



Success Story: IT SWAT Team

Summary:

TerpSys assembled a specialized cadre of computer technicians as a "Super Help Desk" to handle a government client's high priority IT support requests on an expedited basis, night and day.

Client: National Cancer Institute (NCI)

A well-known federal agency based in the Washington, DC area, NCI has a wide ranging mission bearing on public health and medical issues of national and international importance.



Objectives:

- Respond immediately to urgent client IT needs; e.g., virus outbreaks, security patches
- Handle large volume situations, such as new computer rollouts or implementation of enterprise-wide secure email system
- Establish a "Ready Reserve" to supplement usual IT tech support at a moment's notice

Challenge

NCI is a large federal agency with over 6,000 end users, whose everyday service requests are reliably handled by over 50 well-trained and highly competent TerpSys computer techs. Nevertheless, an organization that size also generates service requests of a non-routine nature – usually high volume and/or urgent matters – which disrupt the normal flow of helpdesk support operations.

Because federal government mandates require timely responses to IT problems that may be unforeseen (e.g., password "lockouts" at critical times) or impact large numbers of people (e.g., secure email rollouts, laptop encryption projects, etc.), it was necessary to develop a means of dealing with such time-sensitive or wide-ranging issues in a prompt, efficient and reliable manner.

Solution

TerpSys assembled an "IT SWAT Team" and set its members' schedules so that at any given time, 3 to 6 such individuals are "on-call" for urgent requests or project handling duties.

With an eye on the future, TerpSys has arranged for new or junior staff members to serve on the IT SWAT Team as a way of introducing them to the complex IT environment at NCI's multiple sites. This practice also provides them with real-world experience under difficult circumstances, where their job is not only to render assistance as needed, but to watch and learn from observing their more experienced colleagues in action.

Via pagers, BlackBerries and cell phones, the TerpSys IT SWAT Team provides NCI with comprehensive coverage for special projects and IT emergencies.

Results

- Resolving "urgent" service requests within 2 hours of receipt by IT SWAT Team
- Meeting all federal response time mandates for large and small projects without disrupting normal Help Desk support processes
- Ensuring that trained techs are available to all supported areas at a moment's notice
- Providing instant "backfill" for cases of illness or vacation involving Help Desk Personnel