
Rebooting Travel After COVID-19



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“The COVID-crisis has brought us closer together as an industry. We have understood that we can only overcome this fundamental crisis in a joint effort. This is creating many new, collaborative initiatives — from improving passenger processes to applying greener technologies. Our new mindset, the way we address challenges, and the use of artificial intelligence and data-driven decision models, will definitely increase our efficiency in airport operations.”



— **Claus Grunow, VP Corporate Strategy & Digitalization, Fraport AG**

Rebooting Customer Experience

By Fabian Beringer, Founder & CEO, e-bot7



The Corona pandemic has kept us on our toes for more than a year, significantly affecting the travel and tourism industry. Airports and airlines were facing a very complicated situation. While sales had almost completely disappeared, many travelers could not take their vacations, and inquiries by phone or mail increased, leading to an unprecedented number of customer requests. At the same time, offices were shut down, and companies had to shift to remote working from one day to the next.

And there's more: New regulations and rules are constantly being approved and they often differ from country to country. Travelers find it challenging to keep track of which rules are currently in place and which information is outdated. Many companies introduced self-service options, travel chatbots, and artificial intelligence to offer scalable communication and bridge the information gap. While the spread of COVID-19 has highlighted the urgency to invest in digitization and new technologies in customer service, customers in travel always needed an easy and reliable service.

Especially in the travel sector, customers on the move or abroad need immediate customer support. Travel companies, airports, and airlines often struggle with accessible contact options and resolving questions on time without compromising service quality.

However, the majority of the requests are recurring, first-level support questions such as "Which gate is my flight?" or "What are the travel regulations for my destination?". These questions cause high costs and keep support staff busy and leave customers waiting for hours or days for a reply, ultimately leading to lousy brand reputation and customer churn. And this is where travel chatbots come in. Let's see the benefits of these bots.

The benefits of travel chatbots

Instant Responses

Travel chatbots based on artificial intelligence can automate most requests and be integrated into various channels while offering consistent customer service around the clock.



This drastically reduces waiting times for customers and increases customer satisfaction while reducing costs. Real-time responses, process automation, and easy browsing options enabled through travel chatbots lift customer experience to a new level.

Automatized answers to simple questions

Travel chatbots can also take over standardized and repetitive tasks and thus relieve employees. Thanks to Natural Language Processing, chatbots can process and understand human text or speech input and respond to it in a dialogue in natural language. Automation can deflect a majority of first-level requests, but if a request comes in that is not in the knowledge base, the input from agents is needed. This case presents a high risk for airlines or airports and their brand equity if customers have negative experiences.

Processes automation

Customer service usually ties up a lot of the workforce. Customers want to receive answers directly when they have questions about a product – without long waiting times and preferably around the clock. Companies can rarely guarantee this availability with consistent quality.

The use of travel bots helps to relieve service staff by automatically answering frequent queries such as FAQs. In addition to 24/7 availability, the travel bot can show its strengths, especially when there is an increased volume of inquiries.

First-level queries such as "Where is my gate?" can be easily automated via AI-based chatbots, thus making customer service scalable, reducing costs, and leading to growing customer satisfaction.

More complex requests such as "Does the storm over Paris affect my flight?" are pre-qualified for second-level support and routed to the most viable agent.

Moreover, a travel chatbot can convey multiple chats at the same time in different languages. For this, the travel bot only needs to be set up in advance in the desired languages.

With travel chatbots, airlines & airports can automate processes such as:

- Itinerary suggestions
- Support bookings
- Personalized offers based on customer preferences
- Up-to-date travel regulation information

Thus, customer service has more time to devote to customer interactions, where individual advice and the human element are crucial. Additionally, travel chatbots can guide visitors to relevant information and enable self-service. Hence, travelers do not have to click through the airline's website. The bot can guide travel enthusiasts quickly to the latest information on travel regulations from foreign offices regarding the pandemic. Here, the travel bot stays up-to-date by referring to the relevant pages without additional effort for the airline.

Personalization to strengthen customer loyalty

With the help of artificial intelligence, the travel bot can use a predefined process to identify the user's needs and react individually. For example, suppose a user is looking for a flight from Munich to Lisbon. In that case, general questions such as the date can be asked first, followed by more specific requests for information such as the reason for the trip, time of day, baggage size, and more to enable correct product selection. At the end of the process, the customer is given a flight recommendation tailored individually to their needs. The price calculation is also carried out in the background by the travel chatbot, using the information provided to make suitable flight suggestions.

Fast and personalized communication with the customer takes place in real-time, regardless of time and place. The perfect user experience in their customer journey, increasing both customer loyalty and satisfaction.



This article has been written by
Fabian Beringer, Founder & CEO, e-bot7

A Case Study



e-bot7 is a conversational AI platform for customer service automation. The company develops practical applications of Deep Learning and Artificial Intelligence for customer service and helps companies increase customer service efficiency. One of e-bot7's customers, Europe's largest mobility association, wanted to integrate communication channels offering around-the-clock service at scale to meet their customers' needs. They have integrated the e-bot7 solution via chatbot as a contact option on the website. During the pandemic, the chatbot has been complemented with Corona-related information such as travel regulations to handle the large number of Corona-related requests. To date, the chatbot can answer more than 3,600 questions automatically. Besides automating first-level requests, the bot further generates upselling potentials by suggesting related products. If a question comes in for the first time, the bot automatically routes the chat to the most viable agent and learns from the human colleague. This way, the bot learns from every conversation and significantly reduce the burden on service agents.

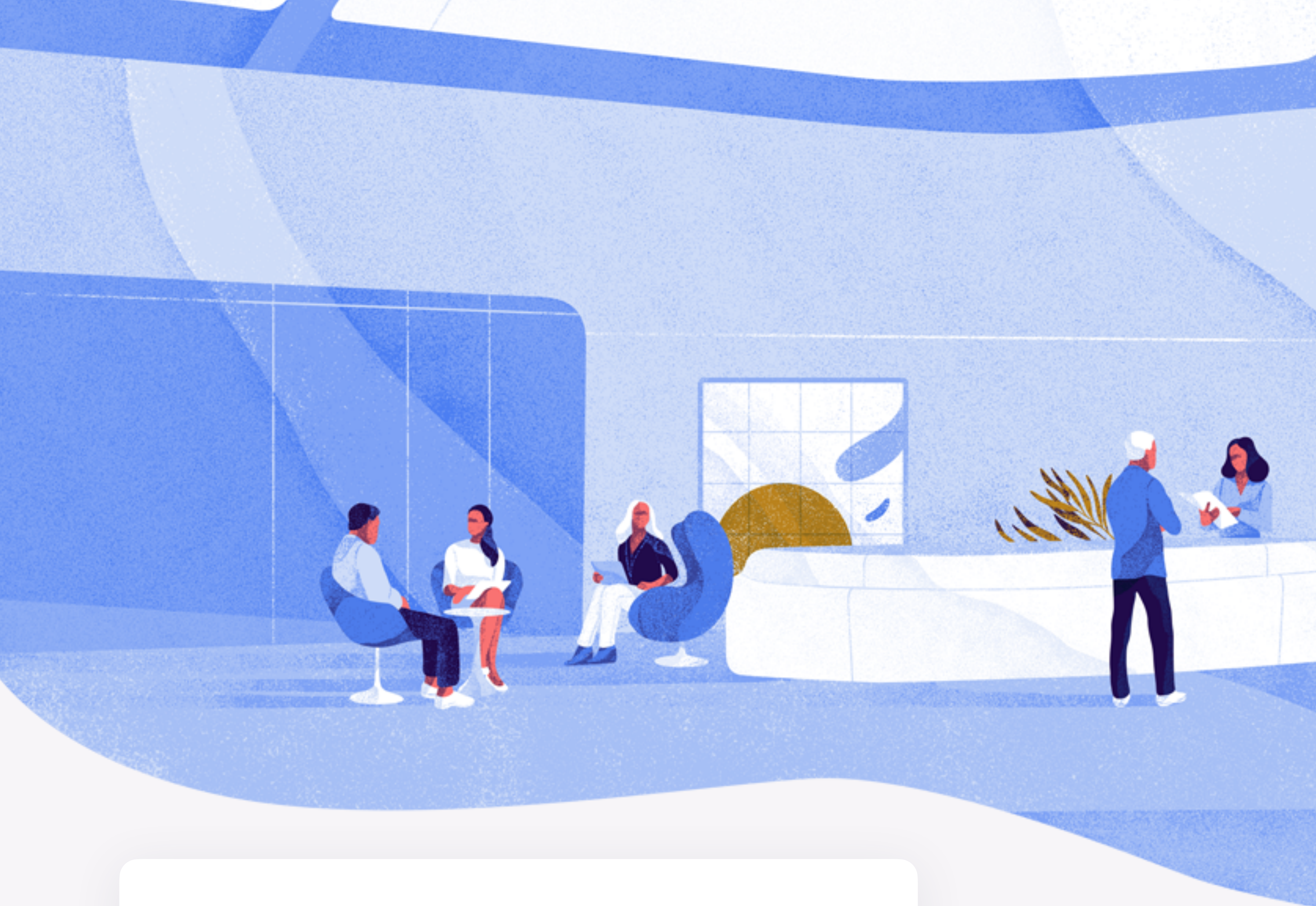
KPI's

- **The chatbot can answer up to 3600 questions automatically**
- **70% automation rate**
- **Around-the-clock service on 365 days of the year**
- **90% reduced chat duration**

“Through automated customer communication via e-bot7, Vienna Airport aims to increase passenger satisfaction by providing fast and accurate information and to focus existing human resources on professional 2nd-level support. In addition, the keyword-based restaurant and store search is intended to increase the revenue per passenger by making the best-fitting suggestions based on passenger needs.”



***Christoph Schmidt, Head of AirportCity Development and Innovation,
Vienna International Airport.***



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