10 BEST TED TALKS FOR SERVICE DESK PROFESSIONALS

Service desk and IT support professionals represent their organizations in times when customers are struggling with the products and services that were purchased and expected to work as promised. Additionally, service desk professionals assist new, existing and potential customers through the purchase process using the technologies, information and instructions at their disposal. While service desk professionals often rely too much on the technologies, resources and skills to offer the best support to end-users, they might miss out on things that can have a larger impact on customer support, customer relationships, problem solving and helping the organization address the true real-world challenges facing their organization.

These aspects are addressed through several TED talks that provide a big picture perspective around various concepts and philosophies that service desk professionals need to consider for their short-term job commitments as well as long-term career focus:

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1. How to Train Employees to Have Difficult Conversations by *Tamekia MizLadi Smith*; April 2018; 390k views.

Service desk support is highly data driven in today's business landscape. Service desk professionals are expected to collect sensitive or unobvious information from their audience to deliver the best support possible. In many cases, this involves asking challenging questions. For IT related support cases, service desk professionals may have to ask repetitive questions from an audience that's already frustrated with the business service. These conversations not only place both service desk professionals and the customers in an uncomfortable position, but also present a negative impression of the business. This TED talks discusses how to make these conversations easier for

both customers and the support professionals, especially considering the importance of the data collection process in order to deliver the best services.

2. Got a Wicked Problem? First, Tell Me How You Make Toast by *Tom Wujec*; June 2013; 2.7M views.

A key responsibility of IT support professionals is to help identify the root cause of issues through end-user interaction. Often, this information is not effectively communicated by end-users. In fact, end-users may not even know exactly which piece of information is critical to help solve the issues they face. In this talk, the speaker describes his experience of asking teams regarding their process of making a toast to identify unexpected truths in solving critical problems at the workplace. A similar philosophy goes a long way in assisting end-users that face IT-related issues.

https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_wujec_got_a_wicked_problem_first_tell_me_how_you_make_toast

3. Meaningful Micro-Engagements, by *Jeannie Walters*; December 2012; 7k views

The talk focuses on a key element of the service desk profession: micro-engagements. The talk discusses the importance of micro-moments and the attention to detail within those engagements that have a direct impact on how the business or support interaction is perceived. The talk discusses how to make the most meaningful micro-engagement while we are in the moment. For service desk professionals, this capability could be useful to swing customer emotions from anger and frustration to trust and joy.

4. 10 Ways to Have A Better Conversation by *Celeste Headlee*; May 2015; 11.8M views

Service desk professionals have limited time to solve the problems facing their audience. As such, they are expected to have better and meaningful conversations. This talk discusses the key ingredients for being better at conversation, especially if that quality is critical to their job tasks. The speaker shares 10 useful rules that help being clear, honest and a great listener during the conversation – some of which won't apply directly to individuals interacting via computer screens or the phone, but help anyway.

5. Why Aren't We More Compassionate by *Daniel Goleman*; March 2007; 1.8M Views

Service desk support requires compassion to understand customer problems and ensure effective support through every interaction. The talk discusses the psychological aspects of assisting others who are in need as we move between tasks and situations. It discusses the importance of making "real" contact with the people we interact. The talk is filled with anecdotal evidences to present different reasons associated with our choices that determine how compassionate we are toward others. It concludes with the fact that useful compassion could be exercised in its basic and simple form of merely noticing the situation to have a lasting impact on others.

6. Closing the Loop on Feedback; *M Daniel Suwyn*; May 2015; 17k views

Service desk professionals receive feedback during most of their conversations with service end-users and often, the feedback shares similar elements or stories on recurring issues. The talk discusses about the importance of collecting and acting upon useful feedback as well as the consequence of not doing so. The presenter uses witty comics-themed slides to make the long talk interesting and specifically, why discusses the reasons why "feedback is the magic of life". While the talk focuses on feedback internally within the organization, it can also apply to feedback from the audience of service desk professionals.

7. Walking in The Shoes of Your Customers, by *Nigel T Packer*; July 2016; 22k views.

Understanding customer problems requires service desk professionals to walk in the shoes of customers. This is especially important from a customer perspective, who don't care about what data says to the organization but only think about their own unique experience with the business service. For service desk professionals, obtaining this understanding requires the right information about the end-users, their behavior, preferences and how the business service responds to their unique services. In this TED talk, the speaker walks in the shoes of the viewers in explaining the concept.

8. How to Speak So That People Want to Listen by *Julian Treasure*; June 2013; 28M views.

Frustrated end-users rarely intend to listen carefully to the service desk professionals attempting to resolve their issues. When end-users don't want to listen, they don't cooperate effectively, making the jobs of service desk professionals even more difficult. This widely popular TED talk offers insights on how to take advantage of these difficult situations in efforts to make the audience cooperate, communicate the right information and wait for the best service that can be delivered to them.

https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen

9. As Work Gets More Complex, 6 Rules to Simplify, by *Yves Morieux*; October 2013; 3.3M views.

Service desk professionals face the growing challenge to address end-user concerns around services enabled through a complex technology infrastructure and business protocols. As the job gets tougher, they need to find ways that reduce the stress and complexity of the work while ensuring effective service to their audience. This popular TED talks offers six simple rules to make the work environment and the job tasks simple, stress-free and productive.

10. The Jobs We'll Lose to Machines – And the Ones We Won't by *Anthony Goldbloom*; February 2016; 2.2M views.

Social media and the Internet are filled with research studies and opinions on how AI will take over our jobs. Repetitive jobs that require less human skill and can be performed better through intelligent automation will likely be the early candidates – as has been the case through the history and evolution of technology. Service desk professionals constitute an important role in every business. They interact with end-users of the business service to troubleshoot issues, offer new services or facilitate the purchase process, among other responsibilities. This TED talk helps us understand whether these jobs are replaceable by machines and AI in particular. According to the speaker, service desk professionals can ask themselves the following question to better understand the scope of this threat: to what extent does the job involve frequent high-volume tasks and to what extent does it involves novel challenges and tasks that require human intuition and thought process?