What Is LZS?

By Rick Joslin

Your director comes to you and asks: "When will the self-service knowledge base go live?" You think for a moment and then confidently respond: "When the LZS is greater than 60 percent." Because your answer sounds official and your director does not want to admit he has no idea what an LZS is, he says "Great!" and walks away. You have bought some time...at least until he gets around to asking you what an LZS is exactly and when you expect it to be greater than 60 percent.

So, what is LZS? It is a metric—level zero solvable—that measures the percent of incidents resolved by the support center that could have been resolved by the customer using self-service.

It is similar to level one solvable (LOS), but with a different purpose. LOS is seen as a quality metric that measures the percent of incidents escalated to level two that should have been solved by level one. When a level two technician closes a case, she's asked if the incident was level one solvable. If the answer is yes, then the technician should document why she felt level one could have solved this incident. The answer could be as simple as "There was an existing knowledge article that documents the problem and the resolution." LOS measures the frequency of escalation for incidents that were escalated when they should not have been. This metric should be trended and monitored. Improvements should be made to drive this result down by analyzing the related escalated incidents and the comments from level two. Feedback to and training of the level one analysts is most likely the appropriate course of action, but access to a new tool could also enable level one to solve these incident.

LZS is a metric that can be used to predict customer success with the self-service portal. If you roll out self-service and customers experience a low incidence of success, they are less likely to return to the site. By predicting the level of success with the knowledge base, you reduce the risk of customers not finding value in it and thereby increase the likelihood that they will return to use it in the future. Testing the success of self-service within the assisted service model enables you to predict the customer's experience. You need to trend and monitor LZS to determine when your organization is ready to implement a self-service knowledge base. As you develop your knowledge base, you should expect to see an increase in LZS over time. Once you've implemented self-service, you can expect to see this metric decrease as self-service adoption rises. You can then analyze the incidents that were identified as LZS to identify opportunities to promote or improve the self-service portal.

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Level Zero Solvable
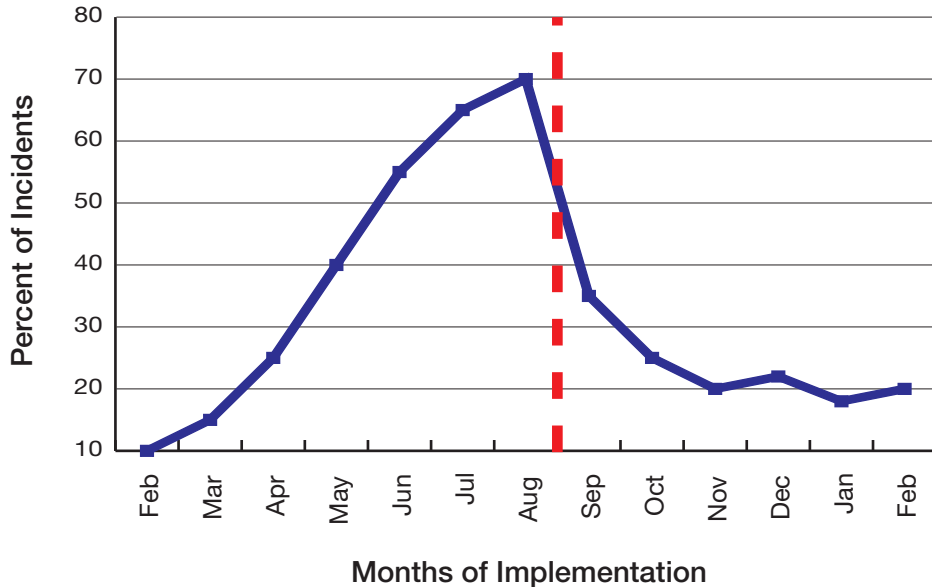
The red dashed line indicates when the self-service website went live.

How to Measure Level Zero Solvable

Level one analysts need to be trained to search the knowledge base on every incident (on behalf of the customer). This requires a change in behavior and process. The process looks like this:

1. **Capture the description of the problem in the words of the customer.** The analyst needs to preserve the customer's context in the incident record.

2. **Search the knowledge base on behalf of the customer before they seek to solve.** The analyst should search the knowledge base using the customer's description of the problem as the initial search string. This is the first action the analyst should take after documenting the information collected from the customer in the incident management system.

3. **Evaluate the results and determine if the incident was LZS.** If the analyst finds a knowledge article and the article has been tagged as self-service or customer-ready, then the incident should be marked as LZS. However, just because there's a knowledge article that resolves the incident, this doesn't mean the incident was LZS. Not all knowledge articles in a knowledge base will be tagged as self-service. Some knowledge available to the analyst may be for internal use only or it may not have satisfied the organization's compliance requirements for publishing knowledge to self-service. LZS requires that *the customer* could have found

the answer using self-service. Therefore, the analyst can only mark an incident LZS if the knowledge article was already tagged as self-service or customer-ready. It is important to realize that the percent of knowledge that is tagged as self-service is not a predictor of self-service success. It is the *use* of that knowledge to resolve incidents that predicts success. Only 20 percent of the knowledge articles in the knowledge base may be marked as self-service, while 80 percent of the incidents a support center receives could be a result of the problems documented in the self-service knowledge articles.

If the analyst doesn't find a knowledge article that addresses the customer's issue, then they would continue with the problem-solving process. At this point, they would begin to search the knowledge base independently, outside of the customer's context, followed by additional investigation and research, if necessary. Later in the process, they may find an existing knowledge article that resolves the incident. The analyst can then update the knowledge article and make it more likely that customers will find that knowledge article in the future. If no knowledge article was found, then one should be created after the incident has been resolved.

Support Center Knowledge Base
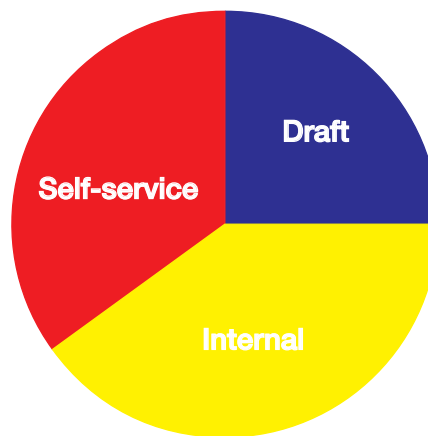
This process of enhancing and creating knowledge articles aligns with the Knowledge-Centered Support (KCS) methodology. To learn more about KCS, visit **www.ThinkHDI.com**.

One common mistake organizations make when implementing a knowledge base is rushing to implement self-service before they are truly ready. Use the LZS metric to predict your success rate before you grant customers access to your knowledge base.

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