

Technical Support from Acuita

The Imperative

The increased automation of business-to-business transactions bring many benefits but also bring complexity and increased pressure on the internal IT Service team. B2B transactions are mission critical and business users require consistent, predictable, high-quality IT services to function effectively. Delivering such service involves preventive problem solving that extends beyond the “squeaky wheel gets the grease” towards a continual and encompassing mode of operation.

The Challenges

One of the major challenges of building and running an IT Support Group continues to be creating a support structure that channels problems and services to the best resource, while maintaining effective management and customer satisfaction. The need for well documented cases and a knowledge management system are key to mitigating these challenges.

The Operating Model

The Acuita Technical Support Group (TSG) operating model enables the following

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functions:

- Log problem calls
- Provide the ability to have one owner/ single point of contact for problems
- Track and manage difficult problems, collect and build historical data and describe characteristics of the problem
- Identify potential training areas or topics; provide trends that show reoccurring user problems and the resolution of the problem
- Collect information about the use of products, the ability to capture product evaluations
- Provide a way to escalate serious problems and those that are slow in being resolved
- Resolve a high percentage of first contact resolution calls by allowing the service rep to reference a knowledge base of similar problems and resolutions
- Generate and use problem history to improve the availability of systems and equipment; provide proactive analysis to predict potential failures
- Develop standard management reports for evaluating vendor performance and service level contracts.

People Management

Acuita TSG has a highly refined people practice involve recruiting, retaining, and training employees to have the right skills for providing high-quality customer service and being able to problem solve technical issues. Support functions traditionally have a high employee turnover problem. Acuita is cognizant of this and has a well crafted career progression path for support personnel which includes financial incentives and wider exposure to technology and roles within the

company.

Problem Management

The process of problem management involves the ability to log, track, escalate, and report on a wide variety of data including calls, online history, call types, caller ID and downtime outage statistics linked to service level agreement tools. In Acuita TSG each problem situation has one, and only one, clearly defined problem owner with clear accountability to manage the overall situation to an acceptable resolution. The ownership may transfer and if so, must be clearly assigned to another individual. As part of the problem management process, standards for defining problem severity types are clearly defined.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a key element in Acuita TSG that provides proactive support. It is a business process enabled by a tool for

managing the problem resolution information relating to past incidents. This process requires discipline that promotes a collaborative environment for documenting characteristics and facts about problems and their resolution. The supporting tools include databases to store the information, documentation guidelines and standards, and also incentives for sharing the uncaptured, tacit expertise and experience of individual workers.

Service Level Management

Service Level Management involves the activities and services covered by an SLA and must be built around measurable events. These measurable events ensure the SLA is meeting performance standards and that customer expectations are being met. The table below gives a list of metrics around which an SLA is developed. Each SLA is worked out with specific customer needs in mind.

METRIC	DESCRIPTION
Callback Time	The length of time it takes for an agent to get back to the end user for status of follow-up work
Resolution Time	Involves the time based on a predetermined priority. Priorities are based on factors such as whether a problem affects one user or multiple users, the location of users, and the system affected. For example:
a) Response Time	The time between identifying a problem and the time it takes for technical support to take action
b) Restore Time	The time required before a problem is identified as temporarily resolved; the restoration may be a temporary solution
c) Total Resolution Time	The time required to identify, diagnose, restore, and have permanent resolution to the problem
Moves, Adds, Changes	The average number of business days from work order to completion
First Contact Resolution	The percentage of requests resolved at first contact
Customer Satisfaction	Surveys identifying feedback from customers on satisfaction with service desk support.
Contribution to Knowledge Management	Ensure that the service desk agents are partnering with one another and the users to create and manage knowledge content. There should be a target number of cases created by the team and they should contribute to knowledge management meetings and the knowledge base.