



IT Service Management

Software House International Builds New Help Desk Service on Flexible, ITIL® Compatible FrontRange™ IT Service Management

When it comes to software and hardware, perhaps no reseller moves more than Software House International (SHI). With sales topping \$2 billion last year, the company ranks as one of the largest resellers in the world.

SHI has earned the top reseller spot for some of the industry's biggest names, including Microsoft, McAfee, Novell, Symantec, Citrix, Corel and IBM. With the ability to fulfill orders over 100,000, it has built a loyal customer base that includes Agilent, AT&T, The Boeing Company, Bank of America, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, MCI and Merrill Lynch.

Traditionally a large account reseller (LAR), the company launched an initiative in 2005 to develop services that add value on top of its software and hardware sales. Chief among them is outsourced help desk services. SHI targets mid-sized businesses, with 1,000 seats or more, that need help desk services to support their growth.

A Customizable, Open Standards Platform

In 2006, SHI needed a strong platform on which to build the new service. At the same time, the company wanted to improve its own internal help desk to support its 850 worldwide employees through rapid growth.

The help desk's incumbent Lotus Notes-based application lacked built-in capabilities for call analysis and reporting, issue escalation or self help – all key to an effective service desk offering. Moreover, SHI needed to adapt its system easily and rapidly to the unique processes and knowledge bases of each client. Finally, demonstrating a commitment to industry best practices was essential to marketing the new service.

"We needed a more formal support process and an ITIL-compatible [Information Technology Infrastructure Library] solution to market to customers," said Bill Santos, general manager, Services Development, at SHI. "As we began to position ourselves as a new entry in the help desk service space, we wanted to differentiate ourselves from other options."

We thought an ITIL-compatible service management system would send a strong message to the market."

SHI evaluated five service desk solutions before quickly narrowing the field to two ITIL-compatible, enterprise-level offerings. After on-site demonstrations, the company selected IT Service Management (ITSM) from FrontRange Solutions for its strong, open standards architecture, while at the same time a better price point.

"ITSM was a more complete solution with the multi-tenancy, scalability and customizability to support our help desk service," Santos said. "We can accommodate each client's unique entitlement processes and custom knowledge bases."

Automating Help Desk Handoffs

SHI first implemented ITSM as its internal help desk application. As a FrontRange Solutions Partner, SHI deployed the software on its own – in just 60 days – beginning with the Incident Management and Problem Management modules. The company accesses ITSM primarily through smart client, but as needed via the Web.

SHI easily customized fields and screens to fit its workflow and to match the previous system. That familiar look helped agents ramp up rapidly on the new application.

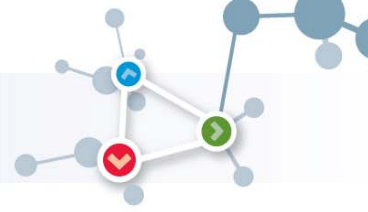
With Incident, agents log, escalate and track every issue to resolution. The software ensures agents follow a standard process, and automates steps such as escalation and notifying customers as tickets are closed.

ITSM enables SHI to tier its help desk, automatically passing tickets on to level two or three agents when needed as tier one agents indicate the type of issue.

"We can establish very clear levels of responsibility and accountability for tickets that are open," Santos points out. "Automating those handoffs allows us to be very efficient with everyone's time."

| From the creators of award-winning GoldMine® and HEAT® software |





Problem Management aggregates multiple incidents into problems, so SHI can address root causes and reduce the frequency of certain incidents.

Adding to its solution, SHI also recently implemented the Service Level Management, Knowledge Management and Self Service modules. Service Level will be particularly critical to staying within established service level agreements for its outsourced service.

Knowledge Management gives agents a customizable base of information from which to resolve issues, improving first-call resolution rates. With Self Service, end customers can log and check on their incidents online, ultimately reducing call volumes.

Improved Service, and the Metrics to Prove it

With multiple ITSM modules in full use, SHI notes significant efficiency and service improvements in its internal help desk. Readily available information and a tiered help desk have driven up the first-call closure rates to about 83 percent – significantly higher than before.

With built-in communication about tickets, fewer internal customers call the help desk asking for ticket status. Online status with Self Service will further reduce those calls, allowing agents to focus on new issues.

Automatic notification about ticket closure improves customer satisfaction. Santos also notes a decrease in the volume of repeat incidents with the ability to identify problems and their root causes.

Reporting on service-level performance ensures that SHI meets its own and clients' service guidelines. Likewise, reporting across all modules gives SHI valuable metrics to share with clients and drive continuous performance improvements.

ITSM provides the flexible, cost-effective platform SHI needs to manage its growing internal help desk as well as support its new help desk offering. The company can ramp up new customers quickly when it launches the service at the end of 2006.

“Our goal is to get customers from signed to operational and customized in 30 days, and ITSM will allow us to do that,” Santos said. “We have a market-leading platform that balances performance with flexibility, and allows us to adjust processes to react to clients' specific requirements – without having to incur tremendous cost.”

Integrating Voice Applications with ITSM

Next, SHI plans to implement FrontRange's IP Contact Center (IPCC), which provides an integrated voice communications platform that extends the functionality of ITSM.

“IPCC is important part of upfront customization, as we begin to approach clients with our help desk offering,” Santos said. “It integrates with ITSM and recognizes, ‘This is a call from customer XYZ,’ then invokes a specific process workflow and screen pops to make it appear to callers that the agent only does XYZ problem-solving all day long.”

ABOUT FRONTRANGE SOLUTIONS

FrontRange Solutions develops award-winning software and solutions used by more than 130,000 companies and over 1.2 million users worldwide to manage a wide variety of business relationships and provide exceptional service. FrontRange product families, designed specifically for small-to-medium-enterprise (SME) and distributed enterprise organizations include: GoldMine® for business relationship management, team-based contact management and sales force automation solutions; IT Service Management with HEAT® and ITIL® standards-based modules for complete service management; Communication Management including IP Contact Center for reduced telephony costs and increased agent productivity, streamlined customer service and communications; and Infrastructure Management, which provides the ability to optimize the full lifecycle of a company's assets. Customers representing 44 percent of the Fortune 100 and 76 percent of the FTSE 100, include Coca-Cola, Shell Oil, Prudential Securities, Électricité de France, Mack Trucks, Campbell Soup, Avaya, Bechtel Corp, Bank of America, and Turner News Network. For more information, call 800.776.7889 or visit www.frontrange.com.

AT A GLANCE

Organization: Software House International

Industry: Information Technology

Web site: www.shi.com

Product(s) Used:
 ITSM Incident
 ITSM Problem
 ITSM Service Level Management
 ITSM Self Service
 ITSM Knowledge Management
 IP Contact Center

Quick Stats
 Internal customers supported: 850
 Desktops: 850
 Average service desk calls per month: 863
 Help desk agents: 15
 Operating environment: Windows

Business Benefits:

- First-call closure rates have risen to about 83 percent with readily available information and a tiered help desk.
- Fewer customers call the help desk asking for ticket status, due to automated communication about tickets.
- The volume of repeat incidents decreased with the ability to identify problems and their root causes.
- The customizable platform enables SHI to ramp up new clients on its new outsourced help desk service quickly and cost effectively.

| From the creators of award-winning GoldMine and HEAT software |

