



THE ART OF MAINTAINING QUALITY FOR SERVICE DESK

CHALLENGES OF ATTRITION, RETENTION, AND THE HIDDEN COSTS





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SERVICE DESK

THE EFFECTS OF ATTRITION ON YOUR BUSINESS

Staffing truly is at the whim of human behavior. Unpredictable at best, the ability for a business to be free of the aches and pains of attrition is rare. Hiring, terminating, and promoting personnel is an involved and intricate process. Information Technology is an industry that absorbs the impact of attrition in a large way. Technicians, end-users, systems, processes, and mechanics feel the effects when your service desk gains or loses an employee.



THE SCENARIO

HIDDEN COSTS

Your company recently hired Sam, a new service desk tech. Even before he entered the building, your business arranged (in time, energy, and money):

- The job posting
- The interview
- The background and reference checks
- A drug screening
- The offer letter

Sam arrives for his first day of work. Your business continues to provide:

- The onboarding
- The training
- Overtime for current technicians to fill the gap until Sam is fully ready

THE SCENARIO (CONTINUED)

Sam has been on your service desk team for four months. The ongoing costs include:

- The office space
- The health benefits
- The scheduling
- Continued training
- His salary
- Vacation days that are starting to accrue
- The 'unpredictable' such as illness, injury, and issues

Two months later, Sam finds an opportunity to earn more money with another service desk and leaves your company.



ATTRITION AGGRAVATION

It is difficult and frustrating to maintain a benchmark level of service when staffing feels like a resource-consuming revolving door. Whether generating from the employee or the employer, attrition can be debilitating and costly.

Turn-over as a result of an employee's choice to leave the company, or the need to let them go is rarely a simple process. Removing an employee from the business is nearly as costly and time consuming as time spent preparing for them to come on-board, and not just in direct financials. The exit or removal of the employee may result in them spreading an unfavorable word to the community about their perception of the experience with your company.

On the contrary, celebrating promotions and advancement due to earned success within the company is a positive reason for employee turn-over. However, even this attrition creates a deficit in the department left behind.



SERVICE DESK ATTRITION

POSSIBLE CULPRITS

The IT sector has a known reputation for high attrition.

Some reasons include:

- Job stress
- Lack of skill or experience
- Technician feeling less than prepared to fulfill the job role
- Better salary or opportunity elsewhere
- Misaligned talents (such as having a high level of skill and knowledge, however lacking qualities like customer service, empathy, and active listening)
- Little or poor retention efforts by the company

Establishing a benchmark for attrition and the trigger at which your service desk backfills is an important measure. Another is identifying some of the causes of turn-over and what can be done from a management perspective.



IMPROVING SERVICE DESK RETENTION

Maintaining a high level of service despite attrition is possible. There are things you might consider the next time you fill a gap in your IT employee infrastructure.

What attributes and skills do you look for on a resume? Planning your hiring decision based on a candidate with a good personality, stability, and drive versus one possessing the preferred skill level may prove to be a positive directive. On-the-job training allows your company to mold the technician into the role and ability required. It is more challenging to teach people how to be friendly, helpful, and dedicated.

Employing a Quality Assurance agent within your company can aid in managing issues, providing training, and promoting advancement.

They engage employees in:

- Training both IT specifically, and general job skills like customer service
- Mentorship programs
- Attendance at company-wide trainings to promote interaction and continued knowledge gathering, allowing them to feel more involved
- Boasting about service desk successes amongst the company, because behind the scenes employees often feel less noticed for their contributions

IMPROVING SERVICE DESK RETENTION (CONTINUED)

Realigning your service desk can help in minimizing attrition. Establishing roles like Senior Agent, Follow Up Agent, and Team Lead structures and nurtures staff in a positive way. These roles provide an oversight of responsibilities, including inbox management and delegation, and appropriate escalation processes. The hierarchy takes immediate pressure off your techs, allowing them to focus on the end-user calls, alongside the overall issues and objectives.

Adjust your training regime to help staff settle into and become comfortable with their roles. Provide opportunity for knowledge gathering to motivate and promote growth within the company. Shadowing with senior agents, participating in live and recorded trainings, and hosting mentorships are helpful tools for success that can benefit your techs. Cross-training is effective in breaking up IT functions by sharing mundane tasks amongst the team and encouraging 'out of the box' thinking. If employees regard your opportunity as a starter job that leads to a new and better opportunity elsewhere, you are simply investing in an extension of their education and training, with little return on investment.

Patience truly is a virtue. It will take your new technicians time to learn your business' scope of work. Plan for 4-6 weeks of training with on-going classes as prompted and start with the basics. Prior to stepping onto a service call, provide an overview of systems and processes to create a comfortable sense of understanding, dedication, and responsibility. This method may require more initial investment, however, will promote interest and longevity. Success is difficult if employees don't feel prepared, supported, or involved.



EXTERNAL RESOURCES ARE HELPFUL

Unless IT is your core business, how can you be expected to know what your service desk employees need in order to feel supported and engaged?

Hiring an external provider whose focus is strictly IT can fill this role fluidly. Partnering with an outside provider takes the ‘pain’ out of the attrition process. Remote IT overcomes obstacles by utilizing a well-staffed and highly trained service desk to fill your business IT needs. Service providers work to overcome the challenges of a service desk by:

- Always recruiting
- Always training
- Employing disciplined and regimented techs
- Having a quality assurance presence
- Scheduling staff based on metrics and charted patterns
- Tracking KPIs to alert of deficits or needed improvements, or to commend solid patterns and progress
- Absorbing costs associated with the IT entity, including overhead, payroll, and training

A well-trained, well-prepared, and well-supported service desk is an asset to your business. Partnerships allow for resources to come together, enabling both teams to focus on what they do best.



CHOOSE THE BEST SUPPORT SOLUTION

It is estimated that within the technology industry, the cost of losing an employee is at a rate of one to two times their salary. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that turnover in 2021 was at 57.3%, which can make the service desk sector challenging, expensive, time consuming, and frustrating.

In-house Management

Done well, in-house management of a service desk can be successful in supporting both its end-users and its internal team. If unstable or needing attention, IT can pull a business from its core focus into a realm that is unfamiliar and overwhelming. Businesses often benefit from help with staffing, training, and overall management.

Drive down attrition, minimize over and under-staffing, receive ongoing resources, and stabilize your tech center. Consider realigning your internal approach or rely on an external partner to provide remote solutions that have a very in-house feel.



PARTNER WITH AN IT PROVIDER

It can be difficult and debilitating to accomplish daily tasks and long term goals if appropriate resources are lacking. Is your IT presence meeting your business needs and expectations?

Cayuse is an external partner that has a support team ready to provide day-to-day and overall management and execution of your IT service desk. Technicians at each tier level are on hand to provide their expertise. Our state-of-the-art Technology Delivery Center in Pendleton, Oregon is equipped to be the service desk hub for your company.

PARTNER WITH AN IT PROVIDER (CONTINUED)

Cayuse provides:

- Tech support for your end-users
- Execution of operations 24x7x365 and across each U.S. time zone
- Recruitment, training, and scheduling of staff
- Defined service desk roles and management structure
- Workflows for ticket resolution, routing, and escalation
- Metrics tracking and trending
- Service Level Agreement
- Fully secure capabilities as a Network Operations Center (NOC) and Security Operations Center (SOC)
- Minority supplier and diversity credits as a 100% Native American owned company

Contact us to learn how we can support your IT needs, allowing you to provide your business with a solid IT presence while saving on your bottom line. Grow your company and gain confidence in knowing that your service desk is in alignment with your staff, your processes, and your goals.

