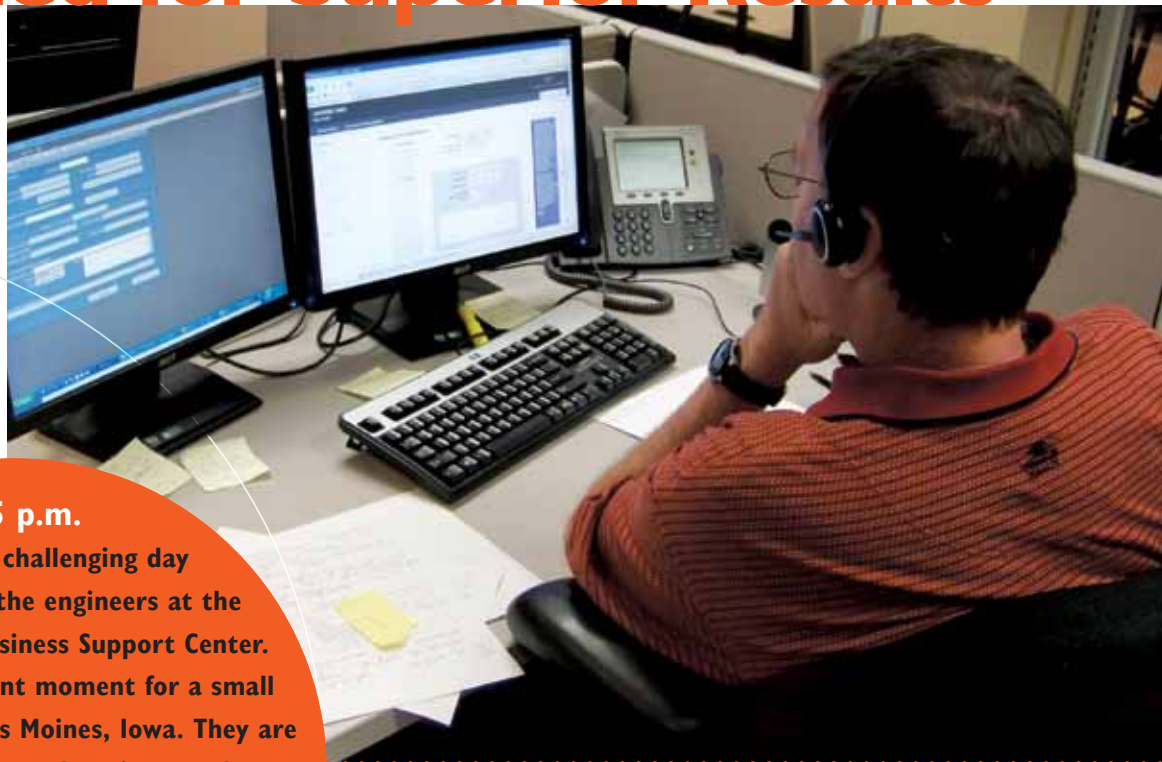




The Concentrix Greenville Small Business Support Center:

Designed for Superior Results



2:45 p.m.

It has been a challenging day for Frank and all the engineers at the Concentrix Small Business Support Center. It is also an important moment for a small service company in Des Moines, Iowa. They are about to open three new locations, and are having trouble integrating our client's new router product with their existing software and hardware. Fortunately, the customer has reached Frank, who is well qualified to help in this type of situation.

The Concentrix client described here is a world leader in networking technology. For this company, and for thousands of their customers, very important, complex technical questions are answered in the Concentrix Greenville, South Carolina Small Business Support Center (SBSC) where Frank has worked since December.

Frank is one of more than 60 engineers who provide world-leading customer technical support 24-7-365 for the critical components used in LANs, WANs, and networking. The advanced support delivered by this center is made possible by a custom-built on-site technical lab, which is accessible to the engineers. The lab contains all the clients' products and software, plus a variety of other manufacturers' components. Engineers replicate customer situations in the lab and test and deliver solutions on actual equipment — all in real time.

Replicating the customer environment

According to Jeff King, Director of Concentrix U.S. Operations, the key to solving customer problems is having personnel who are thoroughly familiar with the many varieties of routers, switches, storage, and VOIP devices. It is also essential that the engineers understand the many ways businesses use these products, and can problem-solve on the fly.

Jeff explains, "We deliver a 'concierge' type of technical

At left: Jeff King, Director of Concentrix U.S. Operations.

2:52 p.m.

Frank works with the Des Moines customer to identify the problem along with several possible solutions. Based on successful trials using the SBSC environment, Frank proposes some solutions that the customer can try in their own environment.

support. This means we are very high-touch, and our skilled engineers must field inquiries and service calls while inside a lab environment. By replicating the customer's technology in the lab, we are able to offer a unique, high level of service. This increases our client's customer satisfaction — key in strengthening brand loyalty and affinity."

A cooperative launch

From the planning stage through the launch in December 2008, our client was frequently on site, collaborating with the Concentrix team. The goal, according to Jeff, was to assure that nothing was missed in creating of the best possible service center for the client's customers, who depend

upon sophisticated technology to keep their small to mid-sized businesses running.

Once plans were in place, hiring and facility build-out began in September of 2008. Hiring was, of course, a critical part of the process. Hundreds of applications were reviewed with the ultimate goal of having CCNA certified engineers in place by launch time.

What characteristics were required for this technical work that also demands superb customer relationship skills? Jeff explains, "We obviously look for technical aptitude. That's a given. But there is so much more to the role. We can train people on the technical aspects of the job but it is very difficult to teach enthusiasm,

Training makes all the difference

Highly qualified personnel. A customer-focused environment. A client with world-class products. Even with all these attributes in place, success in a high-end technical support environment is far from assured unless you have covered the most critical element of preparation — training.

Each newly hired SBSC engineer goes through a program, which immerses him or her in the necessary technical and customer support skills. First comes a two-week CCNA Certification boot camp that each engineer is required to pass successfully in order to work in the production environment. Next, come three weeks

of intensive product training and two weeks of system training. On top of all of this is a week of "soft skills" training. Engineers are taught to handle the vast range of knowledge levels and personalities likely to be calling in with questions or technical issues.

Like every aspect of the launch, the Concentrix client played — and continues to play — a vital role in all training activities. Jeff explains, "They were often on site and participated in the initial training process, which helped us to tailor the training and support specifically for their unique line of products and their unique customer base. Since our client's products are always evolving, we also

teamwork and work ethic. Those qualities are what make or break the service relationship we have with our customers.”

Another characteristic Concentrix sought in its SBSC employees was professional presentation and communication skills, especially the ability to listen carefully and empathize while coming across in a confident, knowledgeable manner.

As the build out progressed, and engineers were hired and trained, they were encouraged to suggest facility improvements, many of which were implemented.

3:14 p.m.

The customer reports that his initial attempt, using our engineer’s suggested fixes, has addressed the issue. Before they end the conversation, Frank shares case identification and other important information should the customer need to refer back to their discussion.

designed a continuing education plan. The program includes refresher and new product courses, and quizzes are given immediately following each session to measure success. In addition, all training segments are videotaped so that the team can go back for a review when necessary. Engineers are evaluated on a daily basis via CSAT, QA, and productivity statistics and further training is recommended when a need is indicated.”



Building on success

In the first six months of 2009, the SBSC facility has fielded more than 40,000 calls. And the staff we hired beginning in September 2008 remains nearly fully intact — and is even growing. Process improvements also include keeping up with the client’s ever changing, always improving product line.

“Currently”, says Amy, another engineer who has recently been CCNA certified, “along with all the ongoing support we are providing, the center is preparing for the launch of a brand new VOIP product. Because the product includes some of the latest VOIP technology, we have prepped the lab to test the many types of VOIP phones. This is exactly what we were trained for! It’s such a great feeling to be able to help a customer quickly resolve their technical issue so they can get back to business.”

Amy’s excitement is something typically shared by all the engineers and representatives at the SBSC. And resolving a customer’s problem strengthens the customer’s long-term satisfaction with — and loyalty to — our client’s product line. Positive interactions mean repeat business and new specifications and purchases that include our client’s products. The better we do for them, the better our client does overall.

Building knowledge for the future

SBSC represents a new way of providing support and end-to-end case management for customers. The fully-interactive, hands-on environment is a “hub” where engineers can work, collaborate, and share best practices for supporting customers. Often this comes in the form of immediate collaboration on problems. There are also scheduled weekly peer interactions, plus ongoing articles written by engineers and posted to our Training Resource Library (TRL) database.



5:08 p.m.

Since helping the Des Moines company with their router integration, Frank has solved several similar calls, along with some more basic customer questions. Tomorrow will bring new calls and new solutions — all of which will build the SBSC staff’s ability to handle future troubleshooting and service situations. As he leaves, Frank wonders what interesting challenges will be handled by the engineers now arriving for their evening shifts.

This article is an excerpt from the second issue of *The Concentrix Source*.

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