



Customer Service

Striving for Service Excellence

As customer service representatives are challenged with more complexity, supervisors and call centre managers are charged with doing more with less. Customer service staff are handling more sophisticated problems and questions, requiring continual training and education. Attempting to make more out of less means staff must try to upsell or cross-sell products and services, which require a thorough knowledge of the company's product/service line. Leveraging e-learning as a means to improve customer service effectiveness is emerging as a substantial competitive advantage.

To improve the customer experience as well as increase job satisfaction and retention among customer service staff, organisations are implementing robust and dynamic learning environments, to help align people, processes and technology for increased performance and profitability. Now, organisations have the ability to address skill deficiencies faster with e-learning based on actual performance. The result is an environment in which staff and management alike can experience performance improvements that customers welcome. Driving learning based on skill gaps, while fostering an environment in which learning content can be created quickly and easily, and then distributed even faster, helps result in a workplace best suited for optimum learning.



With the right tools companies are better positioned to identify training opportunities and skill gaps based on performance evaluation scores. In a Customer Service Centre, e-learning represents an automated way to bring training and development courses directly to the staff's desktops. In this environment, e-learning enables companies to augment existing one-on-one coaching and training sessions — that will continue to have an important role in the development process - with newer methods that allow staff to drive training and learn at their own pace.

Research has indicated that e-learning is retained at a rate of more than three times that of classroom training largely because staff are becoming active participants in their own development. In fact, as many companies begin implementing new technologies, integrating different customer touch points (phone, Web, etc.) and launching new business models, organisations are faced with the demand for better-educated staff. To more rapidly and flexibly deliver learning to customer service staff, industry analysts expect a rapid





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increase in the use of e-learning for remote classrooms, demonstrations of new products and applications, and the delivery of packaged training modules.

According to Gartner, the current level of training for customer service staff is two percent of budget; however, through 2006, they expect training budgets to climb to five percent for staff working within Customer Service centres. As a result, customer service e-learning is needed than ever.

e-learning is not only more accessible, it's more cost-effective. It reduces the "soft" costs associated with traditional learning practices, such as instructor-led classroom sessions, that take staff away from their workstations for extended periods of time. It also helps eliminate "hard" costs like those associated with travel and expenses to/from off-site training venues. Finally, it enables customer service staff to learn anywhere, anytime because training is all browser-based. For remote staff, this is an especially strong benefit in that they are now guaranteed the same level of training as those who work within the physical Customer Service Centre location.



Some companies are choosing to create segments of training from actual customer interactions through software that requires a minimum of time and training development expertise. This new "disposable learning" indicates that these training segments require little time or skill to create and may be disposed of even after minimal use due to the low overall cost to produce and deliver. The disposable learning concept was designed for the unpredictable call centre environment, in which companies launch new campaigns and service offerings weekly, in some cases even daily. Disposable learning can become a key to higher productivity and enhanced customer service levels in the dynamic contact centre environment.



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Creating Customer Service e-learning content



A sample process for creating an unattended coaching session from a best-practices example may follow these steps:

- Create/identify best-practices examples from recorded interactions.
- Export the chosen interactions from your customer interaction recording software.
- Use the interaction editor to segment the audio (voice)/video (data) and mask any confidential information.
- For interactive sessions, create callouts and information balloons and ask questions.
- Create assessments based on the interaction to assess retention and understanding
- Deliver the content through a learning management system to enable tracking and progress reporting to occur.

Corporate Learning Systems can work with organisation considering developing e-learning content specific to them. Using recorded customer interactions, online training modules can be developed based on the real-life scenarios encountered by customer service staff each day. Through workshops we help organisations identify the interactions that represent best practices, and then build e-learning modules to emphasise both technical and soft skills development. Content from the workshop can be delivered through the IBM Lotus





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Learning Management System enabling management to deliver online learning while tracking improvements on an individual and team basis.

The training program can be taken to the next level by virtually simulating real-life customer service situations for new-hires and experienced to solve. This allows staff to interact with simulated customers and test their knowledge of technological resources and procedures. Simulations and scenarios can also instill and reinforce corporate objectives as they are linked to the best-practices modules that have been constructed. Most important, it will raise the confidence level of staff, enabling them to deliver better customer service.

The Benefits

Implementing customer service training using e-learning can help organisations to:

- Increase sales with better knowledge of products, services and promotions
- Increase customer satisfaction to increase loyalty and future revenue
- Improve call performance, repeat call percentages, time to fix, and other key call metrics with targeted training programs
- Reduces the time staff spend in training by proactively pushing training to new hires and training only on needed skills based on assessments and job functions.
- Reduce time spent on new product training
- Reduce time away from the phone using just in time online training, reference material and assessments

Contact us if you would like to discuss your requirements further or to arrange a meeting and demonstration.

