



Knowledge Management within the Travel and Tourism Industry



Knowledge Management Software

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Knowledge Management as a Solution - But to what problem?

Since the turn of the millennium, the Travel and Tourism industry has seen changes of radical proportions, most notably the means by which holidaymakers are organising and booking their perfect escapes, along with the levels of competition that now exists within this unrelenting industry.

As a result of the financial recession a number of high street names have experienced store closures and taken to the web to secure business, with travel agents no exception. This strategic shift has seen an increase in the number of online travel agents able to offer a large variety of packages and tailor-made holidays, generating a demand for customer service levels to surpass all previous standards.

Customer service has therefore become a decisive factor when opting for travel companies. This increasing customer expectation of travel agents has meant that a number of fresh key challenges must be addressed when going forward. The methods in which travel agents choose to combat these challenges will ultimately determine who will thrive or barely survive.

Within this paper, the following key challenges facing the Travel and Tourism industry and their resolutions provided by Knowledge Management software are highlighted:

- The seamless integration of online customer self-service and agent contact
- Identifying customer’s needs and matching them with travel options quickly and effectively
- The demand for a broad range and depth of agent knowledge
- High frequency and variability of customer questions



- High and inconsistent agent workloads decreasing the time available for training
- The requirement to move post-sale questions from the agent to self-service to maximise pre-sales profitability

What is Knowledge Management?

Simply put, Knowledge Management is the process and systems placing relevant information into the hands of the user at the point of need, empowering them with easily accessible knowledge:

“Agents immediately know how to sell your product without having to thumb paper or trawl through PDF documents.”

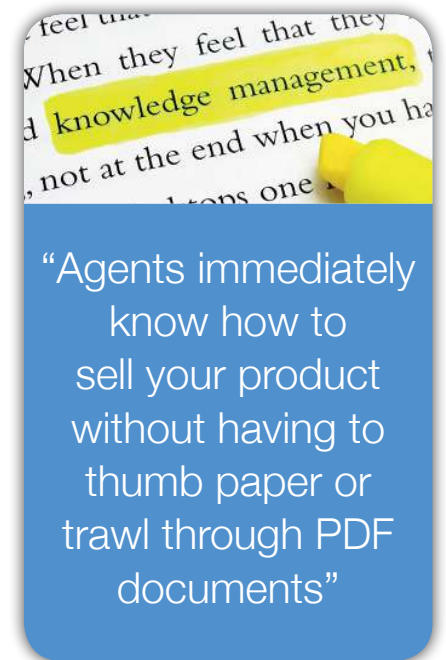
Within customer service organisations the key challenge is to develop a simple and easy to manage approach for the user, both of which can be easily catered to with the use of Knowledge Management software.

How Does Knowledge Management Work?

A quick and easy to deploy Knowledge Management solution is directed to identify and index all of the organisation's available resources on a continual basis, at a frequency to match the rate at which information changes within the organisation.

Removing the need for re-writing and re-formatting your Information Base

One of Knowledge Management's most powerful capabilities is the ability of an index to attain and capture information of multiple formats. Because of the nature of the indexing system, the location of all available sources of information and its format is no longer an issue.





It is commonplace for large amounts of peripheral information to be stored in PDF format. Knowledge Management ensures that this information is still indexed not just as a single document, but also as individual paragraphs across many documents. Information from organisations such as airlines, travel insurance companies, tour operators and hoteliers regarding a customer's holiday can be received and archived in any format, to be leveraged by the end-user in a matter of seconds through the use of Knowledge Management software.

Information Replacement

Key information sent to agents via email may or may not be read, saved, remembered or may even be deleted by customer facing colleagues. Knowledge management provides read/received information to managers and furthermore seamlessly replaces old data with new information ensuring all agents are provided with up-to-date data..

Natural Language Search

With the core information in place, the Knowledge Management solution provides an easy and very simple user interface for anyone seeking information. It's as simple as "Ask the question - Get the answer".



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Knowledge Management's capacity for natural language searching allows the user to ask a question in their own words. The system will recognise the question, and as a result will display only relevant answers to the user. Furthermore the system has the ability to memorise previous questions, enabling the prioritisation of answers based on the number of times a question is asked. The combination of information access and natural language search, is a powerful asset to Knowledge Management for delivering prompt and accurate customer service responses.

This capability is utilised in several ways:

Enabling Web Self-Service and Online Service:

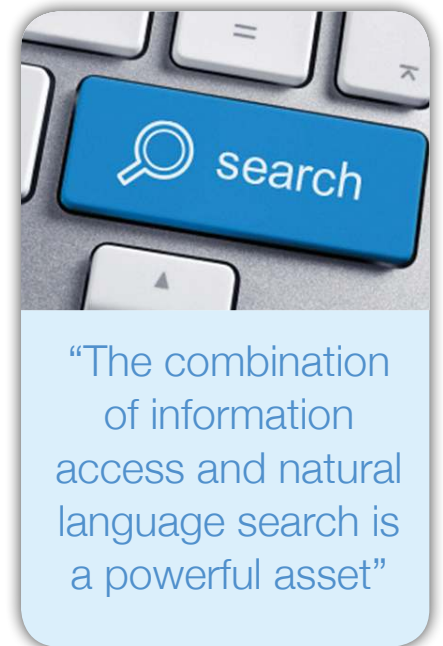
Implementation of Knowledge Management in an online capacity allows customers to self-serve across countless topics. Knowledge Management eliminates the need for FAQs maintenance and traditional navigation to obtain information, providing a Q&A system for customers.

For example questions such as; "What is my luggage allowance?", "Does my insurance plan cover me for skiing?" can be answered via a web self-service channel, meaning that commonly asked questions can be answered without the need to contact an agent, whilst providing customers with highly comprehensive answers. This means your customer contact agents are focused on answering more complex queries. Quicker for the customer, cheaper for you.

Empowering Customer Service Agents:

Having access to relevant answers at the fingertips of customer service agents is an invaluable advantage. Empowering the agent with fast access to a wide range of accurate information ensures that customer confidence is maximised, safe in the knowledge that the best information is being supplied by a highly knowledgeable and experienced agent, whilst also decreasing the time taken to manage customer queries.

First call resolution rate is vastly increased through the implementation of Knowledge Management software, further increasing the productivity of your workforce.





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Removing Inconsistencies in Agent Management Time

Complications arise at almost every point within the Travel and Tourism industry, from airline services to tailor-made getaways. Understanding these complications is of utmost importance when driving sales conversions and high levels of customer service satisfaction.

Scheduling regular training is difficult and call volumes are unpredictable leading to an imbalance of core knowledge across a customer service team. Knowledge Management’s features address these issues in the following ways:

Notifications:

Notifications allow employees at managerial level to choose specific information to ‘push’ through to their teams. Notifications can be tagged by importance, ensuring important information is brought to the immediate attention of customer service agents.

Received and Read Feedback:

Read receipts are used as confirmation to team leaders that critical updates and new information is seen throughout the team. This feature enables team members to independently divide their time allowing for ongoing training when away from answering customer calls. An auditing process is carried out by the Knowledge Management system, making way for manager intervention to address any possible training gaps within the customer service team.



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Agent Monitoring:

Knowledge Management enables team leaders to view a wide variety of metrics such as; team knowledge gaps, which agents are dealing with more customers, and who is answering customer queries without further escalation.

Through easily monitoring agent productivity and success, incentives for hardworking agents can be developed, ensuring that you see a further increase in productivity and effectiveness of your customer service team.

Personalise your Service

From pre-sale web self-service to last minute customer chaos, through implementing Knowledge Management software, you can be sure that you have all the information you need to personalise your service to a specific customer.

By leveraging your CRM system with Knowledge Management, the customer pathway and their experience can be logged ensuring that at every point of customer contact, you are both on the same level regardless of sales cycle stage and any previously irate customers can be treated with extra care.

A Powerful Tool with Instant Results

A quick to deploy Knowledge Management system, equips your travel agency with a tool that is not only powerful but one that also produces results instantly. Unlike other approaches, Knowledge Management does not require the addition of new information or further training for already experienced agents. Knowledge Management simply distributes the latest information, guaranteeing accuracy and consistency when dealing with customer queries, throughout your travel agency, effectively tackling the key challenges that face the Travel and Tourism industry in today's highly competitive market.



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