



Comparing Service Desk Team Models: *Shared vs Dedicated Service Desk Teams*



Mechdyne IT Services

Comparing Service Desk Team Models

Service desk teams play critical roles within organizations. From identifying recurring issues within the environment to solving productivity-sucking end-user problems. When implementing a new managed service desk, many considerations come into play when deciding whether a shared or dedicated support service desk model best suits your organization's needs. Deciding factors include budget, call volume, and required service desk support team tasks.

What is a dedicated service desk team?

A dedicated service desk team consists of a group of agents who work exclusively with one client. This model enables a high level of communication and collaboration between team members. While dedicated teams develop a greater familiarity with a client's environment, leading to higher resolution rates, this model is more expensive.

Benefits of a Dedicated Team

Some benefits of using a dedicated team include:

- Increased efficiency and productivity.
 - Dedicated teams are usually able to get more done in the same amount of time because they don't need to spend their time with other clients.
- High-quality work
 - Being part of a dedicated team often means you're part of a smaller, more cohesive unit. This can be a big advantage in terms of morale and productivity.
- Lower conflict
 - Dedicated teams are less likely to suffer from conflict between team members because they are focused on the same goals.
- Increased collaboration and communication
 - Working in the same environment with the same users creates more shared experiences and increases applicable knowledge between team members.

Challenges of a Dedicated Team

As with any solution to a problem, some challenges come with using a dedicated team, such as:

- Limited availability when contacts are high.
 - A dedicated team means a set number of available agents. This can mean longer wait times during peak contact periods, whereas a shared team can flex the number of available agents up and down as needed.
- Increased cost.
 - A shared service desk team can spread the cost of agents across multiple clients. A dedicated team cannot.
- Ensuring team members are properly utilized during low periods of volume.
 - Just as high contact periods can cause delays, low contact periods can mean agents are less than optimally utilized. Teams may be able to assign other administrative tasks based on skill sets.

What is a shared service desk team?

A shared service desk team is a group of agents who work with multiple clients. Agents work with a core group of clients, but may support other environments as needed during periods of peak or low contact. Having this flexibility in terms of staffing and utilization enables the managed services partner to achieve economies of scale. This often translates to lower costs compared to a dedicated or internally managed service desk team.

Benefits of a Shared Team

There are several benefits of using a shared team, including:

- Lower Costs
 - Since a shared team is comprised of agents who are working with multiple clients, organizations can save money through economies of scale.
- Team Flexibility
 - Since members of a shared team work on several different clients, shared teams can be more flexible and adaptable than dedicated teams. This allows support teams to respond to changes quickly.
- Team Members are More Knowledgeable
 - Working with several different clients, creates a variety of experiences and issues from which agents can learn and apply to all their assigned clients. This can improve the volume of work and reduce costs in the long run.
- A Shared Team is Easier to Hire
 - Turnover happens in every organization, managed service providers included. If you are looking for a dedicated team, you will have to spend time identifying the right agent to fit that client to fill gaps in the team. A shared team enables agents of various skills can be assigned to different clients as needed with little disturbance to the overall support model.

Challenges of a Shared Team

As with the dedicated team, some challenges also come with using a shared service desk model, such as:

- Shared Teams Require More Communication
 - Every service desk requires effective communication – shared teams even more so. As members of the shared team work on different clients, you will need to stay in touch with them and make sure that they are aware of all the various happenings in each environment. Additionally, when team members are located in different physical locations, communication can be difficult. Team members may not be available at the same time or they may have conflicting schedules. Lack of face-to-face conversations or meetings when workers are in different locations can also lead to communication issues.
- Shared Teams Require More Utilization Management
 - You need to make sure that the team members are not overwhelmed with their workloads. Having too few or too many clients can cause stress and affect productivity, so agents need a well-balanced workload. The efficiencies gained from a shared team can be lost if utilization is not properly monitored and managed.

- The Number of Clients Can Affect Team Efficiency
 - When you have a small number of clients, the team members can work on them efficiently. Too many clients lead to teams feeling overwhelmed and confused by all the different processes and documents used to support the clients. This will affect the efficiency of the team and make it difficult to get things done on time. An experienced managed service provider will have standards set up to avoid these issues.

Dedicated Team vs Shared Team Which Team Is Right for You?

IT teams need to evaluate business goals to determine whether or not a dedicated team or shared team is the right choice for the organization. If you have a large want to keep things flexible or have large disparities between periods of high and low contacts, then a shared team is a good choice. But if you have a large user base and want to improve efficiency, then a dedicated team is the answer.

Productivity

Team members in a shared environment are typically not as efficient as those who work with dedicated clients. This can be attributed to the fact that they are working on several clients at once and have to divide their attention.

Team members in a dedicated environment can focus all of their attention on one client and are therefore able to become more proficient. However, this comes at a greater cost.

Initiative

In a shared environment, team members have little flexibility over the clients with whom they work. They may not have the time to think through decisions about the solutions or to develop proactive ideas.

Team members in a dedicated environment can take more time with the client that they work on and have more flexibility to work on solutions. They can use their initiative to develop proactive ideas and make decisions that benefit a single environment.

Focus

Team members in a shared environment will need to use shared information and documentation which varies from client to client. Their attention is split across multiple environments and user populations.

Team members in a dedicated environment can focus on a specific client without having to worry about additional client processes and documentation. They will have fewer distractions and will be able to focus on the client, the repeatable processes, and become more efficient.

Skills

If your business process consists of technical tasks that are consistent and repeatable, a dedicated team will fit well in this environment. Dedicated teams can produce quality solutions and improve the resolution output to your users consistently.

Shared teams also perform similar tasks but gain experience from a variety of environments. This additional experience and best practices can often be leveraged to support all the clients assigned to shared teams.

Flexibility

Dedicated teams have limited flexibility for change due to planned or unplanned reasons. Greater planning sessions are needed with a dedicated team since the teams are fixed in size.

Shared resources and teams can be quite flexible when it comes to the scope of work. With shared resources and teams, they do not work on one client and you share the same agents with other businesses so you use the same resources to support multiple clients at the same time.

Output

Dedicated teams are limited by the number of agents assigned to support a specific client. This limits the team's ability to deliver high output during peak periods of contact.

Shared teams can deliver more output as volume increases by dynamically assigning more resources to one client or another.

Cost

Both models can help you minimize overhead costs but many companies prefer and consider shared resources and teams to be more cost-effective. Shared support is billed by usage (per ticket) / monthly service flat rate. Keep in mind that all rates are subject to incrementing as the volume of tickets goes past the minimum commitment.

Dedicated teams have fixed rates for all resources and charge through monthly billing.

Whatever model you choose, it's important to identify your needs and decide on other priorities such as speed, cost, and flexibility before choosing a service. Having the right team in place lowers downtime across the entire organization and enables other IT resources to focus on other critical projects and strategic initiatives.

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.