Next Generation Service Desk.

Executive Summary

While traditional models of the IT Service Desk remain focused solely on Incident and Reactive Problem Management, analysts will continue to manage down queues by addressing a single incident at a time, escalating problems only when they have affected a large number of customers.

For the IT Service Desk to truly succeed, Pro-Active Problem Management is needed to directly identify the scale of problems and allow action before customers are affected.

Next Generation Service Desks are empowered with new software tools that see your network and services from the end-user perspective, allowing analysts to immediately identify which incidents could affect other users and clients, and to take action to manage problems at a first line support level.

5 signs that your Service Desk isn't working

1. Users are asked 20 questions on every support call.
2. Escalations end up with the wrong team and have to be passed around.
3. Tickets are passed back to Service Desk due to missing information.
4. Users are not reporting problems.
5. Users avoid the service desk and contact 2nd/3rd line support directly with simple issues

Existing Help Desk Models Are Broken

Traditional models of the IT Service Desk are well understood; they focus on *Incident and Problem Management* and on positioning analysts to be an effective first point of contact for end-users.

Key responsibilities of traditional Service Desk Analysts include:

01 Providing workarounds for users

02 Identifying patterns and thus problems

03 Escalating problems for resolution

These are core functions that we'd expect any service desk to perform but with the inherent advantage of technology at their fingertips surely we can expect today's modern IT Service Desk to do more?

Not so. Current service desk tools focus on metrics such as *first time fix or time-to-resolution*, encouraging analysts to process tickets quickly. This leads to common behaviours such as 'cherry picking' - looking for known problems and pushing the same workarounds on repeat callers.

Pressure to deliver a solution, or even just a reason for IT failure, leads to a presume-the-cause mentality. This is costly for the IT department and gives a poor customer experience.

When new issues do arise, the best analysts turn to remote assistance tools or event logs to gain insight into a problem. However, this relies on the skill of the individual analyst in being able to identify a problem on a single user's machine.

All the while the user is waiting and watching and unable to work. This pressure to deliver a solution, or even just a reason for IT failure leads to a presume-the-cause mentality (e.g. the server must be down) so calls are needlessly escalated to more senior and more expensive IT staff.

It's time to put your focus back on the people that matter. The end-users!

Change Your Focus to the End-user Perspective

If you've ever worked on an IT Service Desk, you'll know the question that everyone asks at 9:00am on arriving to work.

How do the queues look this morning? - but this is entirely the wrong question to ask!

The traditional focus is on users reporting incidents, and in response, analysts aim to manage down the queues. Yet this is a just a recurring cycle and any temporary reductions in queue length simply mask the reality that not all users report incidents, and wider problems are not actually being resolved.

Statistics show that across a network of 5,000 machines - for every reported ticket 18 more users will have experienced the problem directly and 800 clients could potentially manifest the same issue.

Instead of asking 'are users reporting any issues' we should be asking 'are users having issues?'. Likewise, instead of asking 'what is the status of our services?' we should be asking 'are end-users able to access our services?'.

Traditional server and network monitoring tools only show us one part of the picture. A server may be up but that's no guarantee that all users can access it.

Likewise, though a client machine may appear to be functioning normally, malware can hide in the background undetected by a single AV client. Software is often unpatched as users fail to restart or leave their computers powered on overnight.

It's only when we begin to look at our network and services from the client and end-user perspective that we can start to identify problems before incidents are even reported.

3 questions to reframe for the Next Generation Service Desk

01 Are users reporting any issues?
Are users experiencing any issues?

02 What is the status of our tickets?
What is the status of our network and services?

03 How many tickets have we resolved today?
How many tickets have we prevented today?

Use Next Generation Service Desk Tools to Empower IT Analysts

It can seem like an impossible task for the IT Service Desk to resolve tickets before they are logged, or even just to identify problems accurately by gathering all the necessary information from end-users during a brief call. But it doesn't have to be!

01 What if ALL the end-user and client information the service desk needs could be available in real time with powerful search and reporting tools?

02 What if each time an incident is resolved at the service desk, analysts could quickly identify all affected users and machines and resolve the problem for everyone?

03 What if service desk analysts could be alerted to and resolve end-user issues (such as the spread of malware or unpatched software) before the user is even aware of the problem?

Next Generation Service Desk Tools such as Nexthink make all this a reality. With the Nexthink client deployed across the network, IT analysts can use the Nexthink Finder to search real time data with ease. Drill down to identify root cause. Or zoom out to see all clients and users that are affected.

***Nexthink** is a powerful software tool which gathers and displays live data from all clients across the network – providing a search engine like interface to identify, diagnose and resolve issues from the end-user perspective.*

These features make Nexthink an indispensable tool for the next generation Service Desk. No need to ask users 20 questions, no need for remote sessions to gather data, and no need to wonder whether issues affect other users.

Challenge Your Service Desk to do Proactive Problem Management

Standard Service Desk

- Focus on one call at a time to get through the queue.
- Patterns are spotted when multiple tickets come in with similar issues.
- Analysts make assumptions and tell other users that the service is down.
- Escalated tickets assume common root cause and generalized problems.

Next Generation Service Desk

- Focus on reducing potential calls to prevent a queue.
- Can identify exactly how many other users or machines are affected.
- Pro-actively inform affected customers.
- Escalate when appropriate with relevant information.
- Analysts always investigate from the end-user perspective.

By introducing tools such as Nexthink to your IT Service Desk, analysts are provided with a wealth of information at their fingertips, such as machine performance, running services, software versions and network routing (from the client perspective!).

The Nexthink Finder also reveals exactly when crashes occurred, what happened prior to the event, and which versions of applications were in use. Making it far easier to identify patterns. Once the problem is identified it's simple to generate a list of all affected users or machines.

With tools like Nexthink service desk analysts can break free of common pitfalls which bog down IT and end users, and instead are empowered to identify issues before they are even reported.

From a list of users or machines, one click is all that is needed to launch built-in or custom scripted actions. For example, quickly send an e-mail to all affected users or push out an update to all affected clients.

This functionality allows true Proactive Problem Management - empowering the IT Service Desk to identify and resolve issues before they are even reported.
Find out more about end-user analytics from Nexthink.