

Six Best Practices for Agent Knowledge Management

Implementing knowledge management in the contact center can have a profound effect on the quality and efficiency of your service operations. Customers benefit from interactions with more knowledgeable agents, who are empowered to resolve issues with greater speed, accuracy and consistency. Agent training costs can be substantially reduced, while job satisfaction can increase as interactions with customers become more positive.

However, organizations should follow a set of best practices to help achieve outstanding results from your knowledge management implementation in the contact center.

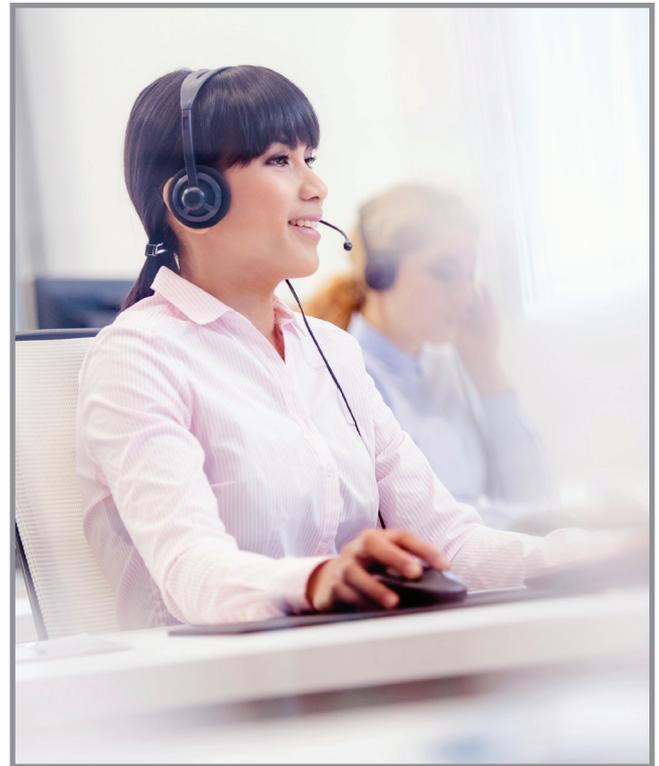
Determine Objectives and Metrics

Identify the areas that are most critical to your company's service operations and then determine the metrics against which the deployment will be measured. Select metrics that will provide a comprehensive view of the business, akin to a balanced scorecard. These should include daily operational metrics, such as reduced talk time, higher first contact resolution, and reduced tier-2 escalations, and performance metrics, such as improved customer satisfaction, higher agent morale, lower agent turnover or faster time to competency for new hires.

Your chosen goals and metrics will guide your knowledge management implementation. As you determine the goals and metrics, establish benchmarks so that you will know the true average for each metric before the knowledge management implementation.

Plan the Implementation Strategy

Organizations must form a well-rounded implementation team to champion the project and ensure the development of high-quality knowledge base content. This team should consist of executive sponsors, knowledge management business owner, knowledge base owner, content owners (authors, reviewers, editors) and IT.



It is also critical that you create a realistic rollout plan that eliminates the risks of a “big bang” implementation approach.

Design a Robust Knowledge Base

A robust knowledge base features content that is appropriate to customer questions and can be easily searched to find the best possible answer in the shortest amount of time. The knowledge base design plan should take into account guidelines and standards for content development that will aid the inquiry resolution process. It should also focus on content categorization (taxonomy) that logically organizes content and increases its “findability.” Finally, it should include content life-cycle management to help ensure content can be created quickly and made available while maintaining accuracy and validity.

Develop Useful Content

The goal of optimizing knowledge is to make sure that service-related content is targeted so that it will speed up the inquiry-resolution process and increase the consistency of resolution. No magic number exists as to how many solutions a knowledge base should contain. Too little information and coverage will be inadequate. With too much information, agents will waste time looking through large numbers of search results to find the right information.

The “right” size of a knowledge base is achieved when a balance exists between the quantity and quality of information in it. The key to optimizing knowledge is to consider what is the most valuable knowledge to include and how can the content be made most effective.

Optimize the User Experience

The user experience focuses on how agents find appropriate solutions most efficiently. This requires more than just standard search. Agents will benefit most from knowledge architecture that structures access to content through interactive guidance methodologies that are attuned to their level of skill, domain expertise or corporate requirements.

Ideally, the knowledge tool will offer the best methodology based on the issue that has been identified. For example, a basic question will result in a simple answer, while a

symptom with many possible causes will lead the agent naturally into a guided resolution experience, resulting in the best answer.

Guidance methods can include simple and advanced search, browsing topic trees, following structured scripts, using clarifying questions, FAQs and Service Alerts.

Constantly Improve Knowledge

Optimizing content is not a one-time activity. Once implemented, the health of the knowledge base must be constantly monitored with new content added, erroneous content adjusted and obsolete content removed on a regular and timely basis.

It is most important that content in the knowledge base reflects solutions that have been proven in the real world of front-line customer support. This can be achieved by enabling agent and customer contribution to the knowledge base, and analyzing service data to determine content usage trends.

Conclusion

The best practices discussed in this paper have been used with repeated success by Verint customers. In combination with the Verint proven solutions for e-service, self-service and call centers, these practices have helped support organizations achieve a level of service that drives higher rates of customer satisfaction and loyalty, agent productivity and operational efficiency.

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