HFS ONE OFFICE™ AWARDS

Follett's digital CX journey with Capgemini creates end-to-end business value

WINNER: OneOffice™ MINDSET

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The Situation: Poor customer experiences and frustrated employees dealing with a lack of information on inventory, customer accounts, and problem resolution were hamstringing Follett, a North American education and campus retailer. Its customer support systems lacked integration with mission-critical data, and its support teams were without customer data needed to resolve issues promptly. As a result, Follett found itself in dire need of rethinking its systems and how to make the right information available, actionable, and distributable across front-office and back-office systems.

Follett engaged Capgemini to rethink, rearchitect, and renew the most crucial system for its business and customers. The result was a rejuvenation of the customer support team, improvements in business management data, and a significant boost to its customers' experiences when transacting with the firm. The success of this project landed Follett as the OneOffice Mindset Winner for the 2022 HFS OneOffice™ awards.

To find out more, we spent some time with the teams from Follett and Capgemini to understand how other firms can also excel at delivering a OneOffice mindset in their firm.

The Problem: Follett was tripping over its own feet when dealing with its customers

Follett, the largest North American educational retailer, lacked the systems and processes it needed to support its employees and customers online or in person across 1,200 campus stores and more than 1,600 virtual stores in the United States and Canada. The front-office experience was burdened by a lack of inventory, order management, and customer data to address needs quickly and effectively. Additionally, the back-office didn't have the systems or data in place to resolve tickets, cope with exceptions, or generate sufficient reports on the status of their business. The result was poor employee and customer satisfaction, operational deficiencies, and loss of revenues.

Follett desired to fix this by modernizing its systems and improving the flow and accuracy of data by creating a digital-first customer service organization. This organization would be empowered with the right tools and information to quickly address internal business and customer needs for fast, accurate service and problem resolution.

Follett engaged with Capgemini to address the needs to rethink its business and bring an agile, integrated, digital customer service platform. Immediate initiatives targeted improving employee and customer experiences. The long-term benefits have been felt across the organization, and they have created a meaningful dialog between teams, Follett's customers, and the executive team.

The Solution: Embracing a digital-first mentality was critical for Follett's Customer Experience Center to transform its delivery model

Capgemini's team worked closely with Follett's customer services and digital operations leadership and teams to understand the current business and technology impediments and how these led to customer and retail operations shortcomings. By understanding these challenges, both teams formed a clear view of the desired end-state and what steps where needed for the company's leadership, employees, and customers to achieve success.

With Follett, Capgemini's team developed an approach that produced business and customer agility at scale. The program was focused on Follett's:

1. need for an omnichannel customer experience platform,

2. an improved front-office customer engagement tool (based on ServiceNow and Zendesk), and

3. an integrated back-office solution for order management, service support, and customer behavior tracking.

The Results: Together with Capgemini, Follett succeeded in creating a frictionless, integrated customer and employee experience center

By delivering a digital-first solution, Follett was able to navigate the pandemic's impact and enable a solid return to business experience for its in-person and virtual stores. Twelve months in, Follett's management team, retail operations, and customer support is able to quantify how customers and employees are using self-service tools to access inventory, manage orders, and resolve issues. The result is front-line employees increasingly have the data and insights they need to deliver better experiences during peak periods throughout the school year.

After speaking with the joint project teams, HFS identified three differentiators of the Follett-Capgemini transformation:

Speed to go-live: By closely identifying their aspiration state and inhibitors, the Follett-Capgemini relationship allowed key

transformation steps to be delivered simultaneously, enabling a go-live within 12 weeks.

Building a partnership based on mutual trust: Together, they designed a OneOffice model that integrated their teams to deliver a best-in-class customer experience. They sought employee inputs, adopted an agile framework for quickly implementing and improving, and ensured teams had the correct data at the right time.

Embracing digital as the way forward: Thinking "all things digital" allows Follett's customers to self-serve and access high-impact services across in-person or virtual platforms. This mindset has led to increased demand from across the Follett retail location to adopt these tools to better serve customers and employees.

The Outcome: Success resulted because this project focused on making Follett's customers the ultimate winner

This project was a success because Capgemini invested the time and resources into understanding how Follett's operations were underperforming. With this knowledge they were able to bring domain and technical expertise to craft a path forward whose end result was to achieve a better customer experience. With this agreed upon path,

Capgemini and Follett's teams focused on identifying what data, insights, and workflows were lacking from front-line and back-office support teams. Throughout the project they shared a mutual understanding of how success would be measured by the end customer, thus how to prioritize their efforts to deliver meaningful outcomes across Follett's business.

The Bottom Line: Delivering increased customer satisfaction begins with investing the time to understand where you are failing the customer and having a partner ready to add value that creates value across the business's operations, its employees, and with its customers

Adopting a modernized omnichannel customer experience solution enabled Follett and Capgemini to operate as one team. Within three months, Follett saw tangible outcomes emerge for its business and customers:

- Twenty-two percent (22%) increase in customer satisfaction

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of all client calls answered in under 30 seconds

- Less than 0.25% abandonment rate

- Ninety-five percent (95%) query resolution rate

- Twenty-five percent (25%) FTE cost optimization forecast in one year

Follett adopted a OneOffice mindset delivering frictionless, omnichannel customer services with scalable resource planning management by working closely with its partner. As a result, employee frustrations with fulfilling orders, resolving customer issues, and providing outstanding customer services have all but disappeared. Now, Follett's store managers, employees, and executives are clamoring for more solutions from their technology partners. Follett will continue to roll out these services to stores across Canada and the United States over the coming 12 months. With the ability to deliver better, timely data on purchasing habits, inventory, and store experience the firm is betting on increased customer engagement driving top-line gains.

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As firms adopt a cloud-native operating model, software-as-a-service (SaaS) is the primary way of getting things done. His research delves into how companies, service providers, and software vendors architect and deliver code via the cloud. Joel's research covers the latest trends in developing code on microservices architectures while using containers and Kubernetes to adopt and integrate SaaS solutions into complex business workflows. Topics Joel is passionate about include edge computing, the role of 5G in cloud services delivery, governance and compliance, low-code, and go-to-market strategies for software and services.

About the
HFS OneOffice™ Awards

Organizations around the globe must now embrace a world where perfectly aligning business outcomes with their enabling technologies demands focus, nerve, and creativity. The HFS OneOffice Awards showcases those teams and organizations that have embraced change, taken decisive steps, and transformed processes and technology to take their businesses into a new era.

HFS OneOffice Awards categories:

OneOffice Mindset · Innovation Ecosystem · Diversity · Sustainability
Native Automation · People and Process Change · Data and Decisions

HFS has a proven history of providing straightforward insights based on research, data, and forward-looking trends. The HFS OneOffice Awards provides a window through which organizations can showcase successful transformation projects and where others can find inspiration and fresh thinking to help them along their journey. Our respected, resourceful, and responsive analyst team brings their experience and knowledge to bear to ensure that successful, proven results are lauded and commended.