

Joanna L. Vahlsing, PMP - Case Study

Project: *Georgia Department of Education Customer Support Desk*

Consulting Company: *CIBER, Inc*

Time Period: *May 2003 through August 2005*

From 1996 to 2006, CIBER assisted the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Office Administrative Technology (OAT) with day-to-day operations of the support desk, training initiatives, data collections and programmatic technical analysis. As GaDOE continually strived to provide exceptional service to educators and to the public, CIBER's intent as a business partner was to act as an enabler to GaDOE and OAT.

In April 2003, CIBER proposed a solution that would allow the Information Technology Support Desk to mature in areas of process, customer service and proactive support, which would help GaDOE achieve their vision of a Universal Support Desk. GaDOE's perception of the then current Support Desk status was that it would not be sufficient to support their vision. GaDOE's complaints included the lack of quality support provided by the Support Desk, lack of formal training processes and general lack of confidence in the current resources.

The objects of the support desk improvement plan included:

- Improve team performance and reduce turnover
- Eliminate time spent dealing with personnel issues
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Apply industry best practices to the support desk environment
- Optimize the HEAT system for better call logging and reporting capabilities
- Position the support desk for future growth
- Enhance the scope of products and customer served by the support desk

The Support Desk Improvement Plan was dependent on GaDOE's acceptance of adding a CIBER Support Desk Project Manager to the existing team who would immediately assume responsibility for day-to-day personnel management of all CIBER consultants.

In May 2003, CIBER provided an on-site Customer Support Desk Project Manager to GaDOE. The Support Desk Manager, **Joanna Vahlsing**, discovered following deficiencies immediately – lack of morale, lack of metrics, such as call and ticket statistics, lack of quality measurements and lack of formal process.

By implementing formal processes from CIBER's Center of Excellence, Joanna was able to increase productivity and team morale without making any changes to the number of Support Desk staff members. Since May, the Customer Support Desk has:

- Averaged a ticket volume of 1600 tickets a month (Average prior to May – 1200 tickets)
- Lowered the average ticket resolution time by 3 hours
- Increased the same day ticket resolution percentage by 20%
- Decreased the average call back response time by 8 hours

This increased productivity allowed for the team to adjust and handle a workload increase of nearly 70% during the month of June without sacrificing quality customer service. The team's performance during this period earned them special recognition from the State Superintendent of Schools, Kathy Cox.

Joanna L. Vahlsing, PMP - Case Study

Project: *Georgia Department of Education Customer Support Desk*

Consulting Company: *CIBER, Inc*

Time Period: *May 2003 through August 2005*

Prior to CIBER's Support Desk Improvement plan, GaDOE was not capturing quality measurements. Joanna proposed a Customer Survey Project for GaDOE, which would randomly survey users who contacted the Support Desk to provide feedback regarding their experience with Customer Support. Users were asked to rate factors such as the analyst's communication skills, product knowledge, courteousness and resolution time. The Customer Support team's average score since the inception of the project is 4.94 (based on a 1-5 scale, 5 being highest).

Other Customer Support improvements include implementing the Single Point of Ownership Philosophy, which states that the analyst who opened the ticket will ensure that this issue is resolved to the user's satisfaction. Also, the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) concept was eliminated and cross-trained all analysts to support all types of calls, so that any analyst can take the next ticket out of the queue.

Future goals include working with GaDOE to produce a "live-call" environment, which will allow users to speak with an analyst instead of being required to leave a voicemail. Other plans include reaching out to other departments within the Georgia Department of Education to provide support to additional applications, which will increase the number of Support Desk staff members.

One of the major deficiencies was solved by the addition of a full-time HEAT administrator. Prior to the administrator's arrival, the HEAT call logging system was not being used to its full potential. Call logging was a difficult process, users encountered frequent downtime and connection issues, automated features and tasks were not configured properly and report metrics were non-existent.

The administrator improved the HEAT system uptime by 75% and reduced uninterrupted outages to five incidents a month. The administrator also established a fully functional HEAT testing environment, capable of mimicking any production situation and testing any new functionality in an isolated environment.

By consolidating three inbound email sources into one ticket queue, requests were able to be handled in the order in which they were received and reduced the number of queues analysts were required to monitor. The administrator also implemented the HEAT Plus Knowledge Knowledgebase, which allows analysts to search for resolutions to common issues with the touch of a button. The Business Process Automation tool was also improved to send informational notifications to analysts and end users concerning ticket resolution and escalation information.

One of the administrator's more significant HEAT improvements was the implementation of the HEAT Answer Wizard reporting module. This module allowed ticket metrics to be reported from HEAT on demand. Prior to this implementation, accurate HEAT ticket statistics were not available.

Joanna L. Vahlsing, PMP - Case Study

Project: *Georgia Department of Education Customer Support Desk*

Consulting Company: *CIBER, Inc*

Time Period: *May 2003 through August 2005*

Future plans include the implementation of HEAT Self Service, which will allow users to initiate and track support requests online.

Another major area of GaDOE concern was addressed by adding an additional trainer to the Support Desk staff. The trainer became responsible for determining the training needs of end users, developing curriculums, training schedules and providing online and in-person training session for GaDOE customers.

The trainer's accomplishments include the implementation of online training classes using the WebEx product. This implementation allowed GaDOE customers to save on travel expenses, provided more convenient method of training and the easy set up allows training to be more responsive to school district's needs.

Working with GaDOE, the trainer also created an online training schedule and registration system. This system eliminated the need for GaDOE customers to fax training registrations and the data entry associated with processing the requests. The interface also allows for quick and easy updates and real-time reporting is available.

User feedback regarding these tools has been extremely positive and their ease of use has created a greater training demand.

Future training plans include an online training evaluation program as well as increasing collaboration with other GaDOE departments to identify other training needs.

Now that GaDOE's confidence in the level of service and quality staff CIBER can provide has increased dramatically, GaDOE is beginning to view CIBER as providing an outsourcing solution as opposed to a pure staffing engagement.