

# Ask Mo: how knowledge gives confidence with customers

Motability Operations

Learn from a knowledge management approach at Motability Operations that gives confidence, builds trust and supports effective conversations, getting it 'right first time' and optimising call length.

## Summary

An exceptional culture of emotional engagement exists at Motability Operations, delivering top-ranking customer and employee satisfaction scores. This is underpinned by the successful management of knowledge, which is easily accessed at the point of need, allowing issues to be resolved at the first contact and eliminating the need for skills-based routing. A highly skilled communications team keep information up-to-date and easy-to-use, ensuring trust and confidence. Instead of focussing on finding the right answer, what matters now are the behaviours that make the difference for customers. A blended approach uses a 'virtual assistant' (Mo) and interactive process maps. User adoption is exceptional and new entrants and experienced advisors alike rely on Ask Mo to do what is right for the customer on a third of calls; it's easier than asking a colleague.

## Key initiatives

### Knowledge: giving advisors confidence with customers

At Motability Operations, knowing the right answer to give to customers does not mean having to learn processes by heart – because all the information needed is just a word away with the 'Ask Mo' tool. The Virtual Assistant allows users to type search terms and find information while talking to the customer. The content has been designed to supply answers that are easy to digest, allowing advisors time to tailor the information to that individual customer. No longer worried about having the right answer, advisors can confidently concentrate on the conversation. As a result, there are no floorwalkers on the floor and advisors do not need to rely on unwieldy paperbased manuals. What's more, call length is down by 50 seconds and satisfaction is up, with customers scoring the company 9.8 out of 10 for the level of service. "I was taken aback with how good it is" "If I'm unsure I can Ask Mo" "We are empowered to make decisions" "I think Mo is God!" "I don't feel stressed out" "We don't need to escalate calls" "We spend time on dealing with emotions" "Customers enjoy calling us".

### Increased knowledge = increased flexibility

Before Ask Mo, the typical time to efficiency for an advisor was 9-12 months, and that was usually within one skill-set. This meant there wasn't time to do any multi-skill training, which resulted in a significant IVR menu. Thanks to Ask Mo, the IVR has now been eliminated. The tool also means that anyone within the business – from support teams to trainers and coaches – can answer calls during peaks. Time to efficiency has drastically reduced, with new entrants having access to exactly the same level of knowledge as someone who has been in the business for 10 years. The 4-week classroom based induction and training programme has been enhanced by e-learning assessments, which ask advisors to answer real-life queries using Ask Mo. The pass rate for this is 97%. "It offers huge agility" "Coaches can confidently go on the phones at busy times".



*"Advisors learn to be confident when they don't know the answer – that's an essential part of what Ask Mo brings to the table. How do you get people to use it? You can't. The tools and content have to be so good so that it is easier to get the answer from Mo than the person next to you."*

Ivan Smith,  
Support Services Department Manager

*"Suggestions for improvement don't go into a black hole – advisors feel involved ... We want them talking to customers, not on the phone to other advisors asking questions."*

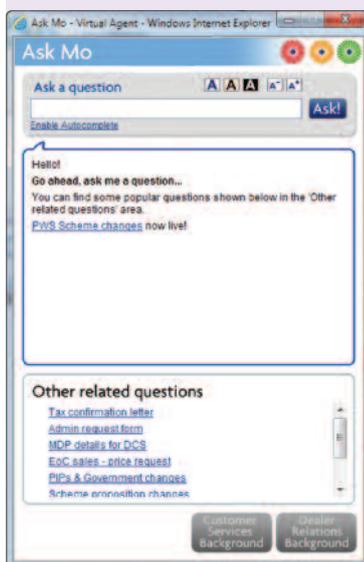
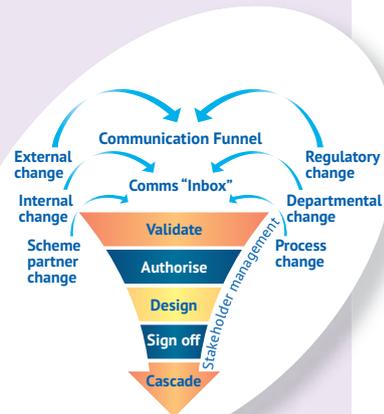
Ali Chapman,  
Communications and Development Manager

*"If you are unsure, the customer can hear that in your voice. If you can check things as you're speaking, it helps with confidence and making sure you give the right answer to the customer."*

Sophie Clark,  
Advisor

## Results

- 98% customer satisfaction score (average score of 9.8 out of 10 from customers)
- Ask Mo is used on average 25,000 times each month, equating to a saving of 5.8 FTE
- In one month, they received 672 inbox items, but sent out just 103, saving 310 hours, which advisors don't spend reading emails



*“The most important thing is making the guys on the floor aware of the changes – and the easiest way to do that is through updating Ask Mo through the comms team.”*

Leon Coombs,  
Team Manager

**Motability Operations** provides cars, wheelchairs and scooters to more than 600,000 customers with severe disabilities. Owned by four high street banks, it has been in business for nearly 35 years and employs 800 people in Bristol and London. The contact centre has 165 advisors, who answer 900,000 calls per year with no IVR. Creative Virtual supply the tool which is fully managed by an in-house team of 3.5 FTE.

## Closing the loop: consistency and speed

User adoption is very high (it's used 25,000 times a month) because:

- 1 **It is extremely easy to use:** It's such a success because it's easier to Ask Mo than to ask the person next to you. This is due to a heavy focus on design and navigation, and time-saving shortcuts, such as a new auto-fill feature and the ability to use abbreviations in search. For visual thinkers, over 400 process maps offer a pictorial view of processes and receive 10,000 hits a month. A great alternative to text-based search results.
- 2 **Advisors have confidence in the answers** because if they see anything wrong or missing, they can click 'Change Mo's answer'. The Comms Team then acknowledge the change within 30 minutes and action it within 48 hours. The individual making a request is kept updated and the team will check back with them before the change goes live. All this engenders trust that the content is consistent and reliable.

## Support teams: indispensable business partners

The Comms Team has a far larger remit than simply updating Ask Mo, as any information or business changes that affect customers have to go through them. They act as a funnel so that the right information gets to the right people at the right time. For example, in October 2014, the team received 672 items for communication, but sent out only 103; this equates to a saving of 310 hours, which advisors don't spend reading emails.

Operational departments will even sacrifice headcount if necessary to keep the support team going – a ringing endorsement for the crucial work they do. “Very collaborative” “You can find information as quickly as you want to” “Before a change of process has happened, it's already on Ask Mo” “You think of the comms team if you want to share information”.

## Sustained improvement: a tool for learning & development

Ask Mo is now an integral part of the advisor journey. Recruitment candidates are tested on how well they use it while talking to customers and training focusses on skills and behaviours, instead of process knowledge. High flyers also have the chance to prove themselves, as team leaders can turn their attention to business improvements, rather than fielding advisor questions. They also have more time to spend on coaching, further driving up performance levels. Despite all these improvements, the support team know that the system is never 'finished' and they continually review and refine the tool so asking Mo will always be easier than asking your neighbour. “Knowledge was in people's heads” “Now, it's accessible for everyone” “We don't have to be the font of all knowledge” “We can manage the team” “I can focus on making improvements”.

*“There is no gap between support services and operations here – we are only as good as the information we get from this team.”*

David Walsh,

Contact Centre General Manager

*“At my old company I was always going to managers or someone – it was chaotic. I had people on hold for ages. The culture is so different here. Everything is organised. I don't feel stressed out.”*

Jo Burrows,  
Advisor

*“When we have new starters and they ask the person next to them, they say: Ask Mo. It very quickly becomes the norm. Everyone is an ambassador for the Ask Mo brand.”*

Fran Hudd,

Dealer Contact Services Department  
Manager

*“Really cost-effective tool – it frees up the time of coaches and managers to actually manage advisors rather than answering questions about processes.”*

James Tuck

Learning & Development Specialist