Knowledge-Centered Customer Support

Best Practices for Success

Great customer support remains one of the few differentiators that businesses can sustain over time. Companies that are winning in today’s hypercompetitive business environment provide stand-out customer service by leveraging knowledge to empower contact center agents and enable superior self-service for customers. eGain has delivered KM solutions for multichannel customer support for well over 15 years. In the process, we have compiled hundreds of best practices to maximize ROI and ensure success. Listed below are some of the popular ones.

1. Quantify value

Assessing expected and realized ROI before and after the deployment helps you justify the initial investment as well as continuous improvement of the knowledge base (KB), while elevating your standing in the organization by creating ongoing value for the business.

**Best Practice:** Make sure the ROI metrics you use are aligned with business objectives. For instance, if your main business goal is to increase upsell and cross-sell, reduction in average handle time will be a conflicting metric. As you assess ROI, keep in mind that KM delivers positive ROI across a broad range of business problems. Some examples are:
- Increase in first-time fixes
- Reduction in escalations, transfers, repeat calls
- Reduction in training time, unwarranted product returns, field visits, and staff wage premiums
- Increase in sales conversion

2. Build the team

Successful KM implementations employ the right team for knowledge capture, creation, and continuous improvement.

**Best Practice:** Build and empower a cross-functional team that can bring a 360 degree approach to knowledge management. Best-practice teams typically include the following:
- **Strategist:** Lead expert that determines the organization, topics, roles and responsibilities, and long term plans.
- **Select users:** High-performance service and sales representatives, who use the KB on a daily basis, can provide useful feedback from the trenches and even contribute answers. Be sure to reward such agents to foster ongoing knowledge contribution.
Subject matter experts: Experts in the organization that have answers, especially for questions of moderate to high complexity.

Knowledge authors: Writers and publishers that are focused on content development, taxonomy, and publishing.

Project managers: Tactical managers that keep the project on track and ensure forward momentum.

3. Start with depth

Ambitious, unfocused deployments almost always result in a shallow KB that is full of holes like Swiss cheese. If agents and customers can't find answers, or receive inadequate or wrong information, they simply stop using the system.

Best practice: Focus first on depth rather than breadth. Start with common questions on common products or lines of business and expand out over time.

4. Implement best-practice frameworks

Best practice frameworks have emerged over time in knowledge management. For example, the KCS framework, advocated by the Consortium for Service Innovation (CSI), is a comprehensive methodology that helps improve speed of resolution, optimize resources, and foster organizational learning. Adopting frameworks like KCS is a win-win-win for customers, contact center agents, and the organization alike.

Best practice: Look for “KCS Verified” providers to implement the best and the next practices in knowledge-centered customer support.

5. Maximize findability

Users prefer different ways of searching for information, just as drivers prefer different ways of reaching their destination—while some drive on freeways, others would rather take the scenic route. A GPS-style approach with multiple options to find information dramatically improves knowledge base adoption and ROI. For example, new agents may find it difficult to wade through hundreds of keyword search results, but might fare better if they are guided through a step-by-step dialog, powered by technologies like Case-Based Reasoning (CBR).

Best Practice: Multiple search options such as FAQ, keyword and natural language search, topic-tree browsing, and guided help allow a broad range of users to quickly and easily find information. Ensure consistency in the knowledge base and eliminate content silos across customer touchpoints by taking a unified approach to multichannel knowledge management.

6. Crowdsource but scrub

Most businesses are not taking advantage of the enormous opportunity to tap into community and social knowledge and, when they do, they often make the mistake of creating yet another inconsistent knowledge silo.
Best Practice: Foster and crowdsourc social knowledge but scrub and unify with trusted knowledge, and proactively publish across all channels. Knowledge in online communities and social networks fosters peer-to-peer service and can help augment enterprise knowledge assets.

Implementing these practices in knowledge-centered support not only helps improve operational ROI but also enables transformative customer experiences and sustainable business differentiation!

About eGain

eGain (NASDAQ: EGAN) is a leading provider of cloud customer engagement solutions. Trusted by leading brands, eGain solutions help design and deliver smart, connected customer journeys across social, mobile, web, and contact centers.

Headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, eGain has operating presence in North America, EMEA, and APAC. To learn more about us, visit www.eGain.com or call the company’s offices: +1-800-821-4358 (US), +44-(0)-1753-464646 (EMEA), or +91-(0)-20-6608-9200 (APAC).