

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the first issue of **In the Know**, *Knowledge and Advice for the IT Service Desk*. Over the past years, I've met with hundreds of IT Directors and Help Desk Managers and listened as they described their most pressing concerns. Time and time again, I've heard the same response: "We have no shortage of smart people in our service center but how do we actually start to work "smarter" instead of "harder"? We're under growing pressure to increase our service quality while keeping our costs low." We've started this newsletter to help IT Service Desk professionals overcome these challenges, so they can deliver the right answers to the right people at the right time. We've designed it to keep IT Directors and Support Center Managers "**in the know**" about the solutions and strategies that can make a difference in how to get the job done. Every quarter, we will provide important and timely information on a variety of topics, including self-service, help desk content management, and practical plans for successfully transforming concepts into reality.



JEFFREY WEINSTEIN
Chief Executive Officer and President

Each issue will feature an article written by a support center industry expert, in addition to insight and analysis from some of RightAnswers' own help desk content and self-service experts. We are very pleased this first issue features an article written by Pete McGarahan of McGarahan & Associates, detailing how employee help desk self-service is transforming corporate IT. Pete is an award-winning help desk executive and one of the most respected names in our industry. As Pete explains, self-service is everywhere these days, gaining wide acceptance in our daily lives. We accept self-service without question at the supermarket, gas station, airport and bank. While it has not yet gained wide acceptance in the world of corporate IT, he tells us why that will soon change and what you need to know to stay ahead of the curve.

As we entered the 21st century, RightAnswers grew from a publisher of technical support knowledge bases into a software & services company delivering knowledge-driven solutions for both support analysts and end users alike. In 2005, we delivered an innovative and effective self-service program that links your end-users first to the knowledge base and then sequentially to your support analysts. For 2006, we'll continue to focus on delivering the Content, Software and Client Success Programs that together help you provide more effective support, at a lower cost.

We hope this newsletter proves to be a valuable resource for you and your staff. Our goal is to ensure that this newsletter is something you look forward to receiving and we welcome your input and comments.

Finally, from all of us at RightAnswers, we wish you a happy, healthy and joyous holiday season. ■

Jeffrey Weinstein
Chief Executive Officer and President

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ RightAnswers offers multimedia and automated solutions – Show-IT's™ and Automate-IT's™. They make answers come to life and give your end users alternative ways to learn how to solve a problem.
- ✓ French, Spanish and German solutions are coming soon. ils viendront bientôt; están viniendo pronto; sie kommen bald!!
- ✓ BlackBerry and Treo solutions are so popular that we're adding the new HP PDA.
- ✓ New solutions to Knowledge-Paks® Online are added daily! If you don't find your answer, we add it, free, within one business day!

INFO BIT

People, Process & Technology is a well-worn yet accurate summary of the three qualities necessary for a successful software implementation. When it comes to not just tracking problems but actually resolving them, RightAnswers is exclusively focused on combining these three core attributes to help our clients deliver better support at a lower cost. To learn more visit our online resource center at:

www.rightanswers.com/resource_center.html

Self-Service Success: A Strategic Guide to Self-Service for the IT Help Desk



BY PETER
MCGARAHAN

A self-service strategy that is properly developed, tested, implemented, and managed over time can add remarkable business value through saved costs and improved employee productivity. Bypassing any one of these four steps can result in a self-service frustration, long remembered by your customers.

- Coach and support users through their learning curve (**training**)
- Manage it (**continuous learning and improvement**)
- Measure the before-and-after impact (**the bottom line**)

The Top 10 Priorities

Learn from those who have been down the self-service road before you. They provide a clear set of priorities that will ensure your self-service success:

1. Work first, last, and always to change customers' beliefs and behaviors around self-service.
2. Justify investment in a prototype and conduct pilots to identify the correct value drivers, debug, and finalize requirements.
3. Minimize risk and the downside – don't set expectations too high.
4. Avoid a full shotgun rollout with a loud marketing launch. Start small, be stealthy, and prove/measure it first.
5. Timing is everything. Link strategy and goals to current corporate initiatives, especially cost-cutting ones.
6. Design for simplicity – customers like directness and lots of white space (think Google).
7. Track and measure every self-service interaction.
8. During initial rollout, follow up via telephone survey with your key self-service customers.
9. Distinguish and apply the correct metrics – change team and individual performance goals to reflect the new mix of self-service and traditional phone metrics.
10. Identify your target audience and the problem types and categories to be self-served.

Slowly, Surely, Successfully

A self-service solution is the way to go – carefully building traction, credibility, support, and utilization. Provide the self-service solution that your customers asked for and are now willing to use because you thoughtfully **designed, tested and implemented** it and now **maintain** it to work... all the time. The time is now. ■

Pete McGarahan is an award-winning help desk executive, winning the Help Desk of the Year award for his work with Taco Bell, Industry Fellow with STI Knowledge and chairman of the Help Desk 2000 initiative. Today, he is actively engaged with his own firm, McGarahan & Associates, helping support centers understand and deliver strategic value to their own organization.

You can contact Pete by emailing pete@mcgarahan.com

Success is not Accidental

Self-service is all about getting more done faster, cheaper and feeling better about the experience. That is what is important to any consumer of any kind. Every day we encounter a self-service outlet of some kind – the ATM, pay-at-the-pump, Amazon.com, eBay and self-service airline ticketing. Given the marvelous flexibility, availability, and ease of use of these vehicles, would you really want to go back to old way of doing things? Self-service works when properly debugged, preceded by an awareness campaign and supported by hands-on training and communication, to stimulate corporate employees to use self-service support rather than making the all-expensive phone call. Once they experience its benefits, self-service becomes a mindset and baked into the cultural DNA.

“A self-service strategy that is properly developed, tested, implemented, and managed over time can add remarkable business value through saved costs and improved employee productivity.”

Know your Audience

Not all customers are created equal. Some will readily adopt self-service, while others will resist. Creating your self-service strategy with a realistic picture of who will use it, when, how, and for what purpose will help set realistic expectations with senior management. Self-service success comes from a long-term, phased-approach to generate an increase in adoption.

Plan your Success

Self-service success is more common than imagined. The “If we build it, they will come” strategy is the typical reason behind most self-service implementation failures but success is achieved when you:

- Know what you are trying to achieve (**vision**)
- Develop a roadmap (**objectives, strategy, implementation plan**)
- Create the need for it (**awareness campaign**)

Self-Service: What's New

By Simon Yelsky, Vice President of Product Management

We are ringing in the New Year with an update to *RightAnswers Self-Service*. Based on input from our user community, we continuously add new functionality and application enhancements. Making the user experience more intuitive and the problem resolution process simpler will result in an increased rate of successful self-service issue resolution, which in turn will drive increased user adoption.



What's New for Users?

Have IT Your Way

Users can customize how their information is accessed and displayed, with the ability to rename their Knowledge-Pak folders and categorize information according to personal preference. Since there are many topics relevant to more than one category (for example MS Outlook and Email) every solution will be accessible through all relevant categories. Additionally the number of solutions within each folder will be displayed.

More Search Alternatives to Find Your Answers

“Did You Mean?” provides a way to find the closest matches to the users questions. “Alternate Keywords” displays various alternate keywords and combinations with every search, along with the number of results found for each keyword combination. This will get users to the right answer faster.

See and Comprehend More

The number of solutions displayed per page can now be configured and different icons will differentiate solution types, so custom content is easily differentiated from standard solutions.

What's New for You?

Seamless Experience

In the event an answer is not found and a user opens a ticket, you can now view all activities the user performed prior to contacting the help desk.

Measurement

You can now track usage and measure the impact of self-service with expanded and more granular reporting capabilities. More detailed analytics will allow you to monitor conversion rate, understand how and when the application is being used and monitor what type of content is being searched. Additionally, the reporting capabilities have been expanded to allow you to export any report into Excel. ■

The Content Corner

By Lynn Sichel, Director of Content Services

Our business is all about getting the “right answer” to the right person at the right time. To do that, we must ensure that you and the people you support have immediate, complete and accurate resolutions to as many support issues as possible.

Providing comprehensive support solutions requires that we not only keep pace with the never-ending parade of software updates, but we must anticipate what new killer apps are on the horizon. What content is added, updated or expanded is decided through a comprehensive content development process that takes into consideration six key elements:

1. **Customer Requirements:** By continuously monitoring user activity, we closely track the number of requests for a particular solution. By reviewing activity logs, questions submitted and Knowledge Cycle™ requests, we know what information is most important to our users.
2. **Sales Leader Index:** We keep our content in synch with the top selling enterprise software applications, as reported by industry leaders, such as Amazon, Yahoo, CNET and ZDNet.
3. **Monitoring New Software Release Dates:** We track major software release dates, and even create preview solutions based on Beta versions to ensure we keep you informed.
4. **Buzz/Marketing Popularity Index:** How do we predict next year's BlackBerry? By monitoring Internet postings on trusted forums, reading industry reviews, tracking the trades for media hype and following user group discussions.
5. **External Marketing Trends:** We stay in touch with what's going on in the industry, evaluating competitive influences or industry pressures driving corporate change that will require IT to align itself with these external market trends.
6. **Client Wishes:** Most importantly, we respond to specific requests from our customers. You know better than anyone what information is relevant and vital to your organization. ■

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CLIENT SUCCESS WORKSHOP

Keith Berg, Director of Client Services

Unlike almost any other support technology, self-service planning and roll-out are key to successful implementation. One of the important ways we help our clients is with our Client Success Workshop. **RightAnswers** recently hosted our first Strategic Self-Service Workshop, designed to help organizations successfully implement self-service. Presented in conjunction with the Diagonal Group, an independent consulting firm, this two-day event brought together support professionals from diverse industries and organizations who share a common commitment to bringing better quality service and lower costs to their organizations.

The workshop provided a great opportunity to:

- Gain insights into the workings of a self-service strategy and the processes necessary to be successful.
- Collaborate with peers, who serve in similar support positions, by sharing ideas, best practices, common obstacles and learning experiences.
- Understand the role RightAnswers content services and software solutions play in both the service desk problem management processes and employee self-service.

RightAnswers conducts this workshop every quarter; just one tool among the many we're providing to ensure our clients near and long-term success. ■

ONLINE SURVEY

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please take a few minutes to answer our online survey. By your participation, you'll be helping us understand your most important service desk needs and to provide you even better products and services in the future. Complete the survey between December 1 and January 4, 2006 and we will send you a RightAnswers insulated lunch tote as a token of our appreciation.

Check out our online survey this month at:

www.rightanswers.com/surveyDec2005

