



How Data #3 consolidates service management systems and enjoys a return on investment.



Industry:

Information Technology Services

The Challenge:

Consolidating and updating systems after acquiring two companies. Add functionality that would help the business cope with rapid growth.

The Solution:

Automation of service processes and consolidation of call center operations and Help Desk functions have significantly reduced administrative costs. In addition, customer Web portals allow clients direct access to critical information, reducing support costs and increasing customer satisfaction.

Business Areas:

- Integrated call center
- Contract management
- Service
- Logistics
- Repair with mobile portals for untethered workers

Number of Users:

100 to 500 users

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– Kim Partridge, Manager Systems and Processes

Publicly listed Data#3 Limited (LTD) is one of Australia’s leading IT integrators employing more than 350 employees in seven national locations. Market driven IT offerings delivered by Data #3 to its 2,000 plus customers include product procurement, technology integration, enterprise application solutions, recruitment, managed services and internet enablement.

In mid 2000 Data#3 realized it was time to consider a systems consolidation. The company was growing rapidly following strategic acquisitions in Sydney and Melbourne. Now as a national player rather than a Queensland based organization, Data#3 was using three disparate service management software systems.

The company effectively had to re-engineer a significant portion of the business into one common national system. With the consolidation of these inherited systems, Data#3 hoped to achieve better customer service management, including an improvement in customer handling, time to invoicing and a reduction in service costs.

The Implementation Process



To begin the process, Data#3 performed a detailed functional analysis of its requirements, examining the cost/benefit scenario with its board of directors. It was discovered that at the very least, an investment into a consolidated service management software system would produce a break-even situation for the company. The analysis also predicted a significant increase in efficiency, which in itself would allow for greater productivity in customer service and the marketing of service excellence as a competitive differentiator.

With the analysis in place, Data#3 put a request for proposal out to twelve software consultancies and vendors in the marketplace and prepared to evaluate which was the most suitable offer.

Data#3 selected Astea customer service management software package Astea Alliance in an applications configuration that includes a Web-based portal for office-based workers, and one for mobile workers. Kim Partridge, Manager Systems and Processes for Data#3 said that Astea was chosen because it best met his company's needs. "Simply put, Aster technology was the closest fit to our business model and circumstances, and Astea Alliance offered the flexibility to manage our service inventory and operations. The scope of the product helped us to re-engineer the critical service elements of the business."

In September 2000 Data#3 began using a pilot system in Victoria, its smallest location, and subsequently went live in New South Wales in December 2000 with Queensland following in February 2001.

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Data#3 now enjoys the control and efficiency of one nationalized call center operation instead of three. The company implemented consistent service processes which have directly resulted in reduced administration costs. Data#3 is now running a tighter business with the integration of its call center, remote management operations and administrative functions. This has created a more positive effect on cash flow for the company with a reduction in time to invoicing.

ASTEVA Customers in Action: Data #3 Limited

Invoices are now processed within 48 hours of a service call, which in some cases has meant a reduction of up to 30 days. The Alliance Mobile portal offers a Web-based interface for the company's mobile workforce providing access to critical company records and customer information to help provide real time customer service and support. This is particularly useful for Data#3's outsourced staff which may be located at a customer site.

In addition Alliance's Web portal has been deployed to empower key Data#3 customers to gain direct control over their orders and requests. Via a browser, companies can log in to the Data #3 Web site and track current service orders, create a new service order and importantly, access trend and service level agreement reporting.

Data#3 has been able to reduce headcount through the much needed integration of call center and Help Desk functions and improved service management processes and can now employ a pro-active call center approach as a result of unifying operations and freeing up resources. This has all lead to a further reduction in costs due to effective centralized administration.

Maximizing The Solutions Across The Company

Paul Buzby, managing director for Astea, Asia Pacific said Data#3 is a company that works to achieve the most from its chosen solution. "Data#3 understands the value of working together with its vendor. The relationship Astea has with Data#3 is a true partnership and both companies operate in that way. As such, the depth of the solution increases as the internal champions of the Astea product at Data#3 help to derive greater functionality where it is needed most," said Mr. Buzby.

"Importantly, we had confidence in Astea during the pre-sales cycle where we had to determine what was best for Data #3. We trust the people, the organization, and the product."

— Kim Partridge, Manager Systems and Processes



Mr. Partridge said that internal staff at Data#3 have been trained so that they can modify and customize the software for specific functions using Astea's Alliance Studio tool set. "This has been quite handy, as we've been able to modify the base product which is flexible and extendable. For example, we've been able to provide additional functionality for the company in the areas of contract management, service level agreement and trend reporting."

Future Steps

Data#3 has been able to create extra value for itself while meeting the critical initiatives around customer service centralization and efficiencies leading to cost reductions. They are a company that has been able to enjoy a measurable return on investment, via a genuine business approach to a technology purchase and a solid vendor relationship.

Looking to the second half of 2002 and beyond, Data#3 is planning on creating further cost reductions via Astea's software by introducing new processes in service management. The company is also evaluating another Astea solution which will provide a wireless CRM capability for remote field service staff using personal data assistants (PDAs).



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Business Growth:

- Data#3 is now running a tighter business with the integration of its call center, remote management operations and administrative functions.
- The Alliance Mobile portal provides the company's mobile workforce with access to critical company records and customer information to help provide real time customer service and support.
- Working with Astea as a partner, not just a vendor, has proven to be beneficial to both parties in the way of better functionality of the product and services.
- Data #3 has improved service management processes and can now employ a pro-active call center approach as a result of unifying operations and freeing up resources.

Improved Customer Satisfaction:

- Customers have gained control of their orders and request through the Alliance Web Portal. They can track current service orders, create a new service order and importantly, access trend and service level agreement reporting.
- With the integration of the call center and Help Desk customers are serviced quicker and more accurately.

Reduced Operating Costs:

- The company implemented consistent service processes which have directly resulted in reduced administration costs.
- Further reduction in costs were reduced due to the effectiveness of centralized authorization provided by Alliance.

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