



Case Study: Articulate [written for Provide Support, a live chat vendor]
<http://www.providesupport.com/about-us/case-studies/articulate.html>

Provide Support's Live Chat Software Adds Sellable Benefit to Company's Premium Membership Offering

- Provide Support's Live Chat allows the company to offer its customers a level of enhanced service to instantly resolve technical issues with its products.
- The added service offered by Provide Support's Live Chat makes a premium membership more appealing.
- Provide Support's Live Chat gives the company a decided advantage for upselling to a premium membership, thereby enhancing revenue.

The Challenge

Companies in the software business are also in the customer service business, since there's no way to neglect the support function. Indeed, for software companies, strong customer support translates into a competitive advantage. For companies with a large customer base, though, support solutions like live chat may prove to be impractical. More staff time is required to provide the kind of instant, customized support expected of such an option. The challenge faced by these companies is how to offer a high level of customer support while optimizing staff time and keep customer service budgets manageable.

Articulate®, a New York-based company that provides cutting-edge e-learning software, initially offered live chat to all its customers and prospects. However, with more than 12,000 customers, the company found that it simply could not keep up with the flood of support requests generated by the system.

The Solution

Just as it was upgrading to Provide Support's Live Chat Solution, whose cost effectiveness and ease of use made it the obvious choice—the company arrived at an innovative use for the system. Rather than offering live chat support for all of its customers and any visitor to its website, Articulate decided to make Provide Support's Live Chat part of its Premium Membership Plan.

Articulate's Premium Membership Plan is offered to customers via the buy page of any software product. For an additional fee, customers get a variety of benefits, including: Live Chat ("Unlimited live Web chat support to discuss issues with your support team in real time"); free updates and full-version upgrades of the software purchased; unlimited priority e-mail support; and much more.

The Premium Membership Plan is an option popular with Articulate's larger customers, obviously companies with bigger budgets, but the plan is presented to every customer as a cost-effective option that includes unlimited customized tech support and automatic product upgrades. It's also part of the e-learning company's ongoing sales efforts. For example, each qualified leads, including those who have chosen to take a demo or participate in a webinar, are contacted by sales representatives who always include in their presentations information about the Premium Membership Plan.

Articulate's decision to make Provide Support's Live Chat a key component of its Platinum Membership Plan has been an unmitigated success. It ultimately helps differentiate the company from its competitors and adds to the overall value of its product. And the industry has taken notice. Due in part to its use of Provide Support's Live Chat, Articulate was named by the Association of Support Professionals one of the 10 Best Web Support Sites of 2007.

Benefits of Provide Support's Live Chat

- Provide Support's Live Chat allows Articulate's Premium Membership Plan customers to connect with "Tier 2" customer support engineers for instant resolution to complex issues.
- Live Chat support is one of top reasons customers purchase the Premium Membership Plan
- Upselling to the Premium Membership Plan is a key element of the company's sales strategy.
- Top-level customer support without a marked increase in personnel: In making live chat support part of its Premium Membership Plan, the company has reduced its live chat case load to less than 20 inquiries a day.

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