

CREATING A STRONG SERVICE DESK CULTURE



The service desk is the first [point of contact](#) for customers with any IT issues. As a result, the service desk has a big impact on customers' experiences and perceptions of the organization. Because it serves as a communication channel between the customer and IT, it also has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the IT team. Given the importance of this role, it's important that your service desk is effective, efficient, friendly, and always improving.

Having a strong support desk culture is one way to make this team more effective while improving customer experiences. Put more simply, a healthy and positive service desk culture leads to better internal and external results. Given the importance of culture, support desk managers should prioritize team culture and work to develop a culture that helps the team thrive. Here are some tips for how service desk managers can do this.

Build Positive Relationships with Team Members

Starting with a positive environment is a key first step for building the right culture. One of the biggest factors impacting employee satisfaction and workplace environment is the relationship with superiors. Unfortunately, in many cases, these relationships are strained.

Corporate morale expert [Kyle Weisler](#) has compiled some concerning data about employee and supervisor relationships. He conducted research about this relationship and found that 57% of people polled would trust a stranger, whereas only 43% trusted their boss. What's worse, 65% said they would prefer a new boss over a raise, and 35% would rather their direct supervisor be fired

rather than getting a substantial raise.

That data is compelling and indicates that in many organizations there is room for growth in relationships between bosses and employees. With that in mind, the first focus of building a strong team culture should be on relationships, such as building better relationships between supervisors and employees. The advice shared below will provide some tangible ways to strengthen these relationships, but it's important to keep such relationships at the forefront of any attempts to build team culture.

Create an Organization-Wide Culture of Service

The primary goal of the service desk is to meet customer expectations and to resolve all IT issues. As a result, customer satisfaction is at the center of everything the service desk does. Interestingly, [organizational research](#) indicates that in the service industry, cultural aspects of an organization can have as much of or more of an impact on customer experiences as organizational processes, structures, or innovations.

More specifically, the research indicates that organizations that effectively build a culture of service have the best customer satisfaction and the most success building long-term customer relationships. This research indicates that as service desk managers work to build a strong culture, they should ensure that it's one focused on service.

A Shared Opinion on Good Customer Service

As a first step towards building a culture of service, it's important to develop a shared opinion of what good customer service looks like. Without this, it's hard to develop organizational consistency and clear cultural expectations. Ideally, this vision would not just be shared within the service desk or IT department but instead would span across the organization.

To accomplish this, service desk managers should work with stakeholders across the organization to ensure that the organization's mission, vision, and strategy reflect a service-oriented culture. Doing so will help to develop an organization-wide statement of what excellent customer service is, an important first step towards developing a culture of service.

Developing a Customer-Centric Culture

A big part of creating a culture of service is developing an internal culture that is customer-focused. Plus, creating a customer-centered culture will lead to improvements in team efficiency, improved relationships across the team, and stronger relationships between the team and customers.

One way to help make your team more customer-focused is by creating customer-experiences guidelines. These guidelines will help keep your team focused on the customer while also helping to further develop a shared opinion on excellent customer service.

A first step towards making these guidelines is understanding the dynamics of your team. On all teams, some members are more customer-centered than others. Take some time to understand the strengths and weaknesses of team members as they relate to customer service. Then, use these observations to create a baseline of performance and a standard for which to strive. It's important to note that these observations should not be critical, but instead should be used to set the standards for your team's customer-focused development.

After observing team dynamics, it's helpful to observe interactions between team members and customers. While watching these interactions, pay particular attention to what actions lead to the best outcomes for customers. This could mean outcomes such as the most excitement, development of trust, or even the most gratitude. From these observations, you should come away with a few trends or keywords that are the most effective for dealing with customer issues.

Finally, talk with your team. Get their opinions about what's most effective when handling customer issues or what helps to achieve customer satisfaction.

After observing and listening, you should be prepared to draft customer experience guidelines to help your team more effectively provide excellent customer service. Experts suggest that these guidelines should have around 5 or 6 points. They should be short enough to be usable but also long enough to provide the team with actionable steps and all necessary details. Ultimately, these guidelines should be something that your team can use *and* something that you can utilize to support the development of team members and a culture of service.

Additional Aspects of a Culture of Service

Beyond making your team customer-focused and developing an organization-wide vision of excellent customer service, there are other things you can do to strengthen the culture of your team. Here are a few areas to focus on initially:

Creating systems and practices that improve customer service. The customer service guidelines serve as one example of such a system, but there are others that you can create. When reviewing and developing service desk processes, always do so through the lens of what will most improve customer experiences.

Developing employee training focused on creating a culture of service. Training that provides tangible ways that employees can help build a culture of service should be developed for both new and veteran employees. Consider creating sessions on such topics as increasing customer satisfaction, improving responsiveness, and increasing effectiveness.

Consistently assessing performance and making adjustments as needed. Providing excellent customer service is a constantly moving target. Additionally, even the best teams can always improve. As a result, it's a good idea to create metrics that assess your team's performance towards specific cultural goals. You can do this through the use of surveys, by reviewing achievements, or through the creation of specific metrics to help analyze your team's progress.

Celebrate excellence. One way to help build a strong team culture is to celebrate success and to celebrate the values that you want to see in your team. With that in mind, it's important to celebrate great customer service. Consider creating formal celebrations of employees that exhibit excellent customer service, such as gift cards or pizza parties, as well as more informal celebrations of great service, such as shout-outs at the weekly meeting.

As you work to build or improve the culture of your support desk, remember to focus on relationships, as they play a key role in creating a healthy culture. Additionally, keep in mind the importance of personalizing any practices or structures that you create to your team and organization. As you do so, trust that while building a strong culture can be difficult and time-consuming, it's well worth the investment made as it will make your team and organization stronger and more effective.

BMC for help desk solutions

BMC Blogs has many resources on IT service desk culture and best practices. Check out our Enterprise IT Glossary or get started with these articles:

- [Help Desk vs Service Desk: What's The Difference?](#)
- [Creating a Service Desk Code of Conduct](#)
- [Service Desk Support Analyst: Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Service Desk & Support Manager: Role and Responsibilities](#)
- [Introduction to Critical Incident Response Time \(CIRT\): A Better Way to Measure Performance](#)