

# Shinesty Slashes Customer Contacts and Response Time



## Support at Shinesty

- Customer support FAQs, email, and chat
- All accessible online only via Help Center
- Seasonal spikes require hiring new agents

## Solvvy

## Solvvy Impact

- 26% average deflection in monthly support tickets
- First reply time dropped from 12 hours to 30 minutes
- Can handle seasonal traffic without adding agents



Antonio King,  
Director of Experience

“Last year we built a whole training module around bringing in seasonal help, but when it came time to hire new people in Q4 we didn’t need to—which was incredible because we’ve been growing 50% year over year.”

# Shinesty Case Study

Shinesty makes and sells fun, customizable garments that range from a little wacky to truly wild, shipping all over the country and the world from its online store. Based in Colorado, the company's founder, Chris White, originally started the site to sell the outlandish vintage pieces he'd collected from thrift stores to college students while he was finishing his own MBA. The shop did so well that White began making custom apparel. In 2014 his "ugly Christmas sweater" patterned suits went viral after a plug on The Today Show, and Shinesty really began to grow.

The company has since expanded its catalog to include a wide range of event and holiday-themed apparel and accessories for both men and women, from day-glow skiwear and NFL themed suits to faux denim speedos and animal print bikinis. With new designs and garments always being cooked up in the MadLab, Shinesty is on a mission to destroy "smile-stealing," boring clothing, and make the world take itself less seriously, one outfit at a time.

## Executive Summary

As a purely online business, Shinesty's focus is on creating a great customer experience (CX) and reducing customer effort through fast, easy digital support. This is especially important during the busy holiday season, when most of its annual sales take place. With a year over year growth rate of 50%, Shinesty's seasonal overhead was growing, too. The company needed a way to

"With Solvvy handling our one-touch issues, we're able to focus on the areas that need human assistance. We're also working with the Solvvy development team to pinpoint where we need to improve and where we can increase self-service."

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handle the spike that begins in September and ends in February without breaking its budget, and without damaging its reputation as a digital CX leader due to inexperienced agents fumbling contacts.

Shinesty enlisted Solvvy to transform its customer support experience:

- Driving tier one issues through self-service
- Significantly reducing one-touch issues becoming tickets
- Achieving lowest-ever customer effort score
- Identifying new areas to apply self-service

## Challenges

Shinesty sells apparel and accessories through an online store on its website, where all customer support is also done. This includes processing returns and exchanges, which are crucial (and common) for any online clothing company. Shinesty's exponential growth coupled with the seasonal nature of retail makes the fourth quarter of each year extremely demanding. And the team recently added a monthly subscription program for boxer shorts that grew far beyond its expectations—gaining close to 20,000 subscribers in the first year.

To handle its biggest challenge, Shinesty had a training module structured around bringing in new agents to manage holiday traffic. But inexperienced seasonal employees can slow things down at a time when customers want everything rushed. The company needed a way to reduce seasonal overhead and speed up order management by driving more contacts through self-service channels, freeing up its agents to handle more complex issues. Shinesty was already using AnswerDash to solve issues before they went to agents, but was frustrated by the company's inability to report on the kind or number of queries it was deflecting and whether or not Help Center visitors converted after having their questions answered. It was time for a better solution.

## The Solvvy Solution

After running a four-week trial to see if Solvvy could out-perform AnswerDash, Shinesty chose Solvvy to implement a more robust self-service solution on its Help Center webpage that would drive more contacts to the available resources. The goal was to increase self-service rates and accuracy enough to enable Shinesty to get through the busy holiday season with the agents it already had, who had the added benefit of knowing which tickets to prioritize, how to make changes quickly, and which customers needed a little extra help.

Solvvy sits on the Shinesty support page, enabling users to ask questions in both the FAQ field and email form in their own words and receive precise, accurate answers. Providing instant answers to FAQs deflects the majority of Shinesty's simple contacts. For customers who prefer to email, Solvvy helps direct the email to the right agent for a faster response, and in some cases can provide the answer up front so they don't need to send an email at all. Solvvy combines machine learning algorithms and natural language processing technologies to understand what customers are asking and extract relevant information from the Shinesty knowledge base. This not only answers queries but also reduces order abandonment and improves customer satisfaction, which makes them more likely to buy again.

## Results and What's Next

Since implementing Solvvy in April of 2017, Shinesty has reduced its weekly contact-to-order rate from 19% to just 9%. The raw number of contacts has also dropped by comparison, while its orders have grown—in November 2016, 4,500 customers contacted Shinesty compared with 2,800 in November 2017, despite 50% higher sales. The company has also been able to speed up its response time significantly, from around 12.5 hours for a first reply down to just half an hour. And at the end of the first year, the company decided it could handle its biggest sales season yet with just its full-time support staff, aided by its new self-service abilities.

### Solvvy reduced contacts per months by up to 56% over AnswerDash

Month	Monthly tickets 2016 (AnswerDash)	Monthly tickets 2017 (Solvvy)	Reduction
October	1600	692	56%
November	4500	2800	38%
December	2800	2300	18%

Solvvy reduced first reply time by up to **96%** over AnswerDash

Average response time with AnswerDash: **12.15 hours**

Average response time with Solvvy: **0.5 hours**

### Solvvy reduced the contact per order rate by up to 59% over AnswerDash

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2016	n/a	71%	40%	27%
2017	21%	19%	18%	16%
2018	15%	12%	9%	n/a

According to Antonio King, Director of Experience at Shinesty, “Solvvy allows us to give people their time back. They don’t have to go searching for answers, and they don’t have to reach unless they need to. Now we bring the content they need to them.” With Solvvy resolving the easier queries, Shinesty’s agents are



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for new ways to reduce customer effort. Now the busy holiday season is an opportunity to expand sales without expanding its support team overhead, and turn holiday shoppers into lifelong customers. And that’s something to celebrate.

able to focus on the tier two and three customer issues that really require a human touch. This has also helped shed light on what those issues are, which is helping the company improve its processes and reduce higher level contacts, too. “We didn’t realize how effective Solvvy would be in showing us other areas where we could improve,” says King. “That’s an underlying bonus you can’t see until you use it. Solvvy allows us to learn from and build around the solution as we grow with it.” As an added bonus, Solvvy’s Zendesk integration makes it that much easier to use—incorporating all logins into a simple solution has helped Shonesty validate its technology investment.

As a digital CX leader, Shonesty is always looking