

Canon Information Technology Services, Inc.

Consona Knowledge Management

Canon Customers Get Great Service Thanks to Canon ITS and Consona

Canon ITS (Canon USA's support company) is providing better customer support and self-service—in spite of bustling sales and a continuously evolving product line—with the Consona Knowledge Management suite from Consona CRM.

A rapidly increasing family of millions of U.S. consumers with Canon digital cameras, copiers, printers, fax machines, camcorders, calculators and binoculars all call the same place with their questions and problems—Canon ITS (CITS) in Chesapeake, Va.—at the current rate of 200,000 calls, 50,000 e-mails, and 1,000 letters per month.

It's All About Customer Support

CITS was formed in 1998 by combining the customer call centers for Canon USA and Canon Computer Systems, Inc. into a single business unit that provides support to all customers who contact Canon. A wholly owned subsidiary of Canon USA, the Chesapeake facility is now the single call center for the entire United States and provides support services for all small office and consumer products. The mission of CITS is to maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty to the Canon brand by providing industry-leading support.

More than 550 people occupy the CITS 60,000 square foot facility. CITS support representatives field over 200,000 calls per month on almost 500 inbound telephone lines along with 50,000 e-mails and as many as 1,000 letters per month. In all, they handle about 3 million customer phone and e-mail contacts per year. Support provided to Canon customers includes technical support, e-mail and web-based support, service

dispatch and other repair referrals, dealer referrals, accessory and supply sales, and customer relations. If a customer living in the United States purchases one of Canon's digital cameras, printers, or other consumer products and needs help, he or she calls CITS for assistance, where over 250 call support analysts are dedicated to providing the very best in technical support.

While technical support is its primary function, CITS handles the direct sale of genuine Canon supplies, accessories and operational manuals. This service provides customers with many items that dealer and retail outlets no longer offer and allows customers who need to replace certain batteries, ink cartridges or ribbons to continue using their Canon product for years to come.

Every CITS representative is a vital point of contact between Canon and individual customers. They seek to maintain the Canon reputation for customer driven excellence as well as to help determine what new product demands will drive tomorrow's marketplace. An extensive CITS customer database provides dynamic marketing information and captures timely, topical end user feedback for the sales divisions, providing a window to the voice of Canon customers.



Return on Investment at a Glance:

CITS realized these results using Consona CRM solutions:

- Enhanced customer resolution rates from 50 to 60 percent resolved.
- Increased call deflection to self-service, from 55 to 71 percent.
- Decreased e-mail escalation rate 42 percent, compared to the first half of 2007.
- Raised customer satisfaction scores for the knowledge base from 6.5 to 7.1 on a scale of 1 to 10.
- Reduced training days for new hires by 17 percent.
- Gained the ability to support agents who work from home.
- Created a more complete and comprehensive (single) knowledge base, eliminating duplication and inconsistency.
- Improved customer service, and in particular self-service, for increased customer satisfaction.

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— **Elliot Cohen**, Director of IT, Canon ITS

Growing Pains

In 2004, CITS did not have a centralized knowledge base for its support agents; content was held in several different systems—in a company intranet, on the Canon USA internet, in hard-copy manuals, and in an internally-developed, tree-structured knowledge system. CITS could not ensure that all of the content was correct and did not conflict with duplicate documentation in another system or in the manuals.

While CITS had initiated an online support capability, the knowledge base was not searchable. The content was good but proved cumbersome for customers attempting to locate the information they needed. Support agents were also inhibited by the need to search multiple sources of information on different products.



With sales of Canon’s many popular product lines growing steadily, the population of Canon customers and corresponding flow of calls to CITS was also growing. CITS had to find ways to leverage support resources to maintain the high level of customer service that Canon customers had come to expect.

Tools of the Trade

CITS implemented the Consona Knowledge Management suite (then known as ServiceWare and later known as KNOVA) in 2004, in two major phases. First, the company consolidated the content that was scattered throughout its existing intranet, the Canon USA internet knowledge base, hard copy manuals, and an internally developed Canon, Inc. decision tree-based system, into a single, comprehensive knowledge base for use by

customer service reps. According to Elliot Cohen, director of technology support, “Consona CRM has been a very valuable partner in the CITS knowledge management initiative. The Consona team has been very responsive to our needs and is truly interested in our success—and not just selling us the next version of the software.”

In the second phase, appropriate portions of the knowledge base were rolled out to Consona’s customer-facing self-service applications. Key parts of the implementation effort included:

- **Development of a knowledge management culture:** CITS started its knowledge management program by building support from the top down. Senior management was involved in the process from concept through deployment. While the software installation and content build were in process, a major PR campaign was conducted to develop awareness of the initiative throughout the entire call center. The value of the knowledge base was communicated to all members of the team.
- **Content built to cover all supported Canon products:** The technical support engineers at CITS gathered the content that was currently held in different sources and built content in the Consona Knowledge Management suite. The CITS team went from absolutely no content in the application to full support for over 800 Canon products. The knowledge base contains approximately 100,000 content pieces that support 99 percent of the products the contact center represents.
- **Implementation of Self Support:** The CITS technology team and the Canon USA IT department integrated the existing knowledge base into the support site. Their work allowed the customer to get the full use of the knowledge base while conforming to Canon’s corporate site structure. The audience feature in the Consona Knowledge Management suite allows them to use one solution concept while maintaining appropriate wording for customer and agent.

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— **Jay Lucado**, Assistant Director, Knowledge Management and Delivery, Canon ITS

Results

With the new searchable knowledge base and improved online self-service capabilities, customers gained a convenient and efficient gateway into product information and CITS support. Combining the information into an easily searchable repository was also a huge benefit to the service reps who could now easily and quickly find the documentation they needed to help the customer and resolve his or her problems—all in one place. Customer satisfaction improved at the same time that the population increased rapidly—a true ‘win-win’ result.

During the first half of 2008, the call deflection rate, customer questions resolved online to avoid the need for a phone call, increased from 51 to 71 percent. This represents a considerable savings of support rep time while providing customers with better service. Another measure of the need for follow-up, e-mail escalation rate, decreased 47 percent from the same period in the previous year.

Overall customer satisfaction scores are up from 6.5 to 7.1 on a scale of 1 to 10. Customer resolution rates are up from 50 to 60 percent. “The Consona CRM knowledge base has been a great help to our service agents and to our customers. It lets the customers get the answers to the ‘easy’ questions themselves, while freeing up the agents to focus on the more difficult problems,” said Jay Lucado, assistant director of knowledge management and delivery.

CITS has also been able to leverage the knowledge base to improve agent training. The new curriculum integrates the knowledge base and focuses on teaching the agents to find the answers in the system rather than trying to teach them how to fix all of the many different problems that customers might have. In addition, the system-based training is remotely available, which works well with the new work-at-home program launched in December of 2007. Newly-hired agents work from their homes four days each week and are able to complete their training remotely as well.

“Effective knowledge management is a critical component of our business. From an internal cost containment perspective, it provides the opportunity for agent knowledge uniformity: reducing handle times, increasing First Contact Resolution and ultimately deflecting contacts (phone or e-mail) through self-service. From an external customer perspective, effective knowledge management enables 24x7 accesses to customer queries, providing them the information they need, when they need it. That’s good for customer satisfaction and loyalty to the Canon brand. Through effective knowledge management, we achieve an important balance between customer satisfaction and cost containment,” said Dan Bell, senior vice president and general manager of Canon ITS.

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The logo for Consona CRM, featuring the word "Consona" in a serif font and "CRM" in a bold sans-serif font, with a blue wave graphic above the "a" in Consona.

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