POV

Logistics Industry and the Power of Digital Assistants

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The great restructuring within the logistics industry has accelerated agility, personalization, telematics, and usage-based policies with real-time usage and interpretation of data from the source systems.

Several trends impacting the global supply chains/logistics industry have emerged during the current mid-pandemic stage, from a disruption and technology point of view, including:

- The continued proliferation of automation and cloud.
- The growing importance of scalable low-code/no-code technology solutions.
- Better supply chain visibility with actual real-time availability of accurate data.
- Rising demand for self-service features.
- 24x7 customer assistance at the lowest operational cost.

The use cases for digital assistants, also known as chatbots or bots, have proven to boost organizational productivity and enhance customer experience. The same is validated by the rapid adoption of chatbots across industries. According to Markets and Markets estimates, they expect the global chatbot market size to grow from USD 2.9 billion in 2020 to USD 10.5 billion by 2026.

Here, we will discuss the benefits, selection criteria, and technical details of an innovative, high-ROI chatbot solution encompassing Microsoft’s Power Platform that can help navigate business priorities and challenges of the great restructuring.
Benefits

Faster response time as the chatbot automates data validation, which might take a considerable amount of time for the human agent.

Lesser volume of incidents reaches the L1.5 and L2 human customer support teams for resolution as the chatbot resolves common issues.

Accurate analysis as we eliminate the risk of human error.

Users can interact with a chatbot in their native language.

Holistic analytics to identify commonly faced problems and permanently prevent/resolve them.

Leverage analytics to gauge the effectiveness of the chatbot and improve it.
By analyzing historical incident data, we select the top three most value-creating processes, which can be transformed by adopting the next-generation chatbot solution.

Selection Criteria

Technical details
Microsoft Omnichannel for Customer Service

Omnichannel for Customer Service is an add-on for Dynamics 365 Customer Service, featuring live chat capabilities to help agents/bots resolve issues online. Users interact with the chatbot via the chat widget. The following components of Omnichannel were used:

**Chat Widget** - A chat widget is defined in the Omnichannel Administration application and then embedded into CRM using JavaScript.

**Workstream** - Workstream defines how conversations are routed to queues. Based on a routing rule, user conversations are redirected to a Power Virtual Agent (PVA).

**Queue** - Queues are used for storing and routing incoming conversations among the available agents.

Power Platform

The below two components of the Power Platform have been used:

**Power Virtual Agent** - A Power Virtual Agent (PVA) is a no-code solution used to build a chatbot. PVA defines the conversation flows. It makes use of topics that are invoked based on trigger phrases. It switches between topics conditionally based on user inputs. Moreover, Power Automate flows can be triggered inside topics.

**Power Automate** - Power Automate is an automation tool that helps connect different applications and services using workflows. Power Automate is used to define the logic that determines the chatbot’s response to the user's query. It uses connectors to fetch CRM data from Microsoft Dataverse. It processes the data based on predefined conditions and accordingly provides resolution to the user.
Microsoft Dataverse

Microsoft Dataverse is a data storage and management engine serving as a foundation for Microsoft’s Power Platform, Office 365, and Dynamics 365 apps.

By implementing this robust chatbot solution, we experience significant business outcomes across advanced/agile supply chain areas with multiple use cases, including:

- Inventory and delivery
- Crowdsourced delivery/multiple logistics partners
- Last milestone delivery solution
- Return supply chain management

As chatbots transform into AI-enabled virtual agents vs. rule-based solutions, the logistics industry will be empowered to drive seamless operations and customer engagement, resulting in topline growth and profitability.
Shruti is a Microsoft Dynamics 365 professional with 2 years of experience in providing production support to the business users of an American Elevator company. Her key responsibilities include analyzing problems, bugs, and defects that arise in CRM as well as due to integration of CRM with other systems. She is a Microsoft certified Power Platform Functional Consultant and Developer Associate.

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