

RIGHTNOW HELPS NIKON OPTIMIZE GROWTH AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WHILE CUTTING COSTS

As the newly promoted general manager of Nikon Inc.'s Technical Office (TO), David Dentry was tasked with making sure that his company could deliver the kind of premium experience customers expected from the premier photography brand—even as growing sales were taxing existing resources.

Dentry clearly succeeded. With RightNow's help, he and his TO team have improved the responsiveness of Nikon's marketing, sales, and customer service organizations to customers across all communication channels, even as the company's unit sales volume has increased substantially. To make this achievement more remarkable, departmental headcount has been kept flat in most cases—and in others has actually been reduced.

In the process, the company has earned accolades for the significant return on investment (ROI) that RightNow has helped them accomplish. Nikon received the ROI Leadership grand prize award from Ziff Davis Media's Baseline magazine and a Technology ROI award from Nucleus Research for achieving a three-year return-on-investment of more than 3,200 percent on the customer service portion of its RightNow implementation alone.

“RightNow is a powerful and highly adaptable technology that Nikon has been able to leverage on a global basis to sustain top-line growth, ensure ongoing customer loyalty, boost productivity, and drive down costs,” declares Dentry. “This has clearly been a great investment for us.”

Starting with Service

The first challenge Dentry tackled was customer service. He started by creating a document that described an ideal system—one that would provide Nikon's contact center with the incident management tools and web-based knowledge resources they would need to respond quickly and precisely to customers' needs across all channels. The document also specified that the system should expose a subset of the internal technical knowledge base on the website to enable online self-service.

One of Dentry's staff read the document and suggested he take a look at RightNow. “It was amazing,” recalls Dentry. “Once I saw RightNow in action, it was almost as if they had used what I'd written as their development blueprint.”

Dentry and his team focused on the web first, and then email. Based on those successes, they then replaced Nikon's homegrown call tracking system with RightNow. To ensure a smooth transition, they had RightNow Professional Services help them import two years of existing SQL data into the new system.

The result was a comprehensive system that enables Nikon's contact center staff to view customers' complete service histories across all contact points—including telephone, website, email, and fax—so they can provide effective,

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Industry: Retail / Consumer Products

Goals

- Deliver world-wide superior customer experience across marketing, sales, and customer service touchpoints
- Continuously capture high-value market insight
- Keep costs under control

Achievements

- Responsive interactions drive customer satisfaction scores above 95%
- 50% reduction in call response times and 70% reduction in email response times
- Improved visibility into customer concerns enhances marketing and product development
- RightNow embraced globally with twelve languages and multi-continent deployments
- Earned Baseline and Nucleus Research awards for 3,200+% ROI over three-year period

CASE STUDY: NIKON



personalized support. It allows incidents to be quickly routed and/or escalated to the right staff member across the department's various locations and tiers. And it provides a powerful knowledge base that both Nikon staff and customers can use to find approved, up-to-date, and relevant answers to common questions with just a few keystrokes.

Because RightNow's reporting and analytical functions encompass all channels, Nikon has also gained unprecedented visibility into its customers' issues and concerns. This visibility provides extremely valuable information to the company's designers and marketers, allowing them to more quickly respond to the ever-changing needs of the buying public.

Measurable Impact on the Business

One of the biggest gains for the phone channel has been the speed with which Nikon staff can actually start working on customers' issues. Before implementing RightNow, it took about a minute to get the information necessary to initiate resolution. Now, it takes about half a minute. Multiply that 30-second savings by tens of thousands of calls per month, and the productivity gains are obviously substantial.

On the email side, the gains have been similarly impressive. Whereas once it might take Nikon 40 hours to respond to a customer question, it now takes just 12 to 18. That improved responsiveness helps reduce call volume, since customers will often call a company if they don't get a response to their email within 24 hours.

But Nikon's biggest gains have resulted from its highly effective online self-service system, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which answers approximately three quarter of a million North American customer questions every month. This non-stop service channel ensures that customers can get the information they need with just a few mouse-clicks and/or keystrokes. It has also significantly reduced phone and email workloads—so that Nikon can support a growing number of units in the field without increasing headcount proportionally. These avoided phone calls and emails are what earned Nikon its 3,200% ROI and its two major awards.

This combination of great phone, email, and web support has strengthened Nikon's brand and customer loyalty. The company continually scores over 95 percent in its customer satisfaction surveys. And that satisfaction translates into more sales opportunities for Nikon.

"When you deliver a great customer experience, they come back and buy from you again," says Dentry. "They also say great things about you to their friends, and that's the best advertising there is."

A Wide Range of Automated, Integrated Marketing Capabilities

After its successful implementation of RightNow as a contact center solution, Nikon moved on to use it for marketing.

One such use involves the monthly distribution of an electronic newsletter, which is segmented for consumer and professional recipients. By using RightNow this way, Nikon has been able to significantly boost awareness of its products at a very reasonable cost.

Nikon is also using RightNow's rules-based outbound communications functionality in conjunction with product registration. When customers go online to register their Nikon products, they do so using a RightNow webform that automatically enters their information into Nikon's RightNow customer database—where it can be used for further marketing, sales, and support. RightNow then sends them an introductory email that points them to appropriate links for purchasing accessories and getting online support.

This automated process helps drive add-on sales, while preempting potential service-related phone calls and emails. It is also more accurate and cost-efficient than the previous process, which involved the use of an outsourced service provider.

Still another way Nikon is applying RightNow is in surveying its customer base. RightNow enables Nikon to quickly create surveys, distribute them to targeted recipients, tabulate the results, and distribute them to appropriate stakeholders across the company. For example, company executives in Japan sometimes want to get early-stage feedback from customers on new products—but they want to make sure their sample size is approximately 1,000 respondents. With RightNow, Dentry can see when the number of registered users of any new product reaches somewhere between 3,000-4,000 names. At that point, he can send the questionnaire and, since response rates have increased with RightNow to a range between 20-30 percent, immediately provide Nikon's executives with the data they need.

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This technique is fast, convenient, and inexpensive. It also tends to be more reliable than use of an outside agency—since the recipients recognize the source of the email and therefore don't block it as SPAM or possible malware.

“RightNow makes it very easy for us to get important information to our customers and receive important information from them,” says Dentry. “It also ensures that the information we get from them becomes an integral part of their universal customer record.”

Boosting Sales Productivity

The next challenge Dentry and his team tackled with RightNow was sales automation. Nikon actually has sales reps whose primary responsibility is to drive revenue, and technical reps whose primary responsibility is to ensure that dealers have the information they need to move Nikon products. Both of these groups use RightNow to manage their relationships with Nikon's dealer/distribution channel.

The use of RightNow enables Nikon reps to be much more productive and to keep track of important information. It also allows that information to be shared by team members as necessary. So if a rep leaves the company for any reason, another rep can pick up where he or she left off without losing essential information.

Reps can also create “incidents” in RightNow, in case an issue with a dealer has to be routed to people in other departments for resolution.

“With RightNow, we don't have information about customers or situations floating around on scraps of paper or inside people's heads,” explains Dentry. “We can therefore treat all of our customers and dealers with the utmost personal attention—and avoid the painful mistake that can occur when one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing.”

RightNow has been such an effective platform for Nikon Inc. that it has now been embraced on a global basis. Nikon Europe has completed an implementation covering the entire continent and twelve languages. The company's office in Japan has deployed RightNow to support its market in that country, and a rollout is underway to use RightNow across the rest of its Asian operations.

In addition to being bullish on RightNow's technology, Dentry is extremely pleased with RightNow's support performance. He has taken advantage of RightNow's free Tune-Up services to get expert advice about everything from knowledge base content to incident workflow rules, and he has been consistently impressed by the speed with which RightNow responds to Nikon's questions and issues. “RightNow delivers the level of customer service to which we aspire,” he says. “This is definitely a company that practices what it preaches.”

He also gives RightNow high marks for Nikon's recent upgrade. “We had to push forward quickly with the new version because it had some features we really needed,” he says. “The fact that a live upgrade like this works so well is a real testament to the sophistication of RightNow's on demand delivery model.”

With marketing, sales, and customer service all running in a unified, highly configurable environment, Nikon is fully equipped to extend the differentiation between its customer experience and that of its competitors. The company can also look forward to expanding its customer base even further without having to shoulder increased overhead costs. And Dentry has confidence that, with RightNow, Nikon's managers will always have access to the market intelligence they need to make informed, timely decisions.

“RightNow is Nikon's strategic platform for optimizing the effectiveness and efficiency with which we interact with our customers and dealers,” says Dentry. “As we continue to exploit its vast potential, the return on our original investment just keeps growing and growing.”

ABOUT NIKON

Nikon Inc. is the world leader in precision optics, 35mm and digital imaging technology and is recognized worldwide for setting new standards in product design and performance for its award-winning consumer and professional photographic equipment.