Case Study

Care powered by intelligence

Automating parent enquiries with AI-driven email automation and Azure AI

The Modernization Engineering Company

SONATA SOFTWARE

Summary

Sonata Software helped a leading Australian out-of-school hours care (OSHC) provider adopt generative AI by establishing an AI strategy, building a centre of excellence (CoE), and deploying an AI-driven email automation system integrated with Azure AI and the client's OCW platform. The solution automated routine enquiries, improved response times from hours to minutes, and reduced manual customer service workload by 40%, creating a scalable foundation for enterprise AI adoption.

Customer overview

A leading provider of OSHC in Australia, supporting over 15,000 enrolled students nationally offering before-school, after-school, and holiday programs that support children's growth, learning, and wellbeing.

Pressure points

The client recognized the potential of generative AI but faced a combination of strategic uncertainty and day-to-day operational strain that made progress difficult without external expertise.

The novelty of generative AI made it difficult to define a clear adoption strategy or implementation approach

The internal team lacked the technical expertise to evaluate, architect, and deliver AI solutions independently

Manually handling approximately 5,000 email enquiries every month, covering class rescheduling, general questions, and payment queries

Average response time of around 24 hours, leaving the team with little capacity for higher-value engagement.

Although the client had already identified thirteen potential AI use cases across the business, they required an experienced partner to shape the strategy, build CoE, prioritise use cases, and design enterprise ready solutions.

Solution highlights

Sonata Software delivered an end-to-end AI powered transformation centred on establishing a scalable AI operating model and deploying high impact customer service automation solutions.

The solution was envisioned in structured phases:

- **Phase 1** Delivery of three prioritised AI use cases through a dedicated Scrum team
- **Phase 2** Expansion with an additional development pod for parallel delivery
- **Phase 3** Broader Microsoft Copilot adoption supported through training and consulting

The flagship solution was an AI-based email automation system integrated with Camp Australia's OCW platform. Key elements included:

Automatic classification of incoming emails using LLMs

Autonomous responses to routine enquiries such as rescheduling and FAQs

Intelligent escalation for complex cases, including contextual summaries

Seamless integration with OCW for data updates and auditing

The architecture leveraged Azure AI Services, Outlook connectors, Logic Apps, and integrations with Confluence and OCW. A review-and-send workflow ensured responsible AI application with human validation where needed.

Sonata also progressed additional AI roadmap items, including:

- An internal global support centre (GSC) chatbot for knowledge retrieval
- A parent-facing chatbot enabling 24/7 self-service

This comprehensive solution combined advanced engineering, domain expertise, structured operating models, and responsible AI design principles.

Solution architecture

- Use of LLMs for intent classification, content generation, and contextual understanding
- Responsible AI guardrails through review-and-send workflows
- Transparent decision pathways with escalation for ambiguity
- Data ingestion from trusted internal sources (Confluence, OCW) to ensure accuracy
- Integration with Microsoft Azure AI services for security, scale, and reliability

Results that speak volumes

Faster, more reliable service for parents

Increased internal capacity for high value interactions

Better auditability and consistency across customer communications

A scalable AI capability embedded through a structured CoE operating model

By the numbers

5,000 emails
automated per month, covering routine enquiries

40% reduction
in **manual customer service** workload for the 10member team

Response times improved from
24 hours to minutes

Projected
AUD 1 million+ savings by FY27

Customer quote

"The approach you've taken is particularly impressive. Designing the solution to thoughtfully interpret customer intent, draw on a trusted internal knowledge base, and keep experienced customer care agents in the loop for review and refinement is a great example of putting both technology and people at the centre of the process.

Seeing the solution already handling around 30% of inbound email enquiries is a terrific result, and a strong foundation for what's to come as the knowledge base expands and responses continue to be refined. The early indicators of efficiency and quality, alongside the expected savings as adoption broadens, really highlight the value of the work you've done"

- CIO of the customer firm