“Employees don’t relate to a ticketing process anymore; they expect immediate results.”

—Prakash Kota, CIO, Autodesk

Autodesk HelpBot: Quick answers bring quick adoption
For both customers and employees, immediate service without friction

Autodesk is a growing software and services company in the business of making software so that its customers can make anything from skyscrapers to the visual effects in Hollywood films. Over the last five years, Autodesk has shifted its sales to a subscription-based SaaS model that enables more frequent updates and a more seamless customer experience.

CIO Prakash Kota and his IT team are focused on delivering both a seamless customer experience and a seamless employee experience. He says, “Whether you look at it externally, for Autodesk’s customer experience, or internally, for the Autodesk employee experience, our focus is the same: give immediate service with no friction, so people can get their work done.”

For a number of years, the Autodesk IT team has pursued the goal of giving employees seamless access to the tools they need to get their work done. “Why do employees need to raise a ticket whenever they need something, and why do they need to wait for a whole four-hour SLA period just to get what they need?” The IT team cut employee wait times by launching a productivity portal, Help Hub. “The portal lets employees learn about and use any enterprise IT service,” said Prakash. Over the last year, Help Hub’s automated interactions and self-service IT tools have accelerated IT delivery for Autodesk’s workforce of over 9,000 employees.

Employees get help faster through chat

As part of building out the portal, the team had created many workflows capable of resolving issues. The automation and workflows they’d deployed could resolve issues instantly, but for Kota one challenge remained: “How do we make it super simple for employees to find each automated solution?”

They envisioned a chat bot, powered by AI and running in Slack where employees were already engaged. With a bot, employees would have a single place to go with their requests, and by chatting with the bot they could simply ask for what was needed, without having to search or learn a new IT tool.

“When your employees are already working in chat and they discover they can instantly talk with HelpBot there, it’s an easy leap for HelpBot to start helping fix issues they care about—changing passwords, updating email DLs, getting ticket updates. When people get what they need, fast, it quickly becomes the new habit.”

—Prakash Kota, CIO, Autodesk
The challenge of finding a bot fluent in IT

Given the ever-changing nature of IT issues, the team recognized how hard it would be to deliver a bot that would really understand employees’ IT requests, and how important it would be to keep the bot’s conversational skills up to date. For this reason, the team specified that machine learning (ML) would be needed to allow the bot to learn from its conversations and continue to provide the right resolutions, even as employee usage changes.

Kota says, “We needed to ensure that HelpBot would learn continually from its interaction with our employees and from our IT information sources. This was a strategic objective: machine learning had to be at the core of the tool.”

The Autodesk IT team had experience working with ML and AI and recognized that a key challenge can be access to large enough datasets to make models efficient. This is particularly relevant for IT support, where there aren’t always huge datasets for certain types of issues. This requirement—the need to learn, even for issues where there’s only a relatively small set of data—brought the team to Moveworks.

Kota felt Moveworks stood out “because their focus is on the IT helpdesk, and because they’re able to learn from data across the industry. If you look at the operations of any major IT helpdesk, you’ll see we tend to have similar kinds of requests and problems that we run into, and Moveworks has built a platform that takes advantage of this.”

Moveworks analyzed a segment of Autodesk’s ticket data and recognized that automated resolution could handle at least 25% of the service desk’s incoming requests—instantly and without an agent’s attention. Based on Moveworks’ analysis of its ticket data, Kota saw that “straight out of the box, the Moveworks service is ready to resolve the types of issues our employees need help with.”

Quick deployment, instant resolution

Working with Moveworks over the course of a fast, 75-day deployment, Kota’s team launched “HelpBot”—their name for the Moveworks chatbot in Slack that helps employees remedy issues. The Moveworks-hosted, Moveworks-managed HelpBot runs as an AI service that continuously learns from Autodesk’s workforce, tickets, and knowledge articles.

Within a few weeks of launching HelpBot, the Autodesk service desk team saw 28% of issues resolved by HelpBot, with a median resolution time of less than one minute for issues handled by Moveworks. Many types of tickets (including requests to add people to email distribution lists, unlock accounts, and reset passwords) and had earlier required agents’ attention but were now being resolved autonomously by HelpBot.

Feedback from both employees and IT agents was overwhelmingly positive. Recently a senior engineer stopped Kota and told him, “I just got a ping from HelpBot saying my new laptop was ready for pickup. I had no idea I was due for a refresh!”

“With Moveworks continuously learning from the leading IT organizations, we knew we would steadily get more value.”

—Prakash Kota, CIO, Autodesk
Making sure HelpBot makes a good first impression

From the start, the team set clear and ambitious goals for employee adoption of the bot. Having launched assistant technologies in the past, Kota’s team knew that to achieve wide adoption, the new tool must be able to help employees starting with their very first interaction with it. Regarding bot deployments, Kota says, “It’s those first impressions that count. When introducing the chatbot, it was very important for us that the employee get what they want within one or two steps”

To make sure employees had a good first interaction with the Moveworks-powered HelpBot, Kota’s team took a focused approach. “In choosing the initial use cases, we picked a few high-volume issue types where HelpBot could have the most instantaneous, positive impact for our employees,” says Kota. These included resetting a password, updating or adding oneself to an email distribution list, getting applications, and notifying employees when they’re eligible for a laptop refresh.

The IT team launched HelpBot with promotions on-site, in email, and on Slack. To help change their employees’ ticket-filing habits, the team made use of the bot’s ability to send employees ticket updates over Slack and let them update their tickets straight from Slack, even if the employee had filed the issue via the portal or email.

Good news travels fast: Other teams want HelpBot’s attention

With Moveworks and HelpBot, Kota and his IT team have taken Autodesk’s reputation as a customer-centric digital innovator and applied it to the company’s internal operations. “Just like we do for customers, we now provide a simplified experience for employees that’s available anytime, anywhere,” says Kota.

Given the rapid employee adoption and positive employee feedback, other business units have started to approach Kota, asking if their information and services can be served via HelpBot as well. He sees this as a logical next step: “Our plan is to have HelpBot continually address new use cases so that our adoption continues to grow and HelpBot continues to take on a greater share of the repetitive tasks, so teams like mine can focus on the important stuff.”

The IT team wins back time for important work

Along with the quest to make the employee experience seamless, the IT team set a goal to automate repetitive tasks. Once HelpBot began resolving issues, IT team members gained time to focus on more important projects. “We’re setting IT agents up for success because we’ve deployed a tool that handles their repetitive workload,” says Kota. He’s pleased to see that, “now, agents have more time to create tools, understand patterns, and augment backend systems, rather than resetting passwords one after another.”

Moveworks is a quick win that a CIO can bring in to provide a frictionless user experience to their employees.”

—Prakash Kota, CIO, Autodesk

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