Delivering Self-Service Access to Your Service Desk: How You and Your Customers Profit

When it comes to profitably scaling a service provider business, there are two key requirements: First, delivering effective customer service that leads to more, and more happy, customers. Second, establishing the operational processes that enable this level of service, while boosting the efficiency and productivity of staff.

The service desk, more than just about any other platform or service, has a direct and fundamental role to play in both of these areas. A strong service desk can bring value to internal operations, and it can deliver differentiation in the market place. Therefore, it's not overstating matters to say the service desk plays a very pivotal role in the MSP's business performance and prospects.

Today, there are several approaches that you can take that will help your service desk support the growth of your business. Here, I'll focus on one: providing customers with self-service access to the service desk.

Providing customers with direct access to information and processes in the service desk is one of the most beneficial things a service provider can do. This effort can cut costs and improve customer service levels and satisfaction. That's why instituting these capabilities should be job number one for any MSP that doesn't already deliver them.

However, to date, a significant percentage of MSPs have not extended self-service to customers, even though a lot of service desk solutions deployed today support it. Why? Following are a few reasons:

- **Mindset**. In many service provider businesses, the service desk has been viewed solely as an internal tool, a mechanism that helps internal IT staff to do their jobs. This mindset has shaped tool purchase decisions and limited the effort service providers have put into the service desk—and as a result, their current capabilities are going to work against them.

- **Limited knowledgebase**. One of the key requirements of an effective self-service service desk is the knowledgebase. If service providers don't have a robust, current knowledge base to leverage, the work involved in delivering self-service gets tougher.

- **Tool limitations**. Even though many tools may ostensibly offer self-service capabilities, the reality is that many are too cumbersome or limited to use effectively. In many cases, tools weren't initially designed with self-service in mind, so these capabilities are limited or difficult to use. For example, many service desk platforms don't offer a robust Web client interface.

For those organizations looking to deliver self-service capabilities, following are two examples of services that can be offered, and how delivering these services can help:

- **Self help**. Service desks can be the tool customers use to solve issues themselves. For example, if a user encounters a problem with a printer, they can go to a self-service portal, get quick access to relevant guidance in the knowledgebase, and take steps needed to solve the problem. This type of service has two significant benefits. First, customers will be delighted. In many cases, they can resolve an issue far faster than if they had to submit a ticket and wait for resolution. Thus, they are happier and more productive. Second, this service can directly and significantly reduce a service provider's costs, which can feed directly into profits or more competitive pricing.

- **Ticket submission**. Service providers can equip users with a self-service portal through which they can log in and submit tickets themselves. By doing so, organizations can save a lot of money by reducing the number of calls coming into service desk personnel. For example, many estimates indicate organizations spend $12.00 to $20.00 per tier one service desk call. If a service provider has 1,000 calls coming into the service desk call center each month, and can realize even a 10% reduction, that reduction can yield savings of approximately $2,000 a month. In addition, when MSPs enable customers to check status online, users can see on a real-time basis what the status is, and what steps have been taken—whenever they want. The result is greater transparency, so users enjoy better visibility and grow more comfortable and satisfied with their service provider.

In both of the scenarios above, service providers enjoy reduced call volume, lower costs and increased margins. What other tasks on your plate will provide more worthwhile outcomes?

About CA Cloud Service Management

CA Cloud Service Management equips service providers with broad, integrated IT service management capabilities—including service catalog, incident management, change management, asset management and discovery and more. This SaaS-based solution deploys easily and enables you to ramp up new services quickly, while minimizing up-front expense. By providing comprehensive capabilities in an easy-to-use and configure platform, this solution can significantly reduce service delivery costs and boost margins.

For more information, please see the **CA Cloud Service Management page**.

Connect with CA Technologies at ca.com

CA Technologies (NASDAQ: CA) creates software that fuels transformation for companies and enables them to seize the opportunities of the application economy. Software is at the heart of every business, in every industry. From planning to development to management and security, CA is working with companies worldwide to change the way we live, transact and communicate – across mobile, private and public cloud, distributed and mainframe environments. Learn more at **ca.com**.