

Extreme Networks

"Partnering is so critical. This has to be an evolving relationship because our company always has new products and implementations that must be included as we grow and change. It's apparent to us that noHold is the kind of company that builds enduring partnerships. That's the primary reason we wanted to be with them."

Dean Floyd
Manager of Planning and Process



APPLICATION

- Web-based self-support for network configurators

OBJECTIVES

- Service 60% of customer inquiries online
- Reduce support expenses quickly
- Maintain high standards for assistance

BENEFITS

Improves customer service

- Helps technical users even at odd hours
- Delivers superior service consistently
- Provides the self-service that user groups desire

Delivers valuable insight

- Helps uncover persistent problems
- Provides usable support metrics

Delivers strong ROI

- Delivers measurable results immediately
- Pays for itself typically within months
- Helps strengthen customer relationships

THE COMPANY

Extreme Networks,[®] Inc., delivers the most effective applications and services infrastructure by creating networks that are faster, simpler and more cost-effective. Headquartered in Santa Clara, Calif., Extreme Networks markets its network switching solutions in more than 50 countries.

THE DILEMMA

Extreme's technical assistance center works diligently to service its user base. On average, the center receives 400 to 500 phone and e-mail inquiries each month from technical users with questions about network configurations. The majority of this information is available in user manuals and other supporting documentation, but in general, users typically want a faster, easier way to obtain the answers they need—without having to search through multiple resources. At the same time, the company was compelled to reduce support expenses by diverting basic, repetitive inquiries toward online resources so the technical assistance center could focus on delivering support to mission-critical cases.

Search engine providers were considered but rejected because the technology would push too much information to users, who needed specific responses to solve problems. If users were looking for a faster solution than reading through manuals, there was no reason to believe they would take the time to search through document links.

THE SOLUTION

noHold, Inc., had created noHold Instant Support to address those specific issues. The Web-based self-service solution consists of a custom-built noHold Knowledge Platform developed from each company's documentation and other materials; Instant Setup, a tool for creating a branded user portal; Instant Metrics, a back-end metrics reporting tool that delivers real-time insight about support sessions; and Instant Editor, a simple-to-use authoring tool to update the knowledge base.

Users access Instant Support through a chat-like knowledge portal embedded in a company's Web site. They describe their



EXPERT ANSWERS.

NOW.

problem in plain language, and then Instant Support guides them through a diagnostic process until it can deliver the one correct solution, typically within three or four clicks. Users are automatically escalated to the next level of support if a solution cannot be found.

Dean Floyd, manager of planning and process for Extreme, said he knew the actual implementation at Extreme would be tricky because there can be a multitude of options involved with data networking that can make a knowledge base search difficult even for those who work with the applications every day. noHold's Professional Services team met with Extreme to map out the knowledge platform and move ahead with its construction. Eventually, several challenges arose due to the complex nature of Extreme's products.

"I began to think they wouldn't be able to complete the task," Floyd said. "But they wouldn't give up, and they worked out a different way to approach the problems. In the end, they met the challenges and did a great job. We were especially impressed with their tenacity and with the strength of the engineering team."

Floyd, who described himself as a "Doubting Thomas," said he imagined that noHold would simply deliver a turnkey product and walk away. Instead, he was surprised by noHold's teamwork, even after implementation. "Partnering is so critical," he said. "This has to be an evolving relationship because our company always has new products and implementations that must be included as we grow and change. It's apparent to us that noHold is the kind of company that builds enduring partnerships. That's the primary reason we wanted to be with them."

Extreme Networks was originally attracted to noHold because of its energy, which was apparent from the first meeting. "noHold was really excited about working on this project," said Floyd. "That kind of enthusiasm was great to see, especially since you don't always get it from other companies. This left us with a good impression."

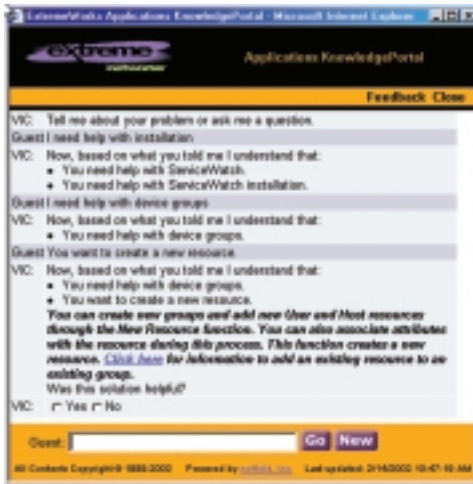
THE RESULTS

Extreme Networks Virtual Information Center (VIC), powered by noHold Instant Support, was released in August 2001, with a major promotion directed at Extreme customers and support agents. Extreme Networks' goal is to service 60% of its customers' inquiries via VIC and other Web-based applications. Currently, about 600 sessions each month are going to VIC. Of those, 75% are successfully resolved. Extreme anticipates even greater results once its other support services are included as a part of VIC.

"Early results have been excellent relative to the first phase of this implementation," said Floyd. "We've also had positive feedback from our Customer Advisory Council and User Group. They value self-support and approve of the direction we're moving."

THE FUTURE

Additional support service features will be added to Extreme's knowledge platform, driving an increasing number of users to self-help. The company also expects that VIC will become more valuable as a ramp-up tool for new technical assistance center agents, as they use the portal to pull up product information during support sessions. Overall, Extreme Networks is confident that they now can provide superior levels of customer service to their end users while maintaining profitable margins on all service offerings.



noHold, Inc.
225 South Milpitas Boulevard
Milpitas, California 95035
Tel: 408.946.9200
Fax: 408.946.9202
Email: sales@nohold.com
www.nohold.com