



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Critical Issues Facing Customer Service Organizations

Customer Service concerns head the list of enterprise issues as organizations struggle with the broad implications of new e-business models. Among those concerns are the following issues that are related to the KM discussion.

1. Growth in the online customer base — As successful businesses continue to build their customer base, it is not unreasonable to expect that e-commerce could generate a tremendous increase in online customer activities.

2. High expectations — Today's customers are increasingly conditioned to expect superior customer service, or they will easily move to a more satisfying competitor.

3. Costly and complex — The cost and complexity of maintaining an effective level of customer satisfaction grows in dramatic proportion to the size and sophistication of the customer base. The effective use of knowledge is a key ingredient

Effective knowledge management enhances products, speeds deployment, increases sales, improves profits and creates customer satisfaction. However, using knowledge correctly in an organization requires an understanding that the mere availability of simple, disconnected bits of information cannot adequately address.

It is important to use knowledge management to enhance customer satisfaction through effective customer service. Customer service, as defined here, includes customer support, technical support, and product support.

Why do Enterprises Implement KM Solutions for Enhanced Customer Satisfaction?

There are a number of issues that are increasingly motivating business executives to consider KM solutions in order to meet the customer satisfaction goals of the enterprise. Of course, customer satisfaction touches many areas of the enterprise, including product quality and suitability, price points, warranties, speed of delivery, etc., but one key area of customer satisfaction occurs when the customer has a problem or a question that needs to be answered. Many people think that a customer problem is a disaster, or worse, not important at all! Successful enterprises, however, recognize that a customer problem may be an opportunity to cement a lasting relationship with the customer by taking care of the problem quickly and efficiently, with good humor and real concern for the customer's satisfaction.