

What Is a Knowledge Base?

244 Administrator Tue, Apr 9, 2019 [Knowledge Management](#) 0 3917

A knowledge base is a self-serve customer service library that includes information about a product, service, or topic.

Customer service organizations exist to improve the customer experience. The ways they do this can vary, but it usually starts out with some sort of ticketing or case management system. When a user has a question or an issue, they get routed through this system and can get an answer through various channels, including email, live chat, social, etc.

All of this is reactive. And when it comes to reactive customer service, it's time-consuming (because you have to have well-trained support staff operating these systems and interacting with customers to ensure a good experience) and can get repetitive. For example, if you work at a photo-sharing startup, you might get the same question about how to upload a photo dozens of times per day.

This repetition is valuable, of course. It shows you how your user experience may or may not be intuitive and how it could be improved. But in the meantime, this reactive repetition is time consuming, stressful, and isn't scalable.

This is where customer service organizations become aware of the need of knowledge bases. Scaling out your customer success initiatives allows you to be more proactive in creating happy and successful customers and it saves customer service reps valuable time. Happy and successful customers then often turn into customer advocates, almost becoming an external sales force for your business that leads to success of the business.

A knowledge base allows you to create self-service customer support content around recurring topics and issues. Consider the example of an image upload service, why not simply create an article to explain the process of uploading a photo? That way, a user can search for and find this article, or you can simply send them the article via your regular ticketing system to save time.

If you're not sold, consider the economic value when you scale out your operations. According to Forrester, a chat with a live customer support agent can cost \$6-12 per interaction, but an automated interaction can cost as little as 25 cents.

A knowledge base doesn't simply have to be a reservoir of help center articles. It can also include functions like a frequently-asked questions (FAQ) section, a user forum, articles,

white papers, how-to articles, video tutorials, case studies, and dictionaries or glossaries - essentially, anything that helps customers understand and use your products or services.

Technically speaking, a knowledge base could also fall under a few broader use cases. In most contexts, we think of it as an online knowledge base, something that helps customers find answers to common questions but you could also set up an IT knowledge base or an internal company knowledge base to help your employees learn how your organization operates, discover benefits and HR information, or get answers to common IT and technical questions.

At its core, no matter the purpose, a knowledge base simply helps users discover answers and achieve success in their endeavors.

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