

Invaluable Helps Collectors Find The Answers They've Been Searching For

invaluable

invaluable

Support at Invaluable

- Help Center that was underperforming
- Customer support email & phone
- Support team partly outsourced to Philippines

Solvvy

Solvvy Impact

- Identified knowledge base gaps
- Improved Help Center content and workflow
- Reduced total ticket volume by 22%
- Decreased customer support headcount by 50%
- Freed up agents to handle more valuable issues



Stephanie Ziebell,
Director of Customer Care

“Quite simply, Solvvy has made it easier for our customers to get the help they need. It’s allowed us to grow our business without increasing our support costs.”

Invaluable Case Study

Invaluable helps lovers of fine art, antiques, and collectibles around the world find what they're looking for, and helps auction houses, galleries, and dealers find buyers for their unique pieces. Founded in 1989, Invaluable went online in 1999 and is now the art world's leading online marketplace. In addition to partnering with premier auction houses around the world, Invaluable partnered with eBay in 2014 to power eBay Live Auctions, and launched a technology partnership with Sotheby's in 2015 to power all online bidding on Sotheby's.com.

For auction houses and galleries, Invaluable offers an integrated platform that's secure, reliable, and lets them manage multiple bidding environments in a single console while also helping them tap into a vast pool of bidders from all over the world. Best of all, it's backed by the most experienced engineering team in live bidding technology. For collectors, Invaluable makes it easy (and exciting) to find rare and one-of-a-kind pieces and bid live online, in some cases alongside bidders on the floor in the world's leading auction houses.

Executive Summary

Invaluable helps connect over 4,000 top auction houses and art galleries with collectors around the world. As the company's user base of sellers and buyers was growing, they needed a way to keep up with the volume of customer support contacts, especially during their busy season. With most of their phone and email support

“With Solvvy, we quickly saw the potential that we'd hoped for—that it was helping users find those answers that we knew were in our Help Center but weren't being surfaced to them.”

Stephanie Ziebell,
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outsourced to a team in the Philippines, they were looking for a way to increase operational efficiency while continuing to provide a high level of support.

Invaluable attended a customer support conference where they learned about Solvvy and quickly decided to give it a try. “We knew we had a lot of really valuable information in our Help Center,” says Stephanie Ziebell, Director of Customer Care at Invaluable, “we just didn't know how to get people to go there.” Invaluable enlisted Solvvy to implement an efficient and accurate self-service solution to support their customers and help them scale their growing business without driving up costs.

Solvvy helped Invaluable transform its customer support experience:

- Enabled users to quickly find answers to common questions
- Guarded against the types of questions Invaluable can't answer
- Deflected a large volume of phone and email contacts
- Enabled them to downsize and up-skill their support team

Challenges

Collectors of fine art and antiques are passionate people who tend to get excited when they find something they love—and this often means asking a lot of questions. While Invaluable had an online Help Center managed by a homegrown system, its users, many of whom are older, were more likely to pick up the phone or send an email than go looking for answers themselves. As the platform grew, the support team was struggling to keep up with the sheer volume of calls and emails—many of which were for simple questions about things like how to reset a password or enter a bid. A large number of inquiries were also related to specific items, such as questions about dimensions or requests for valuations, which Invaluable is not able to answer. In these cases, agents were spending time redirecting users to contact either the seller or an independent appraiser.

With Invaluable's team of 36 customer support agents, managers, and specialists struggling to

keep up with the volumes of tickets a month, the company was excited to try implementing a self-service solution. But they had some concerns. On the customer side, they worried less tech-savvy users would view it as a barrier to getting the help they needed—when in fact it was just the opposite. And on the backend, they needed to be sure that adding an additional tool to their site would not result in any latency or slow down the live bidding platform, because there's a lot of money on the line during every live auction. But the Solvvy's team was able to put their minds at ease.

The Solvvy Solution

Invaluable implemented Solvvy in February 2018 and immediately saw results. "Right away we saw that Solvvy was helping us by keeping the easy questions from reaching our customer support inbox or phone queue because it was serving up those answers in the Help Center," says Ziebell. They did see some users typing in questions like, "What's your phone number?" or, "I just want to email you," but they quickly worked with Solvvy to adjust the way it was implemented to make sure people they can get the help they need, whatever way they want it. "If they're able to self-serve that's great, but if they need to call or email, we pop up that phone number or ticket submission option right at the end so it's easy to reach us."

Solvvy sits on the Invaluable Help Center page as well as in a widget that customers can access from auction catalog and item pages. With double the number of inquiries coming

from bidders versus sellers, Invaluable has been focused on improving self-service for those users, which frees up agents to handle the more in-depth questions, including those on the seller side. Users can ask questions in their own words and get fast, accurate answers, not only directing them to the right article but to the exact section with the information they need. It provides answers about things like how to create an account, error messages, searching for items, managing alerts, and general registration questions. And for the questions Invaluable can't answer, Solvvy is able to redirect users to the right place, saving time and frustration on both sides.

Results and What's Next

According to Ziebell, Invaluable has seen the biggest drop in their volume of phone calls since implementing Solvvy. Monthly calls averaged upwards of 4-5,000 in 2016 and 2017, but since partnering with Solvvy that's dropped to under 3,000. With Solvvy handling the simple inquiries, Invaluable has been able to restructure its customer care team, bringing it back in-house and reducing the headcount by half—while also supporting the company's overall growth. Solvvy has also helped Invaluable identify gaps in their knowledge base content and continually improve it. And thanks to a new partnership with a company that offers online appraisals, it will soon be able to answer those questions, too—one of the most viewed topics. For customers who can't find what they're looking for, Solvvy submits a support ticket that includes information about their query, which helps agents address it more easily.

Invaluable recently launched a new brand called Auction Zip, which has a global user base in the millions and did not have a Help Center in place at all. "On the bidder side, we were able to take the content from the Invaluable Help Center and almost copy and paste it, because we knew what bidders would ask," says Ziebell. "But it's been interesting to start writing help content for what we think will be the most frequently asked questions from auctioneers." As they continue to build that out, Solvvy helps streamline support for auctioneers by asking for an ID number in the ticket submission workflow that helps the support team look up their account for quicker resolution.

Looking ahead, Invaluable plans to continue to build out the Help Center content on both Invaluable and Auction Zip, for both bidders and sellers. "We're excited to see how that grows this year," says Ziebell, "and as Solvvy continues to release new features we're excited to try them, too. We're looking forward to the upcoming image and GIF support Solvvy will be offering when it serves up solutions." Wherever Invaluable looks to increase and improve self-service across their platform, Solvvy will be ready to help people get the information they need.