



Briefing Paper

Pro-active v Re-active Service Desk?

Introduction

What is a pro-active helpdesk and why do you need one?

Demands on IT differ from organisation to organisation and the truth is a proactive IT helpdesk solution is not necessarily needed if you are happy for the IT department to continue functioning in a reactive way. That is responding to incidents and outages as they occur and accepting the consequential down time and loss of production that results from critical business system failure.

Alternatively a proactive Helpdesk enables your IT team to respond to outages in a quick and efficient manner, thereby minimizing downtime and focuses on proactive, preventative processes that enable your team to detect and prevent issues before they cause outages.

If you work in a successful, progressive, forward looking organization that has mission critical system that simply must be available, then this Briefing Paper is for you...

By virtue of the fact that you still reading you are almost certainly working for such an organisation and manage mission critical systems; your organisation probably operates in a competitive market with downward pressure on pricing, has a requirement to keep up to date with industry standards and government legislation and a need to track market trends to facilitate reinvestment in products that will be successful in meeting future demand head on. In this dynamic business environment it is impossible to stay informed without investment in IT systems that enable employees to go about their daily activities and capture the data that empower executives to make informed decisions.

The Requirement

Modern IT helpdesk systems are more than just a method of recording incidents, it is true that a core requirement of any service

management system is to facilitate logging, prioritisation and management of Incidents, Problems and Changes to closure as quick as possible. Great MI (Management Information) reports at your fingertips telling you how well you performed against SLA (Service Level Agreement) is a given, plus a plethora of features and functions designed to aid support staff in their endeavors. But this is reactive management of unplanned events or firefighting. By definition unplanned events are very difficult to resource, you do not want too many people sitting around waiting for the phone to ring yet you need to provide a responsive service to the business. Getting the balance between numbers of first, second and third line support staff is very challenging, you do not want highly skilled and expensive staff resetting user accounts and passwords and nor do highly skilled staff want to be doing this type of work

Solution vendors put a lot of effort into ensuring tickets can be closed at first contact if at all possible or even better closed by self-help provided in the self-service portal however this again is reactive, a case of shutting the door after the horse has bolted. Clearly core features are essential and critical for spotting trends and identifying training needs, for example you cannot stop people from forgetting passwords but you can identify the memory inflicted individuals that forget every Monday and do something about it.

In many organisations, up to a third of all Incidents are password resets, user account resets or “how do I” type requests, another third are typically operational issues like equipment moves or toner outages on network printers which can all be dealt with by first line staff fairly quickly. However there is another third of calls which are more serious and time consuming to resolve like system failures which affect the ability to perform routine tasks for many users.

These are by definition high Priority issues which are unplanned and

probably need second and or third line staff to investigate and resolve to get the service back up and running.

A key component to facilitate a move to proactive management is network and server monitors, the benefits of such tools is well-documented; there are many vendors promoting very expensive helpdesk solutions that include monitors that can alert IT staff to impending failure. System monitors proactively alert staff of conditions that if they go unchecked could or would lead to system failure. A common example is disc space usage; by being alerted ahead of time, technicians are able to manage data bases to free up disc space providing continuous uptime of the systems which leads to increased production and a significant reduction in the number and frequency of system failures i.e. calls logged with the helpdesk.

The Resolution

This is a common problem, as discussed many IT departments are aware of the benefits that system and network monitors provide and have previously invested in solutions that they are happy with and skilled at setting up. But if you have already made a 'best of breed' investment why buy an exorbitantly expensive helpdesk solution that includes features and functions you already have and do not need to replace. One possibility is you are concerned how you can integrate system alerts into the helpdesk and manage the incident in a consistent manner alongside other IT work.

So you now consider spending 10's of thousands, maybe 100's of thousands on helpdesk software with features that do not need replacing. Moreover, the service desk vendor of choice is typically not expert in the development of system monitors and does not offer a 'best of breed' solution. However on the plus side it is integrated which is great, but do you really want to settle for second best? What is the answer? You need a helpdesk system that allows your existing systems to raise alerts without expensive and complex integration middleware.

How can you move from a reactive helpdesk to a pro-active helpdesk?

The answer is simple, Business Rules Automation; the very latest helpdesk solutions like Simplisys Service Desk facilitate automation with third party systems, including system monitors out of the box. System Admins are able to very quickly and easily set up automated processes in line with working practices that deal with system generated alerts. You might think that this is not new, well certainly the concept is not new but the power and ease of creation is revolutionary. With Simplisys Business Rules it is a very simple task for system administrators to create and maintain rule sets that will monitor incoming emails and route, prioritise or alert staff as required determined solely by the rules created.

The good news is that Simplisys Business Rules creation does not require IT staff to learn a bespoke scripting language, it uses Boolean logic, point & click technology to empower class leading proactive monitoring, alerting and management at a fraction of the cost of the main stream service desk vendors.

To learn more about why leading SME's are choosing Simplisys Service Desk visit our web site www.simplisys.co.uk or email sales@simplisys.co.uk.

About Simplisys

Simplisys Limited is the developer of Simplisys Service Desk. When we designed Simplisys Service Desk our objective was to quite simply create the ultimate service desk application for use in the real world – a rich feature list, configuration not customisation at its core, fast implementation out of the box, integration with your workflows and business rules, following ITIL best practice and a price point that make it accessible to most organisations.

Simplisys Service Desk is designed, developed and supported by our team at Simplisys Ltd based in Portishead, Bristol. Simplisys Ltd is an ISO 9001 registered company and delivers solutions to industry best practice quality standards. Our approach to implementation is to work closely with our customers, understanding requirements and reasons for change and ensuring that projects exceed expectation.



Tel: 01275 240500
Fax: 01275 240501
sales@simplisys.co.uk