Alternative Service Solutions

Norm Belbot, Cray Research, Inc., Customer Service,
Calverton, Maryland

ABSTRACT: *The Cray Customer Service organization places a high premium on customer satisfaction. Our customers have consistently responded very positively with regard to the level and quality of services we provide. However, they have been equally consistent in expressing concern about the prices being paid for these services.*

Our challenge; How to maintain a high level of quality services and to do it within a cost structure that allows our service prices to be more consistent with customer expectations. In order to accomplish this goal, we have re-defined our service delivery mechanism and included a call center as the focal point for customer entry to Cray Customer Service infrastructure. Our implementation of the call center combines personnel experience and expertise with state-of-the-art technology to construct service environment that will help us meet this challenge.

Background

Cray's Customer Service strategy development has been an evolutionary process that had its origins in the requirements for servicing highly complex Supercomputers in demanding, production oriented customer environments. These systems, while leading the industry in performance, required significant dedicated resources in terms of people and logistics support in order to meet our customer's requirements for system availability. While this strategy served our customers well and produced high levels of customer satisfaction, the cost of service became a dissatisfier. Our customer satisfaction surveys indicated that alternative, less costly service options were required.

The two primary elements comprising the customer service equation are parts and labor. These components represent approximately 85% of our cost of doing business. It was clear that in order to achieve any meaningful cost control, we had to attack these two areas and search out opportunities to become more efficient. However, our commitment to the delivery of high quality customer services remains unchanged.

Our basic premise for solving the problem was rather simple; Determine the customer's needs and deliver to that level. We asked the question, What do our customers really require from us? What elements of our current service model represent value to the customer? Our goal was to retain the elements perceived as providing value, while continuing to meet our customer's service requirements.

Solution

Our customer's requirements of the Customer Service organization are:

- Technically competent staff
- Timely response to issues
- Effective Repair
- Dependable entry point to the Customer Service infrastructure

All these elements are currently being provided by the on-site Cray staff.

What if we took field experienced engineers and analysts and centrally located them. Provided state-of-the-art telecommuni-cations technology in order to re-distribute their expertise over a widely disbursed customer population, and then provided our customers direct access to these people. This would retain the value of an on-site staff while distributing the cost over a much larger base.

Thus was born the CRI concept of a call center.

The implementation of this strategy was actually begun in 1990 with the establishment of the North American Support Center in Eagan as, primarily, a contact point for our Field Analysts. This function was later expanded to include SW support to selected customers. In January, 1994, our current full service, first level customer support center strategy was implemented as a "proof of concept" pilot project. During this phase, US customers with EL92/94 and CS6400 systems and Craysoft customers were using the newly created Customer Support Call Center located in Atlanta, Georgia. During 1994, the CSCC successfully processed 3241 service requests from Cray's

customers. The concept worked and, most importantly, our customers responded favorably.

In January 1995, the staff of the CSCC was doubled as the CSCC in Atlanta was merged with the North American Support Center in Eagan and placed under one Field manager. The supported product set was expanded to include all customers who did not have a Cray staff resident on their site. The CSCC is currently handling approximately 1000 customer service requests per month.

Similar projects are underway in Japan, UK, France, and Germany as we expand the call center concept globally.

An important element of our call center strategy is information management. After an intensive search, aided by the assistance of an outside consultant, we chose a call tracking system developed by Quintus Corp, CustomerQ™. In order to achieve the agility and performance, crucial in a real time call center environment, we implemented the system in a client/server environment, allowing the sharing of a common data repository among the geographically disbursed call centers.

Call Center Services

The call center is providing the same services as have been traditionally provided by the resident, on-site, Cray staff, with the obvious limitations imposed by factors of time and distance.

While solving HW and SW problems for customers is our highest priority activity, it is, by no means, our only activity. Additional services provided are:

- Technical information resource
- Perform SW upgrades*
- Perform SW installation*
- System administration*
- Performance analysis and tuning*
- Problem management and escalation
- Contract management
- Parts selling (EL, J9X, 6400 systems)
- SW and documentation ordering

  *Requires remote access

Some of these services are included as part of a Cray standard maintenance contract while others are charged at the T&M rate or are delivered by special contract.

FUTURE

The call center is a new concept for Cray. We will continue to strive to improve the services provided by constantly evaluating new technology as it becomes available and implementing that which makes sense and has value for our customers.

Presently in process is a pilot project in the US that will upgrade our phone system to allow the 2 US call centers to function as one "virtual" call center. We will be implementing a service id scheme that will allow our customers to call us and enter an id number which will:

- Identify the caller
- Verify the maintenance contract
- Determine the system type
- Route the call to the call center tech who most likely possesses the necessary skills to help the caller.
- Display the customer's profile on the tech's workstation as the call is being answered.

We anticipate the benefits of this system to be less time spent for the caller to gain access to a technical resource within the call center, a greater degree of accuracy in placing the call with the appropriate technical person sooner, and increased efficiency in our ability to handle calls.

We are currently monitoring the development of Voice Recognition technology, applications involving wireless data transmission, and automated information distribution technologies for inclusion in our call centers as practically applicable.

Summary

Cray is fully cognizant of the fact that our diverse customer base will continue to have varying requirements of our Customer Service organization. The call center will not be able to meet all these requirements. Our traditional service offerings remain firmly entrenched in our service model and will always be available to those customers who require them. However, the call center level of service offers an alternative to customers who's computation enterprise allows sufficient operational latitude to take advantage of this offering. The evolution of the call center service model is an indication of CRI's commitment to providing products and services consistent with our customer expectations.

How to Reach the Call Centers

US
  1-800-950-CRAY
    770-631-2226 - FAX
  e-mail - cscc@cray.com
  Hours of operation; 8 AM to 8 PM, Eastern time, Mon - Fri
  (equates to 8 AM to 5 PM in all 4 CONUS Time Zones)

UK
  +44-1344-868666
  +44-1344-722133 - FAX
  e-mail - support@UK.cray.com
  Hours of operation; 0900 - 1730, BST, Mon - Fri

Japan

24 Hr call support	0120-277-901
0900 - 1700 (Call Support)	0120-377-901
1000 - 1600 (Q&A support)	0120-458-901

Germany

Within German telephone network
0130-865173

Outside German telephone network
+49-89-14903-146
+49-89-14903-190 (Craysoft)

Hours of Operation
0830 - 1630, Monday - Thursday
0830 - 1530, Friday

France

+33 1 69 29 33 00 HW/SW
+33 1 69 29 33 02 Craysoft
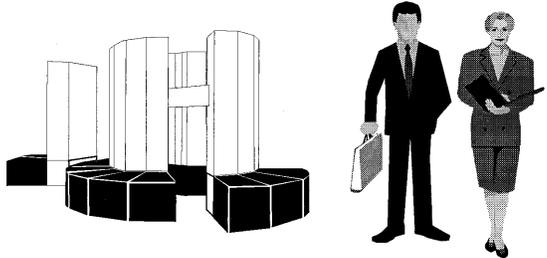
Hours of Operation
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Alternative Service Solutions

Cray Research Customer Service
Implementation of a Global Call Center Strategy

Norm Belbot
Sr. Director, Americas Field Operations

CRAY
RESEARCH, INC.   Service Division

Traditional CRI Customer Service

1 System = 1 Service Team

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RESEARCH, INC.   Service Division

Our Problem

- Customer satisfaction surveys have consistently reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the level and quality of our customer services.

- However, the *cost of service* has been a detractor.

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RESEARCH, INC.   Service Division

Traditional CRI Customer Service

- **Pros**
  - **Very high customer satisfaction**

  - **CRI staff intimately familiar with customer environment CRI staff effectively an extension of customer's staff**

  - **Each site has a high degree of self-sufficiency**

- **Cons**
  - **Expensive**

  - **High cost a detractor from customer satisfaction**

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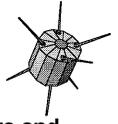RESEARCH, INC.   Service Division

Our Challenge

*"...provide traditional
Cray Research quality customer service
at a price consistent with
customer expectations."*

Service Division

Basic Call Center Strategy

- Centrally locate field-experienced engineers and analysts

- Distribute this expertise via state-of-the-art telecommunications technology

  - Provide customers direct access to the technical staff

  - Establish a focal point for customer access to the CRI Customer Service infrastructure

Service Division

What Do Customers Really Require?

- Timely response to issues

- Technically competent staff

- Effective repair

- A dependable entry point to the CRI Customer Service infrastructure

Service Division

What We Do!

- Diagnose problems

- Answer questions   Provide information

- Dispatch personnel and parts in accordance with the maintenance contract

- Escalate problems to the appropriate levels (technical and management)
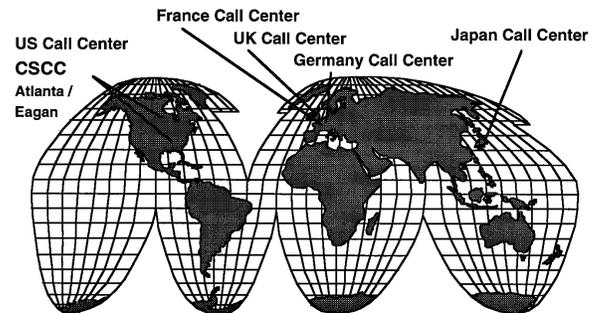
Service Division

Our Solution

- Expand the range of on-call service options

- Implement call centers as part of our overall strategy

Service Division

Our Service World

France Call Center
US Call Center
CSCC
Atlanta /
Eagan
UK Call Center
Germany Call Center
Japan Call Center

Service Division

How and When to Reach Us

- **France** (services France, Switzerland, Spain, and Belgium)

Monday – Friday	Hours 0900 – 1730
HW/SW	+33 1 69 29 33 00
CraySoft® products	+33 1 69 29 33 02

- **Germany** (services Germany, Italy, and Austria)

Monday – Thursday	Hours 0830 – 1630
Friday	Hours 0830 – 1530
<u>Within</u> German telephone network	0130-865173
<u>Outside</u> German telephone network	+49-89-14903-146
CraySoft® products	+49-89-14903-190

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How and When to Reach Us

- **CSCC (Customer Service Call Center)** (services USA, Canada, Latin America, South America, Middle East, Asia Pacific)

Monday – Friday	1-800-950-CRAY
Hours 0800 – 2000 (EST)	
E-mail	cscc@cray.com
FAX	770-631-2226

CRAY RESEARCH, INC.   Service Division

How and When to Reach Us

- **Japan**

24-hour call support	0120-277-901
0900 – 1700 (call support)	0120-377-901
1000 – 1600 (Q & A support)	0120-458-901

- **UK** (services UK, Czech Rep., Russia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Israel, South Africa, and Poland)

Monday – Friday	Hours 0900 – 1730 (BST)	+44-1344-868666
E-mail		support@uk.cray.com
FAX		+44-1344-722133

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