

Service Desk Replacement Guide

10 Questions to Ask Yourself

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Is it time to replace your Service Desk?

IT organizations have a tendency to use systems well beyond their prime. In fact, one of the more common questions we hear from users is related to whether or not they need to replace their current Service Desk solution.

According to Gartner, organizations replace their service desk solution every 3-5 years. Gartner also highlights the importance of selecting a solution that is compatible with your IT maturity level to maximize ROI.

In many cases, a Service Desk replacement is driven by the success seen in other organizations that have made the move to more modern solutions. Ultimately, first generation Service Desk solutions have reached a point where customizability and flexibility, combined with steady and significant cost increases, are factors that can no longer be ignored.

Complicated licensing structures with prohibitive costs can limit IT's ability to support the growth of the business. Additional IT or Line-of-Business processes that need to be added over time should have straightforward licensing configurations and a transparent cost structure. These types of limitations with antiquated Service Desk tools can wreak havoc on annual budgeting, strategic planning and the overall confidence in IT's ability to handle the demands of the organization.

This places the IT Organization in a position to conduct a fair amount of research into modern solutions that are scalable, and act as a partner for best practices and well defined business processes. Finding the right system can be difficult. Even more difficult, is trying to determine whether the current system you have is no longer meeting

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the needs of your business. That means you are going to be required to take an objective look at both the goals of your IT Organization and the paradigm you will be working within. It also means you will need to come to terms with the trouble spots you have seen in the past. Understanding the maturity level of your IT Organization today and the process improvement goals you want to achieve in the next 3-5 years is important.

Without taking these steps, it is less likely that you will move into a new solution that is the right fit for your organization. You do not have to make the journey alone though. This guide will help highlight key areas that should be evaluated.

How to Use This Guide

In the list below, we have pinpointed 5 key areas where organizations generally would like to see the most improvement in regards to their current Service Desk. Each area of improvement has some questions that can help you to evaluate your current Service Desk solution. Ask yourself these questions and answer honestly to develop a great starting point in your Service Desk replacement project.

5 Key Areas of Service Desk Improvement

- 1. Total Cost of Ownership**
- 2. Implementation and Upgrades**
- 3. Adaptability and Customizations**
- 4. IT Maturity and Functionality**
- 5. Flexibility of Delivery**

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1. Lower Total Cost of Ownership

The annual maintenance/support agreement and module pricing are the two key areas that drive cost. Whatever solutions you are researching (new or existing), make sure costs are straightforward and clear. You should understand what you are getting, and how much expansion will cost going forward. Knowing this information will enable you to predict costs, while providing your team with access to the latest innovations.

Questions to Ask

Does the cost of my legacy Service Desk solution's annual maintenance and support exceed the price of a modern solution?

Evaluate your current maintenance and support agreements. Due to the HIGH initial costs of many legacy Service Desk solutions, it is not uncommon to see the cost of annual maintenance agreements exceed the cost of replacing your Service Desk system with a more modern solution.

Quick Tip: Modern Service Desk solutions have become incredibly affordable, with full Service Desk solutions costing less than an annual maintenance agreement of existing solution.

Does my legacy Service Desk solution provider require an additional fee for upgrading to the latest version of their software?

Some maintenance and support agreements are specific to a version of the software. It is possible that you will face the expensive requirement of purchasing every version between your currently deployed version before you can upgrade.

Quick Tip: Maintenance fixes and support, as well as minor and major upgrades should be included in annual maintenance and support agreements. This means you will always have access to the latest innovations without additional license costs to the organization.

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2. Improve Implementation and Upgrade Processes

The amount of time and effort spent on Service Desk implementations and upgrades can significantly influence the perception of IT within your organization. When researching products make sure that you familiarize yourself with the company's upgrade processes as well as a basic implementation plan. Lengthy implementations and services engagements can lead to added costs, heavy resource utilization and ultimately a slower realization of ROI.

Questions to Ask

How long did it take to implement my current Service Desk?

Many first generation Service Desk solutions took months to implement and included numerous hard-coded customizations locking you into a particular release. This dramatically limits your ability to drive process improvement in service delivery for your IT Organization.

Quick Tip: Modern Service Desk solutions enable rapid implementation with built-in ITIL processes, reducing the time to implement from months to days. In addition, customizations can be accomplished within the user interface by administrators with limited technical experience.

Does upgrading my Service Desk to the latest release mean a re-implementation?

Legacy Service Desk solutions typically take weeks or months to upgrade. If you are several versions behind, you might need to implement a completely new version. Finally, do not forget to have a clear understanding of the solution's footprint, as well as the infrastructure required to operate the current system or any upgrades.

Quick Tip: The upgrade process for a modern Service Desk solution is seamless, protecting your customizations and shortening the time to ROI for new releases.

What was the Professional Services engagement like when I implemented my current Service Desk?

It's common for first generation Service Desk solutions to require lengthy Professional Services engagements. Unable to customize the product without coding, you may need to leverage consultants who are heavily involved in the tools configuration. Although training is provided, it may not be adequate enough to familiarize you with a product that was heavily configured by consultants.

Quick Tip: Built in processes and customization tools that don't require coding make modern Service Desk solutions easier to implement. This promotes shorter Professional Services engagements utilizing a hands-on train-the-trainer approach that leaves you more familiar with the tool when consultants leave.

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3. The Ability to Adapt and Customize

IT Organizations are being asked to do more with less. Most legacy Service Desk solutions require significant resources for the administration and development of the environment to meet business demands. This leads to increased costs and a key indicator that it is time to move to a more modern solution. Because modern Service Desk solutions are designed to be easily administered and customized, IT can get more from their Service Desk initiative without adding resources. In turn, this will contribute to significant cost savings.

Questions to Ask

What is required to make both major and minor customizations to my Service Desk solution?

While a standard implementation always seems applicable, even the smallest difference in an organization can require a change in your Service Desk. Changes to legacy systems can be time consuming and costly. Many organizations depend on expensive consultants to make these changes, contributing to an increase in total cost of ownership for your Service Desk.

Quick Tip: Modern Service Desk solutions allow changes to be made quickly and easily without any development or coding. With drag and drop customizations, workflows, forms, and fields can be added or changed in minutes without the need for a technical consultant.

How many development resources do I need to retain or dedicate towards my legacy Service Desk?

A typical model for a legacy Service Desk system is to provide a framework, then develop customizations that meet the needs of the business. However, customizations tend to require skilled development staff, and a full software development lifecycle. While this can typically be addressed in the form of consultants, costs increase significantly.

Quick Tip: Modern Service Desk solutions allow full extensibility with changes and customizations made easily. In many cases a single non-dedicated member of the IT staff can make a change.

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4. Choose the Right Solution to Match the Level of IT Maturity

In today's business environment, most IT Organizations require a Service Desk solution with functionality that not only meets their current level of IT maturity, but functionality that can grow with them over the next 3-5 years. This requires a solution that supports the key Service Desk processes you need today (Incident, Service Request, and Change Management) while being able to grow along with your organization's maturity.

Questions to Ask

Does my Service Desk have the enterprise features needed to optimize service delivery for my organization?

Numerous IT Organizations are leveraging their Help Desk solution for Incident Management. Many of these solutions do not have the enterprise-grade features that allow the IT Organization to drive process efficiencies. As the organization grows, the processes need to grow as well, not just meeting, but driving the maturation of the organization.

Quick Tip: Modern Service Desk solutions provide deep feature sets that enable you to automate processes and communications including: workflows, custom forms, business process automation, and more.

Is my Service Desk solution overly complex with unused processes?

Many organizations with a first generation ITSM solution have processes and features that are not required by the organization, adding complexity and costs. Every organization strives to improve the level of IT maturity and an ITSM solution can help, but it can also be more solution than your IT Organization can manage – not matching the needs of the business.

Quick Tip: The right Service Desk solution is one that is built on a robust platform offering enterprise-grade features and has support for additional processes as your IT Organization grows. A modern solution can take you from a simple Incident Management solution to a complete ITSM solution without a re-implementation or the need to pre-purchase features that you do not currently require.

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5. Flexibility of Solution Delivery

The restrictions on a legacy Service Desk solution extends far beyond the costs associated with licensing consultants and the other expenses previously mentioned. When your legacy solution was implemented to solve your Service Desk requirements, there were probably no delivery options. The days of only offering an on-premises solution are gone. Today, a modern Service Desk solution is available either on-premises or cloud, to better suit your business needs.

Questions to Ask

Does my current Service Desk solution offer the option of on-premises or cloud?

Many legacy Service Desk solutions were only available for on-premises delivery, limiting an IT Organization to hosting the solution. And the solution may require several unique servers, increasing the costs associated with on-going maintenance as well.

Quick Tip: A modern Service Desk solution can be hosted in the cloud (Software-as-a-Service) or on-premises. Giving the business the choice of delivery solutions to best meet their needs. And most on-premises solutions require only a single server to host the Service Desk.