

Life Behind the Scenes

Behind the scenes, several thousand employees work in the Customer Care Team at Siemens Medical Solutions. Enjoy the interviews of two employees – both performing essential functions in Customer Care: education and remote system monitoring.

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Interview: Mr. Karl Krzemyk: Customer Care, Headquarter Application Specialist, Forchheim, Germany

You work within the Customer Care division – the so-called Life team – at Siemens Medical Solutions. What exactly does the Life team do?

„Life“ is more complex than you might expect. Our goal is to take care of our customers. We keep them informed, train them and we keep their systems up and running and regularly provide updates and upgrades. That’s basically our task, and we have several methods to accomplish this. For example, some colleagues train customers on scanner functionalities; other colleagues organize clinical trainings, such as fellowships or CME credited courses. There are many other functions, and I myself, work as a headquarter Application Specialist within this team.

What is your main function as a Headquarter Application Specialist?

My main task is to train fellow Siemens Application Specialists from around the world on the latest software versions, and to support them with news and updates. Most of the training takes place in Forchheim, Germany, where I have been working for the past three years. I also train customers on site to keep them up-to-date on the latest developments in applications and technologies.

How much time do you invest in training your fellow Application Specialists?

For almost 200 colleagues worldwide, we provide around 30 training sessions a year, each lasting about 2–5 days. Overall, half of my time is spent on training Application Specialists. We really provide a wide range of training here at headquarters to make sure that all specialists are on the highest possible knowledge level, regardless of

whether they are from Norway; South Africa or New Zealand. We cover everything from basic training for beginners to training on specific software versions to expert training on new features like syngo Dual Energy or Cardiac imaging. We also support them with e-learning and live web casts to ensure quickest knowledge distribution. The goal, of course, is to make sure that all Applications Specialists worldwide are thoroughly qualified to train our customers on the usage of their systems.

Where are the Application Specialists located?

Our team locations are where our customers are located. All major countries have their own Application Specialists. For example, in the USA, we have around 50 specialists responsible for customer education. Almost all countries have their own specialists.



“We keep our customers informed, train them and we keep their systems up and running and provide regular updates and upgrades.”

Karl Krzemyk mainly provides training to fellow application specialists, who are actually Siemens face-to-face representatives to our customers.



“Guardian systems are monitored pro-actively around the clock via Siemens Remote Service.”

Coping with problems before they interfere with workflow: Preston Elliott (left) and a colleague monitoring a customer's system

What are the most important challenges that you encounter in your job?

Well, first, keeping our own knowledge level up-to-date. In the fast development cycle we are in, this can sometimes be challenging. Second, I'd say time difference is always an issue, but with e-mail, most questions can be answered easily. And third, adapting to different cultures to make sure that all attendees get the most out of our training efforts. What really helps is the companionship you can feel within Siemens – it's universal.

What was your most interesting business trip?

This, I can answer right away. I was in Kutaisi, Georgia in the middle of winter, and I received my luggage on the last day of my 5 day visit. It was quite an experience, buying european clothes in Kutaisi!

As a member of the Customer Care team, how do customers influence your job?

Most customers don't realize how many of their ideas and suggestions influence our organization – they are the number one motivation for our product development. Once these ideas are implemented, I visit customers to train them on the latest applications. So, it is really a never ending cycle.

What do you like most about your job?

Definitely, to work and help people from all over the world, to influence and guide future developments, and to travel to places I would never have the chance to see otherwise.

Interview: Mr. Preston Elliott, Customer Care, Technical Support Engineer, North Carolina, USA

Within the Life Team, what is the role of the Technical Support Group?

Our goal here is to keep our customers' systems up and running. If a scanner is not available due to a technical defect, it causes tremendous workflow interruption, which is what we try to avoid with our Guardian program. It detects technical problems during system operation without interfering with the workflow. Guardian systems are monitored pro-actively around the clock via Siemens Remote Service through the Regional Support Center.

What is your main function here at the Regional Support Center?

I have been involved with the Guardian program since its beginning in 2004. Our job is to make sure that our customer's systems are running smoothly, and to notify them if there are technical problems – acute or potential. We monitor SOMATOM systems in real time using advanced monitoring tools.

On our screen, we monitor events from our customers' systems where the critical level is flagged. For example, events with a red flag mark an urgent event. In that case, we call our customers immediately to clarify the problem. Our job is very much comparable to an ICU, (Intensive Care Unit) where the patient's heart beat and blood pressure are constantly monitored. Instead of monitoring the patient, we monitor our

customers' system to ensure that everything is running smoothly.

Do you also receive calls from customers?

Well, of course they can call us, but with Guardian this generally does not happen. This is a good sign, since it means the Guardian system is functioning efficiently. Our task is to be pro-active and to warn customers of potential problems before they actually happen. We call them and often, we are able to address the issue via phone or online through our Siemens Remote Service connection. Or, if the problem cannot be solved remotely, we schedule onsite service at their convenience, when there are no patient examinations scheduled.

Doesn't it get boring sitting in front of your screen all day?

No, actually not at all. When we are not responding to events, we have the opportunity to further develop our monitoring capabilities through historical review and team discussions with the many other technical support engineers. That way, everyone in our organization benefits. We also train colleagues and participate in training ourselves.

What do you like about your job?

It's a good feeling to know that we can support our customers so that they can take care of their patients and not worry about the performance and availability of systems.