



Improving the Management of IT-Related Sarbanes-Oxley Compliance and Technical Support

Headquartered in Canton, NC, Evergreen Packaging™ – Blue Ridge Division is a leading producer of commercial printing, writing papers, liquid packaging and coated bleached board for food service packaging. Founded in 1905, the company has six facilities located across five states.

The Challenge

Implement a solution to comply with SOX, and track work orders more efficiently

Similar to its peers, Evergreen Packaging – Blue Ridge Division was affected by the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act of 2002, which requires an audit trail of IT-related change processes for certain core business applications. To comply with the internal control requirements of the SOX Act, they sought a service desk solution that could be used primarily for IT-related SOX compliance.

In addition to SOX, the company required a service desk solution that could serve as a central repository for all incoming IT service and support inquiries from its employees. It needed a centralized system to track and manage all service desk activities that could be accessed and shared by agents located across six facilities in five states.

In the past, they created a database, using Microsoft® Access, to manage its IT service and support requests. This homegrown system could not keep pace with the company's changing business requirements. The system offered limited capabilities for agents to collaborate and view open trouble-tickets and requests, making it easy for issues to fall through the cracks.

The Solution

Replace a homegrown system with a 100% web-based solution implemented in days

Evergreen Packaging – Blue Ridge Division evaluated a number of different solutions prior to choosing Numara® FootPrints®. Following up on recommendations from its sales group, the company reviewed ACT as well as a product from Salesforce.com®.

IN BRIEF

Industry
Manufacturing

Challenge

Comply with internal control requirements of the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act; centrally manage all incoming IT service and support inquiries from employees; and share information among 6 locations across 5 states

Solutions

- Numara FootPrints
- Numara FootPrints Change Management

Business Application

- SOX tracking
- Centralized IT service desk
- Product development
- Human resources
- Sales tracking

Key Features

- 100% web-based
- Knowledge base
- Multi-project setup
- Escalation of issues
- Comprehensive reporting

Benefits

- Proactively manage IT-related SOX compliance
- Improved first-call resolution
- Cost savings of nearly \$350,000
- Improved workflow and collaboration among employees
- Ability to access employee information on the fly
- Ability to access status of an issue in a matter of seconds
- Ability to share information across multiple locations

However, no product provided them with as many features and as much functionality as Numara FootPrints. Numara FootPrints offers a 100% web-based platform to automate service desk and customer support operations, as well as other business-critical processes.

According to Greg Bridges, Business Systems Coordinator, the Numara FootPrints deployment was completed in a matter of minutes. Once installed, Mr. Bridges and his team customized the system with drop-down menus and fields based on their workflow processes. The system was rolled-out to users and fully live within days. The company officially started using Numara FootPrints in April of 2005.

“We were initially attracted to the comprehensive feature set, 100% web-based capability, multi-project support, and low cost of ownership of Numara FootPrints,” explained Mr. Bridges. “This product was exactly what we were looking for.”

Key Features

Ability to manage SOX compliance and many critical business processes

Evergreen Packaging – Blue Ridge Division purchased Numara FootPrints primarily for IT-related tracking for SOX compliance. As Mr. Bridges evaluated the full capabilities of the solution, he quickly realized its versatility for other IT-related project initiatives.

Today, they have created nine projects within Numara FootPrints, taking advantage of the system’s multi-project capability which can be uniquely customized. The company is utilizing the tool for SOX tracking, IT service desk operations, sales tracking, human resources, and more.

“One major thing that Numara FootPrints has done is given us the capability to track and manage all service requests in one centralized location, so that issues do not fall through the cracks. Having all of this information available in one location, accessible via the web, allows agents to access it from remote locations. With many different facilities, this is a huge advantage for our company, as our previous system could not easily scale.”

Greg Bridges
 Business Systems Coordinator
 Evergreen Packaging

Easily manage SOX compliance

Addressing its main priority, IT-related SOX compliance, the company also integrated Numara FootPrints Change Management, an add-on tool designed to automate all types of change and approval processes. With this solution, the company tracks all IT-related changes made to core applications that require a paper trail for SOX compliance. This includes step-by-step change requests and multiphase processes that require voting and other approvals.

For SOX, when a project reaches a certain status, Numara FootPrints sends a voting slip via email to the appropriate individuals that are eligible to vote, and tracks the entire process thread. Voters can then sign off and note that they are aware of the new project. The company can fully document these processes and change requests using the system’s comprehensive reporting capabilities.

“Our first step in implementing the Numara FootPrints Change Management tool was to identify the risks we were faced with as an IT group as it relates to SOX compliance,” stated Mr. Bridges. “We then wrote policies on how we would mitigate and handle such risks and implemented a series of processes to eliminate vulnerability points. Through the functionality of Numara FootPrints Change Management, we have mapped our processes to the system and are now able to create and escalate tickets to the person or persons authorized to handle change requests as they arise.”

IT service desk that allows submissions through multiple channels

In terms of their IT service desk, the company, through Numara FootPrints, now has the capability to track and manage all service and support requests submitted by 2,200 employees. Approximately 1,000 trouble-tickets are logged in the IT service desk project each month.

Most trouble-tickets are submitted via phone, but Numara FootPrints allows employees to request help through multiple channels, including email, web, live chat, and wireless devices. Using the system’s knowledge base functionality, agents have access to similar issues and how they were resolved in the past, improving the speed of the support experience.

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“The fact that we’ve more than doubled our level one problem resolution management is really a testament to the functionality, ease-of-use, and flexibility of Numara FootPrints,” stated Mr. Bridges. “Everyone here really enjoys using the product and, as a result, we see improvements throughout our entire company.”

Multiple business process management

Other projects that are set-up within Numara FootPrints include a product development project, a human resources (HR) project, and a sales tracking project. In terms of product development, the company tracks and manages resale opportunities for damaged paper, as well as niche areas for market development within this one project.

In the company’s HR project, after an employee leaves the company, all of the necessary information is logged and tracked within Numara FootPrints. For example, accounts are closed, all departments are notified, and information is tracked instantly within Numara FootPrints, avoiding any risk of broaching compliance.

Automation of document approval that saves time

Bridge’s team is always finding new ways to use Numara FootPrints. They recently leveraged Numara FootPrints Change Management add-on to automate a document approval workflow. Previously, paper forms for corrective action, returned goods authorization, and request for credit had to be passed among up to seven people for signatures. Bridges says this was a time consuming process.

The company eliminated the paper forms by creating appropriate Numara FootPrints fields. Request for credit was assigned to its own project, and data entry interfaces for the other two forms were both contained in another project. When any of these forms is now requested, an agent enters the data directly into Numara FootPrints, which then initiates an approval process. The Numara FootPrints Change Management add-on module automatically routes the digital form to the assigned approver, who can then decide whether to accept. "It's soft dollars but it saved an enormous amount of time for people who no longer have to walk to different areas on the plant floor," said Bridges.

Results

Cost savings of \$350,000 and improved business processes – Numara FootPrints has enabled Mr. Bridges and his team to proactively manage the company's SOX compliance initiatives and IT support operations.

"In terms of SOX, there have been a number of benefits to our organization, including our ability to completely control and manage all IT related changes," stated Mr. Bridges. "Now, if or when we are audited, we can simply run a series of reports within Numara FootPrints and all of our policies, procedures, and changes are fully documented, making the organization extremely transparent for SOX compliance."

Another noticeable benefit of deploying the system has been the increase in first call resolution rates. In the past, its previous Access-based system resolved between 20-30% of its issues on the first call. Now, with Numara FootPrints, they have more than doubled that number, resolving 60-70% of issues on the first call.

In terms of cost savings, they have saved approximately \$350,000 since they deployed Numara FootPrints. "We came up with this number because we were going to invest \$145,000 in a CRM project and our HR department was going to purchase, implement, and support a separate software system that cost around \$200,000," explained Mr. Bridges.

"Instead, we bought a couple hundred licenses of Numara FootPrints and the system's flexibility has allowed us to manage these projects plus others, further extending the ROI of this technology platform, while giving us room for growth."

Better communication and collaboration

The company has also seen an improvement in communication, overall workflow, business processes, and collaboration among agents and employees spanning multiple locations. With Numara FootPrints, agents can now share information across the company regardless of where they are located, greatly improving productivity.

Exciting plans for the future

Going forward, they plan to expand their implementation of Numara FootPrints by integrating it with an existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and other databases. The company also hopes to utilize the system for external customer support and for other HR-related processes.

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Business Systems Coordinator
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Who are we?

Numara Software is a leading provider of integrated IT management solutions for Desktop Management, PC Lifecycle Management, Security & Compliance, Help Desk and Service Desk. Designed to optimize IT management, Numara FootPrints and Numara Track-It! collectively support more than 50,000 customer sites and nearly 20 million IT assets worldwide.

