

Case Study:

Level 1 & Level 2 Service Desk



CDI brings expertise, ITIL methodologies, HDI certification and unmatched service commitment to Midwest university.

Client Description:

A Midwest university recognized among the nation's leading independent research institutions. Located in Cleveland, Ohio, the university offers nationally-recognized undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences, dentistry, engineering, law, management, nursing, social sciences and medicine.

Background:

The Service Desk needs of a higher education and research institution are markedly different than a typical corporate environment. While most corporations have rigidly enforced standards designed to lower support costs, the technology needs of academic and research environments are boundless. University users employ nearly every commercially available computer hardware and software package in addition to numerous applications of Open Source and social networking technologies to support and further their daily work.

The diversity of this technology environment presents a challenge to the service desk requiring vendor staff to be fluent and flexible to quickly transition support offerings between Windows, Apple and Open Source operating systems employed on a variety of hardware manufacturers and numerous mobile devices. With the largest fiber optic backbone in the United States, our client provides students with the ability to use interactive gaming systems to compete with other players around the world. This heterogeneous environment provides any number of challenges for a service provider in meeting user expectations and achieving service level goals.

Our client assembled an RFP that covered the range of services the previous vendor had provided and established a committee to evaluate responses and recommend a vendor. CDI's written response to the RFP, along with the oral presentation to the committee resulted in our selection to provide service desk support and design a new information

technology content management system for user self-service, while the university returned desk-side support and telephone operations in-house.

The selection committee was interested in a service provider focused on customer service as well as the more quantitative measurements of a Service Desk: speed to answer, abandonment rate and first call resolution. They were particularly impressed with our Service Desk's HDI Certification and utilization of ITIL® methodologies. CDI's focus on customer service impressed the committee and was a key consideration in our selection. Our centralized 24 X 7 call center helped provide a degree of confidence that CDI could deliver on the commitments made in our proposal.

Business Issue:

In late 2008, the university began exploring alternatives to their existing IT Service Desk, which had been outsourced for five years. The level of satisfaction with the current vendor had declined over time, and the university was looking for a service provider that could consistently drive higher levels of customer satisfaction with all university constituencies – including administrative staff, alumni, research faculty, students and representatives of numerous medical, artistic and community focused non-profits that are affiliated with the university's larger mission both in Cleveland and around the world.

CDI Solution:

CDI's approach to meet our client's needs included:

- Combining level 1 and level 2 service desk, assigning more experienced agents on front line support, to help reduce the number of escalations to university technical staff.
- Utilization of a shared services model, using pooled and cross trained staff for a cost effective 24x7 coverage model.

- Introduced new or enhanced technologies to increase efficiencies. This included the Numara FootPrints application to provide both incident management and knowledge management and the Bomgar Remote Support Appliance to allow agents to remotely connect via a secure link to client systems anywhere in the world.
- Provide multiple options for users to contact the service desk, including calling a central campus help number, submitting requests via e-mail that are automatically logged in the incident management tool, using a chat option over the web with service desk agents and even submitting incidents via a web interface.
- Co-location of staff in CDI's call centers allowed for better oversight, training and support of call center agents.
- Adoption of our best practices from existing customers, including our HDI certified service desk.

CDI was able to attract skilled staff to our Service Desk team and train them in the customer environment. As with all customers, there are names, places and terminology unique to this environment and CDI and the university worked together to familiarize the team and prepare them for the arrival of students on campus, a peak period with nearly double the average weekly call volume, occurring just three weeks after the start of service delivery.

Results:

Despite a very aggressive launch schedule – 8 weeks from agreement to fielding calls, CDI successfully brought the service desk online on-time. While the first weeks were challenging, CDI was able to achieve high marks for customer satisfaction when students returned to campus. CDI continues to monitor all outstanding IT requests, proactively following up to users to verify that they are satisfied with the solution provided to their issue or request. CDI's active management of open tickets and detailed reports provided to the university's IT management has reduced the time to resolve certain requests and keeps the backlog of aged tickets to a minimum.

Due to the centralized approach used by CDI, a number of problems were detected by the service desk and quickly routed to the appropriate customer team to minimize the impact to the user community. The volume of calls is significantly higher than in previous years, in part due to the high quality of support provided by CDI. The scores from customer satisfaction surveys have been in the 90th percentile 4.5 out of 5, well above the target scores, and hold steady

even during periods of peak hold times for callers.

The university and CDI continue to work together to fine tune support processes, enhance the documentation in the knowledgebase and improve the flow of information and system outage notifications between the university and CDI teams. Service desk is never a standalone process; it almost always includes a close working relationship with the teams supporting the applications and infrastructure. CDI's team continues to build better rapport with these teams, and independently track issue trending in calls to the service desk and research specific concerns and technologies to allow better first-line support to the university's users.

Technologies Used:

- Numara FootPrints – Incident tracking system
- Bomgar Remote Support Appliance – Remote support
- NetReach cmScribe – Website development and content management