



White Paper

# 5 Core Components to Enhance Your Help Desk Experience

**How should organizations be managing their help desk experience?**

A help desk should do more than just provide support. It should provide an overall experience for customers, employees, alumni or any constituents seeking help that will build their trust and keep them coming back time after time.

# 5 Core Components to Enhance Your Help Desk Experience



It's important to realize that help desks aren't just call centers. They are another way to present an organization as a qualified and exceptional brand. They should show the customers who contact them that they care and work to provide a unique and positive experience for them. It is also not easy to maintain and manage your own help desk internally without proper support and staff. Consistently negative experiences can leave callers with a bitter taste in their mouth. In order to keep an organization's help desk thriving and providing exemplary customer satisfaction consistently, take heed to the following core components that drive a great overall help desk experience.

## 1. SERVICE EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY



When dealing with customers, it's important to provide them with not only answers to their questions, but go beyond their basic needs to deliver an exceptional experience that shows that the help desk cares about them and wants to continually provide them with excellent service. This level of quality and assurance builds loyalty and lets customers know that they are valued.

Accomplishing this can take a fair amount of time and effort. It would be nice and easy if great help desk service happened overnight, but that isn't reality. A consistent and exceptional help desk experience starts with the managers and team leaders developing standard processes and developing attitudes that shows how to treat customers and questions, and how to handle difficult situations with poise and professionalism. Many organizations conduct employee training that clearly lays out the guidelines and goals of the help desk experience.

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Genesys Global Survey discovered the two biggest things that make a customer's experience satisfying: competent service reps (78 percent) and

personalization (38 percent). Both of these factors, when implemented and used correctly, can boost a help desk's service quality and overall experience.

Another issue that some organization's help desks have is the false reality that they are already providing quality service. A study conducted by Lee Resources stated that 80 percent of companies say that they produce exceptional service, but only 8 percent of their customers agree. To get an accurate gauge of service levels, send out surveys and heed the responses.

### What ranks highest in customer satisfaction in their help desk experience?

(Source: Genesys Global Survey)



**38%**

Personalization



**78%**

Competent Service Reps

Note: For the purposes of this paper, all customers, users, employees, alumni, faculty, etc. will be referred to as "customers," because at some level, that's what they all are.

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## 2. KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE

In managing the help desk experience, people play a big role in how everything operates. Choosing the right people for the job is paramount, since they will be the ones representing the organization. According to the Help Desk Institute, individuals who have excellent customer service and problem-solving skills are the most sought-after people in a help desk workplace.

Both of those skills are necessary for the job, but help desk agents also need to be knowledgeable about what they are problem solving. Agents that know what they are doing and what they are helping the customer with every step of the way leads to a better experience for the caller and increases the chances of a satisfied customer.

In order to have knowledgeable agents, they have to be trained. There are several areas to focus the training on, and it is important to ensure that the most critical areas are covered. Here are five of the most common types of training that help desk agents receive, according to the Help Desk Institute:

- **The technologies used to provide support.**
- **Help desk service skills.**
- **The technologies used by customers.**
- **Problem-solving skills.**
- **General communication skills.**

**To ensure you have the most knowledgeable agents, focus their training on the following core areas:**

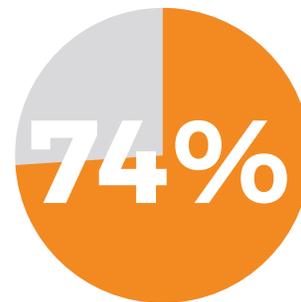
- ▶ Technologies used to provide support.
- ▶ Support service skills.
- ▶ Technologies used by constituents.
- ▶ Problem-solving skills.
- ▶ General communication skills.



## 3. HOURS OF OPERATION

Most help desks are only available during business hours, and this is extremely inconvenient for the people that work late hours or can't call or email in until after they get off work. Today's workplace is becoming more flexible, which means that there are more employees who set their own hours and work beyond the typical shift. In fact, a FlexJobs survey of 1,500 workers found 74 percent of them wanted flexible work options in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Help desks need to realize this and create a way for their services to be available at all hours of the day when customers are working and consuming resources.

This may lead to hiring more help desk agents, or even outsourcing the help desk services to a partner company, in order to let people call in anytime they want. Having a help desk with extended hours and potentially 24/7 support further enhances the experience by accommodating the customers' needs and schedule.



**Percentage of people who want flexible work options**

(Source: Lee Resources)

## 4. INDEPENDENT WORKERS

It is not enough to just have knowledgeable agents and be content with that. Having workers that are independent is the next logical step. This will allow the help desk managers and leaders to focus on bigger things, and not have to micro-manage the help desk agents all the time. These workers must be able to execute correctly and make decisions that are in line with the overall goals and customer experience objectives. This type of flexibility puts the leadership

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team in a position to work “on” the help desk framework and not have to work “in” it all the time. This leads to a better help desk experience and one that is focused on constant improvement.

To cultivate employees that exemplify these traits, consider the elements of a successful work culture from a Help Desk Institute report that surveyed help desk employees, desktop support employees and management. Even though this report doesn't call out independent workers specifically, all of these factors apply to what goes into developing trusted employees, which leads to more qualified and independent agents. The surveyed employees deemed that the following were very important:

## Elements of a successful work culture to develop trusted employees

(Source: Help Desk Institute Report)



## 5. OUTCOME FOCUSED



The final component to the help desk experience is always staying focused on the outcome, and producing results that will enhance the overall help desk service for end-users. Here are three main ways to be outcome focused:

**Strive for first-call resolution.** No matter who is on the other end, customers want an answer to their question right away. Make it a priority for the help desk agents to try and resolve the problem as quickly

as possible, because a high firstcall resolution rate is directly associated with high caller satisfaction. Sometimes the initial agent just doesn't have the knowledge or tools to solve a customer's inquiry. In these cases, be sure to have higher level agents available immediately rather than creating a ticket for follow up. It's also important to record when a first-call resolution happens, as the Ascent Group reported that 44 percent of companies that recorded firstcall resolution results for a year or longer had considerable improvement in their performance rates.

**Reduce response times.** In order to boost satisfaction, work on cutting down the response time for calls, emails or social media. Speed isn't the most important goal, an extraordinary experience is, but it certainly factors into how the customer views an organization. There are a few ways that help desk agents can respond quickly to the customers to let them know that their problem is being handled, such as assigning a help ticket (this could be an automated response), and then providing an estimated resolution time for that case number or ticket. Phone calls are a different situation, since the caller will be on hold waiting for an agent to pick up the phone. According to Harris Interactive, 75 percent of callers think that it takes too long to talk to an agent. It is important to have a very clear understanding of typical call volume, arrival patterns and length in order to optimize the staffing plans in advance. Sometimes things won't go according to plan, but they will more often if a plan is in place. When there's a higher call volume than normal, and there's not enough staff to get to all the calls, consider implementing a hold message that gives the caller an estimated wait time. If customers know what to expect and how long until their call is answered, they will be more understanding of high call volume wait times.

## Percentage of companies which reported considerable improvement in first call resolution with shift in focus



# 44%

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**Conduct surveys.** Surveys are a great way to get an accurate picture of the help desk experience. Some questions to ask in a help desk survey would be:

- **Did the help desk resolve your problem?**
- **Was the help desk prompt and professional in responding to your problem?**
- **Were you happy with the help desk service you received?**

Measure the survey on a five-point scale, and instead of looking at average survey score only, measure it in terms of “top two boxes” and “bottom box.” That is to say, measure the percentage of respondents that rated their experience as exceptional or very good

and the percentage of respondents that rated the experience as poor. There are various thoughts on this, but a typical best practice is to expect more than 85 percent to fall in the top two boxes and less than 3 percent to fall into the bottom box.

Also, be sure to follow up on every single bottom box rating. Determine if there is an action item to correct a potentially systemic issue and decide if there is additional follow-up required for that specific customer. Each of these outcome-focused points are important to improving the overall help desk experience and seeing where changes may need to be made.

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## CONCLUSION



All of these components that make up the help desk experience can be complicated to implement correctly and maintain. So how do organizations go about aligning them properly? Some organizations have the expertise and resources to accomplish this internally, while others turn to professional help desk providers to get access to the resources and thought leaders needed to accomplish it. Both approaches can make sense depending on an organization's specific

circumstances. The key is to ensure that the appropriate time is taken to assess the current environment and determine which course of action is best.

Even though the core help desk components remain constant, the ideal experience looks different for every organization, depending on environment variables and size. By focusing on these unchanging help desk pillars, organizations can work to create an entire help desk experience that not only meets their customers' needs in a timely manner, but always creates a positive impression for their brand.



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