



RightStar Systems Success Story: CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

With over 3 million members and 5,400 employees, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield is the largest health care insurer in the Mid-Atlantic region. Having received seven consecutive national Brand Excellence awards, recognizing its customer service, financial strength, membership growth, and promotion of the Blue name, it's not surprising that CareFirst has more than 80 percent of all the Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia region's health care providers participating in one or more of its provider networks.

CareFirst's Challenge

With thousands of employees and a complex IT infrastructure, CareFirst relies heavily on its service desk. Nearly ten years ago, RightStar consultants installed *Magic Help Desk* to replace a mainframe-based system and centralize IT support for CareFirst. Since that time, BMC Software purchased *Magic Help Desk*, making considerable improvements, significantly enhancing its capabilities, and renaming the product *Service Desk Express (SDE)*. CareFirst found itself with the sizable task of upgrading to BMC's *Service Desk Express 9*. By deploying a service desk solution that could provide a *single source of truth*, they hoped to eliminate technical failures responsible for costly workflow interruptions and integrate their other data sources so information could be shared anywhere within the enterprise.

The Solution

CareFirst chose RightStar Systems to handle the upgrade from *Magic Help Desk* to *Service Desk Express*. "Since we decided to work directly with RightStar, there's been no lack of projects for RightStar to assist us with," says Bob Ketchum, CareFirst's Help Desk Manager. Scheduling time to perform the upgrade was the first challenge

to be addressed. Integrated with four essential systems, *Magic* was an essential part of CareFirst's day-to-day operations. Loss of access to *Magic* would cause a "downstream" of adverse consequences for several teams within the organization. This left odd windows of opportunity for project deployment. Fortunately, RightStar provides its customers the flexibility they need to keep operations moving. "RightStar works with us to accommodate our scheduling concerns, even when that means nights and weekends," says Mr. Ketchum. Secondly, upgrading a system that had been in use for several years is not without challenges. RightStar helped CareFirst deploy a number of new forms, configurations, and business rules into the new *Service Desk Express* system. In addition, RightStar helped evaluate homegrown and stand-alone tools, eliminating those where *SDE* was a more productive and cost-efficient solution.



CareFirst is a true believer in *Service Desk Express* as well as RightStar's ability to optimize the many improved service features BMC has built into the product. For example, with SDE's new Integration Engine, RightStar was able to help CareFirst seamlessly automate the capture of external system events and alerts from three separate sources. In addition, RightStar's expertise with IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices for IT service management—all RightStar consultants are ITIL certified—and *SDE 9's* inherent ITIL focus has enabled CareFirst to appreciate the advantage that *SDE* and ITIL collectively give them.

Benefits to CareFirst

With a fully integrated, single-source service desk solution in use, CareFirst is able to respond quickly to user requests, precisely track assigned tasks for their technicians from the opening of the ticket to completion, realize fewer communication errors through the sharing of information within the enterprise, and more easily track and manage assets. "We're certainly doing things, as an IT organization, that are smarter and better with *SDE*. We've decreased the time it takes to resolve critical business-impacting events within a highly complex environment," says Mr. Ketchum. With RightStar's guidance, CareFirst is exploring the opportunity to migrate their Service Request process from a homegrown system to *Service Desk Express*, providing additional benefits to the organization. RightStar's integration of this process will allow CareFirst to eliminate the administration of a separate system, incorporate Service Request tasks into the technicians' existing work queues, and consolidate the management and reporting of IT work assignments. CareFirst is also able to take

advantage of the many continuing education opportunities RightStar provides to its customers at no cost, including local user group membership and Web-based seminar participation.

When asked about CareFirst's satisfaction with RightStar, Mr. Ketchum said, "RightStar was and remains very confident about requests for assistance that we at CareFirst make and their ability to help us. It's not a sales pitch thing either . . . we often hear them say, 'we've done that, let's meet and discuss to make sure we understand what you want.' And RightStar project tasks fit *easily* into our project plans." He added, "RightStar rocks!"

About RightStar Systems

Headquarters in Vienna, Virginia

RightStar Systems is a leading provider of ITIL-based service management solutions for upper-middle market firms and government agencies. As an Elite BMC Software Solution Partner, RightStar develops its own add-on modules and provides consulting, design, and implementation services for BMC Service Desk Express and BMC Remedy ITSM products. RightStar also conducts onsite ITIL assessments and provides strategic recommendations for delivering services to the business more efficiently.

