

Novell's Knowledge Management Culture Improves Customer Satisfaction and Saves Millions



"At Novell, we are committed to combining our sophisticated and secure directory-enabled networking software with outstanding customer service and technical support. Because of the complexity of the 40 products we support from two major call centers and field offices, we realized that the best way to be consistent with customer inquiries was to have a flexible knowledgebase of predefined 'solutions' that could grow with our company."

- Gig Griffith, Manager of Business Operations at Novell Technical Services

Novell, Inc. is a leading provider of Net services software. Novell's products offer a fast, secure means for businesses to manage diverse networks from a central location. Their \$1 billion business is tied to their ability to provide outstanding technical support by providing consistently high-quality answers to customer inquiries.

The Support Challenge

In 1997, Novell used the Vantive call tracking system to manage the more than 300 incidents received daily by their support centers and engineers. The Vantive system did a great job tracking inquiries and incidents from receipt through resolution, but it could not effectively manage and manipulate the database of Technical Information Documents (TIDs) that Novell's technical support engineers use to provide outstanding customer service.

Operating from two geographically dispersed call centers and from field offices all over the world, Novell was dependent on "knowledge" to provide consistent quality service. Having used informal knowledgebases (KBs) for years, Novell decided to invest in a formal knowledge management (KM) system that would integrate with their call tracking system and give them advanced tools to author, edit, publish, manage, report, and search. Novell defined both productivity and quality objectives in their quest for the right KM system. The goals were: increase efficiency, reduce escalations, reduce the learning curve of the support staff, increase customers' ability to "self-service," improve the consistency of responses, improve the accuracy of KM "solutions", and allow the extended community to contribute solutions.

Novell®

Business Profile

Novell is a leading provider of network and internet directory software and services. Novell's products make networks more manageable and secure, and integrate computer platforms, applications, services and devices.

Geographies Served

Global Customer Base

Business Challenge

Empowering customer service representatives, technical support engineers and field staff to consistently provide quality service.

Deployment Summary

Primus® eSupport	135 seats
Primus® eServer	90 seats
eServer Desktop	600 seats

Primus Technology Partner

Vantive/PeopleSoft

Results

- Positive ROI in 11 months
- 46% reduction in average resolution time, resulting in:
 - Recovered applied costs and \$1 million saved in year 1.
 - Recovered booked costs within 3 years.
- Shifted calls to less expensive service staff:
 - 5% reduction in Tier 3 incidents.
 - 5% reduction in Tier 2 inquiries.
 - 10% increase in Tier 1 inquiries.
- Incidents prevention from web-based self-service produced nearly \$100,000 savings in year 1.

ABOUT PRIMUS

Primus is one of the world's leading providers of knowledge solutions that help companies and their customers access, analyze, and improve information as a natural part of their daily work processes. Businesses around the world currently use Primus software to increase customer satisfaction, improve employee efficiency, and lower operating costs. Primus clients include such industry leaders as 3Com, 3M, The Boeing Company, Compaq Computer Corp., Ericsson, Inc., Fujitsu Limited, Inc., Motorola, EMC, Novell, and VeriSign. (Nasdaq: PKSI)

Contact Information

For more information, visit www.primus.com or email sales@primus.com

1601 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1900
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.292.1000 Main
206.292.1825 Fax
www.primus.com

© 2002 Primus Knowledge Solutions, Inc.

Primus, Primus Answer Engine, Primus eServer, Primus Associative Search Engine, and their associated logos are trademarks, registered trademarks, or service marks of Primus Knowledge Solutions, Inc. Other products, logos, and company names mentioned in this Primus Fact Sheet may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

Disclaimer: This Primus Fact Sheet contains information specific to one customer's experience, opinion, and results. It is based upon certain system configurations, specific use by certain personnel, and several other variable factors. Other customers' and users' experience and results may substantially differ.

Product Complexity Requires Advanced Search Capabilities

To meet their needs, Novell looked at all of the products on the market and selected Primus® software. Novell was impressed with Primus solid reputation for delivering on its technological promise and with the expertise of its staff. Primus state-of-the-art software specifically offered the distinct advantage of a KB with associative search capabilities that met Novell's needs.

Cultural Change Drives Success

According to Novell, "It's not just a tool-set, it's a cultural revolution! The major implementation hurdle in a knowledge-sharing system is not the technology. It is getting people used to it. Sharing ideas freely is one thing when you are at a physical meeting and can see reaction. It is another when you are working electronically and the reactions of others may or may not come."

Novell undertook a six-month trial involving 25 support engineers. The initial beta did not yield the expected results but Novell, realizing the inherent value of the application, was determined to make the KB work. A postmortem of the beta revealed that the technology was solid but required complementary changes in procedures. Novell underwent a corporate cultural change, implementing a new measurement and reward process for their customer service representatives and engineers that allowed them to maximize the value of the KM initiative and improve the quality of their customer service.

KM Best Practices

Instead of trying to convert the entire support organization to the Primus system at one time, Novell phased in the new KB over an 18-month period and made it voluntary. This process minimized the impact of the transition on customers, partners, and employees while allowing Novell gradually to introduce the advantages offered by the new KB system. Eighty-nine percent of the workforce has already chosen to use the new system. The quality of solutions in the KB is maintained through training programs and supported by a new measurement and rewards program. Novell only has one program manager dedicated to the system on a full-time basis.

Productivity and Quality Improvements

Novell invested \$2.6 million in software, hardware, integration, implementation, and training for their three-year KM initiative. Within eleven months of the implementation, Novell realized a return on the investment with improvements in both productivity and quality. Novell's average time to resolution improved 46%, decreasing from 26 days in 1997 to 14 days in 2001. The KB achieved its objective of reducing escalations, shifting calls to less expensive service staff and with the added benefit of reducing training time.

Novell's Flexibility Makes The Difference

"Novell's success was due to the willingness of the company's management and employees to embrace change," said Mr. Griffith. The Novell experience demonstrates that KM implementations will succeed when good technology is implemented by an enterprise flexible enough to adapt itself to a new corporate reality. The Primus KB has helped Novell realize all of its objectives. The benefits are far-reaching. Novell's success is due, in large part, to their commitment to KM and willingness to transform their business to reach their goals.