

# Support Center Practices Certification



*Defining the Best Practices for  
Delivering Service & Support.*

*Created with and Endorsed by:*



*Also Endorsed by:*





The Support Center Practices (SCP) Certification program was developed to address service quality issues that affect the rapidly growing technology support industry. SCP Certification quantifies the effectiveness of customer support based upon a stringent set of performance standards and represents best practices in the industry. The SCP program is guided by a body of sponsoring companies who represent core members of the Service & Support Professionals Association (SSPA), and is managed by Service Strategies Corporation (SSC). The sponsor companies contribute their insight and perspective into defining key elements required for delivering World Class support.

The challenges and demands of the support center continue to increase:

- ◆ Great demands on people, processes and technology
- ◆ Increased need for multiple service/delivery channels
- ◆ Dealing with the more sophisticated consumer
- ◆ Ever changing technology
- ◆ Complex product features
- ◆ Competitive pressures of providing better, faster, cheaper service.

Along with these challenges there is a growing emphasis on quality. Quality and consistency of service causes a direct impact on customer retention and revenue. The SCP Certification program establishes the standard for measuring quality support. The program focuses support organizations on processes and results and defines hard measurements where possible that apply across the technology support industry. It provides a standard for the Technical Support industry that describes world Class support.

The criteria sections defined within the SCP Certification program represent the broad scope of business practices necessary to deliver top quality support. The criteria sections include Customer Feedback, Customer Relationship Management, Performance Metrics, Training Programs, People Programs, Corporate Commitment and Strategic Direction, Productivity Tools, Electronic Service Delivery, Total Quality Management, Research and Development Interface and Sales Interface. Companies that execute well in all of these areas will ensure that they have the appropriate business processes in place to drive efficient support operations and high levels of customer satisfaction.

SCP Certification requires comprehensive on-site audits to confirm that companies meet the requirements of the over 100 business elements defined in the program. SCP Certified companies must continue to demonstrate their commitment to excellence and high performance standards on an ongoing basis through annual re-certification audits.

A company cannot achieve SCP Certification unless they meet the minimum performance standards for customer satisfaction. The system ensures that companies that achieve SCP Certification will have excellent customer satisfaction, which is key to any company's success. While the program ensures high levels of customer satisfaction as a requirement to achieve certification, it also drives strong performance in all other areas of support center practices. The result is a well-rounded program with criteria and elements that focus the support organization on developing and implementing best practices that influence customer satisfaction and loyalty and drive operational efficiencies within the organization. In addition to driving operational efficiencies and customer satisfaction, SCP Certification also provides significant recognition for those companies that deliver exceptional service.

## SCP Sponsor Companies

**!Candle**

**COMPAQ**

**CompuCom**

**COMPUTER ASSOCIATES**  
Software support & design

**HYPERION**

**IDX**

**Intuit**

**Landmark**  
a Halliburton Company

**LAWSON**  
Software

**LOCKHEED MARTIN**

**MCKESSON**  
Empowering Healthcare

**Mentor Graphics**

**Microsoft**

**ORACLE**  
Enabling the Information Age

**PeopleSoft**  
Customer Relationship Management

**Rockwell Automation**

**Sabre**

**sage**

**sgi**

**SOFTWARE AG**

**SYBASE**

**SPSS**

**Stream**

**Ultimate Software**

**THE DOCUMENT COMPANY**  
**XEROX**





### Customer Feedback

Customer Feedback involves all the activities associated with collecting, analyzing and acting on feedback provided by the customer. Feedback from customers is a vital tool that the management team can use to drive change and improvement in their service delivery process.

### Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management centers around managing interactions with customers. Setting customer expectations and proactively communicating with customers are key aspects on managing the relationships.

### Performance Metrics

Measuring performance is a key aspect of managing any support operation. Without quantitative measures for the key performance metrics, it is difficult to determine how well a support center is meeting customer requirements. Support centers should establish clear goals, and then track their performance against those goals. At meeting its defined objectives.

### Training Programs

Training is a critical part of any support operation. Properly trained support personnel can have a significant impact on how customers perceive the quality of support provided by a company. If representatives are not adequately trained, customer issues may take longer to resolve, thereby leading to customer dissatisfaction. Therefore managing the development of the support staff is critical to the success of the organization.

### People Programs

People are the single biggest resource in any support operation. The business of delivering service is all about people, and the support staff represents the "service product" delivered by the company. Personnel costs also typically represent the single largest expense for most support operations. It is critical that the staff feel that they are contributing to the success of the company and that they are respected for the role they play within the company. Customer support is a very "people intensive" business and the quality of life for the people that work in support is critical to the success of the organization.

### Corporate Commitment & Strategic Direction

In today's competitive marketplace, it is critical that companies demonstrate a strong commitment to deliver top quality service and support to customers. In many instances, service and support can be a differentiator in the product purchasing decision. Therefore, companies must ensure that they provide the highest levels of support possible and maintain a strong commitment to satisfying their customers. The strength of commitment to deliver exceptional support must begin at the executive level.

### Productivity Tools

Over the past ten years, support centers have made good use of automation tools to assist in delivering services to customers. These tools are now essential to managing customer interactions. They provide the necessary automation to streamline access to qualified support staff, record critical customer information, and provide resources to speed the problem resolution process for support personnel. The result of implementing productivity tools is a more effective and efficient support center with higher customer satisfaction levels.

### Electronic Service Delivery

In today's marketplace, companies need to provide service options for their customers that allow them to interact electronically. Establishing an integrated electronic service delivery offering is becoming increasingly more important to the success of companies operating in a fast paced business environment.

### Total Quality Management

The quality of the support services delivered by a company can significantly influence its ability to acquire and retain customers. Support has become a differentiator in the current "service oriented" marketplace. Companies need to implement processes and procedures that ensure that every customer interaction is a quality one that leaves the customer feeling good about the company they are dealing with. By implementing processes and procedures to monitor and improve support quality, companies can drive higher performance from the support center and generate greater customer loyalty.

### Research & Development Interface

The relationship between Support and Research and Development organizations is a key factor in the success of any technology company. The relationship should be one of open communication and provide for knowledge transfer between the two groups. By having clear lines of communications and strong working relationships between these two groups, customer identified issues can be addressed rapidly and changes incorporated into product updates and future releases.

### Sales Interface

The relationship between the Support and Sales organizations is a key factor in the success of any technology company. Sales and Support are typically the most "customer facing" organizations in a company. Since the Sales organizations sets customers initial expectations, it is critical that they have a full understanding of the services that will be delivered by the Support organization. By having clear lines of communications and strong working relationships between these two groups, customer expectations can be set properly, and the number of customer complaints reduced.



## SCP Benefits

- ◆ Provides a continuous improvement program
- ◆ Drives higher customer satisfaction levels
- ◆ Provides a roadmap for establishing best practices and ongoing support improvements
- ◆ Sets measurable performance standards
- ◆ Inspires other organizations to focus on customer satisfaction
- ◆ Makes Support a real differentiator in the Sales process
- ◆ Drives consistency through annual re-certification

The SCP program is used in all major business regions around the world.

Currently, technology support organizations in 20 countries have deployed the program.

## Who Should Participate in the SCP Program?

### Companies Looking for a Roadmap to World Class Support

The SCP program provides a framework for the development of support organizations. The criteria and elements defined in the program provide guidance for ensuring that best practices are developed and implemented and focuses the organization on delivering the highest quality support possible.

### Companies that Want to Address Specific Support Related Issues

The SCP program covers virtually every aspect of support center operations. As such, the program will provide needed focus on key operational areas that may be at issue with a support organization. By gaining this focus, support organizations will have the momentum necessary to address long standing issues, and improve overall operations in the process.

### Companies that Want to Validate their Current Practices

Those companies that feel they are already delivering top quality support can use the SCP program as a means of validation. Inevitably, areas for improvement will be identified through the certification process which will drive even higher levels of performance. The certification process will validate the practices in place within the organization and allow for attainment of industry recognition for the quality of support being delivered.

### Companies Looking to Market Support as a Competitive Differentiator

The SCP Certification program provides the type of external validation required to help communicate the quality of support being delivered to your customers. Certified support organizations have the rights to use the SCP logo in marketing materials, which allows the company to better promote the support organization as a competitive differentiator.

### Companies Looking to Drive Consistency in Support Delivery

Many support organizations deliver support through multiple support centers both regionally and across the globe. Consistent service delivery is a key component in maintaining and driving higher customer satisfaction levels. The SCP program provides a common vocabulary through the program elements to review and define the support practices that deliver consistent service levels across multiple support centers.



# SCP Value Added Programs

## Support Secrets Program

The Support Secrets resource provides SCP certified companies the opportunity to share best practices with the community of program participants. The system is designed to provide real-world examples of how World Class support centers manage the multitude of business elements required to deliver exceptional support. Only certified support centers are asked to contribute to the program, and submissions for each element are only accepted from companies that received good scores during the SCP audit. The result is that the real-world examples provided will truly represent best practices in the industry. The Support Secrets guide is published through the "members only" Support Center Practices Certification website. All SCP program participants have access to view the best practices published through the system.

## Access to the SCP Community

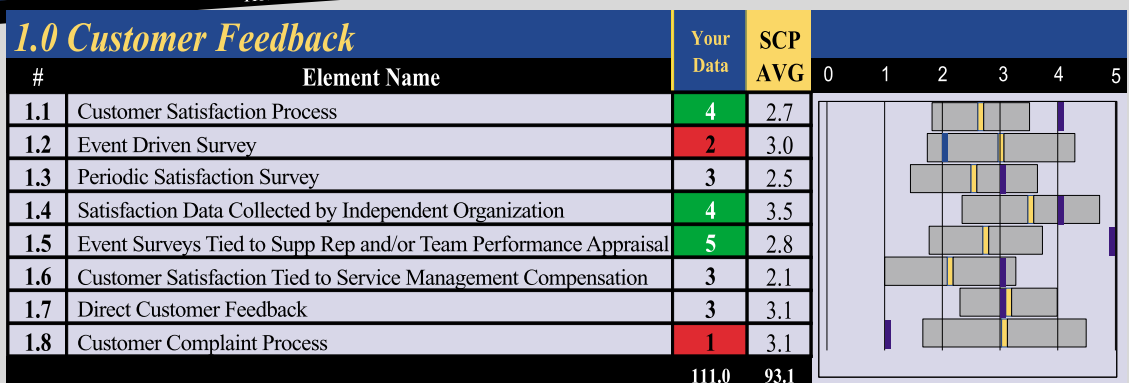
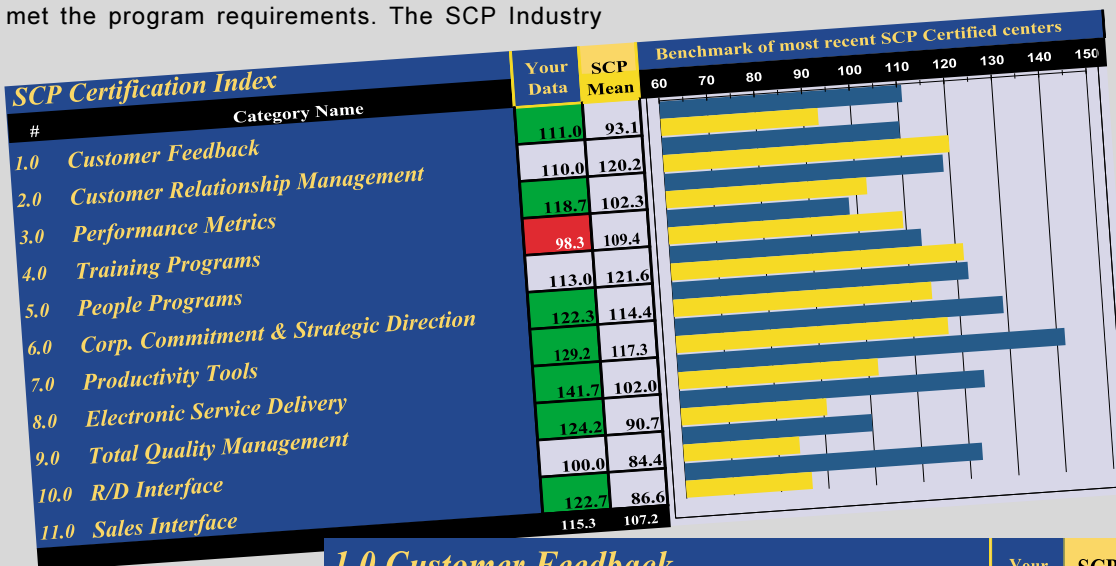
The SCP Certification program is more than simply a quality program. It establishes a community of companies that are committed to delivering exceptional service and support to their customers. The SCP program provides the framework and language for communication of best practices among participants and creates a network of professionals actively engaged in driving higher levels of service within the technology support marketplace. As part of their involvement in the SCP program, companies have the opportunity to actively share practices, ideas and innovations among fellow SCP participants.

## SCP Industry Benchmark Program

The SCP Industry Benchmark was developed to provide valuable benchmarking data to the community of SCP Certified support centers and program participants. The SCP program is unique in that it uses a numerical scoring system to evaluate a support center's performance. The result is a scoring index that allows a company to clearly understand how well they have met the program requirements. The SCP Industry

Benchmark reporting tool provides participants with a comparison of how well they match up to other companies that have achieved certification. The comparison is done for each of the high-level criteria sections as well as for each individual element within the program. By using this comparison, companies can get a better understanding of the areas where

they excel relative to the industry and the areas in which they need continued improvement. The SCP benchmark report is provided to participating companies along with their SCP Certification Audit Report as a standard deliverable and the data is updated continuously as additional support centers are certified.





Sampling of companies with SCP Certified support centers.



## World Class Support - We Deliver!

*"Industry observers call EMC Customer Services our secret weapon. We prefer to think of it as our customers' secret weapon. It's great to know that the Service Strategies Corporation and ITSMA have ratified what our customers already know - that EMC consistently delivers the world's most effective, responsive customer support services." - Joseph M. Walton, Senior Vice President of Global Customer Service, EMC*

*"Landmark is dedicated to providing solutions specifically focused on our customers' goals and business drivers. We recognize that world-class customer support is crucial in the ability to perform effectively in knowledge-based exploration and production and that customer success is as much about integrating people and processes as it is about technology." - John Gibson, president and CEO, Landmark*

*"Congratulations to our employees who, every hour of every day of every year, keep the needs of the EPA computer user foremost in mind. Information Technology is, after all, a people business, and it is an honor having our people validated as the best in this field." - Linda Gooden, president of Lockheed Martin Information Support Services*

*"Achieving SCP Certification demonstrates our commitment to providing world-class customer support. Organizations that fully embrace the principles of the SCP Certification program increase the value of their services and products as well as create an environment that nurtures the success of their employees." - Graham O. King, president, McKesson Information Technology Business*

*"Delivering the highest quality global support is integral to our support philosophy and business strategy. SCP Certification demonstrates to our customers the commitment Network Appliance has made to their satisfaction. The SCP program sets high standards that enable us to continue building a worldwide customer support organization and distinguish our programs against other industry leaders." - David McCroskey, director of customer satisfaction marketing, Network Appliance*

*"The SCP re-Certification is of key importance to Stream and its clients. We believe that the future of the support business is in focusing on the total cost of support. This means that we need to find all possible ways to eliminate waste in the centre. SCP is a meaningful methodology that helps us to continuously improve our efforts. It also works as a great tool for sharing best practices between Stream Contact centres and the rest of the industry." - Joop Heijenrath, president, Stream International*

**"We don't just talk  
about delivering  
World Class support,  
WE DO IT!"**

*- The SCP Certified Centers*



11031 Via Frontera, Suite A  
San Diego, CA 92127

Tel: 800.552.3058 or 858.674.4864

Fax: 858.674.1192

[www.servicestrategies.com](http://www.servicestrategies.com)

Email: [info@servicestrategies.com](mailto:info@servicestrategies.com)