



# Omni-channel Knowledge Management

## Why is omni-channel knowledge management a key cornerstone of customer experience?

We can all recall experiences when we can't find the information we're looking for on a company's website; we ring a contact centre and there are long pauses while the agent tries to find the information we need – and then we know they haven't really found what we're after; or we go into a store, and they refer us to another channel as they don't know the answer.

This creates more effort for us as customers, and diminishes our view of the company we're dealing with.

Research shows that we are increasingly preferring to find FAQ type information through digital – (76% in 2014, up from 67% in 2012<sup>1</sup>), and nearly 60% of callers to contact centres had tried to resolve their issues on the company's website first<sup>2</sup>. This makes omni-channel knowledge management a key cornerstone of customer experience.

**We define omni-channel knowledge management as being the business practices, and supporting technology, to make it easy for customers to access the same relevant and helpful information, whichever channel or channels they choose to use.**

It is one initiative that can improve the quality of customer interactions, lift sales and reduce cost to serve (by creating a true shift to digital usage, you reduce worktime and reduce repeat contacts.)

It's leveraging one source of truth to create tailored knowledge sources for each key audience:

## Single source of truth



### Customers

(via multiple digital portals)



### Contact Centre Agents

Including chat, email, voice & social media (dedicated view for each skill group)



### Face to face Agents

(dedicated view for each skill group, using responsive design)

Business practices are key to success – buying a good knowledge management platform gets you to the starting line, but it's how you use the system, and design and maintain content that makes the difference.

We've found that designing and maintaining omni-channel knowledge requires a deep understanding of all the scenarios that customers want to know and how to present information in a way that resonates and makes it easy for users. Particularly given, we have different preferences for how we consume information.

## Great knowledge requires a truly user-centric approach.

In customer conversations, agents can use their understanding of the company and products gained through training, conversations, and general understanding of standard ways the business operates to gloss over gaps in knowledge. Customers can't do this when they use digital options – how can we best ensure that the knowledge is complete so it is truly useful?

Agents get immediate customer feedback when customers don't understand a concept – and good agents change the way they communicate to help customers understand. How can we make this possible through digital – and make it easier for other agents to pick up hints and tips to make their conversations better?

<sup>1</sup> North American Consumer Technographics Customer Life-Cycle Survey 1, 2014, Forrester.com

<sup>2</sup> Customer Contact Council Research, Corporate Executive Board, 2013

## Our conversations are never static – our knowledge needs to keep pace.

We've found it really worthwhile to get direct input from the best agents to document how they communicate key concepts so that customers easily understand makes for great content.

On any given day, these same agents can provide you with valuable insights on the latest trends in customer queries. If customers are calling for this information it is very likely they are trying other channels for this information too. We often found these new call drivers were among the 'no search results found' report for the company's website. The secret is pausing to reflect and collect the new hot topic trends and then taking the time to publish the conversation your frontline are having on your self-service channels.

In conjunction with quickly publishing articles on what's trending, is an exciting space where you attempt to predict the future. I empowered my team to make changes to our Help Site based on what they felt customers might be looking for in the future. Now, this sounds very science fiction but I promise it is much simpler than that. An example was when the Rugby World Cup was being hosted in New Zealand. My team predicted what content the influx of Rugby Tourists would need and created landing pages tailored to their needs. They also fine-tuned the search ensuring that everything could be found easily. That month we saw the volume of hits on the self-service site hit a record high along with the customer satisfaction ratings for the content. My team applied the same approach to the Christmas Holidays with great success too. It was an excellent way to bring to life customer-centricity.

## Great knowledge bases are supported by great business practices.

5 key ways that we've found help to achieve this:

- 1. Give people responsibility for continually improving content and content presentation to make it work better for users, as well as identifying and filling gaps in content.**
- 2. Create a multi-media content standard that enables multiple people to prepare consistent, rich content that emulates the best of conversations** – diagrams, videos, photos make content come to life.
- 3. Keep as much content common across multiple audiences** – and then add in the extra things that individual teams need to know e.g. procedures etc. This way the information customers receive will be the same as they move across channels.
- 4. Reporting is key to target your efforts to the highest value activity** – user ratings are an important KPI to ensure focus is placed on what matters most.
- 5. Experiment** – and act quickly on feedback. This is the perfect space to see if you can predict the future and practice "fail early, fail fast." With the right reporting and feedback loops in place, you can test new ways to make it easier for agents and customers – the ideas that resonate with users will create the stories, you'll be proud to share.

Omni-channel knowledge management is a very rewarding part of a customer experience programme. Key improvements can be made quickly that have a significant impact on customers experience, staff engagement and financial performance.



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Sue is passionate about customer experience as it is one strategy that delivers to customers, staff and stakeholder requirements. Sue works with clients to establish strategies and initiatives to change the way the business operates to take full advantage of customer experience as a business opportunity.