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Provide Support's Live Chat Software Adds Sellable Benefit to Company's Premium Membership Offering

- Provide Support's Live Chat allows the company to offer its customers a level of enhanced service to instantly resolve technical issues with its products.
- The added service offered by Provide Support's Live Chat makes a premium membership more appealing.
- Provide Support's Live Chat gives the company a decided advantage for upselling to a premium membership, thereby enhancing revenue.

The Challenge

Companies in the software business are also in the customer service business, since there's no way to neglect the support function. Indeed, for software companies, strong customer support translates into a competitive advantage. For companies with a large customer base, though, support solutions like live chat may prove to be impractical. More staff time is required to provide the kind of instant, customized support expected of such an option. The challenge faced by these companies is how to offer a high level of customer support while optimizing staff time and keeping customer service budgets manageable.

Articulate®, a New York-based company that provides cutting-edge e-learning software, initially offered live chat to all its customers and prospects. However, with more than 12,000 customers, the company found that it simply could not keep up with the flood of support requests generated by the system.

The Solution

Just as it was upgrading to Provide Support's Live Chat Solution – whose cost effectiveness and ease of use made it the obvious choice – the company arrived at an innovative use for the system. Rather than offering live chat support for all of its customers and any visitor to its website, Articulate decided to make Provide Support's Live Chat part of its Premium Membership Plan.

Articulate's Premium Membership Plan is offered to customers via the buy page of any software product. For an additional fee, customers get a variety of benefits, including: Live Chat ("Unlimited live Web chat support to discuss issues with your support team in real time"); free updates and full-version upgrades of the software purchased; unlimited priority e-mail support; and much more.

The Premium Membership Plan is an option popular with Articulate's larger customers, obviously companies with bigger budgets, but the plan is presented to every customer as a cost-effective option that includes unlimited customized tech support and automatic product upgrades. It's also part of the e-learning company's ongoing sales efforts. For example, qualified leads, including those who have chosen to take a demo or participate in a webinar, are contacted by sales representatives who always include in their presentations information about the Premium Membership Plan.

Articulate's decision to make Provide Support's Live Chat a key component of its Platinum Membership Plan has been an unmitigated success. It ultimately helps differentiate the company from its competitors and adds to the overall value of its product. And the industry has taken notice. Due in part to its use of Provide Support's Live Chat, Articulate was named by the Association of Support Professionals one of the 10 Best Web Support Sites of 2007.

Benefits of Provide Support's Live Chat

- Provide Support's Live Chat allows Articulate's Premium Membership Plan customers to connect with "Tier 2" customer support engineers for instant resolution to complex issues.
- Live Chat support is one of the top reasons customers purchase the Premium Membership Plan.
- Upselling to the Premium Membership Plan is a key element of the company's sales strategy.
- Top-level customer support without a marked increase in personnel: In making live chat support part of its Premium Membership Plan, the company has reduced its live chat case load to less than 20 inquiries a day.



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E-Learning Company Adds Live Chat Support as Sellable Extra Benefit

Articulate(R) Uses Provide Support's Software to Sweeten Customer Service Package.

New York, NY, March 29, 2008 --(PR.com)-- Articulate(R), a provider of rapid e-learning software, has decided to use Provide Support's live chat software on its website as an added benefit customers receive when they upgrade to its Premium Membership plan.

"This is a unique use of live chat for business," said John Horchner, marketing manager for the New York based ProvideSupport.com. "We've always said that adding Provide Support's live chat software will increase a company's revenues. Articulate is a company that proves this beyond a doubt by bundling it into a package that they charge for."

See Articulate's live chat case study at <http://www.providesupport.com/about-us/case-studies/index.html>.



The company arrived at this innovative use for live chat as it was looking to maintain a high level of customer support for its 12,000 clients. Since staff time and keeping customer service budgets manageable are always an issue, rather than offering live chat support to all its customers and any visitor to its website, Articulate(R) decided to make Provide Support's live support software a part of its Premium Membership Plan. The Premium Membership Plan is now offered to customers via the buy page of any software product (<http://www.articulate.com/store/pmp.php>).

For an additional fee, customers get a variety of benefits, including: Live Support ("Unlimited live Web chat support to discuss issues with your support team in real time"); free updates and full-version upgrades of the software purchased; unlimited priority e-mail support; and much more.

"We use Live Chat to offer our prospects and Platinum Membership customers added support, and I see no reason to ever look for an alternative. Quite simply, it works," says Gabe Anderson, Director of Customer Support, Articulate(R).

For Articulate(R), Provide Support's Live Chat Software offered a wide range of benefits that has helped transform its Premium membership service:

- Provide Support's Live Chat allows the company to offer its customers a level of enhanced service to instantly resolve technical issues with its products.
- The added service offered by Provide Support makes a premium membership more appealing.
- Provide Support's service gives the company a decided advantage for upselling to a premium membership, thereby enhancing revenue.

About Articulate

Articulate (<http://www.articulate.com>) provides software tools that make rapid e-learning work. The company's products allow organizations to empower anyone with expert knowledge to quickly and effectively produce employee training and other critical learning materials.

Corporate Headquarters: 244 5th Avenue, Suite 2960, New York, NY 10001 Phone: (800) 861-4880

About Provide Support

Provide Support (<http://www.providesupport.com>) is the leading, easiest to use, provider of Live Customer Support Chat Services. Over 4000 companies and individual website owners have implemented Provide Support's live chat to improve their sales and customer relations on the Internet.

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The Case Study: A Timeless and Versatile Form

The case study or “success story” is a mainstay of marketing. Most people whose work has even a cursory relationship to marketing communications are at least familiar with the basic format:

- * Problem [Client situation/Industry background]
- * Solution [How the customer used a product/service]
- * Benefits [. . . and they lived happily ever after]

The very ubiquity and simplicity of case studies means that often they’re taken for granted. Many people in marketing, or those who hire people in marketing, see case studies as peripheral or supplemental to their primary vehicles—a Website, collateral, etc.

The case study is an essential marketing vehicle, or at least it should be. It can go where other vehicles cannot, to deliver a measure of credibility and complexity that is unmatched.

Beyond Explanation: Identification > Association > Extrapolation

While other marketing copy tells you about a product or service, a case study shows you how it works.

Case studies eschew the “salesy” language so many people have been conditioned to view with skepticism (no matter how true it is). As in social media marketing, the attributes of the company whose product/service is featured in the case study are implied, never stated directly.

A well written case study is a story that is engaging and triggers empathy. It enables the reader to identify with the challenges faced by the customer in the story, because he/she faces similar challenges.

Also, when the problem addressed is a familiar one, the case study can serve as a model for prospects/existing customers who may have never thought of using the product or service in the fashion illustrated by the story. Without spelling out every minute benefit—usually impossible anyhow—the case study allows readers to imagine how they might benefit in their own situation. That is the ultimate purpose of any case study.

Not only is the case study a mainstay of marketing, it’s also a mainstay of those who venture to instruct others on marketing. (A Google search of "How to Write a Case Study" returned 5 million hits.)

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