LEVERAGE YOUR TEAM’S COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER CUSTOMER SUPPORT

CREATE A TEAM APPROACH

OUR STORY

As veterans of the software and customer service industries, we shared the same pains as today’s customer service teams do. Over the course of our tech jobs—as CEO, software developers, and customer support professionals—we watched in frustration as communication consistently broke down within teams and across departments.

We knew there had to be a better way. And that’s why, in 2009, we created TeamSupport. Drawing upon industry best practices honed in numerous workplaces, our product today is widely considered one of the best in the field.

Industry experts have aptly described this era as the age of the customer. Customers run the show today because in our lightning-fast, digitally connected world they have so many choices. If your support team doesn’t deliver a great customer experience, another supplier is just a few clicks away.

How does this affect the support desk function? Essentially, it requires agents to understand your customers’ various needs and provide the best level of personal support. However, there are times when the best solution can come from another member of your team.

That’s why the most successful firms use communications and collaboration technology to create a team approach that leverages company resources and knowledge to the max. Instead of agents resolving tickets through tiered support, one-to-one communications, or a rash of desperate emails, collaborative support connects team members for faster and more effective issue resolution. A ticketing tool that supports team collaboration makes it easy to bring all stakeholders into the discussion to solve the customer’s problem. The result is better customer support.

“We strongly believe the best customer support experience is rooted in team collaboration,” says Robert Johnson, CEO of TeamSupport, a provider of

TEAM SUPPORT

COLLABORATIVE CUSTOMER SUPPORT SOFTWARE
collaborative support desk software. “Working together delivers quicker access to the expert, thus reducing the cost per incident and resolution times, and improving the customer experience.”

Collaboration offers cumulative benefits by raising the collective knowledge of the support team, in contrast to tiered support that locks agents into their level and kicks complex issues upstairs. The collaborative model encourages agents to tap the best minds to resolve complex issues while educating themselves in the process. Collaboration can also engage sales, marketing, engineering, and executive management in the support process. Their input enhances support while new insights help them understand customers better.

With collaboration closely tied to an excellent customer experience, progressive firms are embedding it in their support processes. The best approach is to deploy service-desk software that is hosted in the cloud and which features a rich toolset for social collaboration. Also essential is integration with CRM applications to link support with other business functions.

Software-as-a service (SaaS) connects far-flung support agents with the team whenever and wherever they are online. A side benefit is the pay-as-you-go subscription model. Not only is it cost effective and requires no dedicated infrastructure, but the service provider automatically delivers bug fixes, new features and upgrades. SaaS lets you focus on supporting customers without getting buried in on-premise IT.

The best help-desk software facilitates collaboration through social business tools such as profiles, tags, internal chat, wikis, groups, forums and Facebook-like internal communities. These capabilities help agents discover experts and expertise throughout the organization and can advance the team’s collective knowledge. Ideally, social network
interactions will be stored and searchable. It’s truly powerful when agents who search to solve a problem find other tickets, knowledge base articles, and even entire conversations among people who had the same issue.

Besides helping agents, internal social networking can further collaboration among those outside the support team. “The ability to reach out to specific groups or the entire staff to ask a question about the product is a positive step for many companies,” Johnson says. “This has the potential to bring in the development and product management teams—and even senior management and other decision makers—so they are apprised of what’s happening in the trenches.”

Integration between the help desk and CRM software such as Salesforce furthers broad collaboration. Support staff as well as salespeople, marketers, engineers, and senior executives gain a 360-degree view of customer interactions within their preferred user interface. Through a seamless information flow, sales and marketing staff can see customer cases from within the CRM application and enter their input, which the support team receives in its software. The same is true for inputs first made in the CRM software—agents gain an edge when account information created by the sales team automatically populates the help-desk software.

To ensure productive help-desk-to-CRM integration, look for features such as out-of-the-box integration, bidirectional information flow, support for rich media responses, and mapping to custom fields. A good place to explore integration is the AppExchange at appexchange.salesforce.com.

Adding collaboration to the service desk makes strategic sense as you work to improve the customer experience. As Johnson says, “Moving to a collaborative model where everyone has a hand in supporting customers brings the entire company together and makes them more aware of their most important assets, their customers.”
OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER SUPPORT FOR THE B2B ORGANIZATION

TeamSupport provides powerful yet easy-to-use, Web-based enterprise software that helps businesses provide seamless, effective omnichannel customer support by enhancing collaboration and breaking down internal barriers. Using their skills as software and customer support professionals, and drawing upon industry best practices honed in numerous workplaces, TeamSupport has built a product that is widely considered one of the best in the field. For more information, visit http://www.teamsupport.com or call +1 800.596.2820.

Suntell is the creator of loan management software that is used by community banks and credit unions. With a high level of customer interaction, exceptional service is a must in their industry.

The company’s existing database handled logging and tracking of customer issues and questions in the beginning, however over time the company needed a more robust support system to move requests away from separate e-mails and into a central system. They were also using three different systems for storing and tracking information, which meant the process was very inefficient and time consuming.

According to Suntell’s Senior Implementation/Training Specialist Anna Yang, “Customers and support representatives communicated via e-mail, which meant that others in the company wouldn’t know what was going on with a customer unless the support rep remembered to copy and past the e-mail exchange into a work order.”

After searching for a collaborative software solution that would also reduce their reliance on e-mail, Suntell implemented TeamSupport. Now all e-mails to and from customers and support reps are integrated in one system and customers can log in anytime to view their ticket status and updates. Having everything in one cohesive system has reduced duplication, and the collaborative features mean that developers can monitor new feature requests, and everyone in the company can see everything that is happening with a customer.

The seamless integration with other office tools like CRM has been an added bonus. “We used to manually manage mailing lists,” explains Yang. “Now when a customer registers on our website, it automatically creates a ticket, which syncs into MailChimp to automatically add the individual to our mailing list.”

Since implementing TeamSupport in 2010, Suntell has logged about 2,700 tickets per year and saves an estimated 20% in staff time thanks to it’s native collaboration and integration features.

“I found TeamSupport, I liked what I saw, it did everything we were looking for and the price point was perfect.”
Anna Yang, Suntell

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