A CLOSER LOOK™

INDUSTRY	Customer experience
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LOCATION	Duluth, Georgia

AI Transformation at A Closer Look: Cutting Repetition, Driving Efficiency

A Closer Look (ACL) is a leading customer experience consultancy that faced significant challenges managing shopper support due to fragmented and unstructured data. With over 300 client guidelines in varying formats, inefficiency thwarted scalability. Seeking a solution, ACL partnered with Quiq to develop an AI-powered shopper support assistant named "Ella." Together, they navigated data complexities to deliver an intelligent support tool that redefined their operations.

Now, mystery shoppers can confidently go to Ella with their questions and quickly get them answered, resulting in significantly better support for the lifeblood of ACL's business.

Mystery shoppers get more with A Closer Look.

Sign up to find nearby shops.

🌐 **a-closer-look.com**

Quiq

Challenges

Before Ella, ACL's customer support encountered numerous hurdles, including:

- **Inefficient data systems:** Non-standardized PDFs made scaling AI assistant or agent solutions nearly impossible.

- **Time-consuming support inquiries:** Shoppers struggled to find small details in lengthy documents, creating a heavy load for support staff.

- **Repetitive questions:** Human agents routinely answered basic inquiries like "How many photos do I need for Client A?" due to the lack of efficient self-serve resources.

- **Version control issues:** Updates to client guidelines were difficult to track across multiple documents.

"Since all our clients have unique needs, shop guidelines were always formatted differently— no standardization, no uniform structure," explains Rachael Paradiso, Product Operations Manager at ACL. "We couldn't scale our existing chatbots because they relied on manual programming, and there was no way to load and maintain that many unique documents efficiently." She added, "AI can't fix poor data. We learned that the hard way, and it took us longer than planned. But once we handled the data problem—once we standardized and clarified everything—AI became an incredible time-saver."

ACL needed more than AI. They required a partner capable of addressing fundamental flaws in their data structure.
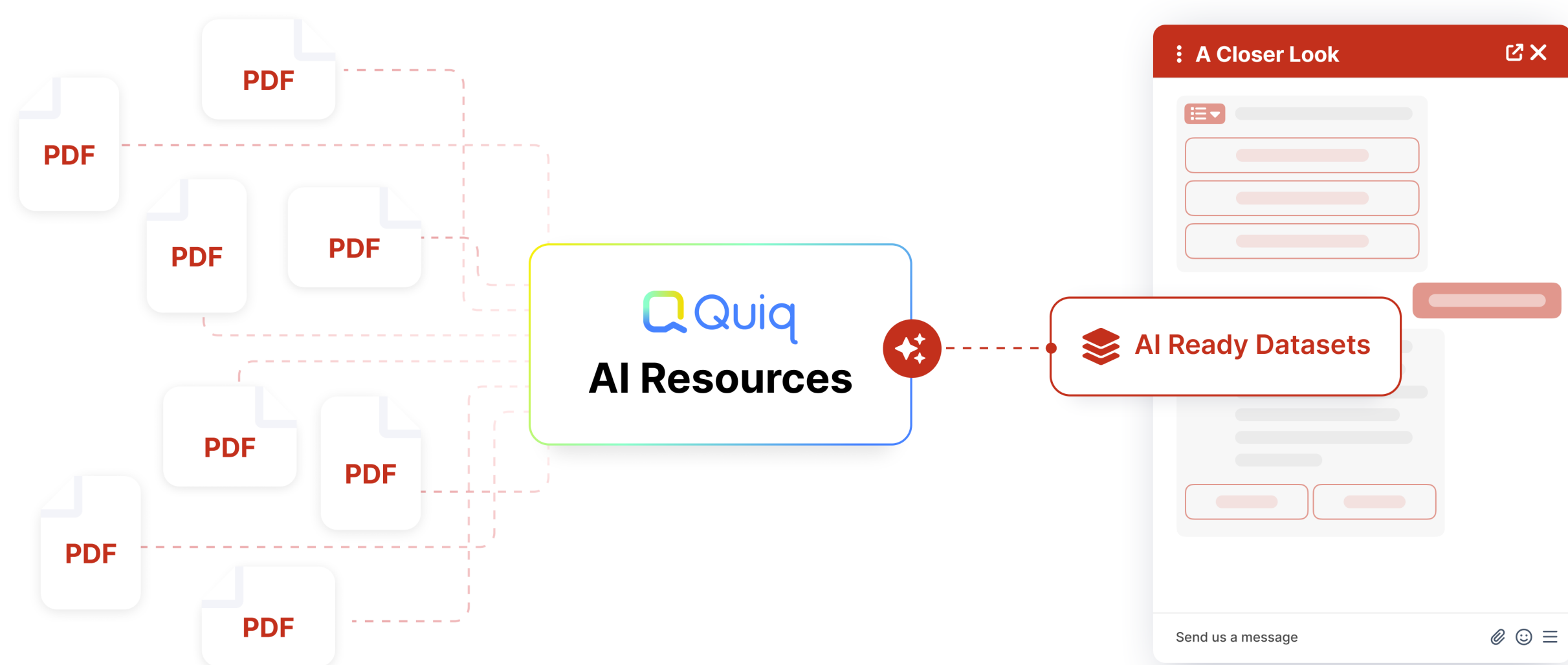
Solutions

To tackle these challenges, ACL turned to Quiq. The partnership focused on architecting a robust system for shopper support by transforming unstructured client data into AI-ready formats and creating Ella, ACL's AI-powered assistant.

Led by Quiq, the solution design and implementation included the following components:

1 AI-powered data structuring

Quiq addressed ACL's foundational problem by developing innovative technologies to convert chaotic PDFs into actionable formats suitable for AI integration. This involved more than just cleaning up data. It required advanced data engineering to completely restructure the information with intelligent automation, while ensuring scalability.

Rachael notes, "When you have more than 300 PDF documents, some dating back years, you're dealing with decades of potential inconsistencies. Even things like capitalization or naming conventions could trip up Ella in the early days."

Key innovations included:

- **Complex indexing and search systems** to parse unstructured PDF content.
- **Query-routing mechanisms** to optimize guideline lookups versus broader FAQ searches.
- **Eliminating hallucinations in AI responses** with pre- and post-answer generation guardrails to improve accuracy and relevance in shopper interactions.

"At A Closer Look, we believe in making work more purposeful. Ella is proof that AI, supported by the right data, can enhance the workforce by freeing people from the mundane and letting them focus on what truly matters."

Rachael Paradiso
Product Operations Manager, ACL

2 Ella's development and iterative optimization

ACL envisioned Ella as a tool capable of handling shopper inquiries in real time, allowing human agents to focus on higher-value tasks and shoppers to focus on evaluating experiences.

Quiq equipped the AI assistant with tools to disambiguate the customer's initial query, and to ask them what they're looking for (as many do not know), which has led to more accurate answers and efficient resolution. Ella is now able to answer questions for itself, like:

- "Is this person asking about a specific shop?"
- "Is this person looking for general info?"
- "What's the best course of action for this issue, given what I know about this particular assigned shop and ACL's broader list of requirements?"

Quiq engineered the AI assistant to expertly dissect complex customer issues into manageable sub-tasks. It utilized multi-stage processing and the ability to handle tasks in parallel to deliver highly effective and smooth troubleshooting and assistance.

With Quiq's help, the team prioritized:

1. **Short, actionable responses** to shopper inquiries, avoiding overly lengthy outputs.
2. **Improved follow-up logic**, ensuring contextual and seamless shopper interactions.
3. **Real-time monitoring and updates** to improve accuracy and workflow integration continually.

The result? By focusing on iteration and user feedback, Ella evolved into a precise and reliable AI assistant for ACL's operations—and has become the go-to resource mystery shoppers can count on for clarity on the job.

3 Enhanced collaboration and AI ecosystem build-out

While technical engineering remained pivotal, Quiq's collaboration with ACL also extended into strategic project management. Despite tight timelines, Quiq guided ACL through data standardization.

Quiq managed architectural complexities by delivering tailored AI solutions within ACL's constraints. "We soon realized AI projects aren't as simple as dumping data and letting it work," Rachael remarks.

Together, the teams adapted to shifting project needs, ensuring Ella's successful deployment.

Results and outcomes

ACL's investment in AI solutions paid off significantly. Ella has transformed shopper engagement and achieved measurable results:

- **24/7 query management:** Ella provides instant, accurate responses, eliminating wait times.
- **Reduced repetitive workload:** Human agents are free from mundane inquiries and can focus on strategic tasks.
- **Improved workflows:** Ella connects seamlessly to ACL's proprietary platforms, enabling advanced automation.

24/7 query management	Reduced repetitive workload	Improved workflows

"Instead of eliminating jobs, we reassigned those employees to more meaningful work. It's never been just a 'cost-cutting' endeavor for us," Rachael states. "No one enjoys repetitive tasks, so by removing those, we free our team to focus on purposeful projects. We used to spend hours on repetitive tasks, especially for new shoppers. Now, Ella handles that, and we can devote more time to complex shopper issues that need a human touch."

What's next?

ACL plans to build on Ella's success and explore further applications of AI within their ecosystem, including:

- **Automating shopper communications:** Ella's interactions will be optimized for deeper flows.
- **Integrating AI with proprietary tools:** ACL aims to extend Ella's capabilities within platforms like Clarity.
- **Expanding AI confidence:** Using Ella as proof of concept, ACL intends to bring AI innovation to broader applications.

Would you like to unlock similar results for your business?

Contact Quiq today and experience how next-generation AI tools can redefine your operations.