

SERVICE DESK AND SUPPORT MANAGER: ROLE DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES



The [service desk](#) provides an important role for businesses, as it serves as the point of contact for all issues related to IT. In this critical role, the service desk is responsible for effectively managing customer expectations, setting the organizational standard for customer engagement, serving as a communication channel between customers and the IT organization, and, whenever possible, providing a first-contact resolution for customers.

In addition to these essential tasks, the service desk is responsible for identifying and pursuing service improvement initiatives; managing complaints, suggestions, and compliments; and, perhaps most importantly, often serving as the face, or voice, of the organization to customers. A strong, healthy service desk team is consistent; committed to quality and regular quality improvements; viewed throughout the organization as an important component of the IT team; committed to utilizing and responding to employee satisfaction metrics; and aware of the importance of utilizing regular performance metrics.

Customer Expectations of the Service Desk

Amidst its many responsibilities, the primary role of the service desk is serving as [a point of contact](#) for customers and meeting customer expectations.

With that in mind, most customers have some standard expectations for their interactions with a

service desk. As a baseline, they expect that: their issue will be resolved in a reasonable and agreed-upon timeframe; that they will receive courteous and consistent service; that they will be informed, in language that is not technical jargon, about how their issue will be resolved; and that all members of the service desk will take ownership of their issue.

As the first point of contact for customers for any IT issues, the service desk can have a big impact on customer experiences and how businesses are viewed by customers. As a result, it's important that the service desk is effective, efficient, and always improving. Having a strong service desk and support manager is one of the most effective ways to ensure that the service desk meets and exceeds internal and external expectations.

The Skills Needed to Be a Good Service Desk Manager

The service desk manager is responsible for managing daily operations of the service desk, managing the service desk team, representing the team to other stakeholders, and helping to ensure that the service desk is constantly developing and improving. To meet these many demands, a good service desk manager must have:

- The ability to build a cohesive team and to manage people effectively. This includes the ability to coach and develop the team.
- A thorough understanding of the strategic vision for the service desk and the ability to set the long-term direction of the team.
- An ability to balance and plan the short-term actions of the team.
- Knowledge and understanding of all relevant industry standards.
- Knowledge and understanding of best practices for service management.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to be influential and persuasive with stakeholders.
- An ability to market and promote the service desk and to advocate for necessary resources, support, and appreciation for the service desk.
- A complete understanding of the organization's business.
- An ability to think critically about systems and to make adjustments consistently as needed.
- The ability to manage time effectively while setting the tone of the team through modeling and leadership.

Responsibilities of Service Desk and Support Managers

This varied set of skills, from knowledge of relevant technical standards to the ability to inspire and motivate a team, is necessary to carry out effectively the many responsibilities of a service desk and support manager. The first and primary responsibility of the service desk manager is to meet targets and expectations for customer service and support performance. This is the key metric for determining the success of a service desk manager and what all other responsibilities are centered around.

Other key responsibilities of a service desk manager that help to ensure the team meets this primary goal include:

- Effectively managing, developing, and training the service desk team.
- Ensuring that all processes used by the service desk are thoroughly documented, consistently audited, and regularly improved.

- Conducting and sharing results from service and operation performance reviews.
- Promoting the service desk with senior management and working to ensure that it is properly viewed as a core business asset.
- Coordinating and managing all relevant stakeholders, including the support desk team, customers, and other teams that are involved in service desk operations.
- Being aware of and managing the costs of running the service desks.

Communication with Senior Management

One of the most important roles of the service desk manager is to help support business-wide and IT objectives. Doing so ensures that the service desk is appropriately involved in any new initiatives and that it's actively helping to improve IT and business-wide services. To effectively do this, the service desk manager needs to regularly inform and advise [senior management](#) about service desk issues and concerns associated with those issues. Similarly, the service desk manager needs to offer tangible and, whenever possible, data-driven suggestions on ways that IT services can improve.

In addition to supporting business-wide goals, regular and effective communication between the service desk manager and senior management is important to ensure that the service desk is aware of and represented on all initiatives or changes that impact service. Doing so allows the team to be involved in cross-functional projections and organizational initiatives. It also provides a communication channel for the service desk manager to share any identified initiatives that can help contribute to the business's success. Further, this is a crucial way to make sure that the service desk is properly viewed as an integral part of the IT team as well as an essential business asset.

Communication with IT Staff and Customers

In addition to communicating with senior management, the service desk manager should review and analyze communications between IT staff and customers. To meet this objective, the service desk manager should have systems for gathering information, analyzing the information, and sharing the results. This analysis should be conducted on communications to and from IT staff as well as on communications to and from customers.

Conducting and Sharing Results of Assessments

As discussed, one of the key responsibilities of the service desk and support manager is to ensure that the service desk is always improving. To help achieve this goal, the service desk manager should conduct regular assessments and share the results with stakeholders. Some standard assessments to include are:

- SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threat
- CSA: current state analysis
- A gap analysis, which identifies areas where current and future expectations are not being met
- Regular benchmarking

From these assessments, a strong service desk manager will create an analysis proposing changes to programs and projects. Effectively conducting and responding to assessments is one of the key components of being a successful service desk manager and working towards constantly improving the service desk team.

Serving as a primary point of contact for customers, the service desk plays an critical role in forming customers' perceptions of businesses. It also has a big impact on customers' experiences. As a result, it's important that the service desk is effective, consistent, prepared, and courteous. Many different factors influence the success of the service desk, but having a service desk manager with the necessary skills to meet the many demands of the job is the best way to ensure that your company's service desk meets and exceeds customer and organizational expectations.

Featuring Maple Leaf Foods, explore how to best establish knowledge management strategies to help provide employees with great self-service as well as eliminate wasted time and effort in searching for the right answers.