



Transformational Change at Network Appliance Global Support



Network Appliance (NetApp) is an industry-leading provider of storage and data management solutions. NetApp brings unmatched simplicity to the complex world of data management through data-center-proven solutions for storing, managing, protecting, and retaining corporate data. NetApp has over 6,600 employees in over 113 offices worldwide with FY2007 Revenue of \$2.8 Billion.

The Challenge

NetApp Global Services (NGS) faced a challenge that many companies would relish – responding to an accelerated expansion of their global customer base driven by the high demand for the company’s products. NetApp’s Global Support organization is tasked with contributing to customer success by providing highly responsive systems, processes, and people wherever they are needed to ensure continuous operations in complex and critical environments. NetApp has a reputation as an agile innovator and the service organization was not satisfied with just handling the growth in support demand. Instead, they wanted to build a support and service engine that could scale globally and provide customers with a more proactive and personalized support experience.

Leading up to the transformation, NetApp was operating a “boutique” distributed, Follow-The-Sun support model with multiple replica support centers located in three primary regions around the world.

The NetApp management team felt that their hierarchical Follow-The-Sun support structure might not meet the expanding needs of customers while remaining cost effective and efficient. Fully replicating the technical skills needed to support the full NetApp product line in each support center across the world was difficult and costly. Even when recruiting was successful, the job of keeping all support center staff fully trained and expert in their respective discipline became a challenge. Consequently, the customer experience varied from center to center, depending on the expertise and the product line involved.

There were also challenges when customer cases needed to travel “around the world” as dictated by the Follow-The-Sun support model. Hand-offs between geographically separated support centers was always difficult and again, the customer experience could vary as the case traveled. Overall, the true role of the remote support centers was unclear.

NetApp Global Services also wanted to create premium service packages for those customers who needed a higher level of service. Those new services would depend upon a strong support infrastructure. Inefficiencies in areas such as knowledge management systems and processes and service readiness processes among others, made it clear that the current structure was not well positioned to support these new premium offerings.

Business Challenge

- Accelerated growth
- Case volume growing more than 50% per year
- Minimal time to be proactive

Business Solution

- Leverage Service Strategies’ Consulting and Advisory Services to address the challenges faced by NetApp Global Support
- Service Strategies’ Support Assessment and Redesign

Business Benefits

- Enhanced ability to scale support operations
- Increased resources for proactive service activities
- Realized a 38% reduction in cost per case
- Realized improved efficiencies including:
 - Reduced case backlog
 - Decrease in average case age
 - Decrease in backlogged defects
 - Reduced case resolution times
 - Improved same day case closure
 - Improved responsiveness to customers



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"The Service Strategies Assessment and Action Plan provided a great platform for launching our improvement initiatives."

Rusty Walther,
Senior Vice President, Global Support


The Solution

In order to support their vision, NetApp needed to conduct a deep level assessment of the existing operation and then develop an innovative solution that would meet future support demands. In addition to their internal efforts, NGS leadership wanted to analyze and evaluate best practices in the industry that would support their redesign efforts. In their search for outside assistance and expertise, NetApp engaged Service Strategies Corporation to conduct an in-depth assessment of their global support centers.

Service Strategies' consultants conducted a thorough assessment of NetApp's support organization and infrastructure and worked with NGS management to gain a complete understanding of the desired strategy. Once the strategy was set, Service Strategies worked closely with NGS staff to identify and create an action plan to drive the necessary improvements. The process included interviews with internal and external stakeholders, review of support processes, personnel, systems and metrics. Service Strategies created a gap analysis comparing NetApp to industry best practices and provided strategic recommendations for changes to the NetApp support model and practices.

One of the most significant recommendations from the assessment was moving from the Follow-The-Sun distributed support model to a hybrid 7x24 centralized support model. Regional support centers were redesigned to take on the role of providing front-line local language support in countries that needed it. In the new model, escalations and "off-hours" support needs are forwarded to the "always on" centralized support center.

Achieving the results that NetApp desired required improvements in case management, service readiness planning and knowledge management processes. Changes to the eSupport processes were also incorporated in the action plan. Strong leadership would also be required to implement the full scope of Service Strategies' recommendations. Rusty Walther was recruited as Senior Vice President to execute this transformational change throughout the NetApp Global Support organization.



“The move to a Centralized Support Model allowed us to jump-start our proactive and personalized support offerings.”

Rusty Walther,
Senior Vice President, Global Support

The Benefits

Rusty and his team quickly restructured the operation, moving to the hybrid centralized support model that allowed NetApp to gain significant economies of scale. Building a centralized core “case closure engine” enabled NetApp to become more efficient across the board. New personalized services were provided to key accounts that enhanced the overall service experience. This resulted in improved customer satisfaction since cases were closed quicker. With a new focus on knowledge management and other support process improvements, NetApp was able to move to a more proactive support model that helped customers avoid problems rather than just reacting to them.

The changes implemented by the NetApp Global Services management and staff had a wide ranging, quantifiable impact. Some of the key benefits NetApp has enjoyed as a result of moving to the hybrid centralized support model and improving key support processes include:

- A 26% decrease in priority 1 backlog
- A 30% decrease in average case age
- A 26% decrease in backlogged defects
- A 20% improvement in case resolution time
- A 12% improvement in speed of answer
- An 8% improvement in same-day case closure
- A 38% reduction in cost per case

While the efficiency gains provide a positive result, another key outcome has been NetApp’s newfound ability to free up support resources to deliver preventive, proactive and personalized support services to customers. In the end, NetApp has realized the vision of transforming the support organization and is now positioned to meet the demands of a bright future.

"We needed a partner who had a deep understanding of the best practices in services and support, that's why we chose Service Strategies."

Ed Deenihan
Executive Vice President

About Service Strategies

Service Strategies advances service excellence for quality-minded organizations by providing industry standards, consulting, and training solutions that ensure delivery of consistent, high-quality customer service and support.

Service Strategies applies a proven benchmark process to its standards programs that measure and drive effectiveness for continuous service improvement. In addition, the company's tailored training programs enhance the careers of service professionals throughout the industry and lead to increased organizational effectiveness.

The world's leading service and support providers use Service Strategies' Service Capability & Performance (SCP) Standards as a roadmap for service excellence and a qualitative and quantitative measure of success.



To learn more about the Service Capability & Performance (SCP) Standards and what it can do for your service and support organization, contact Service Strategies Corporation at 800.552.3058 or email info@servicestrategies.com

