

How to Make Money by Outsourcing Your Help Desk

By Alex Rogers, CEO, CharTec LLC

Managed Service Providers, and even some resellers, maintain a help desk to support their customers. Outsourcing that help desk can free your techs from low-level support calls, but others worry about a loss of control.

The idea of outsourcing a help desk brings three common responses:

1. Never, absolutely not
2. Hooray, no more stupid customer questions
3. Can I serve my customers better and make more money?

If you answered #1, you will be surprised. Read on.

If you answered #2, you will be disappointed unless you outsource correctly.

If you answered #3, the answer is yes and yes.

Those who answer "Never, absolutely not," give the following reasons:

"I want to stay in close contact with my customers."

"I want to keep that money in house."

No one can fault you for wanting to stay close to your customers and for wanting to control expenses. However, outsourcing your help desk the right way will provide three benefits:

1. You will stay in closer contact and provide better service to your customers.
2. You will support more customers without adding more employees.
3. You will free up your techs for more billable hours.

How to Outsource Your Help Desk the Easy Way

Once you decide to outsource your help desk, you can go in two directions: the easy way, or the right way. Let's look at the easy way first.

1. Look up "help desk" in a search engine and pick one at random. After all, a phone support tech is a phone support tech, right?
2. Give that new toll-free support number to your customers, especially the needy ones.
3. Fail miserably.

Fail? The help desk company promised they have a well-trained staff, extensive experience, and can cover every support issue. How could this go so wrong?

Because the outsourced help desk techs, no matter how wonderful, don't know anything about your clients or their computing environment. Every call they get, besides the most basic calls, will be re-routed for you to handle. After two days, your new help desk partner will dump a pile of trouble tickets back to your desk. The difference? Your customer, after waiting for two days for support, has started searching for a new provider.

How to Outsource Your Help Desk the Right Way

Developing a partnership with a help desk provider to help you handle your reactive customer support will add more services to your line card, increase your engagement with current customers, and help you contract with new clients. You will provide a higher level of support, including 24x7x365 coverage, than you can provide by yourself.

Explain to your clients that you now have dozens more support techs. Even better, without the headache of hiring additional staff and the expense of training, you will have instantly add the ability to support new vertical offerings and any sudden increase in business.

There are two secrets to outsourcing your help desk operations successfully:

1. Your company continues to take all support calls. Tickets route internally to your techs, or to your help desk partner.
2. Your client onboarding process must be complete and thorough.

Outsourcing Success Secret #1

You are correct that answering all support calls from your customers gives them a feeling of reassurance, and you tighter control over those accounts. You are also correct that asking your clients to call an outside help desk will drop you out of the loop and lessen the customer bond.

The answer? Have your customers continue to call and talk to the same dispatchers or front line support techs they already know and trust for all support issues. Every client still contacts your support team for all issues.

The difference is that now your dispatchers have options. When creating a ticket, the dispatcher separates them into jobs the outside help desk should handle, and jobs you should handle. If the problem needs a tech onsite, then handle that ticket internally and start the truck rolling. But if the issue can be handled by the help desk, transfer that ticket.

Example: the sales manager for a real estate office calls with a printing issue.

Your dispatcher takes the call and asks basic troubleshooting questions. After determining the problem can be handled by the help desk, the dispatcher calls your help desk partner, describes the situation, and transfers the call.

The help desk tech knows that the sales manager has two printers, a high volume black and white laser, and a multi-function ink jet for color printing. Specific questions begin.

Are you trying to print from your Dell desktop, or the Toshiba laptop you often take out of the office?

Is the problem with the Epson WorkForce inkjet, or the HP LaserJet 5?

Are you trying to print from Word, or from Adobe?

How does the help desk tech, in another location, know about your customer? You tell them.

Outsourcing Success Secret #2

Everything learned about customers during discovery and client onboarding goes into the knowledge base. All the information your own techs need to support customers, your help desk partner needs. Every computer, every server, every router, and every application will be in that knowledge base.

If the issue can be resolved over the phone, your customer will have made a single call, been transferred once, helped, and get back to work. If a tech must visit, your help desk partner will notify you. Your customer still only made one call.

The Red Phone

Never allow a VIP customer to call the general support line. Those are the people who sign the contract for your services, and they expect and deserve the best service you have to offer. Give them access to you or a service manager and always handle their issues internally.

Easing into Help Desk Outsourcing

Still not sure? Then ease into this model, for one of three reasons:

1. After hours support
2. New vertical support
3. Jumps in customer volume

Your customers understand your work day ends. But when you have an outsourced help desk, they can get help anytime, night or day. And if you sign a big new customer or add a vertical new to your team, a help desk partner will help you maintain quality service levels as you ramp up to match your increased business.

Relax and Grow Your Business

As you grow to trust your help desk partner, you can add a new revenue stream by adding points onto their fixed cost. A natural step is to offload more support tickets, leaving your techs free to bill more hours on higher margin projects. Choose the right outsourced help desk partner, prepare properly, and you can serve your customers better while increasing your revenue.

Ready to Start Outsourcing?

Creating your own Help Desk team requires jumping over hurdles in capital investment, new infrastructure, and staffing before you can help your customers. CharTec Help Desk provides American-based support with all the advantages of "live" Level 1 and Level 2 technicians, while leaving your Level 3 techs to deal with advanced issues. Our friendly front-end technical care specialists follow your lead to provide skilled support to your customers.



Alex Rogers is founder and President of CharTec, a “Beyond HaaS” company located in Bakersfield, California. Rogers also established his own MSP practice, ARRC Technology, in 1992 with a \$300 investment. He has since built that MSP company into a multi-million dollar corporation and Master MSP, specializing in the service and design of computers, networks, phone systems, structured cabling, and managed services. His MSP practice is a four-time listed INC 5000 company and was twice listed as an MSPMentor Top World MSP.

Rogers is credited with the creation of CharTec, an exclusive HaaS solution nationally deployed for resellers. CharTec is the winner of multiple awards, including three Channel Insider Bull’s Eye Awards, Business Solutions Magazine Innovator of the Year Award, Comptia’s Best Hardware Product 2010 and Best Channel Vendor 2011. It is no wonder Alex was also chosen as one of MSPMentor Top 250 Entrepreneurs.

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