



## SHARED SERVICES PORTFOLIO: IMPROVED SERVICE-DESK EXPERIENCE

Consolidating help-desk functions can help governments save money and gain efficiency.

**MOST GOVERNMENTS TODAY ARE** under a mandate to do more with less. As the economy slows, the ways in which government revenues are being adversely affected seem to be the only thing that continues to grow. As the financial crisis swells, IT departments are often seen as easy targets for spending cuts. However, even under dire financial circumstances, IT can potentially transform government services and operations by introducing efficiencies and freeing up resources to address current demands. This aspect of consolidation is referred to as “shared services.” Shared services allows governments to provide a set of software solutions or human resources to agencies. One such opportunity is consolidating multiple departmental help desks into a single enterprise service desk in conjunction with a new methodology for tiered response and support.

Most governments have deployed help desks to handle the traditional silos of IT-related activity. As govern-

ment becomes more integrated, this approach no longer makes sense. Having numerous help desks to serve different agencies — or even different functions within agencies — duplicates efforts and creates inefficiencies where functions overlap. A public works field worker having trouble with his mobile mapping application, for example, shouldn't have to determine whether to contact the public works department's help desk, responsible for maintaining the agency's mobile devices, or the county GIS department. If it is not immediately clear where the problem originates, the query could bounce back and forth between the two departments' help desks, thus decreasing productivity. In a more streamlined government support structure, the end-user would contact one service desk without concern for where the issue originates.

### **Single View of the Enterprise**

A single service desk can save time and money for governments. Howev-

er, like any consolidation effort, it must be done correctly to yield the greatest benefit. A consolidated help desk should reduce confusion for end-users, provide tools they need to resolve their own issues (Web-enabled self-service) and decrease downtime. A single service desk also improves accountability within IT, as issues are tracked, escalated and resolved with repeatable, predictable processes. To the end-user, there is only one entity responsible for assisting them in problem resolution and dispatch of resources. Because of this, the consolidated help desk must have all the resources and tools necessary to address any concern that is submitted.

To serve end-users across government divisions, service-desk staff should be able to easily access a consolidated knowledge base for all systems and configuration information relevant to the entire enterprise through a single interface. The ability to see across the enterprise's services helps resolve issues that arise

where systems interact, but also gives service-desk staff knowledge of similar problems in other systems. For instance, if a problem arises with the department of health's Web site, help-desk staff can refer to historical data in its knowledge base of a similar problem that affected the assessor's office Web site, rather than starting from scratch. Problem management can then be brought on line as a permanent solution is devised and a change request can be made through the service desk.

The service desk should also have a consolidated configuration management database (CMDB) that allows help-desk staff to see how the enterprise's systems are set up and understand interdependencies between services and their associated configuration items. Because CMDB data integrity must be upheld, automated discovery tools are essential for accuracy. Tools and standards are available that allow organizations to integrate and link existing CMDBs. Governments should take a methodical approach to implementing the CMDB, focusing initially on services that are most important to operations and building from there. In addition to automated tools, manual audits help to keep configuration information accurate.

Any help-desk solution should assist help-desk staff through the automation of root cause analysis and problem management. Essential to the organization is a change management process to mitigate risk and comply with governance initiatives. Having a process in place to handle change requests and building it into the help-desk management solution makes adherence to best practices more likely. A help-desk solution that supports Information Technology Infrastruc-

ture Library (ITIL®) standards also helps make sure help-desk staff follow best practices. The consolidated help-desk solution should also integrate easily with other IT management solutions and processes. Using best practices helps to build higher levels of process maturity and makes them easier to accomplish.

### **Better Service to End-Users**

A consolidated service-desk solution gives end-users one place to go for problem resolution. This not only reduces hassle and confusion for end-users, it also holds one entity accountable for resolving issues and allows improvements to be applied across the enterprise. Web-enabled self-service features, combined with knowledge management capabilities that make problem-solving experience easily available, can help end-users resolve problems quickly and efficiently.

A service-desk solution should also provide reporting capabilities that let management gauge the help desk's effectiveness in various areas so that improvements can be made. If response times are lagging, management should be able to pull reports that indicate why. For instance, if the service desk is being repeatedly called upon to resolve issues that end-users could resolve themselves, managers can use the data to implement or improve self-service mechanisms and knowledge-management tools.

Consolidating help desks is one way in which governments can save money while improving efficiency. By arming the consolidated help desk with the right tools and best practices for problem resolution, the entire government enterprise — and ultimately the public — can benefit from the consolidated knowledge base and lower operating costs it offers.



## **Colorado Department Supports State and County Human Service IT System Users**

The Colorado Department of Human Services oversees 64 county departments that deliver assistance to citizens in need of social, human, mental-health and other health services. The Department of Human Services and the county departments rely on state IT systems to deliver these essential services to citizens.

"Prescriptions for mental-health patients, distribution of food assistance and the calculation of cash benefits are all reliant on state and county staff having access to IT applications," said Ron Huston, former CIO of the department. "Any problems with our IT infrastructure would cripple our ability to deliver services to the population."

The Department of Human Services uses CA Service Desk and other CA solutions to help resolve IT issues as quickly as possible. The solution allows the department's Division of Information Technology (IT) to track call durations and drop-off rates, see that service-level agreements are met, and view escalation and resolution information.

In addition, the help desk and the Division of IT are financed by different governing bodies, so the department must identify the time spent on different projects to show how finances are being allocated. The CA solutions let the department track this information for the thousands of queries the help desk receives each month — 10,000 on 89 application deployments.

By deploying a help-desk solution that optimizes quality of service for state and county workers who rely on the Department of Human Services' IT infrastructure, the department is making it possible for those workers to spend more time meeting their most important obligation: serving citizens.



For more information call: 1-800-225-5224 or 1-800-CALL-CAI  
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