



FootPrints

Case Study

Reducing Agent Work Load and Speeding Problem Resolution by Empowering Clients with Online Self-Service

The US-based support team of RedDot wished to provide 24/7 technical support to its North American customers and partners, and easily communicate bugs and problems to its German colleagues.

To achieve their goals, RedDot implemented Numara[®] FootPrints[®]. With this installation, they transitioned its help desk to a web-based, integrated service desk, empowering external customers with online self-service to speed problem resolution and reduce agent workload. As a result of centralizing requests online, technicians can more easily track, review and respond to 200+ issues each day. RedDot also uses Numara FootPrints to easily share bugs and enhancement requests with the support and development teams at RedDot's world headquarters in Germany.

RedDot Corporation (www.reddot.com) is a leading provider of enterprise content management solutions. Built on open industry standards, RedDot's XML-enabled, browser-based technology offers the most intuitive content management solution in the industry. The company's North American operations are headquartered in New York City, with offices in California, Toronto, and throughout Europe.

Overview

Industry

- Technology

Challenge

- Implement a web-based, centralized system for managing product support requests from North American clients, and streamline communication between support team and development staff at German headquarters

Solution

- Numara[®] FootPrints[®]

Business Application

- External Customer Support
- Product Development and Bug Tracking

Key Features

- 100% web-based solution for access by customers and technicians in any location
- Online knowledge base for external customers to search for and find solutions on their own, 24/7

- Easy-to-use self-service for customers to enter tickets on their own and track status at any time
- Multi-level security to keep customer issues and account details private
- Extensive customization features for home page, ticket fields and more
- Automatic email notification to alert technicians of new issues and keep customers aware of status
- Custom and built-in reports to track status, review activity levels, and provide "insurance" against customer complaints

Benefits

- Centralized all requests for easy tracking and management
- Improved communication with employees and technicians
- Increased capacity to support more than 3,000 external users and address 200+ requests each day
- Increased self-sufficiency of users and reduced call volume
- Improved quality and speed of support for customers with tickets resolved in about 24 hours

Business Problem

For product support, RedDot's customers call or email the New York-based technical support team. Previously, technicians used email to communicate with one another – but had no centralized system in place to organize, track, and manage the 70-200 requests coming in each day. As a result, the team could not effectively track issues, share information, communicate status to customers, or address requests in a timely fashion. Support was stalled by delays and lost issues. The process in place also made it difficult to communicate critical issues to RedDot's main support and development teams in Germany, who were constantly working on upgrades and enhancements to the RedDot products.

Approach

RedDot wanted to implement a formal tracking process for technicians to centrally manage and review issues, and build an online history of progress, communication, status, and solutions. To do so, the company wanted a web-based solution that could be integrated with its existing extranet. Cost was also a concern.

"We needed centralized, remote access for our services consultants on the road and in our offices around the US and Canada. We also wanted to give customers web access to log on, enter tickets and find solutions at any time. This saves us time and reduces call volume – while improving the level and speed of support," said Oliver Ziegler, Director of Technical Services and Support for RedDot. "The Open Text Web Solutions Group transitioned its help desk to a web-based, integrated service desk, empowering external customers with online self-service to speed problem resolution and reduce agent workload," said Ziegler. "Plus, since our own products are web-based, we knew that customers expected the same of our technical support."

By centralizing help desk data online and automating key tasks, RedDot could provide support consultants with fast, simple access to the information they needed to provide critical support, and to communicate with their international colleagues.

Key Features

While RedDot was looking for a solution in North America, its world headquarters in Germany was rolling out an enterprise-wide sales tracking and support system from SalesLogix®. But, according to Ziegler, that solution wasn't a fit for the US operational needs. "Our operations in North America already used a different sales support tool," he explained. "Numara FootPrints was definitely a better fit overall."

Numara FootPrints provides a fully web-based solution to centralize support for RedDot's external customers, along with internal support consultants and remote users. The software is simple to install and use, with easy access anywhere through a standard web browser. It offers a cost-effective investment for initial acquisition as well as ongoing maintenance and administration, which can be done without consulting or training. And it can be easily used by help desk agents and customers of any technical level, without training – an important factor for RedDot.

RedDot also reviewed Front Range Solutions™ Heat®, but found that it was more than double Numara FootPrints' price, and only offered a costly web add-on to a client/server architecture. In addition to delivering simplicity, flexibility and scalability, Numara FootPrints' web architecture was the key to enabling RedDot's initiative for self-service. Its comprehensive knowledge base could be populated with solutions to common help desk problems, and accessed by customers via the extranet for fast support. Numara FootPrints also offers multi-level security, a critical need for RedDot to ensure that each customer could access only their own issues and account information.

Another important feature for RedDot was Numara FootPrints' ability to automatically escalate issues, and notify technicians and customers of new issues, changes and progress via email – providing incentive for support consultants to quickly address issues, and keeping customers and partners in the loop at every step. This also let the US team easily alert their German colleagues of new issues, bugs and other problems. All activity could be encapsulated in Numara FootPrints' reports, delivering valuable feedback to management, customers and partners.

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– Oliver Ziegler,
Director of Technical
Services and Support

The Numara FootPrints Solution at RedDot

RedDot installed Numara FootPrints quickly and easily, implementing it to all customers and employees in less than two weeks. Numara FootPrints was set up on a hosted Linux server using a MySQL™ database from MySQL AB. The system is integrated with RedDot's corporate extranet, which users access via any browser. Two projects were set up in Numara FootPrints to accommodate customer support requests, each with a database of solutions for customers to access. A separate project with its own knowledge base was established for internal use so technicians could track bugs and other problems, and communicate them directly to the development and support teams in Germany. With Numara FootPrints' extensive customization capabilities, RedDot created a look and feel for the system that matches its corporate extranet.

"Customization was an attractive feature," commented Ziegler. "We created a multitude of custom fields to tailor the Numara FootPrints tickets, so problem entry and tracking is quick and easy for our customers. We also developed a separate set of fields for our internal project, so the process is just as simple for our support consultants." Using a series of drop-down menus, the support team can assign a range of values to each ticket, designating status (open, testing, pending and closed), priority level (1-10), problem type (question, bug and feature request), and severity (high, medium and low impact). And customers can easily fill in tickets by selecting from a list of RedDot products, status (open, in progress, responded and closed), and priority (1-5).

Ten internal technical support consultants at RedDot currently use Numara FootPrints, along with 1,200 active users at its customer and partner sites throughout North America – approximately 2,500-3,000 external users overall. Customers have four points of contact for support: log on for online self-help, send requests via email, LiveSupport via chat or call the support hotline. They are encouraged first to access the system themselves to check account information and search the solutions database for fast answers to common problems. If further assistance is required, they enter tickets directly using Numara FootPrints' web-based interface. They can also email, chat, or call members of the support team, who then enter the tickets into Numara FootPrints. Once a ticket is in Numara FootPrints, RedDot's main support team is automatically notified via email, and immediately assigns it to the appropriate person. Using Numara FootPrints' built-in escalation capabilities on a daily basis, RedDot ensures that tickets don't age for more than four hours without a response, and for a maximum of two days without a solution. The average time to resolve issues is only one day.

"The email notification is so critical to our operation, especially to make our customers feel that their needs are being addressed. Customers love the response system. They get an email confirmation as soon as they submit a ticket, so they can make any necessary changes to their request. Meanwhile, our technicians are instantly alerted so they can start working on the issue," said Ziegler. "Our customers are continuously alerted with the latest status of their request – so our technicians are encouraged to work faster and more effectively, and our communication with our customers has significantly improved."

RedDot uses Numara FootPrints' email alerts for its internal project, automatically updating its German counterparts about new bugs and other product issues. The company also uses Numara FootPrints' advanced built-in and custom reporting capabilities to easily generate monthly reports to RedDot's President in the US and CEO in Germany, and to continuously track daily activity levels, response times and more.

Since its initial installation, RedDot has implemented a second Numara FootPrints system at its German location. The systems communicate with each other, automatically sending tickets to update the opposite site. The German system is also linked with Salesforce.com®, allowing contact records to be mapped directly to Numara FootPrints.

Business Benefits

“The feedback from our customers has been great. We agree that Numara FootPrints is the best customer support system, providing a seamless experience for our customers and internal teams, alike. Our service has never been more professional,” commented Ziegler. “Numara FootPrints runs very well – we’ve never had a problem, not even when we’re on site with a customer.” According to Ziegler, Numara FootPrints’ main benefit has been the improved communication between RedDot and its customers, partners and its own internal teams. Each ticket includes five or six follow-up interactions, so technicians and customers can communicate in real-time throughout the resolution process. All communications are included in the original ticket, creating a history for ongoing reference. Ziegler notes that this also creates an important “insurance policy” for RedDot’s technical team, because all support steps are archived in Numara FootPrints.

“With Numara FootPrints, we have a complete audit trail of each ticket and all the interactions associated with it. So if customers question our process, we simply run a quick report to see who solved the problem, review what kind of information they received, and make sure everything was done by the book,” he explained. “All of Numara FootPrints’ reporting capabilities support this effort. We can measure the number of tickets coming in each day, the amount of time it took to resolve each, and more – ensuring that all tickets are responded to in a timely manner and proving that we have effectively addressed the needs of our customers and partners.”

Numara FootPrints has also improved internal communications and collaboration at RedDot worldwide. With all information centralized and the ability to notify any member of the staff of status via email, providing support is no longer a one-on-one process, but an activity in which the whole team can participate. Technicians can also easily search Numara FootPrints to check if incoming requests have already been entered into the system, eliminating duplicate entries and saving time.

Additionally, by making online self-service available to customers, RedDot has maximized its internal resources and reduced call volume – while increasing its capacity to address high-volume inquiries. The company typically receives 70-150 requests each day, but can spike to over 200 daily inquiries when supporting new customers. With Numara FootPrints, RedDot can easily handle any number of requests, while maintaining high service quality.

“Numara Software’s support team has been very helpful as RedDot continues to enhance and expand its use of Numara FootPrints,” Ziegler said. “After experiencing strong results with Numara FootPrints across our North American support operations, we are now trying to get Germany to adopt Numara FootPrints solutions as well.” Additionally, based on its excellent customer experiences with the easy-to-use Numara FootPrints system, RedDot recently expanded its implementation of the system, enabling customers to manage and respond to their own tickets within the system.

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.