

## Taleo Delivers on Quality in Its North American Assisted Support Center

*Olivier Bouchard, Director Support Operations, Taleo*  
*Interviewed by Shawn Santos, Director of Member Programs, SSPA*


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Taleo is the latest company to achieve SSPA Rated Outstanding certification for its North America Assisted Support Center. Taleo offers on-demand talent management solutions for recruiting and performance management. The company provides its software and services to nearly half of the Fortune 100 and more than 3,300 small and medium businesses. Therefore, world-class support is a critical company priority. Taleo is the first in its market sector and the first on-demand software provider to achieve this world-class certification status.

SSPA Rated Outstanding certification yields support operation certification at the specific module and/or location level. This comprehensive SSPA certification program was developed by 50 leading technology companies and includes over 290 best-practice criteria. The program is one option that is ideal for mid-sized firms like Taleo because it allows them to focus the certification on one support center or delivery method. This exclusive interview with Olivier Bouchard, Taleo's director of support operations, reveals how Taleo navigated the process, the impact that the certification has had on the company and its customers, and how Taleo differentiates itself as a leader in talent management.

**Shawn: Tell me a little about your organization.**

**Olivier:** Taleo is the leader in on-demand unified talent management solutions that empower organizations of all sizes to assess, acquire, develop, and align their workforces for improved business performance. More than 3,900 organizations use Taleo for talent acquisition and

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performance management, including 48 of the Fortune 100 and over 3,300 small and medium-sized businesses across 200 countries and territories. We are known for the strong configurability and usability of our products. Our applications run on a world-class infrastructure and offer 99.9 percent availability. Taleo's cloud computing strategy, called the Talent Grid, harnesses the resources of the Taleo community of customers, candidates, and partners to power the talent needs of companies around the world.

**Shawn: What specific role do you play within the company?**

**Olivier:** I am leading a support operations division responsible for providing back-office functions that support the line delivery of our Global Customer Support organization. My group is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure that enables customer support, including the incident management systems, knowledge management, telephony configuration, training programs, and reporting. In addition, my team is responsible for documenting all of Customer Support's processes as well as insuring support readiness for all new product introductions.

**Shawn: What initially motivated you to pursue the SSPA Rated Outstanding certification?**

**Olivier:** Our continued growth requires that we adapt to an ever-changing environment and optimize the design of our Customer Support organization. We've decided to invest in our future by proactively partnering with the SSPA to do an assessment of our organization, identify opportunities for improvements, and put corrective actions in place.

**Shawn: Success in the program clearly establishes your organization as a leader in service provision. How has the new certification been received internally?**

**Olivier:** We did the official announcement at our annual Sales & Services meeting in San Francisco. The news was very well received, with a standing ovation from our entire field organization. We have been receiving positive feedback on an ongoing basis since then. Many groups are reaching out to us to learn more about the certification, especially our sales team. This certification helped us increase the visibility of our Customer Support organization across our entire company.

**Shawn: And externally, how have your customer organizations reacted to your new status?**

**Olivier:** Our customers are very excited by this announcement. It really shows that we are serious in our quest for building a world-class, industry-leading Customer Support organization. They can really see the difference that this investment in our Customer Support organization has made. They feel even more confident in the services we provide them

now that we have been recognized with an industry best-practice certification.

**Shawn: Auditors from the SSPA conducted rigorous reviews of the policies and procedures used in Taleo's North America Assisted Support Center. Tell me a little about the steps you took in the certification process. How did you prepare? How much time did it take? How many people were involved?**

**Olivier:** It started 15 months ago with an initial assessment of our Customer Support organization. Using the guidelines that were provided to us, we developed a comprehensive intranet Web site to track our progress. We met with the SSPA on an ongoing basis to review the best practices and get feedback on opportunities for improvement. It is hard to quantify the amount of effort that was required to achieve this level of readiness, but everyone in our organization took an active role in this global initiative.

**Shawn: Did you discover any areas for process improvements or productivity enhancements along your way to getting certified, and if so, how do you plan to address them?**

**Olivier:** Absolutely. In fact, we've discovered many opportunities for process improvements, especially around the relationships between departments and many support processes that were simply not documented. Having to provide evidence to meet standards forced us to take a second look at the way we did things and to take action to maximize our efficiency. We still have opportunities for improvement, and we've made significant progress to address those gaps. We're really proud of this accomplishment.

**Shawn: How do you view the credibility of the SSPA Rated Outstanding program vs. other types of certification that you have seen out there?**

**Olivier:** Our search for the leader in the support industry led us to the SSPA for many reasons including the quality and depth of their programs, along with their presence in the industry. SSPA is clearly the largest and most influential industry trade group for support professionals. That was an important factor in our decision.

**Shawn: How does this certification help to ensure that Taleo is doing the right things to drive the best practices in the industry?**

**Olivier:** With the material and feedback provided by the SSPA, we are now in a better position to understand what is considered best-practice in the industry. We know that we can rely on that information and move forward knowing that we are doing the right things.

**Shawn: Leading organizations worldwide use Taleo on-demand**

**talent management solutions to assess, acquire, develop, and align their workforce for improved business performance. In the current economy, how do you feel your new certification will help you to continue your long history of improving upon talent management practices?**

**Olivier:** Taleo is the first and only talent management provider to receive this esteemed accreditation. It is definitely a key differentiator for our company moving forward and a true commitment to our desire to provide our customers with the best support services available.

**Shawn: What advice would you offer to companies like yours considering investing in this certification?**

**Olivier:** I would not hesitate to recommend SSPA's Organizational Development Program to anyone who is ready to invest in their customer support organization. This program will really help you evaluate how your organization compares, identify opportunities for improvement, and guide you in your approach to address those gaps. Whether you think you have the potential to become certified or you simply want to benchmark your organization, the Organizational Development Program is a very powerful tool that will help you break away.

**Shawn: Do you have any other thoughts that you'd like to share that I didn't ask?**

**Olivier:** I would like to thank the SSPA, and especially Joanne Weigel, director operational certification programs at the SSPA, for the assistance and professionalism throughout this long journey. We are really looking forward to extending this accreditation with other certifications as we strive for excellence in customer support.

Comments? Suggestions? We would like to hear from you. Please email the editor at [sspanews@thesspa.com](mailto:sspanews@thesspa.com).

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