

Halfords Improves Customer Service and IT Support with Hornbill's Supportworks




UK's leading retailer of car accessories and leisure equipment invests in IT service management software as it focuses on customer service.

Halfords is the UK's leading retailer in each of the key product markets in which it operates, from car maintenance and car accessories (including in-car entertainment systems and cleaning products) to leisure (including cycles and cycle accessories and outdoor equipment).

Halfords has 467 stores (401 of which are superstores) across the UK and Republic of Ireland, with 5 in the Czech Republic and 1 in Poland, which makes it one of the largest non-food retailers in the UK.

With such a wide range of products and services, the company relies on its IT systems for its business operations and responsive customer service. The company has invested in Hornbill's Supportworks for its IT service desk and external-facing customer service desk, to ensure its employees and users of its IT systems are supported as well as its customers.

Supportworks provides a fully integrated platform for automating and managing Request and Service Management related business processes for internal and external support desks.

Supporting the Business

According to Nik Thompson, Halfords IT Service Desk Manager: "We wanted a single system that we knew could be tailored to support not just our IT service desk, but also our customer service team. We knew that Hornbill's solution had been successfully used by other organisations in this way. Supportworks' out-of-the-box functionality makes it very easy to use and adapt to the needs of each team."

Continued overleaf

Business Benefits:

- One centralised, best-of-breed platform to manage both internal service desk and external customer service requirements reduces support resources and overheads
- Service desk integration with product database streamlines responses to product and service enquiries, saving time and providing a better service to the customer
- Powerful reporting ensures that trends and issues are identified quickly so that pre-emptive action can be taken and calls reduced as a result
- Built-in automated reports give visibility of workload, enabling the prioritisation and allocation of resources.

“In these challenging times, Supportworks has enabled us to continue to meet our service improvement plan, while maintaining the same level of resources. It has enabled us to work smarter and better and deliver an improved service both to our internal end users and customers.”

Nik Thompson,
Halfords IT Service Desk Manager

The IT service desk team uses Supportworks to provide support to over 10,000 staff across all of its stores. The team provides support on the company’s point of sale IT system, telecoms and hardware as well as the standard desktop applications used by staff at its head office and by home and field based workers. The team that provides second line support also uses Supportworks to log and track calls.

The Customer Services team uses a tailored Supportworks interface to log and track all calls, letters and emails from customers, whether complaint or praise. The team answers external queries on any aspect of service or products supplied by Halfords.

Calls are taken from staff or customers and are categorised by service or product. Information on products has been uploaded onto the Supportworks database from the company’s SAP system, enabling queries to be assigned to certain products or ranges. This enables Halfords to identify trends on certain product specifications, enabling them to take the appropriate action on product lines if required.

Improving Service Delivery

The IT team has seen significant changes, providing clear business benefits. It has gained process improvements from using Supportworks, enabling the team to adopt a more structured approach to capturing, tracking and resolving calls.

“We now have much better visibility of the information that we are gathering,” explained Thompson. “We are able to improve our service delivery and system performance by analysing and acting upon the information that we capture in Supportworks.”

Reports That Make a Difference

Halfords is particularly pleased with the reports that are built into Supportworks, using the information to manage and prioritise workload and resources across the team. The data from the reports has enabled the team to act proactively on issues and reduce calls as a result.

“The benefits that we have seen from the reports are fantastic,” said Thompson. “We have adapted the standard reports slightly, but mostly use the reports that come with the tool. Our area managers now have regular information on customer issues and these can be fed back directly to the stores to take action, enabling them to focus on customer service.”

Future Plans

Following the success of Supportworks to date, the team has moved to the latest version and is investigating the possible use of the Customer SelfService portal for staff in the stores, enabling them to log their own calls. It is hoped that this will be easier for staff, as well as reduce the number of calls handled by the service desk. In addition, the team hopes to integrate email, enabling the team to manage all calls through a central route.

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