

Sandia's Specialized Executive Support Increases Productivity and Confidence Abstract



Sandia National Laboratories' goal is to provide "Exceptional Service in the National Interest". It employs some of the best minds in the world, among them the Labs President and her team of VP's, deputies and immediate support staff. To meet the demanding needs of this specialized group, an executive IT support team knowledgeable in many facets of IT and trusted to provide special attention and white-glove customer service has been in operation at Sandia since 2010. At NLIT, we would like to discuss development of the executive IT support team, its scope of service, methods, best practices, pitfalls we've encountered along the way, and issues we've managed to address before they caused problems for our customers.

Sandia executives maintain heavy workloads and crowded calendars with no time to spare for IT trouble or technical snafus that delay meetings. Sandia's executive IT support team handles all customer IT issues, serving as a one stop shop by providing help desk, field service, Windows, Mac, mobile device, printer, Lync/VTC, network, account, and peripheral support. The team collaborates with multiple support groups and maintains working relationships with other IT departments to expedite problem resolution. Response time for most other groups is one hour for non-urgent issues, whereas the executive IT support team treats all issues as high priority, responding within 5 minutes.

Because the executive IT support team provides customers with a familiar face for IT, expedited response/resolve times, and a wide scope of knowledge they are routinely lauded for their high customer satisfaction and attention to quality. Customer downtime is reduced or eliminated by proactive upkeep of systems and senior executive's trust in our IT operations is amplified.

Lost productivity and lost trust, particularly at the senior executive level equates to lost money and lost confidence for IT support as a whole. The team's supported executives are the face of Sandia to the public and government and ensuring that their IT 'just works' helps them concentrate on their job securing the future of the labs. We hope to share our experience with providing this specialized support at the 2016 NLIT Summit.

Sandia's Specialized Senior Executive IT Support

DEDICATED EXECUTIVE SUPPORT INCREASES
CUSTOMER PRODUCTIVITY AND CONFIDENCE



A new idea...

When a VIP has an IT problem, everyone hears about it.

In 2010 our manager was new to her position. One of her first challenges was to address multiple complaints from one of our high-level executives.

When a VIP complains, he/she starts at the top. Managers don't want to hear about a problem from their boss, who heard about it from his boss, who heard about it from her boss and so on....

But, our new manager had an idea and selected a team to assess the feasibility of forming a specialized group dedicated to VIP support.

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Finding Precedent and Scoping Service

The team consisted of 2 Service Managers, 4 tenured field technicians and contractor management representatives.

At the time, we found one Gartner article suggesting that special executive IT support may be the way to go and we heard rumors that some other large companies were examining this model. It seemed like a good idea to us but did not appear to be prevalent.

Realizing that most of our top folks delegate, we surveyed their assistants who provided LOTS of feedback about past problems w/service, what they'd like to see in the future and who they felt should be covered by a specialized support team.



Sandia National Laboratories is a multi-program laboratory managed and operated by Sandia Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation, for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration under contract DE-AC04-94AL85000. SAND NO. 2011-0000XP

Customer Scope



Executives initially supported:

- VP's
- Deputies
- Executive Assistants
- Senior Management Assistants (as directed by Executive Assistants)
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Labs Director and his SMA

Service follows position, not machine. We support acting VP's and assistants filling in for EA's and SMA's.

Our President brought his own IT support from his prior position so he was out of scope at the start, but in our sights for the future.

Formation of Team



The EO Team was initially staffed with 4 technicians, quickly changing to 3. We realized 3 was a sufficient number and kept it that way (although at times we have been staffed with 2 technicians).

Regular backup techs were identified, as well as a plan to use the Service Desk Remote Assistance Support team for overflow calls should the group ever be short staffed.

All calls for EO Team to bypass traditional Service Desk as this was 'show stopper' for the executive customer group.

Logistics needs were assessed, transportation was procured and office space near the majority of our customers was acquired.

Dedicated phone line and queues were setup to be answered by EO Technicians.

Service request forms (Kinetics) were setup for direct customer submittal of tickets.

Deciding Which Services to Offer as a One Stop Shop

Since we wanted to resolve all our customer's issues rapidly, or even proactively before there are issues, and because support has been split into many individualized technical support groups, we wanted to form good relationships and learn from the other groups about supporting technologies besides the desktop.

In addition to PC and Mac support we offer support for:

- Mobile Devices (Blackberries, iPads, iPhones, MiFi hotspots)
- Skype calling and meeting facilitation in customer offices and remote venues
- Integration and installation of AV, skype cams, smartboards and other equipment in executive offices
- Guidance on accounts required and interface to Password Admin

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Deciding Which Services Not To Offer



In forming the team we considered offering unified support on many fronts and even contemplated custom tailored solutions for EO customers, but ultimately decided not to offer support for, or duplicate Enterprise level services for:

- Classified computing – Instead, we field customer calls and send them on for specialized support. We just don't have the volume of calls for this to make support worthwhile. We'd likely reconsider this if our customers' needs change in the future.
- Dedicated servers – We considered managing our own customer fileservers but given the drive for corporate server consolidation and increasing prevalence of corporate document management solutions such as SharePoint and EIMS, we decided against this.
- Laptops on Foreign Travel – LOFT is a specialized, very efficient team so we just defer to them for setup of loaner machines for our customers who travel internationally. We may take customer calls on this, but we escalate to LOFT.

Formation of the Team

Technician Skills needed



TECHNICAL APTITUDE

Helpdesk (Remote) & Onsite technical support

Tier III or Level 3 – Responsible for handling the most difficult (critical) or advance problems, research and development of solutions to new or unknown issues

MS Office 2010-2016, Windows, Macintosh, all mobile devices, collaboration environments such as Lync Rooms and Polycom videoconferencing/telecommunication rooms, networking issues, permission and account issues, data storage and hardware consultations, data management and migration, and much more.

REQUIREMENTS

Exceptional Customer Service

Communication- Team and customers, from onboarding to off boarding

Follow up – Confirm issues resolved

Five minute response time from the moment of notification

Upskill new EO staff

Keep abreast of change in lab's IT environment, attending meetings and participating on multiple teams

Lessons Learned



CHALLENGES

Scope of support – Courtesy support increases

Staffing team appropriately to provide technicians familiar to customer

Interfacing with other teams – Conveying urgency required for our customer base

ISSUES AVERTED

Onboarding process – Complete check list

Keep current model loaner machines ready to go

Keep spare parts for very mobile executives

Self reliance – Team maintains wide scope of knowledge

The Outcomes



WITH SPECIALIZED SUPPORT

High quality, timely end user support structured to anticipate customer needs

Dedicated IT support- familiar face

Increased customer satisfaction

Personalized service increases customer trust and confidence

Convenience/Approachable

Decreased work downtime

In-depth resolution

WITHOUT SPECIALIZED SUPPORT

Lost productivity

Impact on financial, political and community affairs

Negative customer experience

Unnecessary resources utilized as a result of high level complaints

Conclusion / Questions

