



CASE STUDY: PROXIM



RIGHTNOW HELPS WIRELESS LEADER PROXIM MAINTAIN COMPETITIVE EDGE WITH DIFFERENTIATED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, SUPERIOR CUSTOMER INSIGHT, AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

These days, technology markets become commodified very quickly. When standards are rapidly established and embraced by the industry, it gets harder to achieve competitive differentiation based on price or features. As a result, strongly bonded customer relationships are often the key to maintaining market leadership over the long haul.

That's why wireless networking powerhouse Proxim needed to take its CRM strategy to the next level. The rapid standardization of Wi-Fi technology meant the company had to out-service its competitors to stay on top. And it needed greater visibility into its customers' needs and behaviors to avoid potential attrition and erosion of its hard-won marketshare.

So Proxim did what so many other companies do when they need to quickly and substantially improve their customer-facing business processes: It turned to RightNow.

"Today's corporate customers are more demanding than ever before. They require access to information at their convenience—24 hours a day/7 days a week—and have little tolerance for delays, mistakes, or miscommunications," declares Ken Melrose, Proxim's eservice center/networking security manager. "With RightNow, we can be sure Proxim is effectively meeting those demands."

A Track Record with RightNow

Melrose knew that RightNow could help Proxim address its challenges because of his previous experiences implementing it at other companies, notably Cisco Systems. He knew that its rich features and customization capabilities would enable him and his team to create a world-class customer care environment specifically designed for Proxim's unique needs. He also knew that RightNow's on demand model would let him do so without wasting money on additional IT infrastructure or ongoing software management tasks.

RightNow even made it easy for Melrose to sell the RightNow concept to senior management. "RightNow created a demo site for us that clearly showed how the system would boost the responsiveness and consistency of our contact center operations," he says. "So we were able to get immediate approval and get the system live with our existing knowledge base within two months."

RightNow's web-based architecture allowed Proxim to provide a common customer care environment for its contact centers: the Tier 1 facility in Bangalore, India; the Tier 2 facility in Lancaster, CA; and the Tier 3 facility at the company's Sunnyvale, CA headquarters. This RightNow environment supports phone, email, and web channels in an integrated manner. It also provides the comprehensive rules-based workflow/escalation necessary to ensure incidents are handled in a timely and appropriate manner—as well as the reporting the company's managers require to pinpoint problems and opportunities for quality improvement.

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— Ken Melrose, eService Center/Networking Security Manager, Proxim Wireless

Industry: Telecommunications

Goals

- Rapidly improve service quality across all communication channels
- Cost-efficiently link three contact centers on two continents
- Ensure ability to evolve customer service capabilities over time

Achievements

- Achieved competitively differentiated customer experience in an increasingly commodified market
- 50% monthly cost reduction and while enhancing service team productivity
- RMA integration delivers greater efficiencies and more timely responses to customer needs

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Fast, Effective Implementation

Because RightNow is so easy to use, Proxim didn't have to spend a lot of time or money on end-user training. "We spent about an hour on the phone with our supervisor in Bangalore, similar to the train-the-trainer concept," Melrose recalls. "He then trained our staff over there, and we were in business. We used this approach throughout the organization."

Proxim began reaping the benefits promised by RightNow's solution immediately. The company's previous service tools did not provide much in the way of useful metrics, making it difficult to precisely quantify its gains. But there is no doubt the impact was rapid and significant. "For one thing, we didn't have customers calling or emailing our CEO anymore," notes Melrose. "For another, we had more than twice as many customers using our website to get answers to their questions. We realized a 50% monthly cost reduction and increased availability of customer service and support. RightNow also enabled us to provide web-based self-service, automated email response management, customer satisfaction metrics, and powerful reporting tools."

In fact, Proxim is now able to respond more quickly to customer inquiries across all channels. The answers it provides across those channels are consistent and accurate, thanks to the RightNow knowledge base that the company continues to grow and refine. And customers can quickly find a whole range of technical resources—including answers to common questions, helpful hints, and software updates—from a single, intuitive RightNow search page. Plus, by using RightNow's "Notify on Change" feature, Proxim customers automatically receive email notifications whenever any site content to which they've subscribed is updated.

Staying Close to the Customer

RightNow is also providing Proxim with greater visibility into its customers' needs and behaviors. Because RightNow captures all customer service interactions across all channels in a common database, Proxim managers can quickly determine what sorts of issues are of great concern to customers—so they can respond appropriately.

This is particularly important to a company like Proxim, which sells almost exclusively through distribution. "Service and support interactions are the best place for us to learn about who our customers are and how they're using our technology,"

explains Melrose. "The data that RightNow captures and the metrics it allows us to apply to that data are therefore of enormous strategic importance to us."

Proxim is taking advantage of RightNow's workflow management rules to deliver even more proactive and personalized service. For example, account representatives will be notified when their customers are asking for more help than usual. Selected accounts will also be "fast-tracked" through the system based on their service level agreement (SLA).

"Measures like these let the customer know that Proxim is paying close attention to them," says Melrose. "In a highly competitive market, that can make a real difference in long-term customer retention and revenue-generation opportunities."

Proxim has also integrated RightNow with its return merchandise authorization (RMA) system to make the process more efficient and respond more rapidly to its customers' needs.

"Integrating our RMA process into RightNow provides a single application/database for all RMA processing and related data. As a result, we have simplified the process, eliminating the need to deal with disparate systems, data formats, and lack of common reporting tools," says Melrose. "We can now record, track, trend, analyze, and report on all incoming RMA requests with a higher level of accuracy and efficiency," says Melrose.

Melrose notes that personalized, responsive customer care isn't just something that RightNow enables. It's also something it practices itself. "Even though RightNow continues to grow both in size and in the scope of its solutions, it has successfully maintained that small-company feel when it comes to supporting Proxim and caring for our technology and business needs," says Melrose. "We never feel like we're just a number with RightNow—which is not something I can say about the other software companies we've dealt with."

ABOUT PROXIM

Proxim Corporation is a global leader in wireless networking equipment for Wi-Fi and broadband wireless networks. The company provides enterprise and service provider customers with wireless solutions for the mobile enterprise, security and surveillance, last mile access, voice, and data backhaul, public hot spots, and metropolitan area networks. The company is publicly traded on the NASDAQ under the symbol PROX.