



# Why knowledge base content is critical to winning the customer experience battle



## How a knowledge base helps win the customer experience battle

Support and service teams are a vital part of driving revenue. There's a strong case to be made for investing in customer engagement and service – the second half of the buyer cycle. Investments in customer and partner self-service provide immediate ROI in the form of reduced support costs and, in the long term, result in increased customer lifetime value and lead generation.

Better support drives customer satisfaction and loyalty, which drives more revenue, more customer referrals and stronger customer advocacy.

Forrester states that “By leveraging the right technology and processes centered around AI and automation, organizations create deeper value-adding relationships with their clients. This leads to increased retention, spending, and advocacy – all of which boost top-line revenue.

Good customer service experiences boost repurchase odds and long-term loyalty. Customer loyalty has economic benefits measurable in three dimensions: willingness to consider another purchase, likelihood to switch business to a competitor, and likelihood to recommend to a friend or colleague. The revenue impact of a 10-percentage-point improvement in a company's Customer Experience Index (CX Index™) score can translate to more than \$1 billion.” – [“Transform the Contact Center for Customer Service Excellence,”](#) Forrester Research, Inc., March 19, 2019.

To make these revenue gains, service leaders need to align their knowledge management strategies with a transition toward omnichannel and intuitive self-service applications, such as in-product support and integrations with AI tools.

Many businesses are experimenting with different support services, but most are just scratching the surface of what's possible with an extensible knowledge base. But it's not their fault. Service leaders are charged with providing service across a growing number of channels without a comparable investment in resources. The technology to efficiently manage and deploy knowledge base content is just starting to enter the service market.

## The Value Of Customer Self-Service Extends Beyond Issue Deflection

*How To Modernize Digital Customer Self-Service*



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The good news is that the transition from our current state to omnichannel-ready self-service doesn't have to be a painful process.

In this white paper, we'll outline the key benefits that modern knowledge base content solutions offer service teams. Then we'll do a deep dive on how investing in content infrastructure can break down silos, reduce the resources needed to manage omnichannel support and empower service teams to delight customers and drive revenue.

Throughout, we'll share examples of companies that are powering self-service portals, customer support portals, partner portals, help centers, FAQs, customer care, customer experiences, learning and education hubs and more with a unified approach to knowledge base management. These examples are drawn from our diverse customer base and cover a wide range of industries and use cases, from small projects to enterprise-wide solutions.

## How modern content management systems benefit service teams

Modern content solutions empower service teams to consolidate and manage knowledge base content in one hub and deliver it to multiple endpoints: customer care, merchant and partner portals, help centers, FAQs, learning portals, onboarding tools, etc.

Editors love being able to add content and make updates in one place, and then easily previewing and populating that change everywhere the content is used. Developers love having a single code base that is language agnostic, and using their preferred tools to organize and package content. Best of all, your customers, partners and colleagues will love the brand consistency and seamless experiences that you can deliver.

### Reuse content to maximize its value

The content infrastructure approach centers around a flexible content model instead of rigid templates, and uses APIs to deliver content to any digital product. Organizations can manage content from a single hub, where content is organized into reusable elements.

What's more, content infrastructure leverages APIs to integrate content with other tools in a tech stack.

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For example, Atlassian uses Contentful to manage content for a growing list of support services: help and technical documentation, FAQs, help articles, product documentation and evaluative resources. They maximize the value of their content by pulling information from support documents to provide in-product support. Atlassian can also use the same content hub to power future use cases – one of the reasons they chose to partner with Contentful.



## Streamline backend operations to do more with less

Content infrastructure also offers service teams significant benefits on the backend.

Perhaps the most exciting is the ability to unify content from multiple applications without a lengthy and painful content migration.

Service teams can reap the benefits of a unified content hub without the delays caused by cutting, pasting and cleaning up content from their existing knowledge bases. What's more, they can quickly launch new support portals without worrying about reformatting content for every new platform or use case.

When Telus chose Contentful as the content hub for their online Telus Support experience, they had thousands of articles trapped in a legacy CMS. Using Contentful's [migration CLI](#), they were able to migrate the content programmatically, saving time and resources. [See how Telus cut support costs by 9%](#).

Unifying content in a structured way makes it easier to support different audiences, people at various points in the customer lifecycle, or audiences in different locales that require translation and localization.

For example, Lyft populates their driver, rider and call center portals across web and mobile with content from a central knowledge base powered by Contentful. They can curate content for each portal, manage variations and present it in different contexts for each audience.

API-based content solutions integrate well with other tools. For example, Clover and Bill.com combine Contentful with Zendesk. UI extensions make it possible to integrate third-party tools into Contentful's editorial interface, so editors can quickly access what they need without jumping between applications. This streamlines workflows and reduces the stress of having to learn multiple systems for a simple task.

## Focus on content to solve common pain points

Through our work with customer experience and support teams, content strategists, digital leaders, developers and product managers, we've identified three common pain points that organizations need to overcome to take their support services to the next level.

### Silos impair speed and efficiency

In many organizations, knowledge content is housed in silos, with different teams responsible for product information, customer service, partner service, etc. Yet much of the information is still the same. For example, a company address should be consistent everywhere it appears. But in many cases, something as simple as an address change reveals just how difficult it is to update information across multiple systems.

Even within the same team, knowledge base content can be spread across different systems to populate FAQs, email support, chat bots, how-to articles, mobile support, social media and other channels.

Synchronizing content across all these systems occupies a significant amount of resources for redundant work – such as changing that address in a dozen places.

Managing channels in silos is one of the top three challenges to omnichannel strategies, according to Dimension Data's ["2019 Customer Experience Benchmarking Report"](#). "This 'siloes' approach hinders both digital and workforce optimisation," states the report. "As the number of channels grows, many organisations are falling into the trap of silo management: 33.4% continue to manage their CX solutions in individual business units and 32.8% say separate business units collaborate to design a common CX across interaction types and touchpoints."

"Silo management" requires a disproportionate amount of time and resources to update content manually in dozens of places. Larger projects, such as adding channels or implementing new technology, fall victim to time-consuming content migrations and integration and workflow requirements that vary significantly from system to system.

Instead of developing new support experiences, service leaders are tied up managing disconnected systems – and it’s a losing battle.

Customers want a consistent, seamless support experience across products and channels. This can’t be delivered when the content at the heart of every interaction is scattered across systems.



#### SOLUTION

Unify content management to break down silos

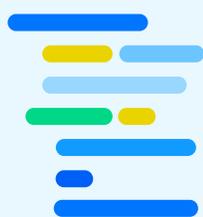
Legacy content repositories and content management systems were built to manage content for single use cases, such as a website, app or support portal. This approach inevitably results in silos, as organizations add more and more systems to manage content for different products and channels. Headless content management systems solve this problem by assembling content into one content hub and using APIs to format and deliver that content to any digital endpoint.

Unifying content immediately reduces the resources needed to keep content updated and consistent. Content is managed centrally and structured for reuse to eliminate redundancy. Instead of hunting for that address across systems, you can simply update it in the content hub and push the change out to wherever it appears. The change goes live across your digital portfolio simultaneously, avoiding any synchronization issues.

Resources that were wasted on synchronizing content can now be focused on creating new content and packaging it in different ways: interactive FAQs, in-product support, a help center app, learning portals, self-service support, etc. Teams can leverage existing content to spin up new features and expand into more channels quickly, without the delays caused by recreating or migrating siloed content.

Adopting a single content solution brings people and processes together, eliminating redundant work and creating *collaboration* between teams. Instead of one team being responsible for populating support content, the content can be drawn from across the organization, pulling from CRMs, marketing materials, training guides, product manuals, FAQs, policy documents, etc.

Structure content so that it is easy to find and reuse, and implement strong governance features, permissions and roles to ensure the integrity of your content.



Well-structured content infrastructure can scale easily from a single project to an enterprise-wide solution.

At the enterprise level, having a central content hub with consistent structure and business logic helps close the gaps between different product teams, channel owners and business units.

Choosing a solution that can scale to break down silos across the organization can help build a case for investment. Service teams can use their knowledge base as a proof of concept to show how content infrastructure can manage content for multiple channels, improving speed and efficiency.



## There are big gaps in omnichannel support

Most organizations have expanded their digital support over time, selecting specialized vendors for email, live chat, learning portals and other services. This approach worked to a point, but as the number of channels grows, businesses are struggling to deliver connected experiences with a myriad of disconnected tools.

Only 8.4% of organizations have all their channels connected, reports Dimension Data in their "2019 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report."

These disconnected channels result in inconsistencies in level of support, wait time and even the answers themselves. For example, "Forty-seven percent of insurers failed to provide consistent answers between different channels," according to Eptica's "[U.S. Insurers failing to deliver on digital customer experience.](#)"

A near 50% failure rate is a bad look for any business. Those that choose to invest in self-service support experiences that function well across all channels have a huge opportunity to stand out by providing the consistent, seamless omnichannel experiences that people crave – and that competitors are failing to deliver.



### SOLUTION

Bridge the gaps with a single content source



The key to providing consistent support across channels is to have a single source of truth for every piece of content.

The challenge is in structuring that content so that it can be accessed by different teams and delivered in the appropriate format for each channel. For example, web self-service experiences are much richer in content than support delivered over SMS, while in-app experiences are highly sensitive to context. Same goes for digital voice assistants, where instructions need to be simplified to be clear, as it's much harder to follow along aurally rather than visually.

To do this, businesses must choose a knowledge base solution built for omnichannel content delivery and organization. Many vendors answer the first challenge with APIs and integrations that can deliver content to different devices, channels and applications. But to deliver omnichannel support at scale, the content itself must be organized for use across channels.

Contentful combines API delivery with content infrastructure to help organizations build a flexible content model that serves as a single source for all of their digital content needs.

With separate interfaces for developers and editors, Contentful gives everyone the tools they need to find and pull content from a central hub without limiting how the content is presented to the user. For more about the endless presentation possibilities of Contentful, check out how the British Museum uses interactive displays, audio guides, responsive websites and more to help visitors engage digitally with the eight million artifacts in their collection.

"In 2017, over two-thirds of marketers believed their companies competed mostly based on CX; 81% of marketers expect to compete mostly based on CX in 2019."

**Gartner**

"Emerging Customer Experience Roles That Report Into Marketing"

## Customers want self-service for a broad spectrum of needs

Anywhere from 50% to almost three quarters of customers want to solve their problems on their own, according to stats collected by [Customer Thermometer](#) from businesses including Zendesk, American Express and Aspect Software. Often, however, customers are frustrated by the lack of available information. When consumers could not resolve issues on their own, more than half blamed the lack of information available online, according to Microsoft's "[2017 State of Global Customer Service Report](#)."

Self-service support is important for businesses as well. Without effective self-service options, agents spend a significant amount of time answering the same questions over and over. This leaves them with less time to handle complex queries and escalations. Alternately bored or hurried, agents become dissatisfied, contributing to high turnover and lowering operational efficiency.

Part of the challenge service leaders face is how to provide self-service support for customer needs that can range from a simple question to troubleshooting a multi-step process. This is further compounded when the definition of "customer" expands to include organizations, partners, merchants, developers, etc.

Self-service solutions need to identify the customer type, discern their intent and provide support in a format that is easy to understand and appropriate for their channel and device.

Forrester recognizes these challenges in "The Forrester Wave™: Customer Service Solutions", Q2 2019: "Customers increasingly use self-service as a first point of contact with a company. Great self-service rests on deeply understanding the customer, their purchase and interaction history, and their current context and journey to serve up the right self-service experience within the channel and touchpoint that they are using. Vendors offer a range of curated knowledge, peer content, chatbots, and automated processes that are, unfortunately, fractured at best."



## SOLUTION

Leverage technology to deliver intuitive self-service experiences

Delivering great self-service means pulling the pieces of siloed knowledge bases together. That content – combined with a smart tech solution – can help identify or predict customer intent and deliver personalized answers. There are no all-in-one solutions that do this well. Service teams need to build their own tech stack of tools that work well together and can be used consistently across all touchpoints.

Knowledge base content is the foundation of every support experience. This requires a content solution with strong integration capabilities that empowers teams to leverage data, AI, personalization and automation technology.

By integrating technology with your knowledge base, you can manage and deliver an array of self-service tools to meet different customer and partner needs with fewer resources, as Lyft does with their driver and rider support portals. You can also integrate with existing vendors: Clover integrated Contentful with Zendesk to maintain some of the internal processes they liked, while expanding their support capabilities.

Integrations also empower you to package knowledge base content into sophisticated support experiences like learning portals and education hubs. Fidelity Investments' learning center application on iOS and Android, Verizon Communications' Education Hub and National Geographic's learning site all use Contentful as the content layer of their tech stack.



## Making the case for investment

Now is the time for service leaders to build buy-in for investments in knowledge base solutions that can serve as the foundation for improving the customer experience. According to Gartner, "As more companies compete on the basis of customer experience, marketers are assuming increased responsibility for managing CX initiatives. In 2017, over two-thirds of marketers believed their companies competed mostly based on CX; 81% of marketers expect to compete mostly based on CX in 2019." (Gartner, "Emerging Customer Experience Roles That Report Into Marketing," May 2019, report available to subscribers).

Investment in content infrastructure sets the foundation for omnichannel experiences that are consistent throughout the customer lifecycle and simple to manage internally. What's more, API-first solutions such as Contentful can integrate with other CX technologies to maximize return across investments.

Breaking down silos and pulling fragmented content into a central knowledge base

Facilitating omnichannel content delivery

Integrating with CX technology to provide intuitive support experiences

Increasing the speed to launch new products and features



## Contentful is a solution that can be used across business lines

The knowledge base captures a segment of Contentful's capabilities, but the full range of applications is much larger in scope. Flexible content infrastructure and omnichannel delivery capabilities make Contentful a strategic investment across lines of business – we work enterprise-wide with advertising, marketing, ecomm, CX, HR and countless other teams, across industries.

Customers use Contentful's knowledge base solution power everything from Microsoft's Office 365 Partner Portal to use cases like IMG's fashion portal.

It's time for a new approach: Contentful helps harness the power of your existing knowledge base content, while building a foundation for future of CX.



# See how user friendly a content platform can be

Talk to a Contentful expert today