

For Immediate Release
Megan Tate, Communications Manager
The Knowland Group
(703) 286-0852
mtate@knowlandgroup.com

“It Won’t Be In This Year’s Model but Maybe in Four Years You’ll Get that Cup Holder You Want”

Top 5 Customer Service Complaints about Hotel Meetings Management and Sales & Catering Software

McLean, VA, 03/7/11 – “It costs a lot of money for their service package and the service isn’t that great.” “Let’s just say calling their support number is not something I look forward to.” “I’m often told my case will be closed even though the problem hasn’t been solved.” “I can never get anyone on the phone and when I do they charge me for the air I’m breathing.” These are just a few things we heard from hoteliers about the customer service for existing meetings management and sales & catering software.

At [The Knowland Group](#), one of our top core values is giving great customer service. During the development and launch of [Target Net](#), our revolutionary sales force automation and meetings management tool, we set out to find the top 5 customer service complaints about existing tools. It turned out to be a fairly simple task, since hoteliers were not at all shy about sharing the multitude of problems they’ve faced over the years.

1. Hope you didn’t really want that cup holder...They make even the simplest problems complicated

There is no such thing as a quick fix for most meetings management software companies. For every simple question, every suggestion, every request, a lengthy process must take place before a solution can be presented. One meetings management software company has their customer service representatives compare their upgrade process to a car company that has been asked to add cup holders to their cars. It’s not going to be in this year’s model, because it’s already being sold. It’s not going to be in next year’s, because they are almost finished. It’s not going to be in the car two years from now, because the parts are already being manufactured. It’s not going to be in the car three years from now, because the designs have already been finalized. If you’re lucky, there’s a chance you’ll get that cup holder four years from now. If you’re willing to pay large upgrade costs that is.

When customers come to Knowland with ideas for quick fixes, it’s a much simpler process: we make sure it adds client value, and then we do it. The new capability is available immediately to all clients without them having to lift a finger or pay a dime. That way we can focus on lightening our clients’ load instead of adding to it. Knowland also works with brands and management companies to integrate systems and create unique versions of Target Net for their properties.

2. I can never get anyone on the phone

If 80 percent of success is showing up, then a customer service team who never answers the phone is doomed to failure. Unfortunately that’s the case with most customer service from meetings management software companies. Multiple messages must be left to generate a return phone call or email. When you finally reach an actual person, they don’t know how to help you so they refer you to someone else and the process starts all over again. **Days pass with no solution.** By the time someone who can actually help gives you a call, you’ve already moved on to the next project.

At Knowland, we nipped this problem in the bud by hiring and training a large client care team and making them available 15 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Each person knows the ins and outs of all Knowland products and is ready to handle any and all questions our clients may have.

3. They charge me for the air I'm breathing

Nickel and dimed doesn't quite cover it. Meetings management software companies love to come up with new ways to charge their clients for customer service. Project management fees, upgrade costs, customized training charges - these add-on expenses can end up costing hoteliers thousands of dollars per year. And if you need something done quick in a pinch? Expect to pay even more. One meetings management client was made to swallow a \$5,000 charge when he needed his system restored quickly after his server crashed.

With Target Net, there are no hidden costs. Clients pay a monthly subscription and enjoy everything Knowland Client Care has to offer - from simple troubleshooting to custom support. Everything is included, meaning there's no need for amortization over multiple years or building in extra in the budget for unforeseen expenses.

4. They care more about closing the case than solving the problem

For many meetings management software companies, the goal of customer service is not to help existing clients – it's to make themselves look good to potential clients. Companies use closure rates to demonstrate how successful they are at customer service. The problem with that is it makes most customer service representatives care more about closing the case than solving the problem. Even if an issue remains unresolved, they will tell clients they are going to close the ticket because they can always open a new one later. This only serves to falsely pad their statistics without them actually having to fix the client's problem.

For the Knowland Client Care team, solving clients' problems quickly and completely is always the number one priority. It's not rocket science – we simply put our clients' needs above everything else. We are not satisfied until they are satisfied.

5. I have to retell the story of my problem again and again

Most of us know the frustration of being passed from customer service representative to representative, each time having to explain the whole situation and how it came about all over again. The sad part is, it doesn't have to be that way. If meetings management software companies would just take the time to share knowledge with one another, then everybody could be on the same page without the client having to tell the same story 10 times.

To prevent this from happening to Knowland clients, each one gets their own personal client care representative. He or she is the only person they have to contact to get any issue resolved. It is the client care representative's responsibility to get input from other departments if needed, resolve the situation, and then let the client know. In this way clients are able to build a personal relationship with someone who is familiar with their specific needs.

Breaking the cycle of bad customer service

Over and over again users of other meetings management tools have complained that they feel like they are being held hostage. They've sunk so much money into the software, often having to spread

installation and upgrade costs over many years, that they feel like they have no choice but to just put up with bad customer service. But as many have begun to realize, it's just not worth it.

Giving great customer service is one of Knowland's top core values because we believe it is not just the responsibility of the Client Care team. Every Knowland employee in every department, from Accounting to Knowland University, takes ownership in making sure our clients are happy. Join us in breaking the cycle of bad customer service – you'll soon see what a dramatic difference it can make.

About The Knowland Group

The Knowland Group is a proven innovator, developing intuitive marketing products and services that streamline and support event and group sales in the hospitality industry. The company, headquartered in McLean, VA, serves over 3,000 hotel clients and 20,000 users globally. Knowland was ranked as the fifth fastest growing software company (public or private) in North America by [Deloitte](#) and the second fastest growing private company in the travel industry for both 2009 and 2010 by [Inc. Magazine](#). For more information, visit www.KnowlandGroup.com, call 410-860-2270, or follow us on Twitter [@knowlandgroup](#)