

## Service Desk Optimisation: The Role of Asset Discovery

A well-organised Service Desk is critical to every organisation's IT service delivery. Accurate and current information about the status and history of user's' PCs significantly boosts Service Desk efficiency.

This paper shows how asset discovery software plays a vital role in raising service desk efficiency while maintaining customer satisfaction and resolving problems effectively.

### Status data

*According to a survey by industry analysts **Gartner Group**, the average duration of a support call is 17min, 42 percent of which is spent establishing the status of the user's PC.*

Clearly a support technician cannot accurately diagnose a user's problem without knowing the status of the PC, its hardware configuration, operating system, application software and other files.

### Configuration Management Database (CMDB)

Unless status information is stored in the service desk configuration database or is readily available elsewhere, the technician establishes it by iterative Q&A with the user, which is a time-consuming process.

Even if a user knows the current status of their PC, they may not be aware of previous changes. So the configuration database also needs to provide the history of these changes, including hardware modifications and software patches, otherwise the technician will still have to make a site visit.

Knowing the physical location of the user's PC and the status of the segment of the network to which it is connected will also significantly speed up the resolution of the problem.

### ITIL best practice

According to the definition of ITIL<sup>®</sup>, configuration management, a subset of service delivery, has four aspects: identification, control, status and verification. Asset management contributes to ITIL processes by supporting the identification, status and verification aspects.

If the discovery and entry of IT asset data is not automated, the configuration database seldom contains sufficiently accurate information and it is highly unlikely that the data will be 100 percent up to date. Even service desk suites that boast ITIL certification may rely on manual entry of configuration data which in a real-life environment can prove unreliable.

Populating the configuration database with the output from automated inventory management software will provide a regular update of the status of all devices on the network. This means the technician will automatically have the information required to resolve problems efficiently.

### Improved efficiency

*With audit data present the average duration of a service desk call falls 50 percent, from 17min to 8.5 min, says **Gartner**, which can result in significant improvements in service desk efficiency. Technicians will be able to handle more calls during their shift and users will see improved service levels and a quicker return to productive work.*

Centennial, the developers of Centennial Discovery own study also shows that the presence of audit data can cut out 80 percent of on-site visits and double first-time fix rates, further increasing service desk efficiency.

### Fluctuating IT assets

Today's dynamic business requirements mean IT assets are constantly changing, so the configuration database will require frequent updates. Being able to see up-to-date discovery data in the service desk screen will significantly boost the efficiency of the service desk.

### Ready access to network inventory data can cut average support call time in half, double first-time fix rates and reduce onsite calls by 80 percent

Ideally organisations need an automatic process to feed live asset data into the configuration database regularly and not just when known changes – such as OS or hardware upgrades – occur. Audit software that uses an industry-standard SQL database will have ease-of-use advantages here.



## Asset discovery data required

Automated asset discovery software needs to provide the following data:

- Hardware: machine name, manufacturer, serial number, BIOS date, processor, memory, hard disk size/space, installed adapters, network information
- Software: vendor, application name, version/patch, last used, frequency of use, licensable & un-licensable applications, product type
- Identification of file types, e.g. MP3s, and percentage of disk space used by file type
- Audit history and record of changes
- Current location and location tracking to alert administrators to movements, additions and removals

For most diagnoses, a service desk technician won't require all the data fields gathered by an asset management package. However, the ability to drill down into this information as necessary will be of great help should the technician need it.

## Conclusion

When service desk technicians have ready access to accurate and current configuration data about the status, network connection and location of users' PCs, average support call time halves, first-time fix rates double and on-site calls fall by up to 80 percent.

Asset management software used to populate the configuration database improves service desk efficiency and supports ITIL processes in configuration management.

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Established for over 20 years, Richmond Systems Limited, is a leading provider of service desk software for enterprise-wide service support based on ITIL® best practices.

Richmond SupportDesk can be rapidly implemented to deliver fast, flexible and scalable service support for incidents, problems, configuration and change management through Windows™, web and mobile interfaces.

Providing the IT department with full visibility of the support environment allows streamlining of the operation increasing efficiency and raising customer service levels.

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