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Automating customer support with AI: what to automate first and what never to

AI & Agents

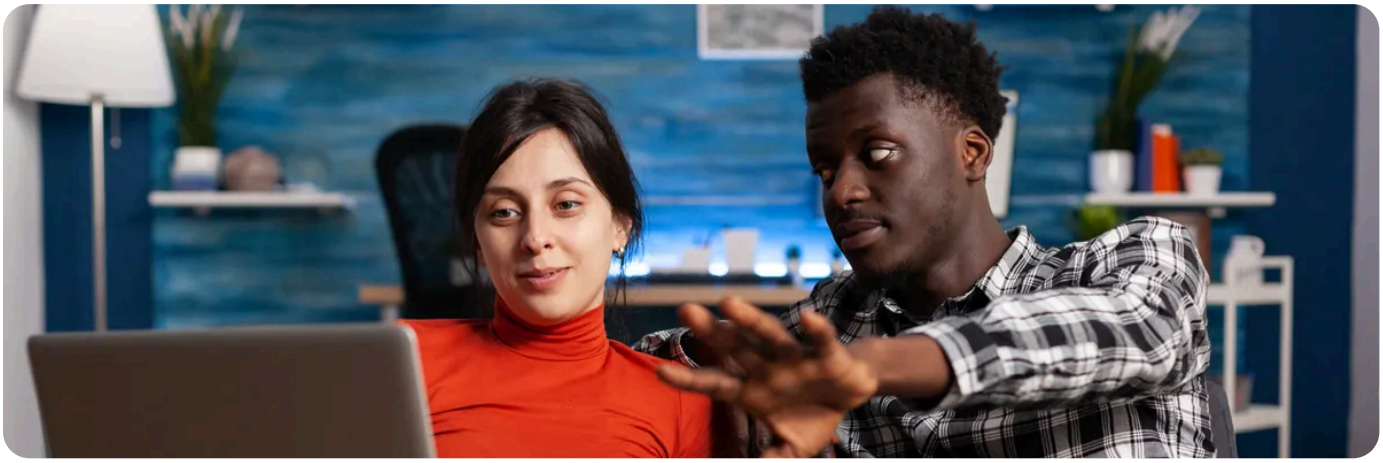
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Automating customer support with AI: what to automate first and what never to

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Customer support is one of the places where AI saves the most time and where it does damage fastest. The rule is to automate **the questions that repeat and have a fixed answer** (opening hours, how to do something, where to find it) and never **those involving money, complaints, safety or a decision**. In between, AI prepares the reply and a person sends it.

Start by measuring, not by buying

1. **List the twenty questions you get most.** Look at your latest e-mails, messages and calls. Half an hour is enough.
2. **Sort them into three groups:** fixed answer (automate), answer that depends on the case (draft for a person), and sensitive matters (always a person).
3. **Write the first group's answers once, properly.** A frequently asked questions page is the best first step and needs no AI. AI comes afterwards, to help the visitor find the right answer.
4. **Choose the channel.** Website chat, e-mail or WhatsApp. Each has its own rules; see **the ways to put an AI assistant on your site**.
5. **Connect the rest to a person,** with the whole conversation. See **handing a conversation over to a person**.

What to automate and what not

Type of request	Automate?	How
Where do I see my invoice, how do I change my password	Yes	A fixed answer with a link to the right page.
The status of an order or a service	Only with the customer identified by the system	The AI must never accept a name or number typed in the chat as proof of identity.
Prices, deadlines and conditions	Only by reading them from the source	A number the machine “remembers” is an invented number. Send the visitor to the page.
Complaints, refunds, cancellations	No	They always go to a person. An automatic reply to a complaint makes it worse.
Technical problems	Triage yes, solution with care	The AI can ask what is missing and tidy the ticket; instructions for the customer’s own system should be reviewed.
Health, safety, legal matters	No	Refer on.

Then measure what changed: how many requests reach a person, how many conversations ended without a useful answer, and what customers say. Do not measure only how many questions the machine “resolved”: an ignored question counts as resolved when the customer gives up.

Do not leave anyone without a way out.
Every automatic reply should have a clear route to a person. Someone stuck with a machine that does not understand them remembers that much longer than the wait.

Interweb follows these rules in its own AI: on support requests, billing matters, refunds and complaints get no automatic reply, they go to a person. See **what Interweb AI does and what it does not**. Read the conversations every week: it is what teaches you most.

RECOMMENDED
Want to set up a support flow on a server of your own? Have a look at the VPS plans.
See VPS plans →

SEE ALSO

- Chatbot or person: handing a conversation over, and telling visitors it is an AI
- What to write in your website chatbot instructions so it stays on topic
- What n8n is, and what you can automate with it
- Which tasks are worth automating first, and how to map one before you build

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