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— Russ Harris,
VP Operations, AppDynamics

AppDynamics powers Slack with AI to provide white-glove IT support

A fast-growing organization that counts on personalized IT help

AppDynamics is in the business of giving IT leaders unparalleled insight into their application environments, and now AppDynamics' IT team is giving its own employees unparalleled, effortless access to the applications and information they need to do their jobs.

AppDynamics is an application performance monitoring company that's now part of Cisco and continuing to grow quickly. They're not only the leader in the APM (application performance management) space, they're also the fastest growing vendor in the space. This fast growth means Russ Harris and his IT team need to continue growing their global, white-glove IT service quickly while keeping costs in check. For Harris, having a natural language-capable bot was critical to supporting this growth. He says, "The bot is absolutely essential. New employees have to be productive in their first week, fast onboarding and IT service are the keys to that, and that's what AppDynamics gives us."

Maintaining white-glove service while growing fast

AppDynamics is a cloud-first organization that embraces the benefits of a SaaS, and that means the employees expect instant access to new applications and assistance. Harris and his IT team deliver this by providing white-glove support.

Harris explains, "This means we have an in-person, walk-up helpdesk and an in-person support model for nearly all employees, backed up by a classic ticketing queue. But that kind of white-glove helpdesk model gets expensive from a human capital standpoint."

With the overall headcount surpassing 2,300 in 2019, the costs of the white-glove helpdesk became difficult to justify, but the need remained. With the environment growing and changing quickly, and new hires coming on daily, most employees are on a steep learning curve where instant support spells the difference between a productive day and a frustrating one.

A laser-focus on the internal helpdesk

To handle the company's rapid growth, Harris and his team began a search in 2018 for a solution that would maintain their high-touch standard of response while keeping IT headcount growth in check.

Right away, the team identified the need for automated issue resolution. Harris says, "My principle objective was to bring in a tool that would help us automatically resolve a high volume of issues, and allow helpdesk agents to move up the value chain to do more complex tasks. The bottom-line objective that I've given to the helpdesk team is to hold IT headcount flat for the year."

"We're growing at 30% a year, and new hires are under pressure to deliver from day one, so we strive to help them within the hour. Maintaining this kind of white-glove support is expensive if you're forced to grow your helpdesk staff at the same rate as the rest of the company. With Moveworks, we can decouple IT headcount growth from the organization's overall growth."

—Russ Harris, VP operations, AppDynamics



Goals: More than just automating issue resolution

In choosing helpdesk automation, Harris says a number of goals led the team's list:

- First, all routine IT help requests, application requests, and basic questions must be handled in an automated way, freeing up agents' time.
- Second, the experience for employees must be effortless. Since employees' first choice for communication is enterprise messaging (at AppDynamics, the platform is Slack), help should be available by typing a message to an IT chatbot in Slack.
- Third, the IT chatbot needs to do more than just resolve issues. It must become the main, trusted face of IT. This allows IT to communicate with employees in a proactive way, both for wider announcements and to notify individual employees when their account becomes locked out or another issue affects them.
- Finally, the system should enhance employees' productivity in ways that go beyond resolving issues, like looking up coworkers and finding meeting rooms.

Evaluating solutions

Harris' team evaluated various AI solutions, but none had focused on achieving automated IT issue resolution like Moveworks. Harris says, "Frankly, I'm laser-focused on the internal helpdesk as a starting point. Get that right and then move on from there."

"With its IT focus, Moveworks has chosen the right strategy, unlike some of the catch-all AI toolkits, where you're just throwing stuff against the wall to see what sticks," says Harris.

Seamless implementation

Harris says, "From my perspective, the implementation literally was seamless. The product came up, the initial announcement and the initial advocacy across the company to use the AppDynoBot was strong, and the early promotions that we ran drove great adoption from our employees."

He continues, "We've been live with Moveworks since March of 2019. Our go-live experience was excellent. We were able to bring the entire environment up within 60 days once we had completed our initial proof-of-value analysis."

30%

Percentage of tickets resolved autonomously

52%

Account unlocks handled autonomously by AppDynoBot

"AppDynoBot's natural language understanding means it can provide instant productivity improvements across the whole organization, from headquarters to our operations in Dallas, Bangalore, New York, and London."

— Russ Harris, VP Operations, AppDynamics

Introducing AppDynoBot: The new face of white-glove IT service

After initial testing within the IT team, AppDynoBot was rolled out to all AppDynamics employees worldwide. Employees send AppDynoBot a direct message to:

- Get approved software, as in, “Can I get Coupa for my expense reports?”
- Reset passwords and tokens, and unlock accounts, as in, “I need to reset my password”
- Join and create email groups, as in, “Can you add Cris Mena to the marketing DL?”
- Get answers to questions like, “What’s the wifi password?”
- Find people and places, as in, “What’s Alex’s email address?” or “Where’s the Osage conference room?”
- Check the status of an IT case, or open a new one, as in, “What’s the status of the headset I ordered?”

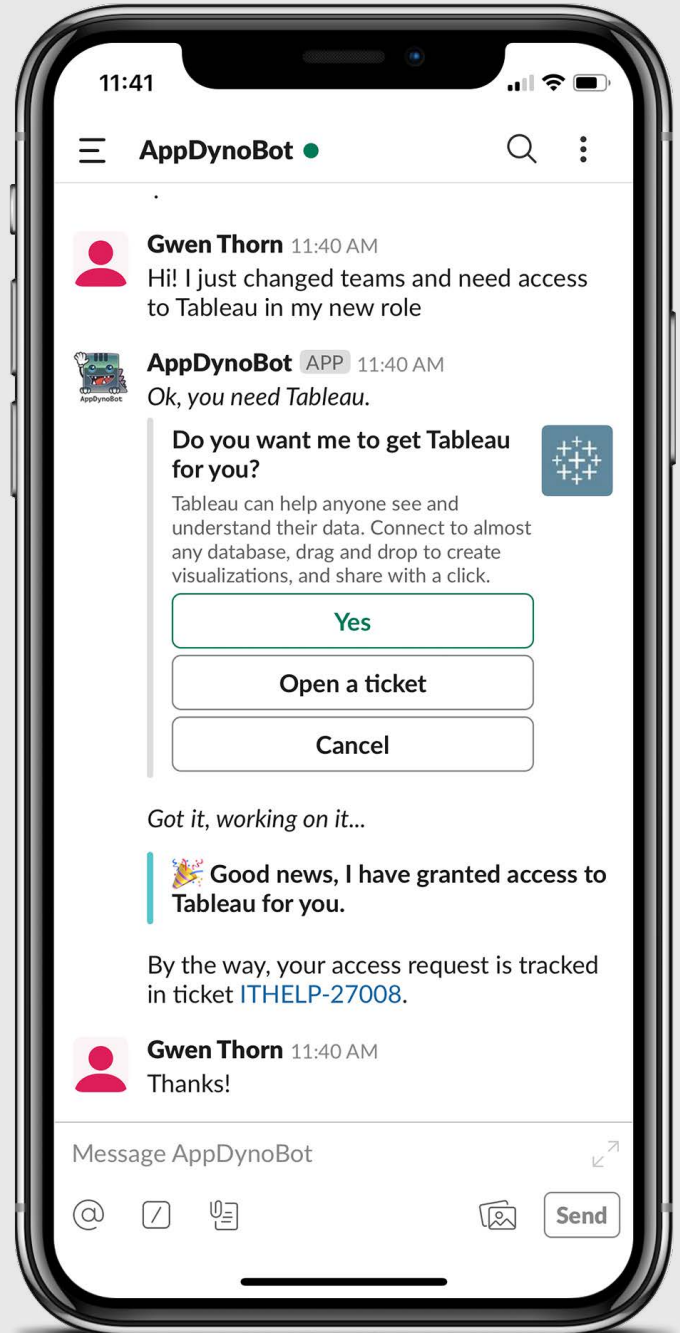
AppDynoBot doesn’t just respond to direct messages, it also monitors AppDynamics’ IT group channel in Slack, called “#it-help.” This channel is a forum where employees can get fast IT help thanks to the many participants. When AppDynoBot sees a request it can help with, it responds immediately in the group channel and starts a direct message conversation with the employee to resolve the issue.

Employee reception

Employees took to the bot quickly, and at the start, most focused on using AppDynoBot to find IT tickets. But employees quickly learned they could type a request in plain English and get results instantly, without needing to go through the steps to file a ticket.

According to employees, AppDynoBot’s responses are generally appropriate and informative. One thing coworkers have told Harris is that they’re glad AppDynoBot doesn’t try to reach too far when it’s not confident it has the right answer. In other words, when AppDynoBot is confident it has a good solution, it provides the solution. If not, it defaults to letting the employee file a ticket so an agent can help. Harris reports that reviews are positive, “You know how people with a new bot: they poke at it and ask intentionally obscure questions to test it. But even with that, I did not have any significant negative feedback. I have not, to date, ever received a comment like, ‘Boy, that AppDynoBot gave me a dumb answer!’”

Product Highlight



“Our experience going live was very good. We were able to bring the entire environment up within 60 days once we had completed our initial proof-of-value analysis.”

— Russ Harris, VP Operations, AppDynamics

Employees are quick to adopt a chatbot that delivers quick results

When employees discover they can chat with AppDynamoBot to get instant access to the applications they need, they're quick to adopt it. Harris says, "The applications that we use to run the business are all hosted SaaS applications, including Salesforce, NetSuite, FinancialForce ERP, Gainsight, and Coupa. Now, with AppDynamoBot, employees get access to many of these applications the minute they need them, just by chatting with the bot."

Harris says, "Since we deployed in March of 2019, employee usage of AppDynamoBot across our entire population of 2,300 users has been steadily increasing. That's in part due to continued promotions we run, to keep new-hires and all employees aware of what AppDynamoBot can do for them."

AppDynamoBot helps employees through a migration to Office 365

One way that AppDynamoBot stays front-and-center in employees' minds is by offering help frequently. System migrations are one activity where the IT team appreciates having AppDynamoBot's help in communicating with employees. Harris relates how AppDynamoBot is helping in an organization-wide application migration: "We're rolling out Microsoft Office 365 and transitioning everyone from Gmail and Google calendar to the Office 365 mail and calendar. AppDynamoBot makes sure the migration runs smoothly by giving employees regular reminders about the program and linking them to the help and information they need."

Great results, and a system that keeps learning

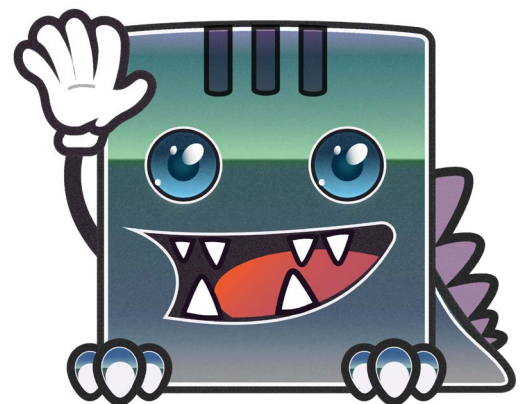
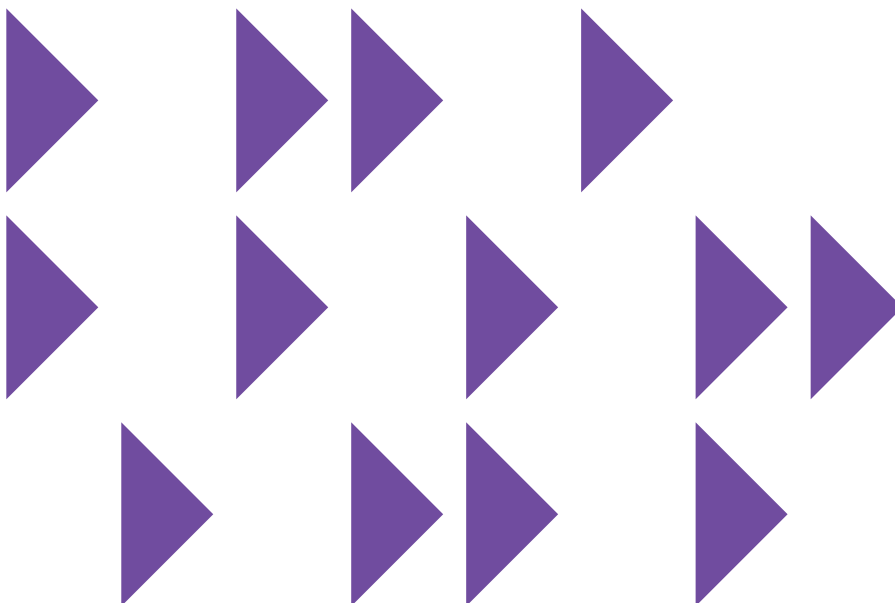
As mentioned earlier, the main measure of AppDynamoBot's success is its ability to resolve employees' issues independently, without agent intervention. By this measure, AppDynamoBot has exceeded the IT team's expectations. Harris says, "Since going live we've seen continuous, steady improvements in the share of issues that AppDynamoBot is resolving autonomously, with the bot currently handling more than 30% of all tickets."

Employee adoption of AppDynamoBot continues to grow, too. Harris says, "We've got continuous promotions going on for things like the Office 365 migration project. As a result, we're seeing a steady increase in the percentage of AppDynamics employees having successful engagements with the bot."

Unexpected benefits

AppDynamoBot gives employees instant access to many types of information: help articles, coworkers' contact details, conference room locations, and more. One of the most popular uses of AppDynamoBot is as the fastest way to check on the status of open IT cases. Employees just chat with the bot, and it provides the latest details on the ticket and lets them add information or close the ticket.

Harris says, "One of the things that I use AppDynamoBot for, quite frequently, is just inquiring on the status of my open tickets, and that's something any employee can do, instantly." AppDynamoBot's ticket concierge skill gives it the ability to look up an employee's tickets and even find tickets when the employee has forgotten the ticket number. Thanks to its tight integration into AppDynamics' Jira ticketing system, AppDynamoBot can get in touch with an employee when that person's input is needed on a ticket, or when the status of the ticket changes.



—AppDynamoBot

Cost-effective white-glove support achieved

AppDynoBot is doing a lot more than just resolving issues. It's enhancing employees' productivity with instant information and proactive help. Harris sums it up: "We use AppDynoBot for a lot more than just helpdesk ticket resolution. We use it for all kinds of outbound communications, both event-driven and initiated by us. For me personally, the bot brings big improvements in quality of life both for employees and for the helpdesk team."

"At this point, we've met our initial goals for the Moveworks deployment," says Harris. "AppDynoBot is automatically resolving over 30% of employee issues, instantly, and we've been able to hold IT headcount flat while freeing up my team to work on bigger value-add work." With instant, high-quality help accessible anytime by typing a message in Slack, AppDynoBot lives up to the white-glove standards set by the AppDynamics helpdesk agents.

Request a demo

www.moveworks.com/request-demo

