CASE STUDY

FANATICS SPORTS & BETTING

From passive e-learning to metric-driven interactive practice.

With a 65% improvement in de-escalation training and 2.4x higher engagement in learning, Fanatics prepares its support team for tough conversations when emotions run high.

"Creatium lets us keep up with the pace of our business—without lowering the bar."

— Jen Powers, Sr. Manager of Talent Enablement at Fanatics

At a glance

Fanatics Betting & Gaming operates in an industry defined by the sports calendar, requiring the company to rapidly scale its customer service team during peak seasons. These agents are immediately thrust into a "hot seat" environment where they must manage high-stakes human emotion and complex technical support simultaneously.

The challenge was twofold: onboarding a massive seasonal workforce at high velocity while overcoming the "forgetting curve" of traditional, passive learning. Fanatics needed a way to ensure agents were truly prepared for the hardest conversations in the business—such as managing "Grievance Holders" or "Angry Escalators"—long before their first live shift.

Ultimately, Fanatics transformed their training from passive reading to active practice by implementing Creatium's AI-powered roleplay platform. Across 113 sessions, the platform drove **engagement levels 2.4x higher** than industry benchmarks. This shift to hands-on learning proved highly effective, resulting in a **24.8% customer transformation rate** (compared to traditional 15%) and a **65% increase** in de-escalation mastery compared to traditional training methods.

Challenge

Onboarding for Fanatics is a race against the clock. The company must ensure that seasonal agents can bridge the gap between technical terminologies and the emotional reassurance bettors need. However, traditional training methods often fail to bridge the gap between "knowing" and "doing."

Standard e-learning modules typically see a low 20% completion rate, and static manuals provide no safe way for agents to practice de-escalating a "Grievance Holder" or an "Angry Escalator."

Without active practice, research suggests employees forget 70% of passive training within just 24 hours. Fanatics needed a way to scale genuine de-escalation skills rapidly, ensuring that every agent —regardless of tenure—was ready for the most difficult conversations in the industry.

Solution

Fanatics adopted Creatium to move training from the page to the "practice field." The platform deployed 10 distinct AI Customer Personas—ranging from "Anxious First-Timers" to "Self-Assured Experts"—to simulate the full spectrum of the Fanatics customer base.

The Creatium solution replaced passive content with active practice:

- **Unlimited Safe Practice:** Trainees could fail and retry scenarios with difficult personas, such as an "Angry Escalator" threatening to sue, until they mastered the objective with no real-world risk.

- **Emotional Realism:** The AI personas responded dynamically to trainee input. If an agent used personalization and building rapport, the AI de-escalated; if the agent was dismissive, the AI became more frustrated.

- **Real-Time Coaching:** The platform provided immediate feedback on tone, word choice, and value articulation, allowing for a loop of continuous improvement.

- **Micro-Learning Optimization:** Sessions were optimized at 9.6 minutes, allowing agents to engage in high-intensity practice that aligns with how humans actually retain information.

Results

The data from 113 training sessions (October 2025 – January 2026) makes one thing clear: when agents move from passive observation to active participation, the outcomes fundamentally shift.

Trainees did more than participate—they engaged.

Typically, when you give agents e-learning, 80% of them tune out almost immediately. But because our AI platform requires active participation, Fanatics agents stayed engaged for nearly half the entire training experience on average. That means we are seeing more than double the engagement levels of a standard training program.


Fanatics AI Training ● Traditional E-learning

High-intensity practice becomes mastery.

Moreover, nearly half of all sessions (**46%**) reached the Mastery level. By utilizing AI personas that differentiated difficulty, the platform identified a **35 percentage point gap** in success between easy and hard scenarios—ensuring agents were truly tested before their first live shift.
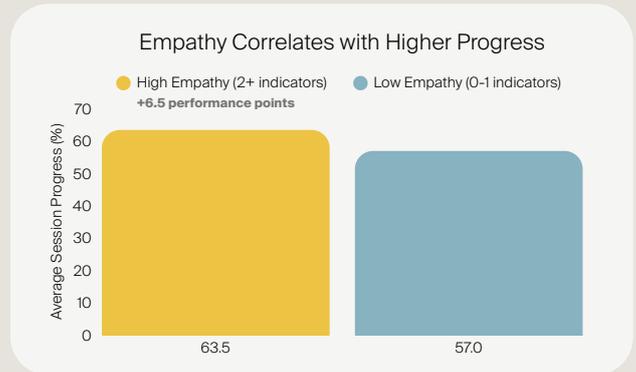
The "art" of de-escalation became a measurable science.

The ability to turn a frustrated customer into a satisfied one—the "Customer Transformation" rate —reached 24.8%. This represents a 65% improvement over the 15% transformation rate typically seen in traditional role-play training.
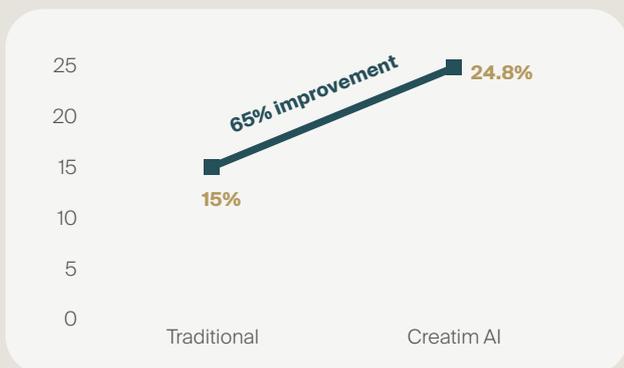
Empathy proved to be a measurable performance lever, not just a "soft skill."

The data revealed that rapport-building is a development goldmine: sessions where trainees used high-empathy indicators scored 6.5 percentage points higher in overall success than those that didn't.

Empathy Correlates with Higher Progress

High Empathy (2+ indicators) ● Low Empathy (0-1 indicators)
+6.5 performance points

Micro-learning proved to be the most efficient path to readiness.

By optimizing sessions at an average of **9.6 minutes**, Fanatics achieved **14 hours** of high-impact training without the scheduling constraints or overhead of manual, facilitated role-play.

By replacing passive manuals with active AI roleplays, Fanatics Betting & Gaming redefined what it means to be "job-ready." They have turned a seasonal training challenge into a long-term competitive advantage—building a world-class service team at the speed of the sports calendar. ◣

CREATIUM

Creatium helps organizations train for the human skills that matter most in the age of AI—skills like leadership, coaching, sales, and teaching that can't be automated. Our platform uses lifelike AI coaches, roleplays, and simulations to replace passive learning with interactive practice, building capability 5–8x faster and boosting learning outcomes by up to 28%.