NICE®

vmware®

Customer Profile:
Improving Metrics That Matter

Website:
www.vmware.com/in/company.html

Location:
Palo Alto, California

Business Need:
- Effective global scheduling
- Accurate forecasting
- Integrated management processes

NICE Solutions:
- Workforce Management

The Impact:
- Minimized scheduling time to 45 minutes per week
- Over 43 teams using the NICE applications globally
- Estimated annual savings of over US $60,000
- Early adapters of NICE IEX 6.4 Version

On The NICE Solution

"We are reaping the benefits of better workload management across multiple support centers and around the globe."

- Karthik Venkataraman, Manager, BTA Process and Solutions, at VMware

About VMware

VMware, Inc., a subsidiary of Dell Technologies, is a global leader in cloud infrastructure, digital workspace and business mobility technology. Founded in 1998, the company provides cloud and virtualization software and services to approximately 500,000 customers worldwide, including 100 percent of Fortune Global 500 companies.

With regional offices in 22 countries and seven US states, VMware operates contact centers that provide 24/7 service to its current and prospective customers. The company's estimated 1,000 contact center agents handle approximately 500,000 service requests and another 110,000 live calls annually.

The Challenge

VMware is one of the very few industry leaders offering live phone support to customers calling in with critical or production issues. Across all the company's global markets, this service is provided via a toll-free number that can be accessed from any location. Non-critical customer calls are vetted during the interactive voice recording (IVR) stage, during which a service request is automatically generated and the customer is offered a call back time. In addition, service requests can be filed online.

In order to handle its worldwide customer support needs, VMware established a Global Support Services (GSS) department that operates according to a "follow the sun" model. This requires GSS managers to be able to schedule technical and customer support personnel with the appropriate skill sets, across multiple locations, at the right time, and in accordance with shifting load and call volumes. Such a rolling model is necessary for VMware to be able to provide seamless and uninterrupted support for its global customer base.

This complex scheduling was being handled manually by VMware managers within Salesforce.com. This was a time consuming method, as was the company's forecasting worked out using simple Excel-based tools.

Finally, as the GSS units were providing both live customer support by phone and case-based support through other channels, tracking schedule adherence was also a complex matter. The effectiveness of agent scheduling for customer support also plays a role in the level of support calls that are abandoned before reaching resolution due to customer frustration.

The Solution

VMware was an early adopter of NICE IEX Workforce Management (WFM) to handle workforce scheduling for its Global Support Services (GSS) business unit. Starting at the end of 2011, GSS began deploying the solution across its contact centers for reliable and automated forecasting, scheduling and time-off management.

That initial implementation was followed by successive version upgrades, with more GSS teams and personnel brought on board. As VMware's contact center forecasting and scheduling processes have become progressively more consistent across its global markets, it is far easier to coordinate workloads among multiple, geographically diverse support centers.

With NICE WFM, the company is able to define specific schedule types and create sequences that ensure one shift follows another across global time zones. Requested schedule changes can also be automatically evaluated and updated based on sufficient coverage. VMware customers everywhere thus receive the uninterrupted always-on service they expect.

Real-time schedule adherence can be monitored for agents throughout the world from a single screen, which displays data captured from all relevant channels. Adherence policies more accurately reflect agent activity, while the platform automatically alerts managers of adherence outliers.

Integration for CRM Streamlining

From the initial implementation, NICE WFM was integrated with other applications, VMStar and Avaya, in use by the GSS business unit. This gave the company a full picture of service requests and other call volume data for better forecasting, resource allocation, scheduling and adherence tracking.

Within a year of first deploying NICE WFM, VMware decided to further integrate the solution with the GSS unit's CRM application, Salesforce. Agent schedules approved in the NICE WFM interface, as well as intraday exceptions and changes, are now automatically and immediately updated in the Salesforce environment. In addition, VMware redesigned its CRM software to reflect NICE WFM categories for effective data sharing.

Time Saved for Greater Managerial Cost-Effectiveness

Immediately upon implementation of NICE WFM for a given team, the relevant manager saw a dramatic reduction in the time needed on a weekly basis for forecasting and scheduling. By the end of 2012, this meant a full 10 hours were made available for managers on a weekly basis to focus on more productive work.

That WFM efficiency translated into an annual savings for VMware of about US $26,333 in 2012 alone. By 2016, this had risen to nearly US $60,000, with each manager needing just 45 minutes each week, on a consistent basis, to handle forecasting and scheduling with NICE WFM. This savings contributed to the company's ability to take on more managers, which in turn contributed to service quality.

The weekly team scheduling process with NICE WFM is extensively automated and, therefore, easier and faster. This is reflected in the fact that scheduling takes half the time of team historical analysis (as an element of forecasting). Without NICE WFM, based on past performance, this breakdown is reversed, with scheduling sometimes taking twice as much time as analysis – a clear inefficiency.

Improving Metrics That Matter

Performance metrics tracked by VMware reflected the benefits of NICE WFM integration across the enterprise.

Schedule adherence, including for both incoming customer contacts and case resolution, calls for rigorous management. The GSS teams have seen exceptional adherence scores, from over 80% during the challenging WFM onboarding year to later scores as high as 92%.

Effective forecast and schedule planning using NICE WFM has also contributed to reducing abandoned customer calls. With the GSS commitment to a "customer for life" business philosophy, this metric has been important to VMware in its KPI measurements. Similarly, service level adherence has also been positively impacted, with consistent improvement over time. This, in turn, makes team forecasts and schedule generation more accurate.

In terms of both performance metrics and cost-effectiveness, VMware has seen a consistent and long-term optimization of its contact center network with NICE WFM.