

## case study: hosting

# Verizon Leverages Expertise to Enhance Hosting Offering

**Verizon utilizes its hosting in-house expertise to deliver a robust customer portal that empowers hosting clients, streamlines technical support, and enables site engineers to shift their focus from infrastructure maintenance to the development of robust features that meet customer needs.**

### Company Background and Industry

Unprecedented mergers, consolidation, and financial restructuring have changed the landscape of the telecommunications industry. Globalization is heating up competition, and deregulation will have a continual effect on the telecom sector worldwide. In addition, advances in telecom technology are continuing at a rapid rate. In order to succeed in the volatile and fast-paced telecommunications industry, Verizon must continually focus on streamlining operations, reducing their cost structure, and enhancing solution offerings for their customer base.

### Key Business Challenges

One of the keys to Verizon's ongoing success has been its ability to proactively identify customers' evolving business needs and leverage emerging technologies to meet and exceed expectations. As both the hosting customer base and product set grew, the technical support desk came under increasing strain. Resources were being pulled away from strategic support functions to handle routine tasks, such as rebooting servers, managing load balancing, and updating account information. Also, while customers embraced outsourcing, they still wanted to maintain a degree of control over their hosted environment. Verizon saw an opportunity to streamline support operations, optimize technical support, and enhance the functionality of their hosting product set. The organization began to tap into their own hosting resources to design a solution that could provide customers with instant access to information they needed to control hosting operations around the clock.

### The Solution

With more than a decade of experience in hosting complex web-enabled applications, Verizon utilized in-house hosting expertise to develop Client Central, an easy-to-use, self-service customer portal that enables customers to view, interact, and manage critical information about their managed site 24x7. The Client Central customer portal contains robust features that enable customers to access information about how their site is operating and scaling to handle site traffic. Hosting clients can customize their own view, as well as create a dashboard that focuses on their individual business needs and preferences. Users can perform a variety of self-service tasks, such as opening and monitoring trouble tickets, managing load balancing, rebooting servers, and adding or removing authorized users. Critical site information, including back-up history, firewall rule sets, server utilization metrics, and bandwidth utilization can be accessed in real-time and exported for further analysis and distribution.

The site is supported and maintained by a dedicated team of software developers that deliver six new Client Central software releases each year. While customers can purchase advanced performance reporting and value-added services, basic Client Central functions are provided to Verizon hosting customers free of charge.

### business challenges

- Streamline operations
- Enhance solution offerings
- Retain customer base and attract new clients
- Reduce total cost of ownership

### network solution

- Verizon Hosting Services
- Client Central Customer Portal

### business value

- **Optimize.** Streamlined technical support resources, while improving operational efficiencies
- **Grow.** Provided a flexible, scalable solution to support future growth
- **Succeed.** Empowered customers to control their hosting operations around the clock

## hosting

A valuable feature that has enhanced efficiencies for both hosting customers and Verizon support teams is the ability to manage data center access lists in real-time. When conducted manually, this process requires a phone call to the Verizon technical support team, and a signed authorization must be faxed to the data center. As a result, vendors and new employees can be granted instant access to the data center, thereby avoiding delays that could temporarily hold up accessibility to mission-critical applications.

The customer portal is hosted in one of Verizon's Smart Center locations. State-of-the-art Smart Centers provide tiered access to sensitive areas, and entry points are secured by keycards and biometric palm readers. Full back-up capabilities are standard, and surveillance systems with fixed and roving security guards provide the security necessary to host the Verizon Client Central site.

Since Client Central is hosted within Verizon, the portal contains the same high-quality standards consistent with Verizon's managed hosting service. Client Central's infrastructure always has the latest recommended application upgrades and patches, and the site is backed up on a daily basis. The entire infrastructure is monitored 24x7 to proactively identify any performance issues and ensure that Client Central scales to meet growing customer demand. Smart Networking Services give Client Central cost-effective load balancing and firewall protection. Along with security, Verizon Hosting Services provide the reliability, flexibility, and scalability necessary to support the fluctuating bandwidth needs of a growing number of portal users.

### Results and Next Steps

Over 2,000 Verizon Hosting Services customers currently utilize Client Central to view critical information and control hosting operations around the clock. By leveraging over a decade of hosting expertise, Verizon has empowered customers with the tools they need to monitor their site, analyze trends, and make better business decisions regarding their site operations and growth. By using their own services to host the Client Central site, Verizon can provide the security, scalability, and reliability necessary to ensure the portal meets their hosting customers' growing needs.

In addition to providing value to their customer base, Verizon has been able to streamline in-house technical resources and reduce the costs associated with performing routine account management tasks for hosting customers. According to Joe Crawford, Verizon Vice President of Hosting Center of Excellence, "Client Central is an excellent example where Verizon has leveraged our own world-class facilities and hosting management expertise to help enhance the security, availability, and performance of the Client Central site. By empowering our hosting customers with access to critical information about their online operations, we have enhanced our hosting portfolio and helped reduce technical support costs."

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