

How To Drive IT Service Desk Efficiencies

cloud
business

Reimagine everyday

How to drive IT service desk efficiencies

Streamline your IT support from a reactive operational cost to a proactive strategic resource.



Introduction

What does your IT department do all day?


If your IT team's day is anything like most overstretched organisations it will probably be another day of fire-fighting. With no time for anything proactive and strategic, it is time to take stock and look for opportunities to drive efficiencies.

- This whitepaper explores how your business or organisation can streamline your IT support creating opportunities to make savings, reduce downtime and improve productivity.
- It also provide insight into the benefits of customer-led service desk teams, and how this approach is a key factor in reducing downtime and increasing employee satisfaction and morale.
- Finally we will show you how to unlock ROI in Managed Services and ensure your IT service desk is delivering value.



A Day In The Life Of A Service Desk Analyst

The new IT support landscape.
Whichever side of the IT service desk
you sit on, it's useful to know what IT
service desk analysts actually do.



You may not have employees within your organisation that have the job title 'service desk analyst'; instead you may find that your network manager, or IT manager is doing many of these activities.

The question that you need to ask is whether their time is best spent on these operational activities, or whether additional support would be beneficial.

Cloud Business provides onsite and remote service desk analysts to our customers. We're increasingly seeing demand for support resolving more complicated issues; in part because most organisations have larger technological requirements, but also because of a more technologically skilled workforce - who can resolve those minor issues themselves, leaving us to deal with the more complicated ones.

Day-To-Day Tasks Of A Service Desk Analyst

Here is a snapshot of what a service desk analyst does:

Desktop Support: reset terminal server sessions, Blackberry device configuration, setup corporate email account, iPhone setup, Microsoft Office support (can't insert image into PowerPoint, Excel won't open, Outlook crashing), Microsoft Operating Systems (Windows session freezing, display adaptor drives need updating etc.),

Third Party Liaison: Vodafone Blackberry support (configure email etc.), printer support, hardware support, bespoke application, Sage, Internet Service Provide (no broadband, communication line is down etc.),

Network: Internet lines, routers, firewalls, switches, remote satellite office,

Service Management: incident management, problem management, change management, configuration management, event management,

Account Administration: new user requests, leaver requests, password requests etc.,

Data Centre Services: Managed rack etc.,

Backups: daily monitoring (monitor backups for failures), troubleshooting, strategy (backup retention periods, time to restore),

Infrastructure Management: monitoring, patching, strategy, hardware support, availability, capacity, server support.

Another factor that is rapidly changing service desk analyst's role is mobility.

Not so long ago service desk providers would have focused mainly on delivering IT support to user in the workplace, and perhaps a small amount of remote working support to directors and senior employees.

This has changed significantly in recent years as increasingly organisations facilitate remote working for their employees, and more and more people are using mobile devices for work.

This new working landscape presents unique challenges for organisations, not only ensuring that remote working staff can access systems and networks wherever they are, but also security challenges for the business.

This is a key area where expert support can be essential for productivity and for the managing risks mobile devices (especially BYOD) and remote working have introduced into the office IT estate.



Shared IT Service Desk

Benefits Of A Dedicated Or Shared IT Service Desk

Removing many of the operational activities from the scope of your IT team can enable them to focus on more strategic and revenue generating activities instead. Having a dedicated IT service desk ensures users (customers or employers) can access the IT support they require and get resolution faster.

For businesses this results in higher customer/employee satisfaction levels, increased productivity, and has a direct impact on the bottom line.

At Cloud Business we provide an outsourcing solution for companies looking for IT support. While an internal service desk is also a viable option, there are clear advantages to the outsourcing model, including cost savings and more flexibility.

There are 25 compelling reasons for outsourcing this IT requirement.

Customer / User Centric

1. Increased customer service levels;
2. Single point of contact;
3. Personalised helpdesk answered in your name;

Highly skilled support

4. Fully trained, experienced, qualified, certified, culture trained engineers;
5. Faster deployment of new systems;
6. Increased security;
7. Instantly overcomes a lack of in-house resources or training challenges;
8. Access to specific IT skills;
9. Access to innovation and thought leadership;

Improved service level

10. Multiple call capabilities;
11. Increased hours of support provided – 24/7/365;
12. Continuous audit / IT Health check;
13. Optional 3rd and 4th line resource;

Sound financial reasons

14. Reduced costs (due to economies of scale or lower costs of staffing);
15. Monthly payment with everything included, no upfront costs;
16. Tighter control of budget through predictable costs;
17. Lower on-going investment in internal infrastructure;

Flexibility

18. Switch-on / switch off;
19. Freedom to focus on your core competencies;
20. Increased flexibility to meet changing business and commercial conditions;

Metrics and Reporting

21. Accurate and timely reporting;
22. Increased measurable service levels;
23. Fully documented process and procedures, specifically tailored to your needs;
24. Optional annual health checks / audits of software and hardware;
25. Monthly service level review meetings.

The Importance Of Customer-Led IT Service Desk Teams

A key differentiator between IT service desk providers is how successfully they embed themselves into your organisation, and build strong working relationships with your employees, IT team and other users.

The value this provides should not be underestimated: reducing incidences and ensuring that any issues are addressed in a way that is optimised to reduce downtime to your individual business systems and operation.

Outlined below is the process Cloud Business uses to build customer relationships and provide an IT service desk that meets different organisations' bespoke requirements.



At the heart of our on boarding and transition process is culture training for our IT service desk analysts.



Our service desk analysts understand exactly how our clients' IT infrastructure, systems and applications impact on their business.



We can therefore take a proactive approach to ensuring business continuity.

If you're weighing up the pros and cons of different IT service desk providers, we recommend requesting information about the following key points to find out how customer-led each service desk actually is:

1. Matching IT service desk teams to the clients' technology estate

Ask how IT teams are assigned to each client. Is it a one-size-fits all approach or do they ensure that analysts with specific skillsets and expertise handle their client accounts? The latter approach will ensure that both the transition process and on-going support will be streamlined with your IT specification. Also will you be assigned a named Service Delivery Manager - a first point of contact if you need to discuss your service or specific issues?

One of the key reasons clients move their service desk to Cloud Business is because of a lack of continuity with other providers, especially those with a high turnover of staff.

2. Business overview

Providers who are customer-led will be hungry for information about your organisation so they can tailor their service to your needs. This will not only include information about the key applications the business uses, but should look at how these are used day-to-day and week-to-week. Look for an IT service desk provider who takes a proactive approach that will help them manage demand and preempt issues before they become a problem.

3. Culture and philosophy

We believe that it's important that our IT service desk analysts really embed themselves in our clients' organisation so that we can deliver a service that is aligned with our clients' core business objectives, ethos and values. This involves client 'culture training' that we initiate with the support of the client to ensure our team become part of their extended team.

4. Technical training

No IT service desk provider should be happy to take on your existing systems and applications without some kind of training. While service desk analysts will already have relevant skillsets and experience, they will still need client-specific training. This normally involves the client passing on relevant documents and, where appropriate, WebEx or conference calls to further their knowledge.

5. Knowledge bank

IT service desk providers should be continually updating their knowledge and have a knowledge bank that provides support for their teams, tailored to each specific client. They should also be interested in any resources their clients can provide that can help them deliver an excellent service. You may also want to find out whether they provide resources for their clients too, such as user guides and other IT information.

6. Tailoring the service

It's all in the detail. To integrate your service desk with other areas of your business and deliver great customer service, the provider should be interested in offering a tailored service. For example setting up a dedicated phone line, dedicated voicemail messages, tailored greetings for when analysts answer the telephone, or even dedicated email signatures and email addresses.

7. Service review meetings

Finally, look for a provider who wants to build their relationship with you and provides the channels for regular communication. This starts with knowing who the IT team is that supports your organisation and may involve site visits to meet with key stakeholders.

Ask potential providers about the transition period and what to expect in terms of updates and regular meetings to ensure that this is kept on track. Also find out what happens once the service is live; how often are service review meetings and will the provider be proactive in advising your business on issues such as improving IT performance, security and other IT factors?

To really benefit from the savings and efficiencies a outsourced service desk solution can deliver, it is important to find an IT service desk provider who wants to form a long-term relationship / partnership with your organisation. One that will provide a flexible and scalable solution that can be tailored to your individual requirements and goes out of their way to understand your business.

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Unlocking ROI In IT Managed Services

Traditionally, organisations look to IT managed services to meet demands for IT support from business users within their organisations and other key stakeholders, as well as providing IT infrastructure management. This is often a reactive response to help provide tech support when internal teams are struggling with capacity and resources.

Typically these requirements revolve around managing and resolving incidents, delivering repeatable support (for example setting up user accounts, performing backups etc.), and managing the IT assets such as networking monitoring and upgrading software. The value of this IT service to the business is that it reduces downtime caused by incidents, lost passwords and other technology-related issues, and frees up key staff to focus on their core competencies. This IT managed service solution also delivers cost savings to the business, providing 24/7/365 support that could be prohibitively expensive to do in-house.

Calculating the ROI an organisation derives from this level of service is a simple question of knowing what it would cost the business if they didn't have it, and had to provide sufficient cover internally. The cost of downtime varies depending on the incident, for example an IT outage affecting the entire organisation will result in a significantly larger cost to the business than a single individual unable to access the system because of a forgotten password.

However, these costs – big and small – add up. In fact downtime costs UK businesses £6.5 billion a year, according to the EMC Global Data Protection Index.

How To Calculate ROI On IT Managed Services

The cost of providing 24/7/365 support internally is also a significant factor. On average IT managers' earn £40,000 + per year, but depending on the size of the organisation and IT requirement, one IT role may not be enough. Factor in normal working hours, holidays, unplanned absences and other staffing costs, and it becomes clear why the decision to use IT managed services is often driven by cost considerations.

But can IT managed services be more than just another business expense that allows organisations to operate effectively? With the right level of service it is possible to move from purely a reactive solution to a proactive and value adding strategic solution.

How Can IT Managed Services Add Value?

One key area that can deliver real value to organisations, although not an easy element to measure, is customer focus. If your business users are happy with the level of IT support, it can have real benefits to the organisation. Good relationships mean that business users will get more out of the service – they'll be more likely to contact the IT service desk early ensuring that incidences are dealt with in a timely manner, and they'll be better at communicating their requirements, ensuring understanding on all sides.

The service team will also gain more insight into the organisation that will allow them to be more proactive, such as by pre-empting demand for services and managing capacity. This allows them to also look at continual service improvement and spot opportunities to help the business increase productivity and profitability.

Building on these strong client relationships, IT managed service providers can become a strategic business partner to enable an organisation to fulfil its' business objectives. IT takes on a commercial role, impacting on the bottom-line and adding value to the business that can be converted into profit.

IT solutions can help businesses become more agile, allowing them to respond quickly to change and scale their operation accordingly, as well as creating opportunities for innovation. No longer are IT managed service providers just focussed on disaster recovery and business continuity, but also on aligning IT with business strategy and support our clients' goals.

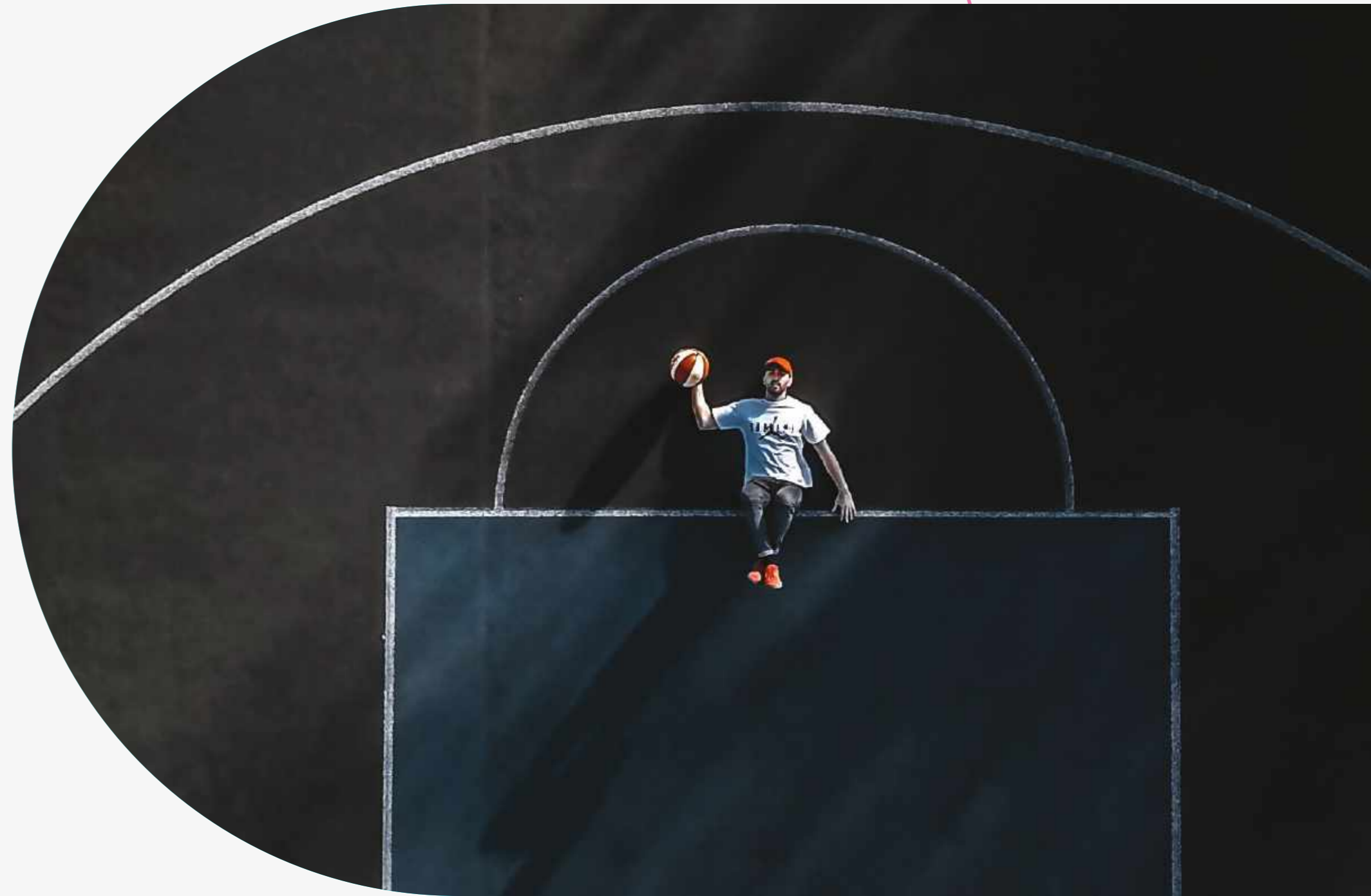
If your existing IT managed services are only reactive, dealing with the day-to-day tasks and incidences with no eye on the future and the organisation's overall business vision and goals, it could be time for a review to see whether service improvements could deliver better ROI with a more business-centric approach.

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Is Your IT Service
Desk Delivering
Value?

How Can IT Managed Services Add Value?

Businesses exist in a new normal, one of constant change. As an operational function, IT has never been under more pressure to support change, innovation and cost savings.

Some IT service desks have adapted, ensuring they are aligned with business objectives, even implementing mission critical digital transformations. Whereas others are struggling to demonstrate value, continuing to act in a back-office capacity for technical issues, rather than proactively support operational objectives.

Service desks that operate on a legacy model continue to believe that 'resolved within SLA' and cost are the two most important objectives. These metrics are based on monthly reports, which only 28% of customers (internal or external) ask to see; even though 50% of businesses make IT decisions based on monthly service desk reports.

IT isn't entirely to blame for a misalignment with objectives. Senior management usually accepts that technical professionals know what they're doing; simply letting them 'get on with it', rather than exploring how IT can better support growth and efficiency goals. HR has been moving from an administrative into a partner-level operational role over the last few years. Now is the time for IT, providing both parties understand how and where to create value.

IT Service Desk Checklist

Here is a six-point checklist, based on the Service Desk Institute (SDI) Standard; 'the definitive reference guide for any service desk looking at how and where to improve service levels.' A four star rated IT service desk, according to the SDI Standard, must demonstrate the following:

1. Leadership

- Service desk management are trusted business partners, able to evolve to meet growth requirements.
- Resources are adjusted according to business demand, to ensure SLA targets are achieved/exceeded.
- Service improvements are continuous and proactive.
- The service desk is active in projects that improve performance across an organisation. Improvement is evident through distribution of timely, meaningful and relevant service information and reports.

2. Strategy

- Service desk vision and mission statements are fully aligned with the organisation, with it clear to partners and internal customers that their role is to support and enhance operational efficiencies.
- Strategic plans exist and are used to support the changing requirements of the organisation.
- Stakeholders have input and can provide feedback, to ensure visions remained aligned.

3. Talent Management

- Service desks use a skills matrix, to ensure job roles are aligned to business needs and changes in the technological environment, providing these are relevant to operational objectives. Innovation for its own sake is not progress.
- Job description reviews, training and career progression is integrated with staff development and service desk performance.
- People satisfaction results are also integrated with service desk HR management.
- Reward and recognition schemes need to be an integral part of how IT leaders manage staff, to ensure they have performance-based incentives.

4. Resources

- Workplaces must provide a high-level of ergonomic design, demonstrating value to the organisation.
- Incoming service requests must be delivered quickly and efficiently, using web or telephony-based ticketing systems, to ensure customers know the incident they report is being handled.
- Staffing and resource allocation is designed to cope with peak workload times, and long-term strategy implementation.
- Increased flexibility to meet changing business and commercial conditions; Customers must be told when interaction statuses (for support tickets) change or when SLA's are approaching a breach, to ensure that stakeholders are kept fully informed.
- For the benefit of customers, knowledge is seen as a support asset, with results published within the organisation and externally (e.g. blogs, articles, white papers). Self-service is also an important feature of four star rated service desks.
- Security is top priority. Systems and resources are protected and continually reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

5. Processes, Procedures & Costs

- Procedures are proactive and focused on how the service desk can improve business performance.
- There is a comprehensive customer satisfaction programme in place, which includes a follow-up procedure to improve performance when a customer is unhappy.
- Regular reviews take place to ensure stakeholders are satisfied with service levels, SLA performance and other KPIs.
- Proactive service desks meet first contact and SLA fulfilment goals for at least one year without failing to hit targets. Re-opened incident rate targets are also in line or above the target set within an SLA.
- IT costs are within or below expectation, demonstrating that a service desk can achieve efficiencies without excessive costs.

6. Social Responsibility

- And finally, service desks that proactively add value should be aligned with an organisations social responsibility goals. Contributions to environmental policies are also a way that IT professionals can make a meaningful impact on an organisations wider, role in society.

So is your **IT service desk** hitting any of these criteria?
Can you make improvements?

5 Things To Consider When Your IT Service Desk Contract Is Up For Renewal

For those organisations that already outsource their service desk, the convergence of cloud solutions, bring your own device (BYOD), more team members working remotely and enhanced cyber security threats, means it's vital that your business is working with a partner that delivers value and great service.

Businesses need IT outsource partners who are at the forefront of these trends and work to support growth objectives through the timely delivery of IT and software solutions, instead of simply acting as a remote support help desk. IT can play an integral role in creating efficiencies and service improvements that benefit an organisation's bottom line and customers.

Choosing the right partner has never been more important. Here are five things to consider when sourcing a new IT service desk partner.

IT Service Desk Contract: 5 Questions To Ask

Do they deliver on their SLA for incident management?

This is a minimum requirement for any IT service desk provider. Before they can deliver long-term efficiencies for your business, they need to be able to solve problems effectively when they arise. Incidents should be handled within the scope of an SLA.

For customers, this should include service that keeps everyone in the loop. Especially if mission critical services go down. Failing to achieve SLA can cause serious damage to productivity, considering how reliant we are on IT and software. Ensure you are working with a provider that doesn't keep you waiting when vital systems fail.

Do you need a different level of support?

Most companies grow and change during the lifecycle of an IT service desk contract. Right now, you could have more employees, desks, computers, devices and IT needs, or you may have new business objectives that need support. Security is also more complex than it was a few years ago, and all organisations are at risk of cyber attack.

Staff use their own phones and tablets (BYOD) or may increasingly be working remotely and this has to be factored in when ensuring they can work productively anywhere and on any device. Has your IT provider kept up with changing trends? Can they deliver the services you need, efficiently and cost effectively?

Does your IT service provider understand your organisation and objectives?

IT service desk support is no longer about mending computers and fixing systems. Modern providers should know your organisation inside and out. They should have a clear idea how IT can play a key role in supporting business objectives and targets.

How well do they understand your overall business aims for the next one to three years? Are they equipped to support these targets? Can they design an IT strategy that will grow and evolve with your organisation? All questions you need to ask and consider when a contract is coming up for renewal.



Do they offer a flexible service that can scale with your business and meet your specific requirements?

While growth may be a target for your organisation, have you thought about what happens if you need to scale back? What if business plans include global growth, does your provider have multilingual and 24/7 capabilities?

IT partners need to deliver on a sliding scale, growing with your business but reducing these services as needed. Flexibility is a valuable feature of modern help desk partners.

Does your IT service provider prioritise Continuous Service Improvement and deliver proactive solutions?

Continuous improvements are when an IT partner constantly learns, adapts and improves services based on growth objectives and solutions that would make the business more efficient.

An effective partner should be proactively presenting solutions to your organisation; after all, they're the experts. But these shouldn't necessarily be technology-driven: instead, they should deliver according to what would benefit your organisation, rather than the next cool thing that IT vendors are selling.

Not all cost savings and efficiencies can be quantified through your SLA terms and contract fees. There may also be opportunities to increase productivity and revenue, reach new markets and customers, and drive growth or expansion; all supported by a customer / business-centric service desk.

A strategic and proactive approach from your service desk partner can give your organisation greater agility and flexibility, which in turn can enable your business to be more competitive. With scalable and responsive IT support your business will be able to react quickly to fluctuations in demand, or the impact external factors can have on your business operation.

Moreover, in some cases legacy systems and mediocre IT support is a barrier to achieving business objectives. With the right service desk partner there may be opportunities to fast track growth and other goals, in a sustainable and cost effective way.

If you would like to explore this opportunity in more detail contact our service desk team.

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or email

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We create transformative
technology solutions that
give our customers the
protection and the freedom
to become the business
they want to be.