

Creating a Platform-based Support Revenue Stream for a Global Telecom Major

Performance Highlights:

- Sutherland transformed the Client's Home Technology Repair Support (HTRS) Cost Center into a Profit Center
- Within a year, the program broke even and by 2011 it was a profitable operation.
- Currently, 50,000+ customers per month use the Client's HTRS service, and the number is increasing steadily

Client Profile

This Case study relates to the Platform-based premium support services solution provided to the Home Technology Repair and Support (HTRS) operations of a Fortune 50 Telecommunications and Data services provider.

Business Scenario

Home Technology Repair and Support Market

- The Home Technology Repair and Support (HTRS) market is expected to grow dramatically in the future.
- Only 11% of broadband households currently use professional tech support for their computers with a majority of spending being incurred on internet security.
- The rapid proliferation of advanced digital equipment and the fast paced adoption of latest technology gadgets will drive consumer support services.
- The consumer repair market is expected to register a CAGR of 39% (2010-15), and remote support will lead this growth with its share increasing from 9% in 2010 to 28% in 2015.

Telecommunication Market

The telecommunications industry has faced a consistent demand for more data at higher speeds, and this will be the primary growth driver for the moving forward, and will fuel a parallel demand for high-volume data applications.

US government broadband stimulus awards will fuel infrastructure spending, particularly on rural broadband. As broadband penetration reaches saturation (more than 90% of households by 2013) growth will come from high speed technologies.

While FTTH (fiber to the home) will make a recovery, other technologies such as DOCSIS (high speed cable) will be the primary drivers for growth.

Business/Operational Challenges

As a full service telecommunications, network, and cable provider, the Client manages support services for IP TV, DSL, broadband, and cable from over 17 million subscribers. The support requirements are complex and a costly challenge even just for the services directly provided by the Client.

However, the current digital home is centered on an expanding variety of devices and applications that operate by connecting to the Client's services –e.g. TVs, game consoles, streaming video playback devices, PCs, printers, video recording, DVR, set top boxes, and dozens of other digital product categories all rely on connectivity to function. Consequently, for today's digital consumer mere 'service support' is not a solution. Their devices MUST work, or there simply is no point to having the service.

Even though the Client's support personnel were able to resolve connectivity issues customer frustration –and therefore experience – was by the performance (or non-performance) of the connected device rather than the connection. For home network or home theatre setup and troubleshooting, new computer setup and configuration and many other processes, connectivity is only a small part of the support requirement. Further aggravating the situation was the high incidence of routine support issues such as virus removal, system recovery, printer installations etc. – issues not directly related, but adjacent to the Client's services.

The Client recognized firsthand that something needed to change, and as a one stop shop for broadband, cable, and telecommunications services, they were uniquely positioned to see, and feel the issues. However, they needed an experienced partner to develop a solution that addressed both the Cost and Customer issues.

Partner Selection Criteria

- Proven technical support capability in Telecom services and adjacent products
- Expertise in developing and deploying Technology-enabled service solutions
- Experience in creating and managing revenue generation channels and programs
- Track-record of constructing risk & gain share based engagement

Sutherland Solution

For over 20 years, Sutherland had been providing technical support, and customer care for PC's peripherals and other digital devices, operating systems, security and entertainment software.

The depth and breadth of this support experience combined with technology expertise and a 150K article Knowledge Base formed the core elements of SmartLeap – Sutherland's proprietary technology framework for technical support and customer care solutions.

The overall solution consisted of the following components:

Voice/Chat Technical Support

The front end of this system was an advanced IVR which addressed many common issues faced by the Client's customers. Skilled associates on this team provided the "core" of the Client's HTRS offering – advanced technology integration support across all devices and communications infrastructure. Technicians used the continuously refreshed Knowledge Base to resolve issues, perform virus removal and remote repair.

Self Help Micro Site

A web self- help tool integrated with the Knowledge Base enabling users to perform diagnostics and repair with the assistance of chat support if required. This free site also promotes upgrades to the Client's HTRS offerings and subscriptions using the PC Health Check utility.

PC Health Check

This utility performs a system wide scan and reports any issues found, along with quick resolutions for basic issues. More advanced issues such as OS repair, virus removal and hardware repair are detailed in a trouble report and recommended paid fixes through the Client's HTRS services are offered. Approximately 50,000 customers monthly use this service.

All of these capabilities are features of SmartLeap™ - Sutherland's proprietary support technology framework. SmartLeap™ provides a range of automated self-support tools, with an integrated knowledge database and the ability for the public to call, chat and/or email with a technical advisor for instant help 24x7.

Value Addition/Innovation

The Client's initial approach was to launch another customer support queue to placate frustrated users. Sutherland, however, from the very beginning, viewed this program as a potential stream of new revenue. The addition of PC Health Check and Chat components solved customer issues, helped reduce cost of calls through channel deflection and helped to sell HTRS subscriptions and paid repair services thereby generating new revenues.

Sutherland created a hybrid Knowledge Base by combining the Client's network support knowledgebase and its own hardware device knowledgebase. This hybrid database proved so successful on the Client's HTRS operations that it was deployed enterprise-wide.

Results/Benefits Delivered

Since inception, the Client's HTRS program has provided viable home support options for the Client's own and other network customers. Based on customer satisfaction alone, the program has been a tremendous success.

However, Sutherland's approach was to understand the real long-term business challenges facing the Client as a broadband and cable provider rather than focus only on the customer satisfaction issues. The result was a much more holistic solution that met the larger business objectives. The benefits of this approach speak for themselves:

- When HTRS was initially deployed, it was a cost center, partially offset by support revenue.
- Within a year, the program was breaking even, which meant that that the Client **no longer carried the expense of an advanced technical support queue, which for many clients is a dream come true.**
- In 2011, after successfully rolling out additional self- help and contract offerings, the program is profitable. The Client therefore is generating profits instead of incurring costs for the program.
- Currently, more than 50,000 customers monthly use the Client's HTRS service, and the number is increasing steadily.

A proactive analysis by Sutherland indicates that this is merely the beginning and that as a stand-alone brand, the Client's HTRS operations h will grow exponentially as the dynamic technology/gadget/entertainment offerings reach even greater saturation.

For more Information:

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About Sutherland Global Services

Established in 1986, Sutherland Global Services is a global BPO services enterprise providing integrated Platform-based and Analytics enabled business-cycle support solutions for major Industry Verticals and global industry leaders. Sutherland collaborates with clients to help them excel in their industry while maximizing their customers' lifetime value.

Sutherland is Certified as a Minority Business Enterprise by NMSDC®.