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# Metric of the Month: Tickets per Technician per Month

By Jeff Rumburg

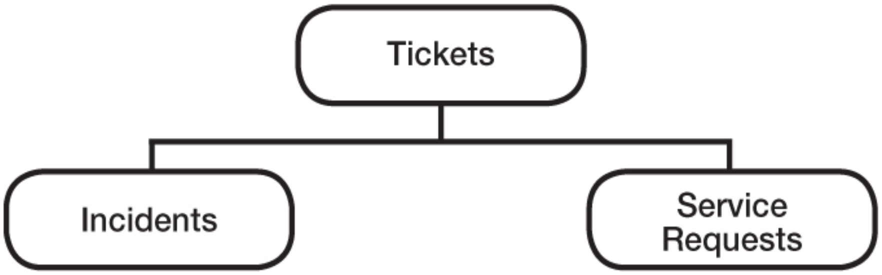
Every month, in the Industry Insider, I highlight one key performance indicator (KPI) for the service desk or desktop support. I define the KPI, provide recent benchmarking data for the metric, and discuss key correlations and cause/effect relationships for the metric. The purpose of the column is to 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.

## Tickets per Technician per Month

Tickets per technician per month is a desktop support metric. As the name suggests, tickets per technician per month is simply the total number of monthly tickets logged by desktop support divided by the number of technicians working in desktop support.

For purposes of this discussion, it's important to remember that desktop support tickets are comprised of both incidents and service requests. An incident is typically unplanned work that requires the assistance of an on-site technician to resolve. Common examples include a desktop or laptop computer break/fix, a printer or server failure, connectivity problems, or any other issue that cannot be resolved remotely by the service desk (level 1). By contrast, most service requests represent planned work. Among the most common service requests are moves/adds/changes, hardware refresh/replacement, and device upgrades. Tickets represent the sum of all incidents and service requests, as illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1: Tickets, Incidents, and Service Requests



Unplanned work that requires a physical touch to a device:

- Hardware break/fix
- Device failure
- Connectivity failure

Planned work that requires a physical touch to one or more devices:

- Move/add/change
- Hardware or software upgrade
- Device refresh or set up

**Incident Volume + Service Request Volume = Ticket Volume**

## Why It's Important

Tickets are the primary unit of work in desktop support. As such, ticket volume will drive the headcount of technicians needed by an organization. A common misperception in desktop support is that the user population alone will define the number of technicians needed. This approach wrongly assumes that the ratio of desktop support technicians to the number of users is fixed (for example, 12.5 desktop support technicians are needed for every 1,000 users). The error in this approach is that no two user populations have the same needs, and therefore no two user populations generate the same workload. As such, staffing decisions in desktop support should be based upon workload, not user population. With this in mind, it's easy to see why two organizations with exactly the same headcount may require very different staffing levels for desktop support.

## Industry Benchmarks for Tickets per Technician per Month

The number of tickets a technician can handle is driven by a number of factors, including the mix of incidents and service requests, the average work time per ticket, and the average travel time per ticket. Service requests generally take more time to complete than incidents, so, for organizations with a higher percentage of service requests versus incidents, the number of tickets a technician can handle in a month will be lower. Likewise, as the work time per ticket increases, the number of tickets a technician can handle in a month will decrease. And finally, in a high-density user environment (think high-rise office building), the travel time per ticket will be low, which, in turn, increases the number of tickets a technician can handle in a month.

Figure 2 shows just how dramatically travel time and work times for incidents and service requests can vary from one environment to another. These wide variations produce correspondingly wide ranges in the volume of tickets a technician can handle in a month.

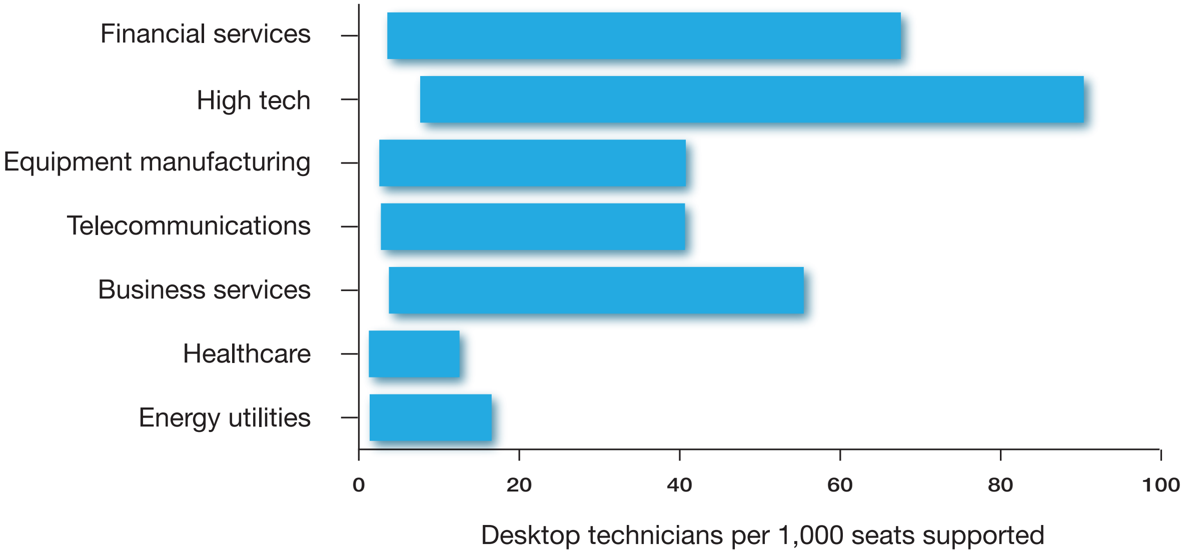
## Figure 2: Desktop Support Work Time and Travel Time

| | Statistic | Financial Services | High Tech | Equipment Manufacturing | Telecommunications | Business Services | Healthcare | Energy Utilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Incident work time (minutes)** | Avg | 18.3 | 19.8 | 14.7 | 16.1 | 21.5 | 12.3 | 14.2 |
| | Min | 6.3 | 12.8 | 5.1 | 7.4 | 12.1 | 6.6 | 6.1 |
| | Max | 71.7 | 65.9 | 44.0 | 73.5 | 58.0 | 59.0 | 30.3 |
| **Service requests work time (minutes)** | Avg | 83.4 | 95.9 | 50.5 | 76.2 | 72.8 | 35.4 | 53.4 |
| | Min | 52.3 | 43.4 | 20.6 | 31.7 | 27.7 | 22.4 | 19.1 |
| | Max | 243 | 302 | 173 | 205 | 168 | 140 | 124 |
| **Travel time per ticket (minutes)** | Avg | 25 | 32 | 33 | 19 | 27 | 20 | 12 |
| | Min | 11 | 17 | 14 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 7 |
| | Max | 110 | 153 | 164 | 64 | 79 | 52 | 53 |

Since ticket work and travel time drive technician headcount, one would also expect to see a wide variation in headcount requirements from company to company, and from industry to industry. Figure 3 shows that the average desktop technician headcount can range from a low of just 5.4 technicians per 1,000 seats in healthcare to a high of 28.4 technicians per 1,000 seats in the high tech industry.

## Figure 3: Desktop Support Technician Headcount Ranges by Industry

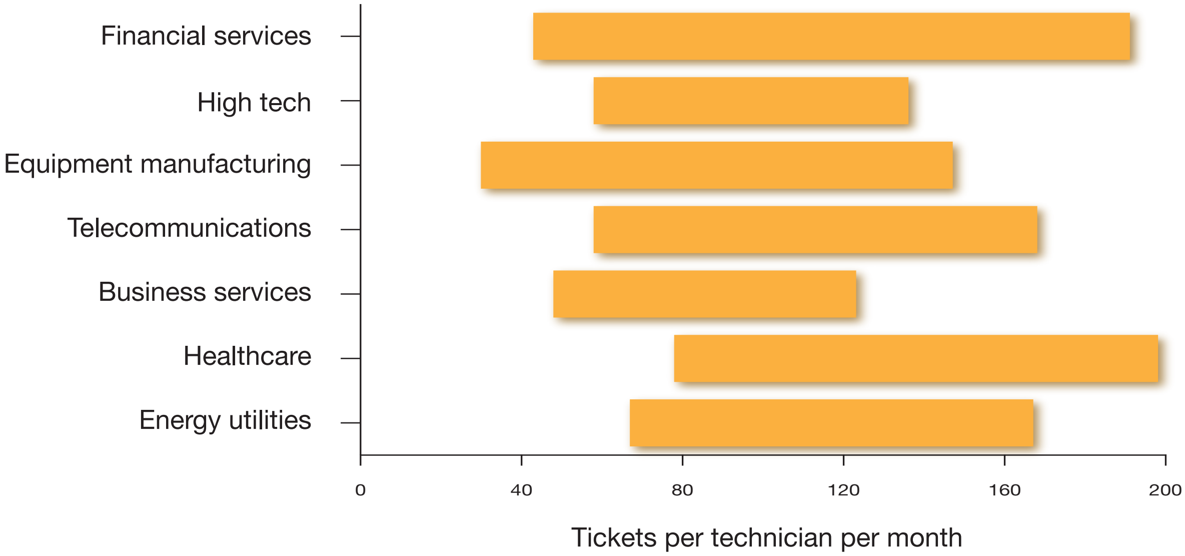
| | Statistic | Financial Services | High Tech | Equipment Manufacturing | Telecommunications | Business Services | Healthcare | Energy Utilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Desktop technicians per 1,000 seats supported | Avg | 21.9 | 28.4 | 12.7 | 15.5 | 27.0 | 5.4 | 7.7 |
| | Min | 3.4 | 7.5 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 3.6 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| | Max | 67.3 | 90.1 | 40.5 | 40.4 | 55.2 | 12.3 | 16.3 |



Finally, when we look at the benchmarking data for the number of tickets per technician per month in Figure 4, we see a wide range of values, from a low of thirty to a high of 198. These wide variations are, once again, driven by differences in travel time and work time per ticket, which are, in turn, a function of the unique environment in which each technician operates.

## Figure 4: Tickets per Technician per Month by Industry

| | Statistic | Financial Services | High Tech | Equipment Manufacturing | Telecommunications | Business Services | Healthcare | Energy Utilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tickets per technician per month | Avg | 99 | 100 | 98 | 124 | 87 | 108 | 133 |
| | Min | 43 | 58 | 30 | 58 | 48 | 78 | 67 |
| | Max | 191 | 136 | 147 | 168 | 123 | 198 | 167 |



Please join us for next month's Metric of the Month on **annual agent turnover**, a service desk metric that has implications for quality of service and agent experience levels.

*Jeff Rumburg is a managing partner and cofounder of MetricNet, LLC, the leading source of service desk and desktop support benchmarks for IT service professionals worldwide.*