

CUSTOMER STORY

ADVANTICOM

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POWERING CONTINUOUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Pittsburgh-based Advanticom is using Cognition360 to drive continuous improvement in services delivered to customers, as well as major improvements in operational efficiency and profitability.

Recognized as one of Pittsburgh’s 100 fastest growing companies – and a Microsoft East Region SMB Growth Partner of the Year winner – Advanticom’s success is built on a strategy of delivering IT services precisely aligned and tuned to the different business needs of individual customers.

ISO 27001 certified, Advanticom serves local enterprises of all sizes and industries with managed IT services, unified communications, cloud solutions, and full infrastructure implementation and service. This is backed by a Microsoft Experience Centre with high level Microsoft development and support expertise.

Advanticom’s Senior Director of Strategic Services and Security, Justin Swanson, says the decision

to subscribe to the Cognition360 cloud data warehouse and reporting service was, initially, to try and solve reporting issues with the company’s ConnectWise PSA system. But over time a raft of further operational efficiency, productivity and profitability benefits have accrued.

“We live and breathe by ConnectWise,” Swanson says. “But ConnectWise reporting was cumbersome and couldn’t give us the data and insights we needed.

“What appealed to us about Cognition360 was that it’s designed to get data out of ConnectWise without adding load to the ConnectWise production server. Also it’s developed and supported by people who understand the MSP business, know ConnectWise back to front, and have a library of standard reports ready to run. Plus, it’s a cloud service that we can subscribe to for an affordable monthly fee.

“There was low cost and risk to trial it, so we went ahead,” Swanson recalls. The results, he says, have far exceeded expectations.

“Before Cognition360 I’d spend two to three hours every Monday morning using pivot tables – exporting data from ConnectWise into Excel to get the data that I needed to update all my reports for the team. But even that only got me so far. I was still limited in tracking and reporting KPIs around ticket lifecycle, project progress and profitability, and engineer utilization.

“Now, with Cognition360, there are no more pivot tables, and no more hassles trying to get reports directly out of the ConnectWise server. Instead, we have our KPI reports, and other analytics, all directly out of the Cognition360 data warehouse. There’s huge time savings on my part and a likewise huge

Customer benefits: quality & consistency

For customers, Swanson says, the benefits are around quality and consistency of service. “They know what to expect when they file a ticket. SLAs are monitored constantly. Someone is always looking at their SLAs and tickets. We have an active ticket report and every Monday morning we go through every open ticket on the board.

“With accuracy of ticket information and speed of escalation managed through a set of specific KPIs developed with Cognition360, tickets get done faster and they’re closed sooner due to quicker escalations. This saves money for the customer. We all have

“Working closely with the Cognition team I keep developing more value out of the relationship. Their knowledge of the backend within ConnectWise is amazing. They know what’s possible and what’s not with various metrics.”

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increase in value from having near real-time data,” Swanson says.

“Out of the gate we started with a ticket lifecycle report and it grew from there. There’s a range of report templates we can drive ourselves. If we want new reports the Cognition360 team comes back within hours, either with a brand new customized report or a modification to an existing report.

Continuous service improvement

“Continuous service improvement is what’s driving our business forward,” Swanson says. “The speed and ease of developing KPI reports and other analytics using Cognition360 means we have near real-time visibility of all the most important performance indicators. We can deep dive into service desk tickets, track and understand engineer utilization, and understand the profitability of our managed service contracts – all using near real-time data to track what’s happening right now rather than what was happening last week.

“Team morale and engagement has really improved. We have a regular cadence of meetings. We sit down as a team and review what went well and what didn’t. To really drive accountability, I meet individually with every engineer once a month and go through their KPIs, deep diving into the data, discussing any anomalies and putting plans together based on quality data and quality metrics.”

visibility, so escalations happen faster with a team approach – rather than individuals bulldogging it themselves.”

Utilization is single biggest benefit area

“From a strategic perspective – in terms of the efficiency and profitability of the business – insight around utilization is probably the biggest single benefit area, Swanson says. “It’s more than just better tracking and recovery of billable time. It’s knowing how busy people are and how they’re spending their time. I can run a 12-month trending report on any engineer area and immediately move to tune our engineer capability to get the best utilization of each engineer, or make new hiring decisions knowing exactly what skill set is required. That’s great for us and great for our customers.”

Cognition360 is also actively helping Advanticom sell new business, Swanson says. “By tracking in great detail which hardware and software elements in our service directly affect the cost of service and uptime for the customer, we can recommend changes to existing customer networks, and sharpen our price on new managed service contracts.

“Working closely with the Cognition team I keep developing more value out of the relationship,” Swanson says. “Their knowledge of the backend within ConnectWise is amazing. And because Cognition touches many MSPs there’s very useful cross fertilization.”

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