

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greg Oxtton
The Consortium for Service Innovation
(650) 261-9200 x22
goxtton@serviceinnovation.org

Customer Support Consortium Announces Results of Executive Summit and New Name – The Consortium for Service Innovation

REDWOOD CITY, CA – August, 2001 – The Customer Support Consortium, a non-profit alliance of customer service organizations, announced the results of their Executive Summit and a new name for the organization.

“We feel we are on the threshold of a dramatic shift in how companies relate to their customers, employees and partners. Customer support as we know it today is not sustainable,” says Greg Oxtton, Executive Director of the Consortium. “The work the members have been doing over the past few years on knowledge management, virtual support communities and scenario based planning have provided insights as to how our relationships must change in order to achieve new levels of effectiveness and maintain relevance in a rapidly changing environment.”

The Consortium held an Executive Summit in May with the senior level executives from its benefactor and sponsor level member

companies. The discussion centered on the challenges and imperatives we face for support, services and customer relationships. Doc Searls, co-author of “The Cluetrain Manifesto”, was the guest speaker and participated with the executives in discussions about market places, conversations, knowledge, learning and relationships.

The issues and observations discussed:

- Organizations are struggling to maintain *relevance* to their markets – markets are evolving rapidly, learning and flexibility have become imperatives.
- Understanding the *R* in CRM – what makes a *relationship* valuable? Key elements are context and learning and these are a challenge in our current business models.
 - The *whole experience* - customers, employees, partners – it is the experience over time that makes the difference. How do we learn from our interactions such that we improve the richness of the relationship?
 - *Blurring* roles and boundaries - people/ functions/companies, roles and relationships are not static nor can they be categorized in the traditional terms of customer/vendor, employee/company, competitor/partner.
- *Free agent* resourcing – both customers and employees are acting more and more like *free agents*.

What's in a name? The Customer Support Consortium announces a new name and an expanded focus – ***The Consortium for Service Innovation***. The principles and practices the Consortium has developed around Knowledge Management and Virtual Support Communities is proving to be valuable in a broader context than reactive support. There is a new value proposition that customer touch organizations can offer their customers, employees and companies. The value is in creating social capital through relationships that can drive learning, flexibility, relevance and loyalty. The Consortium members are exploring and defining the fundamental elements of relationships. What is emerging is an understanding of what makes relationships relevant, valuable and sustainable. The members are working to develop principles and operational models that will enable high value relationships in a dynamic, highly connected world.

Steve Young, VP Worldwide Customer Care, Access Products Group at Compaq says, "As volume and complexity increases, we have to find new ways to improve the customer's experience. It is not about being better at what we do today; it is about finding a whole new way to do it. It is pretty clear the answer is not in the traditional approach to customer support. The work of the Consortium over the past year has been focused on a broader scope and the new name reflects that."

The Consortium for Service Innovation is a non-profit alliance of customer service organizations that are working together to solve

industry-wide challenges. The Consortium is dedicated to improving the whole experience of customers, employees and partners through the development of innovative strategies, business models and industry standards. Through a process of collective thinking and collective experience, the Consortium members have developed principles and practices for Knowledge-Centered Support, Virtual Support Communities, incident and solution exchange standards and a scenario based framework for thinking about the future. The Consortium offers workshops, publishes reports and hosts an annual member's conference in October each year.

For more information about the Consortium, membership, workshops, and the annual conference, contact Greg Oxtan via email at goxton@serviceinnovation.org. The Consortium can also be reached via telephone at +1 650.261.9200, fax +1 650.261.1737 or by visiting their web site at www.serviceinnovation.org.

#