23.01 WW DWEB - Making the Business Case

## **Joe Andrews**

Welcome everyone. Hello. We appreciate you joining our webinar today. Today we're going to talk about how to make the business case to invest in AI for support experience.

I'm Joe Andrews and I lead marketing here at SupportLogic. And today I'm joined by our guest, Rebecca Wettemann, principal of Valoir, where she provides research and advisory services for enterprise technology clients.

She's also well known from her previous role as vice president of research at Nucleus Research. And welcome, Rebecca. We're happy to have you join us today.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

Hi, Joe. Great to be here. Thank you.

## **Joe Andrews**

And we're also joined by my colleague at SupportLogic, Judith Platz, our chief customer officer. Judy is well known in the industry from her previous roles leading customer success and support at Salesforce, MuleSoft, Approva, and Oracle.

She has also advised many support and success leaders in the industry as her role as vice president of Research for TSIA. Welcome, Judy.

## **Judith Platz**

Hi Joe. Good to see you. Hi, Rebecca. Great to be here with you both.

## **Joe Andrews**

I'm really looking forward to this discussion. Before we get started, I want everyone to take a really brief poll. If you go over to the poll tab on the right, and we're asking on a scale of one to five, how advanced is your support and services organization's use of AI?

Five being advanced?

Give it one more minute.

All right, why don't we close the poll. It's pretty evenly distributed. We have about a third of the votes in one and two and a third and four and five.

No one's right in the middle at three, so that's interesting. A bipolar distribution. So we have some advanced folks and if we can get your knowledge throughout the event and you can add comments into the chat, we'd love to hear what you're doing well and what's working and then we have a bunch of people that are here to learn, so that's fantastic.

So before we get started, I would like to actually share a slide around the context for the discussion, which is really about the benefits of AI to improve the customer support experience.

This is where we at SupportLogic are very focused. So what we do is we mine customer signals through support interactions and unlock valuable insights and predictions while guiding workflows that help you improve the customer experience.

Our enterprise customers will say there's a rock solid ROI and there are some very powerful benefits here that cut across the whole organization, and you can see those functional groups here.

From core users in support and success to engineering teams who are focused on creating and improving the products, to IT and operations teams that improve efficiency, and even finance and executive teams who these days are more than ever focused on customer retention, growth, and margins.

Does this sound too good to be true? Perhaps. The reality is this is fairly new technology and making the business case to invest in it is very hard, especially in today's economic climate.

Plus many of these functional leaders, especially including support, aren't necessarily experienced technology buyers. So this is exactly what we're going to talk about today and this is why, in fact, at SupportLogic, we started working with Valoir as a trusted third party advisor to do research with our customers this past year.

Rebecca, I'm going to turn it over to you now to share what we've learned.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

Great, thanks Joe and thanks everyone for joining today. As Joe mentioned, I'm principal analyst at Valoir, an analyst firm focused on the value of technology, helping customers understand and build the business case for investing in improved customer experience and employee experience.

We have expertise in CRM, CX, and AI spanning more than 20 years in the industry. One of our predictions for 2023 was about AI really taking hold in customer service and customer support, but in fact we found historically that, like our poll had indicated earlier, not everybody is on the cutting edge when it comes to using AI and customer support and service.

In fact, in our digital transformation study last year, we found that sales and marketing were way ahead of customer service and support in terms of taking advantage of AI.

So when we started talking with SupportLogic and SupportLogic customers about what they were experiencing, we found some really interesting things. We wanted to really dig into understanding where the value is today.

So as part of our research, we conducted in- depth interviews with SupportLogic customers over the summer of last year, including vice presidents of customer service, CX managers, and technical support managers, and include both medium size and large technology companies on a global basis.

And what we found is that whole AI may have pervaded some areas of the customer experience, when it comes to support experience and escalation management, there's still a lot to be done there as we think about customer service really being critical to retaining customers in a subscription world, providing that ongoing customer satisfaction is very important.

But in a lot of cases organizations are still using manual processes or rules- based processes to manage escalations, meaning that they're based on limited information, often on the instinct of an individual agent, a manager, or some sort of arbitrary rule, and that makes escalations very expensive.

I may escalate later than I necessarily should, or even more expensive, I may have a customer that never escalates that I lose because I miss those signals in the system.

What we also found is that those voice of the customer surveys that help us understand customer health really are only a snapshot in time, really only looking at one piece of the overall customer picture.

And one of the things that we heard from SupportLogic customers was the technology enabled them to really have a sort of early warning system to understand before there was ever a survey, before there was ever an escalation of where there might be a need to better manage that customer support experience and that customer experience.

So before we get into the specific details of what we found in terms of benefits, I thought we'd go to our poll question.

So the next poll question... It's not showing up for me. Joe, do you see it?

## **Joe Andrews**

Yes. If you go over to the polls tab, how is your organization managing escalations today?

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

There we go. So how is your organization managing escalations today? We found in a lot of cases companies were either, as I said, having individual agents or managers try to review cases and do that manually, or they were doing it with rules- based information often based only on the data that an agent was entering in the information around a case, not necessarily the entire context and the entire conversation.

## **Joe Andrews**

So Rebecca, we'll close the poll here. We have, again, a distribution of answers. About a third are managing escalations today with manual processes launched by a customer or an agent.

The lion's share, probably 50%, are rules based with some automation, and then about a quarter are AI or NLP driven.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

So a quarter AI or NLP driven. That's great. Those folks are really ahead of the curve and I think one of the things that we've seen as we look at the benefits of SupportLogic and using AI for support experience management, it really depends on where you start from.

So folks who are moving from rules- based environment to an AI environment are likely to see a greater lift compared with those that may be using some AI today.

Conversely, those that are using very manual processes today are likely to see the greatest benefit from an investment in SupportLogic. But let's talk about what we found in the research in terms of key benefits.

Number one being reducing case escalations by 20 to 50%. This was because of automated case evaluation, the ability for managers to review many more cases in a more proactive basis, to be able to take advantage of the smart console and alerts to understand when cases were likely trending toward an area where they might escalate.

And it really depended, as I said, on the level of technology and automation an organization was using before. Reducing a cost per case is a key part of that case escalation.

It's not just the reduced agent time, the reduced customer time and frustration, but the reduced time and cost of bringing experts in to put out fires. So for one customer, for example, we found just by reducing escalations they were able to reduce their cost per case from an average of $ 400 to $160 a case simply by being able to be more proactive and predictive in understanding when escalations might happen.

Now reduced case escalation really goes hand in hand with accelerated time to resolution. That makes sense. With the intelligent case assignment customers were using within SupportLogic, as well as the support for swarming and collaboration managers were able to get those early warning systems, agents were able to get more help on calls when they needed, and really accelerate the overall time to resolve a case.

A key piece in looking at all of this that we found was really the ability to scale the intelligence of managers, enabling them to review 10 to 20 times more cases than they could have in the past with the intelligent automation, the insights provided within SupportLogic.

And that's important as we think about overall manager time and productivity. But the big question is what are they able to do with that time? Some were able to take on new projects in terms of further digital transformation within their service and support organization.

But the most common theme we heard was they really had time to spend more time with agents, providing more support and coaching, providing more streamlined onboarding processes, making life easier for agents, particularly because managers were able to take a data- driven approach.

Rather than taking one example or one customer survey to go single out an agent to talk to them about their experience, they were able to share with a broader agent community the data about things that were doing well and things that were doing not so well at, so that they could provide a more consistent and data- driven manager and agent coaching experience.

This enabled them to reduce agent onboarding time by two weeks and increase agent tenure tenure by a month or more. And that may not seem a lot, but as we look at the overall cost of recruit recruiting, training and onboarding agents, those numbers can add up fast.

Now those are the sort of tactical benefits we saw those direct savings, direct cost savings. But as we look down the benefit curve, we also saw real improvements in terms of increasing customer satisfaction, increasing revenues, both by increasing the spend per customer, but also the ability to offer more enhanced and premium service contracts because service managers felt that they could actually manage them effectively, but also improve product management.

Having a data- driven approach to understanding the entire context of conversations that customers were having about product issues enabled service managers to provide real data- driven feedback back to product teams to drive product improvements to reduce the need for service overall in the first place.

So a real significant benefit there if we think about ongoing process improvement, and not just improvements within the service organization but within the company as a whole.

So those were the key findings that we had in our analysis of SupportLogic customers. But Judy, I know you have your own story and some great experiences to share and how you've been able to take advantage of the technology.

## **Judith Platz**

Thank you, Rebecca. I think you just told my life story there on that slide.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

Sorry.

## **Judith Platz**

No, it's beautiful and it's wonderful. I joined an organization after coming out of TSIA to transform the support organization, and thankfully I had known about SupportLogic prior to taking that role.

However, when I joined the new organization, on my first day, I was presented with an escalation and it made me pause because I was still onboarding on my first day and I was delivered an escalation.

And when I dug in to why and what, I realized we were going to have to do something quickly. We had a backlog, we had a global organization, our backlog was aged, so it was kind of that smoldering cauldron, if you will, and I knew that escalations were going to come in, and probably on my watch it was going to be pretty heavy while I was trying to learn the lay of the land.

So we purchased the entire suite of SupportLogic tools very quickly, and it was my first technology decision that I was presenting to this new organization, and I needed to be sure that the products were going to improve not only my life, for sure, as an executive, I couldn't be bogged down with the escalations, but I needed to free up my managers and my agents and get this escalation noise to go away.

In addition to that, I needed to be sure that my executive vice president and my CEO were freed and clear to do the work that they needed to, and I knew a lot of things were hitting them.

We implemented SupportLogic very quickly. We focused in first and foremost on predict and prevent the escalations. One of my favorite lines is once you see it, you can't unsee it, and within the first few minutes of SupportLogic turning over the system to us and looking at what was hidden in those cases, it was mind blowing, and it was things that were happening by our hand, things that we were saying to customers and such, but it was also things that were happening to us that I was intrigued by where we had customers who were at such a high level of stress that in some ways they were mistreating our support engineers, and not knowingly maybe or intentionally, but it was coming through.

And might I say this was at the very beginning of COVID. We had no idea then what COVID would bring to our lives, but I knew that kind of chatter and those kind of comments were going to hurt us.

And while COVID increased the amount of stress that everybody had, we really saw it in those support organizations because people just were venting. They were having their stress coming at them from so many angles.

I can absolutely say that without SupportLogic in place, the transformation that we went through would have not had anywhere near the success and the benefits at all, because we were able to take this work, it became proactive, and it changed how we looked at every project.

Every project after that, we were able to say, " Is this for the good of us? Is this proactive work? Or is this just putting us down into the weeds more and more?" We brought our escalation from double digits down to a very low single digit, and I saw the stress relief come off of my managers, come off of my agents, but most importantly I could grab those managers back and we could accelerate other parts of our transformation because they weren't heads down every single day with escalations or with trying to read cases where all of this information was buried.

So to me, I wish I could just advocate and demand that support worldwide uses a product like this, because it's just mind blowing the changes that you can have and seek and see so quickly.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

That's great. And you talked about a couple of areas where there are some immediate benefits that you see when you turn it on, but we also have a list of benefits here, some sort of longer term things that may be tougher to manage or measure or may not be things that people are measuring today, before they get started.

Maybe you could talk a little bit about how you thought about, you said, as a new technology buyer, trying to justify what you were doing and the challenges that you faced in building that business case?

## **Judith Platz**

Absolutely. I'm going to pick on that last one for a moment because I think it's so important and then we'll talk about the revenue piece as well. We were supporting a suite of products.

I think at one time when I looked, we had over a hundred different products that we were supporting with our customers. And there was no possible way, other than hiring an entire army of individuals, to read cases, assign them to a product area, and then take all of that and go back to our product team.

And we called it the great 80. And a lot of executives in the industry probably call it the same thing. Usually you have about 10% of your tickets might be defects or actual bugs.

You have 10% that might be enhancement request. There's your 20. And in the middle sits the great 80, and the great 80 is where product can learn so much, and it's that 80 that product never sees, because support handles them.

It's how- to questions. It's installation configuration issues. It's could the product maybe do something here versus there?

It's all sorts of things. Our product team had never seen the great 80. They had no idea some of the things that support was handling. This tool allowed us very quickly to get in there, present back to our peers in product, that 80% of issues, in a very detailed way, and we could do it like that versus that army of people who'd have to read the cases, figure out how to tag it, what does that go against, and then take something back.

We were able to take everything back. And our product team, they were so astounded, but they were so grateful because we were coming to them with data that showed them, " Hey, I didn't know you were wrestling with that.

I had no idea you were getting 200 cases a month for that particular thing. What if we did this?" Great, 200 cases gone. And we just systematically did that with them, where before that would've been a completely 100% manual task and it would've had either managers, team leads, operations people combing these cases and doing all of this and preparing your graphs and your charts and all of this stuff.

But then it led to our revenue. We were able to find the trends, we were able to see sales indicators in our cases, we were able to see where customers maybe needed a different level of service, and we could take that back to our customer success and our sales teams.

And again, support sits on millions and millions and millions of data points, but you think about the work that you can do, but do you have time to do it? Do you have people to do it?

So we were able to use that kind of thinking to present the business case. Now, we didn't have at that time what the ROI would be.

So we were staking our investment on getting the man hours back or the woman hours, getting that time back so we could accelerate transformation. We of course used something like the cost per case to look at, to say, " Hey, if we can reduce this." It's always appealing to a CEO or an executive to hear that they won't be called on a Saturday for an escalation.

So we could talk about giving their weekend back to them and reducing that stress footprint. That's just so there when you think about escalations as just a part of doing business.

And we said we wanted to remove that. So we had to make a pretty significant business case to push this through, but it was worth every moment of time to do that.

The good news now for anybody listening is those cases have been built and shared with SupportLogic, so we can actually help customers, and with your research help them create that, which I think is absolutely brilliant because it doesn't take as much today because you can learn from those who were there before you.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

So I know Joe, you said in the beginning that building a business case is hard. As somebody who's been doing it for a long time, I would argue that sometimes we make it harder than it needs to be, but it is a real challenge, particularly if you're not measuring things necessarily today, you don't necessarily have all the data, you don't know where to start.

So maybe we can move on. Judy, I think you had another question you wanted to pose to the group?

## **Judith Platz**

Well, I kind of talked to Rebecca about the challenges that I was facing and what I had to look at in my own organization, and for me, I love audience interaction.

I see a couple names here today that I've seen before in my life at other roles. So welcome, good to see some of you. But I'd love to hear from others if you're willing to enter into the chat what the biggest challenges you've seen in implementing a solution or an initiative like this and getting it approved?

Because as you mentioned, Rebecca, support hasn't really been in the buying seat. They might select a solution, but it's generally IT, maybe, or another organization that pushes over the line.

But now I think with everything going on in support and support really having this amazing period, I think support needs to be able to produce these. So I'd love to hear from others, what challenges they've seen in implementing something like this.

## **Joe Andrews**

You can enter it right in the chat. We don't have a poll set up for it.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

Right in the chat window.

## **Joe Andrews**

That'd be great. Convincing leadership to make the purchase.

## **Judith Platz**

That's right.

## **Joe Andrews**

Thanks. Judy, what would you say was your single biggest challenge?

## **Judith Platz**

Well, quite honestly, my single biggest challenge is the company I worked for had an AI tool and we had to show that this tool, SupportLogic, could do things above and beyond.

And I will say that was hard. It was difficult. And we had to go into a bake off, if you will, and go through those motions.

But SupportLogic had something that our tool didn't have, which was it was built specifically for support organizations. It knows support problems, and it was built to solve those problems, and it was, if you will, I'm going to use the word turnkey, but you didn't have to pull your data and push it somewhere else and figure out the reports and all of that.

It was right there in front of us and it was so easy to use. It just became kind of, I'll say, no- brainer, but we still had to get the financial buy- in and our IT team's buy in to selecting a tool that...

I remember the one line I kept hearing is, " Well, we must have something already that will do this for us." And we kept saying" No, no." And it's hard because support is used to legacy software.

There's a lot of organizations that are on very legacy tools. They're on legacy systems that have been band- aided and duct taped together, and this is really one of the tools that for support, it's leading edge, and when is support used to being so leading edge?

So we had to take our buyers on that journey with us.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

So Alex made the same point having that... We've already got products that due to the same thing, why can't we just use those? And I think your point about pre- built is super important. What we saw in talking to customers was I didn't have to have a data scientist.

I didn't have to have a big deployment team. I didn't have to spend months and months training a model. That a lot of what I was able to do was actually pretty rapid to deploy once I was able to get it off the ground.

But as we think about the business case, I thought we could talk through the steps for building a business case, and when Valoir's helping clients, how do you really do that? I think the first and most important thing to remember is building a business case is not about coming up with a perfect number.

It's about having a structured understanding of what you're going to spend and what you expect to get. Recognizing that whatever you expect to get is never going to be the actual end result.

There are a lot of different things that happen in the course of deploying and adopting technology. What you want to do is gather the best data that you can and then use that data as a roadmap for making sure you get the most value.

So let's talk about what those steps look like. First, identifying the top areas of real benefit. I just shared the data on the top areas of benefit that we saw with SupportLogic customers, so that gives you a sense of a starting point.

Second, obviously estimating the cost and benefits, calculating key metrics, and then the fourth and most important step, how do you present and plan your business case?

So let's break these down a little bit. First, the four Ps to identifying the top areas of benefit. People and process are the two most important ones.

How many people or how many processes will a project impact? This is really important as you think about where to focus an effort if you want to do a pilot where you're likely to get the most benefit.

The third P is price. How expensive is it to manage what you're managing today? We talked about the customer that went from a $ 400 case number to $ 160 case number.

But one that's come up, Judy, in our conversation today, but also in a lot of conversations with SupportLogic customers, was the fourth P, potential. What is the cost of the alternative?

The benefit of AI and automation is about being able to scale things, to accomplish things, to do work at scale in a way that just simply would not be possible if you had to hire people to create the alternative.

So in a lot of cases where organizations are not really sure what their cost per escalation is or not really sure what their potential is, they're pretty easily able to look at what are the number of cases that managers are managing today and how many really would they like to be able to see and understand on an ongoing basis?

And this is particularly true when we think about backlogs. So as you think about that list of benefits that we talked about, prioritizing them in terms of people, process, potential, and price, those can help you to focus your efforts to think about where you're likely to get the most quick start benefits, quick returns from an investment in SupportLogic, and also where you want to focus your business case efforts, where you want to think about training, adoption, where to market and promote that application to ensure that you're on the right track.

So once you've identified those top areas of benefit, obviously for the business case you need to estimate cost and benefits. Cost is usually the easy part.

You get a proposal from the vendor, you get some ideas of personnel and training in terms of what you can find in the report or another project plans in business cases. And the important thing to remember here is again, it's not coming up with the perfect number, it's understanding does it make sense for us to move forward with this project?

So looking at the benefits in terms of taking the examples that Judy shared, the data points that are in the report, as a starting point to think about what are those estimated benefits in your own environment.

Often we also find with areas where companies haven't tackled the technology before, they're guessing a little bit and that's okay.

What you want to do is have a conservative estimate of that potential benefit and use that as a tool to understand does it make sense to move forward or not?

So as we talk about the potential savings in terms of 10 to 20 times the number of cases for managers for example, if it's only 10 X for your organization, does the math still make sense?

It doesn't matter that you're not sure exactly what that number is, but what you have is a structured understanding of do the benefits outweigh the costs in moving forward?

Now to understand that you want to be able to calculate those key metrics. We encourage customers to look at both return on investment and payback. Return on investment is important because it enables you to compare different projects.

You could compare it to simply investing the money or keeping the money in the bank as interest rates go up, that's becoming more interesting. But the other key metric really to look at here is payback.

That tells you when you get that money back that you've initially invested. Super important in an area like AI, where the technology is getting better and better all the time.

Payback is a key measure of risk and flexibility because it enables you to then recoup your investment and go on to make that next investment, to fund that next project, to fund that next initiative.

So once you've estimated those cost and benefits with the best data that you have, you want to calculate the key metrics. But the business case doesn't stop there. Remember, as we think about a business case as a guide for maximizing value, you've really just started.

The next step is really presenting and planning. And that is not just about cost benefit analysis, and it's not just about what you plan to do with those savings or the metrics themselves.

It's really thinking about how you present, promote, and drive adoption of the technology. So it's not just about how much manager time will we save, but what will we be able to do with that additional time?

Will it mean reduced escalations? Will it mean an increases in case reviews? Will it mean, in Judith's case, the ability to provide greater feedback to the product team, to reduce overall agent frustration and customer frustration?

You'll also want to use those milestones and metrics to really make sure you're focusing on key things that you can measure. One of the great things that we found about SupportLogic customers is the metrics are right in the software for you.

So once you start to deploy, you can see where escalations are going, you can see where case log and backlog is going, you have some measurement already in place for you, but you're also going to want to think about those adoption factors.

This is a culture shift, too, and a different way of thinking about how you manage escalations and even customer experience, support experience within your organization.

A shift away from survey based understanding of customers to real- time interaction analysis when you think about customer health is a different way of thinking about, organizationally, how you deal with that data.

Certainly providing more data focused feedback to product teams is a different way of thinking about how service and product teams interact. So you're going to want to think about those adoption factors as well.

And also the barriers to adoption, how people communicate, how you promote and market the benefits of an investment in support experience like SupportLogic to different areas of the organization.

Yes, within the customer service team, yes to agents who will be less frustrated and have fewer escalations to manage, but also to broader management into the product team about how they can take advantage of a much richer, more contextual set of data, a far deeper understanding of customer health to be able to be successful.

So finally, as you're thinking about the business case, yes, it's about gathering the data, but the fourth step around presenting and planning is the most important, not just in understanding where you're likely to get the most bang for your buck, but also to understand how you want to build a team between IT, service and support, the customer health and customer success team, and the product folks to make sure that you can maximize the return from your support experience investment.

## **Joe Andrews**

Thank you, Rebecca. We'll get to Q&A in just a second. In fact, you can go over to the Q& A tab on the right and enter any questions that you have and we'll take those.

I just want to share several resources that may be helpful for you in this process of making the business case. The first is the actual report and the writeup from Rebecca and the Valoir team, and you can actually download that today.

It's over in the docs section and it's also available on our website, and that's a summary of everything that we've just talked about today. The second is a white paper that SupportLogic published about thriving in a business downturn.

As we all know, we're in a challenging economic climate and proving the business case for any new technology is more of a challenge today, and this will give you some additional tips to do just that.

And then lastly, many of you have attended our first SX Live in the past or some of the events that we've done, like our webinar today.

SX Live is all about the support experience, an industry event, and SupportLogic is hosting a series of city road shows this coming year, and also a virtual conference the second week of June.

And if you go to sxlive.com, you can register to get more information on that. You can also get all of the content from last year on demand, which brushes some of these topics we talked about today as well as many others related to support and success.

So let's get into the questions. I'm going to start with one here around how do you actually work with the finance and IT teams when you have to make this business case and then ultimately the project actually happen?

Can you start, Judy, on that?

## **Judith Platz**

Yeah, I'll take that first. Thank you, Joe. First off, let's be friends with finance and IT. I think there's always this...

It's sometimes healthy friction, sometimes an unhealthy friction, but either way there's friction because generally from finance you get your budget, and you get your budget and you're told when you're in budget or when you're over budget.

But we haven't been the greatest, and I say we, support executives, at bringing finance more into our world and working with them regularly.

We have business meetings, if you will, with our sales teams and with our HR and our different business partners, but finance, not often, maybe quarterly.

And it really wasn't bringing them into our journey that we were on. And I think that's super, super important. I also think for IT, come sit with us.

Come see the tools as we're using them, and when we bring forth a suggestion for a new tool, and I'm sure support leaders...

I remember well the days you're just bombarded with every new tool that's out there. So if you've taken the time to explore, or somebody on your team has, and we take that to IT, working with them to say, " Hey, watch the click strokes, watch the screens that we switch between, and look what this tool could do for us.

Look at what could happen." And I know we did that at the organization where I purchased and IT was blown away. They had no idea what a support agent engineer had to do even before they started to work with the customer on the issue.

All the things that were going on. So that to me, it really is about the partnership, the communication, and acting and being part of that collaboration with those two orgs is so super important.

And it's one of those moments when you look back and think, " Why haven't we been doing that for decades?" But I think we have an opportunity now to really get better at those relationships.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

That's a great point, Judy, and it really goes to that kind of plan and present what we talked about, recognizing that plan and present starts way before you ever think about a project.

Not to be glib, but one of the key themes I talk about with users is it's take a bean counter to lunch day. Getting to know folks in finance and understanding what they're looking for can be a really helpful way to even thinking about building the business case.

No CFO ever said, " I want someone in the business to come and teach me finance." There are ways that finance likes to do things and every group is a little bit different.

So having that interaction with the accounting financing folks, where you ask what they're looking for in terms of payback, what do they look at in terms of benefits?

What do they want to see in terms of doing your math and showing your work around a business case? They have to build business cases for all the other investments that the organization is making.

So while they may not have a structure for IT, the best thing to do is to go and ask them what they're looking for. A great way to build that conversation before you get down to the tough budget conversation, but really to understand to get guidance from them on what kind of data you need, what they're looking for in terms of presentation, and what they're thinking about in terms of an appropriate payback threshold, how you can fit within those guidelines as you think about your business case.

So getting that guidance from them before you start pulling numbers, getting that advice from them and how to think about business cases for IT can be really enlightening and really helpful.

## **Joe Andrews**

Those are great tips from you both. Thank you. Another question that's related to the whole process and the project itself is what kind of AI expertise is needed to be successful with SupportLogic?

## **Judith Platz**

Great question. SupportLogic has hired the AI people so that you don't have to, and that's the position I was in. I was going to have to make a case that I was going to need AI people to dig into my data, and again, it was going to be porting it out to another system and just tearing through it.

I didn't want to go in that direction because quite frankly I had other urgent hires I wanted to make, but I let SupportLogic have that expertise, and thankfully I was able to take this tool in and use it with my current operations team and my current managers and my current support engineers.

I didn't have to hire somebody. And I think it goes to the fact that this tool was built by our CEO Krishna who came and grew up in support.

So that's how the idea for this tool happened. And he made it a reality for support organizations. And like I said earlier, there are tools that are for support, but this tool, it's unique and different, and after 30 years in the industry, I'm completely comfortable making that statement that it was built by support, for support, and it really matters.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

And I would just say in the customers that we analyzed for the report, no one hired a data scientist. No one.

## **Joe Andrews**

Did you talk with anyone who had an existing data science team and they had to vet it and did they get involved with the project?

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

There were a number of folks that had existing solutions that had some AI in them, but what they found was this was really within the support organization that they were able to quickly learn how to use the console, how to port the data, how to understand the categorization and be able to do that without the need for taxing the business analyst or the data science team.

## **Judith Platz**

And Joe, I'll add onto that, I think there's something from my time doing research at TSIA, a lot of organizations were starting to hire for data scientists or data analysts, and there was the word and the buzz around needing that, and yet data analysts and data scientists are absolutely amazing human beings for what they can do.

My mind sadly is not wired the same way. However, where we had the pauses or the challenges or the roadblocks was they didn't know the support business.

So something that was presenting to them as really, " Hey, top of mind, look at this. I want to draw your eye here." A support executive would go, " Mm- hmm, yeah, that is what it is," and such.

So it was that meeting of the minds between the data scientists and support that really became difficult because they needed to be grounded in what support is, what it does.

And support, you can say that it's an organization that's been around forever and yet there's some things that you need as a baseline understanding of how support works in order to be giving recommendations and insights on that.

So that's oftentimes where that pause was happening in hiring because you couldn't find the data scientist or the data analyst who was so grounded in the support experience.

## **Joe Andrews**

Really speaks to the value of having domain specific AI versus general purpose. That's something we talk a lot about. Related question, and Rebecca was talking about the payback in the business case itself.

How much time does it actually take for companies to see results from SupportLogic?

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

In the customers that we looked at, they were talking about payback within 6 to 12 months, but really being able to see very, very quickly once they were deployed, real key areas where they could make a difference, where they could reduce escalations, reduce backlog, increase that overall understanding of customer health, within weeks.

## **Judith Platz**

I'd agree with that. Ours was in minutes, when SupportLogic, like I said, they turned over the system to us. And I'll never forget the meeting. I had all of my managers and my chief of staff and my operations people, and we were there to see what SupportLogic was giving us, and we were getting our enablement training.

And what they showed us, like I said, you couldn't unsee it. And right there we were able to, from that moment, we were able to grab cases and grab engineers and do things very quickly.

We would've never found those things until the customer actually pulled the lever to escalate themselves. We wouldn't have seen it. So from moment one you're seeing the things, but then it's your process and your workflow that you're putting into place because we're used to, " Hey, I'd like to speak to a manager." We're used to that conversation.

We're not used to somebody serving up for you, " Hey, you'd like to look at this before the customer pulls that lever." So you had to put your workflow and you had to put your process in place of how are you going to encourage your managers to take those promotions instead of waiting for the fire?

So that's what took us a little bit of time, but that was just us having to change manage through that?

## **Joe Andrews**

It's so compelling to see immediate aha value, and then I think marry that with the longer term benefits around the escalation reduction. I know many of the customers I speak with, they see that within just a few months of putting together these process improvements, and that as someone in the MarTech space who buys a lot of technology, that's a significant value and relatively short payback.

So that's good to hear your experiences as well. We have time for one more question, and this is one that comes up, especially in light of the economic climate and how do you justify the purchase of a new tool against existing ones, which is the very basic question of how is SupportLogic different from CRM and other case management tools?

Why don't we start there with you, Judy?

## **Judith Platz**

It's not a case management tool. So you're not taking out your significant investment in Salesforce, Zendesk, ServiceNow, FreshWorks.

You are putting SupportLogic down on top of that. And SupportLogic is looking at what's in your case management system. It's supplementing in an amazing way.

It's giving you an interface for managers who may not go into the service console on a regular basis. So it's serving up for you on top of.

So it's an intelligence layer, and I am careful about that in conversations that I had before and now, as the chief customer officer here.

This is an add- on to what you already have. Not to say, however, other systems that you have could in fact be replaced, and I'll use a CSAT survey as an example.

Once you're getting your customer sentiment prior to a satisfaction survey, do you need those satisfaction surveys? It's a good question. So you could replace that.

You could replace other tools in the stack, but we're not replacing your case management system. We're simply enhancing it.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

I would liken it to... So first I would say every customer, SupportLogic customer we spoke with had their existing CRM and case management tools and saw this as the layer on top.

So I would definitely echo what Judy said. But I would say this is sort of like... None of us would think about buying a car without GPS today.

The CRM takes you from point A to point B, and the speedometer tells you how many miles you've traveled, but it's that level of guidance on top that tells you the fastest way to get there, of the pitfalls to avoid, and really to understand more broadly without having to look at every map and every exit.

SupportLogic provides that intelligent layer on top to help you have the most efficient route to getting to customer resolution.

## **Joe Andrews**

I love that analogy, Rebecca. Thank you. Why don't we leave off here. As I mentioned, please go and take advantage of some of the resources you see here in the doc section.

Go to supportlogic. com/ resources. And feel free to get in touch with us either directly or through our website. We would love to have a conversation with you. I really appreciate the insights here today, both from your research, Rebecca, and also Judy, from your own experience directly and advising many clients.

Thank you both and thanks everyone for joining us.

## **Rebecca Wettemann**

Thanks everyone. Have a great day.