Bloomfire®

HomeAway Uses Bloomfire to Reduce Call Resolution Time

HomeAway®

Quick Facts

INDUSTRY
Software/Internet

USE CASE
Customer Support

TECHNOLOGY
Bloomfire Knowledge
Sharing Platform

RESULTS
Confidence from
employees that they
can find the knowledge
they need to resolve
customer requests,
promptly

Vastly improved their
onboarding ramp-up
time

HomeAway, a world leader in online vacation rentals, offers vacation rental management software for professional property managers. With more than 2 million unique places to stay across 190 countries, HomeAway wants to create the most memorable experience for owners and property managers and their guests. This requires providing excellent customer support to property managers who use their platform.

However, the software that housed many support documents was hindering HomeAway's customer support team's ability to provide excellent service. Leveraging Skype and Google Apps to manage support material and FAQ documents made information difficult to find. If the support material and FAQs weren't in Skype or Google Apps, they lived either in the minds of employees or on their computers. This lack of centralized, searchable knowledge was resulting in inefficiencies across the team in several key areas: onboarding was long and hard to systematically manage, support specialists had to rely on shoulder taps and Skype messages to answer questions, and company knowledge was lost as employees left the company.

The Pitfalls When Employees Can't Find Knowledge

It's inevitable that new employees will have lots of questions and will need to find important documents. When Elana Clift-Reaves, Content and Training Manager, joined the HomeAway team, she was frustrated with how difficult it was to find information because there wasn't a central repository for documents. Instead, when she asked how to find some bit of information, the response was "talk this person, talk to that person, you can call this person."

"The process for how we managed support material and FAQ documents was very disjointed," said Clift-Reaves. "There was no central repository for this documentation. As a new employee trying to get ramped up — or even a seasoned employee looking for information — you wasted valuable time trying to find a document. If that document couldn't be found, you had to disrupt and take time away from another customer support specialist," she added.

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"We also really felt the burden when employees left the company. The years of knowledge they accumulated during their time went with them. You could sense the frustration because employees felt like they weren't able to do their jobs effectively."

"We were growing fast, and it could take up to six months for new hires to be fully trained and speaking with customers," she said.

"When you're adding up to four new employees a quarter, and they aren't going to be productive for at least six months, it becomes a huge drain on the company. Shortly after this realization, we began our search a new solution," adds Clift-Reaves.

HomeAway has vastly improved their new hire onboarding ramp-up time.

Frustrated with their current solution, the customer support team sought out a solution that was not only easy to use but also wouldn't disrupt the flow of work for their specialists.

Choosing Bloomfire and Getting Executive Buy-In

HomeAway looked at several platforms before selecting the Bloomfire Knowledge Sharing Platform to help solve their knowledge sharing challenges. "While conducting our research, we were easily able to narrow our top five features, and Bloomfire had them all. We were attracted to Bloomfire's ease of use, as well as its ability to upload any file types, powerful Q&A engine, and robust analytics," said Clift-Reaves.

However, before moving forward with Bloomfire, it was critical for the team to get executive buy-in for the new solution.

"Even though the executive team was aware of the problem, they believed our existing technology stack could solve our knowledge sharing issues, " said Clift-Reaves. "We did have an internal wiki, but it wasn't being used or managed properly. We had to position Bloomfire as more than just a way to maintain knowledge. We had to show that employees were wasting up to 30 minutes each time they needed to find support material and FAQ documentation.

From that, we presented additional customer questions the team could answer by leveraging Bloomfire's search or Q&A engine which ultimately would increase the team's productivity and ability to find information."

HomeAway specialists are more confident in their ability to find the knowledge they need to resolve customer requests.

The Implementation and Moving Forward

After securing executive buy-in, the HomeAway team was able to move forward with their implementation. They knew that change management was going to be an obstacle the team was going to have overcome during the launch.

"We knew employees were reluctant to share knowledge, so we had to get creative when we were ready to launch Bloomfire," said Clift-Reaves. "We set up a series of themed-based emails to send out, and within the first three days after launching, we had 100% participation from the team. One of the first questions we got from a senior specialist was 'does anyone love Bloomfire as much as I do?' That was a great reassurance for us."

Real Results

Since implementing Bloomfire, HomeAway specialists are more confident in their ability to find the knowledge they need to resolve customer requests, promptly, and the team has also significantly improved their onboarding process. "When new employees are hired, the first thing we ask is for them to get familiar with Bloomfire. This has vastly improved our onboarding ramp-up time. When they can't find an answer, they leverage Bloomfire's Q&A engine, and an expert can respond back to them. This in itself has increased productivity significantly."

There is also transparency for the executive team on how Bloomfire is being used. "Every Thursday, I send a report to my director which includes total contributions by community, total views, number of users who have viewed content, and the percentage of questions posted to the community that have been answered," said Clift-Reaves. "The reporting makes it easy to hold people accountable and make sure experts are addressing all questions. There has been a real increase in the clarity and transparency for the team now that we have Bloomfire. Knowledge is now at the fingertips of our specialists."

Bloomfire's Knowledge Sharing Platform connects people and the information they need to get work done. Learn more at www.bloomfire.com.

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