

Benefiting from a successful Phase 1 implementation of Numara FootPrints

West Midlands-based payroll provider ESOS has completed the first phase of its implementation of Numara FootPrints and can now resolve incidents more efficiently with a greatly-reduced administrative overhead.

Business Driver

An urgent need to reduce the number of low-priority support calls to the Service Desk, and improve the ability of IT staff to filter service calls more quickly, easily and effectively, ultimately reducing incident support times, and response costs

Industry Sector

Business Process / Outsourcing Services

Why Numara Software?

The flexibility to allow ESOS to adapt the software for use across a number of different departments; the ability to filter calls easily; remote access enabling members of the ESOS team to keep up to date even when they are working offsite; effective notifications by email and SMS, together with efficient escalation and workflow

Business Benefits

A consistent single point of contact with the ESOS Service Desk means happier customers, while accessing Numara FootPrints remotely also ensures ESOS has an effective disaster recovery solution in place

Summary

As a busy provider of payroll, hosted human resources (HR), credit management, invoicing services and Desktop support services as well as back-office processing for SMEs, ESOS is managing 150 major projects at any one time and tracking 30,000 support requests a year. The recently-completed, successful Phase 1 project implementation of Numara FootPrints, together with the future adoption of ITIL best practice in Phase 2 covering Desktop support and payroll, will make the ESOS Service Desk more efficient and effective in meeting its customers' demands.

Background

ESOS is a specialist provider of business process outsourcing services, including payroll, HR solutions, credit management, litigation, and office processing solutions to UK businesses. It processes 400,000 invoices and 800,000 payslips and collects £340 million in debts each year. ESOS has 5500 live customers and 150 concurrent, open projects.

Since September 2007, ESOS, which was formerly part of the Pertemps Group, became part of the Network Group Holdings Plc, which is comprised of 24 specialist recruitment



We always felt we had the right product, the right internal team and partner...the support we received from Numara Software was excellent.



and outsourcing companies. It currently has 11 people manning its Service Desk, including a Service Desk Manager, and first and second line support. It is responsible for 1500 PCs and 2500 users daily, dependent on the number of projects taking place at outsourced companies. The operating system and network topology is Microsoft based however ESOS also support a IBM Notes and Domino environment, though a major project migration is taking place towards a Citrix environment.

The main business driver for ESOS's involvement with Numara FootPrints is to see improved service process efficiency and associated cost savings. As part of this, ESOS wanted to find a way to make its support infrastructure more effective, with three clear goals: reduce the average incident support time; reduce response costs; and become more proficient and efficient. It is also working towards achieving a pragmatic adoption of ITIL

First Steps toward Adopting Numara FootPrints

The timeline for adoption of an effective service management solution at ESOS began in the summer of 2007 when ESOS put an RFP together before courting suppliers in October and November. Sean King of e-Nable Consultancy, who has lead both the RFP and Phase 1 (with Phase 2 to follow) of the project implementation for ESOS, began the initial work by attending a service management exhibition with his colleagues at which a number of target vendors were present, including Numara Software.

"We looked at who was going to be there. As well as Numara Software, there was also Sunrise, FrontRange, Touchpaper and Hornbill. We took along a copy of the RFP and eventually sent it to a shortlist of vendors who all responded positively. We then decided to prioritise them by feel-good factor," says King.

In the first round of the process, ESOS organised a conference call with vendors together with Web-based demonstrations of their products.

"We wanted to make the best use of our time by doing it in this way," says King. "We didn't want to invite five vendors to present to us in person for the sake of it and find that three was sufficient. We ended up with two organisations, Numara Software and Hornbill, to take through to the next round. Both products would have done a good job, so the key factor for us was whether they could demonstrate that they could implement the product, and not just sell it. Numara Software did a very good presentation of their Numara FootPrints software, and the final recommendation to choose them went through to the Board and was signed off in December 2007."

Having chosen Numara FootPrints King then wanted to ensure that project implementation could meet a series of target dates that would see Phase 1 formally completed at the beginning of July 2008.

"When we had a project initiation meeting, I asked Numara Software to get the project ready for May 2008 so we could formally terminate Phase 1 in early July and initiate Phase 2. In the end, as a result of our joint efforts with Numara Software, we actually came in three weeks early, and 99 out of 100 projects never do that."

Getting ready for ITIL

ESOS is now taking steps to leverage Numara Software's real-world understanding of best practice processes with a view to implementing ITIL within the company.

"Having best business practices and an underlying ITIL mindset is important to us. We wanted to incorporate ITIL in Phase 1 of the project, where we're focusing on the Support Desk," says King.

"But now we're going to do it in Phase 2, where we're implementing it in the payroll department. ESOS offers payroll bureau services and regularly gets service calls logged saying a client has changed its National Insurance number, for example. Numara Software is very much our catalyst for the take-up of ITIL, and we can achieve ITIL best practice by working with them. We already have Board level support for ITIL signed off, so whenever we need to implement it, it's already in the kitbag."

Delivering on the key metrics

ESOS's implementation of Phase 1 means the company is starting to see progress towards improving the cost efficiency and effectiveness of its support operation. Over a recent 6-month period, the average number of incidents that the ESOS Service Desk dealt with was 611, with the average incident being 'open' for 4.5 hours. By the end of the third quarter of 2008, ESOS had improved its efficiency and effectiveness with the support of Numara and had a typical incident open for an average three and a half hours. Using industry standard figures of £20 per hour, the cost of each individual incident had therefore fallen from close to £100 to £70. The typical industry average for 'open' incidents is close to 10 hours, at a cost approaching £200.



"Being able to add custom fields using company-specific terminology has been a real benefit for us," says Rachel Price, ESOS SSD Manager. "Customisations are also immediately available in the live system, which means no more out-of-hours reboots. The ESOS Customer Portal has also been a real plus as this has allowed our customers to report, track and update incidents 24 X 7. This has certainly reduced the number of low-priority calls to the Service Desk. Now with both the ESOS Customer Portal and incident submission via emails, the Service Team can concentrate on resolving incidents more efficiently and with a greatly-reduced administrative overhead."

Rolling up the sleeves to deliver implementation support

Having decided to purchase Numara FootPrints, one of the key benefits of the relationship with Numara for project manager Sean King has been the support he received when it came to implementation.

ESOS bought sufficient days of consulting to ensure that Phase 1 of the Numara FootPrints implementation would go smoothly. Yet because of the ease of implementation, it was duly signed off in only 9 days, much less than it had anticipated.

"As a result of our joint efforts with Numara Software, we more than hit our milestones. We actually came in three weeks early, and 99 out of 100 projects never do that."

Sean King
e-Nable Consultancy Ltd
on behalf of ESOS Ltd



About Numara Software

Founded in 1991, Numara Software is a global provider of service desk management solutions. Its flagship products, Numara Track-It! and Numara FootPrints, support over 50,000 customer sites worldwide making it the leader in this market for small to mid-sized enterprises.