



HFS Hot Vendor: Espressive

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Introduction

The HFS Hot Vendors are an exclusive group of emerging players, each with a differentiated value proposition for the HFS OneOffice or HFS OneEcosystem. HFS analysts speak with numerous exciting startups and emerging players.

We designate a select group as HFS Hot Vendors based on their offerings' distinctiveness, ecosystem robustness, client impact, financial position, and the impact in our OneOffice and/or OneEcosystem Frameworks. The HFS Hot Vendors may not (at the time of writing) have the scale and size to be featured in our Top 10 reports, but they have the vision and strategy to impact and disrupt the market.

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Chatbots and AI-powered solutions have been at the top of the service management hype lexicon for what feels like decades. And yet, poorly designed solutions just haven't hit the mark with end users—either because they're unintuitive or simply don't get busy employees the services and solutions they need. This set of poorly designed solutions is where former ServiceNow VP of Product Pat Calhoun set his crosshairs when he founded Espressive.

At the core of the firm is the belief that getting help at work shouldn't be hard. While AI is positioned to enable enterprise digital transformation in IT and beyond, AI can just as easily turn into an expensive and lengthy initiative. Calhoun and the Espressive team took on this challenge by developing a virtual support agent, Barista, that is set to transform the enterprise self-service experience from traditional ITSM solutions to a consumer-like approach that drives employee adoption and significantly reduces help desk calls.

Barista aims to bring the ease of consumer virtual assistants, such as Alexa and Google Home, into the workplace, delivering a personalized user experience that maximizes employee adoption—which in turn reduces help desk call volume and resolution times. Barista automates the resolution of employee questions by providing employees with immediate answers, proactively notifying them of outages or other important events, and continuing to interact with them throughout the entire lifecycle of their requests. Barista also delivers visual workflows to guide employees through complex service requests with ease, such as new hire onboarding, password reset, ordering new equipment, managing distribution lists, vacation requests, and more.

HFS' take

In a cluttered market, Espressive is working hard to make its stamp. It is working tirelessly to build a solution that's much more than the plethora of FAQ-powered chatbots that have bombarded enterprise leaders over the last few years. While some solutions in the market have been more successful than others, each has hit the same roadblock. End users just don't have the time or appetite to be led around in circles by chatbots.

Espressive's Barista seems to have hit a sweet spot in the market, with alluring statistics such as employee adoption rates of 85% compared to the industry average of just 10%. By designing a solution that employees want to use, the firm has also managed to tackle one of the industry's other core challenges—doing more with less—with stats that have seen desk call volumes plummet by up to 60%.

As employee expectations push to match more challenging demands in the consumer space, IT and business services teams will need to rethink how they design support, bringing in more capable and innovative solutions to take the pressure off already stretched teams. Allowing team members to

pick up higher-value work that is essential if enterprises are to build intelligent support functions that underpin their digital ambitions. We expect to see the Espressive name appear more often on IT service provider partner lists.

Vendor factsheet

- Espressive was founded in 2017 by Pat Calhoun, former senior vice president of product at ServiceNow and former founder/CTO of Airespace, which Cisco acquired
- Espressive is a venture-funded company with \$23 million in funding. The most recent funding round was July 31, 2018.
- General Catalyst Partners and Wing Venture Capital back the firm
- Espressive has over 50 active customer instances. Notable clients include Palo Alto Networks, Okta, and Dexcom
- Espressive has headquarters in Santa Clara, CA, and additional offices in New York, San Diego, and Mexico

Solution portfolio

Barista

Powered by the Employee Language Cloud, Barista is smart out of the box and understands over 500 million employee phrases across four thousand topics covering multiple enterprise departments (e.g., IT, HR, finance, legal, sales). This built-in base enables fast deployment without the need to hire expensive AI talent or engage professional services. The Barista Employee Language Cloud incorporates leading AI technologies that enable Barista to understand what employees are saying in their own language and provide a single, personalized response.

Barista uses specific context information about the employee's role, responsibilities and circumstances so that it can personalize answers. For example, a Canadian employee asking about benefits would receive information on benefits available in Canada, not the benefits that apply to the United States. An employee using Microsoft Windows would be provided with instructions relevant to a Windows device when asking how to install a printer. Barista pulls context information from a number of IT and HR systems of record.

Industry coverage

With a focus on automating the resolution of employee questions with AI, Barista applies to every industry. Barista supports engagement with any department that deals with many employee questions. The firm's engagements have traditionally begun with IT and quickly expanded to other departments including HR, finance, legal, sales.

Partnerships

Espressive is a member of the AWS Advanced Partner Network.



About HFS

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HFS is a unique analyst organization that combines deep visionary expertise with rapid demand side analysis of the Global 2000. Its outlook for the future is admired across the global technology and business operations industries.

Its analysts are respected for their no-nonsense insights based on demand side data and engagements with industry practitioners.

HFS Research introduced the world to terms such as “RPA” (Robotic Process Automation) in 2012 and more recently, the HFS OneOffice™. The HFS mission is to provide visionary insight into the major innovations impacting business operations such as Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, Digital Business Models and Smart Analytics.

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