



FootPrints

Case Study

Centralizing Technical Support for 900 Internal Users and Three Sister Companies

Based in Illinois, Agri-Fab is a 27-year leader in providing parts and products to the lawn and garden industry. The company has three sister companies: Mid-State Industries and Hydro-Gear, both in Illinois, and Clark Pulley in Alabama.

Agri-Fab uses the Numara Software FootPrints solution as its centralized, online service desk and to automate its support customer activities via the web. Numara FootPrints provides Agri-Fab with a fully web-based solution that integrates with the company's existing Microsoft® Exchange 2003 environment.

Overview

Industry

- Manufacturing

Challenge

- Increase response rate to service desk requests

Solution

- Numara® FootPrints®
- Numara Footprints Dynamic Address Book Link

Business Application

- Centralized IT Service Desk

Key Features

- Fast, simple installation and use
- 100% web-based accessible by technicians and employees
- Integration with existing Microsoft Exchange 2003 environment
- Online self-service for employees to submit issues and track status via Agri-Fab's corporate intranet
- Automatic email alerts to notify technicians of new issues and keep employees informed of progress
- Automatic routing of problems to appropriate technicians for fast, effective service
- Advanced search and reporting capabilities

Benefits

- Centralized help desk activities for easier management and organization of tasks and issues
- Increased capacity to address 225+ issues each month
- Improved quality and speed of support to all employees
- Improved communication between technicians, employees, and managers
- Increased overall satisfaction with the help desk

The Challenge: Increase Response Rate to a High Volume of IT Requests From Different Locations

Agri-Fab's IT department delivers a range of technical support services to 900 employees at Agri-Fab and its three sister companies. With an average of 225 phone and email requests each month for help with networking problems and daily PC needs, the three-person support team was easily overwhelmed. To track open issues, they created simple to-do lists using Microsoft® Outlook's task management capabilities. But they had no way to centrally organize, view, and manage issues. As a result, their level of service was compromised. Responses to urgent requests were often delayed, while other issues were missed completely.

"It was clear that we needed a dedicated service desk solution to manage our department's daily activities," said Neal Ozier, Agri-Fab's Information Systems Manager. "I knew we could work more efficiently if we had a way to centrally manage incoming requests, stay on top of open issues, and better focus our efforts on resolving issues in a timely manner."

The Solution: Access for all users via web-based Numara Footprints

Agri-Fab wanted a simple, affordable solution that was easy to install, and easy for anyone to use. The company planned to implement a system that could be accessed by both support technicians and employees. This would make it easier for the IT staff to track ongoing activity – and reduce incoming call volume by empowering employees to submit tickets and search for solutions on their own. To accomplish this, Agri-Fab had to find a web-based system that could offer access to all users through its corporate intranet.

Agri-Fab also needed a solution that could be deployed within the company's Microsoft® Exchange 2003 environment – a prerequisite for virtually every solution that Agri-Fab purchased. This would ensure that new products had a short learning curve, and worked seamlessly with the company's existing systems.

Numara FootPrints provided Agri-Fab with a web-based solution to centralize its service desk operations, and enable simple, online self-service for employees at all the Agri-Fab companies. The software's web architecture minimizes deployment time and costs, as well as ongoing support, maintenance, and administration. It can be implemented in about a day, without programming, database administration, consulting, training, or on-site support.

Agri-Fab looked at another solution, Heat® from FrontRange Solutions™, but found it was too expensive and cumbersome. Agri-Fab wanted to find a fully web-based architecture like Numara FootPrints. Additionally, Numara FootPrints was the only solution to offer integrated support for Microsoft Exchange 2003. By offering a direct, dynamic link to corporate data stored in Agri-Fab's Microsoft Exchange 2003 directory using the Numara Dynamic Address Book Link, Numara FootPrints eliminates the need to manage multiple directories for different business functions.

"With Numara FootPrints, we can continue to enter users in one place – our Microsoft Exchange 2003 database – and extend that information to our support operations," said Ozier. "At the same time, we can deploy a complete service desk and online self-service system that leverages our inherent Microsoft technology platform. This removes the possibility of any problems with the systems that we already use throughout our organization."

The Key Feature: No worries about address book data accuracy

Web-based Internal Help Desk: Today, all support requests are centralized and routed through Numara FootPrints for fast, easy tracking and management. Agri-Fab, Clark Pulley, and Mid-State employees access Numara FootPrints through the intranet. Most users submit requests directly into Numara FootPrints themselves. A few employees who work in the field or on the sales floor still call issues into the support staff, who then create tickets in Numara FootPrints. Agri-Fab set up a separate project in Numara FootPrints to enter and track incoming calls from Hydro-Gear employees, who only call in to get help with the company's in-house Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

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– Neal Ozier
Information Systems Manager

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Dynamic Link to corporate data: By accessing contact details in Agri-Fab's Microsoft Exchange 2003 address book, technicians can save additional time, and ensure data accuracy. As a whole, Agri-Fab can continue to use Microsoft Exchange 2003 as its only corporate directory without worrying about synchronizing and managing information in a separate service desk address book.

Online Self-Service: Submitting a ticket in Numara FootPrints is fast and easy. Users simply type in a few letters, and employee contact details are automatically pulled from Agri-Fab's existing Microsoft Exchange 2003 database to populate the necessary fields. Agri-Fab's technicians are assigned to assist certain user groups, so based on the user, tickets are automatically routed to the appropriate technician who is notified via email and can instantly start working on the issue. Ozier also receives an email on each ticket, so he can prioritize or change as necessary.

When addressing issues, technicians can search the Numara FootPrints knowledge base for fast answers to common problems, or to get information on systems they may not be familiar with. When a ticket is changed or closed, an email is sent to update employees on progress. Employees can also log on to Numara FootPrints to check the status of their request on their own.

Multilevel reporting: Technicians, department managers, and senior management all use Numara FootPrints' advanced search and reporting capabilities, accessing various built-in and custom reports to streamline productivity. Technicians can review tasks assigned to them and their status to improve organization and efficiency. Ozier uses the reports to review open issues, and ensure that critical tasks are being addressed. And senior management can use Numara FootPrints to easily summarize activity, and make changes to ensure that the IT department continues to operate at peak efficiency.

"With Numara FootPrints, we can generate a range of reports to help us monitor activity on a variety of levels," said Ozier. "For instance, I can print a complete report on which tickets are currently being worked on, which helps me as a manager to do my job better, and make sure we are always tackling the highest priority items."

To increase his understanding of Numara FootPrints and all it has to offer, Ozier attended a Numara FootPrints Training Seminar. He learned valuable tips and tricks to further customize Numara FootPrints to support Agri-Fab's exact needs.

The Benefits: Greatly Enhanced Customer Service and Happier Technicians

With Numara FootPrints, Agri-Fab's IT department has automated the service desk, and can better organize and manage support requests. As a result, it has improved the level of support it provides to Agri-Fab employees. Issues no longer get lost or overlooked, and priority items are handled in a timely manner. Numara FootPrints' email notification and auto-routing capabilities further speed issue resolution. Overall, response times are faster – especially for simple requests. As a result, Agri-Fab has increased its capacity to handle technical requests, improving its ability to handle peak volumes.

"People sense the difference, and have become more confident in the service desk. They tend to use Numara FootPrints more often than not because they have seen the great response they get from using it. At the same time, we are more capable of handling the increasing call load by using Numara FootPrints," said Ozier. "For the volume of inquiries we get each day, it's just too easy to lose track of things if you don't have a system like Numara FootPrints in place."

In addition to enhancing support, Numara FootPrints has improved communication among the technicians, and between the IT department and employees. Agents can immediately view new submissions, gain a fast understanding of critical issues, and track status any time, while employees are kept in the loop as their requests are resolved. This has increased satisfaction with the service desk – for employees as well as for the members of the IT staff.

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Numara FootPrints' reporting functions have also helped in improving productivity, and streamlining Agri-Fab's IT operations. In addition to improving organization and communication for the company's technicians, Numara FootPrints helps management continuously review service desk activity, and make improvements as necessary.

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.