

# The Ultimate Guide to Managed Help Desk

Your organization likely dedicates significant time, money, and other resources to supporting technology for end users, including assisting them when there's a problem and engaging in proactive maintenance and servicing of systems and equipment. Managed help desk is an excellent resource to take the burden of customer support functions off of your IT staff, so they can focus on initiatives that lead to growth.

## ► Why Use Managed Help Desk?

## ► Managed Help Desk and Your Industry

## ► How to Choose the Right Managed Help Desk Provider

## What Is Managed Help Desk?

Managed help desk is a managed IT service that helps you focus on your core business needs. When your business outsources the help desk function, you're able to utilize your best IT professionals to strategize how to apply technology to drive business objectives. Across all industries, IT is moving away from a maintenance role and into a strategic role. Outsourcing your help or service desk can help you achieve a higher level of dedication to your digital transformation initiatives.



## What Is the Difference Between Help Desk and Service Desk?

Distinguishing the difference between help desk and service desk terminology may help you refine how you offer support to your customers. For many enterprises, these terms are used interchangeably, but as digital transformation initiatives broadly expand the role of technology in business processes, assistance also expands. Learning the difference between how help desk and service desk functions serve your company will help you offer each in a setting that is more beneficial to end users. Here are some of the key differences:

### Help Desk:

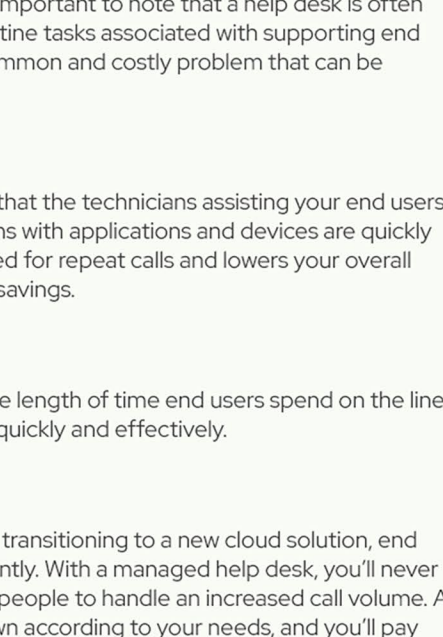
A help desk tends to be reactionary in nature. The help desk responds to the end users' requests for assistance via troubleshooting when an application stops communicating with its integrated technology, or helping an employee when their mobile apps are not syncing with the same ones they access on a laptop. A help desk will also help with malfunctioning equipment and will generally offer more basic services.

### Service Desk:

The service desk, rather than being reactionary like the help desk, is a proactive effort to support and maintain systems and hardware. It's a service-oriented, progressive approach to equipping end users with reliable and updated technology.

## What Role Does Managed Help Desk Play in Managed IT Services?

Investing in a managed help desk offers advantages that far outpace the reasons for an in-house approach. Take a look at some of the [benefits](#) of managed help desk:



### Reliable Support, 24 Hours a Day:

Investing in a managed help desk is an effective way to address any geographical disparity in your employee population. A managed help desk is able to meet the expectations and requirements of remote workers more easily, without the increased cost that would come with staffing an in-house help desk around the clock.



### Freeing up Your IT Team for Innovation and Strategy:

With a managed help desk, you can focus your team on innovation and strategic resource planning. The opportunities in cloud computing, machine learning, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), and automation are expanding quickly. Your team needs to be able to focus on implementing the right technology to drive business results.



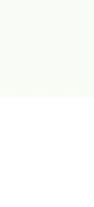
### Cost Savings:

When you outsource, you no longer have to spend in areas like training, equipping a team with the right diagnostic tools for a help desk in terms of hardware and software, or the space to house your help desk team. It's also important to note that a help desk is often staffed as an entry-level position, and the routine tasks associated with supporting end users can become mundane. Turnover is a common and costly problem that can be avoided with a managed help desk.



### Reduced Call Volume:

One of the benefits of managed help desk is that the technicians assisting your end users are highly specialized in their craft, so problems with applications and devices are quickly diagnosed and resolved. This reduces the need for repeat calls and lowers your overall help desk volume, resulting in additional cost savings.



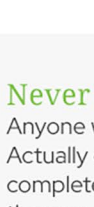
### Improved Call Resolution Time:

A managed help desk significantly reduces the length of time end users spend on the line with a help desk because issues are resolved quickly and effectively.



### Scalable Flexibility:

When implementing a new fleet of devices or transitioning to a new cloud solution, end users may call into the help desk more frequently. With a managed help desk, you'll never need to worry about hiring and training more people to handle an increased call volume. A managed help desk can easily scale up or down according to your needs, and you'll pay only for the amount of service you use.

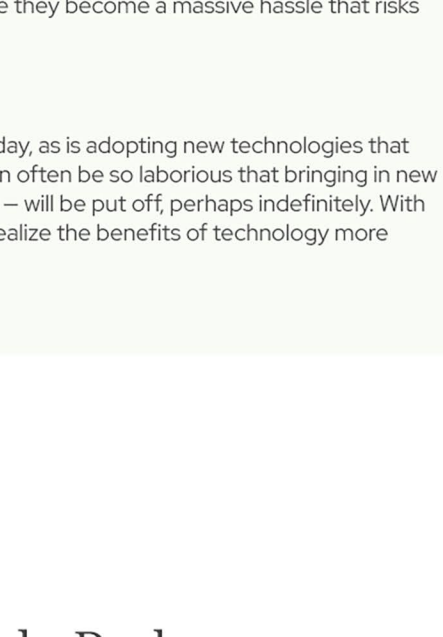


### Reliable Support During a Crisis:

In the event of a cyber security attack or a natural disaster, your end users will naturally require more support. An in-house help desk is often impacted during these situations. A managed help desk can continue to offer the same level of support to your organization, helping employees maintain business continuity.

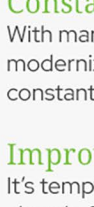
## Why Should Businesses Use Managed Help Desk?

For organizations reluctant to partner with outside firms for IT assistance, learning the many business security benefits of managed help desk can be a turning point. Businesses that are looking to remain competitive in an increasingly complex and connected marketplace need to find and leverage every strategic advantage possible. Here are [a few reasons](#) businesses turn to managed help desk:



### Fight Downtime

A high-functioning help desk reduces IT downtime. Switching to a managed help desk solution boosts innovation and efficiency and can also reduce help desk costs.



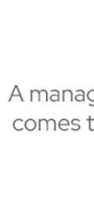
### Fight Cybercriminals

Outsourced help desk works around the clock for you. If your objective is to keep your customer information safe, outsourcing puts you in contact with tools and services that most companies can't afford on-premises.



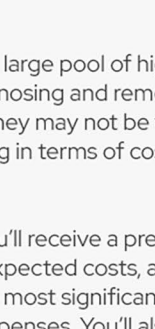
### Gain Insights with Improved Monitoring Services

Tech issues aren't easy to spot, at least not in the traditional sense of relying on on-premise resources. With a 24/7 help desk at your disposal, you can put your trust in monitoring services that identify issues before they become a massive hassle that risks significant downtime.



### Faster Adoption Rates

Business security is increasingly important today, as is adopting new technologies that help an organization grow. Implementation can often be so laborious that bringing in new processes—including hardware and software—will be put off, perhaps indefinitely. With the right help desk at your disposal, you can realize the benefits of technology more rapidly.



## How Managed Help Desk Strengthens Business Security

For organizations reluctant to partner with outside firms for IT assistance, learning the many business security benefits of managed help desk can be a turning point. Businesses that are looking to remain competitive in an increasingly complex and connected marketplace need to find and leverage every strategic advantage possible. Here are [a few reasons](#) businesses turn to managed help desk:

### Never Want for Patches

Anyone who's ever had to run patches on local hardware knows it can be a time-consuming process. Actually downloading the patch, waiting for it to apply, then having to shut down local devices to complete the process can take time out of your day. With managed help desk, that's done behind the scenes, so the end user scarcely notices.

### Reputation on the Line

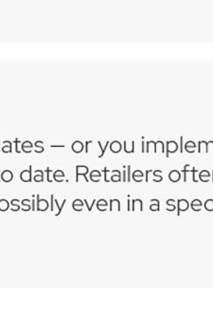
Most reputable managed help desk providers put a particular focus on security, hardening systems against things such as zero-day hacks and malware. Additionally, that extra focus on a timely patch application also better secures a system by removing potential avenues for attack by hackers.

### Constant Modernization

With managed help desk, the need to keep ahead of competitors requires constant updates and modernization ahead of any breaches. That means your security systems will effectively be constantly up to date.

### Improved Local Operations

It's tempting to just toss the burden of business security onto IT staffers who may be overloaded already. By using managed help desk to improve business security instead, the local operations are less burdened and better able to put local best practices to use, including improving password strength and keeping local devices running. This allows a two-sided approach that reduces potential avenues of attack even further.



## The Benefits of Managed Help Desk for Multi-Location Businesses

A managed help desk is often one of the first areas that [multi-location businesses](#) consider when it comes to outsourcing. Take a look at some key considerations when deciding whether to leverage managed help desk:

### Availability

A managed help desk provides the availability necessary to support mobile employees and multi-location businesses. Technical staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Expertise

Managed help desk gives you access to a large pool of highly trained technicians that have specialized tools at their disposal for diagnosing and remedying challenges with devices, applications, and network connections. They may not be trained to your exact specifications, but you also aren't responsible for that training in terms of cost or time.

### Cost

When you access managed help desk, you'll receive a predictable, consistent invoice each month. There will be no surprises from large, unexpected costs, and you'll no longer have to purchase the tools necessary to equip a help desk. The most significant cost relief from outsourcing your help desk is the reduction of IT staff payroll expenses. You'll also save on travel costs because your IT personnel won't be traveling to your sites to walk an employee through resolving a problem.

### Managing Resources

Managed help desk is just one way enterprises are refocusing their IT teams to execute key business strategies more efficiently. Rather than spend time trying to figure out why a branch office is getting an error message, for instance, they can create strategies for outpacing competitors with a new, cloud-based customer interface.



## The Benefits of Managed Help Desk and Other Managed IT Services for Small Businesses

Thanks to the subscription-based pay model of cloud solutions, small businesses suddenly have access to all the same applications and platforms that used to be reserved for only those enterprises with the budget to pay for the latest and greatest technology. While this presents a great opening for small companies to capture new opportunities, it also exposes some additional gaps in the ability to support the technology. Areas such as infrastructure—and specifically the network—may need to be upgraded and maintained at a different level to support the bandwidth and performance requirements of a modern cloud environment.

That's why a small business can benefit from managed help desk and other managed IT services. Consider the [advantages](#) that can be gained by a small company:

### Availability

One of the benefits of managed help desk is that the availability of technicians matches the flexible work schedules of the end user employee. An outsourced IT provider may have 24/7 availability, making it easy for employees to maximize productivity.

### Cost Savings

Managed help desk is a budget-friendly solution compared to paying the salary and benefits of an in-house employee. With a managed help desk provider, you only pay for the help you receive, and the provider can manage the fluctuation in your assistance needs.

### Faster Response Times

Rather than waiting for an overtaxed, in-house IT employee to get around to figuring out why a system is glitching, a managed help desk provider can respond quickly to your employees' needs. Problems can be addressed simultaneously, rather than waiting in a queue until IT has the opportunity to assist.

### Expertise

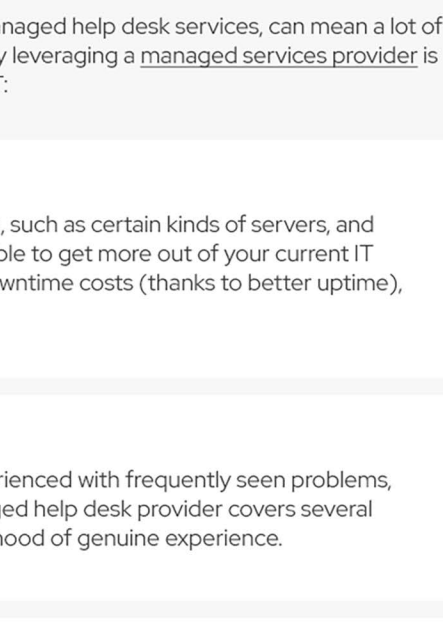
You may wonder if an outsourced help provider could possibly know your systems as well as an in-house staff member. Providers generally train employees with in-depth expertise on a variety of systems and applications, and you'll be assigned technicians who are well-versed in your particular solutions. You may even be able to find a provider that specializes in your industry.

## How Does Managed Help Desk Impact Different Industries?

Depending on the industry, managed help desk can be utilized in different ways to have the greatest positive impact on IT operations.

## How Managed Help Desk Benefits the Retail Industry

Today's customers are more aware than ever that they can get a product from a variety of places, and they are likely to choose the one that delivers it at the right price and at the highest level of convenience. In order to provide the level of technical support that delivers the best possible experience, many retail companies are turning to a managed help desk. Here are a few ways businesses in the retail industry benefit from a managed help desk:



### Better Use of CIOs' Time and Resources

When using a managed help desk, the CIO is able to release that aspect of their responsibility and focus more fully on innovation and implementation that will deliver a better customer experience. Their time is freed up to develop a vision for the direction of the company and consider the potential for new technology that may help other departments in the retail corporation realize their goals.

### Improved Availability

As the hours for purchasing extend around the clock, so must the technological support to equip stores and websites for sales. A retailer may not want to staff their help desk around the clock, but outsourcing the assistance to a third-party help desk allows technical help to always be available. Retailers find that a managed help desk supports both customers' and employees' needs.

### Cost Savings

Retailers often experience a seasonal element in their sales, which often correspond with a jump in help desk needs. With managed help desk, you only pay for the help desk assistance you actually use, so those times when you need more help are offset by when your website is steady and your phones are ringing less frantically.

### Expertise

As your systems receive frequent updates—or you implement more new solutions—it can be difficult to keep your IT help desk up to date. Retailers often partner with an IT help desk provider that specializes in retail support and possibly even in a specific type of retail, such as clothing or furniture sales.

## How Managed Help Desk Benefits the Healthcare Industry

Organizations in the [healthcare](#) industry can also leverage managed help desk so that IT operations can run more smoothly. Given the increased sophistication of today's electronic health records and more stringent compliance requirements, healthcare organizations often lack the internal IT resources to keep up. Using a managed help desk frees up internal IT staff to focus on the critical requirements of keeping patient data secure and the organization HIPAA compliant.



## How Managed Help Desk Benefits the Financial Industry

Financial organizations must have secure, reliable IT services in order to conduct business. Downtime can be disastrous for a financial institution, and internal IT staff must ensure all systems are running smoothly and protected from cyber threats because of the sensitive nature of the information passing over networks. Utilizing a managed help desk lifts the burden of day-to-day IT activities (like password resets) from the internal IT staff, so they can focus on more important aspects of the organization's technology, including security.



## How to Choose the Right Managed Help Desk Provider

Leveraging the right amount of IT support can be a difficult process, especially for organizations that are right on the cusp of having the budget to fund an internal support system but are also considering a managed help desk provider. Rather than try to manage everything in-house, choosing a third party that focuses 100% of their energy on help desk and managed services is a favorable option for [several reasons](#):

### 1 Successfully Navigate Staffing Problems

When you use a managed help desk provider, you don't have to worry about staffing issues.

### 2 Save Money

When you leverage managed help desk, you're basically paying a fraction of the cost of hiring internal staff, because you're not covering employees' benefits and salaries.

### 3 Focus Your Energy Where It Matters

Rather than paying bucks to staff an in-house team that is only there to resolve technology problems, choose a managed help desk provider that offers fast and dependable services, which means your team can get back to work faster and focus on what matters instead of having to troubleshoot hardware, software, or networking issues.

### 4 Digitize with Ease

When you outsource your help desk, you get a group of professionals who make it their duty to stay on top of the latest technological trends. They know what will integrate well with your current system and how you can get the most traction out of it, whether it's hardware, software, or both.

### 5 Low-Risk Technology Implementation

A managed help desk provider will effectively wipe out the risks of implementing new technology, as they have several highly qualified technicians who are experts at implementing state-of-the-art technology.

### 6 Going Remote

One of the trends that has taken hold in managed help desk services is to offer mobile support. Whenever an IT issue comes up, these service providers can log in to your servers or applications and find the root of the problem remotely. This is important because, rather than sending someone over to your facility to physically look over a piece of equipment, it can be managed from afar.

While there are numerous benefits in managed help desk services, businesses should exercise caution to ensure that their needs are being met. It's crucial to ensure your existing IT is a part of the decision to move to a managed help desk. Some [key considerations](#) and questions should be included in the evaluation of a help desk provider:

### 1 How Does the Provider Handle Break/Fix Service?

Just because the provider says they handle break/fix support does not mean that they are the ones doing the actual tasks. They may partner with a third party, and if you are outside of a specific service area for that provider, they may not include this service at all.

### 2 What Are the Contract Terms and Is There an Escape Plan?

If a partnership with a managed help desk isn't working out, you need a way to change direction. Evaluate each potential provider's termination fees and trial periods to help determine the right choice.

### 3 Carefully Evaluate the Service Level Agreement (SLA)

There's no point in moving forward with a managed IT services provider if its SLA doesn't support your business objectives.

### 4 Ask About Turnover Rate

You need to know what level of experience and expertise is staffing the help desk, and you must be aware of any issues with retention.

### 5 Examine the Level of Sophistication Their Help Desk Tools Offer

The ability to quickly and effectively diagnose and remedy your end-users' problems is a key consideration when choosing a managed services provider. A helpful first step is to make sure the tools are more sophisticated than those your end-users have available for self-help.

### 6 Evaluate Their Level of Experience in Your Specific Industry

They may not have serviced a direct competitor, but they should have some experience at a company within your industry and with a similar size and scope to your organization.

A managed services provider, specifically one that provides managed help desk services, can mean a lot of value to a company's IT operations. Here are a few reasons why leveraging a [managed services provider](#) is your key to better IT:

### 1 Cost Savings

Start with the hardware you'll never have to buy again, such as certain kinds of servers, and segue into the reductions in labor costs from being able to get more out of your current IT staff. Follow that up with reduced opportunity and downtime costs (thanks to better uptime), and the savings speak for themselves.

### 2 The Qualification/Experience Gap

Because in-house IT staff tend to only become experienced with frequently seen problems, any new problem is out of their wheelhouse. A managed help desk provider covers several problems across several systems, improving the likelihood of genuine experience.

### 3 Greater Agility

Increasing capacity in-house requires new hardware purchases, new IT hires to handle the hardware, and so on. Increasing capacity with a managed service provider often only requires a phone call and an adjusted monthly bill. Being able to make changes that efficiently makes your business much more agile and able to pivot to new opportunities.

### 4 Greater Efficiency

Using a managed service provider means one point of contact, which reduces the amount of time required to wrangle various vendors. This also improves the time available to focus on the company's main line of business, since they're no longer mired in the time sink of in-house IT.