



SUPPORT LOGIC SUPPORT EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT

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Although artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have been applied to many areas of customer relationship management (CRM), most predictive applications have been focused on the sales and marketing side – missing a significant opportunity in customer service. Valoir found that organizations deploying SupportLogic’s predictive support experience and escalation management on top of existing CRM and ticketing systems were able to reduce the volume and cost of escalations, accelerate time to case resolution, increase manager insights, retain and increase revenue, and improve customer and agent experiences.

The situation

Quality customer service is critical to retaining customers in a subscription economy. Technology companies, in particular, are expected to meet ongoing service-level agreements and rapidly resolve customer issues, and have developed case management and case escalation tools and strategies to that end.

However, today many companies treat escalations as a necessary cost of supporting customers, and, in many cases, depend on support engineers or managers to manually determine when a case is escalated. In cases where technology is used to automate the escalation process, that technology is often rudimentary, rules based, and reacting to the limited information an agent enters about a case.

As a result, companies spend more on escalations than they should. Support managers monitoring hundreds or thousands of cases don’t have good visibility into potential escalations. When escalations do occur, customers are already unhappy (requiring more lengthy and expensive executive intervention), and engineers and executives end up putting out fires instead of proactively improving customer experiences. Although managing escalations this way is expensive, even more potentially costly are the customers that are lost when an escalation should have happened and didn’t.

A reactive approach to escalations is not only costly; it impacts support engineer stress and job satisfaction, reduces the ability for managers to coach and improve staff performance, and limits the ability of support teams to provide proactive solutions and meaningful feedback to product teams.

Most “voice of the customer” survey efforts are also reactive and rely on a small sample of customer surveys rather than a holistic view of all conversations to understand customer health. Although they may

effectively measure customer satisfaction with the response to a particular issue or problem, they are by nature backward-looking.

Instead of a backward-looking approach, organizations that take advantage of technology to develop a proactive, predictive escalation process based on analysis of all the conversations (not just the case records) about a customer issue can more effectively manage case queues, reduce backlogs, and reduce escalations.

Beyond cost reduction, service leaders can use intelligent escalation prediction to identify opportunities for upselling customers, drive higher net promoter scores, and reduce churn.

To better understand the potential value of using artificial intelligence (AI) to support a more proactive customer support experience and intelligent escalation prediction, Valoir conducted in-depth interviews with a number of SupportLogic customers. The interviewees represented medium-sized and large technology companies (including a number of publicly traded companies), and their titles included vice presidents of customer service, customer experience (CX) managers, and technical support managers.

SupportLogic

SupportLogic provides a support experience management application that integrates with existing customer relationship management (CRM) and ticket management systems. It uses artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and natural language processing (NLP) to analyze customer interactions:

- The SupportLogic platform combines customer signals from unstructured data with case data and analyzes escalation factors, customer history, support responsiveness based on similar cases and agents, and customer urgency.
- Escalation prediction predicts escalation probability on an ongoing basis and presents predictions via a dashboard and alerts. Workflow and write-back integration with CRM enable users to take rapid action on potential escalations before they become critical and record their actions within the CRM record.
- Backlog management, intelligent case management and assignment, automated case evaluation, and agent analytics enable support operations managers to scale the intelligent management of cases and identify opportunities for coaching and agent improvement.
- Case and customer sentiment analysis provide account health insights and churn prediction.



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Why SupportLogic

Valoir found that there were three main reasons companies chose to invest in SupportLogic in addition to their existing CRM or ticket management applications:

- Pre-built, specialized escalation prediction. Although many CRM platforms have some analytics and AI capabilities, SupportLogic's prebuilt models and capabilities were faster and more predictable to deploy and manage than building a custom solution with existing tools. Customers with existing CRM systems said the cost and resources – such as data scientist and developers – to build and maintain similar capabilities using their existing tools would have been cost prohibitive.
- High usability. SupportLogic's "single pane" console, as well as alerts, were highly intuitive and ease to use. Timeline views that enabled managers to view multiple case interactions, smart filtering, and backlog analytics enabled managers to quickly understand individual customer health as well as overall trends.
- Broadly consumable insights. Unlike other applications with user-based pricing, SupportLogic's "userless" pricing model enabled service leaders to share the insights gained beyond the service organization to customer success, product teams, and management.

Key benefits

Valoir found that SupportLogic customers recognized benefits from their use of the technology including improved case management, improved support operations, increased customer satisfaction, increased revenues, and improved products.

IMPROVED CASE MANAGEMENT

Valoir found that SupportLogic's case management console, smart alerts, and automated case evaluation helped support managers predict and prevent escalations on a scale that was not possible before the technology. This enabled companies to reduce the time and effort associated with case escalations.

At the same time, support managers were able to use SupportLogic's insights, intelligent case assignments, and support for swarming and collaboration to accelerate the time to case resolution, reducing the overall average cost per case. Customers said:

Our cost per incident exceeded \$400 per case, and we were able to take that down to \$160, with work happening to drive that even lower.

Our escalations were 15 to 20 a month; now we're getting less than 10, and the level of fire drills has gone down.



SupportLogic enables customers to reduce case escalations by 20-50% and accelerate time to resolution by 10 to 15%.

We've had a 12 percent decrease in backlog.

Our time to resolution is more than 10 percent faster, and we've reduced escalations more than 20 percent, and an escalated case is 2.5 times the cost of a non-escalated one.

We were looking for an early warning system of customer sentiment upfront. SupportLogic is helping us proactively call out and govern cases better because managers have visibility, and that keeps a check on escalations.

Valoir found that SupportLogic enables companies to reduce case escalations by 20 to 50 percent and accelerate time to case resolution by 10 to 15 percent.

IMPROVED SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Valoir found that the intelligent automation provided by SupportLogic enabled service and support leaders to improve their overall operations, reducing the time needed to manage and monitor escalations and increasing their ability to coach and support agents. Customers said:

Managers were spending two to three hours a day on escalations – we've easily saved them an hour a day.

We would have had to add two times as many people to manage queues without SupportLogic.

We have highly paid managers, and before they could look at maybe four cases a day – now they can review 50.

We've had an increase in business which means potentially more tickets. While the number of customers and variety of products has gone up, the team size has been pretty constant.

The team was looking after things manually but with thousands of cases a day they could only look at five to 10 cases. Now managers can look at 100 per day and see which ones they need to be focused on.

Valoir found the impact of SupportLogic on manager productivity is significant, increasing a manager's ability to review cases by 10 to 20 times – and enabling them to address backlogs more effectively by focusing on key issues rather than trying to review all backlogs.

Beyond just saving time, SupportLogic's automation enabled managers to spend more time on agent onboarding, coaching, and data-driven feedback to agents and product teams.

INCREASED AGENT RETENTION

In addition to increasing the time managers could devote to effectively onboarding and coaching agents, Valoir found that SupportLogic enabled managers to uncover insights that could be used to improve



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agents' day-to-day experiences, reducing burnout and increasing agent tenure. Customers said:

They uncovered things for us that were pretty embarrassing – that were buried in our case queue – about hurtful things and bullying of engineers by customers that we were able to take action on right away.

We were able to focus on the customer and the employee – with guiding and coaching rather than control and compliance.

People were able to collaborate in unique ways and eliminate non-meaningful updates. Customer effort went down because we were able to coach the best behaviors.

With the great resignation, our retention is still around 90 percent, and SupportLogic is a contributing factor – people feeling good about their work.

With new engineers we can keep a focus on them and help them to manage their backlog, and proactively offer them help and add another engineer, in some cases, to help the customer.

Obviously, there are a number of factors that impact agent retention. However, Valoir found that the ability of managers to better coach new and developing agents, add additional agents to cases before they became frustrating for agents and customers, and identify trends in customer interactions that warranted attention before they contributed to increased stress for agents on a consistent and data-driven basis enabled SupportLogic customers to maintain or increase average agent tenures despite historically high turnover rates.

It is not unreasonable to estimate that, when used effectively, SupportLogic can reduce agent onboarding time by approximately two weeks, and increase tenure by a month or more. Assuming a fully-loaded cost per agent of \$80,000, this represents an average savings of \$9,230 per agent in increased productivity, and additional savings in recruiting and training costs by reducing turnover.

INCREASED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A common theme among SupportLogic customers was that they were looking for early warning signs that customers needed additional attention, before the customer asked for it.

On a strategic basis, unlike customer satisfaction surveys that relied on a small sample of customers and were often reactive based on a recent interaction, SupportLogic gave them a more holistic view of the voice of the customer based on all interactions in context.

On a tactical basis, we found that being able to predict and proactively address customer issues before they escalated enabled Support Logic customers to increase customer satisfaction. Customers said:



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In the beginning our CSAT was 4.2, after 60 to 90 days we were up to 4.7.

Before, if customers escalated and we were able to get all hands on deck and help them CSAT surveys were good because they felt taken care of. But before, they had to ask to get the attention they needed instead of getting what they needed by default like they do now.

By escalation, it's already too late to maintain customer satisfaction – it's us trying to recover.

The attention score helps us to keep a focus on customers requesting callbacks and callback promises.

Although not all customers Valoir interviewed had measured or correlated the delta of customer satisfaction or net promoter scores before and after implementation of SupportLogic, all customers reported they were able to more proactively address customer issues and use SupportLogic to reduce the volume of escalations that required additional resources to keep customers happy.

INCREASED REVENUES

Service and support leaders have often talked about shifting service from a cost center to a revenue center by enabling more effective cross selling and upselling of products and services. However, selling enhanced service-level agreements or premium services to clients requires support teams to be able to deliver on them – often giving already resource-constrained service teams pause.

Valoir found that the increase in manager and agent productivity in managing cases driven by SupportLogic presented an opportunity for service organizations to effectively sell and deliver advanced support contracts. As one customer said, *We identified 15 to 20 percent of customers that we were able to potentially upsell, and sold at least a third of them. Support leaders elsewhere would choke when someone sold an service-level agreement reduction. We knew and we could jump on it.*

IMPROVED PRODUCTS

The ultimate goal of any service team is to have enough data and feedback from customers to drive data-driven conversations about product and service improvements that reduce the need for support. Valoir found that early adopters of SupportLogic were able to gather insights that led to more meaningful input to product and service teams. Customers said:

We went from nothing, or just escalation-driven conversations about defects to driving product conversations with our product teams.

We're looking for SL to identify areas we can fix in the product.

Those that had adopted SupportLogic to deliver product feedback were able to support the data-driven development of new and better products as well as service improvements that reduced the overall burden on support teams. Without SupportLogic, Valoir conservatively estimates that service and product teams would need at least one full-time data analyst to deliver the product insights on an ongoing basis.

Best practices

Valoir found that beyond an initial measurable reduction in escalations driven by insights from SupportLogic, service managers achieved the most sustainable and consistent results from SupportLogic when they followed a few best practices:

- They communicated the purpose of SupportLogic and how it was different from existing case management tools, and consistently used it to improve the experience for agents, rather than simply mandating a new tool requirement. This included addressing all the data uncovered through the analytics, even if it meant taking corrective action with some customers.
- They tracked, correlated, and communicated the use of SupportLogic with reductions in case escalations and time to resolution, and tied those reductions to real metrics around cost per case and cost per escalation.
- They took advantage of SupportLogic to drive real service process improvements, including new coaching and swarming practices, that would further reduce the burden and burnout of support agents. They also took advantage of the human-aided AI capabilities to continue to fine tune the models over time.

Looking ahead

As technology companies face increasing pressure to differentiate their services in a subscription economy, the ability to predict and more proactively address customer issues before they escalate is important for customer and support agent experience as well as margins. Although predictive escalation is one example, driving a more predictive and proactive customer support experience is important for both driving revenues and reducing costs.

However, in most organizations, escalations are a lagging indicator of customer satisfaction, and the highest-cost, lowest- satisfaction route to resolving a customer issue. Traditional customer satisfaction surveys, as well, are backward-looking and present a limited picture of overall customer health.

AI, ML, and automation offer a better alternative, but only when those technologies are purpose-built and adaptable to deliver benefits at scale. In our analysis of SupportLogic customers, we found that the specialized models the company has developed to deliver rapid results

out of the box delivered additional benefits over existing CRM and ticketing systems. Additionally, the ability for managers to refine and leverage improvements in those models over time enabled customers to achieve significant gains in escalation reduction and time to case resolution, reducing costs while driving a better customer support experience.

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