

Virginia Farm Bureau Reduces Compliance Costs by 50 Percent with CA Cloud Service Management



CLIENT PROFILE

Industry: Agriculture

Company: Virginia Farm Bureau

BUSINESS

The Virginia Farm Bureau Federation (VFBF) has more than 150,000 members and is Virginia's largest farmers' advocacy group. It is a voluntary organization and committed to safeguarding the supply of fresh and locally grown produce.

CHALLENGE

To maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and compliance, VFBF needed a solution for automating ticketing and service desk processes that was easy to use and affordable.

SOLUTION

CA Cloud Service Management streamlines service desk activities and enables faster incident resolution as well as providing a complete audit trail of all ticketing processes.

BENEFIT

VFBF has improved productivity and service quality by eliminating manual service desk processes. Compliance costs have been reduced by 50 percent and the SaaS solution has also reduced VFBF's operational costs.



Business

Supporting Virginia's farms

Virginia Farm Bureau Federation (VFBF) is a non-governmental, non-partisan, voluntary organization committed to protecting Virginia's farms and providing a safe, fresh and locally grown food supply.

With more than 150,000 members in 88 county Farm Bureaus, it is Virginia's largest farmers' advocacy group, working to support its producer members through legislative lobbying, leadership development programs, commodity associations, rural health programs, agricultural supplies and marketing, and other services.

In addition to the federation, the VFBF operates 16 different businesses, including a full line of commercial and personal insurance products.

Challenge

Maintaining customer service levels

With so many members and customers involved with the various commercial businesses, the VFBF must keep its IT infrastructure running optimally at all times.

System availability is of paramount importance to maintaining customer service levels, so the ability to process and resolve service issues is critical. The VFBF's IT organization had been relying on manual processes for much of its ticketing and compliance tasks.

Although CA Service Desk Manager was installed on-site, extensive consulting services would have been necessary to get the current version of the 12 complex modules of the solution up and running in the environment. It was a very robust, complete solution; however, maintaining it would have stretched the VFBF's limited IT budget beyond its constraints.

The team began evaluating other service desk tools to find one that was more suitable to the needs of the organization. CA Technologies introduced the team to CA Cloud Service Management, a SaaS-based solution that provides the attractive features of CA Service Desk but was more affordable, and easier to implement and manage.

"We'd had good experiences with CA Technologies and trusted their recommendation – CA Cloud Service Management had all the features we needed," said Steve Villalpando, Manager of IT Governance and Service Delivery, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

The IT organization was reliant on manual processes for much of its ticketing and compliance tasks

Solution

Automated, user-friendly service desk solution

CA Cloud Service Management is a SaaS solution with built-in ITIL®-based best practices and the ability to adapt the workflow to the specific needs of the business in a low cost, easily upgraded way. The flexible, configurable solution can be tailored to the specific needs of the business without the cost and complexity associated with traditional code-based customization, helping companies quickly gain value.

“CA Cloud Service Management is managed completely off-site, which is a big plus,” said Villalpando. “We don’t have to spend money on operating on-site infrastructure, and we save on storage and cooling costs, as well.”

The VFBF found the solution easy to deploy and quickly get users up and running and appreciated its user-friendly interface, configuration flexibility, and the increased visibility provided by the dashboards.

“With CA Cloud Service Management, we can quickly respond to changes,” said Villalpando. “The solution is easy to re-configure on the fly – without scripting – and new users can become productive without extensive training.”

“CA Cloud Service Management helps us maintain a complete audit trail.”

Steve Villalpando

Manager of IT Governance and Service Delivery, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

After implementation, demand for the tool was so high that Villalpando had to add more licenses. “Prior to CA Cloud Service Management our IT managers had no visibility into the ticketing processes,” he said. “Because CA Cloud Service Management enables them to easily view the activity and status of all tickets assigned to their individual groups, there is much higher demand for the tool than we expected.”

Improving consistency and quality of service

Villalpando’s team leverages the Request and Incident modules to improve the consistency and quality of service by applying service levels to the fulfilment process, while reducing costs through self-service and automation features. Clear communication with end users leads to enhanced customer service, as well.

The Service Catalog module provides ticket templates so users can easily enter requests. The templates pre-populate the required information to speed up turnaround times. After a user enters a request, the Request Management module uses the built-in, configurable workflow engine to automatically route all tickets to the appropriate group or technician, based on a combination of the information in the

request or the time of creation. Even email requests can be routed based on text embedded in the subject line or other aspects of the message.

“Everything comes to the service desk as a request, whether it’s a request for new functionality or to fix something,” said Villalpando. “We triage the request in the tool and create an incident or request record, then assign it to the appropriate group for processing.”

The ITIL-based Incident Management module with pre-packaged workflows makes it easy to identify, register, prioritize, categorize and track incidents reported to the service desk. These pre-packaged solutions leverage advanced service management techniques to effectively manage the entire lifecycle of an incident, from detection through closure.

Templates and action-based workflows help the organization to follow correct processes and eliminate the need for extensive training or hiring of highly skilled technicians.

“Being able to pinpoint a problem leads to much faster resolution, and increases service availability.”

Steve Villalpando

Manager of IT Governance and Service Delivery, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

“CA Cloud Service Management enables us to keep an inventory of everything in the IT infrastructure, so our support team can quickly identify the root cause of an incident, zero in on the affected device, and effectively troubleshoot,” said Villalpando. “Being able to pinpoint a problem leads to much faster resolution, and increases service availability.”

CA Cloud Service Management also enables Villalpando’s team to keep a complete audit trail of all ticketing processes, which simplifies compliance activities and increases accuracy.

“Prior to installing CA Cloud Service Management, our technicians would close the ticket when service was restored, and information about changes to the infrastructure was not linked to the incident record,” said Villalpando. “With the CA Cloud Service Management Problem Management module, our technicians can directly create a change request according to what’s in the problem record, which helps us maintain a complete audit trail that includes changes made to the infrastructure as a result of the incident.”

Benefit

Improved productivity, service quality and compliance

Through automation, the solution has eliminated most of the manual labor previously required to

create, investigate, troubleshoot and close tickets, increasing visibility into the ticketing process and streamlining audit activities.

Prior to CA Cloud Service Management, the VFBF team spent hours helping auditors with on-site manual audits, because certain systems were deemed “not reliable” in terms of their ability to produce accurate data about the infrastructure.

“With CA Cloud Service Management, all the information is there, and we can quickly generate a report that satisfies compliance requirements,” said Villalpando. “By automating and streamlining this process, CA Cloud Service Management slashes our audit costs by about 50 percent.”

As a result of using CA Cloud Service Management, VFBF is realizing numerous benefits, including:

- Reduced operational costs as, being a SaaS offering, CA Cloud Service Management minimizes infrastructure overhead and eliminates the time and costs associated with system management, patches and updates
- Enhanced service quality through improved processes, reporting and advanced service management features
- Improved compliance for significantly less cost as the advanced reporting features of CA Cloud Service Management reduce the amount of time and resources allocated to completing audits
- Increased productivity with better problem resolution and elimination of manual processes.

“We don’t need highly skilled technicians to troubleshoot and resolve tickets,” said Villalpando.

“CA Cloud Service Management is intuitive and easy to use with built-in self-service features that enable end users to fix a lot of things on their own. Reducing the amount of support we need to provide and increasing our ability to quickly troubleshoot and fix problems, will save a lot of money down the road.”

**Please note that, in June 2014, the product name in this customer success story was updated from “CA Nimsoft Service Desk” to “CA Cloud Service Management”.*



Connect with CA Technologies at ca.com



CA Technologies helps customers succeed in a future where every business – from apparel to energy – is being rewritten by software. With CA software at the center of their IT strategy, organizations can leverage the technology that changes the way we live – from the data center to the mobile device. Our software and solutions help our customers thrive in the new application economy by delivering the means to deploy monitor and secure their applications and infrastructure. To learn more about our customer success programs, visit ca.com/customer-success. For more information about CA Technologies go to ca.com.