

Case study: KBC

Live Engagement Supports Sales Targets and Digitalisation Strategy at KBC Bank

Overview

Belgium's KBC Bank prides itself on offering an exceptional customer experience through its network of branches and via its digital banking channel. The bank has evolved from a traditional branch-based infrastructure to the efficient omni-channel organisation that it is today. KBC's banking channels are now fully integrated into a live engagement platform and its omni-channel strategy has prompted a move towards regional online sales and support centres operating as KBC Live. Finding the right customer service technology for KBC Live was an essential component of creating the very best customer experience. And it's here at KBC Live that the bank uses the Vee24 Customer Engagement platform to enable this experience for customers.

A vision for the future of customer service

KBC realized that the behaviour of the customer was changing. Customers now want to process their bank and insurance affairs digitally and receive information or help when it suits them without having to relocate to a bank branch. Having a centralised location made sense from a business perspective, but it was important for the customer to receive the same or better experience as an in-branch visit.

The bank's vision for KBC Live was based around serving the digital customer at a convenient time and place for them and across all devices and browsers. The aim was to offer a personal branch-like experience for the customer, but via the bank's website and KBC banking applications, and with extended opening hours than those offered at branches. The strategy was to ensure that the KBC Live teams were also responsible for sales, so it was crucial to create a platform that would support face-to-face conversations with customers where they can share a screen together for more complex and

personal discussions, around personal finances, insurance and mortgage products for example. Live text and video chat with co-browsing and screen sharing were therefore essential technology components required to deliver KBC Live.

Finding the right technology partner

With a high profile project it's essential to find the right technology partners, and when the technology will impact every customer service transaction you need to find a partner you can build a strong ongoing relationship with. KBC conducted an extensive RFP process which took into account everything from price to security and architecture to flexibility, before selecting Vee24.

"We investigated a number of live chat technologies, and our decision to use Vee24 was based on no-footprint being required at the customer side, video quality and integration with KBC's apps. This gave Vee24 a distinct advantage," explains Patrick Toeback, General Manager KBC ICT Global Services. "The strategy came first, and the technology at Vee24 would enable us to meet our strategy of becoming a true omni-channel business".

Start. Learn. Refine

The first stage in the project was to fully understand customer preferences when interacting with the bank, before starting the wider rollout of the live chat technology. The main lesson learned was that customers preferred to interact with the bank using text chat for shorter questions and support, but liked using video chat for longer discussions around more complex products and queries. This early feedback informed the strategy for the wider rollout of Vee24 into the regional KBC Live centres.



About KBC

- Leading Belgium bank, offering banking and insurance services
- Core markets: Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Ireland
- 1,600 branches
- 11 million clients
- 40,000 employees



75% of customers who give ratings, give the agent a maximum 5-star rating



85% of all home loan contracts are signed digitally using KBC Touch or KBC Mobile and some



44% of all instalment loans are signed digitally

"The needs of the mass retail customers change at a fast pace. We developed KBC Live to suit their needs. We see chat and video chat technology as vital to supporting their sales targets and our ambitions for digitalisation."

-Karin Van Hoecke, General Manager Mass Retail Customers Belgium at KBC Bank NV

Online customers are now offered the facility to text chat with an agent directly from the KBC website and KBC banking applications. Learning from the early phase of the project, the bank decided to offer video chat by appointment to customers who require longer conversations about mortgages, loans and insurance products. “Our strategy is always to follow the customer and we review all our services on a regular basis,” explained Patrick. “If we see an increase in the numbers of customers moving from text to video chat for simple queries, we’ll consider offering video chat more proactively and not just by appointment.”

A positive experience for Customers and Agents

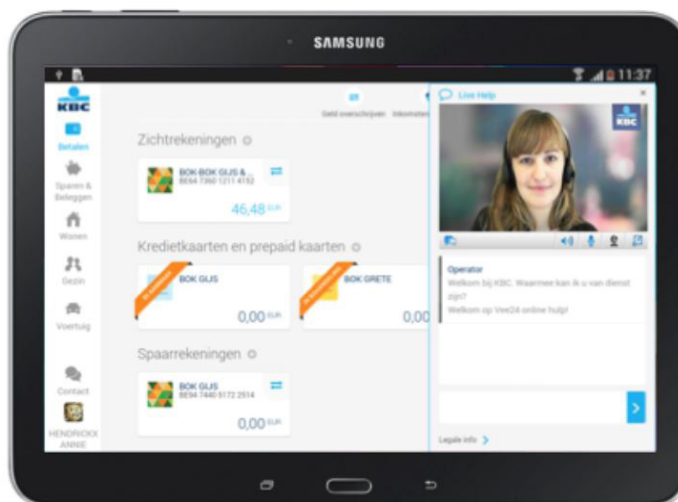
Feedback from customers is closely monitored by KBC and used to continuously improve the live chat service. Analysing post-call feedback forms, the bank can see that customers value the availability of live chat outside typical branch opening hours and are delighted that the technology allows them to see and be seen by the agent. It’s very much like the experience a customer would have in a branch, but from the comfort of their own home and at times that are convenient for them.

Agents too are registering positive feedback, where they are able to co-browse the website and KBC banking applications with the customer, make eye contact with them and respond to non-verbal signals. “Co-browsing and screen sharing with the customer is a great advantage in certain situations,” explains Karin Van Hoecke, General Manager Mass Retail Customers Belgium. “Many of the longer video calls can be in excess of half an hour and it’s useful for the agent and customer to be viewing the same screen, perhaps looking together at a mortgage calculator or an insurance schedule. It’s the same service a customer would receive in branch, but from the comfort of their sofa, and that’s very much appreciated by our KBC Live customers.”

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Example of Vee24 KBC interaction

Benefits

The bank has recorded a number of benefits since the introduction of the Vee24 Customer Engagement platform:

- **Sales enabler** - from a sales perspective, video chat is invaluable – it allows the agent to see and read the customer’s body language and ensures that the agent can respond accordingly
- **Customer convenience** - KBC Live’s extended opening hours means that the customer is able to have personal contact with the bank at a distance- at their own convenience, at a time to suit them and from any location
- **Popular with customers** - the number of customer engagements is steadily increasing for both text and video chat
- **Bespoke product** - the strong partnership with Vee24 has enabled KBC to influence aspects of the product roadmap and enhance the platform, a collaboration that brings benefits for both the bank and Vee24
- **Co-browse functionality** - allows the agent and the customer to browse the website and KBC banking applications, run through authentication checks and complete ‘paperwork’ together
- **Extended opening hours** - the bank has realised its ambition to be ‘instantly’ available to customers. KBC Live has opening hours from 8am to 10pm, 6 days a week and Vee 24 is enabling this customer service achievement

Next steps

One of the next priorities for the bank is to digitalise some of the services that are only currently available in branch. The plan isn’t to simply turn the current processes into digital ones, but to redefine and re-engineer these services to optimise them for customers. Customer support technology, such as live chat, will be essential to enable the bank to successfully change the way in which it offers new services whilst continuing to support its customers.

KBC never stands still, constantly keeping an eye on the future and the ways in which customers are choosing to access the bank’s services. Where currently a customer might start their journey directly from the bank’s website or the KBC banking applications, in the future this is likely to change and the bank needs to be prepared.

“In the future, customers might access the bank’s website or applications via a partner site for example, and move freely between multiple types of apps. Guiding and supporting our customers will continue to be a key focus for us into the future and chat, video chat, chat bots and AI will be of enormous importance as we move into this next phase,” predicts Patrick.