



CASE STUDY

A CHATBOT PROOF OF CONCEPT TO IMPROVE ONLINE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Introducing D&G

Domestic & General (D&G) is the UK's leading specialist warranty provider for kitchen appliances, boilers, and consumer electronics – including the latest cameras and TVs. It offers peace of mind for over 16 million customers in the event of unexpected failure or faults with protected equipment.

D&G believes in offering an exceptional experience to customers. This philosophy has cemented D&G's position as a market leader for more than 100 years.

The D&G Relationship

Salmon has worked with D&G since Autumn 2014, when it was first appointed to help D&G develop a new innovative eCommerce site to cater for its 16

million customers. The site launched in August 2015. Since then, Salmon has worked on a number of releases to help D&G improve its online proposition, drive forward its digital strategy, and stay competitive.

Introducing the D&G Chatbot

In early June 2017, Salmon's Innovation team met with D&G. We looked at ways D&G could utilise new and emerging technologies to save money for the business. D&G swiftly highlighted the call centre as an area where improvements could be made to enhance the overall experience. If more customers used the web to book an engineer or log a query, D&G could reduce expense from the call centre considerably.



“The team at Salmon has helped us turn a nice idea into reality – We had been considering using AI and Salmon brought this to fruition giving us something to touch and feel very quickly. Salmon is helping D&G to be more forward thinking and futuristic in our outlook, a place we need to be in today’s competitive digital world.”

Ben Rees, Head of Digital Delivery
Domestic & General

To make the most of D&G’s existing systems, Salmon’s innovation team recommended designing a chatbot to improve the online customer experience and claim journey. A chatbot is a robot or computer generated program that acts as a personal assistant. It can initiate and converse with consumers in a fraction of the time that it would take a human to do the same task. For example, in a perfect scenario, the chatbot could book an engineer in under a minute.

Powered by artificial intelligence (AI), the chatbot can function in two different ways. It can learn from every interaction, or it can be pre-programmed by a human, using rules to answer specific questions. The D&G chatbot uses natural language processing through a chat window. This recreates the same online journey that a customer receives through the “My Account” section on the website, but via an instant, responsive chat window. It also improves on the more lengthy customer journey of logging into ‘My Account’, providing a plan number, and filling out several form fields to then progress to claim.



Chatbot Proof of Concept - How it Works

The chatbot provides a seamless, convenient, end-to-end customer claim journey. In a simple chat window, customers are asked questions that match the fields on the front-end of the website, including, “What is your plan number and appliance model number?”, “When and how did your appliance break?”, and “What problems are you seeing?”. The chatbot then provides the customer with an engineer’s availability so they can choose which day and time they want to book a repair. Simultaneously, it creates a booking on D&G’s back-end ORBIT system that can be amended or cancelled.

The Technology

The design and development of D&G’s chatbot is based on technology that leverages the IBM WebSphere Commerce platform on the back-end. On the front-end, the chatbot uses Google’s natural language processor, Dialogflow. Dialogflow converts text that the customer types in the chat window into something that can be understood by D&G’s API. Every question can be entered in hundreds of different ways, so Dialogflow is programmed to understand the intent of the question, allowing the claim to be booked and organised.



The Chatbot - already delivering success

D&G held a series of meetings with Salmon over a 6-week period where the chatbot was developed and improved based on D&G's feedback. This provided D&G with the opportunity to populate a roadmap and become more forward-thinking about how to deliver the chatbot.

Currently, the chatbot is still a proof of concept (POC). It is set up on Facebook messenger as part of a development environment. While it is not yet available on WhatsApp, making it work on this platform would be relatively simple. Additionally, making it work on a live chat window on D&G's website would also be feasible, as it would simply reuse messenger services already available.

ABOUT SALMON

Salmon is a global digital commerce consultancy – the biggest in WPP's network of companies – that defines and delivers market changing solutions and customer journeys for the world's leading brands.

Established in 1989, with operations in London, Amsterdam, Sofia, New Delhi, Beijing, Seattle and Melbourne, Salmon clients include Argos, Asian Paints, Audi UK, DFS, Halfords, Jumbo, LloydsPharmacy, Premier Farnell, Sainsbury's, Selfridges and Sligro Food Group.

"I've been really impressed with speed and agility of Salmon's innovation team, taking a real-world business problem and smashing out a POC to solve it. I wish all our suppliers had the same attitude."

Ben Rees, Head of Digital Delivery
Domestic & General

So far, the POC chatbot has been a resounding success, with D&G seeing positive improvements in customer satisfaction and a saving in terms of the number of calls taken. and D&G plans to operationalise it in 2018.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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