



# Self-Service Portals in the Modern Help Desk Model

*“Certified IT Help Desk Support for end-users 24x7”*

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# Introduction

A self-service portal has become an integral part of any IT department's end-user support. It is no secret that as the workforce gets younger, it also gets more tech savvy. It is not only their competence with all things computers that are driving end-users away from their respective IT departments. Surveys show that workers are seeking self-service IT in large part due to dictatorial IT departments whose sluggish, reactionary approaches are incapable of keeping pace with the demands of tech savvy end-users. To be fair, it is not the help desk employees' faults. In a survey, two out of five end-users believed their IT departments were overwhelmed by support requests and incapable of providing timely support. Subsequently, the pendulum is in full swing towards companies empowering their employees to solve their own tech issues by eliminating the traditional IT help desk model. Perhaps the pendulum is swinging too fast and too far. By pandering to a subset of the workforce, these self-proclaimed forward-thinking IT departments are neglecting the majority of their end-users.

Increasingly, IT departments and help desks are recognizing the value of directing customers to a website where they can perform a range of unassisted functions including initiating and tracking service requests, utilizing self-help materials in attempts to solve their how-to issues, and resetting their own passwords, to name a few. It is an extraordinary scenario for end-users as IT departments implement tools and services that put all the power right at their fingertips. But all of this employee empowerment raises a simple question: are end-users up to the task? Do end-users truly want the freedom they begged their IT departments for? Are end-users so advanced that they are capable of serving as their own help desks? This white paper discussed the current state of the help desk/end-user relationship and where self-service portals fit into the current landscape.

# Are End-Users Prepared?

So are increasingly tech savvy end-users prepared to serve autonomously as their own help desks? The short answer, according to IT managers and industry analysts is: yes and no.

On one hand, thanks to the explosion of smartphones and the omnipresence of the internet and applications like Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint in the business world, employees at all levels are more competent with technology than ever before. Specifically, new hires, traditionally the least tech savvy employees, are entering the workforce with years of personal and educational experience using the same technology they are asked to use in the workplace. It is not hyperbole to say that a junior analyst may be more proficient with pivot tables in Microsoft Excel than their boss's boss is with the same function.

However, some employees, particularly the aforementioned tech savvy new hires, take an approach of “give it to me, leave me alone, and I’ll figure it out.” This method works for the truly elite operators of traditional business applications, but the vast majority of new hires are overconfident and underskilled employees and inevitably hit a wall and seek help from their IT departments. In fact, 40% of end-users contact their help desk after seeking support via self-service portals. The same is can be said of senior employees, but they seek out their help desks at a much earlier stage. The question becomes: where will these end-users turn for support?

If you build a self-service portal, they will come. It is a myth that end-users will flock to self-service outlets upon launch. Organizations will find that first-year adoption rates can be very low with widely varying end-user adoption with some employees stubbornly refusing to ever transition to self-service. It is human nature to take the path of least resistance. For some users, the help desk has long served as their go-to IT

resource and nothing will make them switch. It is true that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

Other users, namely the tech savvy millennials, are early adopters and will promote and utilize self-service portals. That is, until something goes wrong and undermines their access to quick issue resolution. For these advanced users, the path of least resistance is much different than that of average users.

Both groups of employees ultimately find themselves in need of expert IT support from their help desks that self-service portals just cannot provide. So what is the solution?

The theme is that users of all technological competence want quick and easy solutions, regardless of the delivery method. An exclusively ticket-based phone support system will alienate advanced users, while an entirely self-service system will anger average users. The best practice for an IT department to appease all of its end-users is to rely on a service model that includes both self-service portals and expert phone support.

## Self-Service Portals

IT self-service portals are a very useful support tool but, as explained earlier, better served as a compliment to a full-function help desk. Self-service portals are not a “set it and forget it” type solution and must be monitored closely to ensure a positive ROI. Inclusion of a self-service portal may be better left to support experts with proven models or reserved for a select few high-volume support issues.

IT self-service is not a one time investment. IT leaders must understand how a self-service portal is being leveraged, whether end-users are extracting value from it,

and whether the return associated with increasing end-user productivity is higher than the investment made in the portal itself. In other words, self-service portals require a great deal of attention and constant upkeep. Specifically, the database of how-to tutorials, articles and videos must be constantly updated to reflect new versions of software and the issues for which end-users commonly seek support. 56% of end-users cite a lack of information as their reason for abandoning self-service portals.

Self-service support that is outdated or difficult to comprehend and apply does not fix an end-user's issue, does not reflect well on the IT department as a whole or help establish the credibility that the self-service portal needs. A framework must be set up in order to ensure that the portal continuously meets the needs of employees, not just at the date of launch but throughout its existence.

End-users demand a self-service portal but these resources may end up costing an IT department a small fortune without the promise of widespread end-user adoption. IT leaders are increasingly limiting portals to easy-to-solve, high volume issues like password resets or turning to external providers like theITSupportCenter.

The most frequent call type IT help desks deal with is password resets. These calls account for nearly 30 percent of all calls handled by an IT department's internal experts. Most of these calls can be resolved by an automated tool, which makes password related issues the perfect support category for self-service. Migrating users to self-service portals for password resets simultaneously eliminates a big portion of help desk traffic, reduces help desk service costs and allows for a pilot program, of sorts. Users will naturally migrate to the self-service portal, driving awareness and traffic for any additions or modifications made in the future. But the brings issues of substantial cost and time commitment to maintain a credible self-service knowledge base for how-to functionality remain. Alternatively, team with theITSupportCenter which offers a cutting edge self-help library as part of off-the-shelf software and help desk support solutions.

# theITSupportCenter's Self-Help Library

theITSupportCenter is committed to empowering end-users beyond live support. theITSupportCenter provides access to a professionally managed and constantly updated database of Tech Tips articles and videos as one feature of its support service packages. The Self-Help Library is available to all end-users and provides education and self-training on common business application questions. These Tech Tips are created daily by Certified Tech Advisors. theITSupportCenter's Self-Help Library is the perfect solution for IT leaders that wish to add self-help to their help desk support outlets without the cost and hassle of upkeep. theITSupportCenter has you covered. But where do end-users turn when the self-service portal does not meet their needs?

## Live Support for Business Applications

There is no replacement for live, expert telephone technical support for business applications like Microsoft Excel and Outlook. How-to requests (how to access or operate common business applications) are the second most frequent call type to IT help desks. But these calls are much more complicated and time consuming than password resets. Password resets are tailor made for a self-service portal, but users ultimately want and need live assistance when they have an issue in a business application and a deadline is approaching. Team with theITSupportCenter for live technical support from Certified Tech Advisors trained and experienced in helping end-users resolve their problems in an average of just six minutes. Most IT departments simple do not offer expert support for off-the-shelf software, lack certified professionals to adequately resolve end-user issues, or both. theITSupportCenter provides live, 24/7 technical support on over 200 common business applications, operating systems and devices used by your end-users. Tech savvy and technologically challenged employees alike will view your help desk as a go-to resource for support.

# Conclusion

Self-service is a great way to expand an IT help desk's offerings to its end-users. Tech savvy millennial employees will use it exclusively until something goes wrong or it feels difficult to use and time consuming. That's when they turn to live support, the trusted support method of less technologically advanced employees.

Self-service portals may be better used for high volume, low strain functions like password resets. Migration of these routine requests can significantly drive down help desk call volume and can serve as a pilot of sorts to test the viability and demand for a self-service portal in your environment.

End-users demand a diverse offering of support solutions from their internal help desks. Partner with theITSupportCenter for immediate, expert phone support and up-to-the-minute self-service tutorials.

## theITSupportCenter's Service Level Guarantee

theITSupportCenter commits to providing support of the highest quality to exceed client expectations.

- Support Calls are Answered on Average Within 2 Rings
- Abandonment Rate of <1% on Support Calls
- Customer Satisfaction Score of 9.4+ out of 10
- All Calls are Answered Live by a Certified Tech Advisor
- All of our Certified Tech Advisors are Located on Shore in the United States
- 24/7 Support Provided by Certified Tech Advisors Located Across All U.S. Time Zones

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