



## **TEACHING STRATEGIES, LLC & MMS EDUCATION**

**A Case Study in Outsourced Customer and  
Technical Support Services Without Sacrifice**



## CASE STUDY

# Outsourcing Customer and Technical Support

*Founded in 1988 by Diane Trister Dodge, Teaching Strategies' products and services are used extensively by Head Start programs, private and public childcare centers, school districts, state pre-K initiatives, all branches of the military, and college and community college courses.*



### Results-at-a-glance:

- 100% of eligible customers were transitioned to the newest and very different version of TS's online assessment system.
- 90% of TS's order processing and customer support were transferred to the 6-person MMS team in 2 weeks.
- Members of TS's inside Direct Response Team were redeployed to other strategic initiatives.

### Bonus Results:

- TS transferred product technical support to MMS, providing an enhanced experience for customers.
- TS relies on MMS to meet intense, short-term, outbound calling campaigns during busy periods.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES, LLC

**As a dynamic publisher of early childhood curriculum, online assessment, and supplemental materials, and a provider of professional development to the early childhood community, Teaching Strategies' (TS) top priority has always been supporting their customers—before, during, and after the sale.**

Teaching Strategies' Kristen Johnson, Vice President, Customer Solutions, recounts, "MMS Education helped us leverage our in-house support team for larger initiatives by seamlessly replicating our strong customer support model—without having to sacrifice our quality or standards."

Thanks to an increase in funding for early childhood education and its own solid reputation for developing high-quality early education resources, Teaching Strategies' business was booming.

And it had launched a new, and very different, version of its online observational assessment program and needed to transition current customers to the new version. TS's talented inside Direct Response Team could have accomplished this task with ease, but TS wanted to redirect the team's focus toward more critical core functions.

Ideally, TS wanted an organization to provide a wide range of customer support services as efficiently and effectively as its own inside team. With a proven record of helping a diverse slate of clients make a positive impact in the education market, MMS Education was the ideal solution.

### Getting Connected

MMS Education worked collaboratively with Teaching Strategies to define a Customer Support and Product Utilization program and a timeline for transferring customer support to MMS. MMS recruited and developed a team of Customer Support Representatives (CSRs), each of whom understands what it takes to be successful in a support role.

TS worked side by side with the MMS team to develop their product knowledge, fluency with TS's proprietary CRM system, and familiarity with TS's policies, processes, and procedures. MMS worked with key TS managers to compile a precise set of metrics for all support activities to ensure that the MMS team achieved TS's customer support standards.

One of the earliest indicators of success was that TS was able to reroute its customer service phone lines to the MMS team after only four days of training. Within two weeks, the six-person MMS team was performing 90% of TS's order processing and customer support, with limited assistance from TS. Within three months, the MMS team was performing at the level of the original inside support team.

### Growing the Relationship

MMS Education's dedicated team of Teaching Strategies representatives provides customer support services; showcases TS products, programs, and services; drives utilization; processes orders; and keeps the TS name on top of customers' minds. The team listens to customers...really listens, and shares specific feedback with TS, offering ideas to improve the customer experience. In turn, TS keeps MMS informed about which suggestions have been implemented. This "closed loop" approach fuels product development and energizes the MMS team's role as customer advocates.

### Strengthening the Commitment

Several months into the program, Teaching Strategies realized that the MMS Education team was responding to many of the technical support questions that were simultaneously being handled by a third-party vendor. Recognizing that embedding product technical support within customer support would provide a more seamless customer care experience, TS moved second-level technical support services to MMS, reducing time and frustration for customers seeking fast solutions.

### A Robust Solution

**Goal achieved:** TS successfully redeployed its original in-house team to other strategic initiatives, where they can stay focused on their mission.

**Goal achieved:** 100% of eligible customers were successfully transitioned to the newest version of TS's online assessment system.

**Goal achieved:** TS customer service was seamlessly transferred to MMS, and customers routinely give TS high marks for both order processing and product support. In an age of automated attendants and offshore call centers, customers are delighted to speak with a live person who is knowledgeable, caring, and effective.

**Bonus:** TS has upgraded from a segmented in-house support team and a third-party tech support agency to an integrated and highly trained customer and tech support team at MMS.

**Bonus:** TS relies on MMS to meet intense, short-term outbound calling campaigns during busy periods. Working closely and consistently on this program means MMS scales up staffing to respond quickly to new opportunities as they arise.



### What Does MMS Do for Teaching Strategies?

Processes online bookstore and web orders

Handles renewal sales, "upselling," and order processing

Registers participants for professional development programs

Drives attendance to pre-scheduled product demos, conferences, and workshops

Follows up and qualifies leads for the TS sales team

Closes sales for selected products

Provides first-level product support, guiding customer use and answering questions

Engages customers, building and nurturing long-term relationships

Gives actionable feedback to improve products

**Why It Works >**

## Why It Works

- TS is deeply committed to its customers and understands that the easier it is for customers to implement and use TS products, the more likely they are to be effective educators and to continue using TS products.
- MMS recognizes that for many organizations, customer engagement has become a strategic sales priority, and when implemented on behalf of its clients, requires an integrated, collaborative approach.
- The TS management team provides extensive support every step of the way. As a result, TS is able to replicate its strong customer support model at MMS, without sacrificing quality or standards.
- MMS is committed to providing the expertise and practical implementation services needed to deliver a scalable, sustainable, and effective customer and product support program, and it can do the same for you.

### About MMS Education

MMS Education helps for-profit and not-for-profit clients make a difference in schools. We know how to help you attract and engage your audience, help them understand and use your program or service, and help you build and retain relationships with the education stakeholders who matter most to your organization. If you have a challenge to meet or an opportunity to address, call to learn how we can help.



Market Research  
Marketing and Communications  
Sales and Sales Support  
Outreach Programs  
Information Management

### **MMS EDUCATION**

105 Terry Drive • Suite 120  
Newtown, PA 18940-3425  
800.523.5948 / 215.579.8590  
[www.mmseducation.com](http://www.mmseducation.com)