

at your service



Craig Williamson is the Director of Customer Support for Tecan US, and has held the position since 1999. He is responsible for Expertline, the helpdesk and the entire service organization for North, Central and South America.

How do you manage to look after all your customers simultaneously?

Our service structure is tailored to the needs of our customers and the US market to maximize our efficiency. We are separated into four regional sales and service regions: the north east, the south east, the mid-west and the west. In each of these regions we have a regional service manager who takes care of that territory and makes sure the customers receive the best care.

And what do you do in Customer Support?

My organization ensures that our customers receive first class care and support, providing them with complete peace of mind. We run a helpdesk with eight people from 8 am to 8 pm and we answer whatever technical questions the customer has, organize package distribution and dispatch field engineers. We are responsible for the installation of instruments, for preventive maintenance to minimize downtime, for device upgrades and repairs and for training our customers in the proper use of the instruments. There is a lot of work involved in the Customer Support organization and, in Tecan US, we put 40% of Tecan's resources into service.

How do you respond to customer queries?

We aim to provide our customers with courteous, timely and efficient service, so our policy is to respond and solve our customers' requests quickly. For complex requests that cannot be solved instantly, we have experts with specialist knowledge at hand and, if an intervention is necessary, we dispatch one of our qualified and certified field engineers on-site to take care of the instrument. We have a clear escalation policy in place and, if necessary, customer requests are directed through the regional manager, then me and finally the respective Tecan production site.

Our goals are to get the customer up and running within four hours on the telephone, or 48 hours if we have to dispatch engineers to the customer's site, and 95% of the time we meet those goals.

How satisfied are your customers with the service you provide?

Every service call that we answer has a survey attached, which the customer can fill in, to give their opinions regarding our service. I compile that information and send it to Tecan's headquarters in Switzerland. I strive to get ratings of 'good' or 'excellent' on over 90% of those reports and, in the last quarter of 2005, we achieved that on about 96% of those reports.

What are the most important aspects of providing good service?

The customers want competency, efficiency, communication, punctuality and, of course, recovery of their instruments to peak condition in the shortest time possible. It is also important for them to see the same field engineer with each visit.

What's special about Tecan's customer service?

A couple of years ago, Tecan US combined the two departments that used to be called Applications and Service, where the scientists worked in Applications and were separated from our electronic technicians. By changing this organization, we are able to provide our customers with the appropriate experts for every intervention, whether that requires specialist knowledge for liquid handling and applications or hardware. Our range of application scientists includes biologists, microbiologists and chemists, for example, and I think that this is a real asset for increasing customer satisfaction. There is no other organization that has switched to this system, as far as I know - it allows us to respond to calls within a shorter time and considerably increase our efficiency.

What does the future hold for Customer Support at Tecan?

Service is very important for our customers and, therefore, it is one of the most important departments in Tecan. Maintaining good customer service is also the key to keeping our customers and we are constantly working to make sure that our customer service is number one.

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