Is Your Knowledge Base Ready for Zero-Memorization Training?

A self-audit for your knowledge base

Introduction

Too many organizations believe that just *capturing* knowledge is enough.

It's not.

Knowledge needs to be accessible, applicable, and easy to use if it is going to improve your training, operations and metrics.

This audit will help you evaluate whether your knowledge base is optimized for employee training and operations.

What we're testing in this audit

The purpose of a knowledge base should be to support employee performance.

For a knowledge base to support better performance, you need evaluate the **speed** of that knowledge base in 4 areas:

1. Creating content
2. Locating content
3. Apply content
4. Update content

If your knowledge base isn't able to do those four things effectively, then you'll never experience the full potential of a knowledge management system.

Speed test #1: How fast can you create content?

Your business has a lot of procedures and policies. If it takes too long to create clear an accurate article, then your content authoring team will avoid creating new articles.

A knowledge base must be designed to create articles quickly so people are more willing to create those articles.

Here are some questions to ask:

How long does it take to create and optimize a simple how-to article with 5-10 screenshots?

A. 10 minutes
B. 30 minutes
C. 1 hour or more

How long does it take to create and optimize a complex article with many decision points in it?

A. 30-60 minutes
B. 3 hours
C. Several days

Does the authoring tool offer you a blank canvas or does it help you logically organize the flow of your article?

A. It helps me organize the article into a logical flow
B. It is a blank canvas

How much effort does it take to publish your article to a location where your team can use it?

A. One-click and everything is published
B. I have to upload individual images
C. I have to export the article as a PDF or other file format and then upload it

Speed test #2: How fast can someone find an answer?

Your knowledge base can only support better performance if your team can **find** the answer they are looking for. The main question is how quickly does an employee know they have found the right guide for their situation?

Here is how to test: Look at a typical situation where an employee might need to use the knowledge base. Think of the actual question the employee has in their mind.

If an employee searches for the question they have in mind, what will they have to do to be sure that they have the right result?

A. They will be able to tell right from the search results screen that they have found the right answer

B. They will need to open the article and read a bit before they are sure

C. They will need to open the article and then just ctrl-f to search for the answer in the article

D. They will need to download a Word or PDF file and browse through it to find their answer

E. They will need to download a PowerPoint Deck, open it and browse through the slides to find the answer

F. They will need to play a video to find the answer

Speed test #3: How fast can someone apply an answer?

It isn't enough to find the right article. Employees need to be able to **read and apply** the information to successfully resolve a situation.

If you are in charge of training contact center agents, then this becomes even more critical because agents need to use your guides during a call.

How fast can your employees read and apply the information?

A. They can open the article, read and apply the information without missing a beat, even if it is the first time they have seen the guide

B. They need to read the entire guide and figure out what to do (if they're on a call, they put the caller on hold while they figure out what to do)

C. It isn't practical for them to use the guide while performing the task. They need to have memorized the information before the situation arises.

If the employee follows the directions in the guide, how accurately can they apply the information?

A. If they follow the guide, they will correctly complete the procedure every time

B. There are often minor mistakes that happen when following the guide, but those go away as the employee becomes more experienced

C. Even if the agent follows the article, there are often significant errors that only go away after additional training is provided

D. Even with the knowledge base article and additional training, mistakes are very common

Speed test #4: How fast can you update a guide?

The final test may be one of the most important. If you can't update your content quickly then it will quickly get out of date. Once your content is out of date it becomes useless to your team.

In some cases it can even be detrimental because it will cause them to deliver incorrect information to your employees/customers or instruct them to follow outdated procedures.

How quickly can you update a procedure or policy?

A. It takes me a few minutes to analyze what needs to be updated in the article and reorganize it. I can then publish those changes with one click.

B. I can reorganize things pretty quickly, but then have to export to a separate file format and replace the outdated document

C. I have to re-read the entire article and then it takes a long time to move big sections around as I revise the process.

How quickly can you update and replace screenshots?

A. It takes a few minutes to recapture and re-publish 5-10 screenshots

B. It takes at least 20-30 minutes to update 5-10 screenshots

C. It takes so long that we forbid our authors from using screenshots

How did you do?

Look at your results. **If you answered "A"** to every question then your knowledge base is delivering great results for your team.

Anything less than that then you have some room for improvement.

If you would like a free knowledge base assessment, get in touch with our team.

We would be happy to review how you are leveraging your knowledge base right now to support performance and offer suggestions for improvements.