

Customer Support Administrator: Job Description

Version 1.0 by Dan Randow on 26 September 2006.

Introduction

A key OnlineGroups.Net staff-member is moving on and the company is growing. We are looking for a new person to look after Websites and provide user support for our customers. The job is technical and interpersonal. It involves maintaining content, configuring custom features and supporting users on a large eLearning site, and on several smaller sites.

To succeed in this role, you must be systematic, a good communicator, a fast learner and able to build successful working relationships. Ideally, you will be familiar with the Web. Understanding of information technology and organisations will be very useful, but you will learn about our software and customers as you go.

OnlineGroups.Net

OnlineGroups.Net builds collaboration software, and sells associated services to facilitate collaboration. Our business is about people and collaboration, as well as technology. Our software, GroupServer is open source and available at <http://groupserver.org>. Our services include hosting, support, software customisation and development and planning and management for successful online collaboration projects. We are currently launching a new subscription-based software service at <http://onlinegroups.net>.

There are three people in the team (not including the vacant position), two in Christchurch and one in Wellington.

Our clients run sites where people collaborate in groups, using both email and the Web. The sites vary from just a few users to over a thousand users. The contexts that we work in include tertiary education, local government, science and environmental management, the community sector and e-democracy.

We support our clients by administering their sites and online groups, or teach them to administer them. We help them to design, launch and support online groups so that their participants willingly and productively.

The Position

Pay, Conditions, Formalities and Informality

This is a permanent position of 37.5 hours per week. Usual working hours are 9:00am-5:00pm but there is some flexibility in that, including some potential to work from home. There is an occasional but rare requirement to work outside regular hours. Holiday Pay is provided at 6% per annum (approx 3 weeks) with 5 days sick pay per annum.

The salary is negotiable, probably between \$27,000 and \$37,000 per annum.

Officially, GroupSense Ltd is the employer. As there are only four of us in the team, everyone works closely with everyone else. The Customer Support person reports to the Projects Director, Dan Randow, who is the owner. They will also work with Michael and Richard, who are the software engineers. Michael and Dan are based in the Christchurch office, and Richard is based in Wellington. The culture in the team is based on trust and good working relationships with a focus on results. We get to know our clients and their businesses, and work closely with them. We learn all the time and have a lot of fun.

The Customer Support person is likely to spend up to half their time dealing with one large customer (a tertiary education provider) and to develop close working relationships with the team there.

The place of work is Suite 409 in Kenton Chambers at 190 Hereford St (cnr Liverpool St). We have a pretty informal and social environment with shared interests including open source software, the Web, the environment and outdoors, music, movies and coffee. Rather than coke and pizza, however, we have fruit and nuts in the office, with tea and coffee and lots of Internet access.

Development Opportunities

This role involves continuous learning. The induction process will include significant support for learning about our business, our customers' businesses and our software. There will be ongoing support for learning software development and management of online collaboration projects. As the company grows, there is likely to be potential to specialise in one of these areas.

The Role

This is the third full time position in a small, growing company. It is a general support role, with about equal proportions of technical and organisational work. The main task is to meet the day to day requirements of one large client and various smaller customers, in the most efficient way possible. The role involves manipulating XML in the management interface of our software. It involves answering the phone and responding to email from customers and their users. It involves analysing and solving problems, devising better ways of doing things, and documenting them.

Site Administration

This aspect of the role involves content management, site configuration and administration. The tasks are usually scheduled so careful preparation and planning is required to ensure smooth operation. At other times, the requirements are ad hoc and require fast problem-solving. Most of our procedures are documented in internal manuals and these require constant maintenance.

This role involves the following.

- Working closely with clients to accurately establish requirements
- Adding and maintaining content for static pages in XML
- Authoring and editing Website content
- Setting up and configuring custom features such as online surveys, assessment results notifications, custom forms like workshop and exam admission forms
- Setting up new sites and carrying out bulk user transactions such as creating user accounts and joining people to groups
- Generating statistical reports
- Managing scheduled activities and projects to meet tight deadlines
- Developing and documenting efficient systems and procedures for carrying out and testing administration tasks
- Testing software enhancements

Support

This aspect of the role involves supporting users, administrators and other support people in online groups sites. The support aims to help people to use our technology and to foster effective collaboration. Some support is scheduled (initiated either by clients or by us) and some is responsive.

This role involves the following.

- Monitoring the phone and various online groups where people request support
- Ensuring that all requests for support are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner
- Following, developing and documenting systems and procedures so that support is provided efficiently and effectively
- Keeping records of support activities
- Supporting and coaching online group participants to use the technology and to participate effectively in line with the purpose of their online groups
- Assisting others to support their online group participants
- Supporting administrators of online groups sites and responding to requests from customers for new features or enhancements
- Writing technical documentation
- Designing, building and assisting to launch online groups and online groups sites, and contributing to reviews of those groups and sites

The Person

This role requires about equal parts of technical and interpersonal and organisational skills. Specific experience in our technology and in the sectors that we work in would be helpful, but are not a requirement. Prior experience in administration, sales, customer service, teaching, training or a technical role would also be useful. A high level of achievement in secondary education is required. A tertiary qualification is not necessary but will probably be helpful, whatever discipline it is in.

The primary requirements are a systematic approach, high level oral, written and numeric communication skills, and the ability and enthusiasm to build relationships and learn. Passion for people and groups, for the Internet and for systems, is preferable.

Technical Knowledge and Skills

Required

- Advanced user skills
 - Operating systems (Windows, MacOS or Linux)
 - Word processors and text editors
 - Spreadsheets
 - Email
 - Browsers
- Familiarity with Internet technologies
 - Web forums
 - Email groups/list servers
 - Blogs
 - Chat/IM
 - Social networking sites
 - Online gaming

Ideal

- Experience or interest in the following
 - HTML or XML
 - Scripting languages (eg Javascript, PHP or Python)
 - System administration
- Multi-lingual

Communication Skills

Required

- Ability to manipulate numbers accurately, to produce statistical reports about website usage, for example
- Ability to write clear, concise, correct and accurate email, technical and procedural documentation, simple reports and Web content; ability to take notes at a meeting, and then write them up
- Ability to communicate clearly, in English, face to face and over the phone

Social Skills

Required

- Ability to build relationships quickly
- Ability to listen and empathise
- Ability to relate in a friendly, patient and helpful way, while maintaining clear boundaries

Ideal

- Experience with leading groups (face to face or online)
- Experience with teaching, training or coaching
- Experience with assessing social and cultural systems

Organisational Skills

Required

- Accuracy and attention to detail (tendency to get things right first time)
- Ability to diligently focus on specific tasks until they are completed
- Organised and systematic approach to task and time management
- Ability to design and build procedures and systems to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Ability to quickly understand organisational processes and requirements

Ideal

- Awareness of or experience with the private, public and community sectors
- Project management experience