CACI CASE STUDY

Transforming IT Support Services to Empower Homeland Security

Meeting the DHS national security mission by providing support services for all their technologies.

Remote work, once largely an exception, became the new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the number of people working from home tripled. This work relocation created a seismic shift in technology environments. Engineers and support staff could no longer be at their coworkers' desks to solve problems, and the volume of technical support tickets and calls rapidly spiked.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was no exception during this time. While many employees already were dispersed geographically prior to the pandemic, many more were asked to work remotely to continue their critical work while keeping themselves and their customers safe. When IT issues arose – often at the least expected time – deskside services were no longer an option.

DHS was well-equipped to tackle this work environment transformation through CACI's desk support services, which provide a wide swath of IT capabilities to more than 18,000 employees, primarily those serving DHS headquarters' mission.

"We run the gamut of customer-facing services such as call center, service desk, and field support services all the way up to network engineering, cyber, and cloud services – it's a broad scope and our technicians and engineers ensure operational excellence at every touchpoint possible," said Jhon Pak, CACI Vice President of enterprise IT. "No matter the time or location, we meet the DHS national security mission by providing support services for all their technologies."

18,000+
USERS

150,000
SERVICE DESK CALLS ANNUALLY

240
LOCATIONS GLOBALLY

The Challenge: Meeting the mission with an evolving workforce

The Desktop Support Services (DSS) 2.0 program provides general IT services and support to DHS employees. As the workforce has evolved, so too has the DSS scope of work, necessitating more robust, reliable, and efficient IT services. DHS leadership needed increased situational awareness of team and mission performance. End users lacked visibility into IT issue status reports, generating longer service lag times and crippling efficiency. The existing service support model was inadequate to solve these challenges, and a new system was needed to reduce operational costs, improve security, and yield better overall end-user satisfaction.

This was no easy feat. DSS faced an excessive backlog of more than 6,000 unfulfilled tickets and an average of more than 3,000 emails each week. Frustrated users kept on hold routinely dropped service desk calls while exhausted, overworked IT technicians toiled to solve problems as quickly as possible.

Continued →

The Results: Building trust with the end user through self-help systems

In response, CACI built out a new ServiceNow-based system, which enable the DSS team to implement a multi-tier support and escalation approach, to include a tier 0 self-help system. This approach reduced the need for deskside technicians and improved user self-sufficiency while prioritizing more difficult problems for technicians.

The self-help portal encourages DHS end users to familiarize themselves with mission-critical hardware and software without submitting tickets or calls to IT. Additionally, end users can use Microsoft Teams to receive training and collaborate effectively. When users need to submit tickets, the ServiceNow portal enables visibility and traceability, helping users to check ticket status or cancel them if they resolved the issue independently.

By empowering the end users, DHS staff trust CACI's service technicians to resolve issues quickly and effectively. This enabled CACI technicians to launch innovative solutions and streamline processes that grew customer satisfaction and saved DHS time and money.

Since deploying the tier 0 system, only about 300 emails are submitted each week on average to the help desk, about 90% less than before, and self-service portal usage is up more than 25%. Service desk labor is down nearly 40% and the ticket backlog shrank from 6,000 tickets to 500, all while maintaining a service level agreement exceeding 98%. Calls were dropped 63% less frequently and technicians solved problems 73% faster.

This platform's value was well received at the start of the pandemic, when a team of 40 DHS employees had to transfer from working on-site to remote in a matter of days. The team didn't face any mission interruption thanks to our prior tier 0 system implementation coupled with increased surge staffing levels.

"When Covid hit, we were ready because of our self-help capabilities that gave the power back to the end user," Pak said.

90%
REDUCTION IN EMAILS

40%
REDUCTION IN LABOR

73%
INCREASE IN PROBLEM RESOLUTION

The Future: More than a service desk

The DSS program has far outgrown its service desk scope, now supporting software development, network engineering, systems engineering, cloud migration, and cybersecurity.

"We can do anything the government dreams of. The only requirement we have now is what the stakeholders want. It's quite expansive compared to its humble beginnings," Pak said.

Post-pandemic, hybrid and remote work remain commonplace, and as such, other agencies look to DSS 2.0 as a model of developing trust with end users to execute flexible, scalable, modern support services.

"End users want to feel confident they can do their jobs without a technician figuratively on standby for whenever they need to do basic troubleshooting," Pak said. "That confidence then provides our experts the capacity to tackle the complex problems only they can solve."