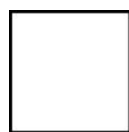




Implementing a New Outsourced Service Desk

Mechdyne IT Services



Mechdyne
ENABLING DISCOVERY

Change is inevitable. It can be welcomed and planned for or it can be unexpected. Either way, it will happen. Businesses experience changes, planned or otherwise, frequently. It's critical to ensure that any changes to business infrastructure and support services managed by IT departments are deliberate and well-planned. So, how do you know when it is time to make a major change in the IT department? Sometimes growth and expansion are occurring so the current team cannot handle increasing demands. Other times, unexpected staffing changes force the conversation around the needs of the business. It could even be that the business's targets and expectations are not being met by the current team and a change is necessary.

Outsourcing some IT operations is one possible temporary or permanent solution. Third-party support, remote and/or onsite, can actually help strengthen an IT department's technology footprint within the organization. Outsource companies should be, by design, specialists with expertise in one or more services.

IT service providers that offer help desk capabilities can free internal IT teams to focus on strategic technology tasks while end-users are provided with dedicated support. Outsource firms have the time and opportunity to generate continuous improvement such as developing best practices, proactive procedures, and gaining knowledge. Outsourcing service desk accountabilities can alleviate pressure on internal staff, allowing them to innovate, focus on strategic initiatives, and contribute to the business as a whole, while still providing high-quality support for end-users. This approach can prove to decrease downtime and ultimately reduce costs. [According to a Forbes article published in 2018](#), two of the top six reasons why good employees leave positions are because they're not challenged or they aren't given developmental opportunities. Outsourcing low-level IT issues will allow higher-skilled technicians to take on challenges that they otherwise wouldn't be able to tackle while dealing with helpdesk requests.

Taking pressure off internal IT resources enables those teams to innovate, focus on strategic initiatives, and contribute more to the business as a whole.

A service desk partner should not only empower an internal IT team, but end-users as well. A helpdesk's passion should be customer support with an emphasis on technology, whereas an internal helpdesk is traditionally staffed with technological skillsets as the focus, rather than customer support or interpersonal skills. Employees should feel they can easily ask for help and expect to receive it quickly. Eliminating hesitation and enabling faster resolution reduces downtime. When a help desk takes the opportunity to teach, not just solve problems, users become more self-sufficient over time. This reduces calls on recurring issues. Quality support should instill confidence in using the technology and systems that the business has invested in.

Over the past 20 years, we have implemented and onboarded hundreds of clients, many of them never having had an outsourced help desk previously. The following will help outline who should consider outsourcing service desk accountabilities, and how to implement an outsourced system for the first time.

Why an IT Partner?

As mentioned earlier, staffing changes, business expansion, and missed targets signal the opportunity to bring an outsourced service desk partner into an IT environment. These moments are not the only ones, however. There are many ways an IT services partner can alleviate strains on internal IT groups and resources. Following are sample scenarios and how a partner can provide support:

- Increased hardware/equipment costs to maintain IT infrastructure, an ITSM tool, or hardware for internal IT? Let a service provider cover the overhead costs of people and infrastructure.
- Limited time to focus on strategic future proofing due to dealing with constant user issues and unexpected “fires?” A service desk provider deals with user issues while more experienced techs help drive business growth and focus on bigger-picture items.
- IT innovation or process efficiencies have stalled? Leverage a new partner’s expertise in IT management and utilize the multi-level management structure to identify new opportunities for the internal IT team.

Case Study

A new client had never worked with an outsourced service desk. The company felt the pain of trying to develop an in-house service desk as they were growing. This caused significant end-user downtime due to slow response from a small internal team. Employees had a bad perception of the IT department, which decreased efficiency and morale within different departments. Outsourcing the service desk function made an immediate impact on the end-user community. They started to enjoy quick response times and quick resolution to get them back to work.

Outsourcing the service desk function made an immediate impact on the end-user community.

Tips for a Successful Implementation

Communication, Communication, Communication

After identifying the need for change, and the new partner, the next step is to plan and implement the new processes and systems. Prior to go-live, weeks, sometimes months, should be spent in discovery time getting to know the new service desk team and providing company workflows. This ensures service delivery is executed successfully from day one.

Here are some other actionable items that can help businesses manage a successful service desk implementation:

- Setting weekly calls to make sure checkpoints are being hit
- Testing access to key systems
- Coordinating training between the new partner and key internal experts
- Hold each other to checkpoints. Going live without the appropriate training or access will lead to a poor initial end-user experience.
- Test the backend setup. Create test tickets, simulate test calls, check IVRs, and review the incident categories and reporting.

What should IT Teams expect from service desk partners?

Businesses should expect more than just high-quality service and IT knowledge from an outsourced service desk partner. Organizations should expect:

- Frequent communication via email and/or phone regarding day-to-day operations.
- Regularly scheduled, high-level review meetings to discuss metrics and open items.
- Best practices review and any additional implementation as changes occur in both environments.
- Transparent insight into metrics, end-user feedback, individual technician performance, and overall team performance.

All of these deliverables round out the offering and ensure that businesses get the most out of their service desk investment.

What should end-users expect from service desk partners?

End-user experience will change, ideally, for the better. Not only will they have a dedicated resource that is available in a variety of ways, but the service desk team will have an understanding of the environment in which the end-users are operating. Common frustrations with a service desk should diminish using an outsourced partner. End-users should not have to worry about sitting on the phone waiting for an IT person to stop what they are doing and answer the call, or sending an email and hoping that someone reads it promptly. An outsourced service desk team is a dedicated resource. A key metric of success is “speed of answer.” That means the service desk team should have the resources and appropriate staffing to quickly answer calls, emails, and chats.

“This appears to be a much better system than handling our IT issues in the past. The timeliness is awesome!” – IT management feedback from a recent client survey

Besides answering calls quickly, the service desk team should be knowledgeable to resolve issues quickly. Service desk agents will be ready to assist end-users after the training and implementation process. Having received the training discussed above, and come armed with the knowledge they have gained through working with other clients, agents should be able to identify and resolve issues quickly and courteously.

“The help desk is a welcome addition. Great service and IT knowledge.” – End-user feedback

No solution is perfect. With all of the benefits that outsourcing can bring, there are considerations. One is that the end-users no longer have the personal connection they may have had with the internal team. Outsource service desk teams are typically remote and do not have the same opportunities to develop similar relationships. This does not mean to say the IT team will be totally replaced and never see end-users anymore. Having more time to focus on strategic projects and business goals may actually let them interact with teammates in a more relaxed fashion, outside of the urgent support phone call or desk visit.

Common Pitfalls of Service Desk Implementation

IT teams should watch out for:

- Pressure to “go live” no matter what
 - There will be hurdles to overcome throughout the implementation process. This could be access-related, infrastructure, scheduling, etc. Deadlines are very important, which is why frequent checkpoints throughout the implementation are necessary. Recovering from a poor launch has tremendous negative implications.
- Lack of responsiveness
 - An implementation is a two-way street between the company stakeholders and the new service provider. The relationship needs to be strong and communication must be frequent from both sides. Communication and checkpoints, scheduled up front, build common goals to ensure proper planning so everyone is successful.
- Limited stakeholder engagement
 - Implementing a new service desk requires lots of interaction between different players in the IT environment. A service provider will have agents, supervisors, managers, directors, and executives involved with the implementation. The more internal buy-in and involvement from the stakeholders, the more successful the launch will be.

How to announce and integrate a new service desk

Once the background tasks of setting up the new service have been completed, an official announcement about the change, as well as other efforts, should go into making sure the new information and service desk are at top of mind for end-users. Changing habits takes time and attention. There are a few ways to announce, provide information, and be creative with this process.

Running an extended “welcome” campaign provides a steady reminder of the change and creates a connection with the new team. Sending out emails introducing key partner members to the end-users can create a closer connection between both groups. Changing desktop or login screen backgrounds with important information is an easy way to provide new contact information. This can be as simple as adding the phone number and email to the images already there. This small change can come in quite handy when someone runs into an issue and needs the information for the first time. They just have to look at their screen.

Another campaign piece can be handing out small swag to employees. Most people like free things, especially if the giveaways are useful or informative. Mousepads printed with the new contact information are a great example of useful and minimal giveaways. They will not distract or burden end-users to find storage and informational swag can come in handy when they need support from the service desk.

In addition to emails, announcements, and possibly even giveaways, training sessions are a critical piece of the welcome, or onboarding, process. End-users will not only get information on how the new service works, and how to contact the new service desk, but they will also have a chance to meet individuals from the new team. Since the service desk is remote, most end-users won't have the chance to meet the actual agents providing the support and assistance. If they have an opportunity to meet the customer relationship manager, team lead, or even some agents who provide the training, the end-users should feel more connected and comfortable reaching out.

Training sessions are also important because they imbue the end-users with confidence. They get to see any changes to procedures and any new systems. The trainers will also be able to highlight improvements over the past process, further proving the new process is a positive change. The sessions also allow end-users to ask questions and have their voices and concerns heard and addressed. Managers and decision-makers



can voice their reasons for making the change and show their support for the new service desk team. Buy-in from managers and decision-makers helps end-users feel confident in the new service. In the end, confident and comfortable users are more productive and have higher utilization rates, for both technology and services.

Confident and comfortable users are also more honest in their feedback. When filling out surveys on service, they will provide feedback that is either positive, like the comments provided above, or they may provide constructive feedback on changes that can improve aspects of the new service.

The implementation sets the foundation for an effective and successful service desk team. With the right expectations and the right partner, downtime will decrease and teams will be able to focus on the tasks and projects that matter most.

About Mechdyne IT Services

Our 100% US-based IT professionals offer a full range of IT support services including an ITIL best-practices-driven service desk that enables end-users to get back to work quickly and improve the businesses for which they work. Mechdyne IT Services is a business unit of Mechdyne Corporation, a global technology leader creating distinctive electronic, software, and service solutions that enable discovery.

For more information, please visit [mechdyne.com/it-and-audiovisual-services](https://www.mechdyne.com/it-and-audiovisual-services).