

simple and immediate interaction
with the right people

ASK **Community Systems**
ASK Brochure

About ASK Community Systems

ASK Community Systems delivers adaptive communication solutions that assist companies to operate flexibly, reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. The ASK system is self-learning, self-organizing and employs feedback mechanisms that enable ASK to adapt to dynamic environments.

ASK Community Systems is a spin-off company of research institute and parent organization Almende. The ASK product is developed in cooperation with several academic institutions such as Delft University of Technology, Erasmus University Rotterdam and the VU University Amsterdam.

Since the establishment of ASK Community Systems in the Netherlands in 2003, the company has expanded to Germany, the United States, China and Belgium in order to assist companies in making their operations more flexible through efficient communication. The head office is situated in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Intelligent and Personal

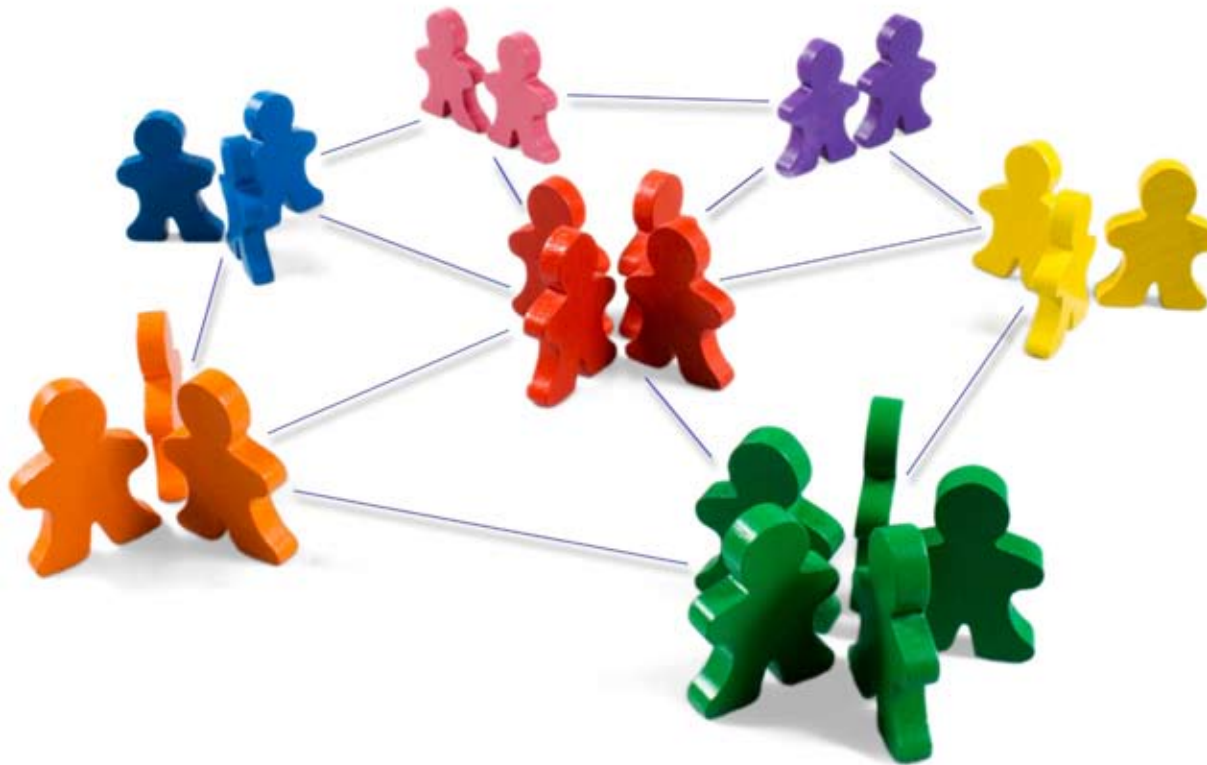
Personal contact is central to our philosophy. Intelligent systems and computer agents support human activity, but human ability is unique. Therefore, we provide a hybrid network consisting of both humans and computers. Self-organization and adaptability, inside or outside the organization, are the driving forces of our philosophy. Our vision is: *“Simple and immediate interaction with the right people”*.



What is ASK?

ASK is a revolutionary communication software system, which enables large groups of people to organize themselves. It integrates all forms of communications - like e-mail, SMS, phone and Internet - giving both users and enterprises more control over their communications.

“Getting people in contact with each other, based on personal preferences, availability and reachability”



Revolutionary and Adaptive

ASK matches people based on their profiles and availability. Experience from previous connections (feedback about preferences) is used to arrange a better match. The system estimates the demand and can thus ensure that enough people are available for a job or activity. Additionally, ASK enables users to inform others about their status, their availability, and how they can be contacted best. ASK uses this information to select the right people for a communication session.

The ability to adapt is beneficial for virtually any industry where large scale communication takes place. ASK enables these organizations to operate flexibly and cost-efficiently.

Self Organizing on an Individual Level

ASK is an integrated communication platform which combines several means of communication to connect people to each other. ASK is created from the perspective that self-organization within companies can be realized with the help of modern methods of communication.

Within our company everything revolves around communication, with special emphasis on the individual person. ASK facilitates a personal approach, even in high volume communication. ASK achieves this by employing all available communication channels and is able to improve itself by learning from the behavior and experiences of the users. This can be realized by posing a direct question to the user via ASK or analyzing the user behavior. ASK uses this information to organize people in an unprecedented way and thereby dramatically improve the communication between them.



The ASK Product

Flexible and Versatile

Effective communication increases the quality of service which culminates in increased user satisfaction. Besides this, effective communication also increases flexibility within an organization which results in reduced costs. This is best illustrated in ad-hoc situations/problems which could be solved quickly by reaching the “right person for the job”. This in contrast to long term forecasts and schedules, which are subject to last minute changes.

ASK is able to connect telephony, internet and other communication channels and thus shorten standard procedures, accelerate and improve with minimum stress on people. This offers companies the ability to tune their services and give personal attention to the individual client, regardless of the amount of customers.



“Please feel free to visit
www.ask-cs.com
for more information”



ASK in Practice

ASK can offer a number of communication solutions for both companies and non-profit organizations. In each domain, both the quality and efficiency of human interactions is optimized.

ASK is recognized by our clients as a revolutionary, quick, direct and reliable communication system, which main purposes are:

- Increasing customer satisfaction;
- Enhancing customer relations and interaction;
- Increasing the quality of their services;
- Obtaining time and/or cost savings;
- Generating extra revenues;
- Creating a more pleasant working environment for employees.

The versatility of ASK allows these targets to be fulfilled in many different ways. Every application ASK is dedicated to, brings along specific product and service demands. That is why ASK Community Systems chooses to distinguish between 5 different ASK solutions.



1. Workforce Planning

The first solution ASK offers is Workforce Planning. ASK assists companies in planning their workforce flexibly by combining several means of communication. It manages to find and schedule either own employees (In-House Workforces) or temporary workers (External Workforces).

ASK:

- Increases productivity and process efficiency (time and cost savings)
- Enhances customer- and employee satisfaction

“ASK tunes the employee occupancy grade to match the current demand for workers within the six distribution centers of TNT Mail in The Netherlands. Without ASK we would never have achieved this. We schedule about 2500 people on a weekly basis with ASK. If you would have to reach everyone individually, you would need about 20 planners for two days in a week. With ASK one planner can achieve the same in a couple hours. The rest of the work is done by ASK”. (John Simons, ICT Director at TNT Post).



2. Customer Service

ASK is also capable of handling Customer Service. Subject to the nature of their request, customers are connected to the right people instantly. In General, 36% of all attempts to reach the right person the first time fails. Furthermore, a minimum of 3 phone calls and a confirmation e-mail are required to make an appointment (Sage Research, January 2006).

At Housing Corporation Vestia for instance, tenants get in touch with the right repairman for the job. Feedback mechanisms are able to provide quality control and automated adjustments.

ASK handles the telephony at the Nieuwerkerk aan den IJssel municipal office. ASK collects incoming phone calls and redirects them directly to the right person. Apart from the incoming request, ASK takes into account reachability and availability.

ASK:

- Takes care of your customers
- Improves the service quality



3. Knowledge Sharing

Another solution is the application of ASK as a Knowledge Sharing system. This application is used by Pfizer; the world's largest pharmaceuticals company. ASK is the engine driving Pfizer MedConnect; an online knowledge bank, in which telephone calls and e-mail are exchanged between everyone in the care chain. Doctors, nurses etc. can share knowledge by either entering or looking up complaints, treatments and other matters or contacting an available colleague or specialist directly to discuss the problem.

ASK:

- Enhances your customer relations
- Provides your company with an empathic and progressive image



4. Social Care

In the Social Care area ASK takes care of the connection between people in need for help and volunteers. Many people, especially elderly or physically disabled people depend on others. On the other hand, there are also many volunteers willing to give a helping hand. In practice it can be difficult for these people to get in touch with each other. This is where ASK can help and thereby solve the needs of both groups.

People in need for a helping hand can call a number and leave a request by pressing a button. The call is then redirected to a neighbor who is available to do the shopping, change a light bulb, let out the dog or lend a helping hand in another way.

ASK:

- Improves client relations
- Gets society closer together

5. Emergency Response

Armed robberies, natural disasters, technological hazards, infrastructure failures... these are all emergent situations where immediate response is necessary. ASK has the ability to coordinate the communication in these critical times, providing safety to people and protecting critical assets.

ASK:

- Takes care of people's safety
- Collects status information, submits tasks, coordinates people and services





If you have any questions,

ASK us!

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