

# Ben Lomand Connect Boosts Support Operations, Achieving 76 Percent First Call Resolution Rate With Calix Customer Success

## CHALLENGE

### Around-The-Clock Assistance To Provide Incomparable Service

Ben Lomand Connect provides advanced voice, broadband, and digital video services to residential and business subscribers in Middle Tennessee and the Upper Cumberland region. The cooperative has grown considerably since its founding in 1952, with more than 33,000 telephone and 26,000 broadband subscribers. Its flourishing division for business technology solutions provides managed IT services to over 100 customers and statewide security offerings to over 1,000 subscribers.

Ben Lomand doesn't just serve its own members. The company also provides support services for other telephone companies, electric cooperatives, and organizations via its 24/7 network support center.

With a staff of 137 and a broad range of offerings, Ben Lomand requires a robust Network Support Center (NSC) with knowledgeable and efficient employees. Live technicians staff the center in three shifts—with the goal of providing the same level of high-quality support for both Ben Lomand members and other customers' subscribers.

"We rely heavily on our support staff. They have to know more than anyone else in the company when it comes to our products, our customers' products, and our networks," said Chris Centracchio, information systems and managed IT manager at Ben Lomand. "We handle more than typical customer support calls, such as Wi-Fi issues and internet outages—we also monitor other Broadband Service Provider (BSP) networks. If their equipment goes down or they have a problem, we get an alert that our staff has to troubleshoot and resolve quickly."

Ben Lomand's NSC also upsells other companies' products in addition to its own. This amplifies the pressure on the NSC—and means technicians must be just as knowledgeable about what customers are selling as they are with what Ben Lomand is selling to subscribers.

The biggest challenge facing Ben Lomand was efficiency of support operations. This team needed to be well-skilled and available 24/7. Getting everyone up to speed was difficult—and directly impacting support center churn.



### COMPANY

Ben Lomand Connect

### COMPANY TYPE

Cooperative

### WEBSITE

[benlomandconnect.com](http://benlomandconnect.com)

### LOCATION

McMinnville, Tennessee

### SERVICES

Broadband, voice, digital video, security

### SUBSCRIBERS

59,000



## Case Study

Another challenge was the sheer amount of knowledge that technicians needed to have. Without standardized equipment at the premise, the team needed to be proficient across many different devices. Subscribers could also simply use their own routers, which often lacked the troubleshooting visibility and performance data insights available through Calix. Subscribers with their own residential gateways expected top-notch support on device troubleshooting—and this was a big lift for support operations. With routers from multiple vendors, technicians struggled to keep knowledge up-to-date due to device volume.

“Customers using their own routers expected the same level of support as those who purchase a router from us,” said Centracchio. “But an agent’s ability to solve problems quickly and accurately depends on their knowledge and skill level. The more they know, the faster they can move on to the next call.”

Although Ben Lomand offered NSC agents regular training, only employees working the first shift were able to participate. Without the benefit of hands-on experience, two-thirds of the support staff were left to troubleshoot issues via different platforms, rely on a simple product manual, or do their own internet search to find answers. This resulted in longer call times and more frequent call-backs, which negatively impacted support agent availability and subscriber satisfaction.

## SOLUTION

### Take A Data-Driven Holistic Support Approach To Successfully Improve End-To-End Subscriber Experience

Ben Lomand realized that to address its operational challenges, it needed a comprehensive, end-to-end approach. Success depended on several things: having visibility into issues for better troubleshooting, more insights to improve process and hit KPIs, and guidance to fill in knowledge gaps faced by the team.

Ben Lomand tapped into its long-term relationship with Calix and Premier Customer Success to help innovate operations. Ben Lomand standardized on GigaSpire® BLAST systems for its members, which allowed them to better leverage the insights from Calix Support Cloud (Support Cloud) as an intuitive cockpit to address subscriber needs quickly and proactively.

“Two key things that really helped us are standardizing on the GigaSpire BLAST and bringing on Calix Support Cloud,” observed Centracchio. “Prior to having Support Cloud in our NSC, it took a lot longer on the phone with customers to troubleshoot because we had all kinds of issues across the board. Calix Cloud puts a lot of power in our technicians’ hands that they did not have previously, and it’s tied in with our billing and ticketing system through an API.” Centracchio credits deploying a common platform using the GigaSpire BLAST for streamlining the entire end-to-end service order to install and follow up process for his team.

Calix Customer Success also helped Ben Lomand benchmark its current business metrics to create a baseline for consistent tracking—for members and customers’ subscribers. “We took care of our subscribers. But, honestly, we weren’t probably tracking as well as we should—and we weren’t holding ourselves to a certain SLA level when it was just us,” said Centracchio.

Ben Lomand tracked several key operational metrics but focused primarily on average agent call time, first call resolution (FCR), and repeat reports. Calix Customer Success helped Ben Lomand’s customer support team focus on balancing these metrics to improve efficiency for the CSR—and to deliver an elevated subscriber experience by solving the problem on the initial contact.

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Information Systems  
& Managed IT Manager  
at Ben Lomand

To prepare support staff with the requisite knowledge on Calix platforms and troubleshooting best practices, Calix Customer Success ran a series of enablement sessions for technicians and CSRs. These enablement sessions occurred live with employees on the first shift. Online recordings were created for second and third-shift employees. This helped all team members gain better familiarity with Support Cloud and GigaSpire systems. With the right knowledge, Ben Lomand's team had the confidence to position specific value to their subscribers. They could better identify ways the Calix ecosystem can solve problems—for the team itself and for subscribers.

## THE RESULTS

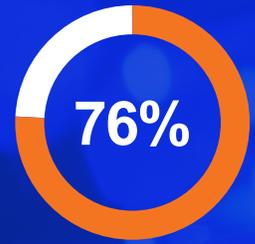
### Getting It Right The First Time Delivers A Better Subscriber Experience

Technicians now have unprecedented visibility into Calix and third-party devices, simplifying customer care and improving operational efficiency. "Calix has given our technicians visibility into our subscribers' home networks that we didn't have before. Right when a subscriber has an issue with their Wi-Fi. And of course, to most of our subscribers, their Wi-Fi is their internet," said Centracchio.

Today, Ben Lomand runs a data-driven NSC enabled from its integrated Support Cloud, billing, and ticketing systems. Their aim is to resolve issues in one call without escalation. As a result, Ben Lomand has achieved a 76 percent FCR and is well on its way to meeting its goal of 80 percent. Improving technician skills and standardizing on GigaSpire BLAST left a profound effect on average call times.

As Centracchio sees it, the more comfortable technicians are with the technology and value of the service they are delivering—the better they are going to be able to handle subscribers' problems. And that also ties in with shorter call times. According to Centracchio, "They're not on the phone as long because they're able to dive right in and get that customer taken care of! Every call center customer seemed to have slightly different requirements when it came to meeting their monthly goals and SLAs. But we realized the end goal was the same: a satisfied customer whose problem was solved while they were on the phone with support, leading to an overall positive experience."

Ben Lomand has trusted Calix Customer Success every step of the way. The cooperative is also working with Calix to provide advanced onboarding support for ProtectIQ® and ExperienceIQ® via CommandIQ® so that technicians can in turn educate subscribers. By partnering with Calix, Ben Lomand has the tools, standards, and procedures in place to drive results while delivering exceptional experiences that exceed member expectations, every time.



**First Call Resolution Rate**

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