

ITIL – Service Desk Metrics

Metrics should be established so that the performance of the Service Desk can be evaluated at regular intervals. This is important in order to assess maturity, efficiency and effectiveness, and to establish any opportunities to improve Service Desk operations.

Metrics for Service Desk performance must be realistic and carefully chosen. It is common to select those metrics that are easily available, and that may seem to be a possible indication of performance; however, this can be misleading. For example, the total number of calls received by the Service Desk is not in itself an indication of either good or bad performance, and may in fact be caused by events completely outside the control of the Service Desk – for example, a particularly busy period for the organisation or the release of a new version of a major corporate system. An increase in the number of calls to the Service Desk can indicate less reliable services over that period of time – but may also indicate increased user confidence in a Service Desk that is maturing, resulting in a higher likelihood that users will seek assistance rather than try to cope alone. For this type of metric to be reliable for reaching either conclusion, compare previous periods for any Service Desk improvements implemented since the last measurement baseline.

Further analysis and more detailed metrics are needed and must be examined over a period of time. These will include the call handling statistics (i.e. Average Speed to Answer (ASA), Abandoned Call Rate (ABR)), and additionally:

- The first line resolution rate: the percentage of calls resolved at first line, without the need for escalation to other support groups. This is the figure often quoted by organisations as the primary measure of the Service Desk's performance (and used for comparison purposes with the performance of other desks), but care is needed when making any comparisons. For greater accuracy and more valid comparisons this can be broken down further as follows:
 - The percentage of calls resolved during the first contact with the Service Desk, i.e. while the user is still on the telephone to report the call.
 - The percentage of calls resolved by the Service Desk staff themselves without having to seek deeper support from other groups. Note: some desks will choose to co-locate or embed more technically skilled second line staff with the Service Desk. In such cases, it is important when making comparisons to also separate out, (i) the percentage resolved by the Service Desk staff alone; and (ii) the percentage resolved by the first line Service Desk staff and second line support staff combined.
- Average time to resolve an incident (when resolved at first line)
- Average time to escalate an incident (where first line resolution is not possible)
- Average Service Desk cost of handling an incident. Two metrics should be considered here:
 - Total cost of the Service Desk divided by the number of calls. This will provide an average figure, which is useful as an index and for planning purposes, but does not accurately represent the relative costs of different types of calls;
 - By calculating the percentage of call duration time on the Desk overall, and working out a cost per minute (total costs for the period divided by total call duration minutes), this can be used to calculate the cost for individual calls and give a more accurate figure;
 - By evaluating the type of incident with call duration, a more refined picture of cost per call by type arises and gives an indication of which incident types tend to cost more to resolve and are possible targets for improvement.
- Percentage of customer or user updates conducted within target times, as defined in Service Level Agreements targets
- Average time to review and close a resolved call
- The number of calls broken down by time of day and day or week, combined with the average call time metric, is critical in determining the number of staff required
- Number of calls over a defined period (per day/per week/per month etc.)
- Trend analysis
- Incident Turnaround Time (ITAT)
- Number of incorrectly assigned incidents

- No. of calls/incidents per analyst
- Cost per call/or per incident (on occasion)