



FootPrints

Case Study

IT Service Provider Improves Its External and Internal Customer Support with an ITIL Compliant Solution

Founded in 1995, EasyStreet® Online Services is Oregon's leading Managed Services Provider offering a full range of IT infrastructure solutions, including web site hosting, internet access, email, backup, storage and more. Due to its unwavering commitment to customer service, EasyStreet owns the longest-standing record of customer satisfaction of any Managed Services Provider (MSP) or Internet Services Provider (ISP) in the Pacific Northwest. In addition, EasyStreet has repeatedly been recognized by the Portland Business Journal as one of Oregon's "Most Admired Technology Companies," one of the state's "100 Fastest Growing Companies," and ranks among the Deloitte & Touche "Technology Fast 50."

Overview

Industry

- Online Managed Services

Challenge

- Automate IT service and support for email and phone requests
- Track history of common issues and customer interactions to increase reliability
- Implement a multi-platform system that supports ITIL best practices

Solution

- Numara® FootPrints®

Business Application

- IT Service & Support
- Time Tracking
- Order Processing
- ITIL

Key Features

- IT Service Desk Support
- Customization
- ITIL Support
- Multi-Use

Benefits

- Improved problem resolution
- Faster time to resolution
- Increased productivity for IT Support and Operations staff
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Implementation of ITIL best practices
- Improved order management

The Challenge

Over the years, EasyStreet has built a comprehensive IT infrastructure to support its various services and expanding network of clients. As the company's client roster grew, it became more difficult to track the large quantities of trouble tickets and change requests through its limited service desk tool. The IT Support and Operations departments needed a better way to centrally manage all of their IT service requests and projects to ensure the infrastructure performed at optimal levels to support their customers and internal personnel.

"Now that we are all working towards a consistent set of SLAs, our communication between departments has greatly improved, enabling a smoother experience for both the customers and support staff. We have found Numara FootPrints to be such a useful tool that we have since employed it in a variety of situations we didn't even consider during our initial purchase."

– John Beaston,
Cofounder and VP
of Customer Services

While ticket tracking was satisfactory, EasyStreet needed a consolidated solution capable of handling its increasing amount and range of service requests. About 18 months ago, the company decided to replace its email-based incident tracking system with a service desk solution that better identified incoming trouble tickets and also tracked each ticket's status as it progressed through the resolution process. At the time, the company was organizing requests using Tracker (RT), which was essentially a robust email system. This tool was not able to proficiently track phone requests and summarily hurt their ability to follow-up on the progress of tickets within teams. Around the same time, EasyStreet began down the path to implement ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) best practices for the betterment of the company and its services. With over 40 employees, EasyStreet had begun to attract large enough customers to require the formality of business processes found in ITIL guidelines.

The Solution

EasyStreet began its search for a solution that would not only help to manage service requests, but also support ITIL best practices and integrate seamlessly with their heterogeneous platform environment. The company was also mindful that the solution must be flexible and adaptable to support its customers' forever-evolving requirements. Six different providers were evaluated, ranging from companies that offered a strong email support system to strictly phone support. In the end, EasyStreet selected Numara FootPrints because it fully supported multiple channels, including email and phone, offered streamlined ITIL compatibility tools, and the 100% web-based platform allowed it to work with any operating system.

Numara FootPrints is an award-winning, ITIL compatible, web-based service desk solution that centrally tracks and manages all service and support requests through multiple communication channels, including phone, email, the web and chat. Its unique project-based architecture allows users to automate both IT and business processes across their organization and fully align their service desk management functions with the needs of the business.

"We decided Numara FootPrints was the best fit for EasyStreet because it provides support for both phone and email requests, in addition to being cost effective and easy to implement," said Cofounder and VP of Customer Services, John Beaston. "We initially intended to use the system for external support, but soon discovered we could use it for a variety of internal support projects and processes, fueled by the easy adaptability of the solution."

Today EasyStreet handles an average of 500 external and 100 internal service requests per week through Numara FootPrints. In addition to traditional trouble ticket tracking, EasyStreet currently uses Numara FootPrints to track and manage other IT projects, including end-user change requests, department-wide application upgrades, network outages or errors and more.

Key Features

IT Service Desk Support

EasyStreet's 12-person support group is now capable of managing all incidents, change orders and trouble tickets in one centralized system. As a result, they can record, track, assign, escalate, manage and report on IT support issues throughout their life cycle, ultimately improving responsiveness and resolution times. The ability to look at the history of each issue has greatly increased predictability of trouble requests, allowing EasyStreet to develop better proactive problem solving methods and effectively control staffing levels.

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“The ability of Numara FootPrints to effectively track and manage trouble requests has enabled us to implement a more efficient change management program,” said Beaston. “Where we previously had to manually record our regular trouble requests and adjust our resolution processes based on rough guesses, we now have the ability to analyze reliable metrics and use them to define standard processes. These new processes automatically create the subtasks necessary to complete the requests, saving our staff valuable time.”

Web-Based Platform

Because Numara FootPrints is a web-based solution, it fits perfectly into a heterogeneous IT environment, which was integral to EasyStreet as they utilize both Windows and Linux. The web-based structure also allows end-customers to access Numara FootPrints from their web browser so they can submit their requests directly and search the knowledge base to solve their own issues. EasyStreet plans to roll out Numara FootPrints access to their customers later this year, which will further improve their time to resolution of customer issues.

Customization

EasyStreet originally employed Numara FootPrints to handle incoming trouble tickets, but quickly took advantage of the customizable templates to manage other IT services. “The built-in templates got our team pretty far, but the largest difference was seen after a team member attended the Numara FootPrints training class,” continued Beaston. “After a simple, one-day course we were able to take full advantage of the solution’s customization capabilities. Now both our IT Support and Operations groups utilize Numara FootPrints to manage almost all of their activities, and many have designed their own personalized views.” The flexibility of Numara FootPrints has allowed EasyStreet to utilize it company wide, cutting down on program translation costs.

ITIL Support

In addition to centralized Incident, Problem and Request management, EasyStreet is also beginning to use Numara FootPrints to support its Change Management processes and procedures. This has helped the company to better educate its customers on the broad impacts of a specific change request, reducing the number of “fire drills” caused by changes made without full consideration of the larger IT environment.

Multi-Use Capabilities

EasyStreet also found the solution’s built-in capabilities to be applicable for functions outside of IT, and has employed Numara FootPrints to manage their entire order tracking process. Again, this was an adaption and a benefit not originally seen with the initial selection, but later realized as a key advantage in creating a consistent, comprehensive flow throughout the different departments within the company. Numara FootPrints consistently tracks every step in the order process, effectively coordinating various groups with different responsibilities through the entire process.

“We use Numara FootPrints to track all aspects of our sales order process,” continued Beaston. “This is a great tool for our business flow as detailed notes about customized services has allowed for greater visibility, better prioritization and increased predictability with our support staff.”

The Results

Since implementing Numara FootPrints, EasyStreet has drastically improved both its external and internal IT service and support for its employees and over 5,000 clients. EasyStreet is now able to open and close an average of 600 service requests a week within Numara FootPrints. Agents are capable of recording the progression of tickets for easy transfer of projects within groups, which has considerably decreased the number of “lost” tickets that require management attention, from two to three a week to less than one a month using Numara FootPrints.

“Now that we are all working towards a consistent set of SLAs, our communication between departments has greatly improved, enabling a smoother experience for both the customers and support staff,” explained Beaston. “We have found Numara FootPrints to be such a useful tool that we have since employed it in a variety of situations we didn’t even consider during our initial purchase.”

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“With a 12-person staff monitoring hundreds of support requests at different points in their lifecycles, it is imperative that we have a system that tracks ticket status better than email or other manual methods,” Beaston continued. “Not only does Numara FootPrints reduce the number of lost tickets, it allows us to track the amount of time for which a problem ticket is open and anticipates the allocation of resources. You can’t plan if you can’t predict.”

The ability to analyze the historical view of customers and issues has been another key benefit to using the software. EasyStreet staff is able to quickly evaluate the time expected to resolve recurring trouble requests to avoid over or under servicing. It can also calculate the overall time spent servicing each customer. This, in turn, is driving change within the billing structure of EasyStreet, as it is now able to charge additional fees for particularly long and difficult service projects.

EasyStreet has also benefited from the quick and easy implementation. “Not only can Numara FootPrints be up and running with no additional third party support, but the software has the flexibility to grow with us,” stated Beaston. “Our initial installation required minimal on-site training, and no custom coding or external support. There was a familiarity with the software and general ease-of-use within the first week of operations.”

EasyStreet is looking forward to the added features and functionality when it upgrades to Numara FootPrints 8 in Q3 of 2008. “We have been very impressed with Numara FootPrints and are happy with the benefits it’s helped us to realize by enhancing our service and support operations, providing a historical view of issues and customer interactions, and streamlining our order processing system. We look forward to growing with the software as we continue to expand and improve our operations and customer service.”

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.