



# DTLR Provides Better Quality Services with HEAT

**Company Name**

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

**Industry**

Central Government

**Business Benefits**

- Call Logging
- Web integration
- Knowledge Management
- Reporting

**BACKGROUND**

The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) brings together key responsibilities for building successful and sustainable communities.

Developing a better transport system is essential for sustainable economic success. The aim is to encourage prosperous villages, towns and cities where businesses can thrive and people have access to the services they need. To achieve this, transport needs to be integrated with policy on planning, housing and urban renewal. The DTLR works closely with local government in each of these areas as well as having a lead responsibility for central Government's relationship with local Government.

In addition to implementing its own programmes the DTLR plays a major part in achieving the Government's priorities in public health, crime prevention and employment.

**REASONS FOR AUTOMATING IT SUPPORT**

Three years ago the IT Help Desk did not have a good reputation within the organisation. On average, call abandonment reached a high of 25%. Customers were far from satisfied and simply gave up using the service. Issues were left unresolved, the IT problems escalated and became more difficult and expensive to solve.

The original automated help desk no longer met the organisation's requirements. Operators found the system slow and difficult to operate and this impacted on the numbers of calls answered and recorded. Without logging all the requests for service, the Help Desk Manager did not have a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by users and therefore no indication where the IT infrastructure might need enhancing.

**ALL CHANGE AT THE HELP DESK**

To reorganise the IT support function, a new IT Help Desk Manager was appointed. With the understanding that technical knowledge was only part of the puzzle when delivering IT support, each analyst's strengths and weaknesses were evaluated and their jobs altered accordingly.

In the new approach to delivering IT support, Customer Service Operators were recruited to work on the first line and analysts with specific technical skills were moved to second line support. The Customer Service Operators have strong people skills and are better suited to logging calls, resolving routine problems and ensuring their customers problems are solved. In comparison, traditional IT support analysts have strong analytical and problem solving skills better suited to dealing with issues that can't be solved at the first line.

Five months after the re-organisation there were still problems with the service levels from the support team. "I was convinced that putting customer service operators on the first line was the first improvement" commented Margaret Daniels, IT Help Desk Manager, DTLR. "but despite our efforts it was also the technology that was letting us down. Operators simply couldn't log the calls quickly enough."

**THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

With a set of clear objectives in mind, Margaret went to the Customer Service and Support Show with a view to finding a new help desk solution to meet the department's needs. Based on products seen at the exhibition, a full tender exercise was subsequently undertaken. One of the solutions evaluated was FrontRange Solutions HEAT. For Margaret key features were; the ease of installation and configuration, the ability to log calls quickly, the white board



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*Margaret Daniels*

*IT Help Desk Manager*

*DTLR*

facility, integration with the knowledge management tool Knowlix and the Auto Ticket Generator facility which automatically allocates a unique reference number to each call via e-mail. More significantly the product could be installed in a modular way allowing the team to tackle issues in bite size pieces. “A significant percentage of the calls to the IT Help Desk were from customers chasing their call. By using the Web interface and Auto Ticket Generator not only do we cut down on the number of calls, but they give the user a degree of autonomy,” commented Margaret.

#### **WHAT THE TEAM HAD TO ACHIEVE.**

As a result of the change in help desk software, the support team was given clear targets to achieve. All calls to the help desk have to be answered within 30 seconds. The team is currently answering >85% within the target time. The help desk also had to extend its operating hours to be available until 6pm. To achieve the longer opening hours Margaret investigated alternative channels to access HEAT. The email option was integrated so calls could be logged from the help desk website directly into the system therefore allowing colleagues to log calls any time of the day or night.

The team has a target of assigning e-mailed calls within 2 working hours of receipt. “The key to a successful help desk is partly educating users on how to make the most of the service. For example we try to encourage colleagues to use the web or email option for non-urgent calls. From our perspective it means we can better allocate our resources to deal with the urgent problems. Its not only to our benefit but they save time and effort calling the help desk,” commented Margaret.

#### **THE IMPLEMENTATION**

HEAT was implemented in phases. The first phase installed the basic call logging elements of HEAT allowing first line operators to record all the calls received. Phase 2 enabled mobile technicians to securely access HEAT via a web browser by using HEAT Web. Phase 3 was the integration of Knowlix to develop a knowledge base to help first line support resolve more calls at first line. “HEAT has all the functionality my team needs to meet its targets,” commented Margaret.

#### **CALL RESOLUTION SUCCESS**

Initially the team had a 25% call closure rate at 1st line, but with the introduction of HEAT and

the change in working practices the team have reached 40% closure at 1st line. The aim is to reach 60% first line resolution with the integration of Knowlix. Now all calls are recorded so the reports prepared by Margaret are a true reflection of the activity undertaken by the team.

#### **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

In line with the Government’s Better Quality Services review of DTLR’s IT Services at the beginning of 2001, Margaret has rigorously scrutinised the way she and her team operate. “Technology is only part of the equation. All operators have now been through customer care training,” commented Margaret. “Our customers want a fast and reliable service which we are able to provide by using HEAT. We have achieved an abandonment rate of less than 5% which makes us look more professional and improves our standing in the organisation.”

#### **FUTURE**

“What next? I want the team to get the recognition it deserves and to win ‘help desk of the year’,” remarked Margaret.

Margaret has high aspirations for the help desk. She plans to implement a comprehensive asset tracking solution to audit employee’s software and hardware configurations. This information will be held in HEAT giving operators a snapshot of the IT environment they are working with thus reducing the time taken to resolve a call and boost first line resolution. Increasing first line resolution has a two-fold effect of enhancing customer satisfaction and reducing the overall costs of the support function.

To further improve efficiency Margaret aims to implement Computer Telephony Integration (CTI). CTI will screen pop the callers profile plus provide the facility to add and store voice files, which operators can then escalate to the next level of support.

In line with Government Best Practice to make the help desk as cost effective as possible, Margaret and her team are trialing the option of analysts working from home and having remote access to the system. This option give analysts flexibility in their working practices and pave the way for more flexible working hours.

“I want the help desk to be proactive and HEAT has the functionality to allow us to get there,” said Margaret.