Case study

"More than anything, we wanted to improve the level of knowledge among our agents by sharing the wealth of best practice and experience that had built up within the team over the years."

Customer Support Centre Manager
Wolseley
Wolseley Customer Support Centre operations employ over 120 agents across three sites. Perhaps best known for their Plumb Center and Parts Center brands, they also provide customer support services to Tesco UK.

Results

- 7,000 Unique queries in 18 months
- 400% Increase in systems use
- A decrease in call volume has enabled agents to spend more time selling
- On average 20,000 extra unit sales
- Reduced calls resulted in increased revenue of c£2m per month

Training

- Prescience™ helps Wolseley to meet Partner SLA's
- On average 12 brands managed by new agents
- Newly trained agents now support around 12 brands, rather than just 2
- Average induction time reduced from 12 weeks to 8 weeks
- Saving on new agents induction time

Improving Contact Centre Performance

A decrease in call volume has enabled agents to spend more time selling resulting in an increased revenue of c£2m per month.

23% reduction

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About Wolseley

Wolseley is the world’s largest trade distributor of plumbing and heating products. The UK division is headquartered in Royal Leamington Spa and operates Customer Support Centres in the South, Midlands and North of England.

Wolseley Customer Support Centre operations were established in 2000 and currently employ over 120 agents across three sites. The main site in Ripon, Yorkshire, comprises 60 multichannel agents, predominantly managing inbound enquiries from the group websites and stores nationwide.

Perhaps best known for their Plumb Center and Parts Center brands, Wolseley also comprises Burdens, Fusion Provida, William Wilson and BCG, to name a few. In addition, they provide customer support services to Tesco UK, via a dedicated Customer Support Centre in Marston Gate.

The Wolseley Customer Support Centres have evolved over time to not only provide support to the 3,000 employees across 740 stores, but also to customers using three websites. Four inbound teams handled an average of 6,500 enquiries per week, or over 330,000 per year.
In 2015 a new Multichannel Director was appointed at Wolseley and began a wide-reaching transformation programme. They had previous experience of knowledge management tools within a multichannel contact centre environment and were keen for Wolseley agents to reap the same benefits.

Alison Goodwin, Customer Support Centre Manager for Wolseley, explains what they were looking to achieve, “If I had to boil our objectives down to one simple concept, it would be to make it easier for our customers to do business with us”.

“More than anything, we wanted to improve the level of knowledge among our agents by sharing the wealth of best practice and experience that had built up within the team over the years.”

Customer Support Centre Manager

“In one instance, we had a member of staff who had been working for the company for over 40 years and they were about to retire. We suddenly thought, what happens to all that knowledge when they leave?”

With the centralization of support across multiple brands, Wolseley was aware of the need to retain specialist knowledge of what amounted to over 200,000 product SKUs; plus, support thousands of customers with sometimes complex enquiries.

With the mission of “making it easier for our customers to do business with us” in mind, Wolseley set about establishing a clear set of operational objectives. Key performance indicators would include:

- An increase in first call resolution rate
- An increase in agent productivity
- An increase in customer satisfaction
- A reduction in agent training times
Prescience™ by Transversal was one of three shortlisted knowledge management solutions evaluated by Wolseley. “Although the incoming Multi-Channel Director had first-hand experience of Prescience™, it was important that we did our due diligence” explains Alison.

Each solution was put through a rigorous evaluation program that included product demonstrations and engagement with a broad range of stakeholders from across the organisation; including c-level executives and representatives from legal, compliance and IT departments.

Ease of implementation, a proven track-record within service-led organisations and flexibility were key considerations in the decision-making process. As was an excellent reputation for customer service. “We looked at a couple of alternative providers”, said Alison. “Neither of them offered what we needed, nor were they as well supported as Prescience™”.

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Customer Support Centre Manager
Implementation

“We really can’t sing Transversal’s praises high enough. Throughout the process, our dedicated project team were outstanding. Service has been excellent, from the account management team through to IT Support”.

**Customer Support Centre Manager**

Alison Goodwin explains the implementation process. “The project kicked off in November of 2015 and we went live at the beginning of March 2016.”

Implementation had the potential to be complex, with over 200,000 SKUs to consider. The reality was quite the opposite.

The flexible nature of Prescience™ meant that information could be added to the system in a variety of formats – PDFs, Word documents, spreadsheets and even video.

“We set targets for users at the beginning” explains Alison Goodwin, “and incentivised the addition of questions and answers to accelerate the gathering of knowledge.

In under a year, Wolseley had established a database with the answers to more than 5,500 unique queries, six months further down the line and Prescience™ contains the answers to more than 7,000 queries, with an average of 30 new assets being added every day.”
Adoption

Ease of use is essential to the successful deployment of any new technology. Users played a vital role in both the design and test phases – part of which involved “seeding” the system with over 200 questions and answers.

Employee engagement throughout implementation and early adoption has been exceptional. In fact, the introduction of Prescience™ has had a positive impact on employee engagement across the organisation. According to an internal survey, employee engagement scores have risen to 74% since the tool went live.

In one Customer Support Centre with a traditionally high attrition rate, the introduction of Prescience™ has contributed to a 400% increase in systems use and a 200% increase in content submission over a six month period.

“Prescience™ makes our job much easier, faster and simpler, resulting in greater customer satisfaction. There are no more unnecessary phone calls, knowledge is but a click away with answers at our fingertips. It’s quick and easy to find any information and just as simple to load new. Who needs Google when we have Woogle – our Transversal knowledge base”.

Sarah Webster, Customer Service Agent.

“Prescience™ makes our job much easier, faster and simpler, knowledge is but a click away”.

Customer Service Agent.
Having been in place for 12 months, Wolseley is in a position to assess the impact of Prescience™ on their customer service and contact centre operations.

“Artificial Intelligence has had a positive impact on the customer experience, enabling Customer Support Centre staff to provide the right answers, first time”. Alison Goodwin, Wolseley.

Prescience™ has rapidly become the corporate memory, consolidating the big data that traditionally resides in spreadsheets, notebooks, PDF's and the minds of employees. Wolseley has seen a rapid return on their investment and is performing exceptionally well against its key performance indicators:

- **First Call Resolution**: 32% increase to 98%
- **Customer Satisfaction**: 20% increase to 96%
- **Net Promoter Score**: 66 to 82
- **Employee engagement**: 37% increase to 74%
- **Advisor Knowledge Score**: 6% increase
- **Inbound call volume**: 23% reduction
Agent training

“In addition to these impressive performance statistics, Wolseley has managed to accelerate its training program, reducing the average induction time down from 12 weeks to eight weeks – a saving of 33%.”

Staff training was another area to see improvements. Prior to implementation, the on-boarding process for a typical customer support agent took 12 weeks; with new agents being assigned a couple of brands to support in the initial weeks and shadowed by an experienced agent.

Post-implementation, this process has been accelerated. New agents can support multiple brands from the outset and the induction process has been shortened by a third.

“Wolseley has managed to accelerate its training program, reducing the average induction time down from **12 weeks to 8 weeks** – a saving of 33%.”

“Since introducing **Prescience** we have been able to significantly reduce the time it takes to train new employees. The ability to access a consistent, comprehensive source of information has had a significant impact. I would conservatively estimate that we have cut four weeks from the time it takes to fully train a new agent.” Alex Ryder, CSC Trainer.
Prescience™ was initially installed at the Ripon Customer Support Centre as a proof of concept, then subsequently rolled out to the regional centres for Wolseley and BCG.

Since launch at one site, NPS has seen an increase of 13% over six months and an internal drive on content and quality has seen a 400% increase in use and a 200% increase in content submission.

The next step in transforming the Wolseley customer experience is to deploy the knowledge management system into the 780 nationwide stores, bringing knowledge closer to the customer.

We asked Alison what the future was likely to hold: “At the moment, we have Prescience™ operating across all of our Customer Support Centres. The logical next step is to roll the system out to our branch locations. Following that, we should be looking at adding self-service elements to the group websites.”

Alison concludes: “We are about a third of the way through the journey to where we want to be. It’s not only my decision, but if it was, I’d role this out across the business in a heartbeat.”
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