

Case Study

OpenAir Helps SupportSoft® Global Services Become a World Class Consulting Organization



Public Firm

OpenAir users: 110

Expenses
Invoices
Projects
Resources
Timesheets

Globalization of business requires a firm knowledge of where your organization is as well as where your company wants to go. With this in hand, an effective plan can be developed and executed to gain desired results. To attain this true global management, common business processes across an organization are essential to guarantee consistency and visibility.

With the help of OpenAir, SupportSoft Global Services gained control of their processes and transformed itself into a truly global enterprise. Founded in 1997, SupportSoft, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPRT) is a leader in technology problem resolution. Its solutions for enterprise and consumer markets have been deployed on over 55 million end points in 23 countries. SupportSoft's world class technology has been awarded seven patents as well as numerous industry awards. The organization has built a client base that spans many industries and markets including enterprise software, telecommunications, finance, and consulting ...

Laying Out a Plan

Upon evaluation of their existing systems and processes, SupportSoft Global Services identified a series of pain points in their professional services business methodology. “Regional thinking and a lack of real-time data prevented us from being proactive and forward thinking,” said Laurie Jacobson Jones, VP of Global Service Operations at SupportSoft. “If we were serious about transforming ourselves into an integrated global organization, laying out a vision and getting everybody on board was essential to success,” said Ms. Jones.

To truly break away from these obstacles, SupportSoft devised a three-pronged strategic improvement plan. First and foremost, standardization and automation of business management was critical. Continuing with manual processes would prevent any scalability and limit opportunities for strategic growth. Second, with a standard implementation methodology, SupportSoft’s services delivery would be optimized thus laying the ground work for increasing both revenue capacity and services profitability. Third and perhaps most important, the development and nurturing of top talent was essential to fuel the entire plan. It became clear that to execute this globalization, implementation of a PSA system would be a key component and would need to happen quickly and simultaneously to standardize and automate the essential aspects of their business. “A key success factor in our strategic plan to become a World Class Consulting organization was the selection, implementation, deployment, and adoption of a scalable professional services automation tool that would provide visibility into and management of our critical business factors. We would need to select a solution that is built on industry best practices and can scale as we scale,” stated Rob Barnum, SVP Global Services and Customer Support. “Ease of implementation and low-risk, low-cost was key in this selection process.”

With this in mind, SupportSoft set out to evaluate PSA systems. With a definitive plan for their globalization, the system requirements were well known. According to Ms. Jones, “To guarantee a successful transition, a low-cost, rapid deployment was necessary to minimize growing pains.” SupportSoft also required a fully integrated suite to tie together project, time, expense, and resource management.

After receiving advice from colleagues and industry leaders as well as personally evaluating five systems, OpenAir emerged as the clear choice. “By far, OpenAir was the best fit for our functionality requirement, especially in regard to global functionality,” said Ms. Jones. “OpenAir’s multi-currency, VAT processing, and international reporting were second to none in our evaluations.” A quick rollout, intuitive usability, and a low, upfront cost were also critical factors in the decision process. Furthermore, OpenAir received strong endorsements from companies similar in size and industry to SupportSoft.

Following Through

After a ten week implementation, SupportSoft went live with OpenAir and the user benefits were immediate. At every level of the organization, OpenAir provides quicker, more effective processes to conducting business. “Our consultants absolutely love the on-line nature of OpenAir. They can enter their time and expenses while on the road and no longer have to use spreadsheets!” says Ms. Jones. Even more, paid time off requests and leave accrual balances are readily available online for easy access and submission.

The consultants in the field are far from the only employees at SupportSoft benefiting from OpenAir. Project managers and the executive management team thrive off of the increased visibility they have gained. With OpenAir, SupportSoft now has a defined and maintained system for their Program Management Office (PMO). “Not only do our project managers now have real time access to project time, expenses, and invoicing within one system, they are also empowered to generate their own reports on demand through OpenAir,” said Mike Resurreccion, Manager of SupportSoft Global Services’ PMO. In addition to monitoring time and expense entries, project managers regularly control task assignments and maintain project plans online or integrate with MS Project with OpenAir’s delivered integration tools. Through finite processes in OpenAir and a supporting project methodology, SupportSoft’s services delivery has greatly improved. “With a greater percentage of our projects finishing on time and under budget, we have happier customers and increased business,” says Resurreccion.

Executive management also relies heavily on OpenAir for accurate resource utilization and revenue forecasts. “OpenAir has given our executive management the tools to push forward on our globalization,” said Ms. Jones. “Accuracy and visibility into our services metrics enable us to focus on strategic planning and growth rather than mundane bookkeeping tasks.”

Shortly after initial usage, OpenAir is already supporting SupportSoft’s initial plan to fully integrate their global business. OpenAir’s automated invoicing and reporting have enabled SupportSoft to standardize their business management by maximizing revenue generation opportunities and capacity planning. “OpenAir has stopped the leaks in revenue at our organization. With an automated system in place, all time and expense that should be billed to our clients is actually invoiced. There is no more lost revenue due to confusion over billable time and expense.” said Ms. Jones.

The fact of the matter is, an organization is only as strong as its employees. OpenAir has enabled SupportSoft to recruit, develop, and nurture top talent at an unprecedented level. OpenAir provides the crucial data for quarterly reviews and recognition through performance reports. With a centralized repository of resource skills and profiles, the system guarantees that the appropriate people are placed on the jobs that best fit their skills. When employees are motivated and being used to the best of their abilities, their work will fuel corporate wide initiatives with amazing results. “We have delivered on all our 2007 Key Strategic Initiatives and 2008 is on track to

being the most successful year in terms of revenue growth and profitability for our services team. The combination of our 'Navigator' implementation methodology and our OpenAir PSA solution has provided our managers and consultants with the best in class tools and processes to ensure we can assess and monitor our business and consistently deliver satisfaction to our customers. The success of this system continues to be a win/win for everyone," stated Barnum.