CHATBOTS OFFER A FAST & EFFICIENT SELF-SERVICE EXPERIENCE FOR MERCHANTS

Bot #1: Helping Merchants Troubleshoot Terminals and Make Account Changes on the Fly

Bot #2: A Call Deflection Solution Handles COVID-related Queries in Self-Service Channel

EVO Payments International GmbH, trading as BOI Payment Acceptance, provides acquirer services including payment terminals and online payment services, including payment gateway, virtual terminal and other products, which are designed to make electronic payment acceptance easier for merchants and attractive to businesses of any size. BOI Payment Acceptance (BOIPA) is a marketing alliance between Bank of Ireland and EVO Payments.

As more merchants adopt electronic and contactless payments, inbound traffic to BOIPA's contact centre in Dublin increases, which can result in merchants experiencing wait-times for assistance, while also trying to serve their customers and run their businesses. BOIPA wanted to provide a more convenient and self-service process for handling payment terminal queries; payment acceptance queries; and changes to merchant bank accounts. A chatbot provided the perfect solution.

THE CHALLENGE

Many of the retailers and sole-traders who use BOIPA payment terminals need assistance with setting them up. As more merchants adopt electronic and contactless payments, this can result in heavy traffic to BOIPA's contact centre in Dublin, with agents handling up to 8,000 calls in a typical month and often repeatedly responding to the same questions.

> "About 18 months ago we started looking at introducing digital assistants as part of our digital transformation plan. We wanted to improve the customer experience on our website, enhance self-service, and modernise the way that we present BOIPA to customers."
>
> **Jennifer Doyle, EVO (BOIPA)**
> **Head of Digital Platforms**

During busy periods, this can result in merchants having to queue to get assistance, while also trying to serve customers and run their businesses. BOIPA wanted to provide a more convenient and self-service process for handling payment terminal queries; payment acceptance queries; and changes to merchant bank accounts. They felt this could be achieved by implementing a chatbot solution.

CALL DEFLECTION
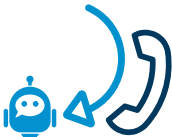
17%
CALLS DEFLECTED
TO THE BOT IN
FIRST 6 MONTHS

70%
BOT
ENGAGEMENT
RATE

BANK ACCOUNT CHANGE

100%
DOCUMENTS ATTACHED
FIRST TIME
(COMPARED WITH 40% VIA EMAIL)

2×
PRODUCTIVITY
OF BOT VERSUS EMAIL
GATHERING ACCURATE
DOCS

A MERCHANT CHATBOT SOLUTION

Merchants were calling with similar questions about operating their payment terminals or changing their bank account details. BOIPA didn't want them to have to wait, particularly if they were having difficulty using their terminal and unable to take payments from their customers. They needed a more efficient way of resolving their queries.

BOIPA decided to develop a **Terminal Troubleshooter Bot** that would guide merchants through a clear step by step process to quickly resolve technical issues with their terminals and provide additional out of hours support, alleviating pressure on contact centre agents while also reducing the cost to serve. **Bank Account Change** functionality was also incorporated within Terminal Troubleshooter bot to assist with processing changes to a merchants' bank accounts.

BOIPA spent several months developing a proof of concept. However, a vendor that they originally worked with didn't suit their need for flexibility. After researching the market, they were introduced to ServisBOT.

> " During the sales process, we provided ServisBOT with some high-level data and within 3 days they pulled together a demo bot that wowed us. It was clear that they really understood our business challenges and what we were trying to achieve and they showed us how they could provide us with flexible chatbot solutions that would really help our customers."
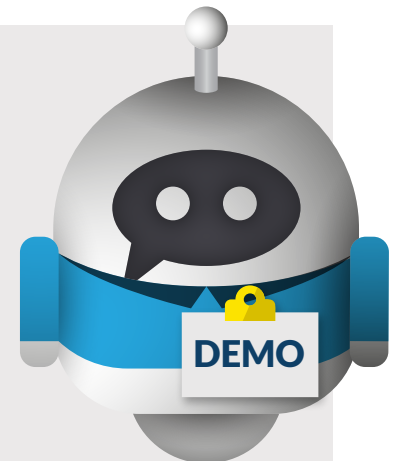
A key part of the selection process was the fact that the team could see how the bot could be developed to follow a clear workflow and how it enabled BOIPA to advise changes as needed.

> " We could see technically how the ServisBOT platform works and how easy and seamless it was to make changes to the bots. It was also clear that the platform would allow us to build an intuitive and engaging user experience."

THE NEED TO PIVOT AS COVID-19 HITS

Just as BOIPA was about to launch the Terminal Troubleshooter Bot pilot, COVID-19 hit and many of the businesses that use BOIPA payment terminals were forced to close their physical premises. A call deflection solution was more urgently required so that they could handle increased call volumes to customer service agents that were now working remotely.

The flexibility of the ServisBOT platform came into its own as BOIPA put the initial bot pilot on hold and quickly turned their attention to offer a self-service option to merchants with COVID-related and other common requests.

> When lockdown was announced, we put the original bot pilot on hold. We had to adapt to accommodate the new challenges that we faced with our customer service colleagues now working from home, while at the same time the contact centre was inundated with merchant questions that had increased by approximately 30% overnight."

BOIPA was able to integrate ServisBOT's platform with its Avaya IVR system and Intercom Live Chat and deploy a call deflection solution within a matter of days. An additional feature was built into the IVR that allowed merchants to divert to a chatbot if they didn't want to wait to speak to an agent. By selecting option "1" on the IVR, they can enter their mobile number and receive an SMS that provides a link to launch an FAQ bot. This bot was designed to provide answers to COVID-related and other top customer queries, with the ability to seamlessly hand over to a human via live chat if the customer had other queries not within the scope of the bot.

> The bot was transformational."

The beauty of the ServisBOT platform was that BOIPA had the flexibility to make any changes they wanted within 24 hours. This is really important as a new bot is launched and starts engaging with customers. Improvements are inevitable.

> We weren't constrained at all, the platform gave us the flexibility to make changes within 24 hours if need be. A lot of providers claim that, but with ServisBOT we really could. It was great to have the ability to request changes and have a team that could deliver at the click of your fingers."
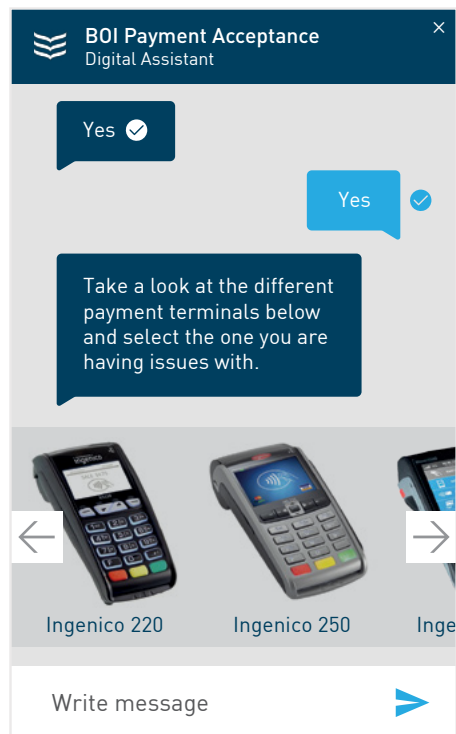
LAUNCHING TERMINAL TROUBLESHOOTER BOT

Once the call deflection solution was launched, BOIPA turned their attention back to the Terminal Troubleshooter bot, deploying it on the BOIPA website within 2 weeks.

The bot seamlessly integrates with BOIPA's back-office systems, providing an interface for customers to upload electronic signatures and other personal documents without the bot itself storing any sensitive data. Designing the bot to pass customer data through to BOIPA without retaining it was vital for meeting the organisation's strict security policies and industry rules and regulations around data handling.

> "
> This demonstrates the flexibility of the platform, it allows us to transform customer engagement while still adhering to the rules and policies of our organisation."
>
> **Jennifer Doyle, Head of Digital Platforms, BOIPA**

When merchants click on the bot in the lower right corner of the webpage they are presented with a menu selection that includes Terminal Troubleshooting, Making Bank Account Changes, and FAQs that relate to the top common requests made by merchants.
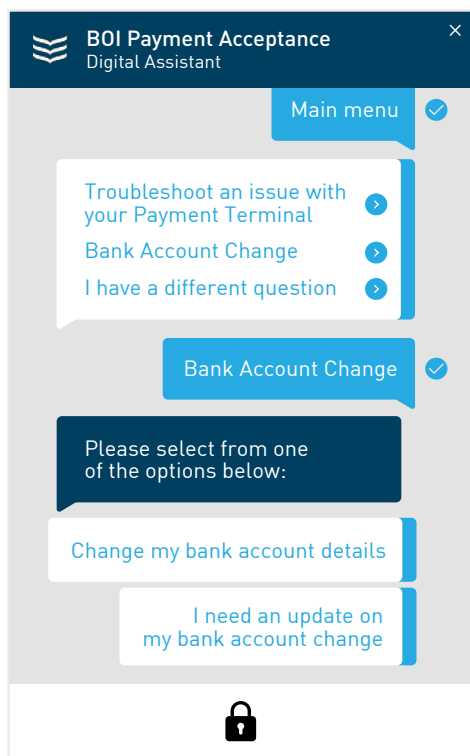

Terminal Troubleshooting Functionality

On choosing Terminal Troubleshooting, the merchant is presented with a selection of different terminal models and the type of connectivity used. They are then guided in a structured way through the steps they need to take to get their terminal working, offering them an option to speak with a human customer service representative if the bot cannot resolve their issues.

BOIPA designed the Terminal Troubleshooter bot to dive deep into technical issues associated with the merchant terminals. However, once it was launched they began to analyse the conversational history to understand how merchants were engaging with the bot and what their primary issues were. They specifically examined where merchants were abandoning conversations. This revealed that customers often just needed help with the basics of "getting started" with the terminal.

In response, BOIPA created instructional videos, which merchants can access through the bot, so that they can watch the steps to follow to get their payment terminal working at the start.

Bank Account Change Functionality

BOI Payment Acceptance
Digital Assistant ✕

> Main menu ✓

Troubleshoot an issue with your Payment Terminal ❯
Bank Account Change ❯
I have a different question ❯

> Bank Account Change ✓

Please select from one of the options below:

Change my bank account details

I need an update on my bank account change

🔒

When it comes to the Bank Account Change feature of the bot, the customer experience is designed in such a way that customers cannot proceed to the next stage of the process unless they have provided a signature and uploaded the required documents. When merchants call in to change their bank details, contact centre agents sometimes forget to ask for proof of banking documentation while they're on the phone, this can result in a three or four step process, where merchants have to call back and might deal with different agents This can take up to three days.

> "The bot creates a more seamless process for the customer. The bot restricts incoming information to precisely what is needed, resulting in less room for errors and greater efficiencies throughout the process."

FAQs

Merchants can choose the option to have a different question answered by the bot. This FAQ functionality presents a menu with the top six requests that are commonly made. If none of these are a close match to the merchant's issue they can enter their query in the message area. If the bot is unable to respond to the typed message it offers the option for the merchant to be passed to a live chat agent for further assistance.

THE PROOF IS IN THE DATA

17%
CALLS DEFLECTED
(FIRST 6 MONTHS)

Within three months of launching the **Call Deflection Solution**, at least 10 percent of the traffic was being deflected to the bot. Six months later the deflection rate stood at approximately 17% and 70% of those that clicked on the bot engaged with it. With the average cost to handle each inbound call estimated at €1.75, having the bots working together to help automate business processes, such as bank account changes, while providing technical troubleshooting and answers to FAQs, is helping to significantly reduce operating costs.

34%
FEWER CALLS
(6 MONTH PERIOD 2020 VERSUS 2019)

At the start of the pandemic, the contact centre was handling up to 10,000 calls a month, about 30% more than average. In September this figure had been reduced to just over 6,300 calls, and by October it had reduced yet again to 5,824 calls a month. The number of calls handled by agents in the six-month period May — Oct 2020, even in the face of a pandemic, was down 34% compared with the same period last year. Pressure on contact centre agents has been alleviated with the introduction of the bot.

> The bot definitely makes it smoother for the merchants. Our call centre can take five to ten minutes to handle an identical request. We've designed the bank account change process so that the bot won't let the customer progress to the next stage until they've provided all required documents. Visually, it's much easier for the merchants and it lives up to our model of modern customer service."
>
> **Jennifer Doyle, Head of Digital Platforms, BOIPA**

2×
PRODUCTIVITY OF BOT VERSUS EMAIL GATHERING ACCURATE DOCS

DOCS ATTACHED ON 1ST ITERATION

100%
USING BOT

40%
USING EMAIL

When it comes to merchants making **Account Changes** using the bot, the true value of a smoother and more efficient journey is borne out in the data. 100% of merchants using the bot for bank account changes attach proof of banking in the first interaction, compared to just 40% of those who request bank account changes via email. Of that percentage, just 20% of emailed documents are correct, and, as a result, emailed bank account change requests require at least twice as many interactions with customer service agents.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & THE FUTURE

With an eye towards continuously improving engagement, bot accuracy and customer experience, BOIPA invites regular feedback from customers to help continually train and improve the bot, including a five-star satisfaction rating within the bot experience.

BOIPA also experimented with changing the call to action (CTA) for the bot on their webpage, introducing a larger format "Need Help?" button with a subtle bounce animation. Following this simple change, bot engagement increased by 150%, as 15 percent of visitors interacted with the bot compared with 6 percent prior to the change.

Encouraged by the success of its first bots and the flexibility of the ServisBOT platform, BOIPA/EVO is hoping to make multi-lingual versions available in its other European markets in 2021 and is exploring ways of using the bots to gather customer feedback by making them more interactive.

ABOUT SERVISBOT

ServisBOT provides a Conversational AI platform that enables financial service providers to create chatbot solutions that automate key customer, merchant, partner, and/or employee interactions across multiple digital channels. The platform gives business users and enterprise developers the tools to get AI-powered digital assistants to market faster and integrate them securely with their business and live chat systems.

USA—ServisBOT Inc. | P: +1 857 424 0978
IRELAND—ServisBOT Ltd. | P: +353 51 348417
askbotty@servisbot.com

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SERVISBOT

www.servisbot.com