



FootPrints

Case Study

Providing Centralized Web-based Support to 300 Attorneys and Legal Staff in 4 Geographically Diverse Offices

The mission of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) is “to provide legal representation to indigent adults and children facing a loss of liberty in the District of Columbia.” PDS enjoys a national reputation for excellence in the delivery of defense services and is often cited as a model for other public defender agencies. Starting out as the Legal Aid Agency in 1960, this free legal service grew in size and in scope of services offered. In 1970, their name was changed to the Public Defender Service.

PDS receives federal funding while maintaining its status as an independent legal organization. It is governed by an eleven-member Board of Trustees.

Overview

Challenge

Handle heavy support call volume with a limited staff

Solution

Numara® FootPrints®

Business Applications

- Internal help desk
- IT invoicing
- Bug tracking

Key Features

- Two-way email request processing
- Web-based architecture
- Multiple projects
- Ease-of-customization
- User surveys

Benefits

- Increased agent productivity
- Centralized request tracking
- Multi-project support extends ROI

The Challenge

The six member IT support team at PDS serves over 300 attorneys and legal staff working out of six offices in the Washington, D.C. area. According to Kimberly Hall, IT Specialist, The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia the support area is grouped into three dedicated agents and two Tier 2 technicians. “We handle roughly 200 calls per month and on some days we see spikes of up to 60 to 70 calls in an afternoon,” explained Hall. “When we have network or software upgrades we’re especially busy.”

When Hall arrived at PDS in 2005, the IT department had already been using Numara FootPrints for almost three years. As an experienced help desk professional, Hall was hoping to optimize Numara FootPrints for this busy legal environment.

The Solution

New to Numara FootPrints, Hall immediately saw that she could customize the software; she took on the project of completely revamping the system. Hall: “There were some growing pains, but I literally picked it up in two days. When I took a hold of it, I redesigned the whole help desk ticketing system; I basically created it from scratch.” Working from templates she found on the web, Hall completed her interface redesign quickly — within a few weeks.

Part of Hall’s revamp involved customizing the Numara FootPrints two-way email management, assignment, and user survey functions. This work took a little longer as Hall learned more about the comprehensive capabilities of Numara FootPrints. “Within a few months, we were completely up and running with email notification, having tickets going to groups, and customized surveys,” said Hall.

After the initial deployment of the redesigned help desk solution, PDS’s IT department began to explore Numara FootPrints multi-project capabilities. PDS soon expanded its use of Numara FootPrints beyond core help desk functions. Hall: “We started using Numara FootPrints for IT invoicing. We have an email address called IT procurement. When someone sends an email to that address to order software or hardware, Numara FootPrints creates a ticket assigned to someone in the ordering department. The invoicing administrators can see whether something’s been ordered or back-ordered or is currently being shipped.”

To support its outreach mission to the public, PDS has a group dedicated to Internet software development and managing the web site. These programmers have also discovered Numara FootPrints tracking and organizing capabilities. “Our software developers use it for bug tracking,” Hall said. “They use Numara FootPrints to manage the whole bug resolution process. They also use it to track user customizations to the software products they deploy.”

While PDS continues to find new uses for Numara FootPrints, most of the work order activity is still centered on the original help desk project. The preferred access point to the help desk project, according to Hall, is email. She believes the office’s busy, computer savvy attorneys see the email interface as a fast way to make requests. It’s an ideal arrangement for PDS’s small support desk team. “At our support desk, we try to minimize phone calls,” said Hall. Self-service is also enabled, but Hall said it hasn’t really caught on yet.

Hall has also tied a Numara FootPrints survey function to the help desk project. Numara FootPrints lets managers design an HTML-based form, which users can browse to based on a URL delivered in an email. Numara FootPrints then stores the answers in its database, and administrators can tap into Numara FootPrints reporting function to summarize results. For PDS, Hall has set up a user satisfaction survey as a separate Numara FootPrints project. Hall has customized the polling interval to send surveys out for every five work orders. According to Hall, the survey gives her managers a good sense of how the help desk is perceived by the rest of the organization.

Hall’s manager also uses the customized reporting function of Numara FootPrints to get a handle on the performance of the help desk. Hall: “My manager pulls up the number of tickets closed in a month and the types of tickets that were worked on. He uses the reports to decide whether the agents need additional training.”

“Based on the other help desk software I’ve used in the past, I like Numara FootPrints the best. It’s much easier to customize – just a no-brainer!”

– Kimberly Hall,
IT Specialist,
The Public Defender Service
for the District of Columbia

The Results

"Numara FootPrints has exceeded our expectations, especially after we got the email interface working," said Hall. Before this capability was implemented, Hall's small staff couldn't keep pace with the request volume, often missing calls while they finished entering data from the current caller.

The web architecture of Numara FootPrints was also important. With PDS's multiple offices, agents and technicians can log into Numara FootPrints and access tickets when they are visiting remote sites.

Looking to the future, Hall is thinking about purchasing Numara FootPrints Sync since many of her technicians already have BlackBerry[®]s. In the mean time, she's currently using the Numara FootPrints calendaring function, which allows BlackBerry users to receive Microsoft[®] Outlook[®] appointments in an email message. Numara FootPrints Sync will give PDS technicians additional capabilities to view and update Numara FootPrints tickets and access the Numara FootPrints address book on their PDAs.

"Based on the other help desk software I've used in the past, I like Numara FootPrints the best," concluded Hall. "It's much easier to customize — just a no-brainer!"

About Numara Software, Inc.

Serving over 50,000 customer sites worldwide, Numara Software is a global leader in providing practical software solutions for service management to IT professionals. From a single technician running a help desk to 1000 technicians managing a complex service desk, IT organizations of all sizes trust our award-winning solutions, featuring Numara Track-It! and Numara FootPrints, to track requests, automate workflows and support internal and external customers.

Unlike other complex, difficult-to-implement, and costly products, we offer robust, affordable and easy-to-use solutions that can be quickly deployed without disruption to your business. Our flexible solutions can be implemented right out of the box or configured to match your unique IT environment and business processes. They can also be leveraged to support non-IT operations, such as human resources and facilities, allowing you to optimize your investments in licensing, maintenance, training, and support.

We're passionate about helping people successfully manage their IT environments. Find out how we can help you by visiting: www.numarasoftware.com.