

“Space Mission Operations Ground Systems Integration Customer Service”

The facility, which is now the Huntsville Operations Support Center (HOSC) at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL, has provided continuous space mission and related services for the space industry since 1961, from Mercury Redstone through the International Space Station (ISS). Throughout the long history of the facility and mission support teams, the HOSC has developed a stellar customer support and service process. In this era, of cost cutting, and providing more capability and results with fewer resources, space missions are looking for the most efficient way to accomplish their objectives. One of the first services provided by the facility was fax transmission of documents to, then, Cape Canaveral in Florida. The headline in the Marshall Star, the newspaper for the newly formed Marshall Space Flight Center, read “Exact copies of Documents sent to Cape in 4 minutes.” The customer was Dr. Wernher von Braun. Currently at the HOSC we are supporting, or have recently supported, missions ranging from simple ISS payloads requiring little more than “bent-pipe” telemetry access, to a low cost free-flyer Fast, Affordable, Science and Technology Satellite (FASTSAT), to a full service ISS payload Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer 2 (AMS2) supporting 24/7 operations at three operations centers around the world with an investment of over 2 billion dollars. The HOSC has more need and desire than ever to provide fast and efficient customer service to support these missions. Here we will outline how our customer-centric service approach reduces the cost of providing services, makes it faster and easier than ever for new customers to get started with HOSC services, and show what the future holds for our space mission operations customers. We will discuss our philosophy concerning our responsibility and accessibility to a mission customer as well as how we deal with the following issues: initial contact with a customer, reducing customer cost, changing regulations and security, and cultural differences, to ensure an efficient response to customer issues using a small Customer Service Team (CST) and adaptability, constant communication with customers, technical expertise and knowledge of services, and dedication to customer service. The HOSC Customer Support Team has implemented a variety of processes, and procedures that help to mitigate the potential problems that arise when integrating ground system services for a variety of complex missions and the lessons learned from this experience will lead the future of customer service in the space operations industry.