

## Apex IT Helps Cherokee Nation Enterprises Create A PeopleSoft CRM Service Desk Solution That Meets Unique Gaming Industry Needs

### Background

Cherokee Nation Enterprises (CNE) is a rising star in the Indian gaming industry. Headquartered in the northeastern Oklahoma city of Tahlequah, CNE operates four Class II Indian casinos and several retail stores. Already one of northeast Oklahoma's largest employers, CNE is growing rapidly. Net revenues, the bulk of which come from electronic gaming machines, tripled over the last three years. CNE broke ground for a new casino and hotel complex in the summer of 2002. A championship-level golf course was opened July 2004. CNE generates millions for Cherokee Nation education, health care, housing and tribal community services.

### The business depends on IT

CNE's IT department, called Technical Services and Employee Solutions, plays an unusually large role in keeping the business healthy. That's because electronic gaming machines—essentially PCs with dollar bill acceptors, touch screens and other added gaming features—generate the lion's share of CNE's revenues. Currently, CNE has more than 2,200 machines on its casino floors. New machines are installed virtually every day. Technical Services and Employee Solutions provides the help desk support that keeps the machines running smoothly. Given the number of computers (both electronic gaming machines and conventional computers) CNE operates, it's a monumental task. In 2003, the department closed more than 7,500 help desk cases—a 21 percent increase over the previous year.

Not surprisingly, CNE has weighed carefully the kind of IT infrastructure it needs to support its growing operations. That's why it turned to PeopleSoft's CRM Help Desk solution last year. CNE's objectives included:

- Transforming its existing help desk approach into a full-fledged service desk. CNE's new service desk approach, based on emerging industry best practices, will consolidate business processes and applications involved in tracking, escalation and resolution of end-user issues.
- Developing a new streamlined, uniform and largely automated business process for change management.
- Giving CNE's Gaming Services Department access to the new system via handheld devices. CNE projected that by allowing technicians to access Service Desk functions and log, track and troubleshoot problems, the new system would cut machine downtime in half. That would generate an additional \$400,000 in revenues per year and



### Customer

Cherokee Nation Enterprises

### Industry

Hospitality/Gaming/Casino

### Business Challenge

Creating an IT support infrastructure for a fast-growing tribal gaming business that enables 99.55 percent uptime of more than 2,000 electronic gaming devices

### Apex IT Solution

- Business process re-engineering consulting
- Application Integration Methodology
- PeopleSoft CRM Help Desk customization, including development of wireless handheld device interface

### PeopleSoft Applications

- PeopleSoft 8.8 CRM Help Desk
- Employee Self-Service

### Results

- \$400,000 in additional revenue annually, thanks to increased gaming machine uptime
- ROI of a little more than a year
- Significantly faster issue resolution and a decrease in re-opened tickets
- Foundation laid for unified and streamlined change management process



produce a payback for the new system in little over a year.

It was a tall order, and CNE knew it couldn't do it alone. "We needed a leader in the CRM marketplace who could really help us look at our internal processes," says Aaron Bean, CNE's Manager of Technical Services and Employee Solutions. "We also needed a company that worked closely with PeopleSoft and understood everything there is to know about PeopleSoft software. After doing our homework, everything came up Apex IT."

### **An enlightening partnership**

Apex IT has completed more than 150 PeopleSoft CRM engagements for clients in a wide cross-section of industries. This experience helped Apex IT put

together a team that quickly helped CNE translate its business objectives into functional specifications for the new service desk system.

The first step was a "fit/gap" analysis, a comprehensive audit of CNE's legacy IT infrastructure, which identified the specific issues that needed to be addressed during the implementation. Next, the Apex IT and CNE team followed Apex IT's proven Application Implementation Methodology (AIM), a flexible, field-tested, best-practices-based methodology that was easily modified to meet CNE's needs.

"Working with Apex IT was enlightening," says Bean. "It was interesting to see their approach to service delivery and how they applied it to the gaming industry, which has a unique set of requirements." Perhaps the biggest advantage of working with Apex IT stems from its close partnership with PeopleSoft, Bean says. "They know where PeopleSoft and the CRM industry are heading," Bean says. "This helped ensure we spent our money in the wisest way."

### **Keeping the casino floors humming**

CNE went live with the new system in late Spring, 2004. Success will be measured on two fronts. On the back-end, CNE's Technical Service and Employee Support function is facing a growing service desk workload as the business rapidly expands. The new PeopleSoft CRM applications will make it possible to close issues faster and more successfully. Already, the number of re-opened tickets has declined significantly.

In the casinos themselves, the all-important objective is decreasing gaming machine downtime, a crucial component of Apex IT's customization work. CNE is confident that success here will lead to fast return on investment.

At CNE, IT support can make or break the business. With help from Apex IT, CNE's Technical Services and Employee Solutions Department is more than ready to meet the challenges of growth and change in the years ahead.



**860 Blue Gentian Road  
Suite 200  
Eagan, Minnesota 55121  
phone: 651.287.2820  
fax: 651.287.2821  
[www.apexit.com](http://www.apexit.com)**