

WHITEPAPER

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS – MODERN DAY “RESOLUTIONARIES”

Understand the skills you need to make a big impact



YOU SAY YOU WANT A RESOLUTION?

When your customers or service and support agents encounter issues, they are looking for resolutions. But a resolution isn't just answering a query by serving up pages upon pages of search results or simply locating a long manual that agents or customers have to sift through. Sometimes those answers aren't good *resolutions*.

At Knova we define resolutions as ***the result of solving customer problems based on context and intent***. Resolutions add value for customers by improving customer satisfaction, loyalty and perception while lowering costs. For example, Knova customers have experienced 10 percent increases in customer satisfaction, 20 percent improvements in resolution rates, and 50 percent declines in service requests.

Resolutions are good for everyone, and they only occur when the right combination of knowledge management (KM) tools and people are brought together for a common goal. KM isn't the “set it and forget it” proposition made famous by those old late night television infomercials – it takes strategy and ongoing commitment. Most of all, it takes good people.

SO...WHAT IS A RESOLUTIONARY AND WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

Resolutionaries are knowledge workers. They are people focused on resolving complex product and support issues, and they do so in evolving and ever-improving ways. The term “knowledge worker” was coined by the legendary management consultant and professor Peter Drucker. In his 1959 book *Landmarks of Tomorrow*, he defined this person as one who works primarily with information, or one who develops and uses knowledge in the workplace. The academics Nonaka and Toffler later expanded on this concept to lay the foundation for KM, the discipline which supports knowledge workers with standard tools and processes.

Resolutionaries are critical in using KM to address customer pain points, which often include:

- “Information is everywhere but resolutions are impossible to find”
- “We need an easy way to resolve customer issues fast and accurately using the knowledge we have”
- “We don't know if customers are finding what they need”
- “Our KB reporting is terrible”
- “We need to raise customer sat scores and escalations are out of control”

Resolutionaries add value by making knowledge work the focus of a world-class support organization. In a support context, knowledge work is understood to be the process of collecting, authoring, distributing and maintaining purpose-built knowledge. Support knowledge, or knowledge expressly structured for support, can be distinguished from all other knowledge in the organization.

It is accepted practice today that a current, well-maintained knowledgebase is essential for a support function to fulfill its duties. No knowledgebase, however, can maintain itself. Staffing is a mandatory component of a KM organization, and it has to be done explicitly.

Fortunately, experience has shown that an early commitment actually frees bandwidth and makes the entire organization more efficient. Building teams with the right skills addresses pain points, improves resolution times, decreases escalations, and raises customer satisfaction scores.

OK, BUT WHO SHOULD BECOME A RESOLUTIONARY?

Knowledge work implies some group of workers who identify and assemble valuable knowledge in distinct roles & responsibilities, and another group who consumes that knowledge (the target audience). Resolutionaries are those that lead this effort.

But what roles belong in a KM organization, and who makes the best Resolutionaries?

Ultimately, a customer’s unique needs drive the number of knowledge workers, the precise roles, and the new business processes which will best facilitate adoption. With that said, here are some roles and skills that we’ve seen time and again in our customer base.

Roles	Functions	Skills	Benefits
Knowledge Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product champion - Leads the KM function • Full-time resource manages the team • Supplies and drives the vision to the entire organization • Analyzes metrics, defends resource commitments to executives • In larger organizations, can be a purely business role (no direct contact with tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Detail and process oriented • Converting vision and business needs into actionable steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steers knowledge workers and tool toward desired output • Ensures KM goals support organizational goals • Sustains executive sponsorship
Knowledge Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the front-end configuration of the KM application • Usually but not always full-time for KM • Manages the taxonomy, document templates, customer dictionary, analytics reports, users and permissions throughout the system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-technical • Should have some background in systems administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables a KM system usable by the masses • Maintains an organized system so that personnel effort is focused on knowledge input
Recommender or Contributor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests candidate articles for the knowledge base • Can be any resource in support and even across the enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to articulate customer issues into words • Basic writing skills, not a technical writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that customer issues are addressed accurately and practically

Roles	Functions	Skills	Benefits
Knowledge Author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops suggestions into knowledge articles Writes content in respective fields, attaches metadata & external files, links to other articles, restricts visibility, and maintains articles Resource allocation is highly dependent on the context, primarily the volume and complexity of the content being managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior experience solving problems on the front lines Good writing skills, possibly a technical writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that customer issues are easy to find Increased FCR and call deflection rates
Technical Reviewer or SME (Subject Matter Expert)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An expert in a specific subject being covered in the knowledge base Full-time resource, but not usually full-time to KM Validate articles for technical accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical expertise in their particular field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimizes escalations and increases resolution rates
Publisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gatekeeper who gives final review to articles and then releases them to the target audience Can be any resource in support and even across the enterprise Resource allocation is highly dependent on the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong writing background, possibly a technical writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains consistent review and publishing standards
Reports Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathers metrics from KM, CRM, and web portal for value-added feedback Not typically full-time to KM, but a shared resource across multiple departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process-oriented Comfortable with creating and explaining charts, tables and data outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures understanding of knowledge trends Identifies gaps and strengths
Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trains authors & agents on search, retrieval, integrations with CRM systems, and overall best practices Usually a shared resource across multiple departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult learning theories Technical or skills training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures consistent usage and understanding of KM by all employees

Other roles, depending on the size of the organization and the model adopted, include KCS Coaches, Domain Experts, Knowledge Champions, Knowledge Architects, and Forum Moderators. None of these roles are absolutes, but they are frequently utilized functions that frame many successful knowledge teams. The right mix for your organization depends on a number of variables, including your specific needs and staffing capabilities. Aptean Global Services has extensive, KCS certified consulting experience to guide you through this process and has helped innumerable companies list the necessary skills, identify key resources, and implement strategies to achieve their goals.

WHERE DO WE FIND RESOLUTIONARIES?

Here’s some free advice: look inside. Most times, companies find that KM superstars already work for them. If you adopt KCS best practices, many KM roles can be accomplished by or folded into your existing agents’ capabilities. The Knowledge Author function, for example, is frequently accomplished by support agents themselves when authoring in the workflow, a key component of KCS.

Repurposing existing employees who demonstrate a particular aptitude – for example, the ability to understand and write about complex problems or structuring complex issues into simple concepts – can become a new career path. A good starting point when considering the people you’ll need in KM is to conduct a thorough analysis of KM goals and needs. Matching business needs to people skills is key, but not everyone can do it.

Questions to think about:

- Do we currently have a dedicated knowledge function and team?
- Do we plan to adopt KCS processes, if not now, then as a long-term strategy?

- What are our goals in both implementing KM and developing people to support it?
- Is this a career path we can develop to retain our best people?

If you have these points nailed down, you are in a great position to undertake your KM initiative.

WHAT RESULTS SHOULD WE EXPECT IF WE DO THIS RIGHT?

Done properly, companies reap important benefits from a qualified staff of Resolutionaries like improved first call resolution, or FCR. This leads to:

- Customer loyalty and repeat business
- Higher profitability
- Stronger brand recognition
- Career growth of personnel

A recent ICMI report stated that moving from average to best-in-class FCR can improve satisfaction with the customer service rep by 20%, sales conversion by 20-33%, and costs by 20%. Additionally, customer likelihood to switch to a competitor or competitive product drops to just 3% with high FCR.¹ While improved FCR is just one possible goal, it is a common objective of many support organizations. You will likely have many others.

HOW DO I BECOME A RESOLUTIONARY?

While some roles and associated skills were laid out earlier, it is equally important to understand the multiple angles or viewpoints that drive KM goals. Individual and team core competency and skill development enables companies to tackle these goals.

There are really two high-level vantage points driving personnel development; one, from the knowledge workers actually working hands-on within the system; and two, from the management standpoint developing and tracking the objectives that define success.

From the knowledge worker's perspective, goals vary and require diverse roles and skill sets to achieve. For example, those with strong writing backgrounds may align well to roles like Knowledge Author and Publisher, and those who wish to take on these roles should consider enhancing their writing skills. Similarly, those with strong technical skills naturally align to a SME or technical reviewer role. At the same time, strong writers looking to expand their skills could benefit by adding some technical capabilities, while technical people can bring additional value by strengthening their writing skills. Either of these examples offers valuable career skill expansion while adding value to the organization.

From a management perspective, several outcomes of a KM initiative are generally important – cost savings, improving customer satisfaction, and increasing revenue. As a result, those looking to take on leadership responsibilities in a KM initiative should ensure that business case development, tracking and reporting skills are paramount. Benchmarking both within and outside of the company to set a baseline is important, while goal alignment driving results beyond that baseline is key.

CONCLUSION

KM initiatives have proven over time to add value through increased customer satisfaction, lower support costs, faster and more accurate resolutions, and higher brand loyalty. Designed properly, companies can leverage their own people to drive KM success, while individuals benefit in parallel by expanding their personal and professional capabilities through learning the skills necessary to achieve big goals. Becoming a Resolutionary moves the needle and puts your people in the driver’s seat.

THE KNOVA DIFFERENCE

Knova is *resolutionizing the customer support experience* by enabling authoring and resolution at the speed of conversation. Only Knova is founded with a patented, self-learning technology platform that understands concepts and how your customers think and search. And only Knova allows such sophisticated technology to be used and tuned without dedicated programmers or linguists.

Beyond other industry solutions like enterprise search, FAQs and content management systems, Knova enables users to both author and search for knowledge internally and externally. Knova provides a single powerful and intelligent search that makes finding resolutions more user friendly. And Knova doesn’t stop after providing the resolution the first time. Knova has a KCSSM *Verified* design with actionable analytics that allow you to continuously improve organizational knowledge and customer experiences.

Large product and service support organizations use Knova to resolve their customers’ issues quickly and accurately. Is your customer support a differentiator? Become a Knova Resolutionary to drive lower costs, improve customer satisfaction and increase loyalty so that your customers keep coming back for more.

You say you want a Resolution?™, Resolutionizing the customer support experience™ and Resolutionary™ are trademarks of Aptean.

¹ Murcott, M. (2012, April 5). Expert’s Angle: Supercharging Your First-Contact Resolution Initiative. Call Center Training, Events, Certification, Resources, and Consulting. See <http://www.icmi.com/Resources/Articles/2012/April/Supercharging-Your-First-Contact-Resolution-Initiative>



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