Four Keys to Successful Contextual Knowledge Management within State Agency Customer Support

Introduction

State Agencies are facing unprecedented challenges as the increasing expectations of the digital customer converge with the pressures of heavily scrutinized budgets. These two challenges have led many public sector organizations to provide digital access to services; investing in technology to help them achieve budget compliance while also meeting increasing expectations of customer service quality.

A challenge to achieving these goals is the management of information that rarely changes, such as how to register a boat trailer, and frequently changing information, such as available health and human services.

A Gartner report found that contextual knowledge management offers critical benefits for gains in satisfaction and productivity; observing that — "Poor KM is a dual curse, causing poor customer satisfaction and a drag on productivity." [1]

As the amount of information available to citizens and employees grows each year, so do customer expectations for efficient service. But unless agencies have effective knowledge management (KM) systems in place, customers looking for answers can quickly get frustrated by Web searches and other self-help options, compelling them to pick up the phone. In turn, the employees who answer may struggle through repeated searches and be required to scan numerous documents, trying to deliver service. The result can be lengthy call times, inconsistent answers, and escalating customer frustration.

Real Results

Contextual knowledge management helps solve this dilemma by bringing the right information to the employee or customer at the right time. When information is easy to find, resolution times drop and satisfaction skyrockets. According to the report, "during 4Q13 and 1Q14, Gartner's work with its customer support operations showed strong TCO on KM projects that included:

- 35 percent reduction in the time that it takes to train a new customer support representative

- 40 percent reduction in inbound emails due to easy access to information

- 25 percent head count shift away from low-value calls due to self-service knowledge search

- 40 percent reduction in talk time in a support center

- 8 percent reduction in support calls, and 18 percent reduction in support costs, by supporting knowledge creation in online customer communities" [2]

At Verint, we have also seen customers achieve outstanding results. Can your agency achieve results similar to this? It's possible, with the help of the correct knowledge management system. Agencies looking to achieve similar results should look for a knowledge management system that provides the following four critical features to take advantage of customer context.

[1] *Knowledge Management Will Transform CRM Customer Service, Gartner, July 1, 2015*

[2] *Knowledge Management Will Transform CRM Customer Service, Gartner, July 1, 2015*

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Contextual Filters

The amount of data accessible to employees and customers is growing exponentially. Contextual filters use information about the customer, such as their agency, to automatically filter the available content to a fraction of the available data. Searching through a restricted result set can have a big impact on the time needed to find an answer.

Suggested Knowledge

In many cases, understanding the context of the customer can provide enough information to present suggested knowledge articles without the need to search at all. For example, if a government employee has enough years of service to retire, knowledge articles relating to how to file for retirement can be automatically filtered at the top of the knowledge article list. If a government employee is relatively new, then knowledge articles about how to plan for retirement would instead be automatically filtered for easy access. By proactively presenting relevant knowledge, resolution times can drop dramatically and the customer experience can be greatly improved.

Personalized Content

Individual knowledge articles can also leverage context to provide personalized information via web self-service. For example, customers can set their preferences and read information about benefits and services in their desired language. For the knowledge manager, rather than maintaining multiple articles written in English, Spanish

and Chinese, a single knowledge article can be tagged with separate sections for each type of language supported. This capability not only provides a much more personalized experience, but can also drastically reduce the total number of articles you need to maintain and, accordingly, the number of places to make edits should your policies change.

Omnichannel Content

Finally, a knowledge management system should provide consistent answers across all channels of communication. Whether in the call center or on the web, across phone, email, live chat, mobile or social channels, your customers need consistent information. A contextual knowledge management application can separate the text from the delivery channel, allowing you to format content differently across channels as needed. In this way, you will again reduce your maintenance efforts by maintaining a single knowledge article for all channels.

Conclusion

As you begin to examine your customer service processes to improve satisfaction while containing costs, it is important to remember that technology alone will not produce your desired results. You must also make the necessary changes to your people and processes to ensure success. Knowledge is an ever-changing entity, so you must create a culture that supports your initiatives beginning at the very top of your organization.

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