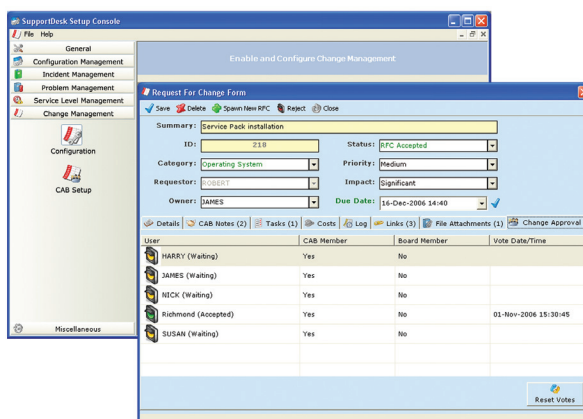


RICHMOND SupportDesk



SupportDesk 6.5 from Richmond Systems

IT Service Management software has to be one of the fiercest markets within IT. The underlying workflow of managing IT assets and services overlays onto many other management requirements, and this has led to very powerful packages with no shortage of ability. However, there has been an increasing resistance from deploying organisations, sometimes struggling to make these expensive applications deliver.

Richmond has had an exciting and seemingly productive year and this is witnessed in the latest release of SupportDesk, version 6.5. It has been designed to provide users with simple CD installation from the Setup Console and does so with a philosophy that centres on giving the user direct control in whatever measure they choose. However, Richmond have not abandoned consultancy, and what they offer is more about establishing best practice, as opposed to product configuration. The product is not short on options, but a staged implementation is easily accommodated and can comfortably reflect the requirements of the ITIL framework.

Users are provided with access from a Windows client, web interface or a Windows mobile client; the latter offering live connectivity, essential to the efficient running of an effective SLA model. The screens are simple and fresh looking; familiar but new. Richmond has retained the Navigator Tree which allows you to

navigate easily through potentially complicated structures of, for example, inventory. It is here that a user can implement CMDB functionality bolstered by links to products such as MS SMS, Centennial or any OLE database. SupportDesk also links to Active Directory facilitating quick, easy and live use of existing data; this too can be operational in quick time.

Underwriting its scalability, the Navigator Tree is just as comfortable around non-IT assets, and can provide clean, highly relevant views to different classes of users.

The incident details screen is simple and uncluttered through its tabulated format, including some user definable fields. An incident is managed through the incident list and displays can be very user specific. Moving data around the views is easy with a drag and drop capability. Reporting is very practical, with most needs being met through onscreen analysis sent to a printer. A separate executable Management Console offers more with drill down and charting, and user choice is once again considered, as this executable is shipped as standard with the product.

Lastly, a crystal run-time licence is included for the more bespoke requirement, including templates which are provided to again speed up deployment and pay-back.

Again part of the standard product, Problem Management offers a simple approach to this vital area of improving productivity and service. This could be an

example of functionality that is not set up initially, but when required it is simply turned on. It offers management options including known errors, workarounds, and investigation requests, and these can be linked to the call logging process, potentially increasing the first call closure rate.

The recent addition of Change Management underlines the strong operational association. Using ITIL terminology, it is characterised with flexible links, drag and drop and its support for requests for change. This includes task management, approval board voting and reporting.

Quite deliberately this product is aimed at the needs of the biggest sector of business users (SMB) and delivers right at the heart of IT Service Management. It elegantly and openly links to third party products, and it is easy to see many examples of how it could scale to meet most users needs. With this focus there are no hidden costs for licence keys, ongoing consultancy or buckets of functionality that you may never use. SupportDesk is capable of going beyond IT, but IT is where it is focused - and it does so with style.

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