

Optimizing Support For Next Gen Retail:

How New Technologies & Increased
Deployments Are Generating The Need For
More Efficient Call Centers

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Every retailer wants to reduce call volume from stores to tech support, but these days it's an epic challenge with more technology coming into the stores and onto the network. Now, as many retailers plan to open new stores and refresh older ones over the next two years, this "Holy Grail" of help desk has become more elusive than ever.

In an attempt to increase efficiency, many retailers are looking to cut corners by leveraging existing IT staff to operate the internal help desk. But, with technology deployments on the rise and software upgrades commonplace, these temporary arrangements become less of a viable solution and more of a slippery slope for many retailers rolling out new stores.

Consider these numbers: on average, a 300-store chain staffs 4 or more people charged with fielding over 1500 calls per month. As rollouts increase, that same retailer may complete 2 to 3 major projects during the year, which could add an additional 2500 or more calls to the annual volume! What's more, since this added volume cannot be spread evenly throughout the year, the help desk is forced to forecast and manage these spikes over the duration of each project.

While IT staffs are trying their best to toe the line, the reality is that they are spending less time solving problems and more time trying to keep their heads above water. More importantly, without the implementation of some crucial best practices, like problem and escalation management, many companies are left with an overwhelming amount of open cases — leading to higher attrition rates, and an endless cycle of stress and unresolved problems.

Once a call comes in that has been determined to be an actual hardware failure that cannot be resolved over the phone, Level 10 will escalate the issue to a certified field service technician who can then be dispatched on-site as quickly as needed.

The philosophy of any successful help desk should be “solve it once, prevent it 1,000 times,” but with overburdened, time-starved staff struggling to field service calls in a timely fashion, it’s an impossible feat.

What we have found is that companies struggling with these issues are more successful partnering with a vendor that can properly manage these essential best practices off site. With customized round-the-clock help desk coverage, retailers can meet the challenges of next gen store systems head-on with faster resolutions, increased visibility, and improved up times—all while saving some money and resources in the process.

Optimized Support: A Customized, Consolidated Approach To Help Desk

The number one reason why businesses are unsuccessful in deploying their own help desk solution is because they fail to put in place some basic operating procedures, like establishing service-level goals to gauge performance.

Also, without having staff equipped with the necessary skill set to properly diagnose and escalate problems or document solutions the first time, many companies are left with a growing and ultimately overwhelming amount of open cases that can greatly affect their rollout processes.

For many retailers, the first response is to hire more staff to tackle the open cases, but we have seen time and again that this is also the worst response. In reality, businesses are spending more time and money hiring more people and getting them trained, only to let them go shortly thereafter because there is nothing left for them to do.

At Level 10, we have helped many of our customers not only effectively handle crucial best practices, like problem and escalation management, off-site, but provide 7x24x365, round-the-clock help desk coverage. This, along with the ability to consolidate other field service events, such as maintenance contracts, warranties and hardware purchasing issues, has helped our customers achieve greater efficiencies through better visibility and 20 to 40% cost savings.

In order to ensure seamless store operations, we extend even greater value to our customers by consolidating and customizing a help desk solution for optimum coverage:

Having complete price transparency and an agreed-upon markup assures our customers that they are receiving the best hardware price available.

Consolidation of Vendors and Processes:

- Single point of contact for all aspects of help desk;
- Consolidate other field service events, maintenance contracts, warranty calls, and hardware purchasing.

Customization of Help Desk Support:

- Support based on retailers' needs: Level 1 or 2 support, project-based,
- After-hour or full outsource;
- Multiple communication channels;
- Pricing structures based on usage;
- Reporting.

A New Response To New Retail Realities

At Level 10, we believe that a more effective approach to call-center management in 21st retail is to consider the larger picture of IT. Historically, the majority of help desk calls have been software-based, but with new technology entering the stores, more hardware-based hiccups have emerged as retailers strive to meet customer demand for instant gratification.

Once a call comes in that has been determined to be an actual hardware failure that cannot be resolved over the phone, Level 10 will escalate the issue to a certified field service technician who can then be dispatched on-site as quickly as needed. We can even coordinate the shipment of any necessary equipment based on your specific requirements.

Here are some other key differentiators that many of our customers leverage to achieve a best-fit help desk solution for their stores:

- **Customized Service Levels** At Level 10, we understand that no two situations are alike: Maybe you only need night and weekend support? Or, perhaps there's a project coming up and you need additional support for a specific period? Maybe you're short-staffed and want all calls going through the Level 10 help desk? No matter what the circumstance, we offer a variety of service levels for a best-fit solution. Guaranteed.
- **Round-the-Clock Coverage** Staffed by technical resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, Level 10 help desk provides on-demand, store-level hardware and software support, as well as software application expertise and support on a variety of selected software.

- **Faster Resolutions** Not only does our live-answer model and remote access tools provide faster service, but our extensive experience provides faster resolutions. With a staff that boasts a total of over 110 years help desk experience, 6 years average tenure, and 6 technicians with over 10 years experience, we are fully equipped to help you tackle your daily challenges in a timely fashion.
- **Flexible Pricing Structure** Located in Spokane, WA, our help desk call center offers a lower-cost base. We also provide flexible pricing structures based on usage, which saves you money.
- **Increased Visibility** Our incident management and tracking system gathers trend analysis information to give you a better grasp on system health to make better business decisions.
- **Consolidation Options** By rolling all of the various “arms” of retail IT (such as hardware purchasing, technical services, field services, maintenance and help desk support) into fewer resources, you will not only increase your efficiency by dealing with less processes and vendors, but there will be fewer business interruptions to store operations and faster implementation to ensure your store is always up and running.

Most importantly, by tapping into Level 10's broad knowledge base of technology and industry trends, companies can be sure they are making educated investments the first time with best-fit solutions that we bring to them. We also offer assistance in designing technology implementations based on real-world examples from other Level 10 customers to ensure seamless store operations.

About Level 10

Level 10 is one company, everything IT. With more in-store technologies, less personnel resources and quicker deployment needs, we recognize retail IT teams need less partners to do more. By strategically bundling our *services-hardware procurement, software development, asset management, maintenance & repair, in-field technician support and a 24/7/365 service support desk*—we create solutions that allow an easy and enjoyable work life. We act as an extension of your IT team through technology & mobile deployments, store openings/closing/remodels, and in-store support work by increasing your service levels and project ease while decreasing cost and risk.

