

# Vancouver Coastal Health

Standardizing help desk incident management reduces costs by over \$4,000 per month, slashes time to resolution, improves clinician support



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“HP Service Manager is the foundation through which we’ve been able to implement ITIL. We’ve reduced costs and we’re better able to support the clinical processes fundamental to delivering high standards of patient care.”  
—Peggy Snelling, regional manager for IT Client Support Services, Vancouver Coastal Health

**HP customer case study:** Implementing HP Service Manager enables standardized help desk processes, significant cost reductions

**Industry:** Healthcare

### Objective:

Improved ability to process support requests efficiently and cost-effectively

### Approach:

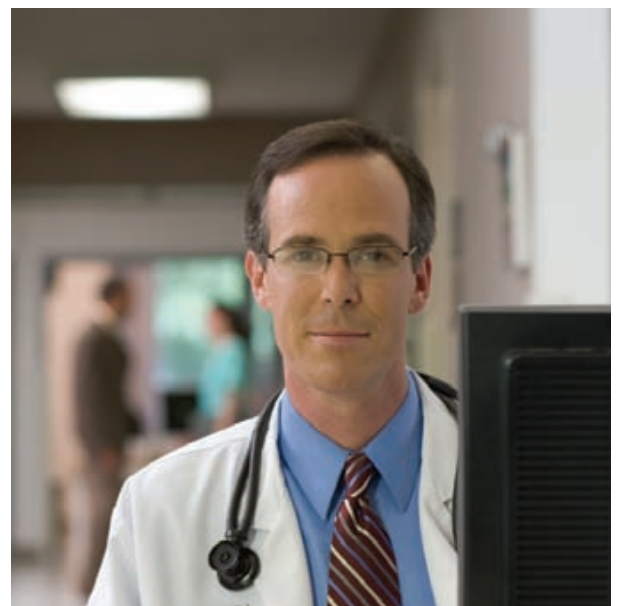
Consolidate disparate support organizations under a single, standardized, ITIL-based help desk tool

### IT improvements:

- Implementation completed in under four months
- Time to resolution decreased from days to minutes
- Time to acquire new hardware or software reduced 75%, reducing request backlog 70%
- Account management first call resolution rates increased 300%, the resolution time reduced from days to minutes, saving at least \$4,000 per month
- Help desk procedures, escalations better defined and easier to implement

### Business outcomes:

- Support processes standardized, improving the support experience and thus increasing customer satisfaction
- Minimized downtime due to lower resolution times provides clinicians maximum access to the technology systems they need to do their jobs
- Streamlined technology acquisition for greater clinician productivity



Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), one of British Columbia’s six regional health authorities, was formed in 2001 by consolidating some 50 different healthcare systems in British Columbia.

By consolidating these disparate systems at VCH—which comprise 14 hospital/acute care sites, 90 community care sites, 9,000 acute, rehabilitation and residential beds, with a total of over 500 locations—it laid a foundation for improved efficiency, productivity, and standards of care.

To ensure the success of the consolidation, however, the IT support processes needed to be seamlessly integrated. That’s why VCH chose HP Service Manager software to create an enterprise help desk infrastructure.

### Fast track to mature processes

When VCH was first created, its technology infrastructure was supported by six different help desk organizations, explains Peggy Snelling, regional manager for IT Client Support Services, VCH. Each of these organizations maintained its own help desk applications. “There was no cohesive vision for how to deliver IT support,” Snelling says. “It was an unsustainable situation.”

Snelling knew that VCH needed to adopt one standard for its help desk operations—and that the model needed to adhere to the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework. But she initially reserved judgment on what the platform should be. “I gave our regional support team responsibility for picking the tool,” she explains, “since they are the ones who have to use and evangelize it.”

To avoid getting bogged down in a lengthy RFP process, VCH short-listed the available options to three applications already implemented within the organization including a legacy HP help desk application, HP Service Desk, and two other industry-leading help desk tools. After narrowing the selection down to HP and one other vendor—selected because the two vendors’ products were ITIL compliant—Snelling gathered a team of 20 stakeholders into a room to make the final decision.

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*“To be frank, I bet everything on this project. Thanks to HP, it was a bet that paid off.”*

Peggy Snelling, regional manager for IT Client Support Services, Vancouver Coastal Health

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After a day-long deliberation, the team decided on HP Service Manager. “HP Service Manager had the functionality we needed,” Snelling says. In addition, the software’s processes are ITIL-based, which would fast-track VCH’s adoption of ITIL best practices. “It would give us, from day one, a more mature, integrated set of processes than anything we had previously.” Another important benefit of HP Service Manager is that it required no customization to meet the best practices standards to which VCH aspired. “We knew that an out-of-the-box solution would be easiest to implement and least costly to support in the future.”

Implementing HP Service Manager also allowed VCH to better support our shared services model to help it deliver technology services across its customer base.



### Outstanding technical competence

Snelling’s next task was to get the new platform implemented. To meet budgetary and bandwidth constraints, they decided to implement Incident Management running on an HP ProLiant BL460c G1 Server. The software is integrated with VCH’s network management solution, HP Network Node Manager, so that alerts generated by that software are automatically integrated into Service Manager tickets.

HP Software Professional Services assisted with the implementation; Snelling credits their help with keeping the project on track. “The technical competence of the HP people was outstanding,” she says. “We couldn’t have done it without them.”

HP was also highly responsive when the situation required extra bandwidth. VCH runs all its applications under VMware, for instance, but at the time, Service Manager had never been deployed in a virtualized environment. HP rallied to the challenge, Snelling recalls. “They brought resources to bear like we’d never seen before.” At one point, the implementation encountered issues; HP responded by adding resources and performing a detailed assessment of the entire architecture. Yet, Snelling adds, “to HP’s credit, they never asked us for a change order or to bill us more and they kept us on schedule. Their attitude was that they were going to work with us to make the implementation a success.”

Snelling also appreciated that HP’s senior executives kept abreast of the implementation. “It was very

reassuring to me that HP understood what was at stake," she says. "We're not used to getting that kind of attention from vendors. HP was phenomenal."

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The implementation was completed in less than four months. "We couldn't have met our timeline without HP," Snelling says. Because many stakeholders were completely new to the software, knowledge transfer was another critical aspect of the deployment. "We had to learn the application," Snelling says. "HP helped us negotiate the learning curve."

#### **Requisition times cut from 16 weeks to 4**

Since completing the implementation, VCH has achieved a number of critical process improvements. Support processes are now standardized. "We have a library of searchable templates that define support processes across our entire organization," Snelling says. Each document details the support a given situation requires, including triage procedures. In addition, steps that were people-based are now role-based. This eliminates what was once a source of inefficiencies: help desk employees initiating an escalation, for instance, can do so even if a particular individual is out sick or on vacation, because they can identify a suitable substitute by role.

Another benefit is streamlined technology acquisitions. In the past, it took as long as 16 weeks for VCH employees to purchase new hardware or software. Today it takes around four, a 75% reduction. "Previously, people submitted requests by email or fax," Snelling says. "The request would then be entered into two separate databases. Confirmations were sent by email. If you didn't receive a confirmation, you had to follow up by email to see if the order was being processed."

## Customer solution at a glance

### **Primary applications**

Help desk standardization

### **Primary hardware**

- HP ProLiant BL460c G1 Server

### **Primary software**

- HP Service Manager software
- VMware

### **HP Services**

- HP Software Professional Services

The process was cumbersome and overwhelmed the technology acquisitions group, Snelling continues. "In one of their databases, they had a backlog of 5,000 requests. Even if they were able to find a request, the data was so out-of-date it was useless."

Today, VCH uses Service Manager's Incident Management tools to track acquisition requests. Every request is referenced by a single ticket number; anyone with a question can easily check the ticket's status. "When we got the group's backlog down to 1,500 requests, they thought they'd died and gone to heaven," Snelling says.

#### **Significant improvements to first point resolution rates**

HP Service Manager enables VCH to better understand its support needs and pinpoint issues that needed to be addressed. "Our help desk organization fields 11,000 calls per month," Snelling says. "Service Manager gave us the visibility to understand that 40% of these calls were related to account management." This was an important bit of insight, Snelling continues, because requests for password resets or to create or delete accounts were often routed to third-party analysts. These analysts, by contract, bill at 2-hour minimum call increments—and the calls often required multiple hand-offs, each of which would trigger another \$160 minimum charge. "In one weekend alone, one staff member handled 22 page outs," Snelling says. "It not only cost us 22 hours of double time, it also meant she wasn't getting any sleep."

So VCH decided to change its process for this class of calls and route them to internal help desk staff. "Our help desk in our main hospital in Vancouver now functions as a central service desk for after hours calls," Snelling explains. Not only is this less expensive—saving VCH at least \$4,000 per month in third-party support charges—it has also increased

the first point resolution rate of account management calls from under 20% to 80%. The new process often reduces time-to-resolution as well: instead of taking 24 to 48 hours to create a new account, for instance, it can be accomplished in a few minutes.

More streamlined help desk processes also reduce the risk that clinicians will be hampered by technical issues. "Reducing time-to-resolution helps ensure our clinicians have access to our technology systems when they need them," Snelling says.

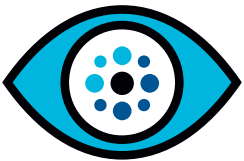
HP Service Manager's reporting capabilities have also improved VCH's ability to comply with audit requests. "Before, it was difficult for us to even supply complete audit trails," Snelling says. "Now we can respond quickly and tailor reports to the auditor's specifications."

It's functionality like this—functionality that improves processes as well as the quality of VCH help desk services—that characterize the benefits VCH has achieved by implementing HP Service Manager.

Snelling brings this point home with a telling anecdote that illustrates how widespread an impact the software has had. "When I took over this project, our CIO at the time told me that he'd judge its success by how many escalation calls he was receiving," she says. "Then, some time after we'd completed the deployment, he asked me if I'd changed his phone number."

He'd been getting one to six escalations a week. Now he was getting none.

"To be frank, I bet everything on this project," Snelling concludes. "Thanks to HP, it was a bet that paid off."



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