



**Exceptional Technical
Knowledge Coupled with
Empathy Skills Creates
Stellar Wins for Complex
Travel Platform...**

Even Amid a Pandemic.

**Scaled to 24/7 Support Team with 90% Customer
Satisfaction and Glowing 5-Star Reviews**

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CLIENT

Business travel and software company

INDUSTRY

Corporate travel, e-commerce

TRANSFORMATION

- 90% customer satisfaction rating and consistent 5-star ratings
- Increased customer support to 24/7 phone, email, text, and chat
- Recruited the right support team members with travel backgrounds, deep technical knowledge, and critical soft skills

The Challenge

NexTravel is a business travel company focused on helping over 700 global businesses book, expense, monitor, and report their end-to-end corporate travel, with over 332,000 trips completed. From flights and hotels to AirBnB stays and rental cars, this travel startup centralizes customer reservations, cancellations, and travel management on a single platform and mobile app.

Although they simplified the customer-facing side, NexTravel's back-end includes detailed and intricate technology and software. "Everything we work with is really complex," explains Holly Hou, Manager of Customer Service Operations and Analytics at NexTravel, "Our agents must be trained to do travel inquiries and technical support, as well as the four different types of support channels: phone, text, chat, and email."

They struggled to find customer support agents who understood the complicated Sabre GDS (Global Distribution System) tool as well as NexTravel's booking platform, and who could speak empathetically to stressed-out travelers. They also needed a flexible support partner who was agile enough to handle their changing workload, especially when the pandemic hit.

Finding the Right Fit: Technically-Sound, Travel Background, Friendly Attitude

NexTravel's original agents, sourced from a travel management company, weren't cutting it, says Hou. Even though they had thorough training, the GDS tool and NexTravel's platform overwhelmed and confused them, and they didn't have a willingness to help customers.

"We received so many complaints about the phone support agents; the customer experience wasn't good at all," Hou explains, "Then we started working with Enshored and bringing all support functions in house."

Because they're a corporate travel platform, NexTravel needed agents with a unique mix of a travel background plus understanding back-end tech tools. They had to handle troubleshooting customer issues, travel inquiries, check out errors, and explain common tech issues to NexTravel's engineering and account management teams. All with a fantastic attitude and compassion for their customers' concerns and travel woes.

"Enshored helped us find agents who were already travel experts and came in with the skill set for Sabre's GDS tool, which helped us jumpstart customer service," Hou says.

"The travel industry is more complex, and **Enshored's agents have those skill sets in Sabre and GDS plus the soft skills to be friendly, patient, and empathetic.** This is especially important in travel because for inquiries, many times they're time-sensitive, and customers are upset and nervous."

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Holly Hou | Manager of Customer Service Operations and Analytics at NexTravel

Growing with Enshored: Onboarding, Training, and Coaching

Because of the complex systems that run through the travel industry, NexTravel has an intensive customer support team onboarding period. Each new agent added to the team needs at least six weeks of detailed training plus a four-week nesting period and ongoing weekly coaching to stay on track with important Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and frequent platform updates.

Enshored helped NexTravel create level one, level two, and web support (manager level) agents to address travel inquiries and bookings, technical issues, and customer escalations. They also worked on measuring agent KPIs like customer satisfaction, problem-solving efficiency, and proactively addressing negative customer feedback.

Working in partnership, NexTravel and Enshored recruited and onboarded the right agents, and created the system described above. Manager-level agents would complete weekly training sessions with Hou, then train all other agents on updates as well as ensure the one-on-one coaching kept agents on track with career goals.

“Enshored works hand-in-hand with me to set up processes together, then managers train the rest of the team,” Hou explains, “Enshored agents are specialized, and have excellent critical thinking, a good attitude, and work hard in terms of their technical skillset. All of them have been with us for more than a year so I’ve seen how they’ve grown during the process.”

“

Whenever issues show up, our agents proactively troubleshoot the issue and report it to me. That’s what makes the team very valuable, and **they can operate and function independently.**”

Holly Hou
Manager of Customer Service
Operations and Analytics at NexTravel

Results

Deep Technical Knowledge Blended with Exceptional Empathy

Having a mix of a technical and travel background with Sabre’s GDS tool plus the soft skills to empathetically respond to nervous, stressed, or upset travel customers was non-negotiable. Enshored listened to NexTravel’s must-have attributes and recruited right-fit agents.

“Our Enshored agents’ soft skills are great; super friendly, empathetic, and willing to help above and beyond,” Hou says, and they know how to troubleshoot issues on the platform to relay critical tech info to NexTravel’s engineering and account management teams.

“At the end of the day, it’s how the agents are proactive instead of reactive,” Hou says, “They’ll find out issues and report them to me.” For example, Enshored agents discovered one hotel was adding an extra charge for NexTravel customers. They reported it, and NexTravel was able to refund those customers.

90% Customer Satisfaction Plus Growing to 24/7 Support

When travel plans go awry, NexTravel’s customers can easily get stressed and worried. And before Enshored’s partnership, these customers only had uncaring phone support. However, now NexTravel’s customer support team has earned one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry at 90% (year-to-date for 2020), and garnered an overwhelming amount of five-star reviews.

They were also able to grow that minimal phone support to 24/7 phone, text, email, and live chat through working with Enshored. Especially when customers are constantly traveling, the high satisfaction and availability of the customer support team was critical to NexTravel’s growth.

Workload Changes Handled with Finesse and Flexibility

Due to rapid growth, the NexTravel customer support team had the ability to swell up to 42 agents to handle the greater volume of support needed for their phone, text, email, and chat channels. They also gained trust, and up-leveled from pre-paid booking customers to VIP customers who needed complicated rescheduling help.

When COVID hit, NexTravel's needs changed multiple times, including whittling down their team to an efficient 15, and Enshored continued to stay flexible to their developing requirements. "Their flexibility is extremely valuable, and the team is open-minded and willing to do things that's outside of their normal duties; I feel like they're my teammates and partners," Hou says, "Our engineering team was amazed by how much detail the agents poured into new tasks, and that really adds a lot of value to our company."

"That's one reason why our team really stands out because they can help out on the engineering side," Hou says.

Highly-Skilled Managers for Every Procedure Level

For NexTravel, it's crucial to have agents at the manager level who are strongly specialized in their skillset, have a strong work ethic, and can help train other team members effectively. After working with Enshored, they developed five top-level customer support managers: a Sabre trainer, software platform process lead manager, QA manager, content marketing manager, and a team captain.

"Those five managers work closely with me on a day-to-day basis so I see them as teammates instead of staff or someone from an agency," Hou says, "They work above and beyond, and they're not afraid to speak up. Many times, they understand more than I do, and whenever they're helping me out, they're good enough to propose solutions and walk me through them."

Support Through Partnership During a Pandemic

In March 2020 when COVID-19 began spreading throughout the U.S., being in the travel industry, NexTravel went on somewhat of a rollercoaster when it came to workload and agent count. Yet, with Enshored's customer team, they were supported no matter the circumstances.

"When the pandemic first hit, our volume was seven times more than normal, and our agents volunteered to work overtime to help us get through; it was great and offered a lot of flexibility," explains Hou, "They've been great partners since the pandemic, and agents have been super flexible; helping on different tasks, including content marketing by creating data entry for Salesforce, and manual tasks, like finding bugs and doc footing for the engineering team."

"The team is responsible, and works above and beyond with a really good attitude; especially since our platform is much more complex than a single e-commerce one with only refunds and returns. With their knowledge and contributions, our agents are worth way more than the fee."

Holly Hou | Manager of Customer Service Operations and Analytics at NexTravel

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Enshored specializes in outsourcing to many of the fastest growing companies in the world. Our tailored outsourcing services and experience building handpicked teams mean we can meet your customer support, content moderation, back office support, sales and marketing and other needs. Our teams truly become an extension of your business.

Contact Enshored today to learn more about how you can find creative solutions to your outsourcing needs.

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