Improving Efficiency and Reducing Costs in the Support Center with Knowledge Base Software

For call centers, success is measured in resolving customer issues in the shortest amount of time. Agents' performance is scrutinized with some of the closest monitored metrics an employee can have. Their success hinges on being able to provide accurate answers in the shortest amount of time, all while dealing with every type of customer personality imaginable.

When we think of support agent tools we think of cubicles and headsets; we also think of help desk software to manage and track calls, but just as important in an agent's toolkit is the company's knowledge base software.

Providing the Right Answers

A knowledge base is a centralized repository for all of your important company knowledge. It can house important information such as:

- Company policies and procedures

- Frequently asked question

- Forms & training guides

In a customer support scenario, a knowledge base can be integrated with the help desk tracking system to provide agents with accurate answers – every time! This ensures your customers are receiving the quality care they deserve from any agent – anytime.

The knowledge base is populated by your management team who draft and manage the articles. Flexible settings can ensure that timely answers are given by showing only applicable articles at certain times. For example, say that you have an offer to replace an item through a specified date. You can set the date of the article to automatically expire once that date has passed, so agents are not making offers after an expired time. Other workflow settings can be put into place to have articles reviewed by set individuals for approval before being made public. Having this automated improves accuracy and ensures efficiency.

Providing Fast Answers

Call center agents not only need to find the right answers, but they need to do so in the shortest amount of time. When important company information is decentralized, finding the right answers can extend call times, reducing your call center efficiency and frustrating customers.

Accurate search capabilities are an essential element of a quality knowledge base. A good search tool will produce the best, related article results to the query. Even better is an advanced search option, where agents can be specific with search requests. Also of importance is the ability to not only search articles, but also attachments. For example, a pdf from one of your vendors may have the exact information your customer needs. A knowledge base that will search attachments will quickly give your agents information to that document without you having to enter all of that information directly into the article itself.

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Reducing Call Center Costs

The right knowledge base can have a big impact on your company's bottom line. By reducing the amount of time it takes to provide answers, call times are reduced, saving money. **Here is an example:**

Bob receives an average of 45 calls per day and typically spends about 6 minutes per call. His company recently implemented a knowledge base where he is able to find answers more quickly, reducing his call times by 10%. This saves Bob 27 minutes per day.

At his call center cost of $3.50 per minute the monthly savings is $1890 for Bob alone. Since his call center employs 50 people...

The company saves $94,500 per month.

That is a lot of savings!

Call Center Statistics from Benchmark Portal - http://www.benchmarkportal.com}

In fact, many companies realize over a 10% savings – this not only improves customer satisfaction scores (because customers are getting the right answers faster), but agents can take more calls in a day, improving productivity!

Easy Access

A knowledge base houses all of your information in a single, centralized location. Article, images, .pdf attachments and more are all kept together, providing easy access. And because it is web based, remote agents can access knowledge from any location, anytime. A knowledge base may also be viewed on a mobile device, such as a tablet or cell phone, so administrators can make updates and view reports even while away from the office.

Security

There will be company information that should be limited to certain user types. For example, agents may have access to one tier of information, while managers can see more. Flexible permission settings allow certain users to view specific information. This keeps your private information safe and secure.

So in the continuing challenge of improving productivity and customer satisfaction in your call center, take a hard look at your systems. Employing a quality knowledge base is a great step towards maximizing productivity.

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