



Palo Alto Networks Reduced Help Desk Call Volume with High Employee Adoption; Barista Positively Impacts Strategic Business Initiatives

PROBLEM

- High help desk call volume
- Routine questions wasted productivity
- Time to gather information increased MTTR
- Employees couldn't keep track of where to go for help
- Global workforce needed mobile access to answers

SOLUTION

- Espressive Barista
- Out of the box AI
- Innovation that improves productivity

RESULTS

- Reduced help desk call volume
- High employee adoption
- Decreased MTTR
- Mobile access to answers from one place
- Positive impact on strategic business initiatives

Palo Alto Networks is a global cybersecurity leader is known for challenging the status quo in every area of their business to ensure excellence and positive outcomes for their employees and customers. When something is negatively impacting employee productivity, it garners attention at all levels.

Nicole Tate-Pappas, Senior Business Systems Manager at Palo Alto Networks, is passionate about employee productivity. She has been in the world of IT service management for much of her career and was an early proponent of self-service portals because of the promise of providing easy access to information that would give quick answers to employee questions. But when she realized that self-service portals had extremely low adoption rates no matter how much training or set-up work was done, she knew there had to be a better way.

Problem

When Nicole came to Espressive, she had identified several problems related to low adoption of self-service portals. Those included: (1) high ticket volume; (2) routine tickets were taking a disproportionate amount of time; (3) mean time to resolve (MTTR) needed improvement; (4) knowing where to go for help was becoming increasingly difficult; and (5) portals were not enabling their mobile workforce.

High ticket volume is a natural outcome when employees opt out of self-service portals. Instead, they pick up the phone and send emails that generate tickets. One of the issues with those tickets is that a high percentage are easy to answer but take a disproportionate amount of time and intervention, thus wasting productivity on both sides. If routine questions could be answered in real time, ticket volume would drop. Another advantage in answering questions in real time, is that employee productivity would rise because employees would be able to avoid the back and forth required for resolution.

“It's common for employees to get confused when they notice that something has impacted their paychecks. Most will reach out to the HR help desk to solve this. The next day, HR will send them to Payroll. Another day goes by and they are sent to the 401K Administrator. Now the Administrator has 24 hours to respond, and before you know it almost a week has gone by. That amounts to significant lost productivity on both sides of the equation, not to mention frustrated employees. Imagine a world where employees didn't need to know who to reach out to because their questions were answered in real time or routed to the right person the first time around for quick resolution.”

– Nicole Tate-Pappas, Senior Business Systems Manager

Even with lower ticket volume, there are still high priority tickets that require resolution through a service desk. However, a significant amount of time is taken up by highly skilled experts gathering the information required to properly route and resolve tickets. Nicole knew if the routing and information gathering could be automated, it would have a positive impact on MTTR and would enable experts to focus on strategic work.

With thousands of employees in over 100 countries worldwide, expecting employees to keep track of all of the help desks and portals across the enterprise is daunting. The notion of what Nicole describes as “an enterprise Alexa” was extremely compelling. She wanted a “one stop shop” for all questions, not just IT, where employees don't have to worry about whose door they knock on to get an answer. And in the spirit of Alexa, whatever solution she chose to solve the productivity issue had to enable global productivity, whether on laptop, tablet, or mobile because Palo Alto Networks employees are always on the go.

Solution

To solve these problems, Palo Alto Networks made the decision to implement Barista from Espressive. Barista is a virtual support agent (VSA) that provides employees with answers to questions, solves issues, proactively notifies them of outages or other important events, and continues to interact with them throughout the entire lifecycle of their requests. Now, when employees have routine questions, no one needs to spend energy answering easy, repetitive questions because employees get immediate answers without needing to figure out the right place to go.

Even when Barista cannot answer a question or solve a problem, Barista will invite an expert to help out. Before inviting the expert, however, Barista gathers information to help speed up resolution. Then Barista looks at the context of the interaction to understand which department to find the expert in. Both of these things help decrease MTTR and free up valuable resources to focus on strategic work. Finally, Barista stays with the employee throughout the experience until the question or problem is resolved.

Barista came out of the box knowing the most common enterprise questions. In addition, Barista leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to get smarter with every employee experience. Every Barista subscription also includes both initial setup and ongoing AI expertise to ensure the best return on investment by maximizing employee adoption and reducing help desk calls. On launch day, Barista knew each employee as an individual, and that enabled Barista to invite employees into an experience versus treating them like a transaction.

Since innovation is a core part of the culture at Palo Alto Networks, Nicole began innovating with Barista's help. In addition to answering questions and solving issues, she wanted to get in front of employees' needs.

“Barista has redefined how employees get help and that has changed the way IT is viewed by employees and executives. That energizes me and is making our help desk experts happy too, because now they can focus on the work that really matters.”

– Nicole Tate-Pappas, Senior Business Systems Manager

For example, Palo Alto Networks has a policy in place that employees will receive a new laptop every few years. In the past, employees had to proactively ask if it was time for a refresh. Now, Barista knocks on their doors and tells them they are due for a new laptop. Not only that, Barista presents them with options and asks them to place an order without ever leaving the app. Then Barista congratulates them and tells them their new laptops are on their way. As Nicole points out, that is the difference between a transaction and an experience.

Results

There are two main metrics that Palo Alto Networks is focused on: case deflection and employee adoption. Nicole measures case deflection by the number of tickets that are being generated by Barista. If tickets are low, that means that Barista has answered most of the questions and resolved most of the issues. This has been true from the beginning for Palo Alto Networks and has gotten even better over time. Nicole states that agents are no longer busy answering routine questions. Barista is the one stop shop for employees, providing them with answers to questions and resolution to issues without ever passing them off to someone else. If an expert needs to step in, Barista will invite them to the experience. And, because Barista does the information gathering, Palo Alto Networks has experienced a decrease in MTTR for tickets that are not deflected.

The way Nicole measures employee adoption is by how many people have actually downloaded the mobile app. As Nicole explains, “We are a BYOD company, which means I own my phone. It has all of my personal and productivity apps on it. So, when I choose to download Barista and commit to dedicating space on my mobile phone it speaks volumes as to how critical Barista is for my day to day work.” Because of high mobile app downloads, Nicole is not only confident that employee adoption is high, she is also confident that she is satisfying the “always on the go” needs of mobile employees.

The bottom line is whether the investment in Barista is making an impact on strategic business objectives, and the answer is yes. Palo Alto Networks has strategic objectives related to decreasing MTTR, improving the internal employee NPS score, and operationalizing the M&A process, and Barista has contributed positively to each of these.

ABOUT ESPRESSIVE Espressive is the pioneer in AI for enterprise service management (ESM), redefining how employees get help by delivering exceptional employee experiences. Barista, our VSA, brings the ease of consumer virtual assistants, such as Alexa and Google Home, into the workplace. Barista delivers a personalized user experience that results in employee adoption of 50 to 60% and reduced help desk call volume of 30 to 50%. Visit us at [Espressive.com](https://www.espressive.com) to learn more and [request a demo](#).

