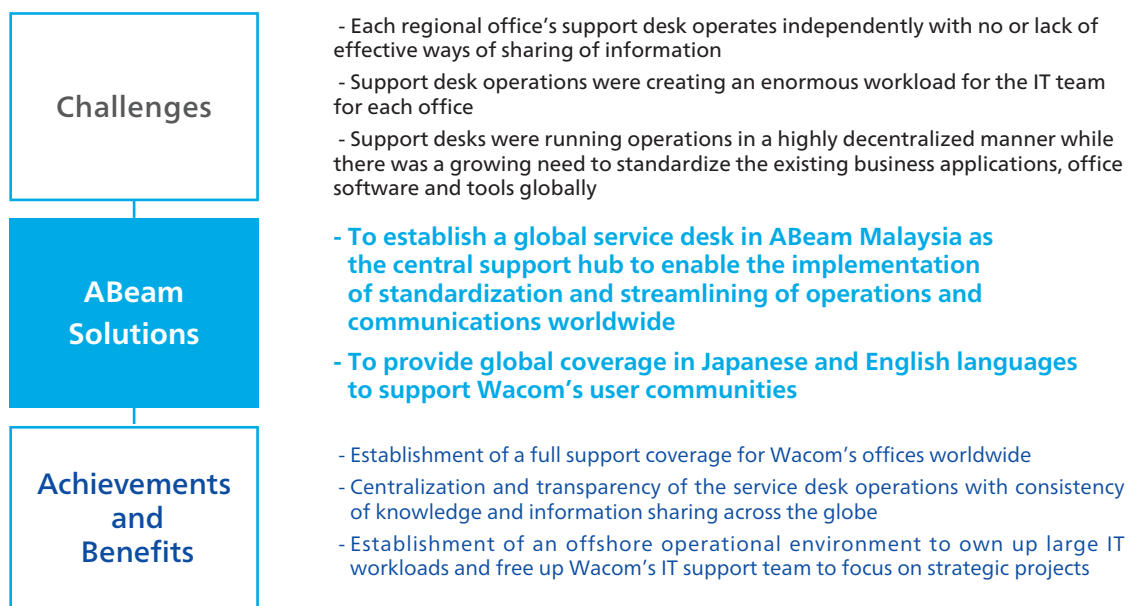




Wacom Co., Ltd.

Flexible, 24-hour bilingual (Japanese and English) support for IT service desk operations at all global offices

Wacom Co., Ltd., a manufacturer of a range of digital solutions, including pen tablets and digital pens, has chosen ABeam Consulting as its partner to implement strategic outsourcing as part of the company's IT strategies to accelerate IT innovation. Wacom's Level 1 IT support services previously performed by each of its global office have now been outsourced to ABeam Global Service Desk (GSD) since April 2019. As Level 1 support, the GSD handles inquiries and issues concerning all applications used at Wacom, as well as some setting changes. GSD comprises Japanese-speaking and English-speaking team members, is operating round-the-clock to provide the support services in covering the business hours of Wacom offices across the world. Having gained familiarity with Wacom's operational GSD now works closely with Wacom's IT team to offer improvements on delivery and operational areas and to streamline processes.





**ABeam Consulting chosen
as Wacom's strategic
outsourcing partner**

**Serving as the IT service
desk for all of its global
offices**

**24-hour support in
Japanese and English to
cover the business hours
of every office**

Project background

Necessity of consolidating Level 1 IT service desks into a single point of contact in an increasingly cloud-based environment

Wacom provides a range of solutions, including pen tablets and digital pens. Its products have been used by customers as tools to express their creativity in various fields, from film, animation, and industrial design to manga. The company also serves the healthcare and education sectors with the most advanced user interface technologies and solutions. Wacom's organization, which operates throughout the U.S., European, and Asian regions, works in line with the following corporate strategies: Technology Leadership, Island & Ocean, and Extreme Focus. Under these three strategies, Wacom's IT department has been transforming its traditional software-based system environment into a cloud-based environment and standardizing applications globally.

The Vice President of Wacom believes that the best way to promote innovation is through a partnership model, working with a strategic outsourcing provider who has the "know-how" knowledge and experience with the ability to gain insights into the industry and its challenges to qualify to support Wacom on a global scale.

By and large, the IT Level 1 project had to undergo a global implementation which required migration of the existing service desks to the GSD, including having to take into consideration of two regions of different support scenarios.

In the Asian region, including Japan and China, Wacom's service desk was already being supported by an outsourced vendor. And in another region, in particular the US and Germany, its local IT departments had been supporting their services locally and independently.

"Not sharing information meant that, for example, after we resolved a system problem in the U.S., we encountered the same problem in Japan and had to work on it all over again," says the Director of Wacom.

Needless to say, global process standardization was a crucial determinant in making this project a success. And since the implementation was of global scale, it became obvious that coordinating the entire project teams across the regions became an immediate challenge.

Reasons for selecting ABeam

Flexibility and 24-hour bilingual (Japanese and English) support

Wacom started looking for a strategic outsourcing provider of IT services, including Level 1 support. At the beginning of 2018, the company selected ABeam Consulting as its partner to implement global outsourcing, starting with the application management and IT operation (AMS/ITO) services in Japan and other offices in Asia. The key factor that led Wacom to choose ABeam Consulting was its ability to provide support services globally; the ABeam Global Service Desk (GSD), which serves as a support desk for Wacom, can establish a 24-hour operation schedule to cover the business hours of every Wacom office worldwide, and can provide services both in Japanese and English. "ABeam Consulting's flexibility was another advantage we appreciated. My boss is an American who is based in the U.S. My team works in Japan, while I also communicate with the staff in Germany. We considered how we could smoothly implement the project despite our differences in culture and location. Since ABeam Consulting also operates on a global scale, it understands regional and national differences. In addition, its communication was straightforward and easy to understand. That's why we decided that ABeam Consulting would be the partner we could work with flexibly to implement the project." (Director)

The project involved migration of an existing service desk to the GSD. Wacom's service desk operations in the Asian region, including in Japan and China, had already been outsourced. In the U.S. and Germany, on the other hand, its local IT departments had been handling support services, and they needed to implement a service desk from scratch. Therefore, global process standardization became a crucial factor in this project. One of the major challenges was how to coordinate the entire project team.

Overcoming obstacles to achieve the objectives

Commitment to overcome time zone and cultural barriers

Wacom embarked on the project in December 2018. The most challenging part was to develop and reach a common understanding and agreement within Wacom entities and also between Wacom and ABeam Consulting.

In Wacom, the internal IT staff has current IT knowledge and practices that were not well shared with among the staff members. This created a large gap which must be addressed and resolved in this project, which if not, could adversely impact the outcome of the actual service desk operations. One of its most effective way to resolve this gap was for Wacom IT staff and ABeam Consulting to engage closely through continuous discussions and deliberations to finally reach a mutual agreement and understanding of new or streamlined ways of running the service operations.

But this did not come easy. The project required wide communications with many stakeholders, including Wacom's head office in Japan, the Europe office, the U.S office, ABeam Consulting's head office in Japan, and the ABeam Consulting Malaysia, which serves as the actual service desk (GSD).

The fact the project team was not dealing with a singular culture thus meeting common expectations made it very challenging. One of areas of contention was the use of the existing JIRA as the single IT service management tool for handling of incidents and inquiries, therefore, more stringent in its control and regulation of support processes, which did not go down well with some stakeholders who had been so used to the traditional ways of support. There was, therefore, a valid concern that users may circumvent processes to get this done.

On another challenging front, the project also required a close planning and coordination for the implementation of global standardization and synchronization of processes as the result of the replacement of the existing service desk with the new GSD model. Therefore, meetings, trainings and updates became a common feature in the course of the GSD implementation.

"Initially, we had regular meetings once a week or so, but as we got closer to the go-live date in April 2019, we met more frequently and conducted practical training almost every day. We needed to impart knowledge to each GSD staff member in Malaysia and make sure they were capable of handling issues appropriately. Everyone was committed to a common goal, which was the success of this project." (Director)

Diagram: ABeam GSD Project Overview

- ✓ Provides support during the business hours of all of Wacom's eleven global offices (from Monday through Friday)
- ✓ 9:00-18:00 JST: for Japan (in Japanese)
- ✓ 24 hours: for all of its eleven offices, including the one in Japan (in English)
- ✓ Services available in Japanese and English
- ✓ Supports 78 applications (inquiries, incident management, and service requests)



VOICE

"ABeam has been a great partner to work with as Wacom goes through the transformation in its business as well as IT operations. The Global service desk is first step in delivering value to Wacom's users in a tangible way and we look forward to continued partnership in expanding the service desk and also partner with Abeam on strategic initiatives."

Vice President, Information Services
Wacom Co., Ltd.

VOICE

"The GSD team in Malaysia has been doing an excellent job, and we appreciate the significant contributions of Japanese-speaking members. The team also handles both IT support and user services for the U.S. region, successfully providing appropriate support when needed. We really appreciate their hard work."

Director, Hosting and
Infrastructure Services
Wacom Co., Ltd.



Results and achievements of the implementation

Level 1 support and expansion to Level 2 support

GSD IT service desk operations went live in Apr 2019 as planned. This allowed Wacom members to access to high-quality and available support services during the business hours of all global offices. Notably, there was an immediate contrast between the previous and new ways of the support services in terms of service accessibility.

“By partnering with ABeam Consulting, Wacom IT was able to expand our reach and support services to all parts of the Wacom user base and provide consistent service levels regardless of the physical location of the IT professionals.” (Vice President)

At Wacom, the GSD is positioned as the user support and the internal IT team as the system administrator. A user who needs support can access JIRA to create a support ticket and report an issue to Level 1 support. If it is not resolved, Level 1 support then escalated to Level 2 support be sent back to the GSD when issues were resolved as this would enable GSD to learn from every resolved issue thus cumulating the necessary problem-solving knowledge and experience over time and builds up their support competency.

“Wacom’s IT team is spread across the world, but now that the GSD is providing services as a single point of contact, our IT team is becoming more united. We can manage the operations more smoothly and share information effectively. Our next goal is to make sure that, as part of a global IT team, each member thinks about what happens in other countries as their own responsibility, rather than seeing it as someone else’s problem.” (Director)

Achievements of the implementation and future outlook

IT team to pursue more strategic projects and transformative initiatives

Wacom envisages that GSD will be able to resolve users’ support issues and forge a support relationship through close interactions between the GSD and users. The GSD now has broad exposure to various Wacom’s IT issues and gathered much knowledge from their support experience, and they have gained better understanding and in a better position of handling tickets. As GSD takes over the support load of IT issues, this would give space for Wacom’s IT team to do better planning management (three to six months ahead) and not over occupied with resolving support issues.

“As we successfully implemented the Level 1 support for Wacom, we really want to use the same framework to extend beyond Level 2/Level 3 support which enhances the response and resolution times for users beyond basic operations. This also provides Wacom’s internal IT organization to focus more on strategic projects and transformation initiatives.” (Vice President)

The benefits of this project are particularly evident in Japan, which has a large user base. The IT team’s workload as well as the time spent dealing with complaints has reduced, and it is now able to focus more on the company’s priorities and operations from a medium- to long-term perspective.

Once it fully adapts to this service desk system, Wacom is planning to extend the system to Level 2 support services for applications. The company further intends to partner with ABeam Consulting for global outsourcing of its operations, including AMS/ITO support in the U.S. and European regions.

Outline of the Customer

Company name	Wacom Co., Ltd.
HQ location	2-510-1 Toyonodai Kazo-shi, Saitama 349-1148, Japan
Estd.	July 12, 1983
Business	Development, manufacture, and sales of pen tablets, related software, and digital pen components and modules for smartphones, tablets, and other devices
Capital fund	4,203 million yen

Project Overview

Integration of Level 1 IT support services provided at each global office into ABeam Global Service Desk (GSD). Through its operations of providing 24-hour support in Japanese and English, the GSD has been accumulating know-how and helping reduce the workload of Wacom’s IT team.