Amica Mutual Insurance Company deploys BMC Virtual Agent to reduce calls to the service desk, extend hours of support, and increase the efficiency of support agents.

With a century of business know-how to its name, Amica is the oldest mutual insurer of automobiles in the United States. Providing customers with quality service is considered a key component of the company’s success. Keeping these business services running smoothly falls upon Kathy Sweet and her IT support team.

Even though the demands on IT have increased, driven mainly by the consumerization of IT, resources are reduced due to the economic downturn.

“We knew that we needed to utilize new technologies in order to continue our quality of service,” said Sweet.

Sweet looked at new channels of support to meet this requirement. Amica had already implemented several self-service offerings, which included a knowledge management system and a place to submit and review incidents. She knew there were many employees in the organization who would prefer to chat online to receive help rather than call the service desk.

“Chat has become a popular way to communicate in our society, and provides the benefit of being able to multitask in a fast-paced business environment,” said Sweet.

Integrated chat

Sweet decided on BMC Virtual Agent, a solution that allows users to ask IT- and business-related questions in an easy-to-use chat session. The virtual agent, named Jenn, searches the underlying knowledge management databases for the best answers. If Jenn can’t answer the query, the user can chat with a live agent.

“We liked that the BMC Virtual Agent was integrated with incident management and other BMC applications. The virtual agent solution allows us to simultaneously view related incidents and other data stored within BMC Remedy while we are chatting with a customer. Since the chat record is stored within the BMC Remedy database, it’s easy to associate a chat record with an existing...
incident or create a new incident from the chat session.”

BMC Virtual Agent also integrates with other technologies, such as remote-control tools.

“We were already using a remote-control tool with users calling into the service desk,” said Sweet. “It made sense for us to offer this to our users who regularly use chat. BMC gives us the ability to quickly launch these applications directly from within the chat session.”

**Chat routing**

“There are many chat tools available on the market today,” said Sweet. “The problem with the majority of them is that they are designed for a person-to-person chat and not for a support environment. We needed a tool that would allow us to route chat sessions to the proper person or queue. BMC Virtual Agent allows us to route a chat the same way we route an incident.”

**A new member of the team**

Jenn, the virtual agent whom customers interact with, uses a natural conversation engine and artificial intelligence to help the self-service user resolve issues before escalating to a live chat session or incident.

“The virtual agent acts just like a member of our support team and has access to the same tools that our live agents use,” said Sweet. “Our self-service users love the animated, three-dimensional support agent. Jenn greets the user and notifies them of any large outages or service alerts. Through chat conversation, Jenn can search multiple repositories of knowledge to help the user resolve their issue.

Currently, Jenn is directly integrated with our BMC Remedy Knowledge Management system. Jenn can search the knowledge base and bring back links to the possible solutions directly in the chat conversation. If Jenn can’t find the solution, the user can then seamlessly escalate to chatting with a live agent. Or, if it’s after hours, they can submit an incident.”

**Efficiencies gained**

Amica is realizing several efficiencies by using BMC Virtual Agent:

- Agents now can handle up to four chat sessions, instead of only one telephone call at a time.
- Employees can work on other tasks as they chat with the help desk.
- More and more employees enjoy their interaction with the virtual agent and are resolving more of their issues without any contact with our live agents.

“This has allowed our live agents to be more proactive and focus on strategic tasks,” Sweet remarked.
Implementation

An unexpected benefit that Sweet encountered was the ease of implementation and the level and quality of support she got from BMC Software during the implementation and throughout the product lifecycle.

Said Sweet: “The implementation was very easy and straightforward. We had the product deployed and integrated within a couple of days. Because it is a BMC solution, I feel very comfortable in maintaining the application. The ease of use is so simple that our agents have required very little training.”

About Amica Mutual Insurance Company

Amica Mutual Insurance Company, the nation's oldest mutual insurer of automobiles, was founded in 1907. The company is a national writer of automobile, homeowners, marine, and personal umbrella liability insurance. Life coverage is available through Amica Life Insurance Company, a wholly owned subsidiary. Amica employs more than 3,200 people in 39 offices across the country.

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