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What is Knowledge Centered Service? KCS Explained

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In the 21st century, digital is the way of life, especially inside any business or organization. With significant shi innovation and productivity, it seems that support functions can barely keep up. While technical support use an internal, back-office department that customers never saw, today's customers interact with technical servi on a daily basis. Support teams within organizations may struggle to keep up, but Knowledge Centered Servic changing that. Knowledge Centered Service, or KCS, emphasizes knowledge as a critical asset for delivering se and support. KCS stood for "Knowledge Centered Support" until the v6 release in April 2016 at which time the was updated to "Knowledge Centered Service". In this article, we are exploring the KCS principles and metho

To understand KCS, let's take the long view of service teams in digital workplaces.

In most organizations, regardless of size, IT help desks are swamped with requests, ranging from small, tedio that are easy to accomplish but take time, to larger problems that must be dealt with immediately. IT service are always balancing these requests, based on priority, individual knowledge of a problem, and time required researching, which can mean reaching out to people outside of the IT service team.

The problems with these existing issues are clear:

- Time spent solving repetitive issues
- Time and resources spent researching complicated issues

Knowledge is a major solution to these bottlenecks. Accessing pre-existing knowledge helps drastically reduc time spent solving problems, therein saving money and resources. This theory, known as knowledge manage a popular way to mitigate the challenges of service teams that are under increasing pressure to respond to cu correctly, quickly, and flexibly.

When an IT service team solves an issue, often handled by only one person, it is very common for that knowl solution to go by the wayside. With one problem solved, the IT staff moves onto the next problem. In a perfec that information would be captured for future use, in a sort of knowledge center, in order to save time and re when the same or similar issues arise again. If no knowledge base has been built, there's no place for that sp knowledge to become part of a collective, collaborative knowledge.

While knowledge is a clear solution to the chaotic reality for IT desks, implementing knowledge management effectively still eludes many organizations. The challenges are two-fold: building a knowledge base, then usin successfully.

Building a knowledge base takes time, priority, and a joint approach with teams beyond just the IT service de Unfortunately, knowledge management often isn't prioritized or embraced by a large enough group of knowl experts, often because it is seen as an extra task for an already overloaded team.

In cases where organizations have already implemented some type of knowledge center, there are still bottle successful implementation: too much bureaucracy in the way of reviews or approval cycles or a lack of priorit in developing it. In some situations, content that has been created often isn't relatable or contextual to the cu experience.

This is where Knowledge Centered Service(KCS) comes in. The theory maintains that speeding up service is ve doable within a provided network for the IT service team to access and maintain knowledge.

There are four core principles of KCS that aim to improve how IT help desks function:

- Abundance: Share more, learn more.

- Trust: Engage, empower, motivate

KCS isn't just theoretical though: its tenets provide both a method and techniques that help organizations res issues quicker, including shortening the time necessary to address complex issues, and provide consistent ar for customers that enable self-sufficiency. The goal of KCS is to integrate the use of a knowledge base into an organizational workflow in order to:

- Create content as a by-product of solving problems
- Evolve content based on usage and demand
- Develop a knowledge base of the collective experience of an organization
- Recognize learning, collaboration, sharing, and improving

History of KCS

In 1992, the Consortium for Service Innovation formed as a non-profit alliance of support organizations. The ship based organization focused primarily on designing a tool with specific features and functionality that wo assist organizations in capturing and reusing knowledge as a by-product of work performed.

Within a couple years, however, the members within the Consortium realized that no matter how good a too manage knowledge, its success truly rested on people and behaviors. In the mid-1990s the Consortium focus defining an organizational that focused on people instead of technology.

In the mid-2002, the Consortium for Service Innovation partnered with HDI to promote and facilitate underst and implementing the KCS approach to knowledge management.

Today, the partnership focuses on knowledge as a key asset of an organization. HDI and the Consortium offe training and certification programs to members that focus on two key areas:

- Methodology, principles, and techniques that leverage knowledge as a key asset of an organizatior
- Reusing, improving, and creating of knowledge articles to facilitate quicker resolution and enable s service

As of spring 2017, KCS methodology is on its sixth version.

The Two Loops of Knowledge Centered Serv

KCS provides a continuous loop for managing, sharing, and improving knowledge, effectively becoming the w team provides technical support, both to internal and external users.

the help desk and fewer incidents logged. It helps users become more self-sufficient and more proficient at u software.

KCS approaches knowledge management so that it isn't an additional task when solving issues. KCS instead b the way in which issues are resolved.

Knowledge Centered Service relies on two continuous loops, the Solve Loop and the Evolve Loop, together kr the Double Loop Process. The Solve Loop is the more immediate loop, with the Evolve Loop working continuc the background.

The Solve Loop has four steps:

- **Step 1: Capture Knowledge.** When a customer request comes in, those answering the request cre article as a by-product of solving the customer's problem. The IT team writes articles specifically fo customer, so that the information is inherently relevant to the customer and easily searchable.
- **Step 2: Structure Knowledge.** Using a template or form for writing an article keeps things easy ar for service employees and it keeps the knowledge base consistent, making it easier for customers.
- **Step 3: Reuse Knowledge.** Agents search the knowledge base when solving a customer issue, and link it to other relevant articles they may have used when solving a problem. This enhances the col knowledge as another agent may not have known that two issues could be related.
- **Step 4: Improve Knowledge.** Agents are inherently reviewing the knowledge as they research arti solve a problem. If there's an issue, the agent can directly update it just that piece of the article, an it to the customers. Topics that are frequently used therefore stay current.

The Evolve Loop has four components, which aren't necessarily steps, as they are more focused on knowledg and product improvement:

- **Content Health.** Measure the effectiveness of each article.
- **Process Integration.** Usage stats indicate which articles are the most popular and requested, so tl articles become ones the team always keeps an eye on.
- **Performance Assessment.** Tracking user searches also helps to identify missing knowledge – thes how the team knows to create new articles to fill in these gaps.
- **Leadership & Communication.** Knowledge authors are guided by coaches that provide automate performance feedback and manual article review alongside general mentoring, so the authors are progressed through sets of competency levels.

Who uses Knowledge Centered Service?

practices, sales and marketing, and more.

When implementing KCS, some organizations establish a dedicated knowledge team that goes beyond the IT desk. Therein lies a similar challenge: a knowledge team is unlikely to have expertise in all subject areas.

Therefore, for KCS to offer the most benefit to the entire organization, subject matter experts from all discipl must buy-in and prioritize the approach to knowledge management.

Beyond the IT service team and subject matter experts, there's actually a third user group: the customers the KCS emphasizes the importance of people over processes, so at the end of the day, if the knowledge isn't dire helping the user, it isn't the best support it can be.

A case study in Knowledge Centered Servic

KCS has been effectively and successfully implemented in organizations large and small, including some mult national groups including Apollo Group, Autodesk, Avaya, Dell, EMC, Ericsson, HP Enterprise, Oracle, and Sale KCS also fits within IT Infrastructure Libraries (ITIL).

One recent success story is Lowe's, a Fortune 50 company with more than 2,355 home improvement retail st across North America. With no formalized best practices and little in the way of locatable knowledge, the IT s desk of nearly 300 people worked in a frustrated manner that exasperated thousands of customers.

When Lowe's began to implement KCS several years ago, they started small: they handpicked seven unique t with a goal of creating a repeatable process that would be flexible enough to accommodate nuances among various teams. Lowe's KCS effort also address employees' concerns head-on, comprised of many ideas includ IT staff aren't tech writers, that experienced employees feared replacement by cheaper, less-seasoned emplo and that subject matter experts would lose their expertise status.

According to HDI, Lowe's IT service team now fully implements KCS tenets. The company recognizes several components that made the knowledge overhaul successful:

- Leadership and communication, though a last-step in the KCS double loop, was always emphasize those leading. As the audience changes, leaders would tweak the message so it was consistent yet effective, and the message on content creation became king.
- Lowe's relied heavily on the Consortium's guides and they also reached out to other large organiza that successfully implemented KCS. Understanding others' pitfalls helped Lowe's anticipate their o navigate them more smoothly.
- Understanding that significant change takes time. In order for KCS principles to be embraced effec Lowe's provided constant attention to the change, coaching employees, cultivating successes, and to diverse feedback. KCS became a journey, not an end-goal.

improvements in operating costs, incident/request resolution, customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, and rec
training and onboarding new staff.

The idea that content truly is king is also a cultural shift: teams can now rely on collaborative knowledge inste
solely individual learning experiences. Collective knowledge means the service team doesn't have to be the o
solving issues, and it helps the organization onboard new agents a lot quicker and reliably while staying flexib
relevant to the customer.

These postings are my own and do not necessarily represent BMC's position, strategies, or opinion.

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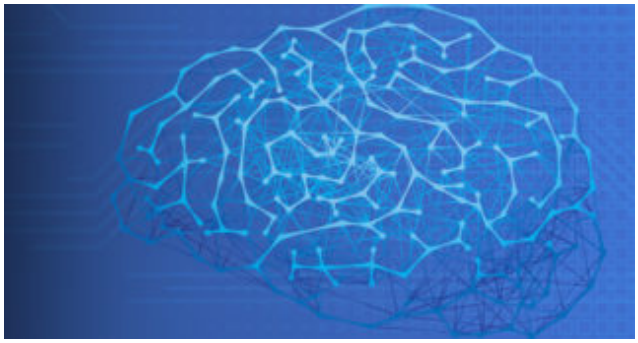

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