

LEADING SOFTWARE DEVELOPER AND MARKETER

Delivers Consistently Outstanding Technical Support through Convergys in India

Client Objective

Reduce costs while maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction with a shift of technical support services to India

This leading independent software vendor is among the best-known brands in the world. The company creates and markets both operating systems and application software at virtually every level of the market, from home computer use to enterprise-level server networks, and serves tens of millions of users in the United States and around the world.

Because of the critical importance of its software to its customers, the company has established an extremely robust network to provide technical support to users—with Convergys as a key partner since the 1990s.

In late 2001, the company asked Convergys to come up with a plan to reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. Convergys recommended a pilot to move the support work to India to take advantage of India's lower cost structure and high expertise in performing technical support services. After recruiting a core team and providing thorough training in the program's technologies and tools, the test got underway early in 2002.

Based on the success of this pilot program, the software company and Convergys worked together to shift additional technical support work to India—at first gradually, then at an accelerating pace. Throughout this migration of technical support work—and in the years since—the software company has maintained a single-minded focus—maintain or improve the quality of technical support services. To achieve this overarching objective, the Convergys team recognized their program had to achieve three essential goals:

- Create a strong quality assurance program
- Reduce agent attrition, traditionally high in technical support programs, to retain knowledge and experience
- Provide fast and thorough diffusion of program knowledge such as product updates, policy and procedure changes, or process changes and updates among agents



case study

Results

Beginning as a 40-agent pilot covering a single legacy operating system in 2002, the Convergys technical support program in India has delivered outstanding results:

- Expanding to more than 1,700 agents in three contact centers
- Expanding to support additional consumer software as well as enterprise operating systems (OS)
- Expanding to accept Tier 2 support calls as well as Tier 1
- 14% improvement in customer satisfaction
- 30% improvement in average call handle time
- 16% improvement in first call resolution
- 10% improvement in agent productivity
- Achieving and maintaining an exceptionally low attrition rate—including a 15% reduction in attrition

relationship management

CONVERGYS
Outthinking Outdoing

Convergys Solution

Deliver outstanding service quality driven by Six Sigma processes and a strong partnership

From the initial pilot program through the transition of virtually all of the software company's technical support work to India, the Convergys team has delivered consistently outstanding service by focusing on the key building blocks of quality:

A Six Sigma inspired quality improvement program.

Convergys inaugurated a structured quality improvement process based on Six Sigma principles. Analysts continually review customer satisfaction data, using root-cause analysis to improve the program and its processes.

The director of the quality team is typically the project manager for quality improvement initiatives—driving them to completion to ensure they accomplish envisioned goals. The entire program is also audited regularly to ensure practices and processes are performing as intended.

Superior training. Convergys implemented a High-Performance Training model that spans the complete agent lifecycle—from new hire training through continuous learning and performance management. The program is continually reinvigorated with current practices from actual operations. Training includes a module on U.S. culture and communications—to help agents master contemporary conversational English—that is so highly regarded it was adopted by the software company for its own use.

Staffing practices that reduce attrition. Convergys has developed a highly successful staffing model that includes a Floor Technical Lead to back up agents for challenging questions. If this front-line team is unable to resolve an issue, the caller is transferred to an Escalation Agent, a tenured

agent with superior technical skills who can consult directly with subject matter experts (SMEs) at the client.

This multilevel staffing structure—combined with the multiple programs that Convergys handles, ranging from consumer applications to enterprise operating systems—provides agents with clear career paths as their tenure and skills increase. There is even the prospect of advancing to a position with the client's own team in India—and more than 70 Convergys employees have done so.

Outstanding knowledge tools. Convergys has continually refined the tools originally developed in the U.S. to help agents solve user problems, adding new tools as available. One new tool, for example, allows interactive communication with agents—so that when an updated diagnostic is sent out, it includes questions to test agents' knowledge—allowing managers to not only track which agents have read the notice, but how well each one understands it.

Close, cooperative working partnership. Convergys and the software company have built an exceptionally cooperative working relationship. Convergys managers immediately report emerging issues to software company engineers, who immediately address them. When the software company has needed to shift or increase support resources—to accompany the launch of a new operating system, for example—Convergys has restructured its programs to deliver the needed support.

More fundamentally, the software company recognizes the value of the Convergys team's constant contact with customers. Software company tech leads and Convergys team leaders regularly hold structured meetings to share insights into the company's products. One outcome was an innovation in the installation process for operating systems, based on a Convergys recommendation.

"I just completed attending the Strategic Business Reviews for all of our partner businesses.... Our businesses continue to be the highlight of the discussions because of the great results you are producing. That makes my job pretty pleasant and I thank you for that." ~Software Company Group Manager