

Shere Ticketing Systems Keeps Client Machines Ticking Over with Hornbill's Supportworks



Business Benefits:

- Open architecture enables straightforward integration with additional client system monitoring solutions.
- Call tracking and logging enables swift escalation to field engineers if necessary.
- Call statistics enable service levels to meet strict SLAs.
- Information from Supportworks to handheld PDAs improves support engineers' productivity and efficiency.
- Trend and problem analysis ensures minimum system downtime for client machines.
- Reporting functionality enables clients to receive regular performance statistics reports.

Shere Booking and Ticketing Systems was founded in 1992 by its Directors Neil Briscoe and David Parson, with a vision of a self-service future for ticketing machines. Shere is now market leader with over 1200 self-service machines and desktop machines installed, nearly two-thirds of the total UK market.

Shere pioneered and developed the FAST range of self-service ticketing systems that are found in most railway stations in the UK. They supply bespoke machine versions to over 26 train operating companies and airlines, as well as specialist self-service reception kiosks for hotels.

For Shere, ensuring that its client machines are operational is a top priority. If a client's ticket machine goes down then this can mean significant loss of revenue, for all the time that the system is not working. It is vital that Shere can quickly identify potential problems and deal with them efficiently. The company has invested in Hornbill's Supportworks service desk management system to record, track and resolve such issues.

Streamlined Support Service

Supportworks is used by Shere to automatically capture, log and allocate problems to the service desk team, many of which are raised by the machines themselves. The software is used by over 16 support desk engineers to track calls at the support centre located in Guildford. The team are supporting more than 1200 machines installed at client sites nationwide. The machines connected to clients' own local networks use VPN technology to allow the machines to communicate directly with the support centre systems.

According to Dave Webster, Support Manager at Shere; "For our clients, being able to provide tickets and handle payments is a critical part of their business and the machines that we provide account for almost a billion pounds worth of business annually.

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Dave Webster
Support Manager
Shere Ticketing Systems

"Our core business is developing and providing self-service ticketing machines and we wanted to concentrate on this. We recognised that we required a reliable, efficient service management system to support our customers and rectify problems when they occur. Hornbill's Supportworks met with all our criteria."

Stringent SLAs

A key driver for Shere was being able to optimise its ability to meet and exceed its stringent Service Level and contractual obligations associated with each customer contract. The SLAs are specific to each client, with an SLA matrix automatically determining the severity, chargeability and regional allocation. It is important that any problems that arise with the machines are dealt with quickly, to avoid sometimes significant financial penalties being incurred by Shere for not meeting its agreed SLAs - Supportworks enables the IT team to do this.

"For the majority of our client train operators, most of their revenue is from our ticketing machines - they provide season tickets, railcards and even tickets on departure that are booked online. This means that it's important that we respond quickly should a ticket machine fail," explained Webster.

"Supportworks automatically alerts problems to our support team, which may be anywhere in the UK, from Aberdeen to Plymouth. The team either rectifies the problem remotely or if it requires a physical, hardware repair, an area supervisor is alerted who will contact the relevant engineer."

The customer support team resolves 60-70% calls remotely, and says Webster, over 50% calls are rectified on first contact. When a call cannot be resolved, the area supervisor is contacted who can access the details via a handheld PDA and send the location and nature of the problem to the nearest engineer. Once the support engineer has rectified the problem, he will then update and close the call remotely.

Customer Reports

"With Supportworks we are able to track and log every call, and generate reports which have been invaluable for trends and problem analysis. We also generate performance reports for clients, of which 70% of the data that we use comes from Hornbill's solution."

Supportwork's open architecture also enables easy integration with a client system monitoring solution, Insight. Insight provides a traffic light system (green, amber and red for critical) that alerts Shere to machine status, that is also linked to the Hornbill system. Shere's customers have access to this system which also collects data from Supportworks, so that customers can check the status of any faults logged or rectified.

"As a company we have three key objectives: our machines should require no manual intervention to remain in service, that each machine will vend a ticket 100% of the time - given the correct payment - and finally that each machine will vend any ticket or item in less than 30 seconds.

"Hornbill's solution is a flexible, reliable, efficient system that helps us to achieve this, and meet and exceed our SLAs," concluded Webster.

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