



TRANSPUTEC

Five reasons
why you need to
consider outsourcing
your **IT service desk**



Executive Summary

In a world of 'always on' business, where employees are mobile and need instant access to company data, their expectations of service desk support are equally high. However, traditional IT help desks are simply unable to provide the kind of service businesses and the public sector now require. End users are adopting an ever-wider range of technologies - from mobile devices to cloud computing - meaning that IT support staff are simply unable to provide the required depth of service across the breadth of technology now in place.

This whitepaper argues that enhancing and extending your existing IT help desk with outsourced support services and cutting edge technology is the most effective way of ensuring your teams get the most out of their tools. By having a dedicated support desk which understands your organisation and your specific technology set up, you can ensure those tools are fully utilised and get a greater return on your technology investments.



Introduction: the need for enhanced help desk service

According to survey results released in early 2017¹, the average cost of major IT incidents works out at over \$8,000 (£6,300) per minute. The study also revealed that the slow response from internal IT service desks means that the severity of incidents is often exacerbated. It reportedly takes the average business 27 minutes *just to assemble a team* of specialists to tackle major incidents—and that's before they even do anything about the problem.

Traditional internal IT service desks are struggling. While staff may be well trained and doing their best, in many organisations there is a poor perception of the department. All too often the root cause of this poor perception is that the help desk is simply overwhelmed by the number of tickets they receive, meaning that resolving issues fast becomes extremely difficult. What's more, in our world of 'always on' business, where employees expect to be able to connect to content from multiple devices while away from the office, a traditional 9-5 helpdesk just cannot provide the service required.

According to a survey by IDG Research, (2017) implementing remote IT support services can bring relief while also improving end user satisfaction. The list of challenges facing IT leaders and their staff continues to grow and evolve in complexity every day. Among the respondents to the IDG Research survey, 66% struggle with supporting new technology and new devices and 56% say they struggle with increasing end user expectations for availability and device support. More than half (52%) are challenged by the growing cost of supporting the sprawling infrastructure, and 48% are concerned about end user complaints regarding problem resolution. The service desk staff in those same organizations face their own challenges. Three concerns top their list: achieving high customer satisfaction levels (87%), decreasing operational and security risk (85%), and increasing the capacity of the support team by reducing time to resolution (81%).

This whitepaper will explore how you can enhance and extend your existing IT help desk through a combination of outsourced services and smart technology. It explores the issues that traditional help desks are facing, and then provides a framework for deciding how you should structure your relationship with your outsourcing partner.

¹ Service Desk Show. 2017. Major IT incidents cost more than \$8k per minute. Available online: <http://www.servicedeskshow.com/industry-news/major-it-incidents-cost-8k-per-minute/>

How one of the world's largest publishers enhanced their IT help desk

With offices in London, New York, Hong Kong, Singapore and Beijing, Incisive Media publishes more than 100 titles in print and online and offers a range of conferences, events and training products. The firm was dealing with an ageing infrastructure and turned to Transputec to support a move to a modern IT setup. As part of the move, Incisive Media engaged Transputec's outsourced help desk service to provide full end user support for 1st to 3rd line resolution 24x7. This has allowed their internal teams to focus on higher value activities, and given them peace of mind that any problem can be resolved fast by a partner who knows their business.



The challenges facing traditional IT help desks

As enterprise technology has become increasingly complex, the need for dedicated IT support services has grown in parallel. When personal computing first really took off in the workplace during the 1980s, the IT help desk would typically provide end users with little more than basic trouble shooting. While help desk staff were knowledgeable about computers, they were often relatively inconsistent in the service they provided. As business computing proliferated, a standardised and documented helpdesk approach was put into place in the form of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), which offers a consistent set of services and protocols for help desk staff.

Until about ten years ago, IT support staff were normally able to resolve most customer issues relatively efficiently if they followed ITIL best practice. However, over the past decade, their ability to provide the level of service required has been hampered by the sheer speed at which enterprise technology has evolved. There are a number of intertwining trends that have made it increasingly difficult for traditional help desks to provide the kinds of support that end users need. As a result, business users are increasingly dissatisfied with internal help desks. These trends include:

🕒 **Improvements in consumer IT have changed perceptions and expectations**

Outside of work, consumer IT has radically improved in recent years. The user experience of modern smartphones and laptops is significantly better than a decade ago. What's more, many of the leading tech providers also provide consumers with a high standard of customer service (as confirmed by a visit to any Apple Store). So, when they call up their company's IT service desk, they can quickly become frustrated by uncommunicative staff or inefficient processes.

🕒 **A greater general knowledge of technology**

Most of the modern workforce have now been using advanced technology for most of their lives. Many people are perfectly capable of resolving minor troubleshooting problems (the famous 'turn it off and turn it on again') and are also used to looking for answers online. Very often, the IT help desk is a last resort for more complex problems, meaning IT help desk staff must be prepared to resolve more difficult issues.

🕒 **More diverse technology**

In the past, most firms used a limited range of software. A typical set up might involve an intranet with a document management system and desktop PCs connected to a network. These would usually include a limited number of software applications tailored for the business. Today, by contrast, the typical business will be using a huge number of applications, with staff constantly connecting to the network with different kinds of personal and mobile devices. Expecting the service desk to monitor and support this complexity alone is problematic.

🕒 **Expectation of 24/7 support**

With the emergence of cloud technology and mobile devices, business users are now able to access company content from their smartphones or laptops at any hour of the day. Most of the time this is hugely beneficial, allowing workers to be productive while out of the office. However, when they have problems logging onto the system, or syncing a document to their device, they need support instantly. When your IT help desk is closed at weekends and after 5pm GMT, the service just does not match up to the requirement.

🕒 **High turnover of help desk staff**

According to help desk industry body HDI, the staff turnover rate on service desks is around 40%². What's more, 64%³ of staff describe themselves as very stressed. Such a high turnover rate naturally means new staff need extensive training, while many positions inevitably remain unfilled.

This combination of challenges has led many businesses to explore alternatives to the traditional in-house support approach. The aim is not to replace the talent firms already have. Rather, the goal should be to extend and enhance in-house IT staff, by letting them focus more attention on high value activities, while using a mix of outsourced staff and technology to support your wider goals.

Could outsourcing help desks contribute to the UK government's cost-cutting targets?

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies⁴, think tank, the UK government will need to implement a further £15bn in spending cuts or tax rises if it is to achieve its target of eliminating the budget deficit by 2022. In the meantime, providing 'round the clock' help desk services is extremely costly for government IT departments, especially when much of the time, those services are underutilised. Flexible outsourcing of help desk services could help here. If public sector bodies only pay for the service when they actually use it, they are able to provide staff with an 'always on' help desk at a fraction of the cost.

The backlash against outsourcing

While the cost efficiencies of outsourcing may be music to the ears of CIOs and CEOs, there is some understandable suspicion about the practice. Many internal IT staff may, quite naturally, feel their jobs are being threatened.

This whitepaper strongly argues that the ultimate aim of outsourcing should not be to replace existing staff, but instead enhance and extend the services they can offer. It is simply not feasible for internal teams to provide the level of service modern businesses need, and the delays this entails can be extremely costly. Therefore, outsourced staff should be viewed as a cost-effective support - both for your business end users and your existing help desk teams.

² HDI. 2012. Metric of the month: annual agent turnover. Available online: <http://www.thinkhdi.com/~media/HDICorp/Files/Library-Archive/Insider%20Articles/annual-agent-turnover.pdf>

³ HDI. 2012. The turnover cycle. Available online: <http://www.thinkhdi.com/~media/HDICorp/Images/Topics/Research/war-for-talent-infographic-hires.jpg>

⁴ The Guardian. 2017. UK needs £15bn in cuts or tax rises to clear deficit by 2022, says IFS. Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/may/02/uk-cuts-tax-deficit-ifs-austerity-public-spending>

Why businesses are looking for enhancements to their help desks

According to industry analyst Gartner⁵, IT spending in 2016 was significantly down on previous years. However, one area where businesses were spending more was in the area of help desk services. A likely explanation for this trend is that the companies which have invested in new technologies, such as mobile, the cloud and improved software, are now looking to ensure they get full value from their investments by providing staff with support for the new technology.

However, as described in the previous section, internal help desks are struggling to provide services across the breadth and depth of technologies that the modern enterprise uses. By enhancing these internal services with improved help desk technology and outsourced service desk teams, firms can fill the gaps and get the greatest ROI from their technology.

Three reasons companies are turning to outsourced help desks

1. **More rapid communication and problem resolution**

Outsourced helpdesk staff are available 24/7 and can be trained to understand the specific needs of your business. This means that your end users can speak to a 'real person' much faster and have their issue resolved much more efficiently, all with constant communication so they understand what is happening.

2. **Latest training**

Outsourced IT service desk staff specialise in providing customer support for a wide range of technologies. This means that they are trained with the latest versions of software solutions. They can also be trained to help with your organisation's specific technology set up.

3. **Cost effective**

Many outsourcing firms provide contracts that ensure you only pay for what you use. This means that when you are not having problems, you don't pay for the service.

Turning to an outsourced help desk is clearly appealing. What might it look like at your organisation?

⁵ Service Desk Show. 2016. ITSM strikes back in 2016. Available online: <http://www.servicedeskshow.com/industry-news/itsm-strikes-back-in-2016/>

Case study: how an outsourced IT service desk helped Informa delight internal users

Informa is one of the world's leading knowledge providers, creating and delivering highly specialised information, providing valuable knowledge to individuals, businesses and organisations around the world. To support their international business, Informa also required a reliable support service 'round the clock.

Informa engaged with Transputec to provide a support service to their existing IT services desk. As Enzo Simoni, Regional Director of Data Center Services and Cloud Computing at Informa explains, this became a true partnership, with Transputec taking up the slack when the internal team was not available.

"Transputec's service desk and networking teams have integrated with Informa's in a true partnership which provides a seamless support service. Not only have our service levels improved, but I feel confident that I can rely on our Partner to deliver and be there when we need them at any time!"

By being able to provide 24x7 support, Informa's service level and performance indicators have improved significantly. Support staff are now available whenever end users require them, meaning problems are resolved much faster and they can get on with being productive. Constant communication means end users understand what is going on, and get a clear view of when they'll be back up and running. Our emphasis on communication cuts the confusion when staff have problems and means they report much higher rates of satisfaction than before.

Crises Control: combining technology with the service desk to provide complete cover and communication

Communication and transparency are key to successful IT support. By supporting your help desk mix with next generation technologies, you can further reduce the response time to IT incidents.

Crises Control is an easy to use mass communications crisis response app that delivers business continuity management plans rapidly across a variety of devices. Designed to support business continuity professionals, it helps you to be prepared for any business disruption when it happens.

Crises Control sends the right information to the right IT staff in a crisis situation and tracks who is engaged. It allows you to launch incidents quickly, and put into place a recovery process which ensures all team members are aware of what is going on, and what they need to do. It provides instant notifications, communicating to your IT teams across devices.

While the IT team are resolving the issue, Crises Control can also communicate regularly and clearly with the entire organisation, pushing out updates to business users so they understand what is going on, and can have an idea of when the problem will be resolved. This allows them to readjust their schedules and do work which does not depend on the affected systems. By keeping people up to date with clear communication, Crises Control creates a better perception of the IT service desk and its ability to support end users.

Contact Transputec to learn how Crises Control can be adapted to your organisation's specific needs.

Five steps to plan for your outsourcing help desk

Outsourcing part of your IT support service will only be successful if the solution you choose corresponds with the specific needs of your business. It is therefore essential to draw up a plan of your requirements and expectations. Whether you are looking for a partner to resolve small but repetitive problems like resetting passwords, or are looking for a close partnership where your IT help desk is fully supported by an external team and cutting edge technology, it is essential to know what you are looking for. The following five steps will provide a practical framework for defining your needs.



1. Discuss with your existing help desk team

Sit down with your existing help desk team and find out what common problems they encounter. Do they simply not have enough time to respond to all tickets? Do they receive calls for help with the same issue time and again? By getting a feel for their problems, you can get a much better idea of what outsourced services you might need.



2. Interview a selection of business end users

It will also be valuable to speak to your staff and learn what problems they have encountered when dealing with your current help desk. What specific problems do they have? What problems can they not resolve themselves? Also ask what they like about the existing set up.



3. Envision

At this stage, you should aim to draw up a plan of what you want from your relationship. What do you expect from an outsourced help desk? Are you only looking for basic support, or for a team who are able to provide all the same services as your in-house help desk?



4. Engage with a partner

Choose a partner who can support your vision and has the expertise and experience to turn it into reality. Your partner should be able to advise you on what is realistic, and you should expect them to be able to guide you to a degree.



5. Set KPIs

To judge whether your partnership is successful, it is highly valuable to measure progress. Conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys to find out whether your business users are now happier with the service they are receiving.

Transputec has 30 years of experience helping companies of all sizes implement sophisticated and customised outsourced help desk services. Contact us today to learn how we can help you.



Enhance and extend your help desk

This whitepaper has argued that the traditional IT help desk model is redundant. Business technology has moved incredibly fast, and end users now expect support 24x7. As a result, traditional IT help desks are simply unable to cope with the increased demand. This creates a vicious circle, where internal IT help desks become overwhelmed with tickets, end users then become more frustrated, and help desk staff become demoralised. This has led to a high turnover rate in help desks worldwide, further exacerbating the problem.

One way to break this circle is to turn to the services of an outsourced help desk partner to enhance and extend internal support systems. When combined with cutting edge IT alerting technology, outsourcing can provide you with the most appropriate solution for modern business needs: a flexible, low cost and 'always on' solution that helps you get maximum ROI from your technology and significantly reduces downtime.

To learn more about how you can extend and enhance your IT help desk, contact Transputec today.

ABOUT TRANSPUTEC

Transputec is an established Information Technology Services and Solutions company with more than 30 years of IT innovation and excellent customer service.

Transputec was founded by two computer science students from Imperial College in their dorms. Developing applications for the banking industry and then migrating to a full IT services organisation.

We believe in flexibility, quality, agility. We see this simply as the ability for us to grow our services as quickly and with the speed our clients expect, whether they are enterprises or small/medium sized organisations.

Transputec is a Certified N-able NOC and Service Desk partner.

For more information, please visit:



www.transputec.com



+44 (0) 20 8584 1400 (Enquiries)

+44 (0) 20 8584 1440 (Support Desk)



enquiries@transputec.com

support@transputec.com



Transputec Ltd, Transputec House, 19 Heather Park Drive, Wembley, London HA0 1SS

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