaction scores, do you think the ability to have the self-service customer get all the information right away makes a significant difference?

Yes, for two reasons. One is because we know that customers prefer to self-serve when it's straightforward and accessible. Perhaps the greater value of Ada is that it frees up humans to deal with more mission critical inquiries. We can escalate to a live agent very seamlessly. You don't have to wait in long queues. Ada can detect when that escalation is necessary using natural language processing and intent to determine when an escalation is warranted.

So how are businesses able to marry the two modalities? How can businesses gauge how many agents they need when they have an efficient self-service option?

While we recommend an automation-first strategy, the reality is that most companies have call centers in place and are dealing with legacy support systems. We integrate with those systems. Whether they use live agent support, call center, or email ticketing, we provide a seamless, easy to integrate backend. The integration can be done immediately right out of the box. The starting point is to work very closely with our clients to automate those inquiries that are responsible for the highest volume of interactions.

What type of people pull Ada together? What is that team like?

That's a great question. One of the reasons that our customers choose us is because we relieve their customer service organization of its dependency on IT. At the end of the day, it's the CX organization that best understands the needs of customers. We have a very strong bias that they're the ones that should be owning and managing the chatbot platform and automation strategy. This is exactly what happens with Ada. It's the CX reps who are building the flows that are evolving and are evaluating how it's being used.

When customers are calling in to self-serve and there is an issue requiring something to be changed, how easy is that for the teams to accomplish?

While transactional inquiries and activities inside of Ada are super straightforward. It depends on the nature of what the inquiry is, what tasks need to be automated, and what the backend systems look like. It is very easy to build those flows and our backend is a user friendly drag-and-drop.

Does Ada work in multiple languages? For example, is it able to switch from English to Spanish when talking to a US customer?

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Another great question. A lot of our clients are global and so being able to provide multilingual support is a top-of-mind priority. It's one more reason why we get chosen, because companies can build in one language and deploy in over a hundred. We accommodate most existing languages.

As to the second part of your question, I don't have a technical background, but my understanding is that it detects the region where the question is coming from and then deploys in the language of that region.

How is Ada adaptable to different channels?

The bots can reside on a company's website, on its mobile app, on Facebook messenger, and on SMS to allow for a complete omnichannel experience. We know that customers expect to be met where they prefer and we want to make sure that they have support on the channel of their choice. It's easy to deploy on all of those channels.

What makes Ada stand out among the many chatbots vendors on the floor?

With so many vendors it is now a noisy space. There are a few things that make us special. One is ease of use and we've proven that over time. We're intuitive and diminish dependency on IT to make it work. Secondly, we support a highly personalized experience. It's more than just a decision tree and FAQ responses. We do that of course, but that's table stakes. We want to offer our customers a delightful, meaningful experience, thus we put that power in the hands of the CX team. The third way is that we think about customer experience in a different way than most other chatbot vendors. Of course, we're looking to diminish costs, but can truly get our customers to zero cost support – an opportunity that businesses are overlooking. Businesses can drive targeted upsell and promotion and discounting through their chatbots. Our clients are automatically generating revenue through those flows by offsetting the cost of their support organization and this puts them on a direct path to becoming a profit center.