

City of Sioux Falls Aims for “No-Call Resolution” by Automating Service Delivery and Endpoint Management with HEAT



ORGANIZATION

Name: City of Sioux Falls
Location: Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Industry: State and Local Government
Website: www.siouxfalls.org

SOLUTION

- HEAT Service Management 2015
- HEAT – Desktop and Server Management (DSM)
- HEAT Discovery

BENEFITS

- Delivers self-service IT support capabilities to improve the employee experience and support tracking
- Automates software and OS deployment processes for further productivity and for IT to stay up-to-date on technology platforms and changes.
- Finesses IT asset allocation and troubleshooting
- Enables building more efficiency into workflows

The City of Sioux Falls is distinguished for many reasons: Its strong job growth, low cost of living and reputation as the cultural center of South Dakota. As the largest city in the state, 171,544 people lived in Sioux Falls in 2015, and the population is growing. The city has been rated a big draw for great home values, solid infrastructure and wealth of employment options, with financial services and healthcare as its top industries.

Bring on the Mobile Brigade

As one of the area's top employers, the City of Sioux Falls keeps the small team manning its application and IT support operations busy trying to stay abreast of rising user expectations, up-to-date on platforms and technologies, and supporting an increasingly mobile workforce, spurred by a city-wide initiative for employees to leverage more technology to increase efficiency.

“We have more devices than people,” says Clayton Siegfried, the city's IT Support Supervisor.

“The goal is no-call resolution.”

Clayton Siegfried, IT Support Supervisor

There's been a surge in mobile device usage over the last couple of years in the city government offices, as more employees can do their work outside the confines of the office. And with a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) program in place, the city issues smartphones or offers a stipend to those employees who prefer to rely on their personal phones. All told, close to 2,000 devices are now in use among some 1,500 employees.

Today, the city's handful of IT support specialists are ensuring that city employees' needs are unflinchingly met with upgrades to HEAT IT Service Management 2015 and HEAT – Desktop and Server Management (DSM). The IT support team has a long history of using HEAT and it turned to the latest HEAT solutions to continue to deliver high levels of IT service quality, especially as the workplace environment changed.

Rising User Expectations: Self-Service Stands Out

The IT support team lead the way on using mobile devices to increase efficiency in their dual roles as both helpdesk workers and field technicians. HEAT Service Management is a big help to them as it makes it possible to receive notifications of new service requests on their mobile devices. “If there's

something in the area while they're out there that they can fix, we can push it to them," says Wade Bentz, Application Support Analyst at City of Sioux Falls. They also can get updates about existing service request tickets on their mobile devices, and take appropriate action based on configuration options in the HEAT system, he says.

But the biggest benefit of HEAT Service Management, Bentz relates, is the self-service portal. Siegfried calls the self-service portal a "fuel gauge," enabling support staff to have clear insight into the status of all tickets. Everything is in one place, and that everything includes "more statistical information coming back from the different types of service requests," he says. "HEAT has helped communication and centralization of work behind the scenes. There's one pane of glass and you can look quickly at what's going on and with what users are waiting on."

"The HEAT Self-Service Portal is huge for us, both for its ease of use and for our getting better tracking specifics," Bentz adds. Now, information is logged in tickets that might not have been entered, because an analyst wasn't in front of a desktop computer when the call came. "There will be a lot more accuracy from that perspective," he says.

Not only that, but the city's employees find the HEAT self-service portal visually attractive and easy to use. Plus, they can easily check in on the status of tickets they've submitted without having to make a phone call. "From a customer service standpoint, HEAT has been well accepted by city employees as a whole," says Siegfried. The customer experience will improve even more as the support team crafts a knowledge base for the portal that will incorporate best practices and other self-help information that users can access to resolve issues on their own.

"The goal is no-call resolution," Siegfried says. That's a concept that holds great attraction for a new generation of employees that want to steer clear from the old call center model, he explains.

Stay Up-to-Date on New Technologies and Platforms: Automating Software and OS Deployment Makes the Difference

The City of Sioux Falls currently manages over 250 applications specific to different departments, such as police, fire and public health. Essential upgrades to the latest operating system versions or Microsoft Office versions are much easier with HEAT DSM. HEAT DSM assures that there's no time lost or risks taken manually building ghost images for any device that will touch the network. "It's one layer, and it doesn't matter what type of device," Siegfried says. "If there's a driver on the server, it will go. It has streamlined the imaging process significantly." Think of it, he says, as a "one-and-done" deployment approach.



With this functionality in place, the city's techs are as efficient getting users up and running as those users are at getting their jobs done out in the field with their new mobile devices. The HEAT DSM Operating System Deployment module has been in use for just a few months now—but it's getting a real workout by the help desk staff. Siegfried says: "They use it every day. They like having one image to push."

As the city moves to Microsoft Windows 10 from Microsoft Windows 7, HEAT DSM's value will multiply. Currently, IT is testing the newest version of the operating system (in fact, its first OSD package was created for Windows 10). "We're going to make the jump to 10," he says.

HEAT DSM makes it a lot easier for IT staff to deal with the uptick, by automatically packaging operating system, drivers and configuration for fast deployment. The same base operating system supports every user device, with IT able to call upon any of a couple of dozen unique images to reflect individual department requirements.

Discovery Dynamics

Also part of the equation for the City of Sioux Falls: Deploying HEAT Discovery for finding, auditing and continually tracking every IT asset on the network, in conjunction with the HEAT Service Management upgrade. Help with asset allocation, says Siegfried, is no small thing considering that the city's IT equipment resides across 40 physical sites. With HEAT Discovery, support teams can search by serial number for assets, or discover them via queries.

"Asset querying and software inventory on the physical product is the big benefit of HEAT Discovery," he says.

HEAT Discovery's value for troubleshooting can't be underestimated, either. "Hand in hand, when techs are logging tickets, we can see the number of tickets logged against devices," says Bentz. "How many times have we had to fix it? Is it hardware-related? Did we just put software on it and now it's acting goofy?" That information is valuable for improved and easier diagnosis.

Business Process-Savvy and Future-Ready

IT and application support operations are joined by other departments that deal with service requests in leveraging HEAT Service Management as well. That includes Facilities Management, Geographic Information Systems and Human Resources. The move to HEAT Service Management 2015 presented an opportunity for Bentz and Siegfried to help these groups engage in business process engineering to make the most of the new solution. "Across the board in all of those departments, we're doing planning and building more efficiency into workflows," says Bentz.



Based on the current success, Bentz expects to see HEAT adoption continue among other city departments that need to track service requests.

Both Bentz and Siegfried expect that the future will bring other changes to the IT service desk as a result of the greater use of mobile devices and the rise of desktop-as-a-service, courtesy of virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI). The helpdesk function, Bentz says, won't be about

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Wade Bentz, Application Support Analyst

opening computers and fixing motherboards and troubleshooting calls, as it is today. "It will be more, 'Oh your VDI session isn't working, let's pop a new one in there,'" he says. As the helpdesk function evolves, in conjunction with those who perform it and the solutions that support it, new efficiencies will arise, he predicts.

"Things that take a long time now will fade away," he says, and that will lower the stress levels of those holding application and IT support jobs. Says Bentz, "HEAT will make IT support jobs easier to do."

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