



New Paradigm
For RTSM Customer Support

Knowledge Sharing Series

A New Paradigm for **Customer Support with Clinical Systems**

Pillars of Excellence to Redefine the Customer Experience

We've all had experience calling customer support, whether it's for your cable, mobile phone service or health insurance. How many times have you punched zero trying to by-pass the automated scripts just to get to a real live human being? You finally hear a voice (hallelujah!) and you realise very quickly that person cannot answer your question and transfers you to another line (or worse gives you another number to call). What seems like hours later, you finally get some sort of resolution, with perhaps additional follow-up to someone higher up that has more expertise in your issue.

Now imagine you have a patient sitting with you that travelled far and wide to get to your clinical site. You just need to do one small thing on your computer that should take a second and frustration ensues. The last thing you want to do it keep that patient waiting or worse tell them they need to come back.

That is why customer service is so important in the realm of clinical trials, with RTSM systems, at the site-level. Customer service/help desk models have evolved over time due to the growth in technology. Although there have been significant improvements in technology it needs to go hand and hand with a shift in the support services paradigm to close the loop.

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[Traditional service models] resulted in duplication, lots of open tickets, unresolved issues and back-end band-aids to resolve customer challenges and complaints.

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Why Traditional **Customer Service Models** are No Longer Sufficient

Twenty years ago, automated phone systems to distribute and record customer requests were not commonly used in clinical trial support centers. More common than not, simple databases (even spreadsheets) were used to keep track of requests coming in. When calls came into support, everyone's phone rang, pagers went off, whether they were busy helping another customer or not.

The first major progression in handling support requests was the ability to use dedicated systems for automatic call distribution (ACD) and ticketing. ACD systems routed live calls to an available support associate. Ticketing systems enabled support to manage service requests in an organized manner.

Since the systems were not integrated, there were still limitations in customer service. Imagine a call comes in and that same person simultaneously sends an email. Two different support staff are assigned to the issue and manually enter information into the system creating separate tickets. This resulted in duplication, lots of open tickets, unresolved issues and back-end band-aids to resolve customer challenges and complaints.

Another layer to a traditional model involves a tiered system. The first tier received the call/email and if that initial respondent couldn't solve the issue, it was pushed to tier two. Typically, tier one support staff were not as knowledgeable as those on tier 2 which resulted in most calls being sent to tier 2. Remember the frustration of getting routed to someone else? It seems this was by design.

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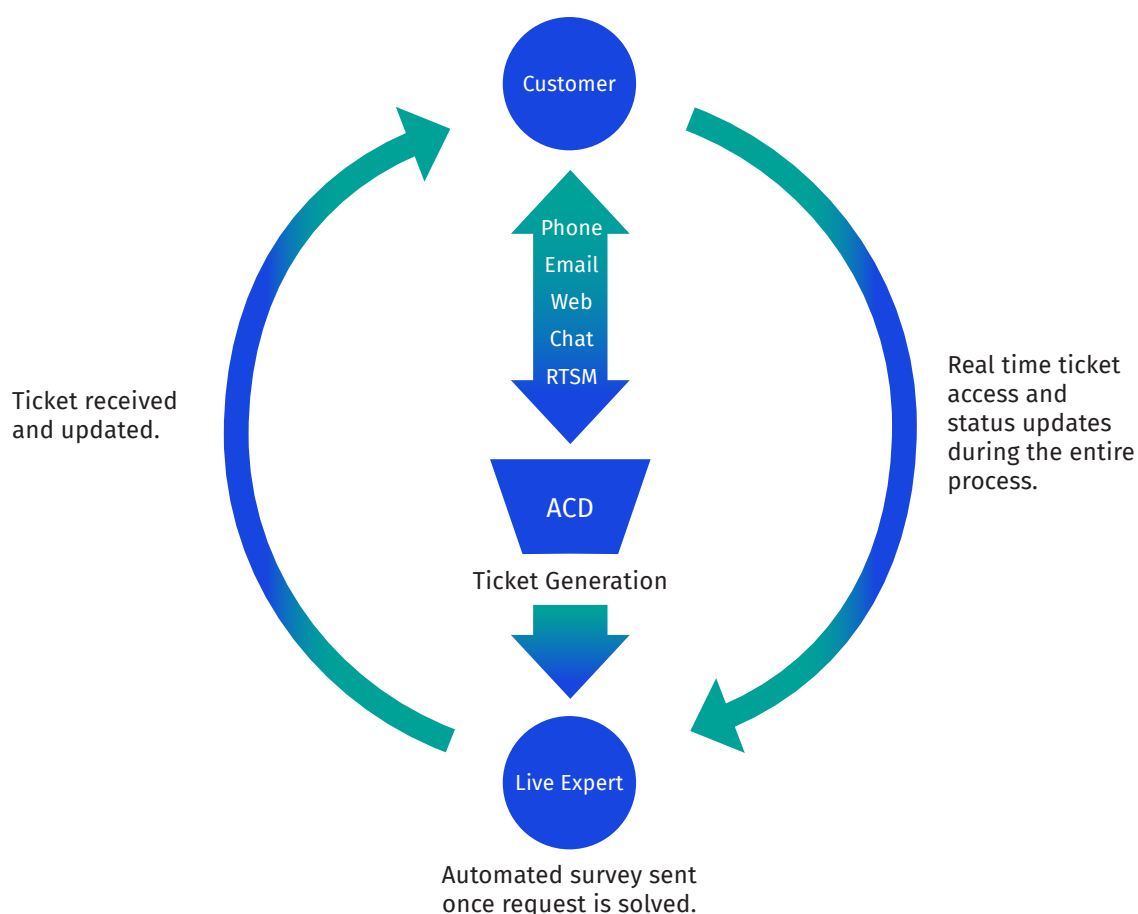
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5 Pillars of Excellence to Redefine the Customer Experience - The New Gold Standard

1) Integrated ACD and Ticketing Systems

If the customer support function is not built on a solid foundation, there will always be issues. It is critical to have an integrated ACD and ticketing system. This increases productivity as the support associate works within one platform instead of many. Additionally, with integrated systems, every inbound request has an ID (in both systems) which allows the support associate to easily locate the record. Voicemail files are saved and linked to the ticket automatically enabling support associates to listen to the call at any time. As a result, this technology enables tracking of every customer's tickets through resolution. In addition, every member of the support staff has visibility into the ticket history.



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2) Unparalleled Communication Channels

We should make it as easy as possible for our customers to connect with our staff. Via phone and email are no longer sufficient. Robust customer service models accommodate an omnichannel approach allowing the customer to use what works best for them.

3) First Call Resolution – Say Goodbye to Two-Tiered System

Our customers are very busy. Remember, chances are they have a patient waiting. Whenever possible, issues should be resolved in the first interaction. But how? The best way to achieve this is to have a support team knowledgeable in how the study is set up in the RTSM and the intricacies of the core RTSM itself.

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*It is evident that the help desk goes through **extensive training**. They understand the study and are **thoroughly trained in the system**.*

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— Jason Russak

Senior Manager Clinical Operations and Development
at Sage Therapeutics

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4) Global Support Facilitated by a Centralised Support Centre

Many companies have moved to a ‘follow the sun’ service model with support centres located across the globe. This model can work, however, there is also a level of caution as various centres may create and use their own processes due to local managers. In this instance support may become fragmented. A support centre under one management team with staggered shifts helps with the transfer of information and it facilitates a team approach to the customer’s requests. Technology has enabled support team members to be sensitive of the customer’s time zone and respond to various language requirements. The goal is to ensure the customer’s request is handled by a knowledgeable team in a consistent, timely and professional manner.

5) Empowered to Improve Customer Experience

The role of customer support should be elevated within the organisation, with the ability to influence product design and future development. After all, they are in direct contact with your customers. Consistent survey and ticket data is valuable information that should be shared within the organisation. Empowering customer support staff to advocate for changes to make the customer experience better is a key to success.

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We don’t work in silos.

*Customer Support has a voice in the organisation.
We can make a difference in the things that matter.*

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— **Teresa Goodnough**
Director, Client Excellence Support at 4G Clinical

Meet **Teresa Goodnough**



About the Author

Teresa Goodnough, Director, Client Excellence Support at 4G Clinical has over 15 years of experience working in clinical technology support services for a major contract research organisation (CRO), with a true passion and steady hand for providing global clinical trial support 24/7. Having worked in the industry and experienced caring for a family member participating in a clinical trial, Teresa has embraced the services environment and is recognised as a trusted leader.

Teresa plays a critical role in day-to-day operations by building, leading and guiding the support team to provide the most professional customer excellence services in the clinical trial industry.

Curious to hear more?
Explore our Resource Center

Still have questions?
Contact us today to start a conversation.

About 4G Clinical

We reduce the time it takes to commercialise vital medications by delivering validated, easily extendable RTSM capabilities to Pharma and CROs faster than anyone in the world.

4G Clinical is driven by a single purpose: bring crucial medicines to those who need them, faster. 4G Clinical believes that the way to accelerate clinical research is by disrupting the way trials are executed. That's why we have revolutionised RTSM (randomisation and trial supply management) and supply forecasting capabilities and services from the ground up.

4G Clinical is committed to helping sponsors and CROs follow the science, wherever it may lead, as quickly and as safely as we can. While we will not discover the next novel compound in the lab, we are doing our part by leveraging our extensive experience and technological innovations to bring speed and agility to clinical trials.

Prancer RTSM®

Our 100% configurable and agile RTSM is built for the clinical trials of today and tomorrow.

4G's RTSM platform, Prancer RTSM®, utilises natural language processing alongside integrated clinical supplies forecasting and management functionality to slash development timelines, increase operational efficiencies and offer exceptional quality.



Bringing crucial medicines to those who need them, *faster*.

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