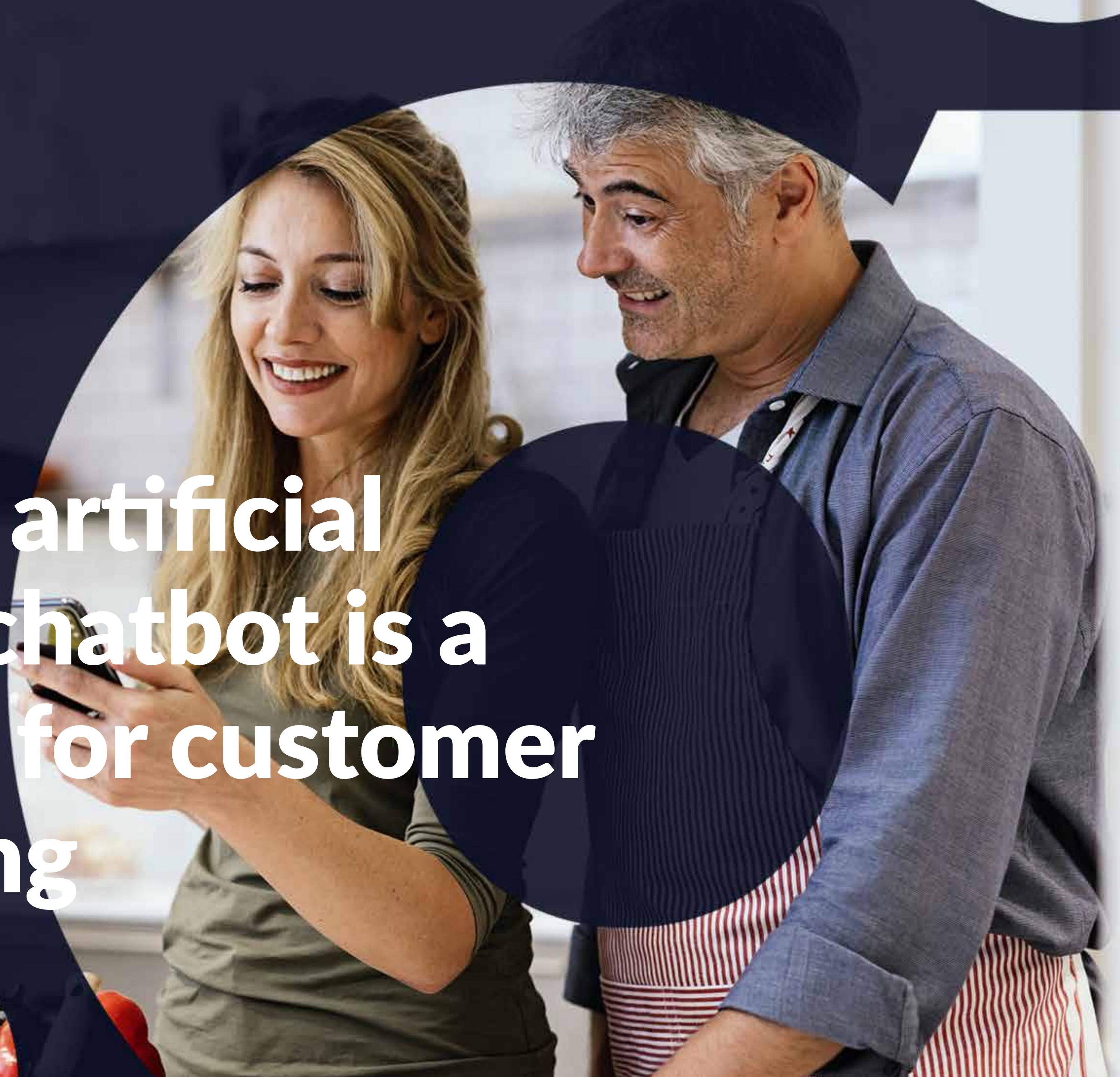




Muru

Valio's Muru artificial intelligence chatbot is a new channel for customer understanding





Valio, a classic brand long admired and valued by Finns, is a pioneer in both digital as well as traditional marketing. Although Valio does not sell directly to end users, it invests heavily in marketing and direct dialogue with consumers.

Having been voted Finland's most sustainable brand many times, Valio also works hard towards sustainability through its marketing. Consumer confidence and accountability are values that must be lived and earned every day.

Valio's customer experience team consists of seven hard-working professionals responsible for web service development, consumer dialogue, customer experience measurement and web analytics. The chatbot Muru, which was launched in the spring of 2021, is also part of the responsibilities of the customer experience team. Behind Muru there is a working group with members also from different marketing teams.



Popular recipe search service visitors have varying needs

The recipe service from Valio.fi is one of the most popular in Finland. The recipe service reaches 1.5 million unique visitors every month and offers a catalogue of more than 5,000 recipes.

The needs and situations of visitors using the recipe service can vary widely. They can be someone on a bus ride home considering what to cook for dinner, a shopper in store exploring new ideas, or another cooking at home and scrolling their phone for help. Critical metrics are the time spent on site and the number of pages and content being viewed.

With a huge amount of content that consumers explore with different requirements and on different devices, the relevant information needs to be quick and easy to access. Valio's team has provided a chat service with consumers through the online service but delays in responses could be possible during evenings and weekends. During discussions, a bot emerged as a natural solution to better serve consumers.

more than **5000** recipes

1,5 million unique visitors

Systematic development and agility

Valio experimented with a chatbot through a pilot project. During procurement, it was a priority that the chosen partner would have the ability to meet the content marketing needs and approach a large content marketing entity in a systematic yet agile manner. In addition, the technology had to be easy to use and insightfully support the organization of content.

The technology chosen was Boost.ai, which has received a lot of praise from the team for its usability. Front AI (the Finnish company that supplies the most talked-about artificial intelligence (AI) projects in the Nordic region) was chosen as the service provider.

The division of roles between the service provider and Valio is clear. The top experts in content production focus on their core competencies and the service provider is responsible for understanding the natural language and the qualities of the AI model.



Muru has an accuracy of

96%

Muru, Valio's AI-based chatbot, was released little before Easter. At that time Muru could answer baking-related questions. The bot was launched with comprehensive content, whilst also being ready to respond to completely unforeseen questions. This responsiveness was considered one of the cornerstones of a successful launch.

In November, six months from the release, there were more than 20 000 conversations opened, despite no efforts being made anywhere to advertise Muru. Each time new content was added, the number of weekly conversations increased.

The accuracy of Muru, i.e. the ability to answer the question, is a staggering 96%. This demonstrates excellent content production and well-defined roles in the marketing team: everyone takes care of their own core area, but the team operates together closely.

By November 2021, more than

20 000

conversations opened

Working with a bot is a bit like jazz

When working with a large amount of content, a systematic approach needs to be followed but at the same time agility is necessary throughout the project. The bot has clear purviews of responsibility whilst also constantly evolving. The team in charge have enough time to both train the bot as well as work with it every day.

Working with a bot can, in some way, be compared to playing jazz. There is a systematic plan, according to which weekly tasks are performed. However, sometimes there are issues that must be dealt with reactively. It's necessary to be ready and able to quickly respond to the feedback received.

Muru has brought a lot of new thoughts and ideas into the team. For example, Muru was asked for a lot of challenging recipes. A new filter was introduced to clarify the recipe search, which filters out the more demanding requests. Another example is the repeated conversations asking Muru to suggest "something good", in addition to searching for recipes with specific names.

The feedback received through Muru has been taken all the way to the Valio Test Kitchen. Chatbot is seen as something to inspire holistic development and a source of data to be exported to other channels and business development. In the close-knit customer experience team, information flows around quickly and seamlessly.



Tips for the future

After baking, Muru received training in content on cooking techniques. The systematic approach means that content is prepared well in advance of each season. For example, the content for Independence Day was created during Midsummer.

Next, the plan is to move on to things related to individual recipes. Many recipes include methods and tips, and some questions are repeated in some recipes. By introducing advice on these through Muru as well, consumers can be both better served real-time as well as kept engaged in the content for longer.