

**ZUYD UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE**

**Zuyd University  
of Applied Sciences** The logo consists of the letters 'ZU' stacked above 'YD' in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

Graduation Project

Undergraduate Thesis of the International Business Program

Juan David Beltrán

Maastricht, the Netherlands  
2023

ZUYD UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Zuyd University  
of Applied Sciences 

Graduation Project

Undergraduate Thesis of the International Business Program

Juan David Beltrán

Kalogeras Nikos

International Business

Maastricht, the Netherlands  
2023

## **Acknowledgment**

I want to thank Kalogeras Nikos for his advice and support in this work, Ruud Simons and Marcel Mertens for the comments and guidance.

### **Declaration of Originality and Autonomy**

I declare under the gravity of the oath, that I have written the title document “Graduation Project”, in the grade option of International Marketing IB v2 and that, therefore, its content is original.

I declare that I have clearly and precisely indicated all direct and indirect sources of information and that this work has not been given to any other institution for qualification or publication purposes.

Juan David Beltrán

### **Disclaimer Statement**

I declare that the intellectual responsibility of this work belongs exclusively to its author. The Universidad del Rosario is not responsible for the content, opinions, or ideologies expressed in whole or in part in it.

Juan David Beltrán

## **Management Summary**

The thesis focuses on identifying and addressing the factors contributing to request delays in Boston Scientific's Customer Care team. The research aims to provide insights and recommendations to improve the team's performance and achieve the organization's goals. The study conducted a thorough literature review, exploring topics such as communication channels, task distribution, training, and resource availability. It analyzed the current process for managing requests and identified the root causes of delays.

Based on the findings, several strategic options were proposed, including improving communication channels, optimizing task distribution, providing comprehensive training, and expanding the Customer Care team. A decision matrix was developed to evaluate the relevance of each strategy based on criteria such as ease of implementation, risk, long-term benefits, and financial implications. This helped to determine that all the strategies will be recommended to the team, but they will be implemented in a specific order to be successful.

The estimated cost for implementing these strategies is €49,450, taking into account the trainer salary and hiring expenses. The benefits of the project include improved customer satisfaction, increased sales, enhanced productivity, and long-term growth for Boston Scientific. The actions that before taken around 5 to 7 days will be reduced to 1 to 3 days.

In conclusion, it is recommended to Boston Scientific to implement the proposed action plan in order to improve the customer experience and reach the goals of the Customer Care team.

## List of Content

1. Research Set Up.....	13
1.1 Introduction .....	13
1.2 Company Profile .....	13
1.2.2 Organizational Structure of the Team .....	13
1.2.3 Vision, Mission, Company Slogan & Core Values .....	14
1.2.4 Competitive Environment.....	15
1.2.1 Company Overview.....	15
1.3 Problem Statement .....	16
1.3.1 Current Situation.....	16
1.3.2 Desired Situation .....	17
1.3.3 Gap.....	17
1.3.4 Problem Statement.....	18
1.4 Company Objective.....	18
1.5 Research Objective.....	18
1.5.1 Research Questions.....	19
1.6 Justification of Methods .....	19
1.6.1 Secondary Desk Research .....	20
1.6.2 Primary Field Research .....	20

1.7	Limitations .....	20
2.	Literature Review.....	21
2.1	Introduction .....	21
2.2	Communication Channels .....	22
2.3	Task Distribution.....	23
2.4	Training .....	23
2.5	Resource Availability.....	24
2.6	5 Why's technique.....	25
2.6	Conclusion – Learning Lessons .....	26
3.	Internal Analysis .....	26
3.1	Introduction .....	26
3.2	Current Process for Managing Requests .....	27
3.3	Root Causes of Delays .....	30
3.3.1	Problem-solving.....	30
3.4	Types of Requests and Time Analysis .....	32
3.4.1	Types of Requests.....	32
3.4.2	Time Analysis.....	33
4.	External Analysis .....	34
4.1	Introduction .....	34
4.2	Best Practices and Competitor Analysis .....	35

4.2.1 Best Practices .....	35
4.2.2 Competitor Analysis .....	36
5. Strategic Options and Best Solutions.....	37
5.1 Introduction .....	37
5.2 Analysis of Findings.....	37
5.3 Strategies .....	38
5.3.1 Implementation of a Unified Communication Platform.....	38
5.3.2 Optimized Task Distribution .....	38
5.3.3 Development of a Comprehensive Training Program.....	38
5.3.4 Team Expansion Through Hiring .....	39
5.4 Best Solutions.....	39
6. Policy Recommendations.....	41
6.1 Introduction .....	41
6.2 Action Plan.....	42
6.2.1 Training .....	42
6.2.2 Hiring.....	44
6.2.3 Migration to Service Cloud .....	44
6.3 Financial Underpinning.....	45
6.3.2 Benefits .....	45
6.3.1 Costs .....	47

	10
6.4 Conclusion.....	47
Bibliography .....	48
Appendices.....	50

**List of Tables**

Table 1. Decision Matrix .....	40
--------------------------------	----

### List of Figures

Figure 1. Organizational structure .....	14
Figure 2. Customer Care team current process .....	28
Figure 3. Amount of orders 2022 – 2023.....	29
Figure 4. Average of days for solving a case.....	34
Figure 5. Training Gantt Chart.....	43
Figure 6. Current sales net 2023 .....	46
Figure 7. Sales net 2022.....	46
Figure 8. Sales net 2021 .....	46

## **1. Research Set Up.**

### **1.1 Introduction**

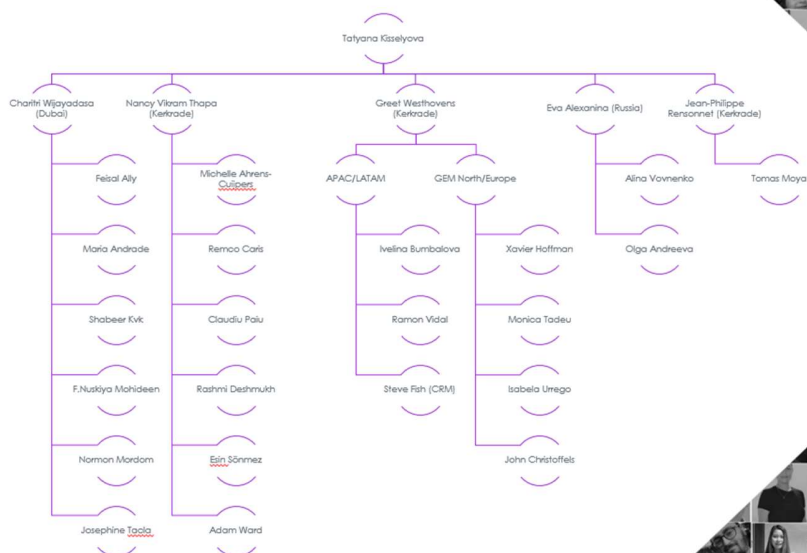
The first chapter will provide an overview of Boston Scientific Corporation, an esteemed maker of medical devices founded by John Abele and Pete Nicholas in 1979 and now recognized worldwide. Current employees at this corporation total more than 36,000, and operations span 100+ countries. Following is an outline of their problem statement as well as the current, desired situation and gaps for improvement. This problem statement will form the cornerstone of this thesis. Based on it, company goals, overall research purposes, associated questions, design considerations, methodology choices, and limitations will all be presented for discussion to conclude this chapter.

### **1.2 Company Profile**

#### **1.2.2 Organizational Structure of the Team**

Below in Figure 1, an overview of the customer service organizational structure can be found. The focus of this project will be on the team of customer care at Kerkrade which is formed by one supervisor and 7 agents.

## Customer Service Export team



**Figure 1. Organizational structure**

Source: Self-made

### 1.2.3 Vision, Mission, Company Slogan & Core Values

**Vision:** We foster an environment of creativity to transform new ideas into breakthrough services and solutions that create value for patients, customers, and employees.

**Mission:** Boston Scientific is dedicated to transforming lives through innovative medical solutions that improve the health of patients around the world.

**Company Slogan:** Advancing science for life.

**Core Values:** Boston Scientific counts with 6 core values that they use to work with their patients, customers, and employees. These values are Caring, Meaningful Innovation, High Performance, Global Collaboration, Diversity, and Winning Spirit

### **1.2.4 Competitive Environment**

Boston Scientific operates in an industry with intense competition among major players such as Medtronic, Abbott Laboratories, Johnson & Johnson, Becton Dickinson, and Siemens Healthineers for market share. Each of these firms offers medical devices and diagnostic products with specific expertise in cardiovascular, diabetes, and neurological care.

Boston Scientific remains committed to maintaining and driving growth despite stiff competition, investing heavily in R&D, streamlining operations, and differentiating its products and services from those of its rivals. Furthermore, Boston Scientific closely tracks market trends as well as changes in healthcare regulations and policies which could significantly change its position within its industry.

Boston Scientific understands the challenges it faces competing in an intensely competitive medical technology sector yet is determined to remain viable.

### **1.2.1 Company Overview**

Boston Scientific is a renowned, globally recognized medical technology company that is dedicated to developing and manufacturing cutting-edge medical devices that are used across a wide range of medical specialties. The company, founded in 1979, is headquartered in Marlborough, Massachusetts. With an extensive product portfolio that encompasses devices for treating cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, and pulmonary diseases, as well as pain management, urology and pelvic health, and neuromodulation, Boston Scientific is at the forefront of medical technology innovation. The company's unwavering commitment to research and development has driven its success in the industry.

Boston Scientific's mission is centered around improving patient care by providing physicians with medical technologies. To this end, groundbreaking devices like stents, catheters, implantable defibrillators, endoscopes, and bronchoscopes have been created as a result. Boston Scientific also pledges its commitment to sustainable business practices with ambitious goals to reduce its environmental footprint while increasing diversity and inclusion within its ranks. Boston Scientific stands out among medical technology firms due to their dedication and innovation - making an undeniable positive impactful contribution that directly improves patient care.

One of Boston Scientific's greatest strengths lies in its dedication to research and development (R&D). Boston Scientific makes significant R&D investments, dedicating themselves to advancing medical science while creating innovative new products that go to market. They have an outstanding track record in creating breakthrough technologies like drug-eluting stents for coronary artery disease treatment and neurostimulation systems for chronic pain management, among other breakthroughs. Boston Scientific also boasts strong quality and safety controls - adhering to strict manufacturing quality control standards before testing and regulatory approval before they reach consumers.

## **1.3 Problem Statement**

### **1.3.1 Current Situation**

Boston Scientific has established a Customer Care team dedicated to managing requests from various customers and locations worldwide, right now this team is formed by 9 people. But this team has sustained a significant number of staff losses as a result of multiple individuals defecting from that role. Furthermore, Boston Scientific implemented a platform called service

cloud three years ago, which is designed to automate some operations and organize the view of the requests that consumers give to the team via email. But this change was not so well received by the team as some were reluctant to use this platform, leading to a lack of control over who, how, and when a request is processed.

Requests are organized into four priority levels, categorizing them into Critical, High, Medium, and Low requests with Critical requests being delivered within one day of receipt; High requests are supposed to be completed one working day later while Medium requests three working days later, and Low requests within ten working days respectively. Unfortunately, Medium and High priority requests are struggling to meet delivery goals set forth by Boston Scientific; But they do not understand the source of this issue.

### **1.3.2 Desired Situation**

Boston Scientific tries to identify and investigate the root causes of late responses to requests from customers, while also providing timely updates on case statuses as well as solutions tailored to each employee's priorities. Employees can expect to receive timely updates on the status of cases that need priority resolution within a reasonable timeline. Also hopes to reach the standards that the customers in this market are demanding.

### **1.3.3 Gap**

To address this problem, this thesis will conduct a research study to ascertain the cause of Medium and High Priority Request delays within Boston Scientific's Customer Care Team. This investigation may explore factors like workload distribution, communication channels, and training resources available to them as possible causes. Furthermore, recommendations would be

made to improve the current process in order to provide prompt responses based on customers' requests priority levels.

#### **1.3.4 Problem Statement**

Based upon the current, desired situation and gap, the researcher has formulated the following research question; What are the underlying reasons for the Customer Care team at Boston Scientific struggling to meet the delivery goals for Medium and High priority requests, and how can the process be improved to ensure prompt responses and timely solutions based on the priority level of requests?

#### **1.4 Company Objective**

The objective of the Boston Scientific Customer Care team is to achieve the goal of delivery time set for each priority request. By identifying the root cause of the delay, the company aims to develop recommendations and propose process optimizations to ensure timely solutions are provided to employees based on the priority level of their requests. The team desires to enhance the efficiency of the delivery process by the time of 4 months.

#### **1.5 Research Objective**

The objective of this research will be to identify the problem that causes the requests are not being completed in the time proposed in the salesforce team goals, analyzing the current process, and moreover developing recommendations to improve the team's performance.

In order to achieve this goal, some research questions have been developed. These research questions can be found in the following chapter.

### **1.5.1 Research Questions**

- What is the current process for managing requests in Boston Scientific's Customer Care team?
- Which factors impact the ability of the Customer Care team to meet delivery goals?
- What are the root causes of delays in meeting delivery goals for Medium and High priority requests?
- What types of requests are, and which ones takes the most time to fulfill?
- Which practices could help the team improve the delivery time?
- Do the competitors in this industry use any strategies to improve contact with their customers?

### **1.6 Justification of Methods**

Based on the problem statement and research questions, a quantitative research approach may be best suited for this study. This involves gathering and analyzing numerical data in order to detect patterns, correlations, or cause-and-effect relationships. Conversations or questions with members of the salesforce team as well as relevant stakeholders may help collect this data while numerical analysis can identify factors contributing to Medium or High priority requests being delayed. Furthermore, historical Customer Care team performance data could reveal trends or patterns which explain current circumstances.

### **1.6.1 Secondary Desk Research**

Desk research will be done to get further qualitative insights and background data on the study questions listed in Chapter 1.5.1. In the company's SharePoint, Boston Scientific has a wealth of information that is easily accessible. This data will make it possible to learn more about the business. The best communication channels, workload distribution, training, and resources that Boston Scientific could use to address the issue raised in Chapter 1.3 will also be determined after consulting Google Scholar, the Zuyd Library, industry journals, and the Library of Rosario University.

### **1.6.2 Primary Field Research**

Interviews with members of the Customer Care team will allow for a deeper understanding of the current situation and process used. These interviews will also allow for the needs of this team to be better understood and thus allow for the development of suitable strategic options.

## **1.7 Limitations**

This study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting its results. A key time constraint of data collection and analysis may prevent comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; as a result, the findings presented here may not fully represent the company's situation.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review is to give the researcher learning lessons that can be applied to the research questions posed in chapter one. These learning lessons will also be used to build information and recommendations for Boston Scientific about what could be the possible reasons for request delays. This, in turn, will help Boston Scientific achieve its goal of finding the fundamental reason of the request delays and solving it.

In order to achieve these learning lessons, literature on the following topics will be reviewed:

- Communication channels
- Task distribution
- Training
- Resource availability

The literary works included in this study were thoughtfully selected based on their relevance to the factors that are critical to the Customer Care team's operations. The decision to include these specific works was informed by a careful consideration of the team's key performance indicators and the various challenges they routinely encounter while interacting with customers which will be explained in the following chapters 3 and 4.

Through a rigorous selection process, these works were identified as having the potential to offer valuable insights and practical guidance to the Customer Care team as they navigate complex customer interactions and strive to deliver exceptional service. The works were chosen

based on their ability to address key areas of concern, including effective communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and customer satisfaction.

By analyzing and drawing from these works, the Customer Care team will be better equipped to understand and address the needs and concerns of their customers more effectively and efficiently. This, in turn, will help the investigator to answer the research questions.

## **2.2 Communication Channels**

Effective communication is crucial for any organization to succeed. The use of proper communication channels is key to ensuring that employees receive responses regarding the status of the cases. Communication channels such as emails, telephone calls, and messaging apps have become essential tools for salesforce teams to communicate with employees, customers, and vendors in different geographical locations (Rosenberg, 2015). Rosenberg (2015) explains that one of the main trends in communication channels involves the creation of media assets, including videos, interactive documents, and visually engaging slides, which provide team members with essential information such as frequently asked questions that pertain to daily tasks and processes.

In addition, companies are increasingly adopting collaborative platforms like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Salesforce to enhance communication and collaboration among team members and also with clients (Kane & Brown, 2017). With the emergence of collaborative communication platforms, companies that fail to adopt these tools risk falling behind their competitors. By embracing new technologies, businesses can increase efficiency and improve communication and collaboration among team members. However, Kane and Brown (2017)

highlight the need for careful consideration and planning when implementing new technologies, as companies may face challenges such as resistance from employees or integration issues with existing systems.

### **2.3 Task Distribution**

Task distribution refers to the allocation of tasks and responsibilities among team members. It is essential to ensure that workload distribution is optimized to ensure that the salesforce team can meet delivery goals for all priority levels. Inappropriate distribution of workload can lead to overburdening of some team members, leading to delays in completing tasks (Borad, 2018). One approach to optimizing workload distribution is through the use of workload management software. Such software can help to automate the process of task allocation and ensure that tasks are distributed evenly among team members based on their skills and availability (Lee, 2017).

### **2.4 Training**

Training is a crucial factor in ensuring that the salesforce team has the necessary skills to perform their duties effectively. The lack of proper training can lead to inefficiencies in the sales process, resulting in delays in completing tasks. Regular training programs can help to ensure that the salesforce team is up to date with the latest industry trends, sales techniques, product knowledge, and processes understanding. Furthermore, companies are investing in e-learning platforms to provide on-demand training for their salesforce team members (Duncan & Bowman,

2017). Duncan and Bowman (2017) discuss several types of e-learning tools that can be used for Salesforce training such as:

- **Simulations:** Simulations provide a way for trainees to practice their skills in a controlled environment, allowing them to learn by doing without the risk of real-world consequences.
- **Gamification:** Gamification involves incorporating game-like elements, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, into training programs to increase engagement and motivation.
- **Virtual classrooms:** Virtual classrooms use online tools such as webinars and video conferencing to allow trainees to participate in live training sessions from remote locations.
- **Interactive multimedia:** Interactive multimedia, such as videos, animations, and quizzes, can be used to enhance the learning experience and make training more engaging and interactive.

## **2.5 Resource Availability**

Resource availability refers to the availability of tools and resources necessary to complete tasks. The lack of proper resources can lead to inefficiencies in the sales process, leading to delays in completing tasks. Examples of resources necessary for the salesforce team include understaff, sales automation tools, and customer data analytics tools (LeSueur & Rao, 2017). The article suggests ways in which companies can optimize their resource allocation to improve sales performance:

- **Aligning resources with business goals:** Companies should ensure that their resources are aligned with their overall business goals and objectives to maximize their effectiveness.
- **Focusing on high-value activities:** Companies should prioritize their resource allocation to focus on high-value activities that have the greatest impact on sales performance.
- **Improving resource utilization:** Companies can improve their resource utilization by identifying areas where resources are underutilized and reallocating them to areas where they can be more effective.
- **Investing in training and development:** Companies can invest in the training and development of their sales teams to improve their skills and knowledge, which can lead to improved sales performance.

### **2.6 5 Why's technique**

The 5 Whys technique is a powerful problem-solving tool that involves repeatedly asking "why" to uncover the root causes of a problem. By delving beyond surface-level symptoms, this method enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the problem and conduct a thorough root cause analysis. The 5 Whys technique promotes a systemic perspective, allowing researchers to explore the interconnectedness of factors and trace cause-and-effect relationships. It encourages logical reasoning and critical thinking, as each "why" question builds upon the previous answer. By addressing root causes instead of symptoms, the technique leads to more effective problem-solving strategies and targeted interventions. In an academic thesis, including the 5 Whys technique showcases the researcher's ability to employ a systematic and analytical

approach, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem at hand, enhancing the overall quality of the research conducted. (Lean Learning, 2006)

## **2.6 Conclusion – Learning Lessons**

In conclusion, this literature review provides valuable insights into the factors that impact the salesforce team's performance in meeting customer requests. The study reviewed literature on communication channels, task distribution, training, and resource availability. Effective communication channels are necessary to ensure that employees receive timely updates on the status of customer requests. Task distribution must be optimized to ensure that workload distribution is fair among team members. Proper training programs are necessary to equip the Customer Care team with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. Resource availability is also critical to ensure that team members have the necessary tools and resources to complete tasks efficiently.

## **3. Internal Analysis**

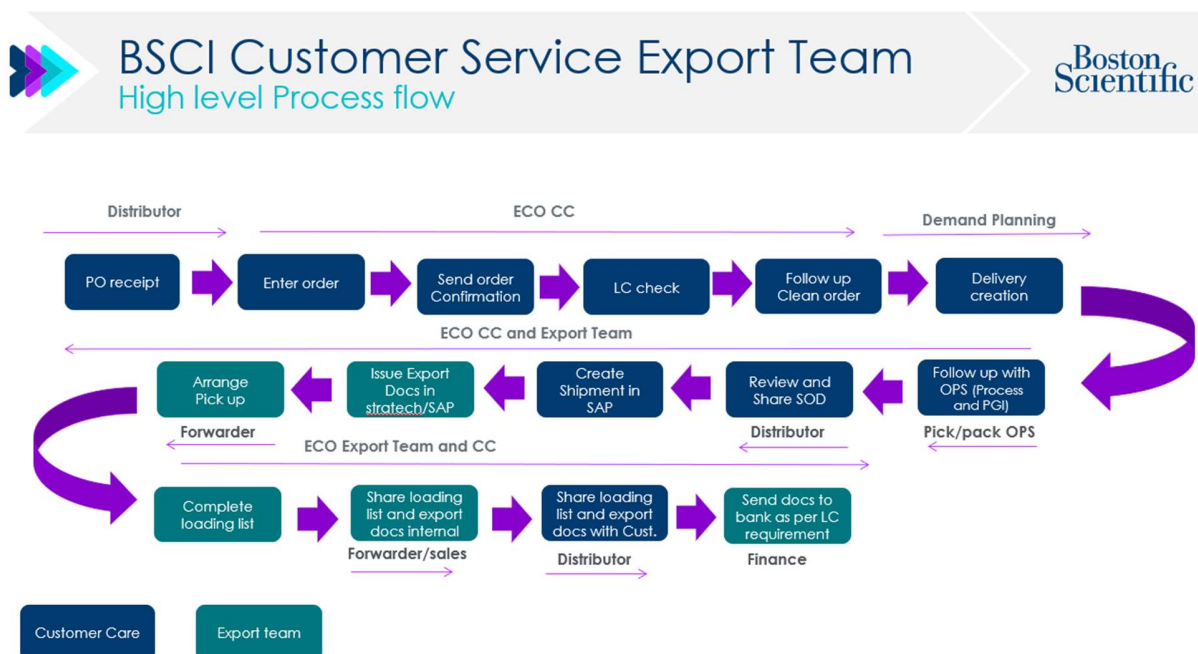
### **3.1 Introduction**

Throughout this external analysis, the research questions regarding performance and internal issues in the Customer Care team presented in Chapter 1 will be answered. The findings from this analysis will help on the factors contributing to request delays, identify areas for improvement, and enable the development of targeted strategies and recommendations. Ultimately, the insights gained from this analysis will assist Boston Scientific in achieving its

goal of improving the request management process and enhancing customer satisfaction. It is important to show that the information used here is based on the literature review and also on the information given by the managers and supervisors of the team.

### **3.2 Current Process for Managing Requests**

For a better understanding of the current process for managing requests, the researcher will conduct interviews with key stakeholders within Boston Scientific's Customer Care team. The interview transcripts can be found in the appendix. These primary research methods will provide firsthand insights into the workflow, communication channels, and tools utilized by the team. Moreover, it is presented in Figure 2 that the process workflow adopted by the Customer Care team encounters a multitude of different stages, thereby needing frequent interaction and coordination with various teams. This elaborate process entails a substantial number of actions to ensure the comprehensive resolution of each individual case.



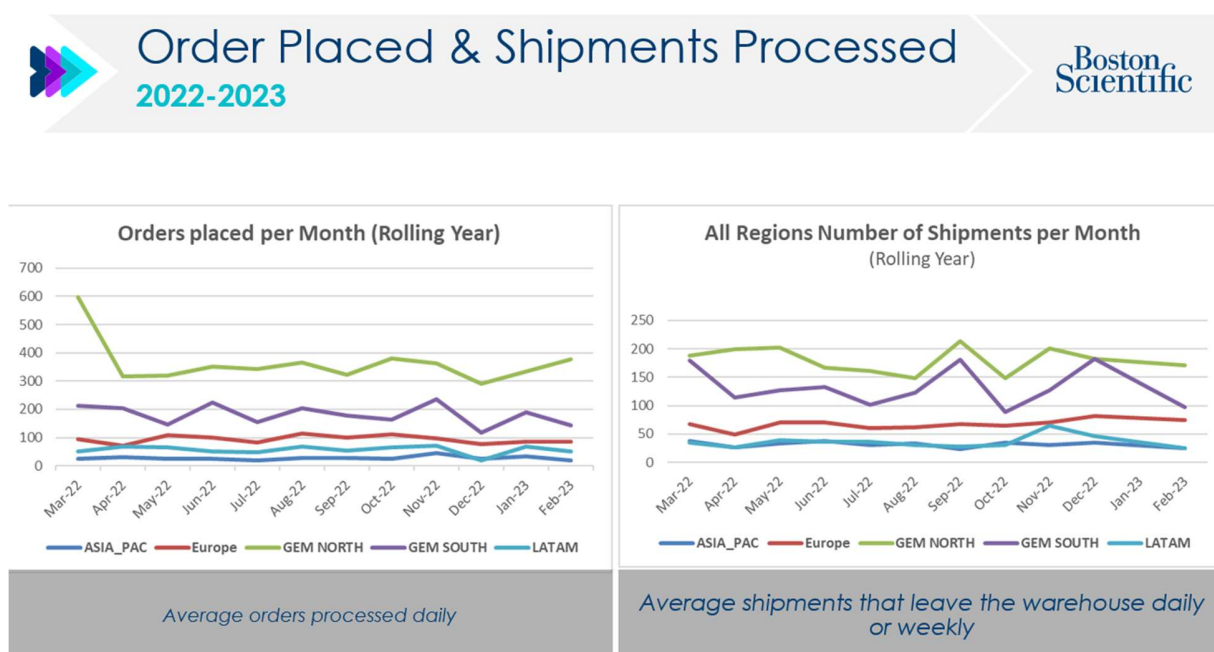
**Figure 2. Customer Care team current process**

Source: Self-made

The interviews conducted with the members of the Customer Care team have provided valuable insights into the current state of request management and the challenges faced by the team. The following key statements were extracted from these interviews.

Firstly, it was revealed that each member of the Customer Care team is responsible for managing a significant number of customers, ranging from 18 to 30 from all around the world, with each customer having different and specialized treatment. This highlights the importance of having enough staff for a team because the number of customers per worker could be sometime overwhelming.

Secondly, the interviews shed light on the daily workload of the team members, with everyone receiving an average of 15 to 20 cases and orders per day. These cases require prompt resolution, but the process is complicated by the extensive paperwork involved and the need to collaborate with other departments such as sales, finance, and the warehouse. This emphasizes the need for streamlined task distribution and improved coordination between teams. As seen in Figure 3, the Customer Care team is leading with around 200 cases and orders daily, each one of them being totally different.



**Figure 3. Amount of orders 2022 – 2023**

Source: Self-made

In addition, it was discovered that not all team members are using the Service Cloud platform from Sales Force. Instead, some members are relying on Outlook for case resolution. This happens because of the changes that the Customer Care team has been through, because

before the implementation of Service Cloud 3 years ago the team members were used to only solve cases via Outlook. This lack of uniformity in the tools being used poses challenges in terms of case tracking and comprehensive data analysis.

The interviews also revealed that while some team members possess some knowledge of the platform, there are still gaps in their understanding of the basic functionalities of the platform and processes that could help in the resolution of some cases. The absence of formal training programs for the team has resulted in individual members acquiring knowledge through self-learning. This highlights the importance of comprehensive and ongoing training, to ensure that all team members are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver efficient and effective customer support.

### **3.3 Root Causes of Delays**

Understanding the root causes of delays in meeting delivery goals for Medium and High priority requests is essential to developing effective solutions. To uncover these root causes, the researcher will employ a root cause analysis methodology, which may involve techniques such as the 5 Whys. This qualitative approach will help to identify issues related to communication channels, task distribution, training, and resource availability.

#### **3.3.1 Problem-solving**

By asking "Why" questions as a strategy mentioned in the literature review, the researcher will go deeper into the root causes of the challenges faced by the Customer Care team at Boston Scientific. The identified issues thanks to the interviews and the understanding of the

complete process of dealing with cases and orders, include the high workload per team member, the need for efficient communication channels, the lack of uniformity in tools, and the absence of formal training programs. Addressing these root causes will be essential for improving the team's performance and resolving the request delays effectively.

- Why are team members receiving a high number of cases?

Since each member of the Customer Care team is responsible for managing 18 to 30 different customers with different needs. It is visible a problem with the task distribution and also the lack of staff in the team.

- Why is there a need for efficient communication channels and processes?

Because team members are receiving around 15 to 20 cases per day that require timely resolution and involve collaboration with other teams. And they are not fulfilling the goals set for the team in order to give the best experience to the customer

- Why are some team members not using the Service Cloud platform?

Because not everyone on the team has adopted the platform since they still don't know how to deal with cases on that platform, and instead, they are solving cases via Outlook.

- Why is the lack of uniformity in tools a challenge?

This aspect presents a challenge as it delays the ability to follow the cases and orders and track the progress of the team members.

- Why is there a gap in knowledge despite some members having in-depth platform knowledge?

Because the team has not received any formal training, relying on self-learning for platform understanding and not all the members of the Customer Care team are open to start using the platform without proper training and knowledge being difficult to embrace the change of platforms in the team.

### **3.4 Types of Requests and Time Analysis**

To gain insights into the types of requests and their corresponding fulfillment timeframes, we will conduct a comprehensive analysis of historical data. This analysis will involve categorizing requests based on priority levels and tracking the time taken to fulfill each category. By comparing the different request types, we can identify patterns and trends that may contribute to delays and prioritize improvement areas.

#### **3.4.1 Types of Requests**

Through interviews conducted with the Customer Care team members, it was determined that the team handles a diverse range of requests from internal and external stakeholders. These requests can be broadly categorized into the following types:

- **Product Inquiries:** These requests involve customers seeking information about Boston Scientific's products, including their features, specifications, and potential applications. Product inquiries often require in-depth knowledge and expertise to address customer concerns accurately.
- **Technical Support:** The Customer Care team also deals with technical support requests, where customers require assistance with troubleshooting, product

installation, or resolving technical issues. These requests may involve collaborating with other departments or teams to provide timely and effective solutions.

- **Order Status and Tracking:** Customers frequently reach out to the team to inquire about the status of their orders or to track shipments. Responding promptly and accurately to these requests is crucial to ensuring customer satisfaction and maintaining transparency in the order fulfillment process.
- **Complaints and Issue Resolution:** The team also handles customer complaints and works towards resolving issues promptly. These requests require a high level of empathy, problem-solving skills, and effective communication to address customer concerns, provide appropriate solutions, and ensure customer retention.
- **Complaints about banks:** Some of the customers usually counts with restrictions in the credit with banks, so the team needs to contact the banks in order to know if all the paperwork is in line and if the customer is able to fulfill the requirements needed.

### **3.4.2 Time Analysis**

In the Financial year 2023, the Service Cloud team got an average solve case of 5 days per case, this lets us see that the whole team throughout the year has been underperforming drastically because the goal Boston Scientific tries to reach is an average solving case time of 3 days, this delay can be caused by several factors that will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Figure 4 below also demonstrates the lack of knowledge in Service Cloud of some users since some of them are not completing cases in more than 100 days this is because, after an investigation of some of these cases, these results are highly concerning to the managers, it was

concluded that some of the people have plenty of open cases and hasn't closed them because they don't know how to finish those cases and sometimes they don't know how to close the case when the issue has been solved, this shows the lack of training in some basic areas on the usage of Service Cloud. Another issue found was the users with the best knowledge in Service Cloud still have an average of 11 to 15 solving time per case and with time this number of cases will continue to grow, and the performance of the team could get worst, this show how this team is understaffed and need new staff with a good amount of knowledge, skills, and training.



*Figure 4. Average of days for solving a case*

Source: Service Cloud, Self-made

## 4. External Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

This external analysis will provide answers to the research questions presented in Chapter 1 regarding the practices and strategies of Customer Care that competitors use in the industry. This analysis will use information from the competitors' web pages and also from the

companies' web pages that give the CRM (Customer Relation Management) service to the competitors.

## **4.2 Best Practices and Competitor Analysis**

To get inspiration and identify potential strategies for improving customer contact, a review of best practices and strategies employed by competitors in the industry. This analysis will involve reviewing the academic literature shown in the literature review. By studying successful approaches taken by competitors, we can adapt and apply relevant strategies to Boston Scientific's Customer Care team.

### **4.2.1 Best Practices**

- **Task Automation and Workflow Management:** Implementing task automation tools and workflow management systems can streamline the process of assigning and tracking customer requests. Such tools help in optimizing task distribution, ensuring equitable workload allocation, and facilitating efficient collaboration among team members. Automation can also reduce manual errors and improve overall productivity.
- **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Providing comprehensive and ongoing training programs is essential to equip the Customer Care team with the necessary knowledge and skills. Training should cover product knowledge, customer service techniques, problem-solving strategies, and effective use of tools and technologies. Regular training sessions, workshops, and e-learning platforms can

help keep team members up to date with industry trends and enhance their performance.

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems:** Implementing a robust CRM system, such as Salesforce, can centralize customer data, track interactions, and streamline customer support processes. A CRM system enables the team to access customer information quickly, track the progress of requests, and provide personalized and efficient support. It also facilitates the analysis of customer data for insights and improvement opportunities.

#### **4.2.2 Competitor Analysis**

To gain further insights into industry best practices, it is essential to conduct a competitor analysis. This analysis involves studying the practices and strategies adopted by key competitors in the market. Boston Scientific can identify areas for improvement and gain a competitive advantage.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 some of the main competitors in the industry are Medtronic, Abbott Laboratories, and Johnson & Johnson. By analyzing their relationship with clients and strategies for customer service, it is concluded that Medtronic prioritizes customer support and employs a multi-channel approach, efficient task distribution, comprehensive training programs, and strategic resource allocation (Marinero, 2021). Abbott Laboratories excels in delivering exceptional customer support through various communication channels, streamlined task distribution, comprehensive training, and strategic resource allocation (Corthout, 2021). Johnson & Johnson emphasizes customer-centric support practices, offering multiple

communication channels, efficient task distribution, comprehensive training programs, and effective resource allocation. (Partners, 2022)

## **5. Strategic Options and Best Solutions**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will relate the findings from chapters 3 and 4 to the overall company and research objectives. Next, this chapter will present various strategic options that could help solve the overall problem statement.

### **5.2 Analysis of Findings**

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted in Chapters 3 and 4, several key findings have emerged. The examination of communication channels revealed a lack of standardized platforms and reliance on manual processes, such as email, delay updates, and tracking of customer requests. Task distribution analysis highlighted an imbalance in workload allocation, leading to some team members being overwhelmed while others underutilized their skills and capacity. The training assessment uncovered a lack of formal training programs, resulting in knowledge gaps and inefficiencies in handling customer cases. Lastly, the evaluation of resource availability exposed limitations in terms of staffing and the utilization of advanced customer support tools.

### **5.3 Strategies**

To address the identified challenges and improve the efficiency of the Customer Care team, several strategic options are proposed.

#### **5.3.1 Implementation of a Unified Communication Platform**

The adoption of a unified communication platform, such as Salesforce Service Cloud, can streamline communication channels and facilitate real-time updates and case tracking. This centralized platform would enable seamless collaboration among team members, customers, and vendors, enhancing response times and improving overall customer satisfaction.

#### **5.3.2 Optimized Task Distribution**

A thorough assessment of workload distribution is recommended to ensure a fair and balanced allocation of tasks among team members. This can be achieved through the implementation of workload management software like Salesforce Service Cloud , which automates task allocation based on skill sets, customer, availability, and priority levels. By optimizing task distribution, the team can ensure prompt resolution of customer requests across all priority levels.

#### **5.3.3 Development of a Comprehensive Training Program**

To bridge the knowledge gaps identified in the training analysis, a comprehensive training program should be established. This program should cover a wide range of topics, including product knowledge, industry trends, communication skills, and problem-solving

techniques. Incorporating both online and in-person training sessions, as well as interactive multimedia tools, will provide continuous learning opportunities and ensure that team members are equipped with the necessary skills to handle customer cases effectively.

#### **5.3.4 Team Expansion Through Hiring**

This strategy involves expanding the Customer Care team by hiring new members to handle the increasing volume of customer requests. By augmenting the workforce, the team can distribute the workload more effectively, reducing the burden on individual team members and improving response times.

#### **5.4 Best Solutions**

In order to have an idea of which is the best strategy to implement first, the researcher will work with a decision matrix that will help to understand which strategy are more relevant and necessary, the matrix will take into account the following criteria:

- **Ease of Implementation:** Measures the ease of implementing the strategy.
- **Risk of Implementation:** Assesses the potential risks associated with implementing the strategy.
- **Long-Term Benefit:** Evaluate the long-term benefits expected from implementing the strategy.
- **Financial Risk:** Reflects the financial risk involved in implementing the strategy.

Each of the mentioned criteria has been given a corresponding weight based upon the importance from 1 to 5. 1 Meaning that is not beneficial to the team and 5 Meaning that is highly beneficial to the team, all criteria count with the same weight because of information that

manager granted the researcher, all the criteria goes along with team goals. The grade of each of the options has been granted by the team manager Greet Westhovens.

**Table 1**

*Decision Matrix*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Ease of Implementation</b>	<b>Risk of Implementation</b>	<b>Long Term Benefit</b>	<b>Financial Risk</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>5.3.1 Total</b>	3	4	4	5	12
<b>Migration to Service Cloud</b>					
<b>5.3.2 Task</b>	3	3	4	5	15
<b>Organization</b>					
<b>5.3.3</b>	3	4	5	3	15
<b>Training</b>					
<b>5.3.4 Hiring</b>	3	3	5	2	13

Source: Self-made

After the analysis of the matrix table, the researcher concluded that all the options are critical points to address the problem of the late response of requests in the Customer Care team. Consequently, the researcher proposes to implement the four strategies presented, but the strategies will be implemented in a specific order to be successful.

Based upon the results of the decision matrix, it is apparent that the best strategic option to apply to the team first is options 2 and 3, to implement a training program for the Customer Care team and also organize the workload per team member. The analysis of the options makes clear that the next best option would be to implement option 4 the hiring strategy, followed by option 1 the total migration to Service Cloud.

Regarding implementation time, options 2 and 3 will be the first options to be implemented into the Customer Care team, the option 2 can be fast and easy to implement and can be implemented right away by reorganizing the workload for each member of the team. On the other hand, option 3 the training, can start right away but it will take more time. After the implementation of options 2 and 3, option 4 the hiring will take place, and it will take weeks to find new team members that will count with enough knowledge and skills to fulfill the expectations of the team. Finally, option 1 will be the one to take more time since not all the team members are ready to migrate to Service Cloud.

## **6. Policy Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

To start this concluding chapter, policy recommendations as to how the Customer Care Team from Boston Scientific can implement 4 strategies that will improve the performance of the team and accomplish the goals of time in high and medium requests. Next, based on the

developed action plan, a financial underpinning will be made to prove the feasibility of the selected strategy.

## **6.2 Action Plan**

### **6.2.1 Training**

The training strategy aims to address key skills and knowledge gaps within the Customer Care team. An assessment will be conducted to identify these gaps, and a training program will be developed to enable team members to learn and develop skills beyond their primary responsibilities. A mentor will be assigned to facilitate the training process and provide guidance to team members. A feedback mechanism will be established to assess the effectiveness of the training program and identify areas for improvement. The program will be regularly updated and refined based on evolving needs and feedback from team members. After identifying the main issues for each team member, the training will be the most specialized as possible targeting the personal issues and challenges of each team member. As seen in the Gantt Chart below, the training program will take 5 weeks to implement.

In the first week, this program will be presented to the managers and supervisors of the Customer Care team, after the first look at the project the researcher will get feedback from the managers and supervisors to change anything they think appropriate, in the second week the trainer will have time to see how the team operates, this will help the trainer to target the possible tools the team could need to improve and then the personalized training will start, each member of the team will have 1 hour of training in the platform Service Cloud daily. By the end of the third week, the team members will start implementing what they have learned, thus in the fourth week, the team can give any questions or problems they encounter with the platform and the trainer will give a refresher training to each member to solve any doubts. In the last week, the

managers and supervisors will see again the performance of the team and will give feedback to the trainer to ensure that the team is well set up and ready to keep improving. Finally, the trainer will gather all the information gained from the training and will start the production of documents or presentations where is shown step by step the solution to constant issues the team encountered in case any of the team members need to remember the training, also these documents will be useful to help new team members. This strategy is predicted to start on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.



**Figure 5. Training Gantt Chart**

Source: Self-made

### **6.2.2 Hiring**

The team expansion strategy aims to address the workload challenges by hiring new personnel. An evaluation will be conducted to determine the optimal number of new team members required and since the company is showing impressive growth, with the time more Customer Care team members will be needed. Job descriptions will be developed, and the recruitment process will be initiated. The new team members will go through a training process to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge. The team expansion will provide the additional capacity needed to handle customer requests more efficiently and effectively. This strategy is planned to start on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **6.2.3 Migration to Service Cloud**

After each member counts with a better understanding of the proper usage of the platform Service Cloud and also with a fair workload, the team members maybe will be more open to the idea of moving all the processes from Outlook to Service Cloud. This strategy will be the one that will take the longest. Will be the responsibility of the supervisors from the team to see the increase and motivate the usage of Service Cloud. By telling the team members that if they use more Service Cloud the performance of everyone can be more detailed and easier to show to the managers, as a consequence the team members could get a promotion by showing the improvement in the request solved time. The implementation of this strategy will start as soon as the hiring process is done, therefore all the team members will have the same tools and knowledge.

## **6.3 Financial Underpinning**

### **6.3.2 Benefits**

With the four strategies already mentioned, the investment for team expansion in the Customer Care department at Boston Scientific, and the addition of a trainer in the Customer Care team will help Boston Scientific to reach the goal of responding to requests of customers at certain times depending on the urgency of each request.

By investing in training programs and expanding the team, Boston Scientific aims to equip its Customer Care team members with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide the best support. With well-trained staff, customers will receive more effective and efficient assistance, leading to higher levels of satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to the company and recommend its products or services to others.

Another benefit the adoption of these strategies can bring is a growth in sales and amount of customers thanks to the better customer experience the team will offer, it is important to highlight that this benefit will be an estimated in a hypothetical situation on how the team could help in the sales of the company, thus a further investigation in this sector is needed. The information given in this section is classified and is given by the company to be only used with educational purposes. As seen in the figures below, the sales from Boston Scientific in 2022 growth 13.58% in comparison to the 2021, and the 2023 hasn't finished yet to see the growth in sales of the company. The objective of these strategies is to get a growth in sales of 15% in comparison to the 2022, closing the year with sales net of \$2.377.386.534,145 USD.

Totals Summary				
	Fully-Automated	Semi-Automated	Manual	Grand Total
Order Volume	248,041	247,666	239,940	735,647
Order Volume %	33.72%	33.67%	32.62%	100.00%
Sales Net USD	\$245,107,651	\$266,003,018	\$528,724,290	\$1,039,834,958

**Figure 6. Current sales net 2023**

Source: Tableau Database Boston Scientific

Totals Summary				
	Fully-Automated	Semi-Automated	Manual	Grand Total
Order Volume	498,907	566,423	616,415	1,681,745
Order Volume %	29.67%	33.68%	36.65%	100.00%
Sales Net USD	\$411,682,926	\$593,627,930	\$1,336,941,887	\$2,342,252,743

**Figure 7. Sales net 2022**

Source: Tableau Database Boston Scientific

Totals Summary				
	Fully-Automated	Semi-Automated	Manual	Grand Total
Order Volume	365,962	633,394	620,914	1,620,270
Order Volume %	22.59%	39.09%	38.32%	100.00%
Sales Net USD	\$310,174,377	\$588,636,159	\$1,187,124,465	\$2,085,935,001

**Figure 8. Sales net 2021**

Source: Tableau Database Boston Scientific

### **6.3.1 Costs**

The following cost will be based on financial information given by the company. As presented in Chapter 6.2 if the training strategy is implemented starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The initial investment of a trainer that is part of Boston Scientific is estimated to be €3,000 monthly and the hiring process will start on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, this strategy has an estimated cost of €2,500 monthly per each new team member added to the Customer Care team, by the end of 2023 this project will cost €43,000, but it is recommended that in case of any unexpected costs, add an error margin of the 15% to the budget. The total cost that Boston Scientific will have by adding these strategies from July 1<sup>st</sup>,2023 until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, in will be €49,450.

It is important to note that the budget for hiring new staff and trainer is based on the current salary of the Customer Care team members, since the new team members will have the same responsibilities and tasks it is prudent to affirm the salary of the new staff, and the salary of the trainer is based on the supervisors current salary because the trainer will have more responsibilities and tasks than any Customer Care team member.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

It is recommended to Boston Scientific to implement these because by implementing them, Boston Scientific can enhance its operations, improve customer satisfaction, and achieve its organizational objectives. These strategies will contribute to the company's success and position it for sustainable growth in the market.

## Bibliography

- Abbott (2023) Consumers, Consumers | Abbott U.S. Available at: <https://www.abbott.com/>
- Borad, S. (2018). Optimizing task distribution to maximize productivity. *Journal of Management*, 34(2), 78-83.
- Boston Scientific. (2023). Businesses. [www.bostonscientific.com](http://www.bostonscientific.com).  
<https://www.bostonscientific.com/en-EU/about-us/core-businesses.html>
- Corthourt, J. (2021). Which CRM is used at medical device companies like Abbott ... - quora.  
Which CRM is used at medical device companies like Abbott, Boston Scientific and Medtronic? <https://www.quora.com/Which-CRM-is-used-at-medical-device-companies-like-Abbott-Boston-Scientific-and-Medtronic>
- Duncan, J. & Bowman, C. (2017). E-learning for salesforce training: a review of best practices. *Journal of Business Communication*, 45(3), 44-52.
- Johnson & Johnson Services, Inc (2023) Johnson & Johnson, Content Lab U.S. Available at: <https://www.jnj.com>.
- Kane, G.C. & Brown, J. (2017). The rise of collaborative communication platforms in the workplace. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(6), 62-70.
- Lean Learning, C. (2006) Five Whys problem-solving: how to apply the right lean tool for a given problem. thesis. Gardner Publications, Inc.
- Lee, J. (2017). Workload management software: a review of current trends and future directions. *Journal of Information Systems*, 43(2), 120-133.

Marinero, M. (2021, September 23). How CRM – Medtronic’s ‘Original Business’ – Fuels

Innovation Companywide, finds its own new growth. DeviceTalks.

<https://www.devicetalks.com/how-crm-medtronics-original-business-fuels-innovation-companywide-finds-its-own-new-growth/>

Medtronic. (2023). Key facts. Medtronic. [https://www.medtronic.com/us-en/our-company/key-](https://www.medtronic.com/us-en/our-company/key-facts.html)

[facts.html](https://www.medtronic.com/us-en/our-company/key-facts.html)

Partners, Cc. (2022). Johnson & Johnson – Customer Success Story CRM. CClear Partners.

<https://c-clearpartners.com/client-case/johnson-johnson-customer-success-story-crm/>

Rosenberg, M. (2015). The future of communication: trends to watch. Journal of Business

Communication,

## Appendices

Interview 1. Ramon Vidal (RV)

JB: Hello Ramon thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Your expertise as a seasoned member of the Customer Care team is highly valuable, and we appreciate your willingness to share your insights. Today, we would like to discuss your experience with the Service Cloud platform and how it has impacted your daily work. Your expertise and honest feedback will help us identify areas for improvement and propose effective solutions. Your input is crucial in shaping the future of our customer support operations.

JB: So if you are okay with this we can start with some questions

RV: Of course, Juan no problem

JB: As an experienced team member, what specific aspects of the Service Cloud platform do you find challenging or problematic?

RV: First let me tell you, thank you for having me. In my experience, the Service Cloud platform has several limitations that hinder our productivity. For instance, the user interface can be unintuitive, leading to inefficiencies in navigating through customer cases and finding relevant information. Additionally, the lack of integration with other essential tools and platforms creates problems in accessing crucial data or communicating with other teams. These challenges impede our ability to provide customer support.

JB: Okay but do you think this is because of the performance of the platform or because of the knowledge the team of the platform

RV: I would like to say the first one, but I'm not really use to the platform.

JB: From your perspective, what do you think are the key issues within our team that impact our performance?

RV: We are understaff Juan, this issue places a heavy amount of cases on each team member, leading to increased workloads and stress. It becomes challenging to manage a high volume of cases while maintaining a high level of service. Also, the lack of training on the Service Cloud platform leaves us without the necessary knowledge to use its full potential.

JB: Thank you, Ramon, for sharing your valuable insights regarding the challenges with the Service Cloud platform and the issues faced by your team. Your expertise and suggestions provide valuable guidance for improvement. We really appreciate your feedback.

Interview 2. Isabella Urrego (IU)

JB: Hello Isabella, thank you for participating in this interview. Your perspective as a member of the Customer Care team is really important to the understanding of the challenges you face.

IU: Hi Juan, How are you?

JB: Good thank you very much, what about you?

IU: Just a bit tired but everything is okay.

JB: Glad to hear that, should we start?

IU: Yeah, let's do it

JB: Can you share any specific incidents or problems that you have encountered due to the team's situation over the past year?

IU: Yes for sure, over the past year, the team's situation has caused several problems. We have experienced difficulties meeting the growing customer demands due to limited staff, also meeting the demands of the Sales teams. This has resulted in delayed responses, unhappy customers, and even potential customer losses. Also, the lack of training has led to errors in resolving complex cases, impacting the ability to provide accurate solutions. But the worst thing has been the constant changes in processes and team members leaving, these have created disruptions and inconsistency in our workflows.

JB: In your opinion, what are the key factors that need to be addressed to improve the team's situation?

IU: From my perspective, addressing the understaffing issue by hiring additional team members is crucial. It would help distribute the workload more evenly, reduce stress, and let us provide more personalized and efficient customer support. Also, providing training that cover the Service Cloud platform and other essential tools would greatly enhance our capabilities and confidence in handling customer inquiries. These improvements would contribute to a more harmonious and effective team.

JB: Alright, Thank you very much Isabella for sharing all this information.

### Interview 3. Monica Tadeu (MT)

JB: Hi Monica How are you? thank you for participating in this interview. As a member of the Customer Care team, your perspective on the challenges you face is vital for my investigation. I would like to go deep into your experience with the Service Cloud platform and its impact on

your daily work. Also I would like to know the effects of understaffing, unavailability of comprehensive training, and the changes in processes that have occurred over the past year.

MT: Im good, thank you that sound really interesting but my bosses will know about this?

JB: If you want this can be anonymous.

MT: No you know what it is okay

JB: Okay, thanks Can you share your experience with using the Service Cloud platform and any specific challenges you have encountered?

MT: The truth is that there are many problems, since there are very few people and many new cases and customers are arriving, sometimes I feel it is impossible, besides many of my colleagues do not even use Service Cloud and I cannot teach them much because I do not know many things, and finally I am handling many more customers and cases than my colleagues which in my opinion is too unfair but no one has heard me that an adjustment is needed in that and that managers are more attentive to the performance of others.

JB: That sounds difficult, this means that these problems are coming from a long time ago

MT: Yeah all this year has been awful.

JB: Thank you, Emily, for sharing your experiences and insights regarding the challenges faced by the Customer Care team and thank you for being honest.

MT: Glad to help Juan.

Interview 4. Greet Westhovens (Supervisors team) (GW)

GW: Hi Juan how are you?

JB: Hello Greet, Im good what about you? Thank you for your time

GW: Im good thanks

JB: So if it is okay with you we can start with some questions

GW: Yeah sure

JB: What are your thoughts on the Service Cloud team

GW: Well, I started as a supervisor in this team a little over 3 months ago, so for now I have been adapting to the rhythm that they handle in this team since it is quite different from what I handled in my previous job, but what I have seen is that this team is very different from any other since they handle a very long and complex process and we are working on the automation process but for now we have to follow this long process step by step with each case that is delivered to us, unfortunately it is a very small team with a very high responsibility.

JB: So do you think a process of hiring will be necessary?

GW: It is totally necessary and especially attracting new talent who is interested in staying for a long time or long enough to stabilize the team. It is also true that this may not be as necessary as specialized training on the use of new platforms and processes since there are many tools that help to achieve automation and thus save a lot of time and also improve the result of the service provided since lately it has been too low and the managers of other teams have been on top of us demanding results.

JB: Okay, would you agree that some key factors to look into to improve the performances on the team are Hiring, training, task organization and the migration to service cloud?

GW: I would totally agree with you, but I think that with one of them must come the other ones

JB: Okay Greet ill have that into account. So Greet thank you very much for your time and your honesty.

GW: I hope I could help you understanding better the situation the team is going through. And I hope your work could be helpful to the team.

JB: Thanks Greet.