iGLASS ENABLES NYSERNet's EXPANSION OF MEMBER SERVICES

CLIENT

NYSERNet (New York State Educational Research Network)

INDUSTRY

High performance network services for the research and education community

iGLASS SERVICES

Network monitoring
Server Monitoring
Tier-1 Remediation
Inbound Call Support

OVERVIEW

Long before most people had even heard of the Internet, a group of visionary men and women from New York came together to create a statewide, high-speed research network. They were prompted by the National Science Foundation's search for a consortium to develop such a network for educational institutions, and to connect that network to the newly launched NSF network, NSFNET.

Two years later, in 1987, NYSERNet deployed the nation's first statewide regional IP network. Today, the private not-for-profit corporation serves more than 80 universities, museums, healthcare facilities, primary and secondary schools, and research institutions with a robust fiber optic network offering 100Gb speeds. The organization, initially created to foster science across New York State, now also offers member institutions colocation, disaster recovery, and business continuity services at its 4,000-square-foot facility, as well as hands-on technical training and information-sharing conferences.

EXPANDING SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

A few years ago, Chief Operating Officer Steve Kankus, a 23-year NYSERNet veteran, led the organization's exploration to expand services to include network management and monitoring. With a staff of 16, including just four engineers, it would be a challenge. While conducting a pilot program that offered the services to select member institutions, Mr. Kankus also began to research outside organizations.

At the same time, Manager of Network Operations Jeff Harrington wanted to reduce the 24x7 on-call support load incurred by the small team of engineers. His intent was to eliminate some of the less complicated tasks so the team could concentrate on more complex member concerns.

Early in his research, Mr. Kankus came upon the iGLASS website. He quickly realized the business offered sophisticated services that would take years and significant resources to develop internally at NYSERNet. When Mr. Kankus spoke with iGLASS representative David Nizen, he was impressed straightaway:

"In all the years I've been doing this work, I've never worked with a sales operation that knew so much about the company's products and services."

The call was followed promptly by an online webinar demonstration. That was in October 2014. By January 2015, NYSERNet had installed the iGLASS network-monitoring appliance, and had begun a 30-day evaluation.

Mr. Kankus looked at a few other suppliers, and says he didn't see anything that offered so completely the services for which NYSERNet was searching.

A JUDICIOUS EVALUATION

For the first few weeks of the iGLASS evaluation, Mr. Harrington and his team of engineers monitored the system in correlation with NYSERNet's network monitoring. "They pretty much caught everything we were catching," he recalls.

"There weren't any false positives or false negatives. It was all rock solid, and Steve and I felt very comfortable we could use this on our own network with our members."

Just a few short months after the initial webinar, NYSERNet contracted with iGLASS to provide network monitoring services. The evaluation proved to NYSERNet that iGLASS also could effectively help them manage Tier-1 outage remediation. But bringing iGLASS on board for that service would require documenting NYSERNet procedures.

NYSERNet's team of engineers went about the task of documenting their institutional knowledge to ensure a seamless support experience for members. iGLASS's knowledge had to be foolproof for both organizations to succeed in this venture. In November 2015, NYSERNet launched iGLASS Tier-1 remediation services and inbound call support in what Mr. Harrington calls "a very, very smooth process."

ENSURING SATISFACTION

While NYSERNet counts large institutions among its membership, many of them rely on small teams of engineers who know NYSERNet's engineers by name. In preparation for transitioning elements of support to the iGLASS NOC, NYSERNet conducted member education webinars and conference calls to ensure members understood the quality and level of support to be provided by iGLASS.

As NYSERNet continues to grow even more confident with iGLASS's capabilities, other call topics and higher-level call issues are added to the list of issues managed by iGLASS.

As hoped, the upside for NYSERNet has been improved member services, including availability of engineers to work on larger projects, such as network design, infrastructure evaluation, and other more complicated issues.

"The folks at iGLASS have always been able to get the answers our members need," Mr. Kankus says. "I know our members — and our engineers — are happy because otherwise we would hear about anything that even hints at sub-par service."

ROI IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

"One of the many benefits of the iGLASS NOC is that our engineers are able to sleep through the night," Mr. Harrington says. "Their NOC creates

tickets with our carriers and works the problems through to resolution. We no longer have to wake up at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning to check our email just to make sure everything is still working. We also experience fewer interruptions during the day about smaller concerns, such as a member needing a facility access code."

iGLASS now handles approximately two-thirds of the NYSERNet calls. "Routine matters are handled in an intelligent and effective manner," says Mr. Kankus, "and that is extremely valuable."

From a financial perspective, iGLASS is a cost-effective solution. As Mr. Harrington explains,

"We could not recreate this internally at the same price point. To run a 24x7 operation with at least two people on staff at all times, we would require a 13-person NOC. With iGLASS, the cost is less than one FTE. That's as much of a no-brainer as one can get."

CALL VOLUME REDUCTION

Before iGLASS NOC Services

After iGLASS NOC Services
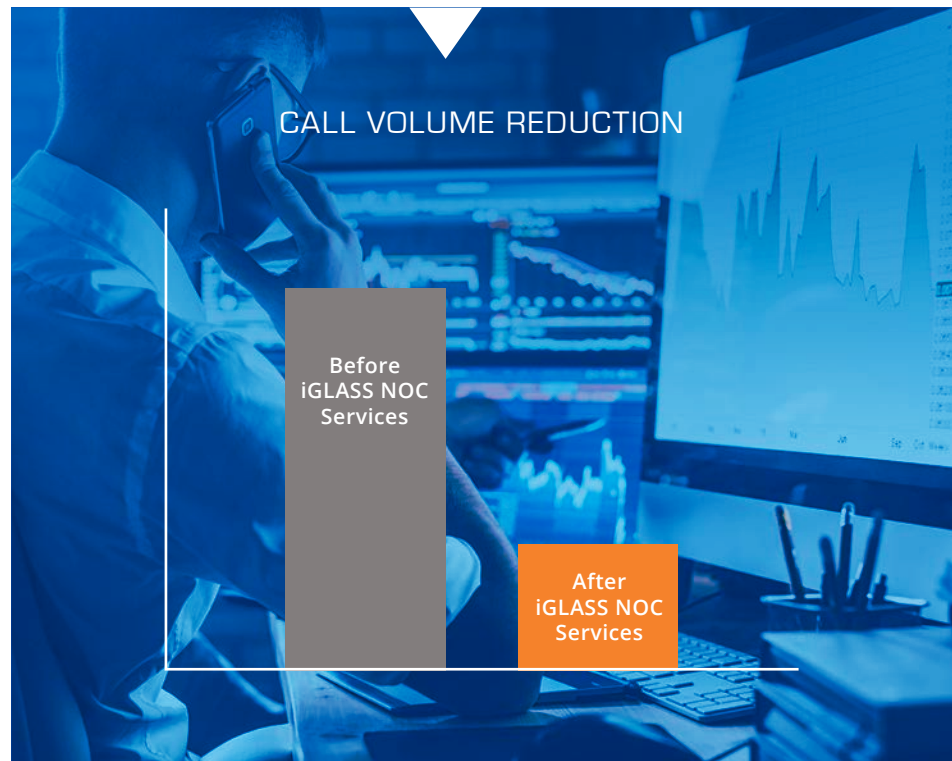
Mr. Kankus adds, "I don't know how they do it. It's challenging to keep 24x7 staff with competent people in this time zone, and it's difficult to retain quality people on the overnight shift. But iGLASS does it."

Mr. Harrington believes a good working relationship with a supplier is defined by other influencing factors, as well.

"There are a number of other things about the iGLASS NOC I very much appreciate," he explains.

"Their response time to our inquiries is generally under two hours, which is phenomenal. Another thing that strikes me about the entirety of the iGLASS NOC staff — and I'm guessing this is their company culture — is that they are extremely good at making sure they are doing the right thing.

"If there is at any point a question or a grey area about a procedure, or if the NOC folks think they have exhausted all the options, they don't make assumptions," he continues. "They call us. If there is a question, we will be there to answer it for them. We have full confidence in them and their judgment.

"It's crucial for us and for the members who have decade-long relationships with NYSERNet and who expect a certain level of response and expertise," he adds. "Our members receive that regardless of whether it's our team or iGLASS."

NYSERNet (New York State Educational Research Network)
100 S. Salina Street
Suite 300
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 413-0345
www.NYSERNet.org

iGLASS
NETWORKS

Unlike other monitoring platforms, iGLASS is a service; not just another piece of software you'll have to purchase, install and maintain. iGLASS NOC engineers are experts at what they do and serve clients across the globe. Our flexible, browser-based monitoring platform is fully administered by our programmers and engineers. We provide focused, customized monitoring and NOC support, freeing you to focus on your business.

YOUR NETWORK. OUR FOCUS.