



Washington Department of Corrections Extends Critical IT Support for 9,500 Officers and Staffers Across the State

Washington Department of Corrections (WADOC) oversees a network of facilities across the Northwestern state, including 12 prisons, 16 community correctional facilities and several field offices. In all, 9,500 corrections officers, staff, contractors and volunteers work together to serve a population of nearly 16,000 inmates. WADOC's mission is simple, but critically important: To improve public safety.

The Business Case for Service Management

WADOC employs 185 IT professionals to take care of the IT support needs for the agency's entire staff. Most of these IT experts work in a centralized environment, while some serve as local IT staff, providing support on the ground at some of the larger facilities.

"Within IT, every single one of our job descriptions includes a public safety expectation," says Michelle Greene, Systems and Applications Supervisor, Washington Department of Corrections. "Our role is all about ensuring that the technology supporting our officers is working as expected. If it doesn't, someone could get hurt."

For several years, Greene and her team relied on BMC Express, a basic, incident-based IT management solution. When staff had a problem or question, they would send an email or go into the system to create a ticket. Tickets were then manually routed based on the email subject header or other basic information provided. With no workflow engine behind the solution—and lots of tickets that carried little to no detail—it was very hard to assign and triage incidents. "With no automated workflows, it was everything about everything," explains Greene.

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—Michelle Greene, Systems and Applications Supervisor, Washington Department of Corrections

Customer Success Story

In late 2013, WADOC made the decision to modernize its IT service experience. After reviewing a number of solutions including ServiceNow and Cherwell, WADOC selected EasyVista as its preferred service management platform.

Choice and Ease of Use for End Users

Greene and her colleagues wanted to make sure the IT service experience was simple, so they didn't overwhelm their end users with too much functionality. The team took a two-pronged approach: traditional helpdesk support and self-service support. This way, end users—many of whom are not highly tech savvy—can get help in the way they feel most comfortable. “Our team receives between 400 and 600 requests per day through the help desk. But some of our customers like to manage their own service requests, and that amounts to between 100 and 200 self-service actions per day.” Greene says.

Staffers who opt for self-service choose from a short list of straightforward categories like cell phone, desk phone, application support, email support and IT purchasing support. “Our whole purpose is to provide help to people who are having a hard time with technology. The last thing we want is to introduce a system where they encounter trouble while they are getting that help,” says Greene.

Improved Design and Navigation

Overall design and ease of navigation was a priority for the new system. The team worked hard to simplify processes down to the bare essentials. And they continue to look at ways to make the experience more intuitive. “EasyVista can be anything you want it to be,” says Greene. “But you need to engage with the customer to know what they want before you start building things.”

Greene and her colleagues take user feedback very seriously. They consult with a technology advisory group of WADOC staff representing different roles, technical capabilities and viewpoints to learn what they want, what they like and where they experience confusion. “In our last quarterly focus group, our technology advisory group was really excited about how we had generalized and simplified information on the main page of the service catalog, and they liked the ability to drill down to get more information on a given topic,” she explains. “We plan to keep soliciting their input over time.”

Improved Mobile Service Access For End Users and Support Staff

Everyone in WADOC, whether management or IT critical support tier, receives an iPhone, so part of the IT support team's objective with EasyVista was to offer a great service experience via a mobile device. “We've designed the layout so it's easy to accomplish tasks on a small screen. This way, if a staff member is away

EXPECTED RESULTS

- *Simpler, more automated IT support*
- *Ability to manage service requests with fewer staff*
- *Increased service continuity with mobile capabilities*
- *Greater visibility into the entire service lifecycle*
- *Technology advisory board that is pleased with the system*

Customer Success Story

from their desk or onsite, they can still do things like review and approve a request from another employee who wants to purchase a new mouse,” she says. This mobile-friendly functionality also helps the IT support team deliver better service. “When we have IT experts in the field, they can still move the service process along,” Greene adds.

Better Visibility into the Service Lifecycle

As a government agency, transparency is important and EasyVista has given WADOC greater visibility into the service life cycle. One thing WADOC had a hard time tracking before was where time was spent between when a ticket was opened to its ultimate resolution. Greater visibility has surfaced opportunities for process improvement, faster support and more proactive service.

For example, the support team now confirms all change requests, a process they couldn't do before. “In the past, a change request might be approved on Monday but it couldn't be logged until Tuesday—but we never knew that. Now we know why, we can see what failed, and we can address it,” she explains. “We are not working from behind anymore.”

There's also greater visibility into equipment management. “Assets are money and EasyVista has a stringent process for tracking them. Today we can identify and report on when assets go out and when they come back,” said Greene. “That was a manual process before.”

Next Steps

- EasyVista's robust service management engine has made the team far more efficient. “With pre-defined workflows and simple catalog topics, I could have half of my team out sick and not need backup or extra dollars,” she explains. And as more service automation kicks in, the team can concentrate on proactive service management goals.
- Going forward, the WADOC IT team feels well positioned to make sure their staff on the front lines has the technology they need to perform their jobs at peak performance. “These people spend each day protecting the community and our inmates, and it's a privilege to support them in that endeavor,” Greene adds.

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