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Best Practices Case Study: Support Center Solutions

With GoToAssist, SPECTRUM techs address customer issues remotely, handling everything from software interface problems to training without leaving their desks.

People Power, But Better

As a provider of human resource information systems, SPECTRUM Human Resource Systems Corporation has good reason to keep the “people” component in their service and support delivery. They’re supporting sophisticated HRIS technology, with integration points to other back-office applications, so they’re often dealing with the kinds of IT problems that require contact with a technician. Moreover, they want to use every chance they have to strengthen their relationships with customers, and support interactions present a prime opportunity.

“One of the tenets of our support model is that we provide clients with a personal touch,” says Sandy Mussato, manager of client relations at the Denver, Colo.-based company. “It helps them to know a real person is there with them, and it helps us because we can understand fully how clients are using our products.”

SPECTRUM’s iVantage® HRIS, available in enterprise, SaaS and ASP versions, provides a full range of HR functionality, including benefits administration, compensation management, talent management, recruiting and staffing, performance management, succession planning, and reporting. Given their focus, these applications are typically integrated within the enterprise with other personnel-related applications, such as payroll.

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As part of their strategy to keep customers productive and loyal, SPECTRUM complements live phone support with Web-based remote support. A game-changing technology for technical support, remote support solutions enable technicians to view and take control of a user’s desktop — wherever they are — to enact fixes, install software, perform maintenance and diagnostic checks, and numerous other functions. By avoiding travel to customer locations or wasting time trying to walk customers through issues over the phone, support organizations dramatically cut costs, increase first-call resolution, and improve customer satisfaction.

Indeed, remote support tools have moved beyond the kinds of issues — connectivity problems, security concerns, and user discomfort — that plagued the sector early on. Revenues reflect this: The worldwide

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market for clientless remote support tools will stand at \$336 million by 2012, up from \$126 million in 2007, according to IDC.

For its part, SPECTRUM has been using GoToAssist, from Santa Barbara, Calif.-based Citrix Online, since 2001, when they needed a product to run sales demos. According to Mussato, they found the SaaS-based remote support solution to be extremely reliable and much more firewall-friendly than anything else they'd tried — key attributes for demonstrating the performance of their Web-based products to potential customers.

“Once we started using GoToAssist frequently and had proof of concept, we thought we could use it to support clients,” says Mussato. Prior to adopting GoToAssist for support, they used another remote support offering, but weren't happy with its client-heavy architecture, difficult session set-up, and connectivity problems.

Front-line Support

Since its early use in sales demos, GoToAssist has gone on to become a critical component in SPECTRUM's multichannel support strategy, which includes the phone, email and self-service channels. From a single license in 2001, the company now has 60 support technicians and professional services consultants using the product to serve clients throughout North America. They employ it to help end users ranging from HR professionals having trouble creating reports to IT employees dealing with complex network issues.

“We don't have a tiered support group so our front line is expected to do fairly heavy troubleshooting,” says Josh Davis, assistant product support manager for the software provider. “We have to cover everything from issues on the usability front to very technical issues where we're working with the database administrator and running SQL code to uncover a problem.”

The range of problems and user experience levels make GoToAssist indispensable, he continues. “For us, GoToAssist delivers huge benefits. It saves an incredible amount of time, particularly on complex calls.”

In addition to support and consulting functions, SPECTRUM uses GoToAssist for remote training sessions for individuals or small groups. After sending content electronically for customers to peruse, technicians rely on GoToAssist to conduct sessions, enabling the parties to share screens so trainees can visualize how the software works in various scenarios.

Client and Agent Satisfaction

Like most companies that deploy remote support tools, SPECTRUM had some early concerns about user comfort and data security. Prior to widespread deployment, the company developed documentation to

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give to end users regarding firewall configuration and the small client download that GoToAssist requires, but today, rarely has to use it. The majority of their clients are comfortable with remote support and even request it, says Mussato.

A few clients have regulatory requirements or corporate policies that require IT to get involved in a session, but most simply give the go-ahead. GoToAssist's configuration, unlike earlier products in the space, doesn't require pre-installed software on the client side — using a link, customers merely download a temporary executable that self-erases when a session is over. Comfort with the product is further enhanced by the fact that clients have to give permission for SPECTRUM techs to take control of their machine, can see what's being done on their desktop, have dual mouse control, and can opt out of a session at any time.

Since fully deploying GoToAssist, satisfaction is up for both support technicians and customers, according to Davis.

"Customers were really excited when we first rolled it out. As technology has become more sophisticated, remote support is more commonplace, and now they expect it and even ask for it," says Davis. "They love the fact that I can be sitting in Denver and log-on to their computer in New Jersey and handle their problem."

"I can't imagine trying to solve some of the calls we field without GoToAssist."

— Josh Davis, asst. product support manager, SPECTRUM

For the support team, GoToAssist provides a confidence boost, says Mussato. "The ability GoToAssist gives our support staff to view a customer's desktop and understand what's happening puts them in a good place.

They don't want to have to guess and lead someone in the wrong direction, and GoToAssist alleviates that worry."

Though they don't measure actual ROI for their remote support delivery, Davis says they're able to support a large number of customers with a relatively small staff, despite the fact that the product they're supporting is more complex than older versions.

"I can't imagine trying to solve some of the calls we field without it," says Davis.



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