

How An Effective Service Desk Improves Productivity And Operations In The Mid-Market



Most Users Only Think about the Service Desk when They Need It



When there is a problem, the service desk can either hinder employee productivity or provide fast support that keeps things moving forward. Solving problems quickly provides a competitive advantage to an organization, but a poor service desk creates problems. A critical factor that impacts which kind of service desk you have is not the staff—albeit they are important—but the system that supports these professionals. Unfortunately, many mid-market and even many larger organizations don't have effective service desk software. They are running on spreadsheets or email, and possibly decade old service desk software.

The right service desk solution provides the engine that drives fast resolutions and remediation of user problems, as well as improving productivity for support and IT staff. The implementation of a capable and easy-to-use service desk solution will truly change the game—and it doesn't have to break the bank either.

A service desk is defined by Wikipedia as: "A central point of contact for handling customer, user, and other issues." The most common use of service desks is for IT technical support, but they are also used for customer service and other groups. This white paper focuses primarily on the IT support desk, however the key features and capabilities for an IT service desk are also important for other applications.

In addition to competitive advantage, the need for an effective service desk is also being driven by a user's expectations for "instant satisfaction," which they have become accustomed to with consumer technology. Employees want the same high-speed high quality service at work too. Furthermore, employees today often completely rely on their personal devices for nearly every task. Downtime isn't acceptable, and it can result in lost productivity and tremendous frustration. Midsize organizations have several unique needs for their service desk solution. It must be affordable, easy to use, non-resource intensive, and deliver fast "time to value." Some service desk products are just too big and complicated. But there are service desk solutions that are well positioned to improve the results of the service desk in organizations of this size.



A Financial Services Organisation That Deployed Atlassian's Jira Service Desk Had A 300% Improvement In The Speed Of Problem Resolution

How Midsize Companies Can Benefit From An Improved Service Desk Solution



A service desk decision comes down to the benefits it can provide to the organization and its employees. Therefore, identifying specific capabilities and features that a service desk product has is where the focus should be. There are three key "big picture" benefits mid-sized organizations derive from using an appropriate service desk solution. Perhaps the single most important is speed of problem resolution. When IT issues occur, employee productivity is hobbled, so solving the problem fast has hard dollar benefits. In a real-world example, a financial services organization that deployed JIRA Service Desk had a 300% improvement in the speed of problem resolution and a 30% increase in user/employee satisfaction. This improvement changed the perception of IT in the user community. Second, a service desk solution can vastly improve the process for supporting the organization. It ensures that no trouble tickets or problems are lost in the system. It also makes certain that as different support people interact to solve the problem,



Jira Service Desk...Reduces the Number of Communication Channels We Use, Consolidating Information Data, As Well As Making Conversation Available to Everyone.¹

—Laura Haines

Skyscanner Product and Operations Leader

all of that information is collected and documented. The service desk also supports the development of a knowledge base, standard best practices for problem resolution, and improved teamwork. Finally, a service desk solution provides the ability to prioritize the most important problems so that they are solved first. The bottom line: improved service desk productivity and increased employee satisfaction. In addition, there are major financial benefits from deploying a help desk solution geared toward mid-market organizations. With a better platform for providing service, a greater number of issues can be handled without increasing staffing levels or the cost of support. And with the efficiency gains, IT resources are freed up to support new projects, lowering the cost of contractors or additional resources. When the service desk improves productivity, savings can be substantial.



A Multinational Retail Company Found That After Implementing an Itil Certified Service Desk, They Decreased The Support Management Staff by 50% According To Yekateryna Samoylenko, The Deputy Director.

The benefits don't end there. Service desk solutions also help organizations in other ways, including

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

There is no greater frustration for employees and customers than when a problem "goes into the black hole" and they have no idea of its status. Using a capable service desk solution, it is now possible for them to track the status of the issue, expected time to resolution, and if desired, who is tasked with solving the problem. This level of communication and information eliminates the frustration of not knowing if the issue is being resolved. In many instances, this single benefit can result in vastly improved user satisfaction and confidence in IT.

HELP EMPLOYEES HELP THEMSELVES

With the use of personal technology exploding, employees and customers have become better at supporting their own personal IT "environment." As a result of this growing expertise, smart organizations are delivering self-service capabilities via the help desk, and that has many pluses. First, there is no faster resolution than when users can solve their own problems without having to wait for other resources, or even wait on the phone. Second, self-service is empowering and builds confidence; users become more adept at handling issues in the future that might require some level of technical support.

CONSISTENCY

An effective service desk is built on consistent processes, proven solutions, and accurate prioritization of issues. Consistency allows the service desk staff to constantly refine and improve how they solve problems, resulting in better service to the users. In addition to a consistent approach to solving user problems, the service desk can impose consistency on software versions, security tools installed, and other elements of the software "stack" that impact IT infrastructure.

REDUCE THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF A TECHNOLOGY FAILURE

When an outage occurs or a key employee is impacted by the loss of critical systems, it can result in real and measurable impact on the organization. Reducing the amount of time that systems or individuals are down is crucial. A service desk provides better coordination, tracking, and responsiveness to reduce the business impact of downtime.

INCREASED LEVELS OF AUTOMATION

The better-quality service desk solutions have the ability to set “rules” that will automate specific actions or activities. For example, when a high-priority or critical issue is created, the agent most capable of resolving it is automatically notified. This ensures high-priority problems get immediate attention. Another use of this type of automation is to create an automated follow-up notification if a user or customer doesn’t close the trouble ticket or adds a new comment. However, the most prominent use of automation is to proactively notify the user or employee as to the status, expected resolution, and who is handling an existing issue.

BETTER MANAGE UPDATES, UPGRADES, AND CHANGES

One of the most common and frustrating problems for IT organizations is when the user base has many different applications and multiple versions of the applications or software stack. The service desk can mitigate this problem by acting as a platform for driving successful upgrades or changes in the software being used at the perimeter. Having a consistent software stack will simplify and lower the cost of support. In addition, when all employees are using the same tools, collaboration is improved. Last, consistency allows organizations to optimize their license agreements to reduce costs of software.



Jira Service Desk and Confluence is a Simple Clean Transactional / Collaboration Tool with Good Standart Functionality, Based Around Service Desk and Back Office Support Functions.²

—Barclay Rae
Independent ITSM Consultant

7 Key Features Of Best-Of-Breed Service Desk Solutions



1 SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

As noted above, the most effective service desk allows users or employees to resolve their own problems when they can. This is far faster, results in greater levels of satisfaction, and empowers the user. The portal should also allow the user to quickly see the status of any open issues they may have.

2 INTUITIVE INTERFACE

If the service desk is hard to use, requires a lot of operational training, and forces the agents to “speak a new language,” it will not be successful. The agent interface should support intuitive use and minimize any need for training.

3 AVAILABILITY OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS OR CONSULTANTS

As with any system, there is a need for some technical installation and setup activity. This is where third-party experts or consultants can be a huge resource. Having experienced professionals who can quickly design and deploy the service desk exactly as you need it is a substantial benefit.

4 FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Every organization has its own unique way of doing business and running operations. The service desk must be able to adapt itself to become an intrinsic part of daily operations, not force changes in the way things are currently done.

5 AUTOMATION

A strong service desk solution is not just a better way for agents to work with users or employees. It is possibly more important that the service desk act as a platform for automating specific tasks or processes that will result in more efficient operations and better service for all. As many of the cost components of the service desk continue to increase, automation is key to keeping those costs in line.

6 MOBILITY

Today's digital businesses are truly virtual and enabling service desk staff to work and receive notifications from anywhere is becoming an essential component of the solution.

7 DELIVER ON SLAs

Meeting SLAs is essential for IT organizations. The right service desk solution is a key part of making sure that you nail your SLA for support every time. It will also help you get the most important things done first and ensure accurate prioritization. Best-of-breed solutions enable the ability to configure, click, and get going in minutes.



Sphere Partners and Atlassian's Jira Service Desk Provide The Right Answer



[Sphere Software](#) provides expert design, integration, and deployment support for the award-winning JIRA Service Desk. This combination results in the optimal solution for the customer. The JIRA Service Desk has won awards and positive notice from a number of different sources. These include:

- [G2 Crowd](#) named JIRA in the leader quadrant⁴
- [PC Magazine's](#) review noted that JIRA Service Desk is a "solidly featured help desk at a decent price..."⁵
- A recent [TrustRadius](#) review noted that JIRA Service Desk's "Dashboard of ALL tickets including 'Stale,' 'PastDue,' 'Unassigned,' and 'DueThisWeek.' ...is very helpful for an overview of what needs to be worked and what is being worked within the team."⁶
- [Capterra](#) gave JIRA Service Desk 4.5 / 5 stars on ease of use and noted that "JIRA Service Desk combines an intuitive user experience for your customers with powerful SLA support, customizable queues, automated request management, and real-time reporting."⁷
- [CrowdReviews](#), a user-driven feed forum, gave JIRA Service Desk 89% positive reviews and 0% negative reviews.⁸
- [Deskroll's](#) review of JIRA Service Desk reported, "The system contains simple and intuitive interface, suitable for ITSM automation, works well for small to mid-sized companies."⁹



*[The] Quick Setup [Of Jira Service Desk] Suits a Fast Paced Environment Such As Our Business.*³

—**Robert Koch**
Marketing Manager Online, Mobile Bridge

Sphere Partners Brings Deep Expertise and Technical Skills to Atlassian's Jira Implementation



Sphere Software, headquartered in Chicago, has a team of JIRA /Atlassian Service Provider experts who can help you get all of the benefits of JIRA Service Desk and deploy a Service Desk that improves productivity. Sphere deployments ensure that workflow is optimized, that there are no bottlenecks or memory issues that can impact performance, and that all of your critical data is migrated into your new JIRA Service Desk solution. This includes migration from Gemini (Countersoft), Remedy (BMC Software), Bugzilla (Bugzilla.org), and Trello. Sphere stays with its customers during the entire deployment and installation process to ensure a successful rollout that matches the client's business processes. Sphere also goes the "extra mile" to meet unique customer requirements that are not supported in the standard version of JIRA Service Desk. Sphere will customize the interface to ensure it follows the customer's workflow and other requirements. In addition, Sphere can provide cloud hosting if necessary. For over a decade, Sphere has earned a stellar reputation with clients due to their transparency, responsiveness, and technical excellence.

Summary

For midsize organizations, the value and benefits that can be gained from having a capable and effective service desk are highly compelling. Unfortunately, too many organizations are struggling with this function as they use modified spreadsheets or emails that have no documented processes and often result in unacceptable wait times for issue resolution.

1. <http://www.baselinemag.com/enterprise-apps/service-desksoftware-boosts-sales-collaboration.html>
2. <http://www.theitsmreview.com/2015/05/review-atlassian-jira-service-desk-and-confuence/>
3. <https://www.trustradius.com/reviews/jira-servicedesk-2016-04-21-06-56-19>
4. <http://blogs.atlassian.com/2015/09/jiraservicedesk-leader-g2-crowd/>
5. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2488242,00.asp>
6. <https://www.trustradius.com/products/jira-service-desk/reviews>
7. <http://www.capterra.com/help-desk-software/spotlight/138769/JIRA%20Service%20Desk/Atlassian>
8. <https://www.crowdreviews.com/jira-service-desk>
9. https://deskroll.com/blog/article.php?id=Help_Desk_Software_Review_and_Comparison

YOUR Business Challenges
OUR Technology Expertise



SPHERE
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About Sphere Partners

Sphere Partners is a strategic technology partner offering consulting services, cutting-edge software development, expert engineering teams on-demand and enterprise platform implementations such as Monday.com, Netsuite, Salesforce, Google Cloud and Snowflake for companies seeking to transform in a demanding digital world.

With a global team of business and technology consultants, solution creators, and engineers, Sphere delivers strategy, design, and software development to help organizations solve their technology challenges and improve productivity, enhance the user experience, and maximize growth.

