

OUTSTART



OutStart Lets CVS Caremark Fill the Prescription for Sharing Knowledge

CVS Caremark has America's largest chain of pharmacies and is a leading provider of pharmaceutical services with more than \$73 billion in revenue. In addition to more than 6,300 retail CVS/pharmacy stores, CVS Caremark provides comprehensive prescription benefit services to more than 2,000 health plans throughout the United States. CVS Caremark clients include corporate health plans, managed care organizations, insurance companies, unions, government agencies, and other funded benefit plans.

The CVS Caremark sales team (encompassing sales, clinicians and account service representatives) sells a diverse and complex set of products and services to multiple markets.

Traditionally, the sales team searched for information through a confederation of five Web-based collaboration and document management software systems along with reaching out to the CVS Caremark subject matter experts (SMEs) by phone and e-mail about topics such as government regulations, product support and technology.

THE CHALLENGE

The CVS Caremark sales team had multiple Web sites and documents to search through to find information.

"One of our CVS Caremark Pharmacy Services executives was prodded with a question from a colleague about which tool to use to find information," said Paul Zickert, an Advisor in Sales Operations for CVS Caremark. "The executive thought about this and asked, 'Can we have one place to find all of our information?'"

It was a question many people had. After spending a few minutes trying to find information from one or more of the Web site and document systems, most CVS Caremark employees, especially the sales team, would have to go straight to the experts for answers.

"Employees would rely on e-mail, a face-to-face visit or voicemail to find somebody who could answer their question," added Zickert. "The use of these systems became its own monster. Employees and experts needed a new technological and cost-efficient solution."

When they did navigate the many software systems for archived knowledge, employees often found documents that did not exactly address their question. So, in response, the sales team began creating pockets of knowledge. If you knew about these pockets, you might have been able to find the information you needed, but even within the individual pockets, it was still hard to locate information.

INDUSTRY

Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Services

SOLUTION

The CVS Caremark sales team shared knowledge with a confederation of five Web-based collaboration and document management software systems. CVS Caremark chose OutStart Participate to automatically collaborate, answer questions and easily store the shared knowledge.

RESULTS

- Fourfold increase in number of employees sharing know-how
- Sales people receive answers to their most pressing questions in as little as an hour
- 93% of employees surveyed felt features for asking questions were "very or extremely helpful"

To address this information sharing concern and to help employees get timely answers to their business questions, CVS Caremark decided to use one system for exchanging knowledge.

"...sales people can ask a question using their wireless devices and get immediate answers."

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CVS Caremark wanted its knowledge-exchange platform to be easy for people to use. Employees wanted to be able to find information with a few clicks of a mouse. If the information did not yet exist in the system, employees wanted to be able to route it to an expert and get a timely response. CVS Caremark also wanted the expert's responses to the sales team's questions to be captured by the system. If the information already existed, employees should be able find information without repeatedly asking the experts. The software would also need to appeal to a cross-section of demographics.

THE SOLUTION

"I asked employees what their favorite Web sites were," said Zickert. "They said MSNBC, CNN and ESPN were good Web sites and simple to use. They could find just about everything from the home pages. If they didn't, they could easily find what they needed by searching the site."

With this and a lot of other research in mind, Zickert and his colleagues developed a business plan. The team concluded that the best software for CVS Caremark would be that which sparked collaboration, served-up and reused content, stored documents and returned answers from experts in a timely way.

"The product we chose was OutStart Participate," added Zickert. "The software could automatically and organically capture online discussions and easily store the knowledge people wanted."

The Sales Operations team dubbed the new system "Max." Employees access Max via a link on the company's intranet. Once there, they can become a member of one of eight communities, or they can simply browse the communities to discuss sales, marketing,

product offerings or new solutions. The upkeep of these online communities is spread across a team of people. So if someone leaves or retires, it does not affect the continuity of the community.

Max also features "expertise exchange," where sales people can communicate with experts. Max captures these online discussions and stores them for use later. Max also provides blogs, which Zickert, in particular, uses to encourage comments about the new system. According to Zickert, there are approximately 1,500 employees now relying on Max for information, expertise and knowledge exchange. These employees are mainly comprised of sales executives, account managers, clinicians and consultants.

"Sales people can now upload selling documents or pass best practices back and forth easily without relying on e-mail," said Zickert. "There is a function in the center of the Max home page for finding answers to your questions or getting advice from others about how to get things done. If you have a question about a particular product, just type in that question and get an answer from an expert or from the software's knowledge bank."

In addition to the account teams, other groups within CVS Caremark use Max to help drive forward their initiatives. Zickert says the clinical team, for instance, uses Max to share updates on "new clinical offerings and services."

"The collaborative nature of Max is starting to change the culture here. More and more people are using Max as a place to update the sales organization about industry or product news and to share their latest experience," said Zickert. "This practice eliminates much of the mass e-mailing that has gone on in the past, and experts are receiving fewer and fewer of the same kinds of questions."



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Paul Zickert
Sales Operations, CVS Caremark



CASE STUDY:

CVS
CAREMARK

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THE RESULTS

After unveiling Max, Zickert surveyed several hundred members of the CVS Caremark sales team to gauge employee reaction. 93% felt the ability to ask Max for documents or support was “very or extremely helpful.” 95% said the “training was clear,” and they “enjoyed learning about Max.” 92% said they would “visit Max regularly each week.”

On a weekly basis, there is more than four times the number of active members on Max versus the old patchwork of tools. “Each week,” Zickert says, “Max handles 17 times the number of questions from employees that the old tools fielded. All the answers to the questions are immediately available in Max.”

“People have been very happy about Max’s expertise exchange. The sales team has seen responses in as little as one hour,” said Zickert. “With Max, we always have the most informed people answering questions. The sales team does not have to maintain all this data any longer.”

In addition, sales people can ask a question using their wireless devices and get immediate answers if the data is available. If the question goes to an expert, the sales person will get an e-mail informing him or her when the answer is available.

The system also eliminates the experts from having to answer repetitive questions and requests for information. For example, a sales representative might need an immediate answer to a question, such as: “What is the CVS Caremark position on an industry topic?” With the help of OutStart Participate, the sales team can now use Max to find the answer in a presentation, a news release, competitive notes or a previously answered question.

About OutStart

You view knowledge sharing between your employees, partners, and customers as a strategic priority. Their knowledge leads to your success. OutStart’s portfolio of inter-related mobile, social, and learning Knowledge Solutions accelerate and broaden access to colleagues and the knowledge they need to respond to business requirements more quickly and make better informed decisions. Together you excel. Recognized as a Visionary in Gartner’s Magic Quadrant reports for the last seven years, OutStart is regularly acknowledged for its award-winning solutions including OutStart LCMS; Participate, social business software that integrates social networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing technologies; Hot Lava Mobile to develop, deliver & analyze high impact mobile learning; OutStart LMS, a full featured, configurable learning management system; and TrainingEdge.com an affordable learning & knowledge suite for the Enterprise the extends LMS and traditional elearning to support informal, social & mobile learning.

For insight into customer implementations, best practices, industry news and more, visit the OutStart Knowledge Solutions Blog, and follow us on Twitter @outstart.

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