Case Study: How Northline Logistics Cut Support Response Time by 40% with an AI Triage Bot

Northline Logistics is a regional freight company with a small support team and a big problem. Customer questions poured in through email and a web form, but everything landed in a single shared inbox. Agents spent their mornings sorting and forwarding messages before they could even start helping people.

Response times crept up. Urgent shipment issues got buried under routine rate questions. Sales complained about missed opportunities. The support manager, Elena Ortiz, knew the team was working hard. The problem was the system.

The company decided to test an AI-powered triage bot to classify and route incoming requests, while leaving humans in control of the actual replies.

The challenge

On a typical weekday, Northline received 250 to 300 inbound messages. Roughly:

- 40% were tracking and "where is my shipment?" questions
- 25% were billing and paperwork issues
- 20% were rate and quote requests
- 15% were assorted one-off problems

Agents spent 20 to 30 seconds per email deciding what it was about and where it should go. That did not sound like much, but across hundreds of messages it added up to hours of manual sorting every day.

The solution

Working with their technology partner, Northline implemented an AI triage bot that sits between the intake channels and the shared inbox.

Here is what the new flow looks like:

1. A customer submits an email or web form.
2. The triage bot reads the message and classifies it into one of several categories: tracking, billing, quote, claims, or "other."
3. Based on the category and a few business rules, the system routes the message to the right queue or person.
4. For common cases, the bot drafts a suggested reply that agents can accept, edit, or discard.

The model was trained on past support tickets, but Elena insisted on a slow rollout. For the first month, the bot only labeled messages and suggested responses. Agents did their normal work and rated the

AI's suggestions behind the scenes.

Measurable results

After six weeks, the team turned on automated routing and kept human review for replies. Within three months, they saw clear improvements:

- Average first-response time dropped by 40%.
- Agents spent 60% less time on manual sorting.
- More than half of all tracking questions could be answered using an AI-drafted template with light edits.

Importantly, the bot did not replace any staff. It replaced a pile of low-value decision work that no one enjoyed.

Lessons learned

Northline's experience offers a few practical lessons for other logistics and B2B teams considering AI in their support stack:

- Start with routing and classification, not full autonomy.
- Let agents rate and correct the AI's suggestions before you trust it in production.
- Use clear categories and business rules so the system's behavior is predictable.
- Treat AI as a speed multiplier for your existing team, not a way to do more with fewer people.

For Northline, the triage bot turned a noisy inbox into an organized queue and gave agents back hours each week to handle the complex, human problems that actually require their judgment.