Wikis: A Step Forward In Knowledge-Based Service

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National Association of Call Centers | Volume 7, Issue 11, December 7, 2012

At Strategic Contact, we continuously "beat the drum" for reducing complexity at the agent desktop to increase efficiency, increase revenue, and improve service. One way to reduce complexity is ensuring agents have access to the right information at the right time to resolve customer issues during the first contact. Wikis are an effective tool to address that requirement.

Wiki – What?

Wikipedia, one of the best known wikis, defines a wiki as, "a website which allows its users to add, modify, or delete its content via a web browser…" Wiki software enables those with knowledge to create content collaboratively using standard editing tools. It captures and disseminates "tribal knowledge" with very little training required of the "publishers" or "consumers." Topic associations across pages enhance learning in a constantly changing information environment. Search capabilities make it easy for users to find the information they need. A "knowledge" wiki can be an internal intranet for contact center agents and other employees, or a community website for customers and agents. A wiki becomes a knowledge aid to create, browse, search, and consume information.

Wiki – Why?

Managing knowledge to optimize agent access can be difficult. Some companies are "stuck" at the hard copy stage. Agents often create "cheat sheets" that line cube walls. In these scenarios, companies struggle to ensure the information is consistent, up to date, and comprehensive. Most companies have progressed at a minimum to creating an intranet or using SharePoint as a basic document repository. While the "library" approach enables version control, searches often bring up multiple documents. The agent digs for the desired information buried in these documents. Handle times increase while both agents and customers grow increasingly frustrated.

By contrast, wikis can present more "bite-sized" and specific information that is quickly accessed through a search function. Subject matter experts create targeted content focused on contact resolution based on "typical" questions and problems. Search results lead to pertinent content with links to further information. Agent performance improves with familiarity with the tool and expansion of the wiki content. And customers get a much better experience.

Wiki – How?

There are multiple paths to acquiring wikis, including:

- Open Source
- SharePoint 2010
- Hosted/Cloud-based application
- Premise solution
- Element within another application (e.g., CRM)

Open source wiki software is available at no charge but requires development to build your wiki website. SharePoint 2010 offers a wiki component to use in developing your internal wiki. For companies wanting

a more robust, user friendly, or specialized application, vendors provide licensed wiki applications that could be cloud-based or premise based, and could be standalone or part of a broader application such as a CRM solution. Whatever your source, you may want to add an advanced search engine for more refined multi-level searches. Many use Google search appliances.

As always, the technology is the enabler. Implementing with structured, documented processes, training, and reinforcement will ensure success. Open collaboration does not imply a "free for all." Appropriate governance is essential to ensure accurate content. Most wikis allow control over levels of access to different functions. Use best practices for knowledge management to establish rules and access for:

- Viewing
- Authoring (including providing templates for structure)
- Reviewing or editing
- Publishing
- Updating

The appropriate level of control depends on your business, your products or services, the nature of the information shared, and your compliance or other rules.

Implementing a wiki can be a relatively quick and low cost step forward in empowering your agents with easy access to the knowledge required to resolve customer issues. Develop a strategy and action plan soon.