

BEYOND PERFORMANCE:

# A GUIDE TO MEASURING YOUR IT TECHNICIANS' SKILLSETS

- Understand technicians' skills to understand and enhance overall team performance.

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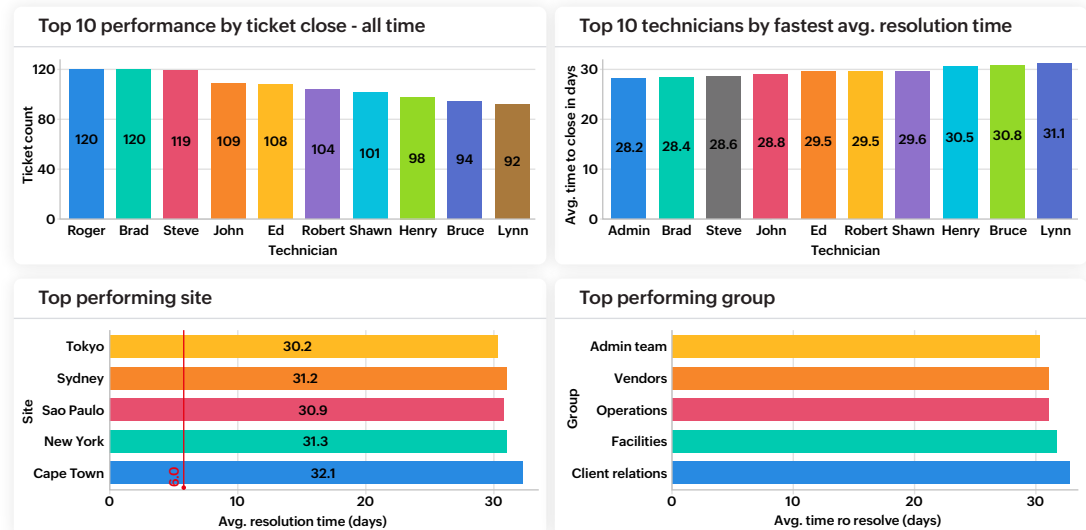
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# Introduction

There is a heavy emphasis in the IT industry on measuring and optimizing the performance of help desk technicians, but we often fail to realize how closely performance is tied to the skillset of the technicians. A common practice is developing a technician leader-board dashboard, like the one shown below, which addresses the key areas in which help desk technicians perform. These dashboards are useful to instill a sense of healthy competition among technicians, and rewarding technicians on their performance for a particular month or quarter. But they typically don't go a long way in identifying the skill level of employees.



## Technician Leaderboard



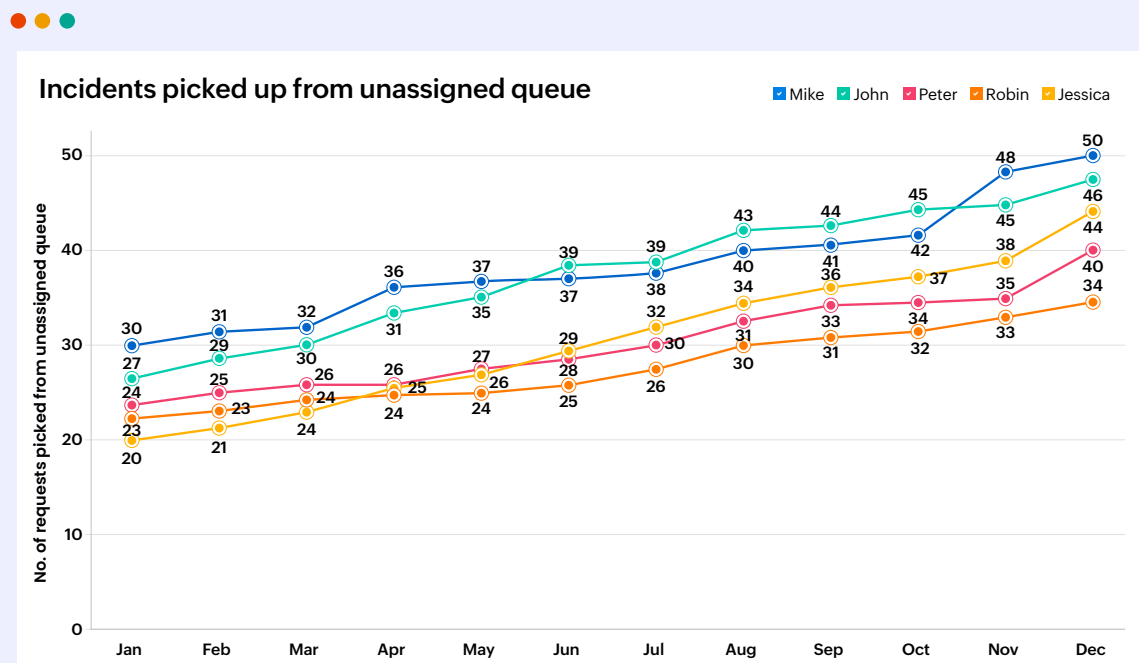
Identifying and understanding the individual skill level of technicians is necessary to gauge the overall capability and capacity of the entire help desk team. This understanding is necessary in adapting workflows, planning crisis management protocols, or strategizing based on the strengths of your help desk team. Also, this understanding is useful for identifying subject matter experts who can train other technicians, or handle escalations and complex issues.

In this e-book, we will look at various areas for measuring technician skills and assigning an overall score based on how they fare in critical areas. We've hand-picked skills that are important for a help desk technician to be successful, but these can vary based on the type and requirements of your organization. The methodology described in this e-book can be applied to any skill you wish to assess your technicians on.

## Proactivity

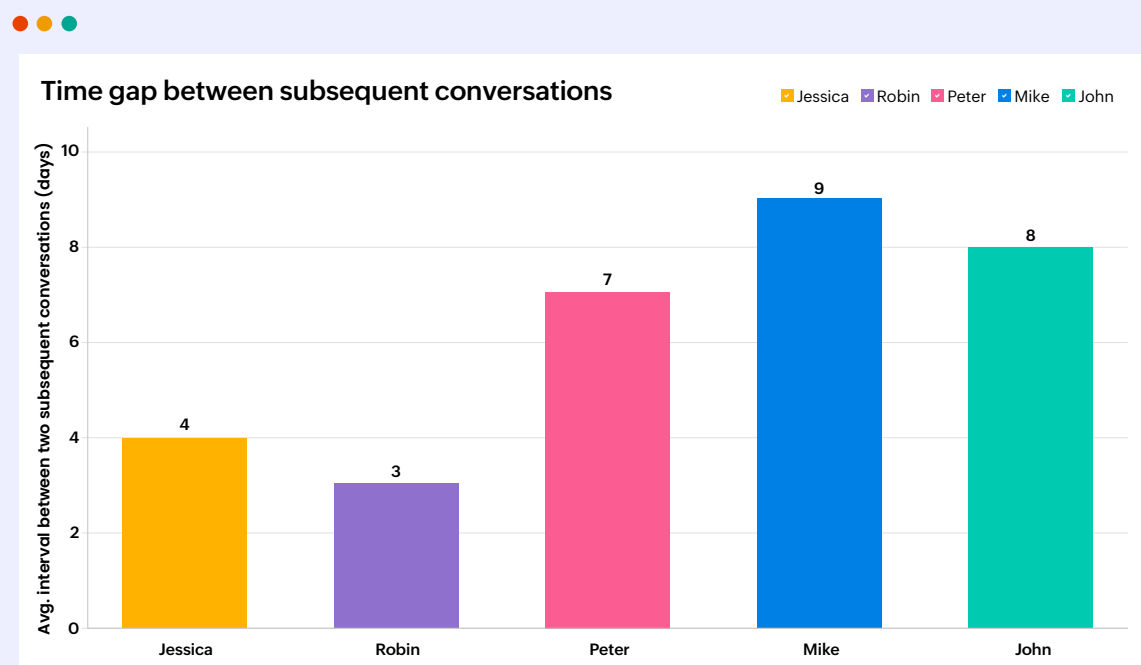
Employees turn to the help desk when they need help. Technicians, over time, might become more focused on being reactive in terms of extending this help because they get accustomed to people reaching out to them. This can be detrimental to the help desk operations in the long run because this can seep into other areas of the help desk operations where technicians are expected to be proactive. Help desk technicians should be willing to take the initiative, such as populating knowledge base articles for an issue that they've just discovered. Documenting the RCA for an issue can be useful to the entire help desk team.

There are several mundane, but key actions that indicate how proactive a technician is, and one is picking up requests proactively. Although modern help desks can automatically assign incidents to technicians based on a preconfigured protocol, a technician picking up unassigned incidents from the common pool is taking a positive-focused proactive action. This also hedges against scenarios where created incidents are not caught by any preconfigured rules and fall through the cracks. It's a great sign that help desk technicians don't shy away from taking on additional work and are always up for a challenge.



This analysis highlights proactivity as well as shows the consistency of help desk technicians in demonstrating individual initiative over time.

Another aspect in which you can judge proactivity is customer communication. A key factor that make or break customer satisfaction levels is the visibility customers have about knowing the status of their service request, especially issues that take a few days or weeks to resolve. Keeping the end user informed about developments with their request invariably increases customer satisfaction levels, with some internal organization findings indicating by at least 30%. The conversation pattern on pending requests is a tell-tale sign of whether the end user is kept informed on the progress of the request. The frequency of conversation is a sign of updates being shared on a regular basis. By looking at the average interval between conversations on a request, it can be determined if the end user is being informed on the progress of their ticket, is being given more information about their issue, or is helping the technician troubleshoot their issue. Each is an indicator that the end user is in the loop and not blind to how their request is being handled.

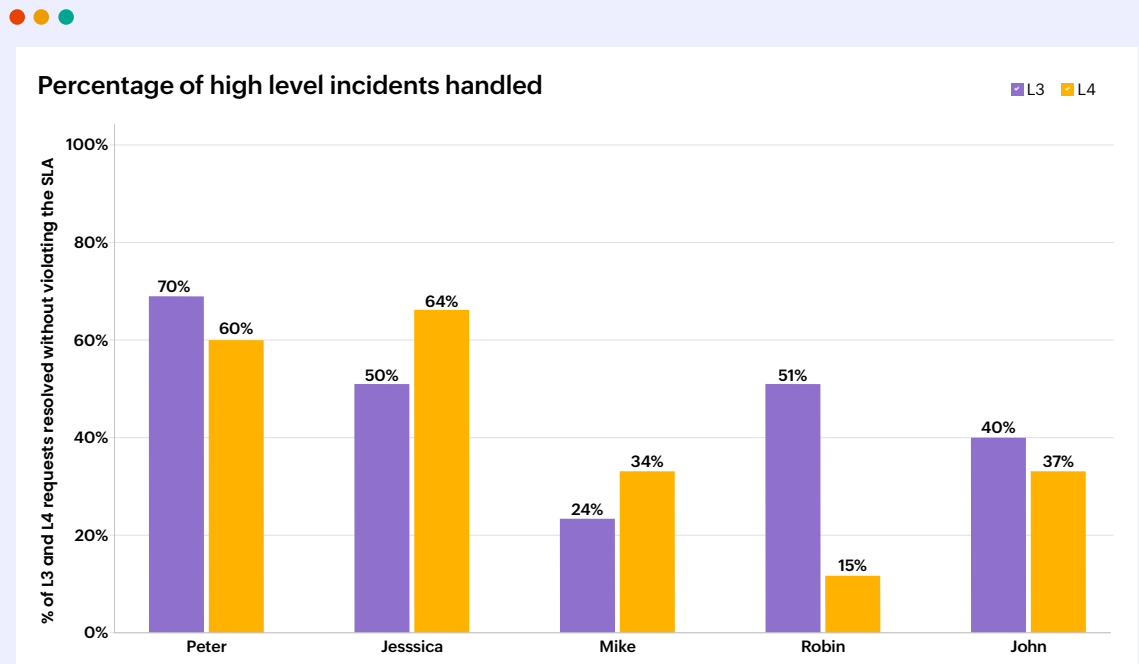


Help desk technicians who have a lower time gap between conversations are better at keeping end users informed of the service ticket progress, and score higher on the proactivity scale. Proactivity is a key skill that every help desk technician should possess, as the benefits of being proactive are multifold, and this skill assists in ensuring help desk operations run smoothly. Proactivity among technicians means that configuring checks and balances into the help desk process is less critical as individual technicians ensure things don't fall through the cracks.

## Expertise level

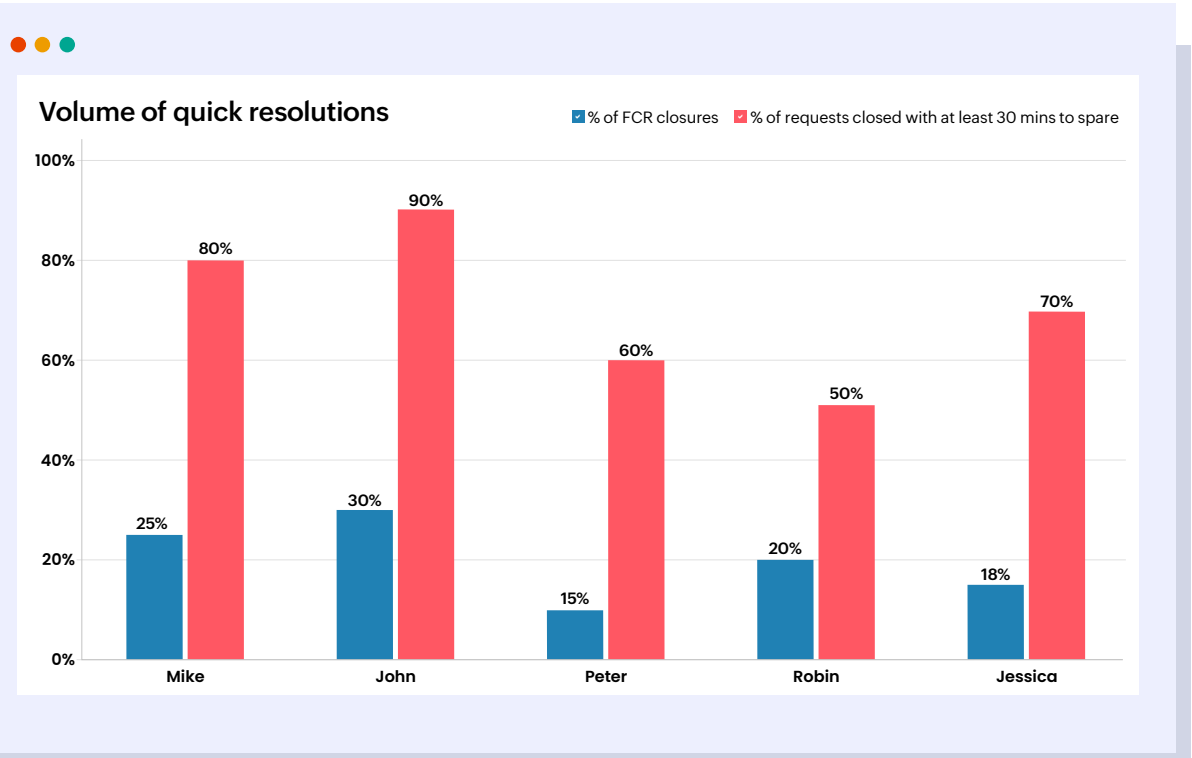
Subject matter expertise develops over time. Most help desk technicians start with a low level of expertise and develop expertise over time as a result of the experience they've gained. Building the expertise level of individual technicians invariably builds the collective expertise level of the entire help desk team. As technology advances, end user expectations rise and the complexity of issues often increases, but having a high level of collective help desk experience is essential.

The best and the most straightforward way to measure the expertise level of an individual help desk technician is to assess the complexity of the incidents they are able to resolve within the time prescribed by the SLA. The following analysis addresses the percentage of L3 and L4 incidents handled by technicians without violating the SLA. Technicians that consistently show they can handle demanding requests are generally those with a high level of expertise.



Another good indication of higher levels of expertise is the help desk technician's ability to resolve incidents within the time available and, of course, first call resolutions. Technicians need to possess a depth of knowledge in a multitude of areas to be able to resolve incidents with time to spare. The following analysis displays technicians who can resolve at least 10% of incidents in the first interaction, and at least 50% of incidents with anywhere between 30 minutes to an hour to spare.



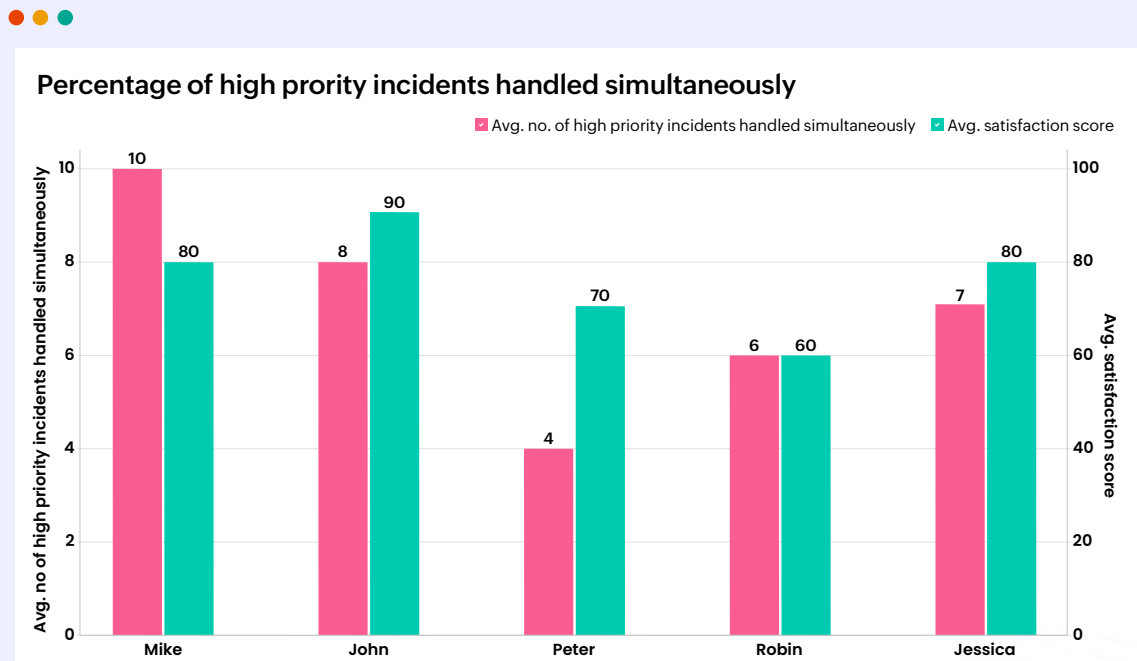


Help desk managers should aim to increase the expertise level of technicians collectively over time. This ensures that the help desk team is ready for demanding emergency situations, such as a company-wide outage or a security breach.

## Effective time management

Managing time efficiently is vital for a help desk technician. Those who are able to manage their time well achieve timely and successful resolutions and steer clear of SLA violations. The real time management test comes when there are several high priority incidents that require immediate and simultaneous attention. Taking periodic snapshots of help desk data is necessary to run this analysis. Snapshots are time-capsules that display the state of the help desk at various periods of time. They can be used to visualize the number of high priority requests that a help desk technician was working on at a specified point in time.

The following analysis shows the number of high priority requests that a technician is working on in a span of 30 days. It also displays the average satisfaction rating a technician can maintain during this period.



Technicians who have a larger number of high priority requests and are able to maintain a good satisfaction rating reflect a high degree of time management skills. Help desk managers should be mindful of technicians who take on a high number of priority requests, but are unable to maintain a respectable satisfaction score. This is an indication of a technician who tries to adhere to SLA goals, but who doesn't focus on the quality of the resolutions provided.

# Coordination capabilities

Completing many help desk tasks and resolving incidents depends on having key knowledge, but it doesn't necessarily require a lot of coordination skills. Handling and completing change implementation projects, however, often requires demonstrating the important skill of coordination between various teams and stakeholders to achieve a successful completion.

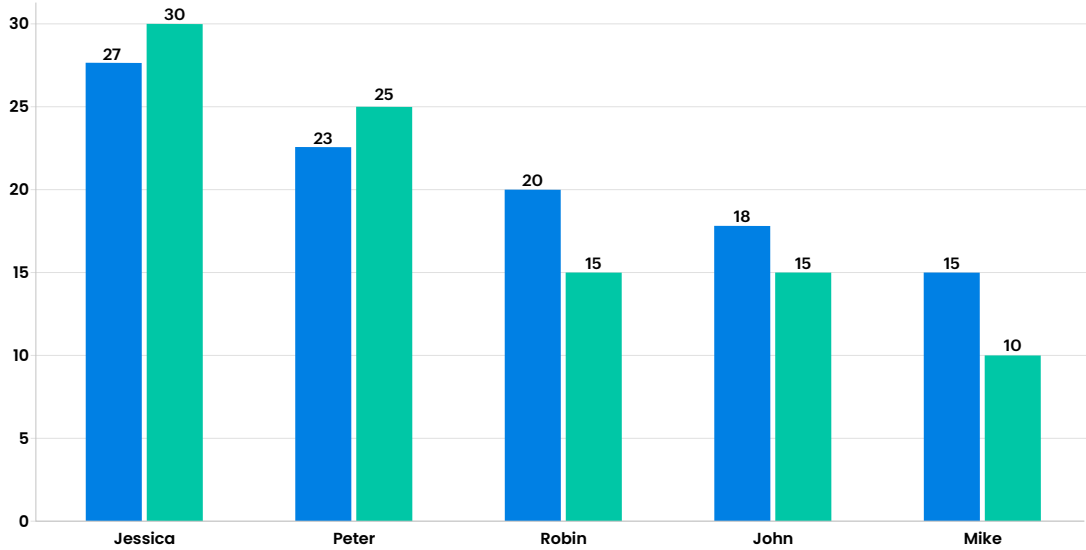
In general terms, help desk technicians who check all boxes in the previous points we've discussed make good coordinators. This is primarily because they can focus more on coordinating with teams on efforts because they already possess understanding about the technical aspects of the project, can manage time effectively, and are proactive in reaching out to stakeholders.

Technicians who have a track record of handling successful change implementations, and have played pivotal roles in implementing a project, can be assigned a higher score when it comes to coordination.



### Coordination competency

■ No. of successful change implementations ■ No. of projects coordinated

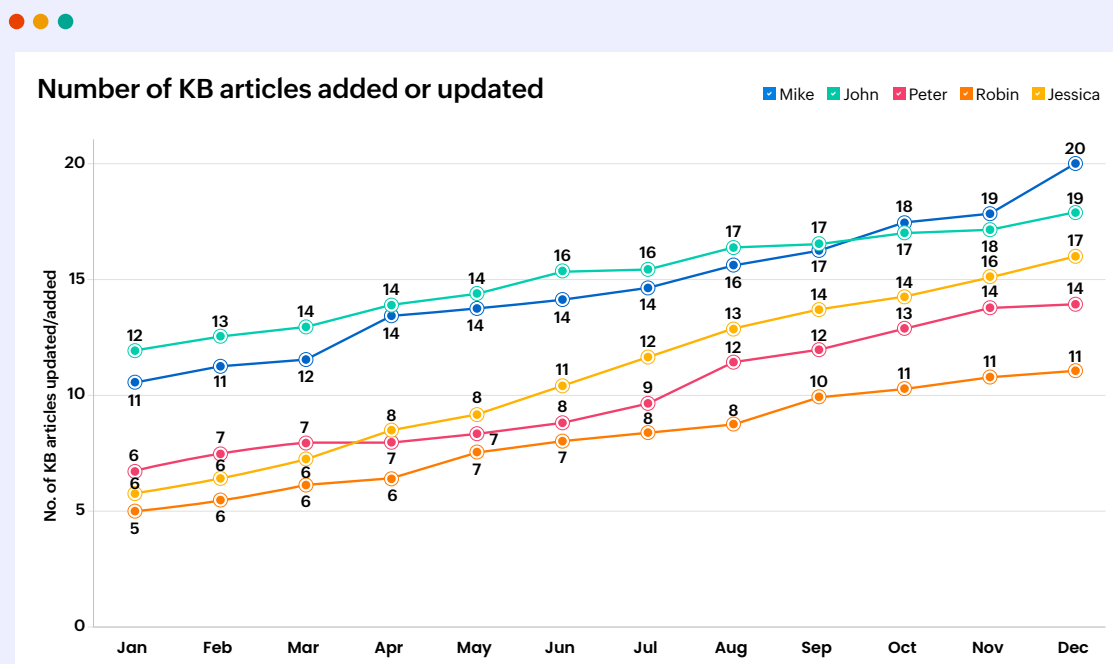


Besides scoring well on the overall skillset levels, help desk technicians who score well in their ability to coordinate make good candidates for team leads when needed.

## Ability to be a team player

Technicians who keep the overall goals of the team in mind are valuable assets for any help desk team. This is an important quality from a help desk process standpoint. This capability also provides quality, non-tangible benefits, such as helping boost the overall morale of the team and positively influencing other help desk technicians by demonstrating good best practices.

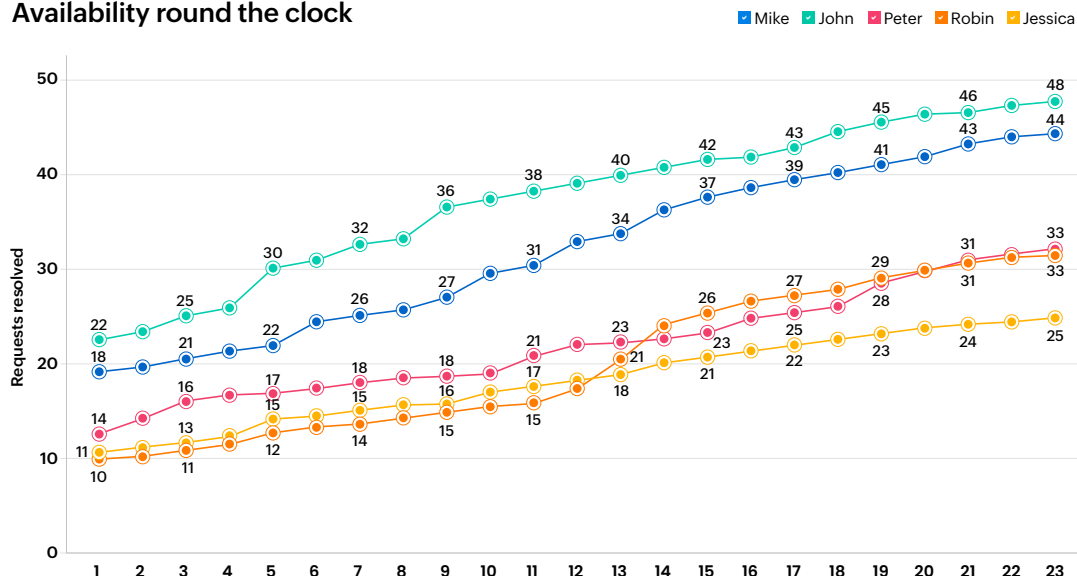
There are several KPIs that help desk managers can review to determine how often an individual help desk technician serves as a team player. Some KPIs show that a technician places a special interest in putting the needs of the help desk first, such as the KPI that tracks how consistently a help desk technician adds or updates KB articles. The importance of adding KB articles is known among help desk technicians. However, many technicians look at it as an additional chore and avoid it. Help desk technicians with the foresight to look at the larger picture and who want to help their colleagues will consistently put in the effort to update or add KB articles. The following analysis shows the top technicians who create and update KB articles.



Another important quality of a team player is being available, around the clock as needed, to either help colleagues or to handle an escalation or a complex issue. This can be easily gauged by looking at the volume of requests resolved by technicians over different periods of the day.



Availability round the clock



Being a team player is a quality rather than a skillset, but one that needs to be weighted appropriately on the scale of skillsets. These technicians should be periodically recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

## Collective skillset

We've covered various areas where a technician's skill can be measured. The next step is to derive a collective skill score for each technician based on their skill level in each of these areas. This can be done by assigning a weightage to each of these skill levels. For example, if a team values proactivity more than expertise level, the weightage or the relative multiplying factor can be assigned like so,

Weightage for

**Proactiveness: 8**

**Expertise Level: 5**

The overall score of a technician who scores 60 in proactiveness and 70 in expertise level will receive a score of  $8 \times 60$  and  $5 \times 70$  viz 830. The weightage assigned to a particular skillset influences the multiplying factor and the overall score. The following is an analysis built by assigning an overall skill factor to technicians based on how they score in each of the various skills discussed in this e-book.



# Conclusion

Evaluating skillsets holds equal significance to monitoring technician performance, as these aspects are inherently interconnected. Much like two sides of a coin, proficiency in skills directly influences a technician's ability to excel in their tasks. Instead of solely emphasizing improved performance, help desk managers should prioritize enhancing skillsets in critical areas. This approach signifies a more comprehensive strategy for elevating team performance. By directing efforts towards skill development, the team's overall performance can be organically elevated, providing a well-rounded and sustainable solution for achieving higher performance levels.



# About

**ManageEngine Analytics Plus** is a self-service, AI-driven IT analytics solution that helps organizations implement complex initiatives that address requirements of expanding businesses. Available on-premises and on the cloud, Analytics Plus visualizes IT data from several applications and integrates out-of-the-box with several popular IT applications such as ManageEngine ServiceDesk Plus, Jira, Service Now, Zendesk, and ManageEngine Endpoint Central. Analytics Plus features an AI-powered analytics assistant that responds to voice and text prompts to provide meaningful visualizations. This eliminates the need for a data analyst to aid help desk managers and reduces report building time while enabling organizations to make faster, data-driven decisions.

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