CASE STUDY

Barsala Turns to SMS-Magic to Build a Robust Customer Support Center

ABOUT

Barsala had been running a successful business for two years providing luxury travel accommodations at affordable prices. The company had thousands of satisfied guests using their service, but they needed a system able to handle all their customer support requests.

It was critical to overall customer satisfaction to resolve problems and answer questions quickly. The legacy system wasn't handling tickets effectively, which put customer service reps at a disadvantage as they tried to satisfy their guests.

The company was becoming aware of issues that could be resolved easily, as long as the customer service reps could connect with the guest immediately and stay connected as the problem was addressed. The company needed a new system for their customer support center.
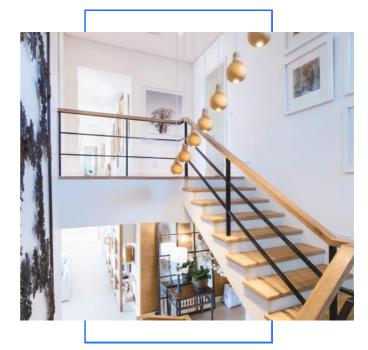
What Makes Barsala Unique?

Barsala, as a disruptor in the world of travel accommodations, was familiar with using cutting-edge solutions to solve problems. After all, their business model relied on leveraging new opportunities.

Barsala realized that developers of luxury condominiums and apartments in major cities were regularly losing out on potential income during their lease-up period. Not all units in a building get leased during the construction phase, and it's not uncommon for lease-ups to take up to 24 months. Barsala saw an opportunity to help monetize these empty apartments before they were leased.

The company works with developers to identify ideal properties. Once a project is underway, Barsala designs high-end interiors, stages the empty condos and apartments with furniture and accessories, and rents them to travelers looking for luxury accommodations in major U.S. cities. The buildings are located in highly desirable neighborhoods, mostly in downtown areas.

"We position ourselves as a vacancy management solution," Michael Copley, Barsala's chief technology officer, said in a recent interview, "because we're able to monetize properties that would otherwise be empty."

"It's a unique offering for travelers, especially business travelers," he said. "Hotels are not designed to feel like home. Airbnb gives you a more personal experience, but there's little consistency and you might get owners randomly popping in and out during your stay. Barsala gives you a furnished apartment with a kitchen, as well as a washer and dryer at a price point similar to hotels or Airbnbs. We combine the best of both worlds."

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>
> - Michael Copley
>   Chief Technology Officer, Barsala

What Did Barsala Need to Re-imagine Its Customer Support?

As Barsala considered its options for a new customer support system, Copley and his team reviewed their requirements. They wanted to be able to use text, voice, and emails through the same platform - which includes fielding all guest support inquiries via text through the customer support line. Equally important, however, they wanted the system to be tied closely to Salesforce which is where all their company data lived.

The company migrated to Salesforce Service Cloud to manage all the cases, but then they had to decide who would be their partner for contact channels. They used several services during the transition but found the experience to be very disjointed. The services weren't able to mesh with Salesforce in a meaningful way. Finally, they chose SMS-Magic to manage their customer support center because of its ease of use and close ties to Salesforce.

SMS-Magic helps Barsala's customer service reps easily reach out to the right people to resolve issues.

HELP

Thank you for reaching out to us. How may we help you?
-Team Barsala

Example:

If a guest is arriving late and has a question about checking in -- they can call, email, or text customer support. The inquiry is logged in the support center and any customer service rep who checks that guest record later can see the complete interaction.

It makes solving guest issues easier, especially when handing off open cases during shift changes.

Connecting a guest and a customer service rep via text is an important functionality needed for Barsala to resolve issues. It's also likely to be a guest's preferred method of interaction since messaging is the fastest growing conversational medium on the planet. Research shows that more than 97 percent of people in the United States use messaging every single day, and more than 90 percent of them prefer to hear from companies via message over any other form of communication. In fact, 80 percent of people use texting for business, and 35 percent of these same people said they can't go 10 minutes without responding to a text.

Barsala saw that their guests needed a more robust messaging solution, and SMS-Magic helped Barsala meet that need.

How Has the Transition Gone?

Copley said the transition to SMS-Magic has been "seamless." Barsala hasn't modified the initial set up very much but expect to expand their use of it in coming months.

"It's great to see," he said, "that the SMS-Magic team is open to accommodating some of our unique business use cases and works to build features that we can utilize on our platform and grow together."

Since starting the business, Barsala has hosted more than 85,000 guests in 15 cities. After implementing SMS-Magic, their guest support Net Promoter Score increased, as they expected. Their response to customer inquiries is more flexible than before and having a robust messaging solution has allowed them to higher performing support team members.

"I would recommend SMS-Magic to any company or platform that's built on Salesforce," Copley said. "We looked at other products offering similar services, but the downside was the need for heavy integration with lots of developer work to link it to Salesforce."

Copley's Salesforce developers have been able to access the functionality of SMS-Magic and share it with other developers on their team. Developers working on Barsala's API can ping a simple endpoint to send a message through the SMS-Magic package. It shows up in Salesforce attached to the appropriate records, and shows up in all relevant user interfaces for the support team. "SMS-Magic is good from a developer's standpoint," he said.

SMS-Magic is an expert with Salesforce integrations. The company is a Salesforce Partner and the top-rated messaging application on the Salesforce AppExchange.

For companies that don't use Salesforce, but still need texting, calling, and emailing in one platform, SMS-Magic has a stand-alone product that doesn't need integration with a database. SMS-Magic is also working on integrations with Zoho and other popular databases.

Barsala is meeting its business goals with satisfied guests, and SMS-Magic has been an integral part of that journey. As Barsala expands its business, SMS-Magic will be ready to help them scale and continue their growth.