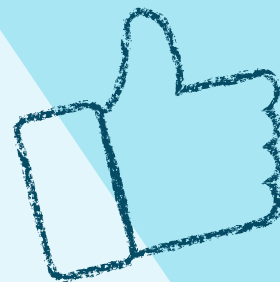


Putting your customers first

Supporting department as added value for your organization





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This e-book describes how you can focus on your customer by, among other things, expectation management, a clear service catalogue, knowledge management and communication. After reading this e-book you will know how to optimize your services by focusing on your customer.

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Internal services are of vital importance to the organization. Supporting departments, such as IT, Human Resources and Facility Management enable the employees' daily work. Setting up a work station, resolving a technical problem or reserving a room; all this is possible thanks to good services.

From colleague to customer

Service departments could not exist if there was no demand for the services they provide. Departments providing services not only support colleagues, but help internal customers as well. This realization is an important part of optimizing your services. A customer-oriented approach can help you increase the supported employees' satisfaction and thereby increase the department's right to exist. This change in mindset is the first step towards improved services.



“Manage expectations and create understanding”

Costs versus customer satisfaction

In a perfect world, a service provider is available at all times to answer the questions of internal customers. This means that one service provider would have to be employed for each employee. Of course, this is inefficient and unaffordable. For this reason it's important to find the perfect balance between the internal customers' satisfaction level and the costs made by supporting departments. You can achieve this balance by focusing more on

the customer, for instance, and by gaining better insight into your customer satisfaction. If you know what to improve upon, you will also know which parts of the service require investment.

The importance of good communication

A component of customer-focused thinking is customer-focused communication. Does your customer know what services your department has to offer? Do they know how long it takes

to deliver a specific service? In which ways can they contact you? You can manage expectations and create understanding by clearly communicating about what you provide, but also the things that don't fall within your catalogue. »

Keep your goal in mind

Many organizations choose to optimize their services with the help of a tool, which the internal customer can use to log call and request services or products. Setting up such a tool can greatly improve your services. It is certainly important to remember that the tool is only a means to increase the customer satisfaction and efficiency, and is not a goal in itself. In addition to the tool, you should continue to communicate and provide good services.



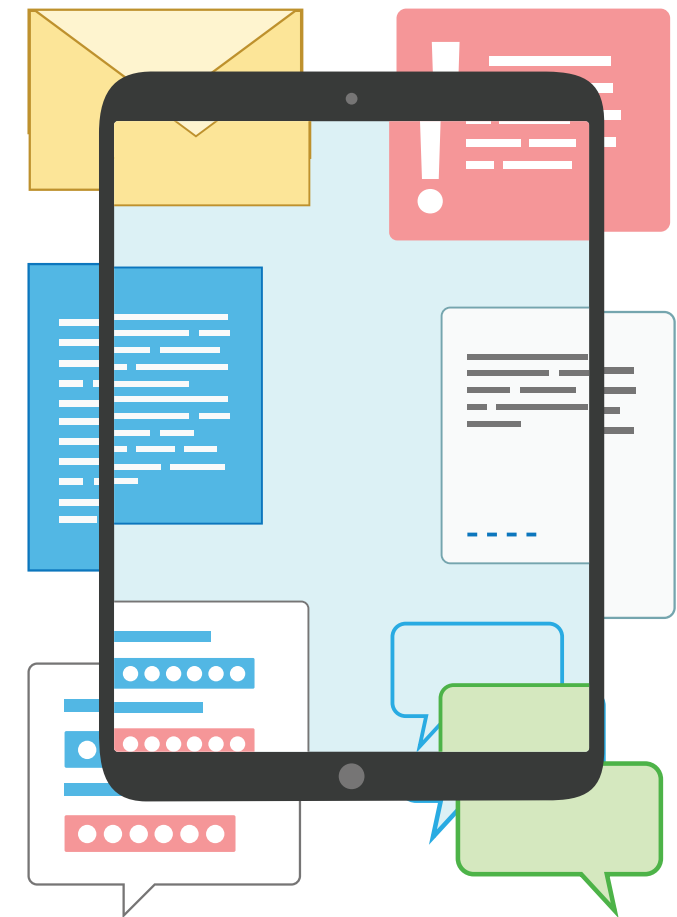
As a supporting department you deal with different questions from many different internal customers. All these customers have expectations about the services that the department provides. Not being able to meet these expectations can lead to disappointment and affect customer satisfaction. Managing your customer's expectations is therefore essential when you want to increase customer satisfaction and justify your department's existence.

Transparency

Managing expectations begins with transparent communication. Does your internal customer know what you can offer him or her? Tell your customer which services you provide, but also mention which services you don't provide. When a customer requests a product or service that you don't offer, and you don't communicate this, then you cannot meet the customer's expectations. This will certainly affect customer satisfaction. It is therefore important to clearly indicate what your services do and don't cover. When you don't provide a certain product or service, it's also important to point your customer

in the right direction. This helps you keep your customers satisfied, even when you can't fulfil a request.

What's more, many departments providing services forget to communicate about the time needed to process a request. When will a specific product be delivered? Clearly communicating the expected delivery date ensures that your customer doesn't expect to receive the product within a day, while the actual delivery time is a week. The department will then receive fewer complaints about delivery times being (too) long, helping you increase customer satisfaction. >>



A continuous conversation

Managing expectations demands a continuous conversation between the service provider and the customer. For example, you can consider implementing status updates. This lets you inform employees about the status of solving their problem. By showing that you take the problem seriously and are working on a solution, you also demonstrate that you understand that the problem is very inconvenient for the customer.

Moreover, involving the customer in your service delivery can keep the conversation going. You can do this by means of a [customer satisfaction survey](#) or by involving a customer panel when you draw up and improve your [service catalogue](#). This lets you live up to your customer's expectations even better.

The service catalogue is your department's shop window. It clearly describes which products and services your department can and can't deliver. In many organizations it is not always clear to internal customers which services and products can be requested. Communicating this clearly in a catalogue is therefore an added value for your customer.

You can let your customer play a central role in your services by opting for an interactive service catalogue. This catalogue features all the information about products and services, and the customer can log a request or call at the same time.

Benefits for the customer and the service provider

Drawing up and maintaining a clear, interactive catalogue offers many benefits. Customers can register a request or call in fewer steps. It also provides transparency, clear

information and customers have a good idea of what they can expect. The customer can log a call at any time and place, and problems are resolved faster.

Not only the customer, but also the service provider benefits from an improved catalogue. It creates more clarity, helping you manage expectations. By providing clear information that is immediately available to the customer, the supporting department receives fewer questions. What's more, the

customer can also add a form to their request that contains all the required information. In this way the customer's problem is immediately clear and it is not necessary to ask additional questions, which saves your department a lot of time.

Together with the customer

Drawing up a service catalogue is the perfect opportunity to talk to your customer about the products and services that you deliver.

This not only helps you manage expectations – you can also critically examine your department's range of products and services. A good catalogue is therefore always designed together with the customer. It lets you create more support for your services, helps you make sure that your customer actually understands the final result, and you can promote your department internally.



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A good service catalogue
is the result of customer
collaboration

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The process

Customer contact occurs on several occasions during the process of creating a good service catalogue. Drawing up an effective and complete catalogue is essential. The following eight steps will help you create the best digital catalogue for your organization.

1

Step 1: awareness

It is important to first analyse what the supporting department means within the organization. Answer the following questions: What do we deliver? What do we do and what don't we do? To whom do we deliver our services? If we don't offer something, where can the customer turn to? When analysing the range of products and services, it's often apparent that certain services or products are missing or that, for instance, there is little demand for a certain product. The range of products and services can be optimized in conversation with the customer or by carrying out a [survey](#).

2

Step 2: translate to the customer

When the department has a clear overview of the activities and the products that they deliver, these can be categorized. It is important that employees can put themselves in the customer's shoes and continue to communicate with them about logical names for the offered services and products. Furthermore, the range of products and services is split into groups, helping the customer to search more easily.

3

Step 3: specify

After the products and services have been categorized and defined, the catalogue can be extended with information. This incorporates expectation management, for instance by describing how long it takes before the requested product arrives or when the problem is dealt with. You can also describe the order procedure, for which you can think of answers to the following questions: are employees allowed to order this product themselves or do they need approval from their manager? Do they have to collect the product or is it delivered?

4

Step 4: feedback from the customer
After specifying the products, services and conditions, you can ask the customer for feedback. You can check whether the names of the products and services make sense to the customer and whether they are classified in the correct categories. Will the customer be able to find the products in the catalogue? You can check whether the information and procedures are fully described as well. Is the customer still missing information? Is there something that is not clear?

5

Step 5: development
This is the moment that you actually develop your catalogue. During the previous steps you have already given considerable thought to how you can set up the system, making it faster and more efficient to carry out the actual structure and organization.

6

Step 6: testing
After the development and a test phase within your department, you return to the customer. The customer tests the system to see whether everything has been developed clearly and intuitively. After that you can carry out any modifications and improvements, until the system is completely adjusted to your customer's requirements.

7

Step 7: maintenance

In this step, you devise a strategy to be able to maintain the catalogue within your organization. This not only concerns technical management, but also the continued development of your range of products and services. A service catalogue is not a static environment, but needs to be revised from time to time. Carrying out frequent [measurements](#) helps you remain aware of the customer's wishes. You can then adjust your catalogue accordingly and continue to optimize it.

8

Step 8: launching and creating support

Organizing a major launch of the new service catalogue ensures that employees become aware of its existence. This will also make it much more likely that they'll actually use it. In addition, it is important to provide good information about how to use new catalogue.

Good communication about the new catalogue will create a wider support. It is important to meet the expectations that you create in the catalogue. If it states that you will respond to a problem within 24 hours, then this is your chance to prove it. Delivering products and services requested via the catalogue in a good, reliable manner will give your customers confidence in the system.

An important task of many support departments is answering your internal customers' support questions. Consider, for instance, the supporting role of the IT department. How often do they answer the same, recurring question? How many questions are actually resolved by the first line support?

Centralize knowledge

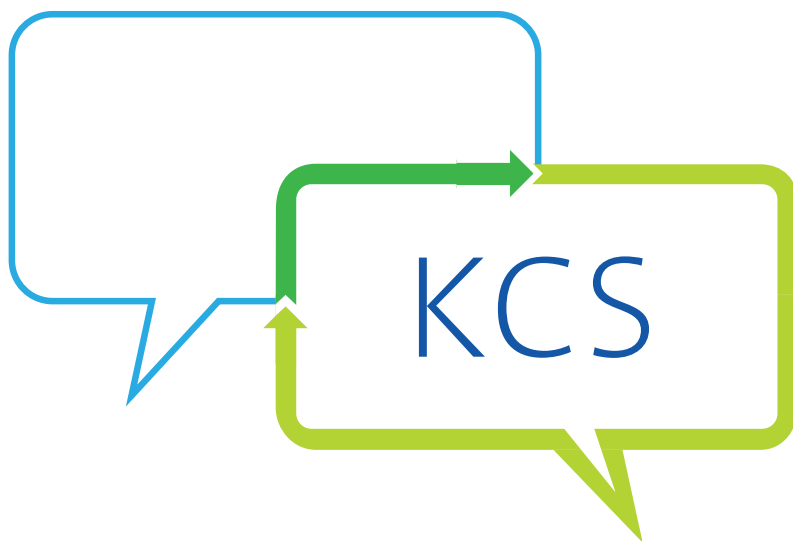
Not every question that your support department receives is unique, but every question is dealt with as a unique question. This is time-consuming and inefficient. To simplify answering and resolving these questions, TOPdesk has implemented its interpretation of Knowledge Centered Service

(KCS)*. KCS is a set of best practices for knowledge management that was developed in 1992 by the Consortium for Service Innovation. The main objective of Knowledge Centered Service is to improve the services to customers by centralizing knowledge in one knowledge base. This makes knowledge comprehensible for every (support) employee and problems can be resolved faster.

Knowledge Centered Service has the following specific benefits:

- 50-60% shorter lead times and 30-50% more resolved calls during the first contact
- New employees settle in 70% faster
- The work satisfaction increases by 20-40%
- An increase of up to 50% of questions that customers can solve independently

Source: The KCS Academy,
www.thekcsacademy.net/KCS



Two courses

Knowledge Centered Service consists of two loops: Solve and Evolve. Solve focuses on resolving calls by recording and improving knowledge on the basis of the customer's problems. The Evolve component is about maintaining the knowledge base and further adopting and refining the system.

Solve: When a customer asks a question or reports a problem, the support employee first searches the database for an existing solution. If there is already an answer in the knowledge base, this knowledge item can be used to answer the question.

Furthermore, this answer is checked and possibly updated. When there is not yet a suitable solution available in the knowledge base, the problem is solved and this solution is added to the knowledge base. »



KCS explained in 45 seconds?

Watch the video at
www.youtube.com/topdesk

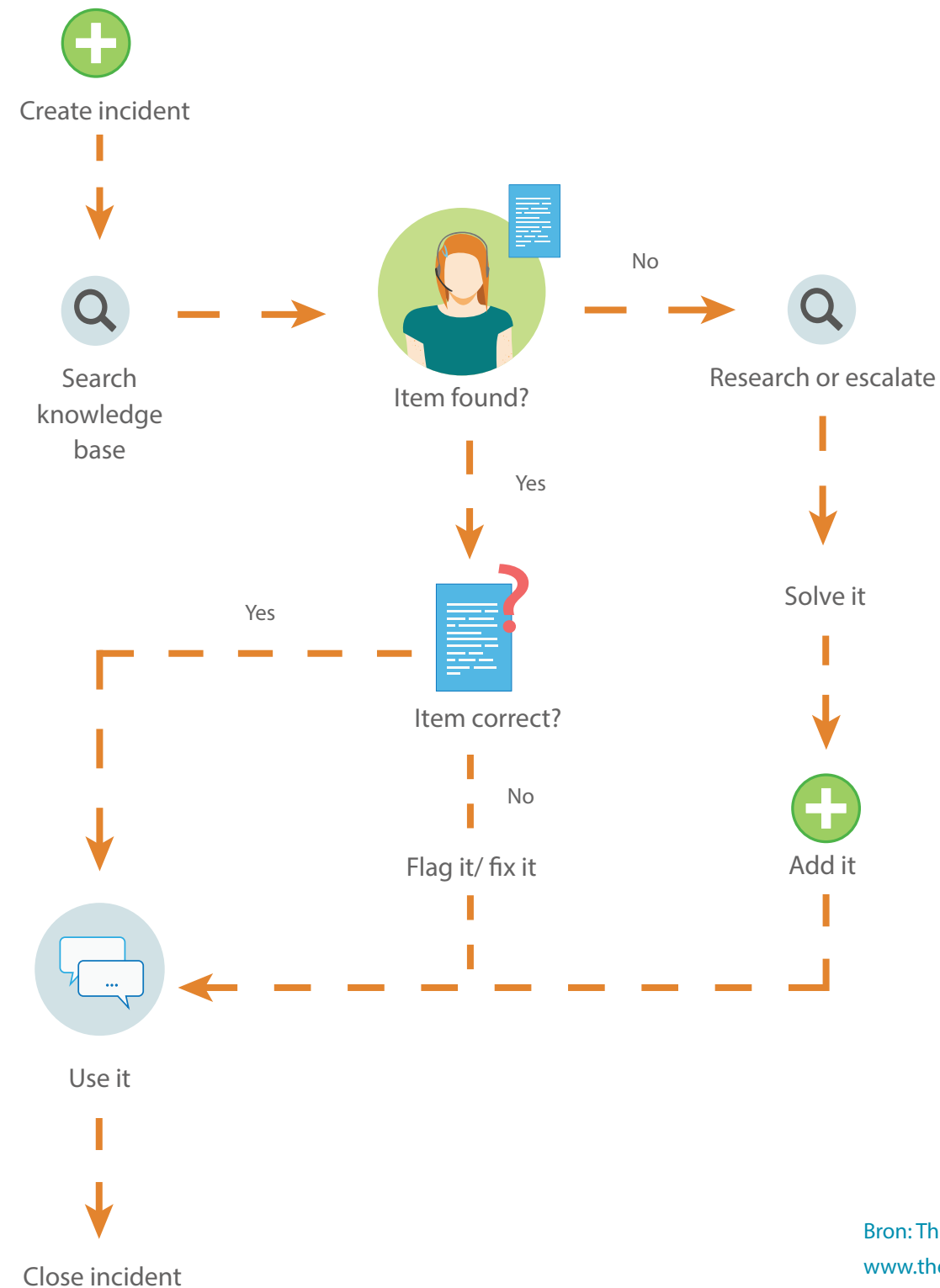


The support department builds up a comprehensive knowledge base, helping them resolve frequently asked questions more quickly. By stimulating and rewarding knowledge sharing, there is more time for resolving difficult issues and proactive management.

The solve process can be summarized in four steps:

1. Record knowledge
2. Structure knowledge
3. Reuse knowledge
4. Improve knowledge

How this process works in practice for support employees is visualized in the diagram on the right.



Bron: The KCS Academy,
www.thekcsacademy.net/KCS



Evolve

This loop focuses on the future viability of your KCS system. Existing knowledge items are analysed within this loop to be able to optimize the system. This involves proactively checking whether several problems arrive at the same solution. Furthermore, the same problems can demand different solutions. Through analysing and improving this, your knowledge base can be even better deployed and problems are resolved even faster.

Evolve moreover focuses on further adoption of KCS within your organization and the employees who are going to work with it. Three phases can be distinguished:

1. Planning & design: making decisions around the process and authority to publish
2. Adoption: make KCS a part of the daily practice and activities
3. Improve: expertise that actively leads to better processes and articles

Good Knowledge Centered Service leads to shorter solution times and thereby higher customer satisfaction. When internal problems are resolved faster, this helps the entire organization to progress. Moreover it increases the capacity of the support department, so that the same number of employees can resolve more calls. In short, KCS is efficient and customer-friendly. »

Shift left

Complicated questions from customers often have to be passed on to a specialist. Resolving these difficult problems therefore costs more time and often more money. After all: a specialist is more expensive than a support employee.

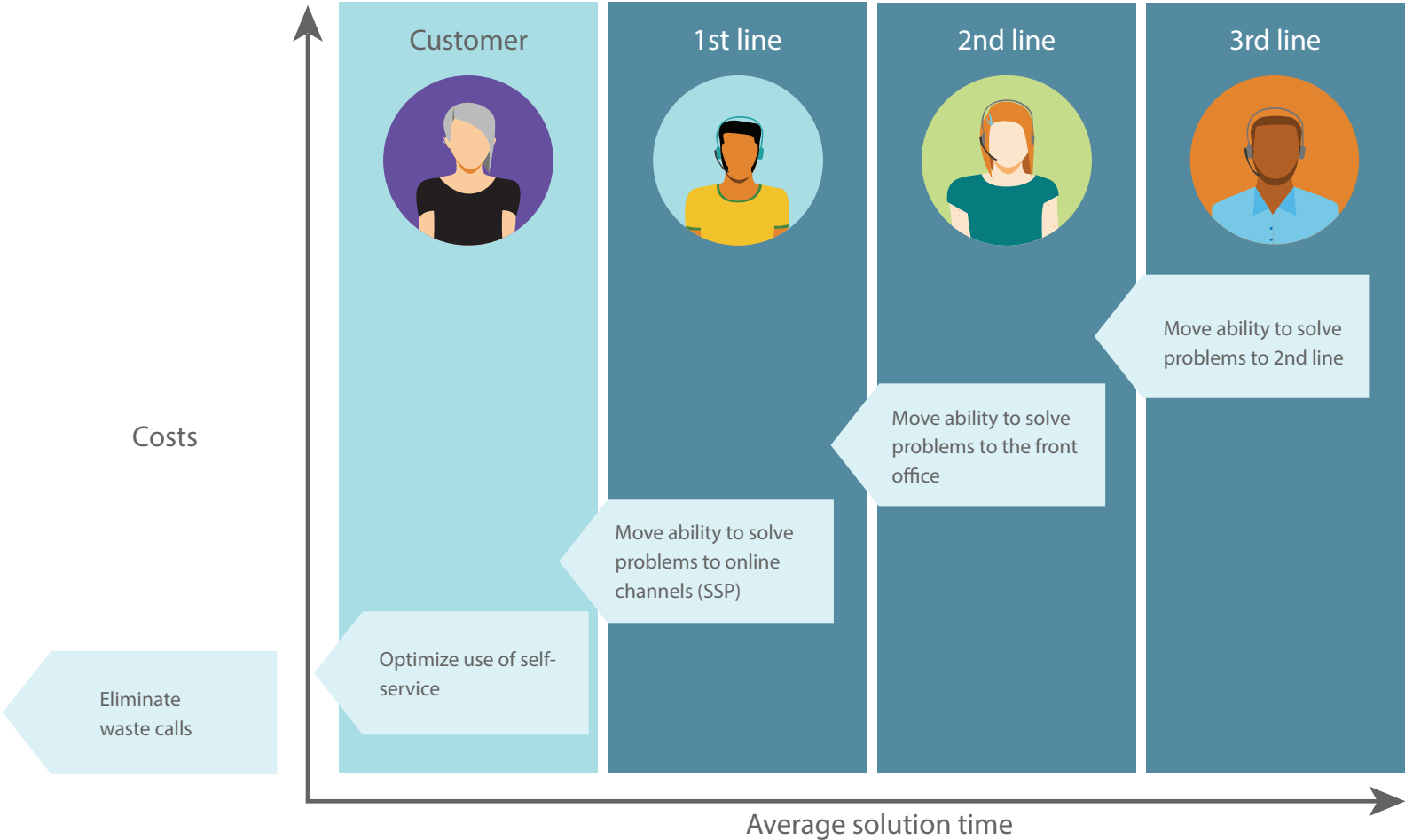
In many cases the knowledge of these specialists can be transferred to a first line employee, for instance. In turn, this employee can digitalize knowledge about easily solvable and recurring problems. By making this information available for the customer in a digital form, the self-sufficient customer can try to resolve smaller problems directly for themselves. This knowledge transfer is also called Shift Left or Shift Left Left. By bringing the problem-solving

ability as close as possible to the customer, problems can be resolved more quickly. This helps lower costs and improve customer satisfaction.

The illustration below presents the Shift Left theory schematically.



Shift left explained in 45 seconds?
Watch the video at
www.youtube.com/topdesk



Self-sufficiency

Nowadays people are more self-sufficient. Certainly when it concerns the younger generation. When someone has a problem, they first use Google to find an answer. Self-supporting knowledge platforms, such as Wikipedia, gain the upper hand and fewer people make direct contact when they have a problem. Why would you not adjust your own knowledge and problem management to make use of this?

Knowledge Centered Service and Shift Left Left gives your customers the opportunity to do things independently. Making your knowledge base with questions, answers and specialized know-how available to everyone helps the customer look for a solution to their problem. The more information the customer can find for himself, the less capacity you need to answer questions. This lowers the costs and eliminates waste calls. >>



In practice

To experience how Knowledge Centered Service adds value to your organization and service departments in practice, TOPdesk has internally started working on its own interpretation of the KCS theory.

Objectives

A pilot was carried out with nine support employees between February and May 2015. This pilot was carried out to accomplish the following objectives:

- Resolve more incidents, in less time
- More effectively resolve recurring incidents
- Accumulate collective knowledge at one central location

Execution

To be able to apply KCS in daily activities, you first need to change the mind-set of support employees. At first sight KCS can look like additional work that is primarily time-consuming. However, by creating a knowledge item you help not just one customer, but several customers at the same time. In addition, it also helps colleagues in the department, because they can make use of the knowledge that is stored, and recurring problems can be corrected faster. This also provides benefits in the long-term. Achieving this is crucial in creating a good knowledge base and making a success of KCS.

Support employees could subsequently start working on the basis of the previously discussed Solve loop. Existing knowledge items were therefore used and new items were created for new problems. In order to create a uniform database, a fixed template was used for adding a new knowledge item.

Result

The experiences with TOPdesk's interpretation of KCS within the support department were positive. The employees started working more efficiently and gained more satisfaction from resolving problems. The solution was not just relevant for one customer, but helped several customers at once. Moreover the following results were measured:

- After ten weeks approximately 50% of the calls within the pilot group were resolved with the help of a knowledge source
- The lead time of calls resolved by means of a knowledge item was four times shorter on average

- Recurring incidents were resolved more effectively
- There was more time left to thoroughly deal with more advanced problems
- Collective knowledge was accumulated at one central location

These results show that the pilot was a success. In future, TOPdesk will apply KCS as its method of working throughout the entire company. All support employees will be trained for this, the number of knowledge items will be increased and improved and the database will also be comprehensible for customers when it is sufficiently filled.

* Knowledge Centered Service is a methodology developed by the Consortium for Service Innovation. All information in this e-book is an interpretation of this methodology and does not pretend in any way to be the correct one. All rights and leading interpretations are and remain with the Consortium for Service Innovation and can be found at www.serviceinnovation.org.



After the development of the service catalogue or the implementation of KCS, many organizations believe they have sufficiently optimized the communication with the customer. This is however not the case. You may have set up your service catalogue or filled your knowledge base as well as possible, but communication with the customer remains a crucial part of the daily activities.

In practice it appears that there are customers who would still rather contact us by telephone after the implementation of the catalogue or KCS. They need personal contact and referring them to the digital self-service possibilities is not always the best option. Remember that the service catalogue only serves as a means and is not a goal in itself.

The customer is king

As [discussed earlier](#), the service department should view colleagues as internal customers. This way of thinking greatly affects customer

communication. By viewing the target group differently, the employee can put himself in the customer's shoes and more effectively adapt to their wishes and problems. Furthermore, this makes the employee more aware of the manner in which the customer rates the service. More priority is then given to good and customer-friendly communication. Customers are not a difficult persons with their questions and comments, but are the reason for the existence of the service department. A good relationship is therefore important.



What can you improve?

There are always possibilities to train your staff. For instance, by following a training or seeking personal advice. There are a number of regularly occurring issues that you can already improve within your organization:

Customer-friendliness

Every organization communicates in a friendly manner with its customers – and this also applies to internal customers. Being friendly during a telephone conversation or in an email is an additional service, ensuring that the customer is happy to contact you with questions or to place an order. This is your objective. After all, without this internal customer the support department has no right to exist.

Empathy

Many customers who contact a support department have a specific problem for which they need a solution. This problem is an interruption to their daily work. Showing that you understand the problem can mean a lot to the customer. You can do this directly, for instance, by saying that you find it very unfortunate that the customer has a problem. You can however also say this implicitly. By sending status updates, you let customers know what you're working on, and it also shows them that you understand that they're waiting for a solution and that the situation is unfortunate.

Transparency

There was already a discussion earlier in this e-book about managing customer expectations by being transparent. For instance, communicate in advance that your customers can't contact you with questions about an operating system that you don't support, and point them to an alternative. This ensures that they're not disappointed when you can't help them further. Furthermore, it is important to confirm that you have received a request and when you expect to be able to deliver a product or resolve a problem. Transparency keeps the customer satisfied, also when you cannot deliver.



When you want to focus on the customer and improve customer satisfaction, it is important to correctly measure customer satisfaction. This grants insight into the customer's wishes and points on which you can improve your services.

Involve your customer in what you are doing

Carrying out a customer satisfaction survey not only makes the supporting department aware of the points for improvement and customer wishes; the customer also feels that they're taken seriously and involved with the department. The customer feels that he is heard and will appreciate the changes that the department makes as a result of the investigation. Just the fact that you ask his or her opinion helps improve your services and customer satisfaction.

What are you going to measure?

When measuring customer satisfaction two questions are key:

Are we doing the right things?

Many organizations make use of a customer satisfaction survey to determine whether they deliver the correct services. What is important to the customer? Are certain services superfluous? Are there services or products missing that customers would like to see?





Are we doing things right?

A customer satisfaction survey can also grant insight into your department's performance.

What are the good points and which services or products can be improved? In addition, the survey results make clear which points for improvement must be given priority. Which points should be improved immediately?

An often used model within a customer satisfaction survey is the SERVQUAL model. This model assumes five dimensions of customer satisfaction:

- Reliability: does the service desk meet its agreements?
- Assurance: do you experience the service desk as professional and sympathetic?
- Reactivity: how quickly are products and services delivered?
- Empathy: to what extent does the service desk understand my situation?
- Tangible elements: what do you think about the physical resources (communication, range of products and services, etc.)?

How are you going to measure?

There are different ways and methods to measure the customer satisfaction within your organization. These measurements can be combined to achieve a complete overview of the customer satisfaction and any points for improvement.

Customer panel

A customer panel lets you enter into discussion with a small group of customers. This is particularly effective during the development of the service catalogue or the development of a new project. By sitting with your customers, you can immediately experience how they respond to new ideas.

Customer effort score

You measure the customer satisfaction throughout the entire year and continuously request feedback on your services and products. You do this, for example, by asking a customer about the satisfaction immediately after delivering a service or resolving their problem. This measures the customer satisfaction for one specific service.

Periodic measurement

A periodic measurement is normally carried out once a year. The total customer group is addressed and it evaluates the complete service provision. This means that this survey measures aspects that apply

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A customer satisfaction survey ensures that customers feel taken seriously and involved

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to the entire service provision, such as communication. A periodic measurement uses open and closed questions. Closed questions give you a score. Open questions often give specific points for improvement and ideas from your customer. In many

cases these points for improvement can be closely related to your score on specific components.



The results

After carrying out a customer satisfaction survey you naturally want to put the feedback into practice. The results of the surveys can be divided into two categories.

Quick wins

The customer satisfaction survey most likely leads to changes that are easy to implement. By quickly applying these simple improvements, you show the customer that you take the received feedback seriously. Experience shows us that this leads to many positive reactions and motivated employees.

Complex changes

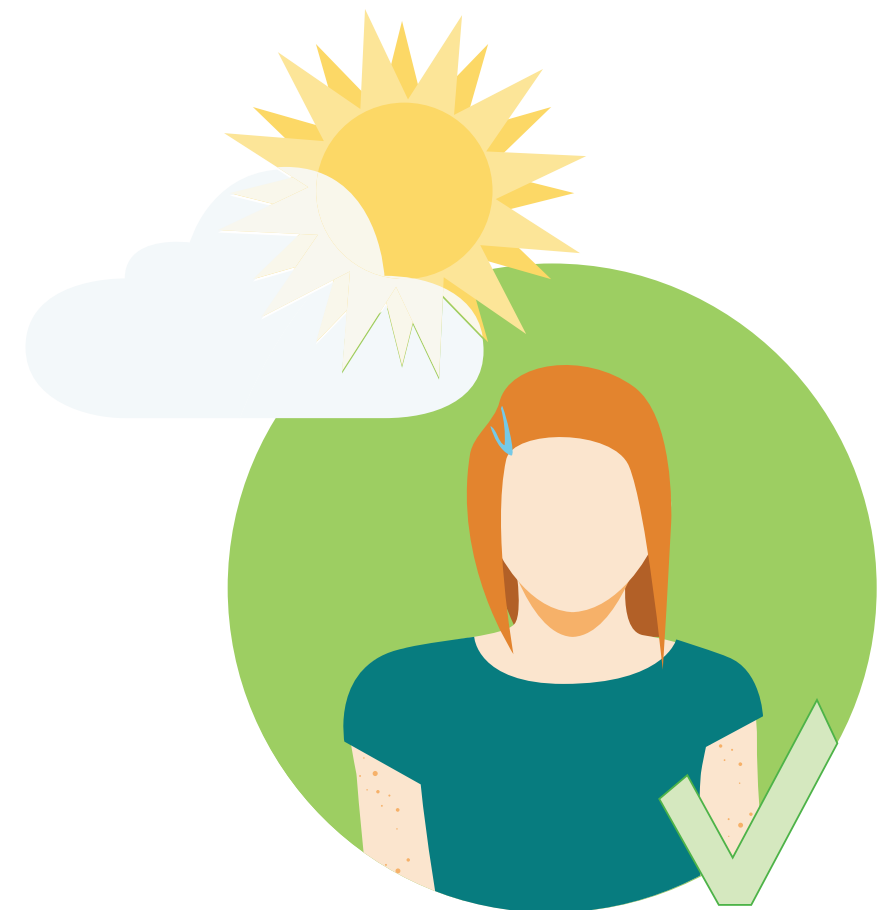
Other points for improvement will cost more time. A change

project could be set up for major modifications. It is important to not think too lightly about the change and to remain focused on the final objective. This is another perfect opportunity to involve the customer in the process, using a customer panel for instance.

Customer satisfaction measurement as a foundation

A customer satisfaction survey forms the basis for improvements within the support departments. Carrying out a baseline measurement therefore provides a good starting point, for instance when developing a service catalogue or implementing Knowledge Centered Service. In this way you get to know the

requirements and points for improvement before you start a process, but you also create support for the changes that you want to implement.



Earlier in this document we mentioned that in the ideal situation, every customer has their own service employee who is always available to them. This is an unachievable objective and is not cost-effective.

This e-book has shown you how you can focus on the customer: by setting up a service catalogue, implementing knowledge management and carrying out measurements. However, a crucial change in mind-set is first required. The colleagues who you support, are your customers. This awareness is the basis for all successful changes to your services.

TOPdesk

TOPdesk is pleased to help you improve your support department's services. We do this by not only supplying user-friendly service management software, but also by giving you advice. Are you curious about how you can focus on your customer? Our expert, experienced consultants are pleased to assist you in achieving this.



