

HDI[®] 2018

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CONNECTING
THE
WORLD
OF SERVICE &
SUPPORT

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The calm after the storm

Taking a disciplined approach to growth and change

Presented by

Andrea Silas – VP of Technical Support

DreamHost

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Andrea Silas – VP of Technical Support DreamHost



- 14y of tech support and customer experience
- Evolution of Technical Support team and roles

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Learning Objectives

- *Pay attention to the metrics that matter in the context of a hosting support organization*
- *Calculate and increase ROI with improved onboarding and QA*
- *Optimize an expanding organizational structure in a constantly growing team*

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Learning Objectives

- *Restructure existing teams for maximum effectiveness*
- *Manage a distributed employee base*
- *Retain talent while offering internal growth opportunities*

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Who We Are

DreamHost

- Founded in 1997 - Friends offering friends hosting service
- Webhosting, Cloud, and WordPress hosting
- Based in CA
- 400k+ customer base



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Who We Are

DreamHost

- I started in 2003 as a TS employee
- Currently running a 100-strong organization as VP



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The past

- Small in-house team of friends and family of founders
- Horizontal management
- Lack of specialization
- No training
- No real metrics
- No ongoing feedback



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The past

- Email only support
- Mostly techie customers
- Easier subjects

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Pain Points – The growing team

- Need:
 - Grow without changing culture
 - Stay in-house
 - Accommodate changing customer base



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Pain Points – The growing team

What did NOT work

- Lagging on structure change
- Keeping people in wrong roles
- ‘Legacy guys’ not fully engaged and utilized
- Lack of communication – within team or with other teams
 - Last to know about changes... Oops.

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Multi-layered vertical mgmt structure!

- Different levels of responsibility
 - Day-to-day
 - High level strategic
 - People management
 - Internal/external coordination
- Trickle-down delegation
- Room to grow + smaller steps to progress

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Specialization, role definition, process/procedures!

- Multiple specialties overlap
 - Keep team efficient
 - Provides multiple avenues for growth

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Workforce management!

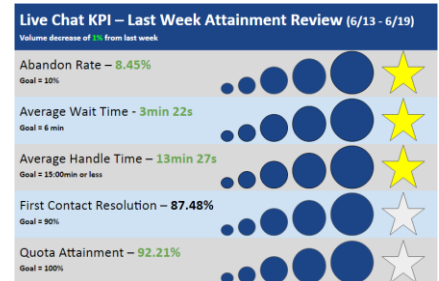
- Do more with less
- On-demand scheduling
- Fully utilized during downtime too
- Prep for holidays, training, emergencies

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Queue Metrics!

- What matters to customers AND revenue
- KPI reports
- Helps with identifying trends
- Helps with identifying under or over covered shifts
- Mobilize in case of emergency / large queue
- Team happiness!



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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Improved hiring and training!

- We hire for customer service and some technical base then teach the technical - important for our brand and values!
- Multi-step process including culture-fit screening
- Onboarding – constant improvement based on newbie feedback

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Improved hiring and training!

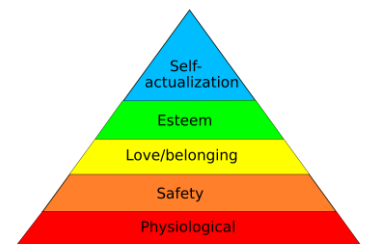
- On-demand training and assessments
 - Refresher (in person or online)
 - Advancement training
 - New products
- Able to support different type and knowledge-level customers

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Quality Assurance!

- Q/A and feedback
- Constantly evolving scorecard
- Acknowledgement and direction
 - Public acknowledgements of individual and team achievements
 - Goal and feedback discussions
 - Feeds into Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Brand compliance



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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Quality assurance!

- Positive ROI!
 - Retains talent
 - Helps them grow
 - Reduces need for escalation

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Q/A Performance Metrics!

- Quota and home-made simple survey
- Expanded Scorecard and HDI surveys
- Even more data points, built-in surveys, coaching

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Communication!

- Sub-team meetings
- Social hours
- Newsletter
- Climate surveys



IT'S HAPPY HOUR
SOMEWHERE

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Cooperation with other teams!

- Tech liaison
- Product Support Coordinator
- We know what happens and when + have a say
- Feedback loop
 - Help measure success of change
 - Real customer need
 - Spend effort on the right project/product

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Knowledge Base refresh!

- New tool!
- Internal and external updates
- Customer feedback

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Pain Points – The growing team

What worked – Distributed team!

- Remote working structure
- Adjusted supervision
- Online training
- Keeping them involved in team life

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The Present

- 100 technical team members
- Structured team – mgmt and otherwise
- Flexible knowledge overlaps
- Well-defined roles
- Well-defined processes and procedures

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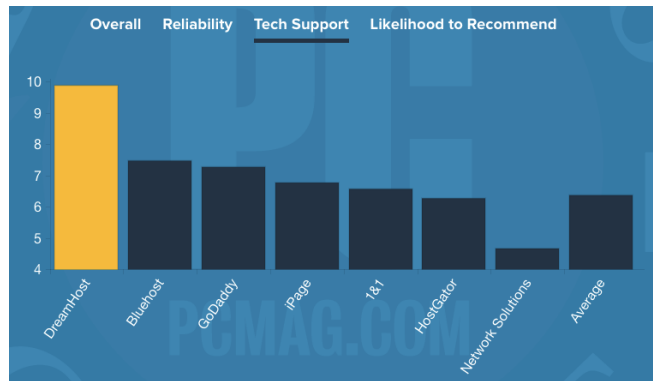
The Present

- Still friendly keeping the original service agenda alive + more!
- 24/7 Support
 - Email
 - Instant support with Live Chat
 - Call backs
 - Abuse desk
 - Social support (support everywhere)
 - Sales (incoming)

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The Present

- Coordination with other teams
 - Smoother rollouts
 - Customer feedback
- Customer satisfaction



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Takeaways!

- *Throwing bodies at the problem isn't always (or ever) the best idea*
- *Training and Q/A will help to attain positive ROI*
 - *Take care of your talent – their growth is your growth*
- *Measure measure measure – then make sure you're measuring the right things!*

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Takeaways!

- *Remain flexible – just because something worked for a while, that doesn't mean it will always be the best option*

Thank you, and good luck out there 😊

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this session.***

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