E-book

IT Service Desk

A Guide to supercharge your IT service delivery

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1) Introduction

An IT service desk is an integral part of an organization's IT operations. It's relevant for entities of all sizes, and plays a key role in making sure that IT services meet key business objectives.

In an organization, a service desk acts as a catalyst for digital transformation, which is a major trend affecting almost every industry.

In a report from Forturum, 41.4% of their respondents (companies) had a dedicated digital transformation team.

In a nutshell, a service desk plays an important role in enhancing service delivery and user experience, and it will continue to do so in the coming years.

According to Service Desk Benchmark Report V.9: 44% of their respondents have said that they expect an increase in the staff managing their service desk.

In this guide we will break down the concept of service desk in to what, why and how.

2) What is an IT Service Desk?

An IT service desk is a single point of contact for internal customers (employees) to get services from their IT department.

In a service desk, requests are registered as tickets, which is why it's also called a ticket management system.

ITIL, a standard framework for implementing a service desk, has identified 26 processes and 4 functions that can be mapped on to service lifecycle stages.

3) Functions of a Service Desk?

The primary role of a service desk is to deliver services. Apart from that, it captures major incidents in an organization.

In most organizations, the service desk is not just limited to IT. It is integrated into other business processes like:

- Travel booking.
- Onboarding of new employees.
- Infrastructure management.
- Onboarding of new vendors and their management.
- Data and reporting.
- Documentation Management.

In our ITSM solution, Motadata ServiceOps, we provide predefined templates to take care of common use cases like New Employee On-boarding.

4) What are the common types of Services Desk?

ITIL has clearly stated that there are four types of service desk. They are as follows:

- **Local Service Desk:** Such a service desk is generally situated inside the premise of an organization and caters to the demands of users in close proximity. The capacity of such a service desk is limited and suitable for small and medium-size enterprises.
- **Centralize Service Desk:** A central service desk eliminates the requirement of maintaining multiple service desks across several locations. It allows greater efficiency and results in significant cost reduction.
- **Virtual Service Desk:** When a service desk delivers services through online, and gives the sense of a central service desk even though it might be distributed across multiple locations, then it is a virtual service desk. Most modern service desks are virtual service desk.
- **Follow the Sun:** This kind of service desk runs 24 hours. This is achieved by combining two or more service desks situated across multiple geographical locations.

5) What are the benefits of having an IT service desk?

The primary role of a service desk is to deliver services. Apart from that, it captures major incidents in an organization.

In most organizations, the service desk is not just limited to IT. It is integrated into other business processes like:

- Most modern service desks leverage a cloud architecture to give services anytime anywhere. With service desk, people can report their issues/service from a portal, via email or a mobile app anytime.
- A service desk ensures, services are delivered in a standardized way and that there are no gaps in the expectations of the end-users.
- A service desk brings in the power of workflow automation that automates repetitive processes and service level agreements so services are delivered on time.
- A service desk generates a lot of data and makes reporting a lot easier. Apart from that, it also gauges the sentiment of the end-users.

According to a report from SDI, 41% of their IT respondents have said that they see customer satisfaction as their main indicator of success.

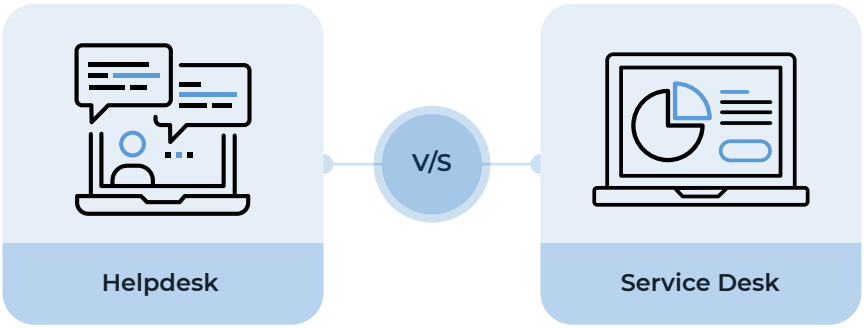
6) How service desk is different from helpdesk?

People tend to confuse between a service desk and a helpdesk, but they are different.

A helpdesk is a limited version of a service desk. It was designed to fix IT issues for IT teams. The traditional helpdesk

ignores the end-user experience.

A service desk is everything a helpdesk is and more. It takes into consideration what is called a service lifecycle that includes handling incidents and service requests. Click Here to Read more about the difference.

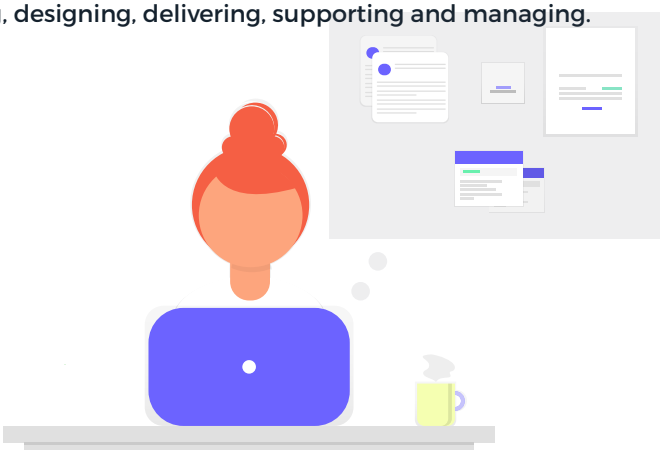


7) How a service desk fits into IT service management?

IT service management deals with service planning, designing, delivering, supporting and managing.

A service desk is a subset of ITSM that includes:

- Incident management
- Problem Management
- Change Management
- Knowledge Management
- Self-service
- Service Requests
- Integration with a CMDB



8) 4 Ways to align your Service Desk to business operations

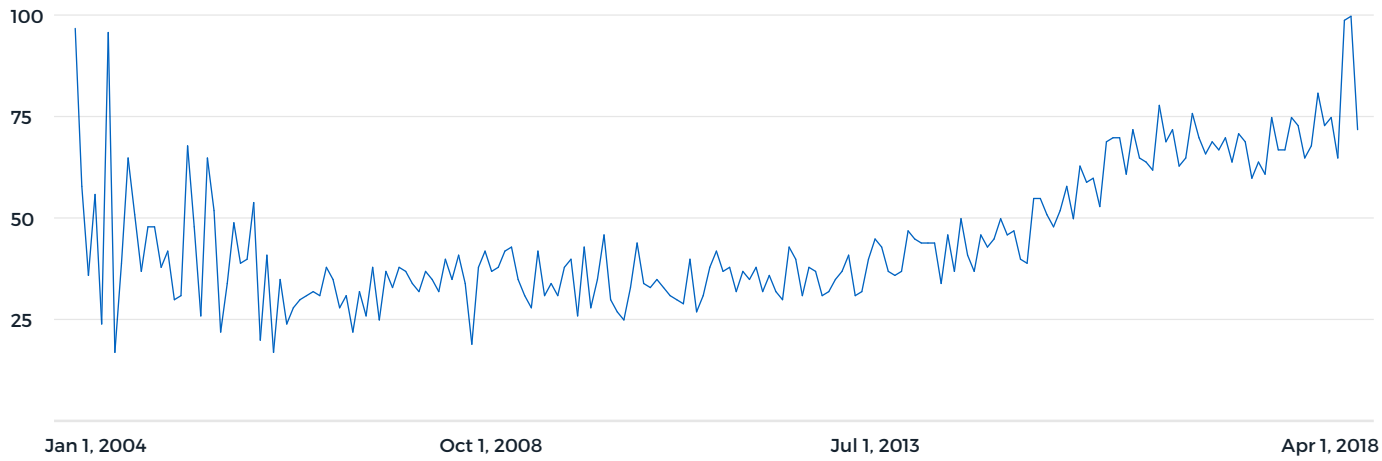
As an IT leader, it's important to step back, sometimes, and view what you can do better with your service desk. Because small issues and inefficiencies can easily add up to day-to-day chaos.

In organizations where IT services are aligned with business objectives, they are more likely to make investments in new technologies like AI & ML. Periodic reviews will make sure that the alignment stays.

Now we are going to look at few areas where putting efforts can yield significant result.

8.1) Automation

Automation is one of the "WOW" words of this era. A quick Google trend analysis of the keyword IT Automation shows a steady increase in people's interest since 2004.



The main reason for this uptick is that people want to do more with less in the face of ever-increasing need.

Automation generally comes as a part and parcel of an ITSM solution. Automation can be a quick win if you haven't explored it earlier. If you are considering it then these are the five areas where automation can yield significant results.

- Ticket categorization (Workflow to automatically categorize tickets based on certain parameters).
- Assignment of a ticket to a technician (Auto assignment of tickets based on smart algorithm).
- Approval for a ticket (Create sequential workflows to automatically handle approvals).
- Notification to the requester (Automatically send emails when certain conditions are fulfilled).
- Closing of a ticket (Workflow to automatically close a ticket that has the status resolved).

Success with automation is not only about saving time and money; it's also about customer experience and making sure ITSM processes are followed.

8.2) Shift Left

It is an ITSM concept that aims to make the requesters self-reliant.

The idea is to move most of the provisions to resolve an issue closer to a requester. This means tasks that technicians are doing, at various levels, to resolve issues will ultimately be done by the requesters.

Why shift?

This idea has a significant cost advantage; think about it, the problem solving that your technicians are doing if done by the requesters can save a ton of money.

How it is done?

Most modern service desks come equipped with a self-service portal; couple that with a robust knowledge base, requesters can figure out the solution to common problems by themselves.

When you achieve a successful shift, you empower your requesters and the workforce at large, because everyone is doing the work they are meant to do.

8.3) Focus on Old Tickets

These are tickets that remain unresolved and mess up SLAs. In most cases, such tickets are forgotten until it is found by a technician drowning in backlogs. This is why you need a plan to resolve such old tickets.

Eventually, your service desk will get tickets that are hard to resolve, but if your technicians are focused and continue the communication with requesters, letting them know the reason for the delay, then such tickets can be resolved without the pile-up. Here time-based email notifications can be useful that can keep the requesters aware of any problem if the ticket is not resolved within the stipulated time.

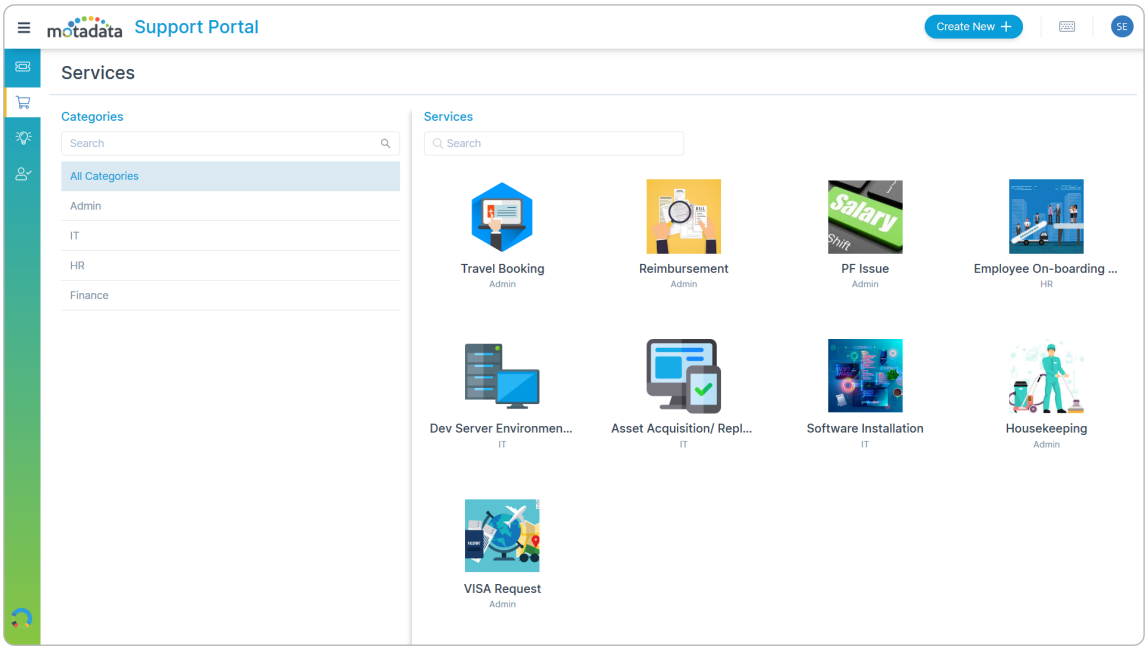
If you are someone who collects monthly performance stats of your service desk then make sure to add the volume of aged tickets. This will help you to keep a tap on them.

Motadata ServiceOps ITSM solution allows for easy creation of reports showing tickets still pending grouped by technicians.

8.4) Provide Consistent User Experience

The main purpose of a service desk is to provide consistent user experience to requesters. This is achieved because most modern ITSM solutions come equipped with a framework for service design.

In general, services are organized in a catalog and made visible on a self-service portal.



Each service on the portal is created from a template. In Motadata ServiceOps, a template supports the following:

- Custom form
- Dedicated automation (workflow, SLA, Scenario, and Approval)
- Tasks

Services offered in a designed way offer more control (by IT admins) and ensure consistent experience to requester.

9) IT Service Management Trends to Watch Out

ITSM is a hot topic for people managing IT infrastructure because there's always something new every few months.

Last month we saw the release of ITIL V4, which was a major step towards the future. Read more about ITIL V4.

AI was a big topic in 2019, and expect similar advancements in this year as well.

Let's dive into some major trends of 2020 that might affect you this year.

9.1) Increase focus on customer experience

With the release of ITIL V4, there's no doubt customer experience is at the focal point.

According to Service Desk Benchmarking Report V.9, 79% of their respondents use the customer feedback data to improve their IT services.

Even ITSM experts are echoing the same thing. The trend will continue to persist in 2020 even though it started in 2019.

The expectations of employees of what IT can do for them have changed; they have realized that for their productivity IT is a big enabler. The increased interaction between the employees and IT is one of the reasons why ITSM professionals are focusing on user experience.

9.2) The craze for AI will normalize

There's no doubt that AI is transforming the ITSM landscape. But the excitement will normalize as people will realize more concrete use cases of AI, which will gradually reduce the uncertainties around it.

The benefits of an AI-powered ITSM tool has become more meaningful. For example:

- Chatbots are reducing the workload of IT technicians by handling requesters with known issues.
- AI-powered smart suggestions allow requesters to discover solutions from the knowledgebase before filling a ticket.
- AI is optimizing the way tickets are assigned to technicians.

According to a survey by Axelos, 77% of their respondents have said that AI and Machine Learning would free up ITSM professionals from routine tasks thus helping them to focus on pressing issues.

9.3) Adoption of agile methods

Organizations are adopting methods like agile and scrum in ITSM processes. The reason being to design services the yield maximum customer satisfaction while keeping the organization goals in mind.

According to ITSM Academy, Companies are adopting agile service management which is a hybrid between agile methods and ITSM practices.

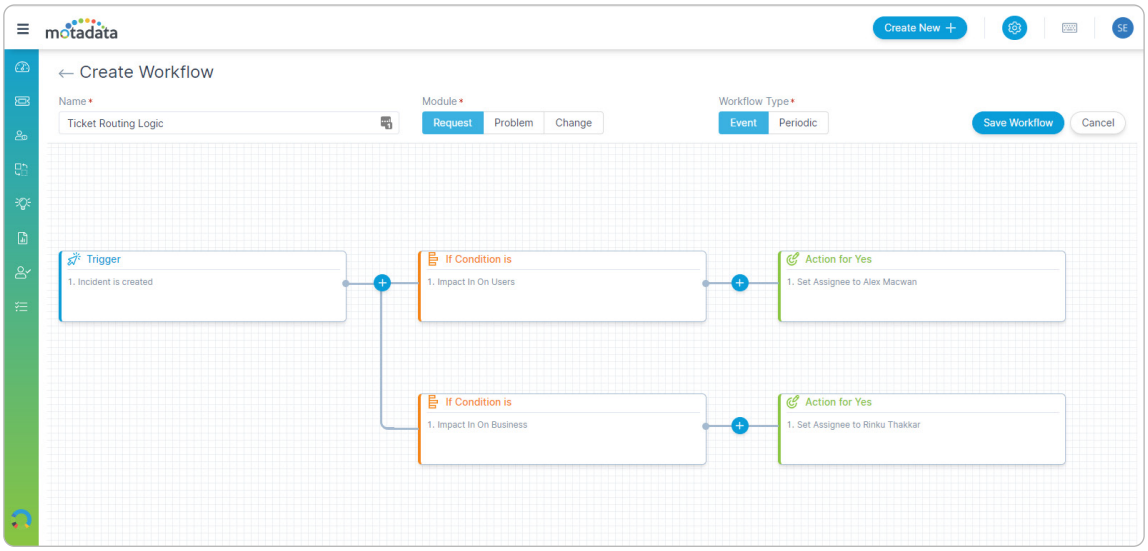
9.4) Self-service will play a prominent role

Self-service has become a cornerstone topic for many ITSM practitioners because it helps in managing costs and making IT technicians more productive.

With self-service, requesters are less dependent on technicians for common, known issues thus reducing their workload.

According to a survey by Service Desk Institute, 69% of their respondents have reported that they use some kind of self-service or similar automation.

Automation is an important component of self-service; keeping that in mind, Motadata ServiceOps has created a self-service portal that has a robust service catalog powered by automation and knowledgebase that focuses on easy searchability and accessibility.



9.5) ITIL 4 will have a prominent impact

ITIL 4 aims to answer the question, how to combine the best practices of ITIL with the methodologies of agile.

With ITIL 4, organizations are redesigning their ITSM processes with the aim of not creating unnecessary rigidity.

The important impact of ITIL 4 will be that companies adopting the new version can decide on ITIL processes suitable for their business.

9.6) Focus on people

An organization is made up of people, and to manage them processes exist. So people are important not just for process sake but to maintain the overall culture of the organization.

ITSM creates an intersection between people and processes. So far, the user side was receiving all the attention; now organizations are realizing that the technician side is as important as the user. That is why companies are pushing for a team-centric culture in their service desk.

10) 11 Service Desk Best Practices to Supercharge your Service Delivery

A service desk is the nerve center for all activities related to IT service delivery. It's at the forefront of all interactions an organization has with its requesters.

Implementing a service desk involves processes, workflows, and domain knowledge. That's why most people stick to a framework when setting up a service desk. Learn more about the most popular ITSM framework.

A service desk comes with numerous challenges that can be overcome if you are aware of the best practices.

We will discuss the best practices grouped by the following:

- Practices to better productivity.
- Practices to better manage metrics.
- Practices for optimization
- Practices to manage knowledge.

10.1) Practices to Better Productivity

The primary reason for having a service desk is to drive positive business outcomes. A healthy service desk promotes behaviors and activities that are geared toward achieving business objectives. Some of the best practices to maximize productivity are:

- **Customize your tool according to your business:** A service desk is one of the many aspects of an ITSM tool. Most modern ITSM tools are customizable which means you can do the following: create custom forms, create workflows that align with your existing business processes, create the perfect service catalog, etc. All these customizations will give you a productive service desk.
- **Allocate tickets and tasks dynamically:** Make sure technicians are assigned tickets and tasks after taking into consideration their workload so they can maintain their optimum efficiency. Motadata ServiceOps has the feature to show the workload of every technician.
- **Adopt everyone-is-a-technician mindset:** The department that is handling the service desk; everyone in that is a technician including the managers; everyone should get adequate training to handle customer queries. In the unlikely event of a ticket flood, an extra pair of hands is always appreciated.

10.2) Practices to Better Manage Metrics

Metrics help you to quantify the outcomes of your efforts. Having the right metrics steer you towards a better service desk, and the wrong ones give the impression that things are ok even though they are not. Here are the best practices with regards to metrics:

- **You don't need to report everything that you can measure:** An ITSM solution is a complex software that works in mysterious ways behind the scenes for an average user. That is why it is important to start with a question before moving on to a metric. For example, if you are thinking that technicians are taking more time in resolving issues, then it makes sense to track something like the average resolution time of all technicians.
- **Use both subjective and object measures:** In case you have a doubt that the efficiency of the service desk is going

down then you can use something like average resolution time to substantiate. But it won't tell the reason behind the decrease; for that, you might require something like sentiment analysis. Here both subject and object measures play an important role.

- **Be consistent with your measures:** Consistent measures help you in building trends, which help to identify problems that might crop up in the future. For example, a trend line of tickets by category might give you the categories that require special attention.

10.3) Practices for Optimization

An ITSM tool, like Motadata ServiceOps, can streamline your service delivery processes so end users can get a better experience. Streamlining is done so you can deliver services faster. Here are some best practices that you should consider while streamlining.

- **Leverage workflows to avoid queuing:** A queue of tickets is something you should avoid because it hampers your average resolution time metric. Leverage the automation features of your ITSM tool handle recurring tickets so technicians can work on tickets that require actual attention. For example, ServiceOps allows for workflows that can send a predefined solution to common issues and even close them if required.
- **Every ticket should have an owner:** Accountability is important if you want tickets to be resolved on time. When a ticket is assigned the technician tries to resolve it within the time limit so he can maintain his average time. The auto-assignment is an inbuilt feature of ServiceOps which uses a proprietary algorithm to perform the assignments.
- **Create SLA and escalation:** An SLA is an agreement between you and your end-users that dictates the quality and availability of a service. An SLA also has escalation clauses that dictate what will happen when the SLA is violated. SLAs are important to keep your services on-time; Motadata ServiceOps has built-in SLAs to cover common use cases.

10.4) Practices to manage Knowledge

Effective knowledge management is the difference between self-service and long ticket queues. It gives you a repository of best practices and solutions that both technicians and requesters can use to solve their problems. Here are some best practices with regards to knowledge management:

- Technicians should participate in knowledge creation: Technicians should actively participate in creating knowledge articles in order to capture solutions to common problems. This will eventually instill a mind-set among technicians to treat the knowledge base as the go-to place to find solutions.
- Make Knowledgebase accessible to the requesters: Knowledge should be accessible to the requesters so they can search for a solution to their problems. Motadata ServiceOps offers an advanced search bar on the service portal so requesters can perform self-service.

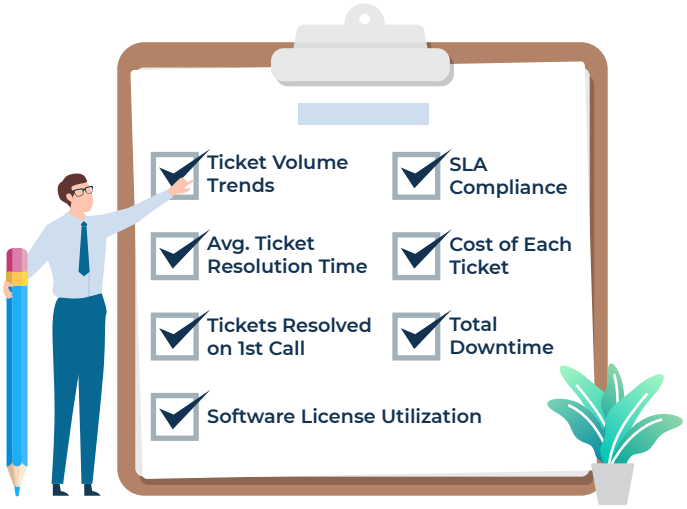
Learn about the steps that you can take to build an awesome knowledge base.

11) Important Service Desk Metrics to Measure

Service desk or IT teams are critical to organisations for ensuring business continuity and service delivery. Hence, it becomes important for IT organizations to use a slew of metrics to measure how efficient their service desk is.

With the recent advancement in IT Service Management (ITSM), the reporting capabilities offer multiple KPI metrics that can be measured and monitored. So, with the increase in service desk metrics, it becomes even more difficult to zero down on which metrics to measure.

We will now discuss 7 KPIs that are aimed at achieving Productivity, Business Continuity, Timely service delivery and Control Cost.

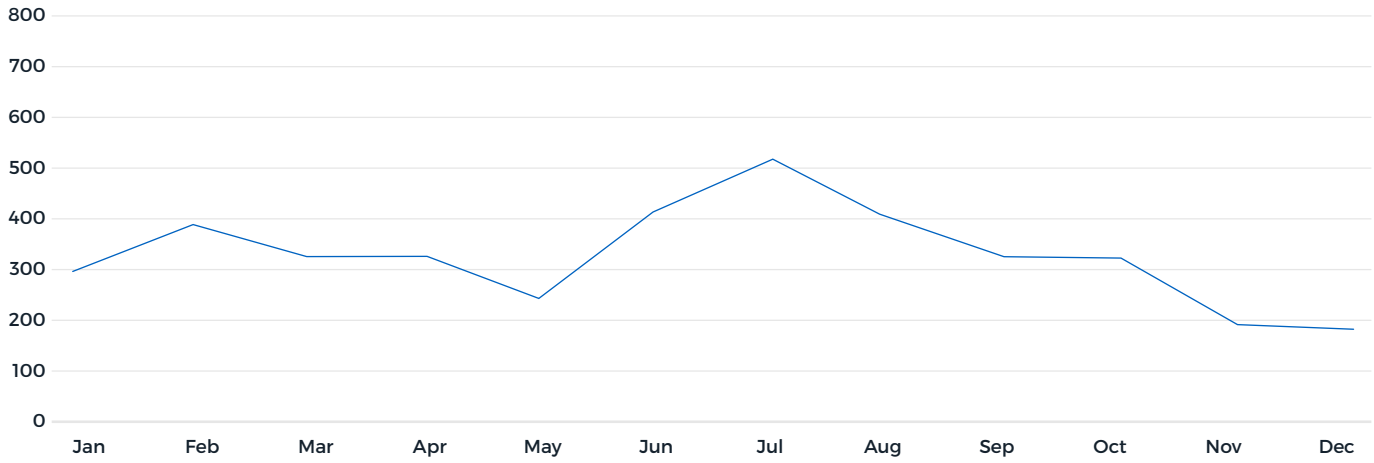


11.1) 7 Service Desk Metrics

11.1.1) Ticket Volume Trend

It is the total number of tickets that have come to service desk in a particular time frame.

Motadata ITSM dashboard allows for easy creation of line graphs to highlight ticket volume over a specific time frame.



Objective to measure the metrics

Analysis of monthly ticket volume would allow IT managers to optimize incidents and service request that helps in handling the ticket load effectively.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Identify peak loads to optimize resource management
- Create talent pool / increase bench strength
- Identify training needs

11.1.2) The average time it takes to resolve a ticket

This is one of the important metrics related to incident / ticket management, which summarizes the time taken to resolve all tickets divided by the no. of tickets.

In Motadata ITSM, service desk manager can create similar reports for individual technicians grouped by days, weeks or months.

Objective to measure the metrics

The report helps organization in planning and designing OLAs (Operational Level Agreement) and SLAs (Service Level Agreement). It also helps in measuring individual / team productivity.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Analyze service request patterns to build a robust knowledge base to resolve common issues i.e. password reset
- Automate manual activities with workflow automation, so as to reduce the time required in assigning ticket manually
- Properly prioritize and categorize tickets to reduce incorrect ticket assignments
- Categorise and tag similar tickets so as to reduce the time wasted by multiple agents in resolving the same set of issues individually

11.1.3) Number of tickets resolved on first call

A ticket is considered as resolved on the first call when it's resolved at a tier 1 level and doesn't have a comment thread with more than 2 comments.

In Motadata, the report can be grouped by technicians and can be generated for a specific time period.

Objective to measure the metrics

It helps IT managers to measure the service desk efficiency and allocate technicians across different levels of support based on their expertise.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Analyze service request patterns to build a robust knowledge base to resolve common issues i.e. password reset
- If the calls are not resolved on first call, training needs could be identified so as to upgrade technician's skill.
- Create detailed form so as to collect and capture all the relevant information that would be required in order to resolve user tickets.
- With workflow automation, automatically route tickets to the right technician or group.

11.1.4) Total Downtime

Downtime refers to the duration during which critical services of IT were not available. IT managers can sum-up the resolution time of such tickets (Created by the NMS tool) to ascertain the total downtime.

Motadata ITSM can be integrated with any NMS tool that allows automatic creation of tickets in the event of system failure.

Objective to measure the metrics

Keep lost business hours to the bare minimum due to unavailability of IT Services. It also helps IT managers to figure out whether their IT is delivering the promised level of services as defined in Service Level Agreement (SLAs).

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Properly plan application upgrades, server migration, and other IT change related processes.
- Sensitize IT teams on the indirect cost incurred by businesses in case of IT Failure
- Prepare IT teams to analyse the past and anticipate future outages for effectively handling service desk

11.1.5) SLA Compliance

A ticket incident/request is considered violated, when it's not resolved within the time stipulated in the associated SLA.

The compliance report in Motadata ITSM, gives the total count of SLA violations for a particular period. i.e. % of tickets resolved within the agreed SLA.

Objective to measure the metrics

It helps in measuring the number of times SLA has been violated.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Match business expectation with IT Capabilities to set achievable SLAs
- Sensitize IT teams on business impact due to SLA violations
- Set escalation matrix, in case SLA's are violated

11.1.6) Cost per ticket

It is the operating cost of running IT support divided by the total number of tickets during a particular period.

Objective to measure the metrics

Keep in-check the cost incurred per ticket, which is crucial for budgeting.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- Identify technician training needs, to keep the cost in control
- Logical workflow automation to assign tickets to right technician
- Create a robust knowledge base

11.1.7) Software license utilization report

The report tells how many licensed software's are installed across the organization against what was procured. It has a direct bearing on the decision of how many licenses to be purchased for a particular software.

Objective to measure the metrics

The report helps in optimizing the ROI on cost incurred to procure software licences. It also lets you measure, over and

underutilization of licensed software.

Actionable for Service Desk Manager

- If the number of licenses procured exceeds the license in-use, the service desk manager has to optimize the software utilization, so as to plan future procurement effectively
- Sensitize IT Teams and employees on the risk of using pirated / unlicensed software's.

11.2 Common Mistakes while Setting Service Desk Metrics

- **Selecting the wrong metrics:** Every metric should serve a specific purpose. When deciding on a metric ask yourself what is the purpose that it is going to be solved.
- **Selecting too many metrics:** Current ITSM tools allow for a wealth of reports that measure various metrics. IT teams need to select the right metrics to be measured, that affects the cost and performance of service desk.
- **Metrics not aligned to business outcomes:** A good metric if misaligned with business, will be of no use. An ideal metric should be measurably against business expectations.
- **Ignoring context:** Analysis of a metric shouldn't be one dimensional. It should also build business context by taking into consideration multiple metrics i.e. more than one set of data points.
- **Blindly follow industry benchmark:** Industry standards can be misleading if you don't understand the uniqueness of your organization. Industry benchmarks which are applicable to the world-at-large may not be applicable to your business.
- **Not updating your metrics:** Organizations evolve with time, and hence IT teams have to keep their metrics up-to-date so as to adhere to the new benchmarks.

12) Conclusion

A service desk is an enabler to provide comprehensive IT support to people inside an organization.

It is one thing to have a service desk and totally different to have a service desk that requesters like to use. The perfect service desk is a by-product of evolution.

In your journey to maximize your returns, shift left will always play a big role. Ultimately how many of your users are able to resolve their own issues will tell whether you are heading the right direction or not.

We have also discussed about best practices and trends that might impact the way ITSM professionals work. There are many more things to watch out, but the important question that you need to ask is that are we falling behind. If you don't have the answer then you might think of switching to Motadata ServiceOps. Try Motadata ServiceOps for 30 days free of cost.