

HELP DESK OUTSOURCING: One Antidote to Technology Advances and Increasingly Tech-Savvy End Users

Technology innovations enable many bold and visionary business strategies, but those very advances also make it difficult to provide help desk support to corporate users and customers. An IDG Research survey of enterprises with 5,000 and more employees finds IT professionals face a broad range of technical support issues, from a knowledge and skills gap to the struggle to optimize support processes, enhance self-service, and improve quality of service.

Growing Support Desk Challenges

Today's IT support desk professionals face a range of challenges—some new, some driven by the changing business environment, and some stemming from increasingly knowledgeable end users. Here is how those challenges stack up:

- **Knowledge and skills gap (51%).** Rapidly evolving technologies make it hard to keep expertise up to date. Training is time-consuming and costly, but non-negotiable as technology continues to advance.
- **Optimizing support processes (51%).** Organizations struggle to increase the efficiency of end-user support processes—the “do less with more” mentality—while also striving to reduce costs and free up IT resources for strategic endeavors.
- **Enhancing self-service (45%).** Empowering users to help themselves reduces demand for support staff, saving money and freeing up resources for new initiatives.

- **Improving quality of service (45%).** Users expect the same high-caliber customer support for their corporate technology as for their personal technology. Plus, increasingly tech-savvy users can be impatient with slow service.
- **Providing 24x7 real-time support (35%).** Organizations with global operations must support employees around the clock, 365 days a year.
- **Servicing multiple languages and locations (27%).** The global nature of many organizations requires supporting multilingual workforces and customers.

Technology Trickle Down Effect

It's not surprising that big data ranks first (41%) among trends keeping support teams busy. The reason is simple: As the use of predictive analytics to glean business intelligence increases, the need to train users in these new tools also grows. And because big data analytics is still new, and often requires integrating new and legacy applications, support staff may struggle to keep up.

Taking a self-service approach to big data analytics can reduce the draw on help desk support staff. However, big data can also benefit help desk operations. Sifting through equipment reliability statistics, for example, may reveal performance tendencies that could be used to replace equipment before failures occur.

The mobile workforce, equipped with their own personal devices, is the norm at large organizations

HELP DESK CHALLENGES IN 2016

Knowledge skills gap 51%

Optimizing support processes 51%

Enhancing self-service 45%

Improving quality of service 45%

24x7 real-time support 35%



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across a variety of industries—and providing support for these users ranks high (39%) among help desk challenges.

In this world, help desk staff must be versed in all approved corporate devices, including hardware features, apps, and operating system upgrades. Keeping these devices secure means implementing strict password and access policies and keeping highly sensitive data off devices altogether.

The technical support functions are also feeling the impact of several other trends:

- **Customer-centric approach (29%).** End users expect a high-quality experience, and don't accept difficult-to-use systems or limited data access.
- **Moving to the cloud (29%).** Public and private clouds at many companies—and the resulting hybrid cloud architectures—give rise to integration issues that require additional support and specialized knowledge.
- **Monitoring social media chatter (24%).** Monitoring and analyzing how customers discuss product issues on social media is increasingly important—and may require new skills and/or dedicated staff.
- **Omni-channel support (24%).** Users and customers expect consistent technical support across all devices, whether in the office or on the road.

Outsourcing May Provide Relief

But there's light at the end of the tunnel. At large organizations, outsourcing help desk and technical support functions enjoys wide acceptance: 43% of respondents will outsource some or all support operations in 2016. A look at the top challenges helps explain their reasoning:

- **Knowledge and skill gap (51%).** Because staffers with the latest skills are hard to find and training is expensive and time-consuming, relying on a third party to maintain a skilled workforce saves the enterprise time and money.

- **Optimizing support processes (51%) and improving quality of service (45%).** Handing over basic maintenance and support to an outsourcing team can improve time-to-resolution and reduce callbacks while also freeing up in-house experts to work on high-priority projects or new initiatives.
- **Providing 24x7 real-time support (35%) and servicing multiple languages and locations (27%).** A global outsourcing provider can deliver 24x7 multilingual support in varying worldwide locations.

Conclusion

Technology innovation is raising the bar for help desk and support services. Rapid advances are contributing to a knowledge and skill gap, making it difficult to hire and train qualified support staff. At the same time, organizations continue working to optimize support processes, reduce costs, and free up resources for more strategic endeavors. Against this backdrop, big data, mobility, and BYOD are creating added demands. In response, many organizations are turning to outsourcing providers to support an increasingly tech-savvy, sometimes demanding, global workforce.

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- **CGS Technical Support Services deliver exceptional experiences when and where needed by customers.**

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