

Metric of the Month:

Percent Resolved Level 1 Capable

By Jeff Rumburg

Every month, in the Industry Insider, I will highlight one key performance indicator (KPI) for the service desk or desktop support. I will define the KPI, provide recent benchmarking data for the metric, and discuss key correlations and cause/effect relationships for the metric. The purpose of the column is to familiarize you with the KPIs that really matter to your support organization, and to provide actionable insight on how to leverage these KPIs to improve your performance.

Percent Resolved Level 1 Capable

Percent resolved level 1 capable (PRL1C) is a desktop support metric that measures the percentage of tickets resolved by desktop support that could have been resolved by the level 1 service desk. This happens when the service desk dispatches or escalates a ticket to desktop support that could have been resolved by the service desk, or when users bypass the service desk altogether and go directly to desktop support for a resolution to their problems. Although this metric is tracked at desktop support, it has strong implications for both desktop support and the service desk.

Let's say, for example, that a desktop support group handles an average of 1,000 tickets per month. Let's further assume that 200 of these tickets could have been resolved by the service desk. The value for PRL1C would be 20 percent ($200 \text{ tickets resolvable at level 1} \div 1,000 \text{ tickets resolved by desktop support}$).






Ideally, this metric should be as low as possible because it costs much more to resolve a ticket at the user's location (desktop support) than it does for the level 1 service desk to resolve a ticket remotely. Indeed, "Get It Done at Level 1!" has become a common rallying cry for the many support organizations that recognize that one way to minimize support costs is to resolve as many tickets as possible remotely (i.e., at the service desk).

PRL1C is typically tracked when a desktop support technician closes out a ticket. If, in the technician's estimation, the ticket could have been resolved by the service desk, she will check a box on the ticket indicating that the ticket was level 1 resolvable. This method requires periodic audits to ensure that desktop support technicians are accurately reporting tickets that could have been resolved by the service desk. This involves reviewing a representative sample of tickets each month to determine whether or not the tickets designated level 1 resolvable could, in fact, have been resolved by the service desk. Likewise, tickets that were not identified as level 1 resolvable are sampled to determine whether or not tickets that should have been marked level 1 resolvable are routinely being missed.

Why It's Important

Total cost of ownership (TCO) for end-user support includes the cost of support from all sources, including the service desk, desktop support, other groups or individuals in IT, and vendors. It is a well-established fact that the cost of resolving a ticket at level 1 is lower than the cost of resolving a ticket at desktop support. Figure 1 shows the average cost per ticket for resolution at various support levels in an organization. These figures represent fully-burdened costs, including all salaries and benefits, desktop technology and software licensing fees, telecommunication and facility costs, travel, training, and office supplies. Furthermore, these costs are additive. That is, if a user first contacts the service desk, and the service desk in turn opens a ticket and dispatches it to desktop support, the total cost of resolution is \$22 for the service desk plus an additional \$62 for desktop support, for a total of \$84. The message here is that “getting it done at level 1” is not just a catchy phrase: it can significantly reduce your support costs!

Figure 1: Average Cost per Ticket (North America)

	Support Level	Cost per Ticket
	Vendor Support	\$471
	Field Support	\$196
	Level 3 Support (e.g., apps, NOC, networking, etc.)	\$85
	Level 2 Support (Desktop Support)	\$62
	Level 1 Support (Service Desk)	\$22

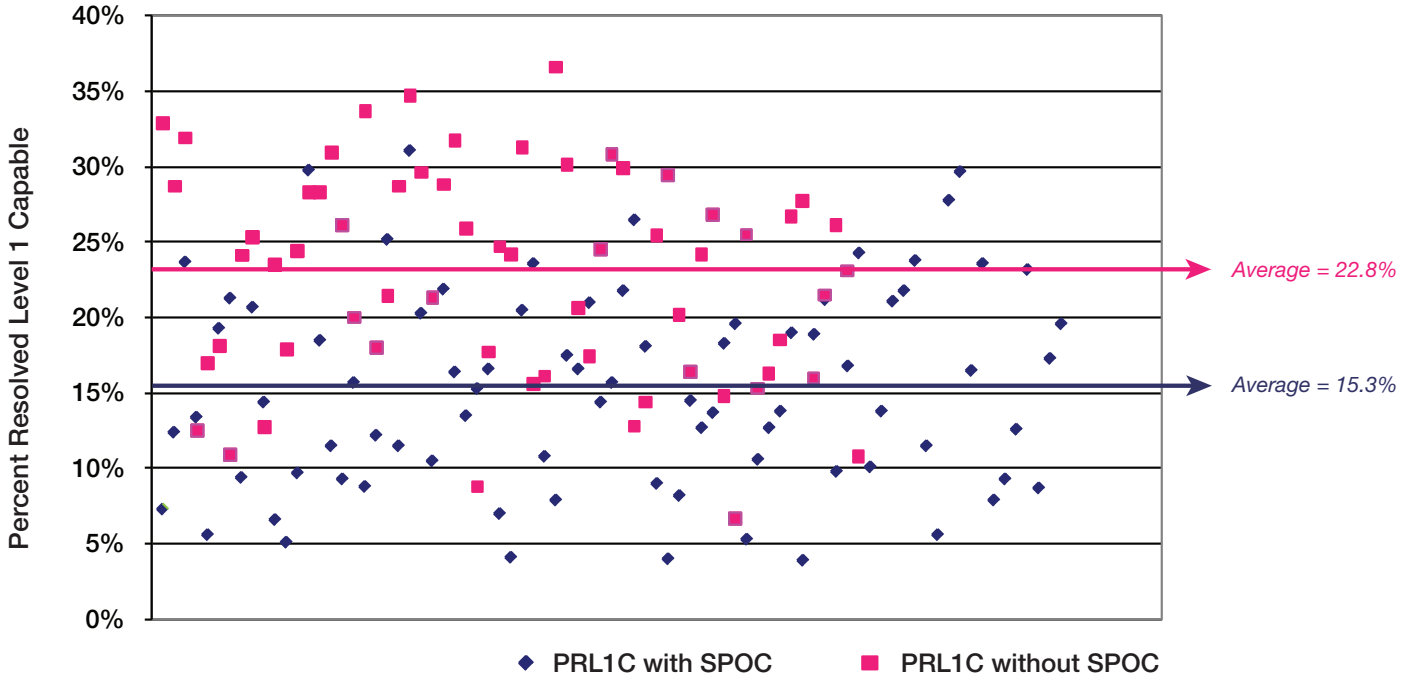
Minimizing Defects

Every ticket resolved at desktop support that could have been resolved by the level 1 service desk represents a defect in the support organization. You can estimate the cost of these defects by multiplying the number of defective tickets by the cost of resolution at desktop support. To continue our example from above, by taking the 200 tickets that could have been resolved at level 1 and multiplying that number by the \$62 cost per desktop support ticket from Figure 1, we get an estimated defect cost of \$12,400 per month. These escalation defects can really add up! So how do we minimize them?

Here are four suggestions for minimizing PRLIC:

1. Begin tracking the metric at desktop support. You cannot control, let alone reduce, the number of ticket defects until you begin tracking PRLIC.
2. Conduct root cause analysis on the tickets that should have been resolved by the service desk but were escalated to desktop support. Are there common themes? Are they coming disproportionately from one or more agents? How many are the result of customers bypassing the service desk and going directly to desktop support with their support requests?
3. Provide targeted training at level 1 to increase awareness of the importance of this metric, and to reduce the number of tickets dispatched to desktop support that should be resolved by the service desk.
4. Insist upon a strict single-point-of-contact (SPOC) support model, whereby all customer support requests go through the service desk. This will prevent “drive-bys,” which happen when desktop support technicians get pulled into an on-the-spot support request without a ticket first being logged and dispatched by the service desk. Figure 2 (on the next page) shows that support organizations that follow a strict SPOC support model average 15.3 percent PRLIC, while those that do not average 22.8 percent.

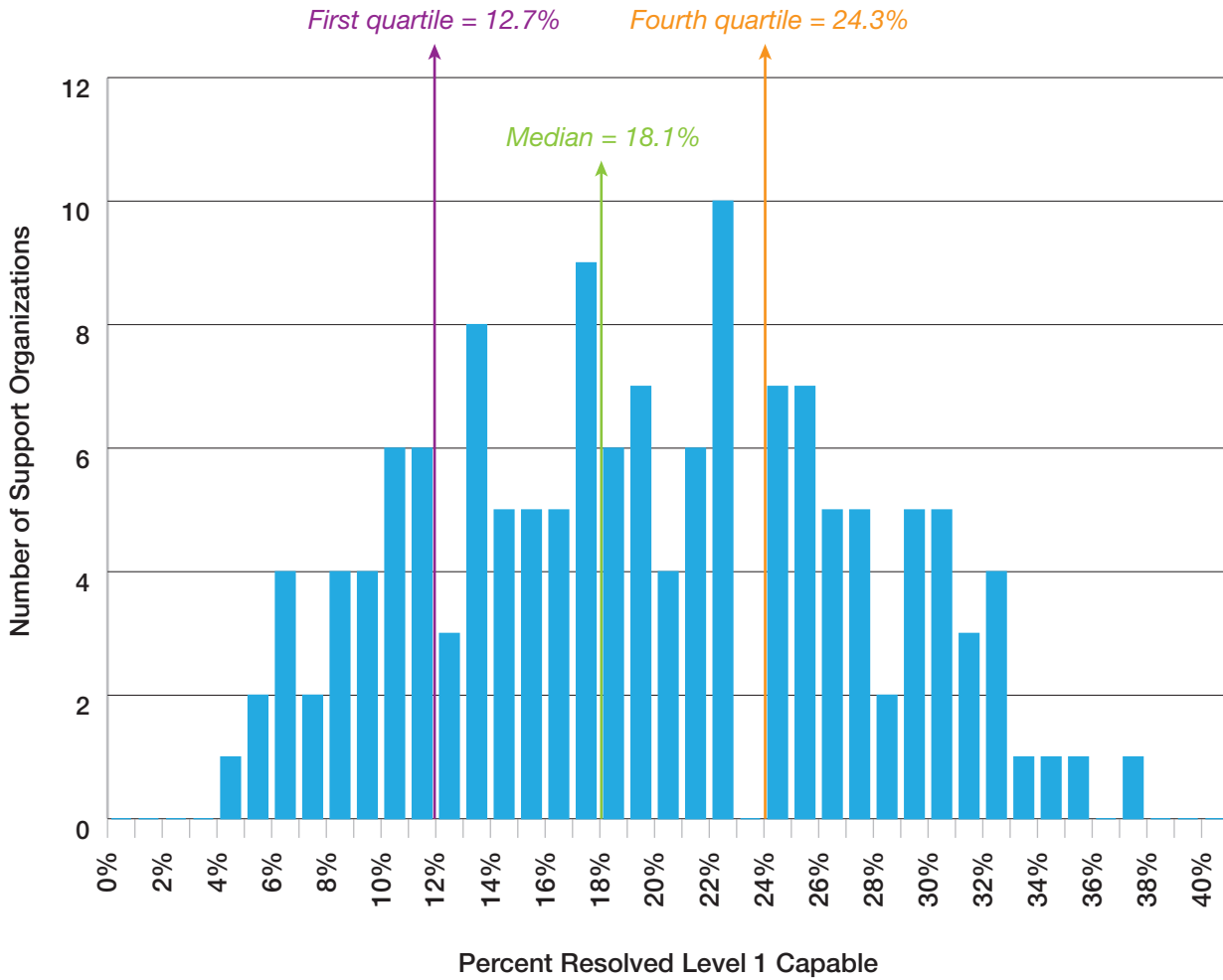
Figure 2: Percent Resolved Level 1 Capable (PRL1C)



Benchmark Data for PRL1C

MetricNet's benchmarking database shows that PRL1C ranges from a low of 4 percent to a high of 37 percent, with an average value of 18.6 percent. That is, 18.6 percent of all tickets closed by desktop support could have been, and should have been, resolved by the service desk. This is a surprisingly large number, and it indicates that most support organizations have ample opportunity to reduce their support costs by managing this metric more aggressively. To perform in the top quartile for this metric, your PRL1C should be less than 12.7 percent. Figure 3 (on the next page) shows the global data distribution for PRL1C.

Figure 3: Global Data for PRL1C



Please join us for next month’s Metric of the Month—**agent satisfaction**—a bellwether service desk metric that impacts agent turnover, absenteeism, customer satisfaction, and cost per contact.

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