

## Apex IT CRM Roadmap Puts Hughes Network Systems on the Road to Success

### Background

Hughes Network Systems (HNS) takes customer relationship management seriously. Considering the technical complexity of its product line, that's a sound business strategy. HNS is the world leader in broadband satellite network solutions. Its customers include teleworkers, Internet Service Providers, end consumers and large businesses in multiple industries. The company's larger customers might have hundreds or even thousands of locations connected by an HNS system. In all, HNS has more than 600,000 systems installed in 85 countries.

### #1 customer touch point

A CRM interface, whether at a call center with a live customer service agent, or through a web-based customer self-service application, "is our number one touch point with customers," explains Steve Finley, senior director in HNS's IT Group. Consequently, Finley says, HNS pays an extraordinary amount of attention to fine-tuning its customer support systems to ensure fast and efficient service.

Originally, Vantive's suite of CRM applications met these needs. HNS installed its first Vantive system in 1999 and subsequently implemented multiple, highly customized Vantive systems for several different business lines. Presently, the applications are used by over 7,000 named users, with concurrent usage of over 700 users during peak times. Apex IT, one of the first CRM consultancies to specialize in Vantive implementations, was selected by HNS as a Strategic Alliance Partner.

Two years ago, HNS began migrating to PeopleSoft's 8.4 and later 8.8 Enterprise CRM solutions, largely because support and maintenance for Vantive would eventually be discontinued after PeopleSoft's acquisition of the company. HNS also needed to replace separate call center support systems with a consolidated enterprise-wide solution.

Given the high degree of customization of its Vantive systems and the extensive investment this work represented, migrating to PeopleSoft wasn't a step HNS took lightly. In fact, HNS knew it would be a massive undertaking and suspected it might take several years. That's why it turned to Apex IT once again as a Strategic Alliance Partner for the PeopleSoft implementation. "From time to time, we have looked at other alliance partners," says Finley, "but we always come back to Apex IT. We need a partner that really understands customer service and customer relationship management, as well as our unique business processes. No one beats Apex IT in these areas."



### Customer

Hughes Network Systems

### Industry

Broadband satellite service

### Business Challenge

Replacing several extensively customized Vantive help desk and CRM systems with PeopleSoft CRM 8.8, ensuring consistent functionality and migrating massive amounts of customer data.

### Apex IT Services

- Extensive experience with both Vantive and PeopleSoft CRM implementations
- Comprehensive roadmap for multi-year, multi-phase project
- Business process consulting and fit/gap analysis
- Technical specialization in application messaging, component interfaces, data conversion and other areas
- Ongoing project implementation and customization support

### Results

- Roadmap serves as detailed implementation guide, establishes business expectations and wins senior management support
- Fit/gap analyses and extensive knowledge of PeopleSoft functionality reduces project risk and speeds up implementation
- Technical expertise ensures functionality of successful original application is duplicated
- As much as a 50 percent reduction in implementation cycle times



## Roadmap for success

First Apex IT developed a roadmap that defined all business objectives for the project and broke down the project into logical phases. This turned out to be a smart move, Finley says. For one thing, the roadmap made it clear to upper management and business units that the implementation would be no trivial undertaking. “People tend to want everything done in a couple of months,” Finley says. “The roadmap helped set expectations and demonstrate how we were doing things, how long it would take and why.”

The roadmap was extremely well-received by senior managers and helped ensure their buy-in. Some senior managers commented that it was the best documentation they had ever seen from a consulting company, which helped make the job of the IT team easier.

Following the success of the roadmap, Apex IT worked with HNS on fit/gap analysis of PeopleSoft functionality, business requirements for each phase of the project and concrete implementation plans. The first phase of the project, completed in 2002, was the implementation of PeopleSoft CRM Help Desk 8.4. In 2003, HNS started migrating CRM case management to PeopleSoft Support 8.8 in its Network Operations Center. In late 2004, HNS will have all case processing migrated from Vantive to PeopleSoft. By 2005, HNS hopes to have all customer service functionality migrated to PeopleSoft and to have implemented PeopleSoft’s Field Service 8.8 application.

## Half the time and less risk

Finley is proud of his IT team at HNS and feels that HNS could probably have undertaken the migration largely on its own—only it might have taken 50 percent more time and greatly increased its risk.

Where does the risk come in? “When it comes to CRM and PeopleSoft, Apex IT has the knowledge and experience base no one else has,” says Finley. That means Apex IT knows what works and what doesn’t, Finley says, and brings that field-tested experience into the design process. “When you try to do something like this yourself, the risk comes in making assumptions and design considerations without as much knowledge of the software package and how it works in the real world.”

Apex IT also accelerates the implementation process and reduces risk further thanks to its technical skills, Finley says. PeopleSoft CRM is both extremely capable and extremely complex, Finley notes. Implementing it requires a degree of technical specialization that virtually no company has on its own. “Apex IT has people who are specialized in PeopleSoft application messaging, component interfaces, data conversion and other areas,” Finley says. That’s essential, he adds, to meeting project timelines and budgets.



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