

ITIL® Poster Series #49

Centralized Service Desk

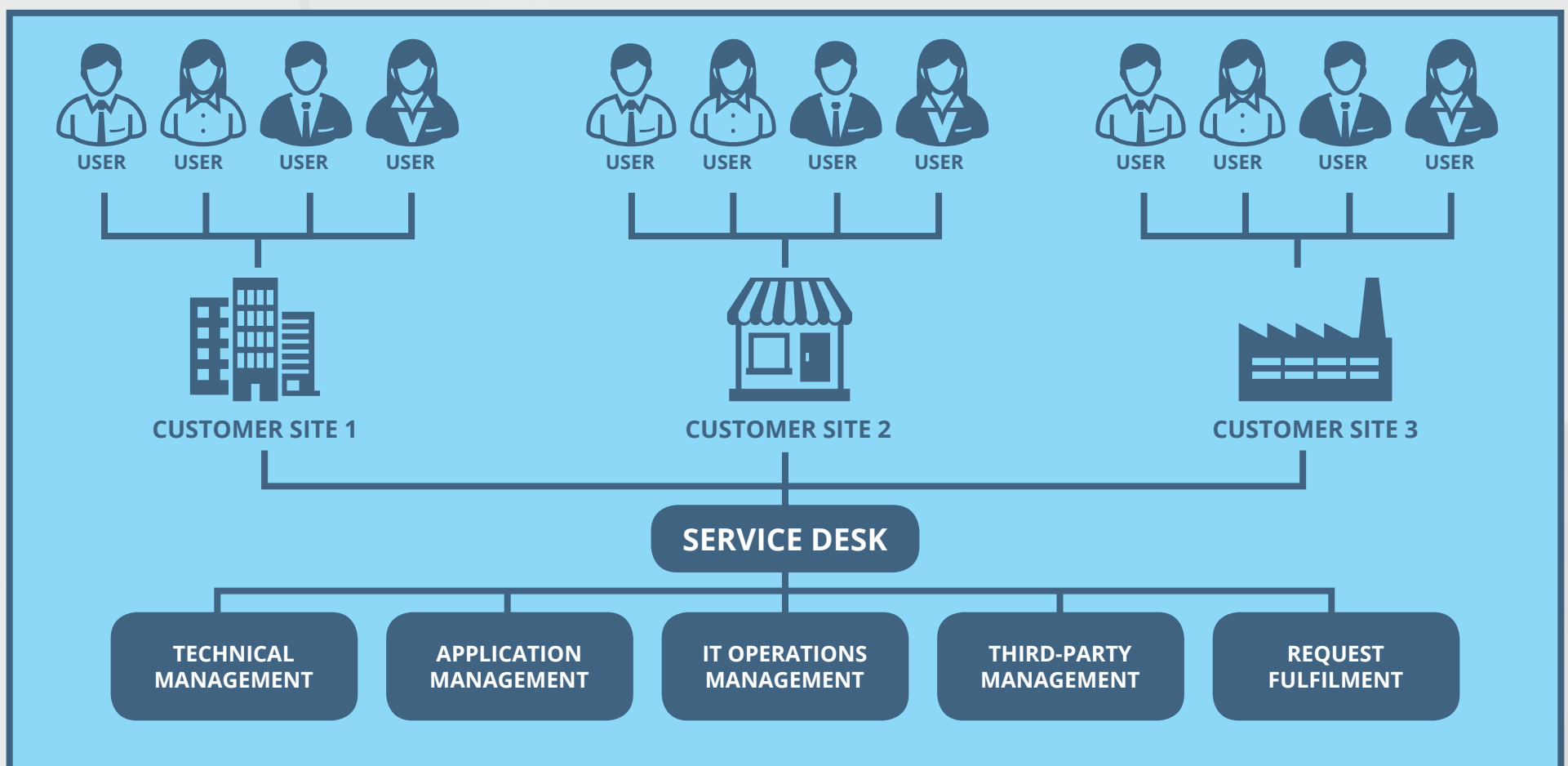
Introduction

A common factor in examinations, and a vital decision in the delivery of service management in the real world, the structure of the service desk is an important aspect of service operation.

ITIL does not specify the structure of the service desk, it simply provides guidance on what is possible, and has been seen in best practice in the real world.

There are a number of service desk structures in the framework, and in this structure we look at a relatively commonly used approach, that of the centralized service desk.

In this resource, we briefly explore the advantages and disadvantages, which are dependent on the organizational structure overall, and the nature of the calls taken by the service desk from the user base.



A common structure for service desks is that of a centralized service desk. In this model, all users contact the same service desk. This has the benefit of providing economies of scale because there is no duplication of provision. Specialist technology, such as intelligent call distribution or an integrated service management tool, may be justified for a centralized service desk but not when implementing this technology across many sites. There are no issues with confusion regarding ownership of major incidents, and knowledge sharing becomes much more straightforward. Offering a service at times of low demand is more cost effective when only one service desk needs to be staffed.

Staff members on a centralized desk will gain more experience with particular incidents, which a local service desk may encounter only occasionally, leading to an increased ability to resolve these issues immediately. Where the centralized desk is supporting users in many countries, the language issue may be resolved by the following:

- Employing staff members with language skills and using technology to allocate calls requiring support in a particular language to staff members who have that language ability. Staff members would then log the call in the main language.
- Standardizing on one language; callers would need to report incidents in that language, and support would be provided in it. This option depends on the type of organization and whether its users may reasonably be expected to be able to converse in the language.
- Local super users may be required to support users without the necessary language ability and to log calls on their behalf.

To provide support to a global organization, a 24/7 service may be required. Where the resolution requires a physical intervention (unjammed a printer, for example), the service desk would require local support staff who could be assigned calls and be responsible for updating the incident records or could assist in the resolution of an issue at a remote site.

Consideration should also be given to maintaining service continuity because an event that affects a centralized service desk would impact support across the entire organization. A plan to provide the service from another location, possibly using different staff members, in the event of a disaster must be developed and tested in conjunction with IT service continuity management. There should also be plans in place to ensure the service desk's tool resilience in the event of disruption to the network or a power failure.

