



Seneca

NUMARA
software

FootPrints

Case Study

Seneca College centrally tracks and manages employee help desk issues and delivers online self-service to over 3,000 employees

Seneca College is the largest college in Canada, with campuses located throughout the Greater Toronto Area. With 16,000 full-time and 90,000 part-time students, Seneca offers a tremendous variety of classes and methods of teaching – from in-class lectures and online learning to co-op and field placements. Seneca's size and diversity allow for dynamic partnerships with industry leaders, the latest in hands-on computer technology, extensive student services, academic advisement, and career counseling.

Overview

Industry

- Education

Challenge

- Centralize and automate help desk activities within the school's IT department

Solution

- Numara® FootPrints®
- Numara FootPrints Dynamic Address Book Link/LDAP

Application

- Centralized Service Desk

Key Features

- Centrally managed customer request tracking
- LDAP directory integration
- Self-service online
- Knowledge management
- Two-way email management
- Advanced escalation
- Reporting and metrics –including time tracking

Benefits

- Faster response time to requests
- Better workflow management
- Ability to handle larger ticket volume
- Improved support activity reporting
- Streamlined communication
- Improved efficiency and speed of technical support

The Challenge

Seneca College's Information Technology and Telecommunications Department (ITT) supports more than 3,700 faculty and staff members across the campus. With multiple campuses located throughout Toronto, Seneca needed a centralized way to track and manage service requests received via its employee help desk, such as problems with software installations, or academic systems, applications, the college's network, printers, other hardware-related issues, etc.

"We have also saved a lot of time and increased the amount of work our technicians can do in a day. FootPrints allows them to check their calls from the field. This keeps them moving and working."

– Louis Koutsovits, Chief Technology Officer

Prior to selecting Numara® Software's Numara FootPrints web-based service desk software, Seneca was using Front Range Solutions™ Heat® Service and Support Solutions™. Heat provided Seneca with a client/server environment, but the college was looking to move its service desk operations to a web-based system. Of equal importance was the ability to leverage and integrate their LDAP-based central directory, which serves as the main address book for its faculty and students. As a policy, the school purchases solutions that are mainly LDAP-compatible or products that can be modified to support the standard. It was based on this criteria that the ITT Department decided to implement Numara FootPrints.

The Solution

"As we began the review process, our purchase decision was dictated by the ability of the product to seamlessly integrate with our LDAP-based centralized directory," explains Clare Vozza, Manager of Client Services at Seneca. According to Vozza, the help desk staff needed a centralized system to report problems and track service requests more efficiently, while streamlining workflow and communication.

Seneca also wanted a solution that enabled faculty and students to email the help desk or submit requests via the web. This capability helps automate a range of tasks, route requests to the most appropriate help desk analyst, and trigger escalation rules.

Seneca's ITT Department employs 15 full-time agents/technologists to support the 3,700 faculty and staff members across the college.

ITT rolled out Numara FootPrints over a four month period before they went live in April 2001. This allowed them to fully understand the capabilities of Numara FootPrints and conduct internal testing prior to the employee rollout. From January 2002 until December 2002, 9,814 calls were submitted and logged through Numara FootPrints.

Employee Help Desk: Employees can submit requests via telephone or the web. Once a request is submitted, whether by telephone or the web, an email notification is immediately sent out. The email informs the employee of his or her ticket number, so the user can track the issue with Numara FootPrints' self-service online functionality.

Additionally, ITT uses Numara FootPrints' self-service online to allow employees to search through the school's knowledge base for answers to frequently asked questions, problems, etc. If the problem cannot be resolved using the knowledge base, employees can submit their request via an online form. The form was easily created in Numara FootPrints and it includes a range of drop-down menus that correspond to specific technical categories, such as Blackboard™ (the college's collaboration system) hardware, network, printing, software, web, and other.

When employees submit issues online, they log into Numara FootPrints via the web, enter a description of the problem, and tag the appropriate drop-down menu category. When the employee help desk receives the request, the title is changed to match the specific drop-down category, which is then routed to the most appropriate technician. Agents can easily categorize problems and run problem-specific reports to determine trends. Each issue is then assigned a priority as well as a call status of open, acknowledged, pending, reopened, or closed. Each of these status criteria were easily customized in Numara FootPrints.

Technologists have access to Numara FootPrints from any of the college's ten campus locations or even off-site. Via the web, they can login, update tickets, and inquire about any other pending jobs – without having to return to the main office. "This eliminates time wasted when the technologist has to drive all the way back to the main campus to receive the next call," explained Louis Koutsovits, Chief Technology Officer at Seneca College. "As a result, we are able to be more efficient and address service requests much faster."

FootPrints

In addition to the internal help desk, Seneca plans on using Numara FootPrints to implement other projects throughout the school. Here is a snapshot of some of the projects which are in development:

Programming Project: Seneca will create a separate project that will be used for project management purposes related to application development.

Student Help Desk: Seneca will use the faculty and employee help desk model to create a student help desk.

Additionally, other departments within the school have approached the ITT Department to request Numara FootPrints for their own use, such as facilities management, maintenance, etc

Key Features

Seneca selected Numara FootPrints because of its web-based functionality and integration with LDAP-based corporate directories. The Numara FootPrints Dynamic Address Book Link/LDAP provides the capability to leverage their existing directory, giving the employee help desk up-to-the-minute contact data. Vozza was equally impressed with Numara FootPrints' ease-of-use, email management, and comprehensive reporting functionalities. Anticipating the need to extend the use of Numara FootPrints, Seneca purchased an extended license agreement, to support the student help desk and other initiatives throughout the school.

Seneca's employee help desk incorporates business rules to ensure service levels and uses Numara FootPrints to automate the escalation process. When a call is first logged into Numara FootPrints, one of three ITT employee help desk agents is assigned to address the issue. If the request cannot be initially solved, it is reclassified with an appropriate priority, and then escalated and reassigned to another agent or technologist.

With Numara FootPrints, Seneca's first-level problem resolution capability increased significantly. Based on the priority of the call, combined with service standards set forth by the school, calls remain open for a minimal amount of time, and then they are automatically escalated based on specific criteria. Seneca configured Numara FootPrints to categorize calls by five different types of priorities.

Generally, a priority one call is dealt with immediately and management is notified. Priority two calls are dealt with within the day, priority three calls are handled within 24-48 hours, priority four calls usually take 48 hours or 3 days maximum, and timing for priority five calls depend on the intricacies of the request. The employee help desk manager also gets involved with outstanding calls and may re-assign them to others or provide additional resources.

Seneca is in the process of developing a knowledge base in Numara FootPrints for employees and students to search for solutions on their own. Vozza anticipates this capability will make the help desk even more efficient, while providing a 24/7 service facility online.

Numara FootPrints offers a range of reports. Koutsovit and Vozza run reports on a weekly basis to gauge the number of service requests open and closed, review the performance of individual agents, and evaluate the number of requests received from each campus, so they can allocate more or less technologists as needed.

"Reporting allows us to identify trends, justify resources, and anticipate how we can staff the help desk on an ongoing basis," added Vozza.

FootPrints

The Results

Because the transition to Numara FootPrints has been so effective, Seneca significantly improved its ability to centrally manage technical support calls. It also provided a new process for employees to submit and/or resolve problems on their own.

Seneca also improved agent workflow by reallocating resources at the employee help desk. This enabled the group to handle a larger ticket volume. Numara FootPrints' reporting capabilities help Seneca College determine where and when they need to insert more resources to handle peak call volumes. "If more problems are reported from one campus location, we know we need to allocate more technologists to that site," explains Koutsovitis.

Seneca streamlined communications and expanded their ticket volume at the school. "We have also saved a lot of time and increased the amount of work our technicians can do in a day," says Koutsovitis. "Numara FootPrints allows them to check their calls from the field. This keeps them moving and working."

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