

New **Windstream** online customer experience.

Nina Web™ virtual assistant gets 72 percent first contact resolution rate in first three months.

Challenge

- Deploy innovative, online customer engagement channel to support its residential customers
- Expanding live chat and call center support was cost prohibitive
- Existing online resources like static FAQs were ineffective at helping customers

Solution

- Launched Wendy, the Windstream virtual assistant (using Nuance's Nina™ Web)
- Branded persona
- Delivers personalized Web customer service
- Human-like conversational interface uses natural language processing

Results

- In first three months, Wendy handled on average over 24,000 conversations a month
- Achieved 72 percent first contact resolution (FCR) rate
- Deflected 44 percent of contacts escalating to the contact center

About the company

Windstream Corp. (Nasdaq: WIN) (www.windstream.com), is a leading provider of advanced network communications, including cloud computing and managed services, to businesses nationwide. The company also offers broadband, phone and digital TV services to consumers. Windstream has more than \$6 billion in annual revenues and is listed on the S&P 500 index.



“Our decision to use a virtual agent is part of our commitment to being innovators in the telecommunications space,” said Sarah Day, vice president of Consumer Marketing at Windstream. “In order to win in our markets, Windstream must keep pace with customers and that means delivering content and support to them when, where and how they want it. Using a virtual agent delivers the kind of always on, engaging, and contextual experience that our Web-savvy consumers expect. And with Nuance’s proven track record, we knew we would produce a world-class agent.”

The business challenge

With a vision to become a telecommunications innovator, Windstream was looking for the kind of innovative, “disruptive” technology that would provide a cutting-edge engaging customer experience by quickly and effectively answering their customers’ support questions. Expanding live chat and call center support was cost prohibitive, but existing online resources like static FAQs were ineffective at helping customers resolve their issues in a timely, dynamic fashion. So the company embarked on a journey to revamp the digital support experience to more effectively address customers’ needs.

The solution

In 2012, Windstream launched Wendy, an intelligent virtual assistant and branded persona that delivers personalized web customer service via a human-like conversational interface, powered by Nuance’s Nina™ Web. With natural language processing ability, customers are able to converse with Wendy as they would with a live human agent.

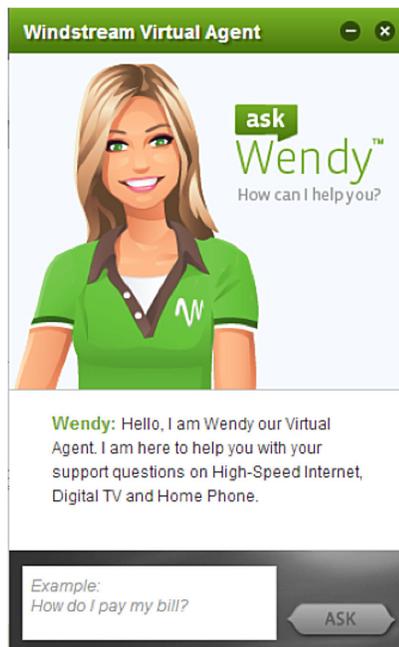
Windstream believed their customers would benefit from a virtual assistant, because she is always available to customers, removing the need for them to sit in long call center queues and resolving their issues faster than ever before possible. During outages, she can also provide critical information to customers so they can stay abreast of the latest updates. The personal interaction Wendy provides can also help to assure and calm customers. Overall, a virtual assistant provides a much richer customer experience over static, unidirectional online self-service options such as Web site alerts or FAQs.

The initial implementation process took four months. During this time, the Nuance Professional Services team identified possible customer requests and responses that Wendy should provide by reviewing Windstream’s call center transcripts. In addition, Wendy was fully integrated with Windstream’s live chat solution from Moxie Software, allowing the customer to stay in the same interface despite being transferred to the live chat service channel. When the customer is connected with

a live chat agent, the transcript of the virtual assistant conversation is passed to the live agent so they can pick up where the virtual assistant left off.

“Integration with our live chat solution from Moxie completely eliminates the frustrating need for customers to restate who they are and what their need is while also accelerating time to resolution – helping create more loyal customers,” said Ryan Dahlstrom, Staff Manager-Interactive Marketing.

Rather than go fully live right away, Windstream decided to first launch Wendy internally so they could refine and fully test her before offering this new service to customers.



Windstream introduces Wendy, their virtual assistant for Web customer service.

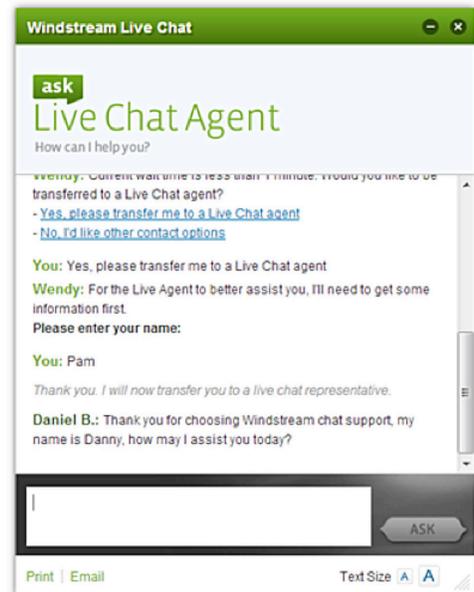
<http://www.windstream.com/Support/>

Sample question to ask Wendy:

“Can you help me get my internet service back up?”
(Notice how Wendy offers a resolution for the customer to try.)

“Doing an internal launch enabled us to work out the ‘kinks’ that are typical with any new software implementation,” added Ryan Dahlstrom.

In parallel and as part of the company’s quest to become the leading telecommunications innovator, Windstream was also completely revamping their Web site, which added another layer of complexity to Wendy’s launch.



Customers can be easily transferred from Wendy to a live chat agent in the same active window, providing a seamless experience.

“We had dozens of calls between our Web site development agency and Nuance. The Nuance team played a critical role in helping make our massive Web site and customer experience project a reality,” said Ryan Dahlstrom.

After three months of internal testing, Wendy was ready for her first public appearance and was officially launched in January 2013.

Results

In the three months since her public debut, Wendy is handling on average over 24,000 conversations a month. She has achieved an average 72 percent first contact resolution (FCR) rate, which has continued to increase since launch as Wendy gathers additional data about what customers need. In fact, in the three months since launch, Wendy’s FCR rate has increased 19 percent. During this time, she has also, on average, deflected 44 percent from escalating to the contact center.

In addition, Wendy has already flagged frequent support issues so proactive measures can be taken. For example, Wendy was regularly being asked how to add an additional email account. In response, the support team created an FAQ with specific instructions to provide this information.

Wendy expands to meet customers’ needs

As part of its monthly Virtual Assistant Optimization (VAO) Service, Nuance uses robust analytics capabilities to capture the voice of the customer and provide a

“This is just the tip of the iceberg. In just the three months since she launched, Wendy’s first contact resolution rate has increased 19 percent and provides an engaging customer experience. We expect Wendy to continue to improve over time and help us further reinforce our leadership position as a technology innovator.”

Ryan Dahlstrom,
Staff Manager, Interactive Marketing

monthly Virtual Assistant Performance Scorecard to Windstream. Aimed at improving Wendy’s content, comprehension, and logic, these Performance Scorecards are critical in helping Windstream fine tune Wendy and ensure customer satisfaction. In addition, the scorecards are important tools for unearthing potential expansion opportunities or areas of improvement.

During one of these scorecard review sessions, the Nuance/Windstream team realized that a large percentage of customers were asking Wendy sales related questions. Since Wendy has already proven to

be a valuable asset in her support role, Windstream is currently exploring an expansion of their virtual assistant capabilities into sales support.

For more information

To view more case studies, videos, and what Nuance customers are saying, visit our [Customer Success web site](#).

More information about the Nina Web solution used by Windstream Corp. is also available on the [Nuance web site](#).

About Nuance Communications, Inc.

Nuance Communications is reinventing the relationship between people and technology. Through its voice and language offerings, the company is creating a more human conversation with the many systems, devices, electronics, apps and services around us. Every day, millions of people and thousands of businesses experience Nuance through intelligent systems that can listen, understand, learn and adapt to your life and your work. For more information, please visit [nuance.com](#).
