

# AI-based unified digital messaging amplifies the customer experience

Vodafone Germany reaches 44% automation rate with a chatbot that integrates WhatsApp, Apple Business Chat and SMS



**Customer:** Vodafone GmbH  
**Industry:** Telecommunications  
**Location:** Germany  
**Company size:** 16,000-plus external agents

#### Challenges:

- Leverage AI to consolidate digital platforms
- Create a center of excellence for messaging and understand operations

#### Product:

- Genesys Engage solution

#### Solutions:

- Digital
- Inbound
- Outbound
- Self-Service and Automation
- Open Platform

## Digital, mobile-first omnichannel strategy

One of Germany's largest telecommunications companies, Vodafone, prides itself on high-quality customer service. Omnichannel foundations were laid several years ago when Genesys helped bring people and technology together in one virtual contact center.

More than 10,000 agents were empowered with full visibility of the customer journey as they moved between voice, chat, email and social media channels. Leveraging Genesys APIs, Vodafone technicians integrated the Genesys Engage™ solution with the company's mobile application. So, when agents accepted a call or chat, their desktops instantly displayed customer activities across all channels, further boosting customer experience.

## Consolidating messaging platforms

The next challenge was to standardize messaging services, ensuring customers always got fast answers and information. Rather than siloed pools of agents who handled WhatsApp, Apple Business Chat and SMS contacts, Vodafone wanted to simplify and consolidate management through one central team of messaging specialists.

"In the call center world, it's all about average handle time and first call resolution," said Jörg Knoop, Technology Digital Incubator for Vodafone GmbH. "Moving to a digital messaging center is a completely different mindset. Suddenly, agents can find themselves in a quiet environment receiving messages, while supervisors struggle to get the insight and control they had with voice communications."

“Moving to a digital messaging center requires a completely different operating model and mindset in how people work.”

Jörg Knoop, Technology Digital Incubator, Vodafone GmbH

## Ingenious chatbot integration

To overcome these challenges, Vodafone launched the intelligent chatbot, TOBi. Assisted by IBM Watson-powered artificial intelligence (AI), this gives customers a personalized, around-the-clock concierge. If the bot cannot resolve the inquiry, the conversation is quickly routed to a human agent, with everything managed via a single screen. Another innovation is that Vodafone experts use Genesys Bot Gateways and open APIs.

“It wasn’t a multi-month project costing a small fortune,” added Knoop. “You just need to plug APIs together. It was done in a matter of days. Similarly, we used open APIs to create a smart workaround, which allows us to extract an audio file, run it through a voice recognition engine and ingest the text so TOBi can handle such conversations. That innovation took less than two weeks — from design to production.”

## All set for digital growth

Now, TOBi fields 100% of all messaging conversations and understands more than 230 intents. First-contact success rates increased from 16% on launch to 44%.

Users of the digital service aren’t stereotypical. “You might expect to deal mostly with younger customers, but that isn’t the case, probably because everyone messages friends and families every day,” said Knoop.

“Also, inquiries can actually be quite complex. So, messaging is often the customer’s go-to channel because they can carry around a complete record of the conversation on their smartphone. For example, to retrieve order numbers, installation codes and so on.”

With 1,500 agents already dedicated to messaging, Vodafone is strongly positioned at the forefront of digital customer experience. “In Germany, 95% of all smartphones have WhatsApp installed and it comprises around 80% of messages, followed by Apple Business Chat at 15% and SMS text at 5%,” Knoop concluded. “Within the next two years, we expect messaging to account for half of all contacts. Customers especially like the fact they can send a photo or screenshot of a bill or red flickering router, for example, and TOBi will instantly recognize it.”

The transmission of photos, videos and voice messages is seamless and customers are completely free to enjoy all the benefits of WhatsApp. In the last quarter of 2019, Vodafone customers sent 120,000 images, videos, voice messages and documents via WhatsApp, while TOBi learned to analyze and categorize them meaningfully. Afterward, that data is incredibly helpful to agents in solving customer concerns — significantly simplifying customer communication.

To learn more about the solutions featured in this case study, go to [www.genesys.com](http://www.genesys.com).

## RESULTS

**100%**  
of messaging conversations fielded by TOBi chatbot

**Over 230**  
customer intents programmed

**44%**  
of inquiries now resolved by AI, up from 16%

**Freed up agents**  
for other tasks

**Improved collaboration**  
and knowledge sharing

## ABOUT GENESYS

Genesys® powers more than 25 billion of the world’s best customer experiences each year. Our success comes from connecting employee and customer conversations on any channel, every day. Over 11,000 companies in more than 100 countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes. Genesys on-premise and cloud solutions are built to be fluid, instinctive and profoundly empowering. Combining the best of technology and human ingenuity, we work the way you think.

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