

Verizon Wireless

Knowledge Management for Customer Service and Support

Verizon Wireless has a Map for World Class Customer Service

A wireless phone company builds its reputation on two things: coverage and customer service. Verizon Wireless, with America's most reliable wireless network, also excels in providing top-notch customer service, with the help of Knowledge Management solutions from Consona.

With nearly 92 million customers and over 40,000 service reps, Verizon Wireless has to be acutely focused on having the right answers, quickly, when customers call in with questions or when they need a little help getting their phone set up or choosing the right plan.

Verizon Wireless has done just that by continuously working on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service reps as the company has grown and prospered. The company's first foray into the use of a knowledgebase as the key tool for these agents started with Consona's ServiceWare product, supporting a centralized tech support operation that was expanded into three centers about five years ago.

"The knowledgebase served our Tier 2 reps," said Page Phelan, who is in charge of Knowledge Management, Technical Support, for Verizon Wireless. Verizon's Tier 1 Representatives service 800-number inbound customer inquiries such as account setup, billing inquiries, and basic phone setup and troubleshooting. The more technical questions were routed to Tier 2 where more experienced, highly trained technical people searched for answers to undertake advanced troubleshooting. Verizon also offers Tier 3 service and support, which handles network issues not related to the device or administrative matters.

The knowledgebase, in its early stages, contained step-by-step setup and troubleshooting instructions that could be easily called up and used by the technical support representatives to help the customers get answers and get their phones in service quickly and efficiently.

In 2008, Verizon Wireless initiated the "OneSource" project to bring the knowledgebase and new capabilities to Tier 1, so as to provide customers with quicker, more thorough answers and better results upon their first contact with Verizon Wireless support. Far more than just a rolling out of the existing knowledgebase to more reps, OneSource aimed to rethink how knowledge is managed, presented to, and used by the customer service personnel, as well as how it could be consolidated into a single, comprehensive database that provided consistent information to all constituents. According to Phelan, OneSource would eliminate the "content chaos" that, despite having a knowledgebase, still existed, with multiple versions of information residing in different repositories with inconsistent maintenance and upkeep processes.



ROI at a Glance:

- Continually building on its strong reputation for providing superior customer service and an excellent customer experience
- Increased ability to handle customer inquiries on the first call (reduced escalation rate)
- Reduced average handling time for support calls
- Increased ability of Tier 1 staff to resolve customer technical issues
- Able to absorb Alltel support structure in months with no reduction in customer service during the transition
- Significant savings in knowledgebase maintenance through OneSource initiative
- Significant growth (customers, revenues) without equivalent growth in support staff

•• When a Representative is talking to a customer, the proper information for that account and device is on the screen and ready. ••

— **Page Phelan**, Head of Knowledge Management, Technical Support, Verizon Wireless

The OneSource Initiative

OneSource was a 15-month project, with the first six months dedicated to research and preparation. The remaining nine months was execution, including knowledgebase cleanup and the rollout to all Tier 1 and Tier 2 representatives.

The OneSource implementation included an upgrade from ServiceWare to the Consona Knowledge Central solution, which features the ability to tag various sections of a document for specific purposes. Thus, a single version of the document can exist in the knowledgebase but different users will see the sections that apply to their needs. The result: one version of a document, one place to maintain it, and consistent information throughout the organization.

Another aspect of OneSource was to put the knowledgebase into the hands of all Tier 1 representatives. This effort required that all administrative procedures, workflows like account setup and billing inquiries, were set up in the knowledgebase, along with the tagged step-by-step technical instructions. “The information is served up contextually,” said Phelan. “When a Representative is talking to a customer, the proper information for that account and device is on the screen and ready.” The knowledge management team is now working on further improvements that will serve up the information according to call type (or call flow) as well.

Managing Growth

When Verizon Wireless acquired Alltel in 2009, the company’s transition to the Verizon Wireless knowledgebase was remarkably smooth and quick. The acquisition was first announced in January. The implementation process began in March and was completed at the end of the summer. “Alltel was known for superior customer service before the acquisition, achieved through excellent execution. By providing access to our tools, we are able to be even more efficient in delivering world class service.”

While the Verizon Wireless knowledgebase is an integral part of the company’s customer service process, the knowledge management team is working on even more integration with other systems and further improvements in usability. “We want the Representatives to be able to focus on the customer interaction,” said Phelan. “The goal is to eliminate the need for them to do additional checks outside of the built-in procedures.”

Results

Great customer service is paramount for high-profile, tech savvy companies like Verizon Wireless. It reduces churn, and minimizes the potential for bad press in a world where every poor interaction is an excuse for dissatisfied customers to air their grievances on social networks like Twitter and Facebook. When a customer calls, for any reason, the most important thing is to answer their questions and resolve their issues quickly, completely and efficiently. The more issues that can be resolved on the initial contact, the better.

The Verizon Wireless structured knowledgebase puts the right step-by-step instructions and process flows right in front of the Representative for each call and allows him or her to address most issues efficiently and effectively. One measure of success is how many calls can be resolved during that first contact. Another is the average duration of that call (average handling time, or AHT). For competitive reasons, Verizon Wireless does not release specific numbers publicly, but they are happy to say that both measurements show significant improvement as a result of the OneSource initiative.

Verizon Wireless Facts

- America’s most reliable wireless network
- 91.2 million customers
- 83,000 employees
- Annual revenue: \$62.1 billion

•• Consona Knowledge Management is central to all of our initiatives to improve customer service while controlling costs. The knowledgebase helps our reps give customers the answers they need quickly and efficiently. ••

— **Page Phelan**,
Head of Knowledge Management,
Technical Support,
Verizon Wireless



“Representatives are using the tools to help customers more and more everyday. Tool usage increased 200% in 2009. This in turn, decreases device returns and, not surprisingly, customer satisfaction ratings are also climbing, as reported on surveys that the company conducts regularly.

Knowledge management is at the heart of the Verizon Wireless customer service and support strategy, and Consona Knowledge Management solutions provide the company with the tools and facilities they need to deliver ever better service and support in a highly competitive business. Phelan concludes, “Consona Knowledge Management is central to all of our initiatives to improve customer service while controlling costs. The knowledgebase helps our reps give customers the answers they need quickly and efficiently.”

About Consona CRM

With a comprehensive set of solutions spanning self-service, customer management, chat, communities and proactive, just-in-time marketing and support—all fueled by a patented, best-of-breed knowledge management platform and backed by advanced analytics—Consona’s KCS *Verified* tools are the choice for integrated, multi-channel customer service and support.

The only CRM vendor focused entirely on service and support, Consona helps the Global 2000 control costs while providing a superior customer experience.

Consona

Problem: Solved!

www.consona.com/crm

Consona Corporation

450 East 96th Street, Suite 300
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Toll Free/Fax:
(888) 8 CONSONA
(888) 826-6766

info@consona.com
www.consona.com/crm