

# Now Tech: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020

Forrester's Overview Of 22 Knowledge Management Providers

by Kate Leggett

July 23, 2020

## Why Read This Report

You can use knowledge management (KM) solutions to empower customers and front-office workers with curated answers to common questions, drive customer satisfaction, and create lasting customer success. To realize these benefits, you'll first have to select from a diverse set of vendors that vary by size, functionality, geography, and vertical market focus. Application development & delivery (AD&D) professionals should use this report to understand the value they can expect from a KM solution provider and to select one based on size and functionality.

## Key Takeaways

### **Improve Effective Engagement With Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management solutions provide a wealth of benefits. They increase operational efficiencies and customer satisfaction, decrease engagement friction, and contribute to ongoing customer success.

### **Select Vendors Based On Size And Functionality**

Large vendors serve a wide selection of use cases, while small to midsize vendors provide deep capabilities on specific market requirements for quick starts.

### **Success Is Heavily Dependent On Strategy, Process, And Technology**

To realize success with a knowledge management program, you must define your engagement strategy, knowledge maintenance processes, and roles supporting this initiative.

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## Forrester's Overview Of 22 Knowledge Management Providers



by [Kate Leggett](#)  
with [Daniel Hong](#), Hailey Colin, and Shayna Neuburg  
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### Related Research Documents

- [How To Scale Your Chatbot](#)
- [The Forrester Tech Tide™: Contact Center Technologies For Customer Service, Q3 2018](#)
- [The Forrester Wave™: Customer Service Solutions, Q2 2019](#)
- [The Three Customer Service Megatrends In 2020: Fuse AI And Agents To Drive Better Experiences](#)



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## Improve Effective Engagement With Knowledge Management

Customers demand effortless engagement delivered via self-service or via knowledgeable agents who have a full understanding of who the customers are, their history, and their context. They also expect to interact over the channel and touchpoint of their choice. In fact, customer service organizations support an average of eight communication channels — a number that is projected to grow to 11 by 2021.<sup>1</sup> Customer service leaders and their organizations increasingly invest in knowledge management solutions to add order and easy access to content from any touchpoint or channel for customers and agents alike.

Forrester defines knowledge management solutions as:

*Software used to create, publish, and maintain curated content, enabling employees to answer internal and customer-facing questions and customers to find answers via self-service.<sup>2</sup>*

Companies invest in knowledge management solutions to:

- › **Empower customer service agents to deliver successful outcomes.** One of the top three drivers of customer service success is agent knowledge.<sup>3</sup> The early days of knowledge management focused on streamlining access to relevant and accurate curated content. Now, machine learning, natural language search, intent derivation, and personalization enable agents to access journey-specific contextual content in the context of their actions and comply with regulatory policy.
- › **Drive customer satisfaction and engagement.** Customers use self-service knowledge to quickly find answers to common questions, increasing their satisfaction and deflecting inquiries from the contact center. Self-service knowledge also helps customers to gain confidence in their purchases during the buying process — increasing conversion rates and revenue.
- › **Create lasting customer success.** Customers use knowledge management for product and new feature education, best-practice application, and peer input. This eases their onboarding, allowing them to realize quick value from their purchases. It also increases product knowledge, which helps drive customer retention.

## Select Vendors Based On Size And Functionality

We've based our analysis of the knowledge management market on two factors: market presence and functionality.

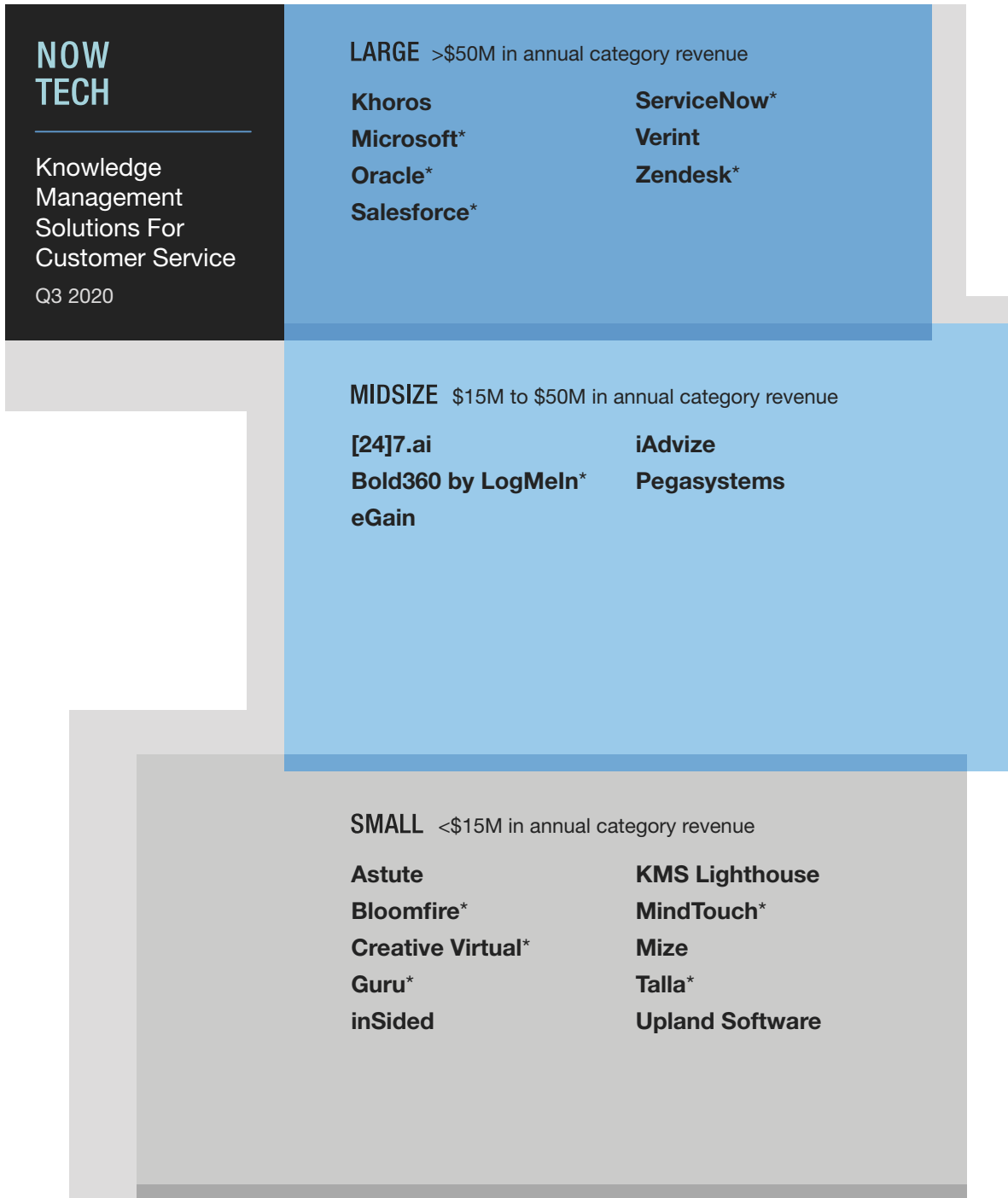
### Knowledge Management For Customer Service Market Presence Segments

We segmented the vendors in this market into three categories, based on knowledge management revenue: large established players (more than \$50 million in knowledge management revenue), midsize players (\$15 million to \$50 million in revenue), and smaller players (less than \$15 million in revenue) (see Figure 1). We did not include vendors that we estimated to have less than \$3 million in revenue.

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**FIGURE 1** Now Tech Market Presence Segments: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020



\*Forrester estimate

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**Knowledge Management Functionality Segments**

To explore functionality at a deeper level, we broke the knowledge management market into four segments, each with varying capabilities (see Figure 2 and see Figure 3):

- › **Specialist knowledge vendors provide standalone knowledge solutions.** These solutions are often integrated into customer service applications geared to organizations that handle broad and complex customer service queries, often in multiple languages. These solutions have best-in-breed, AI-fueled capabilities to create and manage content — including autogenerating content, organizing content into topic clusters, advanced search with intent derivation, analyzing trends to understand surging content, and optimizing most-used content and knowledge summarization.
- › **Customer service vendors provide solutions for omnichannel customer interactions.** They are used to manage customer incidents over the voice channel and digital and social channels. Knowledge management is an integral component and cannot be purchased separately. These vendors proactively display knowledge to agents and customers based on case, customer details, process step, and engagement channel. They support customizable authoring workflows, natural language understanding (NLU) search and basic intent derivation, and knowledge optimization based on user feedback and behavioral analysis.
- › **Digital engagement vendors offer personalized interactions during a customer journey.** They provide conversational assistance to users to uncover intent, delivering answers that are contextual to the customer, product, journey, and behavior. These solutions have broad AI and machine learning capabilities to organize content, optimize the relevance of search results, and surface knowledge gaps and usage trends. As such, companies often deploy these knowledge solutions for pre- and postpurchase engagement.
- › **Collaborative knowledge management vendors support crowdsourced knowledge.** Employees can author knowledge in the flow of their work or use knowledge sourced from community answers. Knowledge spans the range of answers, educational content, tutorials, and best practices. Knowledge users take collective responsibility for the health of the knowledge base via feedback and active reviews. These vendors are used companywide, for sales enablement or customer service. As such, they integrate with CRM, products, and sales engagement platforms as well as employee collaboration tools.

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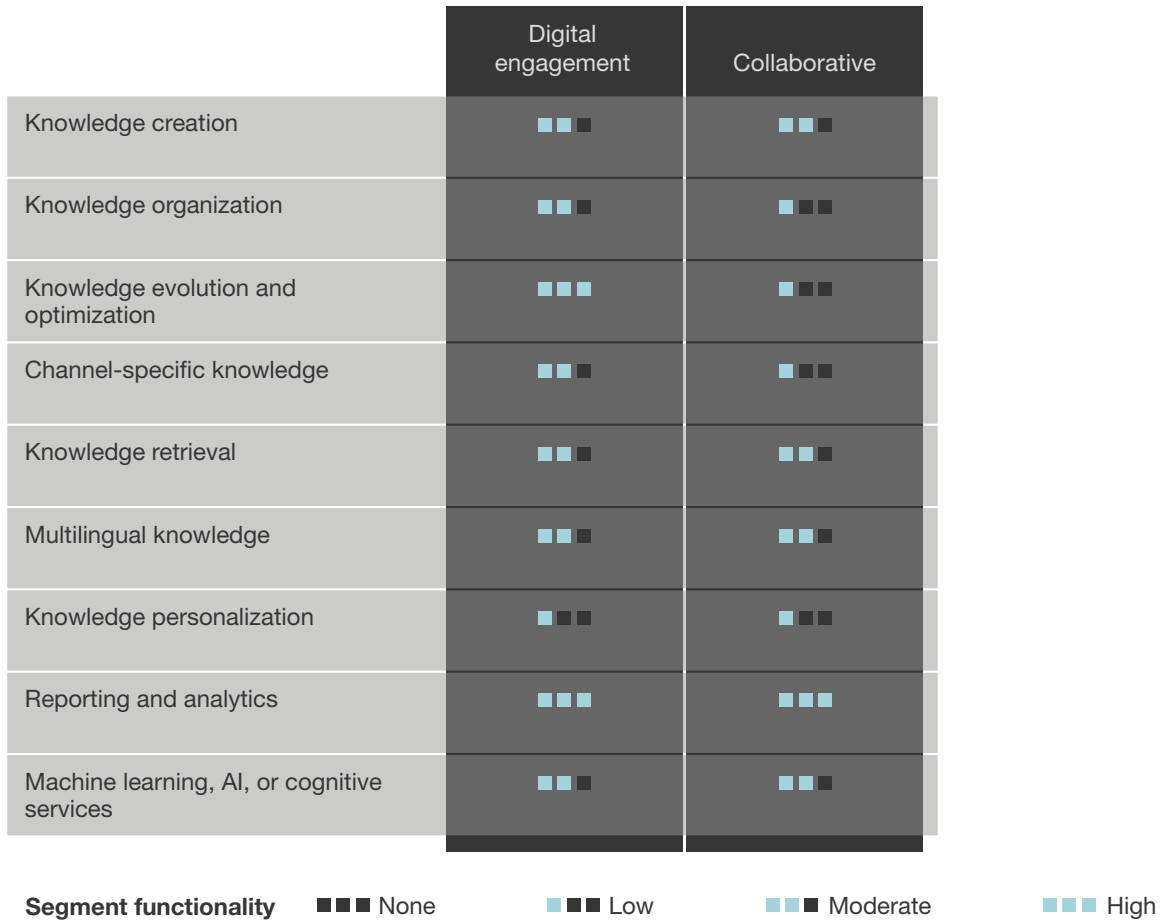
**FIGURE 2** Now Tech Functionality Segments: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020, Part 1



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**FIGURE 3** Now Tech Functionality Segments: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020, Part 2



### Align Individual Vendor Solutions To Your Organization’s Needs

The following tables provide an overview of vendors with details on functionality category, geography, and vertical market focus (see Figure 4, see Figure 5, and see Figure 6).

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**FIGURE 4** Now Tech Large Vendors: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020**LARGE** >\$50M in annual category revenue

	<b>Primary functionality segments</b>	<b>Geographic presence (by revenue %)</b>	<b>Vertical market focus (by revenue)</b>	<b>Sample customers</b>
<b>Khoros</b>	Collaborative	NA 65%; EMEA 30%; AP 5%	Software; high-tech products/manufacturing; telecommunications	Microsoft; PayPal; Schneider Electric
<b>Microsoft</b>	Customer service	NA 45%; EMEA 35%; AP 20%*	Financial services; telco; retail*	HP; MetroBank; NedBank
<b>Oracle</b>	Specialist	NA 50%; LATAM 10%; EMEA 30%; AP 10%*	Financial services; retail; high tech*	Freddie Mac; Radware
<b>Salesforce</b>	Customer service	NA (includes LATAM) 71%; EMEA 20%; AP 9%*	Communications, media, and telecoms; high tech; healthcare and life sciences	DoorDash; Marriott; Vizio
<b>ServiceNow</b>	Customer service	NA 65%; EMEA 26%; AP (includes LATAM) 9%*	High tech; telecommunications; financial services	Gemalto (a Thales company); NICE Systems; the state of Tennessee
<b>Verint</b>	Specialist	NA 52%; EMEA 29%; AP 19%	Finance; insurance; retail	BMW; Equiniti; Garmin
<b>Zendesk</b>	Customer service	NA 52%; LATAM 8%; EMEA 28%; AP 11%*	Software; retail; consumer services	Freshly; Squarespace; Trustpilot

\*The vendor did not provide information for this cell; this is Forrester's estimate.

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**FIGURE 5** Now Tech Midsize Vendors: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020**MIDSIZE** \$15 to \$50M in annual category revenue

	<b>Primary functionality segments</b>	<b>Geographic presence (by revenue %)</b>	<b>Vertical market focus (by revenue)</b>	<b>Sample customers</b>
<b>[24]7.ai</b>	Digital engagement	NA 82%; EMEA 1%; AP 17%	Banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI); telecom; travel and hospitality	Blue Cross Blue Shield; Dish Network; TD Bank
<b>Bold360 by LogMeIn</b>	Digital engagement	NA 80%; LATAM 2%; EMEA 14%, AP 4%*	Retail and e-tail; financial services and insurance; telecommunications	Fannie Mae; Royal Bank of Scotland; VF Corporation (The North Face, Timberland)
<b>eGain</b>	Specialist	NA 50%; EMEA 50%	BFSI; healthcare; government	British Telecom; Department of Veterans Affairs; WorldPay
<b>iAdvize</b>	Collaborative	NA 18%; EMEA 82%	Retail; tourism and hospitality; finance	Lowe's; Samsung; TUI
<b>Pegasystems</b>	Customer service	NA 59%; LATAM 1%; EMEA 30%; AP 10%	Financial services (including insurance); healthcare; CSPS and public sector	GAIG; Kaiser Permanente; Scotia Bank

\*The vendor did not provide information for this cell; this is Forrester's estimate.

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**FIGURE 6** Now Tech Small Vendors: Knowledge Management Solutions For Customer Service, Q3 2020**SMALL** <\$15M in annual category revenue

	<b>Primary functionality segments</b>	<b>Geographic presence (by revenue %)</b>	<b>Vertical market focus (by revenue)</b>	<b>Sample customers</b>
<b>Astute</b>	Specialist	NA 88%; EMEA 12%	Automotive; CPG; grocery	Ford; J.M. Smucker; Kroger
<b>Bloomfire</b>	Collaborative	NA 80%; EMEA 15%; AP 5%	Business and professional services; insurance and protection; financial institutions and banking	American Home Shield; Dominion Energy Resources; Jackson Hewitt
<b>Creative Virtual</b>	Digital engagement	NA 35%; EMEA 55%; AP 10%	Financial services; telecommunications; travel/hospitality	American Family Insurance; BT; HSBC
<b>Guru</b>	Collaborative	NA 88%; LATAM 4%; EMEA 7%; AP 2%	Software; business services; banking and financial services	Shopify; Slack; Spotify
<b>inSided</b>	Collaborative	NA 40%; EMEA 60%	B2B software and software-as-a-service; telecommunications; consumer online services	Coursera; Gainsight; T-Mobile
<b>KMS Lighthouse</b>	Specialist	NA 50%; EMEA 35%; AP 15%	Finance (banking and insurance); telecom; healthcare	GE Healthcare; Tele2; Unum
<b>MindTouch</b>	Specialist	NA 80%; LATAM 2%; EMEA 14%; AP 3%	Computer software; IT services; manufacturing durables	8x8; Waters; Whirlpool
<b>Mize</b>	Specialist	NA 60%; LATAM 5%; EMEA 25%; AP 10%	Heavy equipment; consumer durables; machinery	AGCO; Electrolux; Takeuchi
<b>Talla</b>	Digital engagement	NA 65%; EMEA 15%; AP 20%	Knowledge support; business process automation; product knowledge	DHHS Australia; Mutual of Omaha; Toast
<b>Upland Software</b>	Specialist	NA 70%; EMEA 28%; AP 1%; LATAM 1%	Financial services; insurance; communications	Nestle; Paychex; Syngenta

## Recommendations

### Success Is Heavily Dependent On Strategy, Process, And Technology

Knowledge management solutions allow content to be created, optimized, and used via the workflows and patterns that they need to deliver successful outcomes to customers. As an AD&D pro, you should do the following to assess this class of products:

- › **Articulate your knowledge strategy.** Define up front the strategic goal of a knowledge deployment — such as using self-service knowledge to deflect simple, repetitive inquiries; capturing knowledge to help agents resolve complex issues; harvesting the knowledge of your extended workforce, which may involve contract or gig workers as well as badged employees; driving customer engagement and loyalty; or supporting prepurchase scenarios to drive conversions. Then, define high-level capabilities to support your end goal.
- › **Define your knowledge program.** Decide how you will author and publish knowledge. For example, decide whether only a small group of knowledge workers will be responsible for authoring and publishing, whether certified agents or any agent will be allowed to author knowledge, and whether customers or contract workers will be able to create knowledge or flag community content to be added to a knowledge base. Define and communicate roles, responsibilities, and knowledge processes that you will adopt to support your knowledge management initiative.
- › **Understand that knowledge management is a journey.** Knowledge becomes stale as soon as you stop focusing on it. Follow best practices to maintain knowledge, including adopting relevant knowledge methodologies like the Consortium for Service Innovation's KCS.<sup>4</sup> Tie knowledge management continuous improvement activities to company KPIs to ensure that stakeholders and executives realize the economic benefits of knowledge management.

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## Supplemental Material

### Market Presence Methodology

We defined market presence in Figure 1 based on factors such as revenue size, geographic presence, and use and interest as expressed by Forrester clients.

To complete our review, Forrester requested information from vendors. If vendors did not share this information with us, we made estimates based on available secondary information. We've marked companies with an asterisk if we estimated revenues or information related to geography or industries. Forrester fact-checked this report with vendors before publishing.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Source: 2020 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, NTT (<https://hello.global.ntt/insights/2020-global-cx-benchmarking-report>).
- <sup>2</sup> See the Forrester report "[The Forrester Tech Tide™: Contact Center Technologies For Customer Service, Q3 2018](#)."
- <sup>3</sup> Source: 2020 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, NTT (<https://hello.global.ntt/insights/2020-global-cx-benchmarking-report>).
- <sup>4</sup> KCS, or knowledge-centered support, is a methodology to author and maintain knowledge. Source: Consortium for Service Innovation (<http://www.serviceinnovation.org>).

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