

Customer Story | July 2023

PBT's digital employee Awhi - transforming the customer experience

20%

reduction in call volume

24/7

availability for instant responses

1.5x

agent overheads saved



"Our customers don't want to have to search for answers - they just want an instant response."

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About PBT

PBT is a New Zealand-based business with its roots firmly in the transport industry, offering the most comprehensive range of express courier and freight services in New Zealand. The company, which has operated for over fifty years, comprises 21 branches, with 700 employees across the country.

The challenge

Gary Boxall-Hunt, PBT's National Manager - Customer Experience, is always in search of excellence in customer satisfaction and constantly looking at how the business can make clients even happier by delivering a great customer experience.

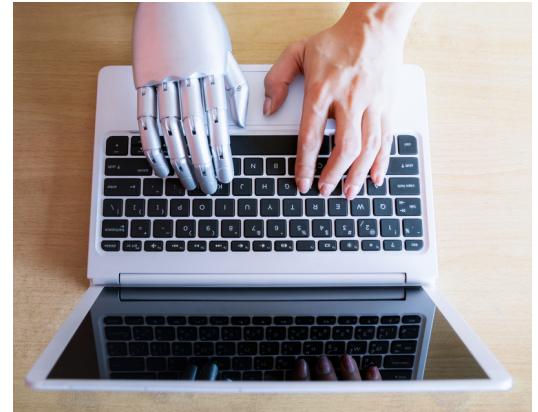
As a key part of his role, Gary is heavily involved in call monitoring and has listened to hours of calls to identify how the business could improve its customer interactions. Noticing that customers were spending an average of six minutes on a phone call for a response to simple questions, as this was not ideal, he began looking into alternative communication channels.

With a keen personal interest in how technology could help, Gary knew that by implementing a chatbot, PBT could

- streamline communication
- improve efficiency
- ultimately provide a better customer experience

The six-minute wait could be replaced by instant responses online, leaving PBT's experienced customer service/experience agents to deal with more complex customer queries.

"Our customers don't want to have to search for answers - they just want an instant response. I personally use chatbots daily and wanted to introduce the technology into PBT."



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National Manager -
Customer Experience



As well as reducing call wait times, the call centre team wanted to solve another problem - a lot of incoming calls were not from their core customer base, but from those expecting delivery of a product.

“In their minds, all courier companies were basically the same, and therefore they assumed we all had the same delivery standards and timelines. I saw having a GPT-powered chatbot as a huge education focus for receivers when they contacted us with delivery queries. I looked into conversations involving tracking items, checking if delivery is outside service expectations etc. and realised the importance of educating delivery recipients and showing them how they can self-serve as well.”



Putting the plan into place

Gary put forward a compelling business case, recommending that PBT invested in a GPT-powered chatbot to enhance its customer service operations. After review, he was given the go-ahead to begin the implementation process.

PBT was working in partnership with One NZ who were familiar with Ambit’s solutions and recommended they onboard an Ambit digital employee.

“I remember One NZ describing what Ambit could do for PBT, and I just thought I want this, I want this, I want this!” says Gary. “I wanted to take pressure away from the team. None of our competitors had a chatbot - one of the key drivers in onboarding ours was wanting to be the first in the industry.”

With the silly season quickly approaching, starting with Click Frenzy in November and ending with the January sales at New Year. Gary knew that having a chatbot trained and onboard by then was going to be a game changer. Ambit delivered, hitting all agreed deadlines and had everything PBT wanted in place in time for the Christmas rush.

"Awhi has exceeded all my expectations and more."

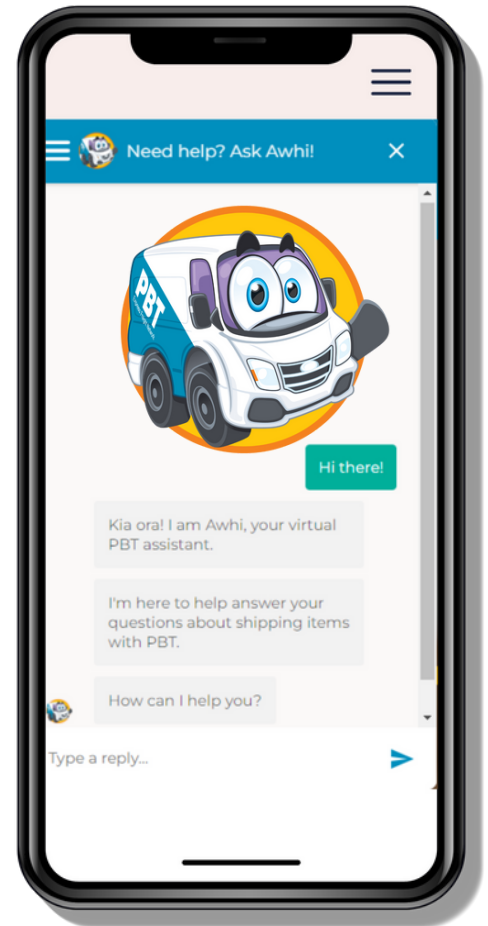
Onboarding Awhi - PBT's chatbot

In August 2022, Awhi was born.

Ambit takes onboarding seriously and the team pride itself on taking the heavy lifting out of what can sometimes feel like a cumbersome task, especially considering how busy everyone already is with their day-to-day tasks.

Implementation started with an interactive conversational design workshop. Hosted by two Customer Service Managers, Ambit took PBT through a series of exercises, ultimately resulting in the creation of the base for its key, priority conversations.

The next stage was building PBT's digital assistant, based on the outputs from the initial workshops. Conversation flows were built in the backend and ready for testing within just a few days. After testing and feedback were completed, edits and updates were turned around within two working days - and Awhi was born.



Driving forward with Awhi

Once live, PBT's dashboard began tracking critical metrics for Ambit to monitor and iterate for constant growth and improvement.

Ambit checked in with PBT daily to ensure Awhi was settling in well, the team was happy and confident and that results were being monitored and tracked.

Awhi's implementation went according to plan, with no hiccups or concerns along the way.

Gary says "When we went live, it was crazy volumes, around 200 conversations a day. That was during our peak in the silly season. September until around mid-January is always crazy-busy. Thank you Awhi, you've made life a hell of a lot easier and really improved our customer experience!"

"Awhi has exceeded all my expectations and more, I'm looking forward to the next stage of the journey which I'm very, very excited about - it's about what more Awhi can do for us - we haven't looked back."



"Support wise, Ambit was phenomenal. They're absolutely great, our client-customer relationship is superb and makes me feel really valued as a customer - absolutely excellent."

Gary Boxall-Hunt
National Manager - Customer Experience

Gary and his team knew the project wasn't without its risks. As no other freight company in NZ employed the technology, the team didn't know how it would be perceived or what the feedback would be from customers. Gary recalls wondering what would happen if it was a failure and only two people a day used it - as the results demonstrated, he needn't have wondered or worried.

He was so happy when Awhi launched and the business saw the amount of engagement that took place. "I remember the excitement of realising that the more people that used it, the more we could understand what people were using it for. There were a lot of learnings and as it happened, what our customers wanted turned out to be quite different to what we'd assumed in our planning sessions."

Gary had nothing but great things to say about the service he received from Ambit's Customer Service team, stating "The support was amazing - I remember when we went live, I was living and breathing Awhi, emailing the team with queries and receiving an instant response - support wise Ambit was phenomenal. They're absolutely great, our client-customer relationship is superb and makes me feel really valued as a customer - absolutely excellent."

And here we are today...

“I look at Awhi as one of our employees, that’s how I see our chatbot. I was excited about GPT - Awhi is real to me, and that’s how we want our customers to feel - we want them to have a better experience.”

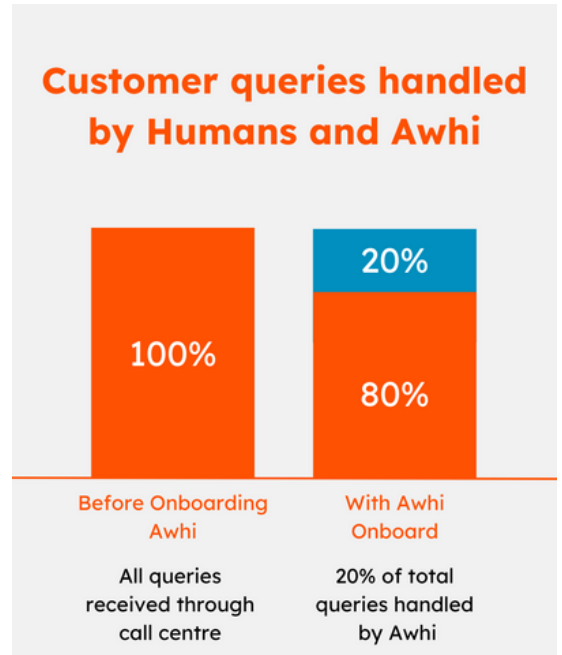
Ambit’s CS team kept Gary up to date with continual improvements, technological developments and how PBT can move Awhi forward. “That’s the aspect of the relationship I enjoy with Ambit as well, they don’t just give you a product out of the box and say goodbye.”

We can’t live without Awhi...

When asked what would have happened if PBT hadn’t introduced Awhi to their contact centre team, Gary’s answer says it all: “OMG I’d cry, like literally, I could not imagine it, especially looking at how quickly technology is changing. There are so many companies out there that are behind the 8 ball and we’re not.

It’s taken so much pressure away from the Contact Centre and the feedback from our clients has been amazing. I love how it’s given PBT a better image in the mind of both our customers and receivers and how easy Awhi is to use.”

The results of Awhi’s implementation speak for themselves. Call volumes have seen a significant reduction of 20%+. PBT has reduced its overheads by the cost of one-and-a-half agents, with the potential of further reducing the cost to a saving of two agents.



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