

Case Study: Staples

Proven E-mail Management for Leading Retailer of Office Supplies



THE COMPANY

Largest operator of office supply superstores and multi-channel (stores, catalogue, on-line, & contract) B2B retailer of office products, furniture, technology and business services.

THE CHALLENGE

Provide a scalable, flexible and well-supported solution for e-mail management to enhance service excellence.

THE SOLUTION

KANA Response

THE RESULTS

Productivity increase of 25%; 12 month ROI; higher customer satisfaction.

KANA Response helps drive higher levels of customer satisfaction with ROI achieved in 12 months.

Staples implemented KANA Response to meet the e-mail management needs of its fast growing online business. KANA Response proved to be best-of-breed in all respects that were important to Staples including scalability, functionality and vendor support.

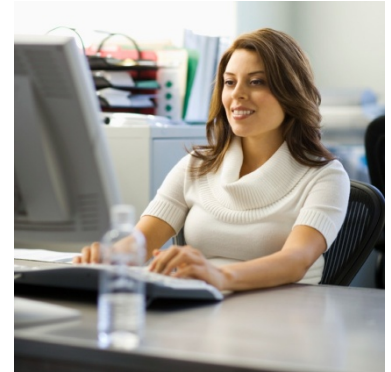
Customer service representative (CSR) productivity jumped by 10% immediately after KANA Response entered production, and has grown since then to an estimated 25% improvement. KANA Response also equipped CSRs to achieve an industry-leading e-mail response time, helping Staples increase customer satisfaction. These factors enabled Staples to recover its investment in KANA Response within 12 months.

"KANA Response has been a big win for all involved – our CSRs, our management, and most importantly our customers."

Randy Scollins, Director of Strategy and Implementation

Staples, Inc. is an \$11 billion retailer of office supplies, business services, furniture and technology to consumers and business from home-based to Fortune 500 companies in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. Headquartered outside Boston, Staples invented the office superstore concept and today is the largest operator of office superstores in the world. The company has approximately 53,000 employees serving customers through more than 1,400 office superstores, mail order catalogs, e-commerce and a contract business.

Staples has grown dramatically throughout its corporate life. With this growth came a great deal of strain on the system that Staples used in the past for managing responses to e-mails from customers. The solution lacked the scalability to keep pace with the increasing volumes of orders and inquiries that customers sent by e-mail.



“We performed a detailed evaluation of the major e-mail management solutions, and everyone here concurred that KANA Response is best-of-breed,” said Randy Scollins, Director of Strategy and Implementation for Staples. “Our CSRs found KANA Response to be intuitive, powerful and a key tool for helping Staples to provide excellent customer service. Our administrators saw the ability to leverage the solution’s rules logic to optimize the timeliness of responses to customers, such as the ability to segregate requests by type. KANA Response is reasonably priced and well supported, and it has the scalability to keep up with our growth in e-mail volume.”

KANA Response also displayed the flexibility to meet the company’s unique needs in setting customer expectations for on-time deliveries in the country’s various time zones.

Productivity Up 10% Immediately and Continues to Grow

Staples chose KANA Response, and KANA Professional Services completed the implementation on time and on goal in every respect.

“Immediately we saw our CSRs’ productivity jump by 10%, and it’s been growing steadily ever since,” reported Scollins. “Now, with all the other improvements we’ve made since then, it’s harder to pinpoint the contribution KANA Response makes to their efficiency. But I’d estimate that the CSRs are 25% more productive than they would have been with our previous solution.”

One feature of KANA Response that has proven especially beneficial to Staples is its ability to set up queues based on the zip code of the person who initiates an e-mail. Staples takes advantage of this feature to set customer expectations for timely deliveries, which are based on specific cutoff times expressed in the customer’s time zone. The flexibility of KANA Response allows CSRs to manage orders in the proper sequence to ensure orders are fulfilled on time for all customers, including those in the coastal time zones.

E-mail Response in Industry-Leading Time

At the outset of the KANA Response project, Staples established a goal of rapidly replying to customer e-mails. “We’ve exceeded that goal handsomely, even though our e-mail volume has increased by well over 100% since then,” said Scollins.

Staples began by deploying KANA Response for the 200 CSRs who reply to e-mails sent to staples.com. Since then Staples has broadened the use of KANA Response to include its sister company Quill, its Canadian operation Business Depot, and its contract business that serves its Fortune 500 customers.

Nearly 400 CSRs in North America use the solution. Next, in the spring of 2002, Staples went international with KANA Response to bring its many benefits to European customers as well.

Staples has kept pace with new releases of KANA Response. Scollins reports that each new release contains important improvements in functionality, and that KANA continues to provide excellent support whenever it is required, including timely escalation of issues when needed.

“KANA Response has been a big win for all involved - our CSRs, our management, and most importantly our customers,” concluded Scollins. “It’s helped us maintain high levels of customer satisfaction, which in turn helps us grow the business. Considering that along with the productivity improvement, our investment was repaid within the first year. KANA Response came through on every expectation we had going in, including the scalability to continue to meet our volumes and needs. There’s no doubt that KANA Response is best-of-breed for e-mail management. We’re very pleased with our decision. KANA is certainly our vendor of choice for e-mail management.”

To learn more about how the KANA suite of intelligent multi-channel solutions can help you create customers for life, call **1-800-737-8738**.