Call Management Systems for the Help Desk / Service Desk

Do you have the right Call Management System to service and support your customers? Are you replacing an existing product or looking for your first Help / Service Desk solution? Is your organization outsourcing your support to a company that uses a different product than you are currently using? Should you have a support tool in mind in case things don't work out and you have to bring support back in-house?

The following information may offer you some useful information to better understand some of the support solution options.

Since the proliferation of support technology in the early 90's, technology for service and support units has been difficult to follow. Industry Analysts, consultants, and sales people have done their best to keep up on the trends and products but not without being challenged by the constant changes.

In the early 90's there were over 250 call management systems (i.e. systems used to track and log calls). Many of the original products went out of business or were purchased by the competition. Purchasing of the competition's systems was driven by two key factors: getting the competitor's customer base or adding functionality to their existing product. Some companies purchased complimentary systems to increase the extensiveness of their solutions.

Today, there are fewer options. Many have been scaled down for small centers or primarily sell to larger Help Desks and Contact Centers. There are a very small number of these affordable solutions that will accommodate a small to medium sized organization and offer all of the functionality needed, including the popular ITIL methodology.

The primary change from the 90's is that support solutions are popping up all over the world offering advanced hosted solutions or ones that have the basic functionality needed to log calls. Many are free to low cost. A small number of the solutions at this level are ITIL compliant. Many do not offer the complete functionality often desired – they are simply ticket- tracking systems. For many support organizations this is all that is necessary. For those who need the more advanced systems there are fewer choices but they are good options - the best of the best have remained in existence. Plan to see a few more acquisitions in the future though.

Bottom line: Today there are numerous products to select from but most of the mainstream solutions have the same capabilities with few differentiators. The typical differences include customer service from the provider, cost, ease of use, ITIL compliancy and corporate stability. If you search on "Help Desk Software" you will find hundreds of products. The products range from Call Management Systems to network monitors, telephony solutions and knowledge bases.

The following is an abbreviated list of Call Management Systems in alphabetical order. Their inclusion does not represent a recommendation. It has always been our position at High Tech High Touch Solutions, Inc. to remain unbiased when we talk about tools for service and support centers. We have not taken a commission from the vendors for suggesting their tool sets.

The list is not intended to be all inclusive. The objective is to provide an idea of what's currently available for support operations.

1. AdventNet / ServiceDesk Plus
2. Altiris Helpdesk Solution
3. Amdocs / Clarify
4. Auscomp
5. Autotask
6. Axious Systems / assyst
7. BMC Solutions purchased Remedy and Magic Solutions

8. CA

9. Genticity / Customer1

10. Entellium eCustomerCenter

11. EnterpriseWizard, Inc.

12. Epicor / Clientele

13. FrontRange Solutions / Heat

14. GWI / c.Support Service Desk Edition

15. HELP!Desk

16. HelpStream (free or low cost)

17. HP / Peregrine

18. Infra Corporation / infraEnterprise

19. Kemma Software / BridgeTrak

20. Marval Service Management / MSM Service Desk

21. Numara Software owns Track-It and FootPrints

22. Oracle which includes systems from Vantive and Siebel

23. Parature

24. PhaseWare Inc.

25. Platinum Technology / Support Centre

26. PS'SOFT

27. Serio Service Desk Software

28. Soffront

29. SumTotal Systems / DKSystems - DKHelpDesk

30. Target Helpdesk

31. TechExcel

32. TouchPaper

33. Trident Software / InfoTrak Help Desk (free to low cost)

34. Trouble Ticket Express (free)

35. Service-now.com (SaaS solution – includes ITIL compliancy)

What's next? The following technology considerations should be at the top of your lists to take your support centers to the next more advanced level.

- Social networking
- Wikis, Blogs, enhanced knowledge bases and search engines
- Mobile solutions
- Technology to facilitate virtual/remote work possible.
- Accommodations in technology for the deaf or blind.
- Speech Analytics

Interested in additional information on Help / Service Desk technology please email solutions4u@hthts.com.

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