The 2020 pandemic caused seismic shifts in the workplace. Employees are challenged to get things done with added stress and isolation. Their ability to embrace changes to policies or procedures is strained, with day-to-day changes proving to have a 2.5x greater impact than organization transformations. Without the advantage of “shoulder tapping” colleagues, it is harder to get answers to even the most basic questions.

Even before the pandemic, employees reported they were struggling to get help from HR, with 57% finding it too hard to use the HR portal, and 53% not knowing where to go for an answer. When they call or email the help desk, nearly half (48%) complain it takes too long to get an answer. Many HR teams are using shared email, voicemail, and spreadsheets to track, dispatch, and respond to employee requests, making it impossible to give employees a seamless self-help experience.

The Employee Experience Has Become the Digital Experience

Employees expect their work lives to be as easy as their consumer lives, which means they want seamless, effortless experiences enabled by digital technology. In response, CHROs and CIOs are coming together to elevate the “future of work,” with a close eye on automation and enabling AI. They recognize that automated technologies can help provide a positive employee experience—and one way to achieve that is through virtual employee assistants.

Espressive Barista, our AI-based virtual employee assistant, provides a consumer-like experience that results in personalized, immediate answers to questions, issues, and requests 24/7. Barista brings the ease of consumer virtual assistants, such as Amazon Alexa and Google Home, into the workplace, giving employees the kind of self-service experience that they have come to expect from their regular lives.

Employees Become More Productive

Barista goes way beyond providing personalized and immediate answers to employee questions. Barista walks employees through experience-based workflows, such as vacation requests and onboarding, while delivering around-the-clock coverage for work from home. If approvals are required, Barista tracks them for compliance and auditing purposes. Barista can even send proactive notifications to employees for things such as the start and end of open enrollment.
Barista delivers instant answers to questions across all major service teams (HR, IT, Facilities, etc.), delivering a much better experience for employees as they have one place to go for all questions across the enterprise. When Barista doesn’t know an answer, Barista automatically invites the right expert from your team into a conversation, so employees don’t feel stranded.

As a result, employees get time back in their day, making them more productive, increasing their job satisfaction, and ultimately promoting employee well-being.

Your HR Team Becomes More Productive Too
When organizations add Barista as a virtual employee assistant, Barista answers the repetitive questions that monopolize and frustrate your HR team. The result is a reduction in HR help desk call volume up to 70% with employee adoption averaging 80 to 85%. With Barista as a virtual team member, your HR team can focus their time on projects that add more strategic value to the organization and provide help for more pressing and high-touch employee issues.

HR Gains Employee Trust Through Change
Barista Conversational Surveys, available with Espressive Barista, are the first AI-based surveys designed to involve employees in decision making, gain their trust, and trigger action in real time. These interactive surveys are often deployed to get an ongoing pulse of employee sentiment related to any type of change.

Barista Conversational Surveys are dynamic and interactive with employees, mimicking a conversation and ending with a specific action, leaving employees with the sense that they have been heard. They are also designed to be brief and timely, so that employees are much more likely to engage with them in the moment.

Whether deploying new technology or making decisions related to bringing employees back to work after a crisis, Barista Conversational Surveys help ensure your employees will be happy and productive while you save valuable budget dollars with data driven decisions.

Barista Employee Language Cloud—Understanding Employee Language
The Barista Employee Language Cloud is the “secret sauce” that enables Barista to understand the language of employees with a high degree of accuracy from day one, bridging the gap between AI and the semantics of human language. The Employee Language Cloud comes with over 1.3 billion phrases understood, and the number grows daily through a crowd-sourced architecture, which enables Barista to learn through every employee interaction.

Equally as important, Barista includes a natural language processing (NLP) engine built on a unique architecture, maximizing the ability to understand what employees are saying. Barista is also multilingual and supports Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese, and Spanish, with more languages coming soon.
In addition to understanding employee language and answering questions, Barista delivers true conversational AI. That means that Barista engages with employee to gain clarity when a question is too vague. Plus, Barista is able to walk employees through experience-based workflows, such as vacation requests and benefit inquiries.

Have Your Own Knowledge Articles? Barista Handles Those and Improves Upon the Experience

For organizations that have a strong knowledge management practice in place, Barista will use and improve upon the work that you have already done. Barista uses a machine learning model to immediately learn all of your knowledge articles and map them to employee questions, even if the articles use different terminology from what employees ask.

In the past, your employees likely accessed your knowledge articles through a portal which used keyword search, so they were presented with a long list of possibilities in response to a single question. That meant employees had to search the list to try to find the article that might contain the right answer—which was both frustrating and counterproductive.

Barista solves the accuracy issue by building a language model from your content and extending that with Barista’s expanded vocabulary. This means that Barista analyzes the meaning of the entire phrase, not just the keywords, which delivers a more accurate result. In addition, Barista monitors for any changes to knowledge articles and will update the model instantly if a change is noted. That way you don’t need to update content in two places.

FAQ Management Tool—Keep Up with Change in Real Time

The FAQ Management Tool, available with Barista, is an industry first technology that enables subject matter experts (SMEs) to easily create, edit, or retire content in real time so you are not dependent on IT to do that for you. Your SMEs simply type in a sample phrase within the tool, and then are guided through the appropriate steps. Responses can be made specific to job role, location, and more, which is critically important in cases like pandemics, when policies are changing daily and are specific to city, state/province, and country.

HR Use Cases

Barista supports HR in a number of critical use cases. Barista answers employee questions on an endless number of subjects such as benefits and company policies. In addition, Barista automates employee workflows, such as vacation requests, onboarding, and benefits inquiries. Barista can even send scheduled check-ins to ask employees whether they feel ready to return to the office after a crisis situation, as well as proactive notifications to employees for things such as the start and end of open enrollment. Identifying and implementing the HR use cases that are most important to your employees will help free up your team while increasing employee satisfaction and productivity. Learn more.
Built for Employee Adoption

Omni-channel Accessibility
Barista has unique omni-channel accessibility that delivers the highest possible employee adoption by meeting employees wherever they are. Employees can access Barista via their desktop (Windows or Mac) or on their mobile device (Android or iOS), either as a native app or by simply going through their browser (e.g., Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer). In addition, no matter what channel employees use—email, Slack, Teams, intranet, or even the self-service portal—all roads lead to Barista. Barista even integrates with interactive voice response (IVR) systems, meeting employees via phone. By integrating Barista into the channels that employees are already using, employee adoption and overall ticket deflection are maximized.

Barista Adoption Campaign – Helping Your Employees Fall in Love
Picking and launching the best technology is only half the battle. Making technology easily consumable by employees is what will ultimately result in success. When you become an Espressive customer we partner with you to create a campaign that will get your employees motivated to give Barista a try.

We offer a number of options and then customize them to match your organization’s culture and communication style. If your workforce is predominantly working from home, we know how to launch a digital campaign that will get their attention. We are committed to your success in every way, and helping your employees fall in love is one of our favorite things to do.

Barista Case Management—The Tools for HR Teams to Respond Quickly
Behind the scenes, Barista improves the efficiency of HR service delivery to help with the routing, tracking, and reporting of employee requests. Barista integrates with the sophisticated IT service management (ITSM) tools used by IT departments such as ServiceNow, Cherwell, Ivanti, Jira Service Desk, and Zendesk. If you prefer something that is robust, yet more economical and easier to use, we offer Barista Case Management. Barista Case Management is a powerful way for internal service providers such as HR, Payroll, Facilities, and even the travel desk to improve the efficiency, experience, and quality of support they offer to employees—without the complexity of IT tools.