

Servigistics' Real-time Field Service Management Command Center

By [Nora Parker](#)

(Nov 27, 2007)

Field service management involves sending technicians or other staff into the field to install or repair systems or equipment - for example, appliance repair. [Servigistics](#) offers field service solutions and serves the needs of automobile manufacturers, computer hardware providers, appliance companies and medical equipment companies.

Mike Landry, CTO, and Joe Berti, vice president of Workforce Management Products, showed me Servigistics' "Command Center" application. Command Center is a combination of a business intelligence dashboard and a "war room" application. Think of it as a real-time asset management system to ensure customer satisfaction. Landry cited research from the Aberdeen Group that specified the need for effective follow-on service as a requirement for customer satisfaction. In addition, he said, more and more revenue is coming, beyond the initial purchase, from follow-on service. Consumers who get stuck waiting interminably for a service repairman are unlikely to ever do business with that company again.

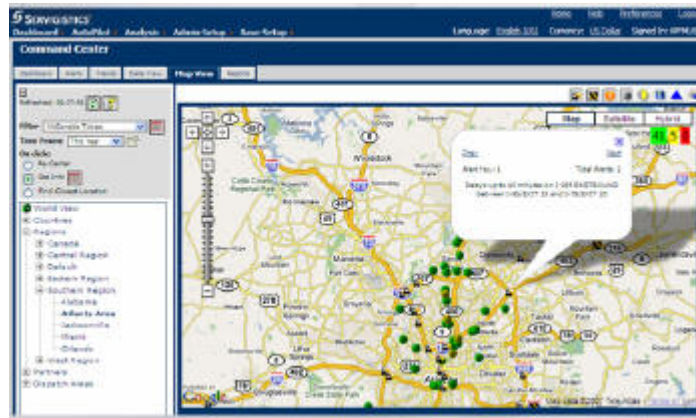
Dell uses Command Center on a global level to manage service calls for its larger, corporate accounts. "In Dell's case, not only does it allow them to be more proactive in responding to service calls it turned out to be a powerful differentiator for sales and marketing," said Berti. Command Center helps Dell land big corporate accounts by showing that the company can be highly responsive if a server or other important piece of computing equipment goes down. Berti added that the return on investment "is enormous, and as quick as six months [to pay for the system] - never more than 12 months. The ability to justify a project is very, very easy."



One of Dell's Command Centers. (Click for larger image)

Geospatial technology partners include Google (global visualization), Land Sonar (traffic data) and NAVTEQ (base data). In addition, Servigistics acquired TransDecisions and its white-label GIS engine a few years ago. Servigistics is very proud of its early involvement with Google. "Google gave the

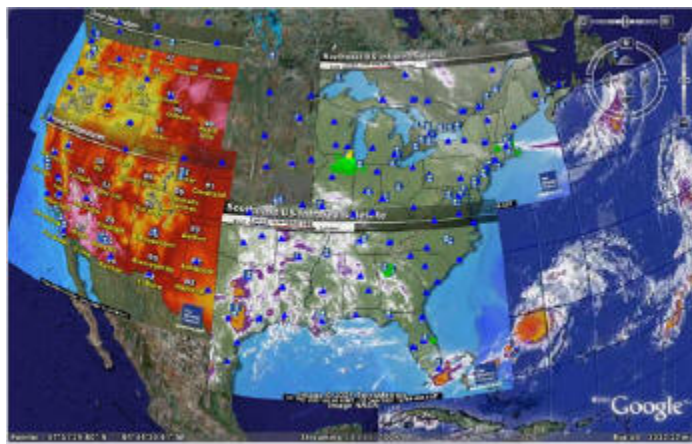
where they had an open service ticket," explained Berti. Other technology partners are Antenna (customized mobility), Yasutech (rules engine) and Intellicus (reporting).



Command Center displays real-time traffic information, and offers alternative routes. (Click for larger image)

The main application for Command Center is real-time field personnel management, which makes sure that "open tickets" (service requests) are getting the resources (technicians and parts) needed to close them within the agreed-upon period of time. When a ticket is not closed after a stipulated period of time, an alert is posted. The system tracks a wide variety of variables and manages thousands of tickets at each customer site. It includes dispatching, forecasting and planning staff needs, updating and optimizing schedules throughout the day, locating and managing delivery of parts, etc. It's worth noting that Command Center has earned two awards for Servigistics, the Service Supplier of the Year award from Dell, and the Supplier Performance Award from Sun Microsystems. The demo I saw is likely the "Cadillac" in this space, and if I was responsible for field service management at my organization, I would certainly want such a tool.

Command Center can also be used as a planning tool. One interesting application is the ability to layer real-time weather data on top of the current service picture to see if adverse weather conditions might either delay response or create additional problems. For example, the presence of lightning in the area might affect the use of electrical equipment. Another application is the ability to analyze whether current resources (field staff and location of parts) are adequate to meet service agreements, or whether the company should even be offering service agreements in certain rural areas. Finally, Command Center can be used to help locate additional field resources by looking at where demand is unmet.



Command Center with real-time weather overlaid. (Click for larger image)

Reprinted with permission, Copyright 2007, Directions Media