

More than a photo: customer-first automation

Case study

CEWE's products are more than just prints, they're memories.

From photo books documenting a child's first years to carefully curated holiday gifts, CEWE's customers are emotionally invested. When something goes wrong, fast, empathetic resolution isn't just expected, it's essential.

But during peak season — especially Christmas — CEWE's order volumes spike by 400%, creating an avalanche of support inquiries, many of them repetitive, time-sensitive, and emotionally charged. The company faced a difficult balancing act: scale service capacity without sacrificing care.

That's when they decided to take a bold step: reimagine service automation not only as a cost-saving tool, but as an extension of their customer promise.

THE TURNING POINT

From disappointment to direction

CEWE had tried other chatbot platforms, but found them rigid, limited to FAQ-style exchanges, and unable to support real transactional workflows. Worse, they often created friction instead of solving problems.

What CEWE needed was fundamentally different:

- A chatbot that could own and resolve entire processes — like returns and complaints.
- A platform that developers could shape, not just configure.
- Deep integration with internal tools and on-premise hosting for full GDPR compliance.

After a disappointing PoC with another vendor, CEWE's innovation team discovered botario through Germany's AI tech community. They soon realised it wasn't just a platform — it was a partner.



Website

www.cewe.de

Industry

Photo Services

Headquarters

Oldenburg, Germany

Employees

4,000+

Markets

Operating across Europe

"Our goal wasn't to reduce costs. It was to improve experiences consistently, even at 10pm, when no agent is available."

Jan Halfbrodt, Head of Mobile & AI Campus, CEWE

THE SOLUTION

Building a smart, nuanced chatbot, together

Starting in 2020, CEWE and botario co-developed a sophisticated chatbot, beginning with the company's most complex use case: complaints and returns. The chatbot wasn't a bolt-on widget — it was treated like a real team member. CEWE defined its tone, personality, escalation logic, and customer journey.

botario's strengths sealed the deal:

- Open-source foundation (Rasa) for full transparency.
- Ability to write custom Python logic and plugins
- Lightweight, secure deployment on CEWE's own infrastructure.
- Easy integration with CEWE's website, CRM, and telephone system.

"The platform isn't just powerful — it's respectful. It lets us control every detail, from data hosting to how the bot speaks to customers."

Jan Halfbrodt, Head of Mobile Campus & AI, CEWE

INNOVATION ACROSS CHANNELS

From webchat to phonebot — and beyond

botario powers two pillars of CEWE's support system:

- A web-based chatbot, capable of full end-to-end issue resolution — photo uploads, returns, form prefill, and more.
- A phone bot integrated into CEWE's ACD that authenticates callers and identifies their request — thus enabling time savings per call.

botario's flexible SDK (software development kit) allowed CEWE to build features like:

- A webcam plugin for damage documentation
- Vector database integration for retrieval-augmented LLMs.
- Language localization for multimarket rollout.

RESULTS

Automation that feels personal

The chatbot launched to immediate adoption: **4,000+ conversations in just the first two months** and quickly became an embedded part of CEWE's service DNA.

The outcomes:

- **300+ chats per day** during peak season
- **Chatbot now central to support** operations
- **Multilingual rollout** across CEWE Group in progress
- **Phonebot now greets every caller**, captures intent, and assists agents

Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. They praise the bot's clarity, helpfulness, and the surprise of getting a fully resolved claim process, even at night.

"When customers upload damage photos at 22:00 and get an instant return label - it's not just service. It's reassurance."

Jan Halfbrodt, Head of Mobile Campus & AI, CEWE

WHY IT MATTERS

The bot that frees up human time

botario technology was not deployed to replace CEWE's agents — but to empower them. By offloading routine inquiries, agents can now focus on complex, emotionally sensitive interactions, like helping a customer fix their photo software minutes before a deadline.

"Every second the bot saves is a second our agents can spend with someone who really needs them. That's the real ROI."

Jan Halfbrodt, Head of Mobile Campus & AI, CEWE

Cewe x botario - Case Study

LOOKING AHEAD

From smart support to strategic scale

CEWE is now adopting botario GPT, expanding capabilities with LLMs while maintaining control. The goal: enable automation that understands nuance, scales across geographies, and preserves CEWE's customer promise — at any hour, in any language.

The vision is clear: automation with empathy. And botario is helping CEWE deliver it.

Key facts

- CEWE sought a chatbot solution to manage high seasonal inquiry volumes and improve customer satisfaction.
- 20% of customer service inquiries were related to complaints — a key automation opportunity.
- botario enabled CEWE to automate full complaint and return processes, including file upload and form generation.
- The chatbot handled 4,000+ conversations in its first two months, with 300+ chats/day during peak season.
- CEWE is now rolling out the solution across multiple languages and business units in Europe.

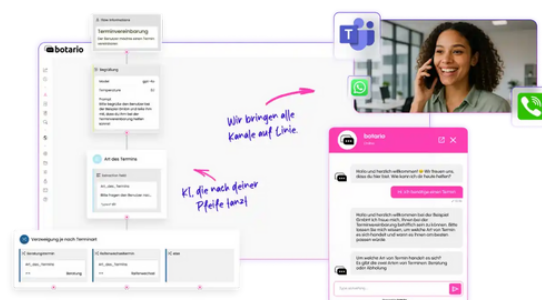
Benefits

- Enhanced 24/7 availability improves service accessibility — especially outside business hours.
- The average call duration was noticeably reduced through authentication and routing via the phone bot.
- Full control over bot logic, hosting, and integrations ensures GDPR compliance and system compatibility.
- Strong customer feedback confirms that the bot is clear, intuitive, and genuinely helpful.
- Enterprise-grade flexibility allows CEWE to scale across countries and product lines

About botario

botario is a next-generation automation platform built in Germany, designed to help organizations deliver seamless customer interactions across chat and voice. With an open, modular architecture and native support for technologies like Rasa, Python, and Large Language Models (LLMs), botario empowers teams to go beyond simple FAQ bots and automate real business processes with full transparency and control.

Enterprises and public sector teams across Europe rely on botario for solutions like self-service claims, multilingual phonebots, and secure, on-premise deployments. Our mission: make automation not only scalable — but open, explainable, and empathetic.



Learn more about other customers' success stories on botario.com