



Creating a Single View of the Customer

Managing between 100,000 and 120,000 domain registrations per month for over three million customers, including 3,000 registrars, Nominet UK is the registry for .uk Internet names. The not-for-profit company does not proactively sell domain name registrations, but provides the infrastructure for registering and maintaining names, as well as delivering direct support services to domain name holders. Nominet also offers legal resolution services in the event of a domain name dispute.

Business Needs

Achieve and maintain corporate-defined standards of excellence and adhere to ITIL-based best practices in order to enhance overall levels of customer service.

Solution

LANDesk® Service Desk
LANDesk® Process Manager
LANDesk® Active Knowledge
LANDesk® Desktop Manager

Business Benefits

- Easily manage, track, and correlate nearly a quarter million calls and emails a year
- Provide a single view of customer issues and history across all segments and departments within the organization
- Simplify the measurement of support performance levels against predefined customer satisfaction metrics
- Enable proactive problem management and resolution through reporting tools that facilitate trend analysis and root cause identification
- Improve overall efficiency of IT support and external customer service

The Requirement

The organization's not-for-profit status and the fact that it operates in a technologically advanced environment combine to make Nominet a very unique enterprise. The company aims to be a beacon of best-practice for the registry industry, and with this in mind, Nominet's Board has established technological and service excellence objectives for the organization to adhere to. As part of this drive for excellence, the company has recently undergone a complete review of how it deals with internal IT support and external customer service.

"Nominet provides a service, rather than a product," explains Jay Daley, IT Director at Nominet. "Our success can be best measured by the satisfaction of our customers. For this reason we decided to roll out technology that would give our customers a superior service experience—by speeding up processes and providing faster access to information—and give us better measurement of how customers feel about the service they have received."

One leg of Nominet's service excellence strategy was a move to adopt IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes. Every member of Nominet's Technical Department, including management, has now been ITIL-trained. The other leg was to engage with potential technology partners, a process managed by Nominet's Internal Support Technician, Andy Bell. He notes that partner selection was a relatively straightforward process involving three vendors, including Touchpaper, which now is part of Avocent's LANDesk division*.

"Our original brief was for an incident management system for internal IT support, but was soon widened to embrace all customer support requests as well. We knew we would need a degree of product tailoring to meet our exact needs, and the configurability of the Touchpaper solution was a strong factor in our decision."

Action Plan

The LANDesk implementation plan for Nominet was divided into three phases. In Phase 1, the requirement was for three linked systems to support the 120 users in Nominet's three largest departments: the Technical Department (Nominet's IT and support department), Registrant Services (handles customer queries), and Member and Tag Holder Services (registrar support, such as ISPs with .uk domains). Since each department uses its own separate database and has its own unique needs, Nominet needed a solution that could be configured according to each department's specific requirements. According to Bell, LANDesk had the best ability to meet each group's strict imperatives.

The complexity of Nominet's IT infrastructure created significant technical challenges in terms of integrating the different departments' databases. For example, the use of the latest version of the Oracle database (version 10g) meant that new modules were needed to ensure that query responses would be returned from the databases within acceptable time limits. To facilitate this overall integration process, LANDesk provided a significant amount of technical input and advice.

"With the new Touchpaper software, customer incident transfers between teams have become much smoother and quicker for the customer and easier for the support team to manage."*

Juliette Stone
Manager of Registrant Services
Nominet

** Spanning 20 years' experience across Europe, the USA and Asia Pacific, Touchpaper has a rich heritage as one of the most established and respected international providers of IT business management (ITBM) solutions, encompassing IT service management (ITSM), customer service solutions, and network and systems management. On July 1, 2008, Touchpaper was acquired by Avocent Corporation and has been integrated within Avocent's LANDesk division. Touchpaper solutions now carry the LANDesk® brand name and are offered either directly or through an extensive international network of solutions providers serving commercial and public sector markets that include education, financial services, government, healthcare, IT, law, manufacturing, professional services, retail, transportation and utilities.*

Despite these challenges, the system went live on schedule and the users in all three departments can now log every incoming call or email onto LANDesk® Service Desk to ensure they are resolved completely. This involves just under a quarter of a million calls and emails per year, with an average of 100 telephone calls and 300 to 400 emails to the Technical Department per month; 4,000 incoming telephone calls and 450 support emails for Member and Tag Holder Services; and 8,000 incoming telephone calls and more than 7,000 emails for Registrant Services.

A Single View of the Customer

As these figures suggest, Registrant Services has the largest support workload in Nominet, with 50 staff members handling customer inquiries. It's currently subdivided into five groups that each handle a different aspect of customer support, including front line support, renewals, transfers, the online reply system and specific projects.

According to Juliette Stone, the manager of Registrant Services, before the LANDesk implementation, the department relied on a mixture of paper files and details stored electronically in the individual domain registration files. With no central repository for customer incident data, members of these five teams had to either have a complete picture of the incident, or spend time finding and collecting the relevant documentation from the archives.

“Not only did this reduce the efficiency of the department, it also meant that there was no easy way of handing over the relevant details if customers had to be passed to a different team,” explains Stone. Referring to LANDesk® Service Desk and other LANDesk® solutions formerly branded under the Touchpaper name, she adds, “With the new Touchpaper software, customer incident transfers between teams have become much smoother and quicker for the customer and easier for the support team to manage.”

The single view of the customer extends across all segments of the organization. For example, if an executive officer receives a customer comment, all details relevant to that customer can be viewed at the touch of a button. This common view across the entire team means that Nominet can now make better use of staff resources by balancing staffing levels across teams depending on their workload. The next goal for Registrant Services is to leverage this single-view of the customer to create a “one-stop shop” for incoming calls and emails, eliminating the need to transfer incidents from team to team.

Measuring the Impact

Another new development for Registrant Services is customer satisfaction metrics. Andy Bell points out that before LANDesk® Service Desk, Nominet could report on the number of incoming calls through the switch ACD (Automatic Call Distribution) software, but had no way of relating this traffic to calls that had been resolved. Since deploying LANDesk Service Desk, Nominet has been able to regularly track customer satisfaction metrics based on query resolution levels. With the help of LANDesk, the satisfaction levels currently register at 80 percent, and Stone aims to drive the customer satisfaction levels above 90 percent.

“We want to be an example of best practice to the industry”, she says. Stone is also considering the potential for introducing customer self-service, providing customers online access to the LANDesk system so customers can see how their incidents are progressing.

In addition to customer satisfaction data, the fact that LANDesk Service Desk logs all incoming traffic enables Nominet to provide a much higher level of internal reporting to each department, improving the ability to identify trends and causes. This has allowed Registrant Services to be more proactive at analyzing the root causes of certain problems and initiating remedies.

Future Plans

In Phase 2 of its implementation plan, Nominet intends to roll out the availability of LANDesk to 20 additional users in four other departments, including legal, credit control, payments and renewals. “The flexibility of the Touchpaper software is so impressive that we can adapt it for use by departments that are not conventionally thought of as support or help desk,” notes Bell. “Managing cases or queries is what the software does extremely well and we can see significant benefits in handling all Nominet’s case loads within the same application.”

At the same time, Nominet intends to build its LANDesk Configuration Management Database (CMDB) to track infrastructure and then control changes made to the infrastructure. This will give them more detailed impact analysis capabilities and help Nominet to become even more ITIL compliant.

With its commitment to adopt new technologies, Nominet has decided to use LANDesk® Process Manager to control these change-management processes. Bell says that the internal development team is already planning how its Java based software can directly integrate with the .net environment inherent to LANDesk Process Manager. This integration will allow summary information from LANDesk to appear within internally developed customer account management systems.

Looking to Phase 3 of Nominet’s implementation, Bell foresees a number of technical advances, including new capabilities to cope with VoIP traffic. “VoIP will allow us to automate a massive amount of data logging into Touchpaper by using the switch’s ATAPI interface to capture data from the IP system. Once this data is integrated into Touchpaper, our ability to track customer incidents and to respond to trends will be even greater.”