

OpSource Leverages ePeople for Differentiated Service

OpSource, based in Santa Clara, California is one of the fastest growing providers of outsourced, on-premises and private labeled IT infrastructure services. Founded by a team of veterans from the telecommunication, hosting, storage and IT services industries, the company combines innovative technology, best practices and experienced personnel to deliver IT infrastructure services of higher quality and at lower cost than corporations can do themselves.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENT

As an IT services provider, OpSource's success is heavily weighted to the quality of its customer care. As a result, the company is committed to deploying best practices in account management and customer care operations to achieve rapid customer response and fast issue resolution. To realize these goals, OpSource needed a customer support and account management software solution to automate these best-in-class service delivery processes. It was imperative that the solution could:

Support collaborative issue resolution: For OpSource, many incoming support incidents are complex and require the customer care team to work collaboratively with engineering, services and account managers to resolve issues. Many of these individuals are geographically dispersed across the US. As a result, OpSource required that the software system provide an infrastructure for real-time collaboration and communication among everyone assigned to the ticket.

Facilitate fast knowledge transfer at shift change: The customer care engineers work in a shift-oriented 24X7 environment. At the end of the shift, they need to transfer detailed case knowledge to the incoming shift engineers, so resolution times do not suffer from the change. Hence, OpSource needed the system to provide the user an ability to view the "entire story-to-date" associated with the customer ticket, including all emails, log files, documents and SPX data.

Enable account management processes: OpSource has implemented an account-centric support and escalation model providing account managers with visibility into all issues associated with their accounts. The model enabled them to proactively address escalations quickly and smoothly without the typical disruptive firefighting typical with other outside IT service providers. The system should support this model by automatically providing account managers with complete visibility and transparency into every interaction.

Easily integrate with other systems: OpSource has deployed a unique technology platform called Sigma Operations Platform (SPX) to proactively monitor and manage its customer's IT operations infrastructure and ensure industry-leading system uptime. OpSource wanted its new support system to easily integrate with SPX.

Offer fast, low-cost deployment: OpSource wanted a system that was cost-effective to purchase and implement, but could deliver the scalability and performance to keep pace with its sales growth.

SYSTEM SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

After evaluating many vendors, OpSource selected ePeople Teamwork problem resolution software because it was the only solution that met its needs for remote collaboration, easy integration, seamless knowledge transfer, support for account management model and cost-effective deployment. Additionally, ePeople Teamwork offered a framework for delivering high-touch services to its customers. OpSource selected ePeople in Q3, 2002 and went live within 45 days in November 2002, surpassing expectations for time-to-benefit and responsiveness.

ePeople's engineering and professional services organizations worked closely with OpSource to not only execute against an aggressive deployment schedule, but rapidly develop product enhancements to support OpSource's best-in-class account-centric support processes.

"ePeople has proven to be a very responsive partner. They take our feedback to heart," said John Rowell, vice president of Operations and Engineering and co-founder of OpSource. "As a result of our close working relationship, ePeople Teamwork has evolved to become a very good solution for the collaborative support model commonly found at complex-service organizations."

HOW ePEOPLE WORKS AT OPSOURCE

ePeople Teamwork addresses OpSource's entire incident lifecycle from information capture, relevant team assembly and collaborative resolution to incident close. Comprehensive knowledge captured during the resolution process, including the approach to resolving the incident is immediately available for reuse to resolve the next incident.

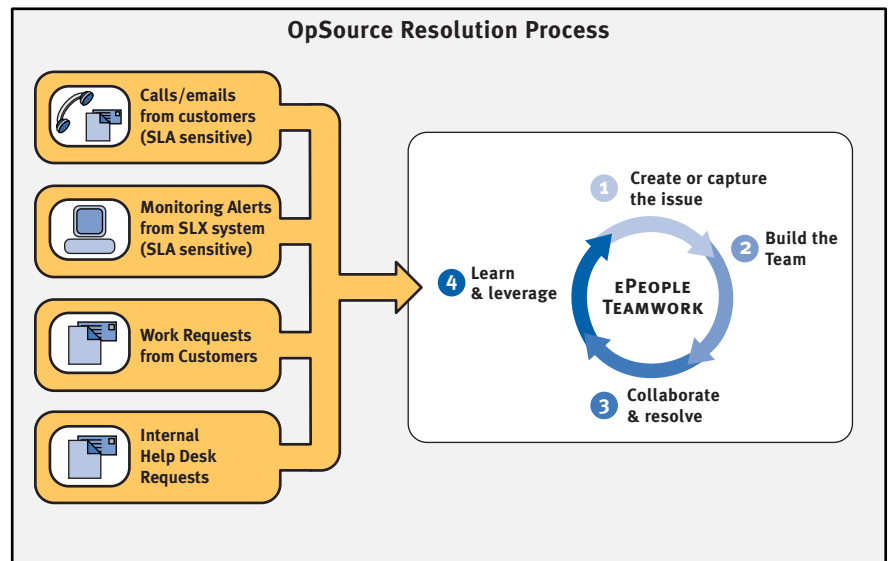
Once a support ticket is created in ePeople Teamwork, it gets assigned to the right customer care technicians. The system automatically notifies the account managers about the ticket and then adds them to the team of OpSource people working on the issue. As a result, the account manager is automatically in the loop on any activity, decision and resolution at any time during the lifecycle of that issue and can work proactively to leverage the right resources within OpSource to ensure highest level of service for their account. This capability has enabled OpSource to successfully implement an account-centric support model on top of a function-centric support team.

If the ticket resolution requires additional help from internal experts, the ticket owner or the account manager uses ePeople Teamwork's expertise management and location capabilities to invite and engage relevant engineers on the ticket. ePeople Teamwork's recommendation engines uses dynamic profiles and proprietary heuristics to also suggest the most appropriate advisors to help resolve an issue. As a result, the best team to resolve the ticket can be created and mobilized quickly for action.

Once the team is assembled, ePeople Teamwork provides a web-based workspace, where all interactions, emails and documents about that ticket are automatically stored and are accessed real-time by the team members. If any new document is added to the ticket workspace or any new interaction between any team members takes place on the ticket, the rest of the team is automatically notified ensuring that the entire team is always on the same page.

The team collaboratively works together using the ePeople workspace to resolve the ticket. This collaborative resolution technology enables OpSource to capture and resolve customer issues rapidly using its team of geographically distributed engineers.

In addition to tracking and resolving customer issues, generated from either phone calls or monitoring alerts from the SPX system, ePeople Teamwork is also used to track and resolve customer change requests and internal work requests. With ePeople Teamwork's web-services architecture, OpSource integrated its customer care solution and its SPX platform within days.



With the initial installation a success, OpSource plans to expand the degree of integration between ePeople Teamwork and SPX to automatically but intelligently generate tickets from monitoring alerts. OpSource also plans to leverage the reporting and analytics within ePeople Teamwork to continually measure and improve the performance of its support processes.

RESULTS

Today, OpSource averages about 500 logged tickets per month, a number that has grown consistently over the past four months as its customer base increases.

"We were very pleased with the speed at which the system went live in our business environment," said Fran Ramirez, manager of 24/7 Customer Care Services at OpSource.

Added Rowell, "We credit ePeople Teamwork with helping us keep our customer response time within our internal targets and the resolution times on sensitive customer issues within the committed service levels."