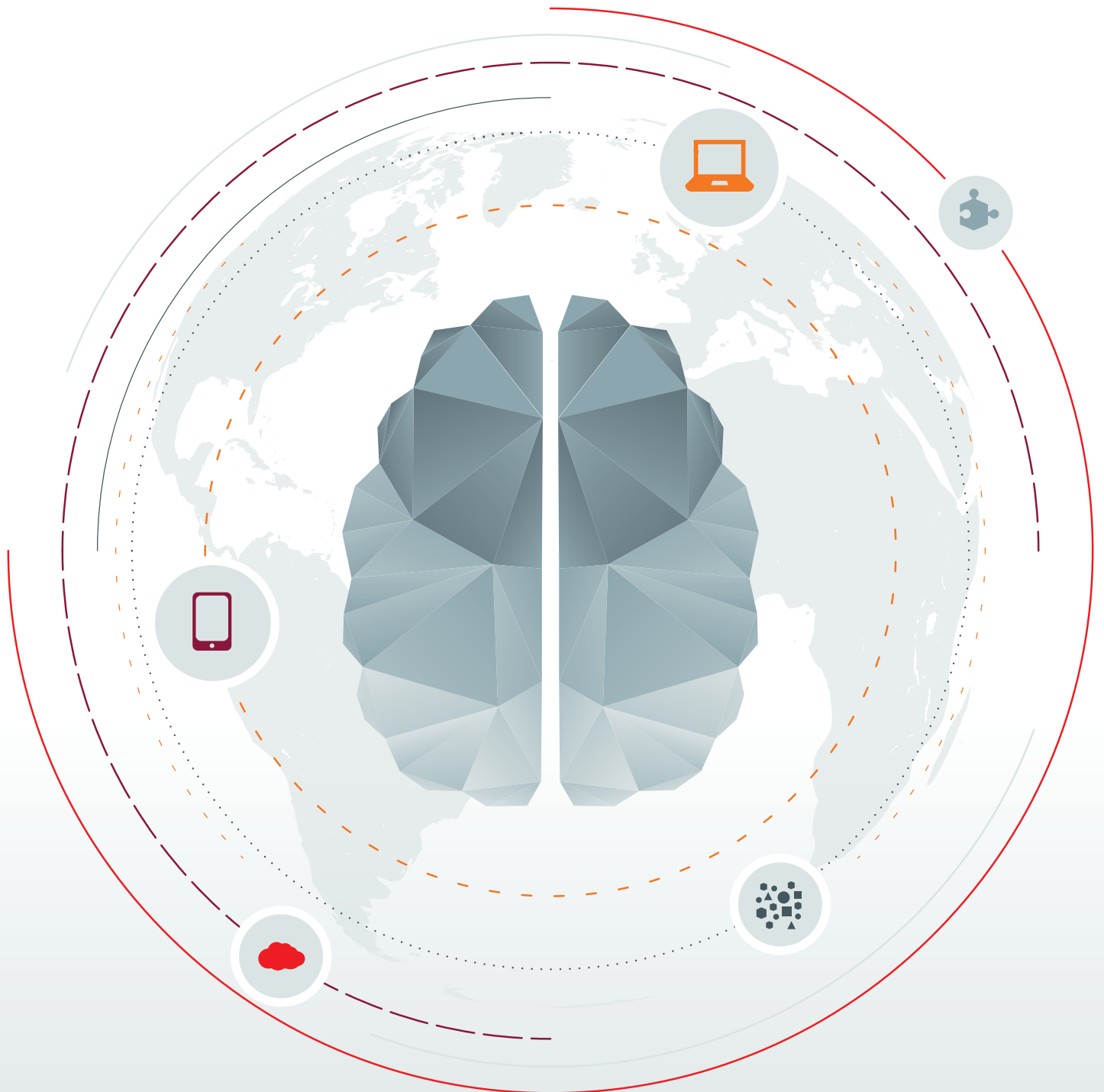# *Delivering Effortless*
Knowledge Everywhere

In today's digital economy, customers want effortless engagements, and will increasingly leverage self service options as a first point of contact with an organization. If organizations fail to make it quick and easy to find answers to questions, customers will abandon their purchase. Same occurs on the service side. Customer objectives are simple. Customers want satisfactory answers to their questions quickly and effortlessly regardless of the channel they choose as their mode of engagement. The challenge is customers now have many channels in which to contact a brand or organization. There's a broad mix in how customers want to reach your brand from voice, email, self-service, social media, or even live video chat. Complications come when customers receive different information or customer service experiences depending on the channel they use to contact you. In order to deliver the right knowledge, at the right time, knowledge must be everywhere; it must underpin the entire customer experience.

In fact, according to Forrester Research's September 2015 report Vendor Landscape: Knowledge Management for Customer Engagement, "Knowledge delivered to the customer or the customer-facing employee at the right time in the customer engagement process is critical to a successful interaction," wrote Kate Leggett, vice president and principal analyst, Forrester Research. "When done correctly, deeper knowledge can be used to personalize an interaction, increase customer satisfaction, reduce call handle time, lead to operational efficiencies, increase customer engagement, and ultimately drive conversion and revenue."

In order for customer interactions to be "done correctly" across all channels, knowledge must be consistent everywhere throughout the entire customer engagement. This concept is not new, but often times organizations struggle with the delivery of consistent knowledge at the right time, across all channels.

So how do we provide knowledge everywhere? In a way, which is consistent, yet easily accessible to customers and agents when and where they need? It all starts with understanding our audience, and delivering consistent answers across all channels, powering knowledge everywhere in the context of their interaction.

Five Tips for Delivering Customer Knowledge *Everywhere*

Create a single knowledge platform and deliver Relevant Answers from all sources

Delivery of consistent answers across all channels requires *knowledge* to support both customers and agents in a single platform. The use of the term platform is important; understanding you might have multiple repositories however content should be displayed or delivered in one single view. Ideally customers should be able to see all content related to their question in one single interface, regardless of where the content is actually located. It's critical to understand that providing customers with relevant answers goes beyond your curated knowledgebase. Knowledge can come in the form of customer community posts, documents such as manuals, or technical documents, customer forums, and social sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Enable your customers to find relevant content in one single view regardless of its location. By taking advantage of federated search, organizations can find and display knowledge in one single interface regardless of where it is located, including the knowledgebase, other content stores and social sites.

Likewise customer facing employees (agents) should be able to find relevant answers contextually through their workstations, without requiring them to change screens or interfaces. It's essential that an agent handling a customer interaction have access to all relevant information. This could include not only curated knowledge answers, but also community sites and content management systems or company websites. Typically this requires an agent to toggle to a new window and type the customer's issue into a search box. With integrated knowledge management, knowledge articles are automatically returned directly to the agent's desktop based on the context of the customer interaction, saving valuable handle time and making interactions more efficient for the end customer.

Optimize your content

Delivering *knowledge everywhere* is not only about offering knowledge, but offering the right knowledge at the right time. Optimizing your content is a critical step. Optimizing knowledge starts with thinking about your content in the context of the targeted audience. Knowledge should be written with the voice of the customer in mind - use your customers' language—not company jargon. Providing content in the context and language of the customer interaction will ensure customers find the answers they are looking for the first time. Online knowledge should be tailored to customer segments when appropriate; this will not only help to improve self-service success, but will also help improve search results. Additionally, think about utilizing a knowledge search platform that captures learning based on content relevancy and customer interaction to provide your customer with the best possible answer, while simplifying search query.

Guided knowledge can also be a useful tool in more complex troubleshooting scenarios, to provide customers with a logical process for resolving an issue on their own. Decision trees or guided knowledge allows the users to walk through an interactive question-and-answer tree to find a path to resolution in a way that is unavailable from static content.

Optimizing content for agents is also critical to delivery of the right information everywhere. Knowledge answers should be optimized and structured for readability so that information is quickly and easily consumable. Good knowledgebase answers are typically restricted to a single topic, and formatted into highly readable sections, lists and bullets. Answer templates are a great way to accomplish this, so that regardless of the knowledge author answers are structured in a consistent format. Guided knowledge can also be utilized for agents to provide a logical process for problem solving and will expedite the troubleshooting process.

Tip 3 – Deliver the Right Knowledge to the Right Audience, in the Right Channel

Delivering *knowledge everywhere* means extending your knowledge to where your customers want and need it. The modern customer is very mobile; customers are more likely to visit a website via a mobile device as their first option for support. Which means your customers will expect to be able to contact your brand through their mobile device. According to Gartner, through 2018, the lack of in-line contextual knowledge or support in mobile applications will lower customer satisfaction by 5%, undermining the enterprise's mobile strategy . Putting knowledge in the hands of your customers on their mobile devices is now even more important than ever. Knowledge must be extended beyond self-service pages. Knowledge widgets and REST APIs can be used to embed knowledge where it's needed—directly in a product, appliance, game console and mobile app, go beyond self service pages to make knowledge accessible from any device or system your customer may be using when they need information.

TIP 3

Empower Customers and Agents

Knowledge everywhere includes pulling as well as pushing knowledge. Leveraging your customers' collective knowledge of your product or services can provide substantial benefits. Enable customers to discuss, rate and subscribe to answers within your knowledge. Allowing customers to provide feedback and rate your knowledge will not only help to improve the quality, but it can help to understand the value or gaps in knowledge content. Taking it one step further through customer communities, helps customers become knowledge contributors. Social knowledge learning captures collaborative interactions in the community. Connect stakeholders – such as content authors or community members – who can provide the most relevant and engaging responses. Harness learning's from your community to create dynamic knowledge articles for your customer facing service agents.

Providing an agent with powerful knowledge does more than just allow them to answer questions your customers have, it empowers agents to become the expert. Often times, during a customer interaction an agent must become the researcher, the troubleshooter and the solver, meaning if they didn't know the answer – they will be required to find the answer. Harness "tribal" knowledge by empowering agents to become part of the knowledge creation process, implementation of KCS (Knowledge Centered Support) is one way of doing this. Even if KCS isn't part of your knowledge management process, you can still allow agents to provide feedback on answers or request content if the content they need isn't found. Giving agents a voice will not only improve the quality of your knowledge answers, it also helps to build job satisfaction.

TIP 4

TIP 5

Mind the gap; Continually improve

Knowledge everywhere is only effective if the knowledge you deliver is satisfactory and useful for your customers and agents. Keeping knowledge consistent, current, and effective throughout your organization means you never stop monitoring the quality of your knowledge. Utilize analytics reports to understand which articles have the highest and lowest deflection rate, which answers are being used most frequently, or even which answers aren't getting viewed at all. Eliminating unused or ineffective answers will help users find the right information more quickly. Identify gaps in knowledge by assessing usage and success rates, and also by looking at customer and agent searches to understand which search queries aren't yielding results.

Once content gaps have been identified, it's important to prioritize efforts to fill the gaps. Customers' needs change constantly because of changes in product, usage, regulation, etc. Since it's unlikely your knowledge base will ever be completely free of content gaps you'll want to continually focus on addressing the highest priority gaps.

Once an answer is found, the quality of the content within that answer is critical to the success of both customer and agents. KCS is a great way to embed quality control into your knowledge, "reuse is review" a fundamental technique in KCS methodology. Who better to review content than those that use it on a daily basis? The goal of this theory is to create a culture of collective ownership; therefore every time an agent uses an answer they are expected to review it for accuracy and quality. If the answer did not resolve the issue, the answer should be tagged for revision or review or in cases where an agent has authority the revision of the answer can be done at that point.

Conclusion

When knowledge is enabled everywhere and maintained properly, it can transform the customer experience. An excellent customer service experience means that customers get a satisfactory answer to their questions quickly and effortlessly. Eighty nine percent of customers surveyed by Accenture said that 'speed of response / resolution' was the most important aspect of customer service….regardless of the channel. Enabling your agents and customers to efficiently and easily answer questions with consistency will always result in greater customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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