

How to calculate work hours lost

from inefficient service desk practices

- An analytics-powered approach to tackle inefficiencies head-on and reclaim work hours lost in service desk operations

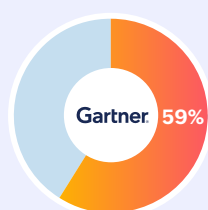
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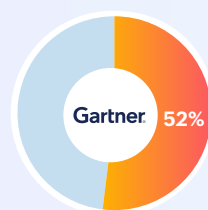
Introduction

In times of economic uncertainty, enterprises must optimize resource utilization across departments to deliver results and better returns on investment. When it comes to changes aimed at boosting operational efficiencies, organizations place greater emphasis on improving service desk operations.

Recent Gartner surveys found



Customer **service leaders** want to devote more resources to streamlining inefficient practices.^[1]



Businesses cite **productivity gains** as the primary driver for investing in any help desk or IT support software.^[2]

However, in the race to meet service-level agreements and minimize concrete expenses, service desk inefficiencies are often overlooked.

Therefore, merely identifying these inefficiencies does not often garner the necessary attention or convey their true impact. Quantifying them in terms of work hours lost brings the true cost of inefficiencies into focus, incentivizing IT leaders to commission immediate solutions that foster productivity and business growth.

This e-book explores the six key avenues across various stages of a service desk operation cycle to uncover the work hours lost due to inefficient service desk practices. You'll gain clarity on the detrimental effects of inefficient service desk practices along with detailed strategies to enhance your IT team's productivity.

The impact of inventory delays

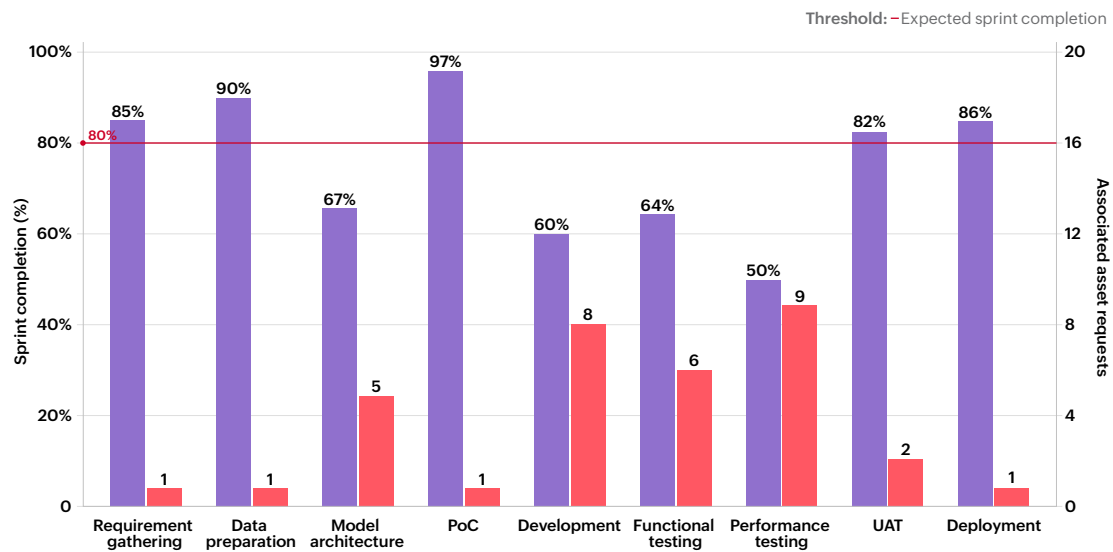
When the discussion arises on productivity loss or wastage of work hours in the IT department, it is common for leaders to focus on ticket creation, assignment, and execution within the service desk to identify where there are gaps to try and optimize them. However, to achieve a sustainable solution to the productivity problem, IT teams must start from the asset procurement process.

If a service desk does not have sufficient inventory levels, it may struggle to provide timely service for end-user asset requests, leading to unnecessary delays when purchasing new assets. Ad hoc procurement bottlenecks resulting from budget delays and policy constraints can decrease employee productivity and impact employee satisfaction. Furthermore, without the necessary assets, employees may resort to suboptimal workarounds, risking output quality.

For instance, consider a newly formed R&D department in an enterprise tasked with developing in-house GenAI and LLM models. Such focused initiatives will necessitate accelerated upgrades to existing assets and hiring of specialized technical staff.

An asset procurement plan without clear visibility into such strategic initiatives and their asset requirements will result in insufficient inventory. The resulting delays in fulfilling asset requests can critically hamper the department's productivity and project progress, as clearly indicated by the following analysis.

Correlation between sprint progress and pending hardware requests



This analysis examines the sprint-by-sprint progress of the R&D team's GenAI model project using data from the enterprise project management tool. The analysis shows that for sprints that require specialized hardware or asset procurement, the overall sprint completion was less than the optimal completion percentage, resulting in user story completion and sprint progress falling short of the expected threshold.

This shortfall's root cause can be easily mapped to the high proportion of unfulfilled asset requests in the service desk during the sprint period. The analysis enables project and IT leaders to accurately evaluate how ineffective asset procurement and inventory management practices impede a strategic organizational initiative.

To avoid this conundrum, IT teams, before procuring assets for the upcoming year, should audit key strategic initiatives and discuss with the respective project owners to gain vital clarification on asset requirements.

Additionally, incorporating hiring plans ensures IT asset procurement strategies reflect the organization's headcount estimates. This can be easily accomplished through an analytics platform that correlates data from the HR and service desk teams. Taking these proactive steps to refine asset procurement helps IT reduce service desk inefficiencies and man-hour loss caused by asset shortages.

02 | The software request barrage

Building upon the foundation of addressing asset procurement inefficiencies, the next natural step in improving IT service desk operations is streamlining the software fulfillment process.

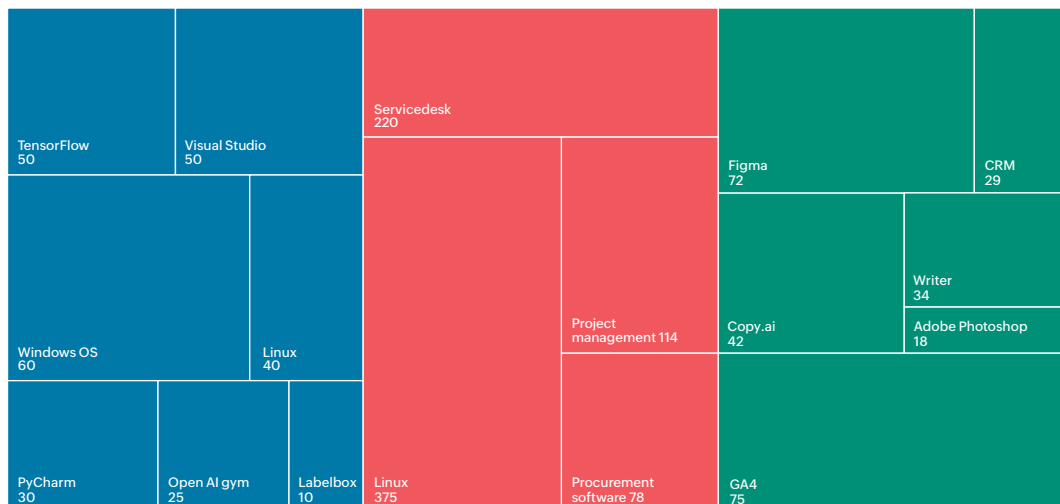
Once assets are assigned to users, they typically raise a series of requests for commercial software required to carry out their day-to-day activities. Rather than waiting for users to raise software requests after being assigned assets, IT teams can take a proactive approach by pre-installing essential software based on department and job functions. This avoids cluttering the service desk with redundant requests and saves significant time, both for users who no longer have to wait for software installation and IT technicians who can avoid repetitive tasks.

Since business and IT teams already know the software needed for departments to function, requiring individual requests wastes the efforts of users and technicians. Pre-installation streamlines software deployment across the organization.



Analysis of software requests by departments

Department: ■ GenAI Labs ■ IT ■ Marketing



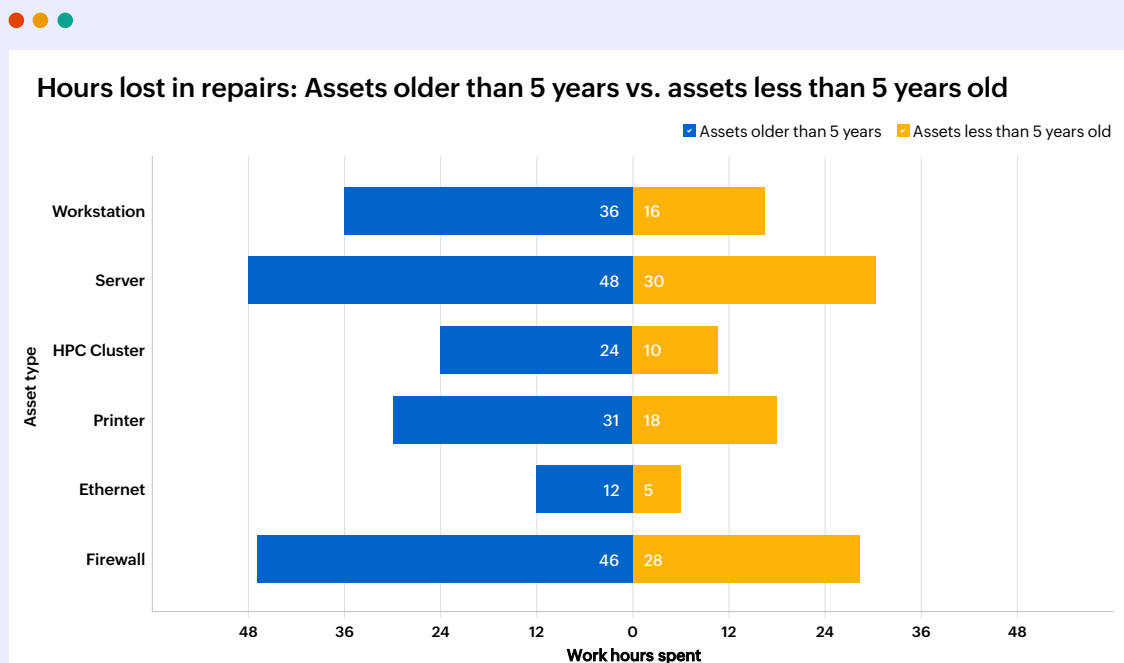
The above visualization analyzes the commonly requested software across distinct departments in an organization. This analysis enables IT teams to easily identify the applications requested most often by each department and consider pre-installing them on all new desktops allocated to the respective department. They can also trigger remote installation and update these applications on desktops that are already in use.

03

The true cost of outdated assets

In the pursuit of cost optimization, modern IT strategies emphasize prolonging asset life cycles, even if it involves small sacrifices to operations. Outdated assets, though cost-saving initially, often result in decreased productivity due to slower performance and frequent failures. This can frustrate employees and hinder their efficiency. Unreliable assets and frequent down times decrease employees' productive working hours, making it harder to meet deadlines.

The chart below provides a comparative analysis of work hours lost in repair between assets that are in different stages of their life cycles.



The analysis clearly shows that for outdated assets, i.e., assets operating beyond the standard disposal date configured in the IT Asset Management (ITAM) module (five years), the average number of work hours spent on repairs is high when compared to assets that are within the recommended life cycle. This inevitably increases the downtime experienced by outdated assets. This visualization can be used by IT managers to map out the issues in continued usage of outdated assets, guiding optimizations to minimize downtime and maintenance windows.

By tracking asset availability and correlating it with service desk technician cost data, organizations can determine the technician hours and cost drain that result from using assets past their ITAM module recommended disposal dates.

Outdated asset costs

	Asset	Lifecycle stage	Technician hours lost on break-fix events	Hourly cost of technician efforts (\$)	Total technician cost of break-fix events (\$)	Asset replacement cost (\$)
1.	MacBook Pro	Outdated	75	24	1800	1600
2.	LG monitor	Outdated	55	24	1320	480
3.	NAS storage array	Outdated	12	24	288	100
4.	Cisco firewall	Outdated	70	24	1680	700
5.	NVIDIA GPU	Outdated	122	24	2928	2400
6.	AMD Radeon	Outdated	100.5	24	2412	2000

From this analysis, it can be clearly observed that the cost of replacing outdated assets trumps the cost of sustaining outdated assets.

The above two analyses emphasize the importance of proactive asset management strategies, regular asset replacement cycles, and investments in modernizing the organization's IT assets in ensuring optimal productivity and security in the IT ecosystem.

Now that we have examined the various inefficiencies occurring before request creation, let us discuss strategies to analyze and optimize inefficiencies that arise once a ticket is logged in the service desk.

04 | The request routing red tape

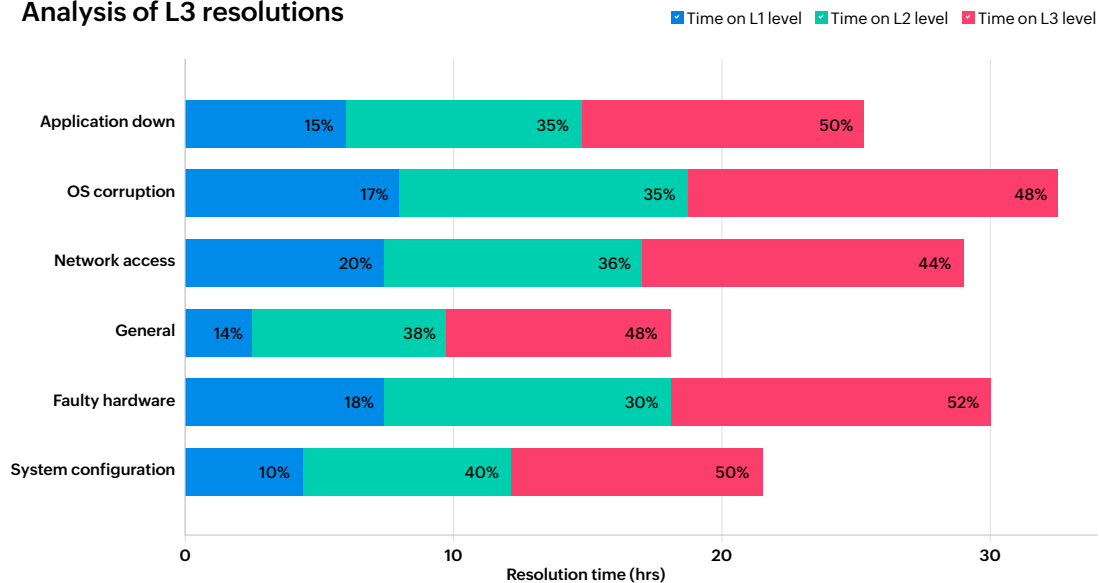
Analyzing a service desk's existing ticket routing mechanism can unearth inefficiencies that waste productivity and work hours.

The automated ticket routing system used in standard service desks assigns tickets to a particular level based on preset criteria and parameters. While this methodology can be effective, it is not always efficient. Resolutions for tickets meeting a predefined criteria or falling under the same category can vary based on multiple factors like impact, coverage, urgency, customer influence, protocol compliance, and more.

As a result, tickets auto-assigned to L1 technicians often require escalation to L2 or L3 levels, increasing resolution time. In such scenarios, the time spent by technicians determining that they need to escalate to a higher level represents wasted effort. Therefore, a more nuanced routing system is required to reduce technician work hours and improve productivity.



Analysis of L3 resolutions

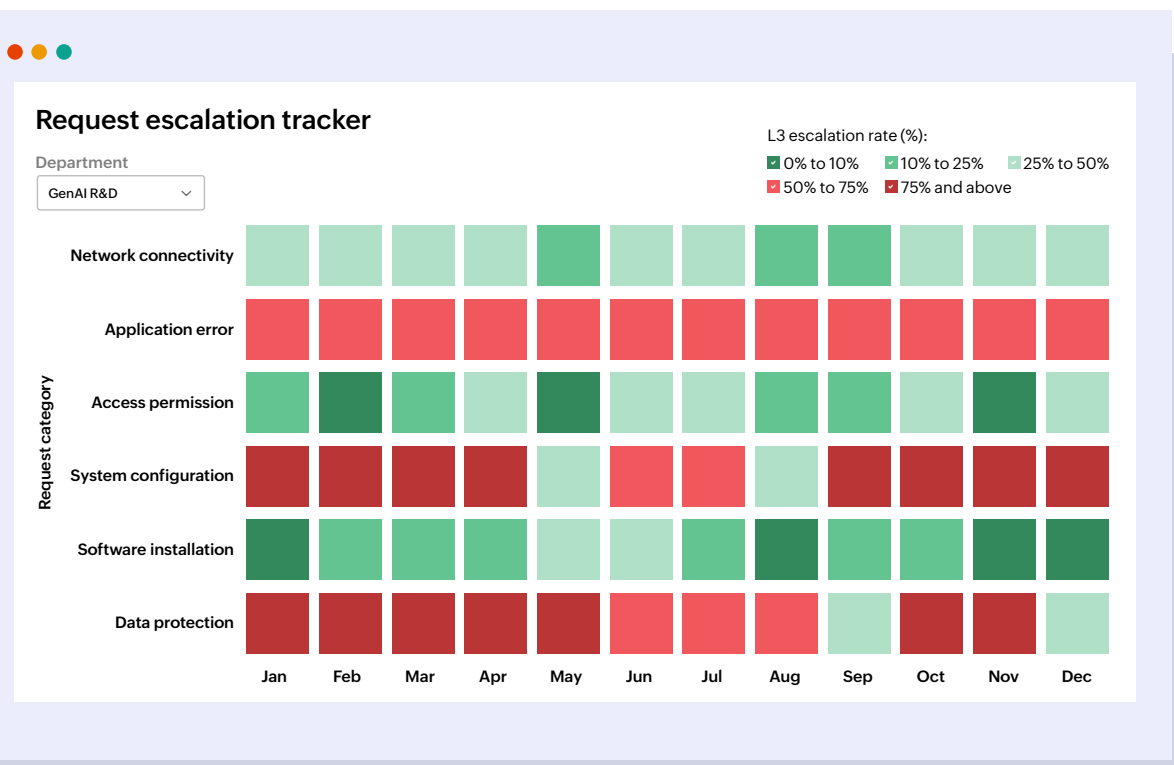


From this analysis, IT leaders can get a clear idea of time wastage happening in a sequential ticket routing system. For tickets that are assigned to a L1 technician but resolved by a L3, the time spent with L1 and L2-level technicians is wasted productive hours. In such a system, as the number of reassignments increases, the resolution time also goes up.

Directly assigning tickets to the higher level technicians can seem like a quick fix but requires judicious implementation to avoid overburdening experts with mundane requests that do not require L3-level expertise.

To enable appropriate L3 assignments, we must identify tickets that require advanced support. Advanced analytics can provide these insights.

The below visualization showcases escalation rates for service desk requests raised by the GenAI R&D department over the past year. System configuration and data protection requests show high escalation rates, indicating direct assignment would be appropriate. Network connectivity has considerable L3 escalations, so further analysis of factors like impact, priority, and context of the request can identify specific tickets within the category to enable direct L3 assignment.

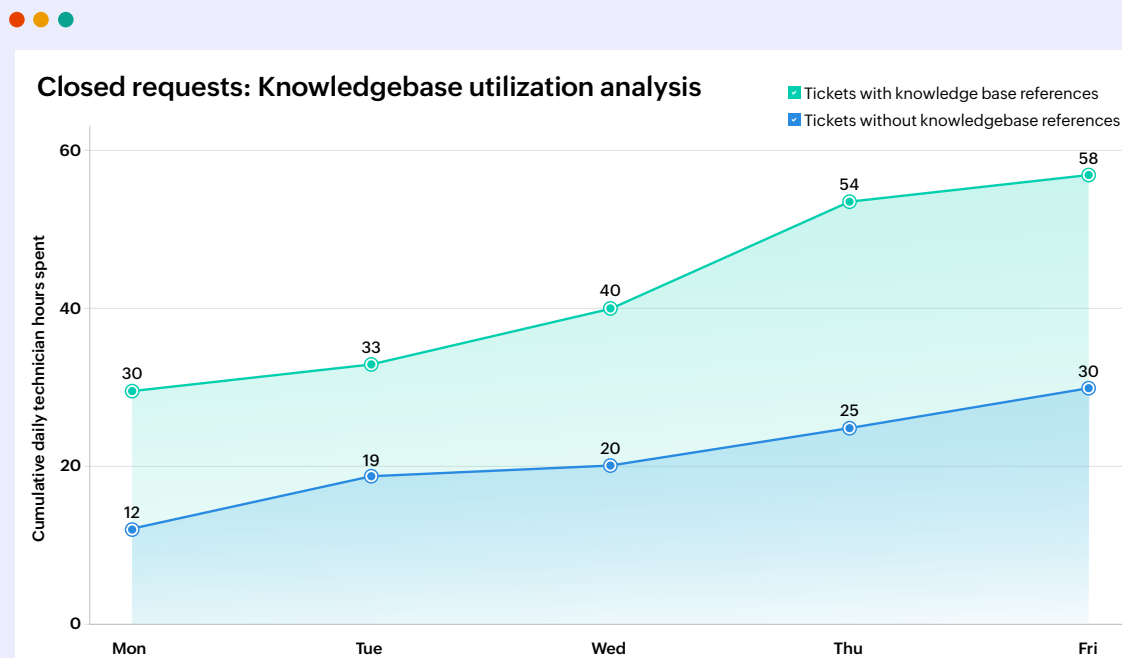


IT leaders can use this analysis to visualize each business unit's support needs to streamline the ticket routing mechanism to reduce wasted hours and enhance organizational productivity.

Inefficient knowledge base utilization

Knowledge bases are invaluable tools that empower IT technicians to be more productive and focus their time and expertise on complex issues that require their dedicated attention. Comprehensive knowledge base solutions allow end users to address routine and mundane issues without turning to the service desk.

However, organizations often fail to realize the full impact of this tool. Issues that can be resolved through available knowledge base articles are often assigned as tickets to service desk technicians who end up resolving them by referencing the same knowledge base articles. This squanders valuable technician hours and hampers service desk efficiency.



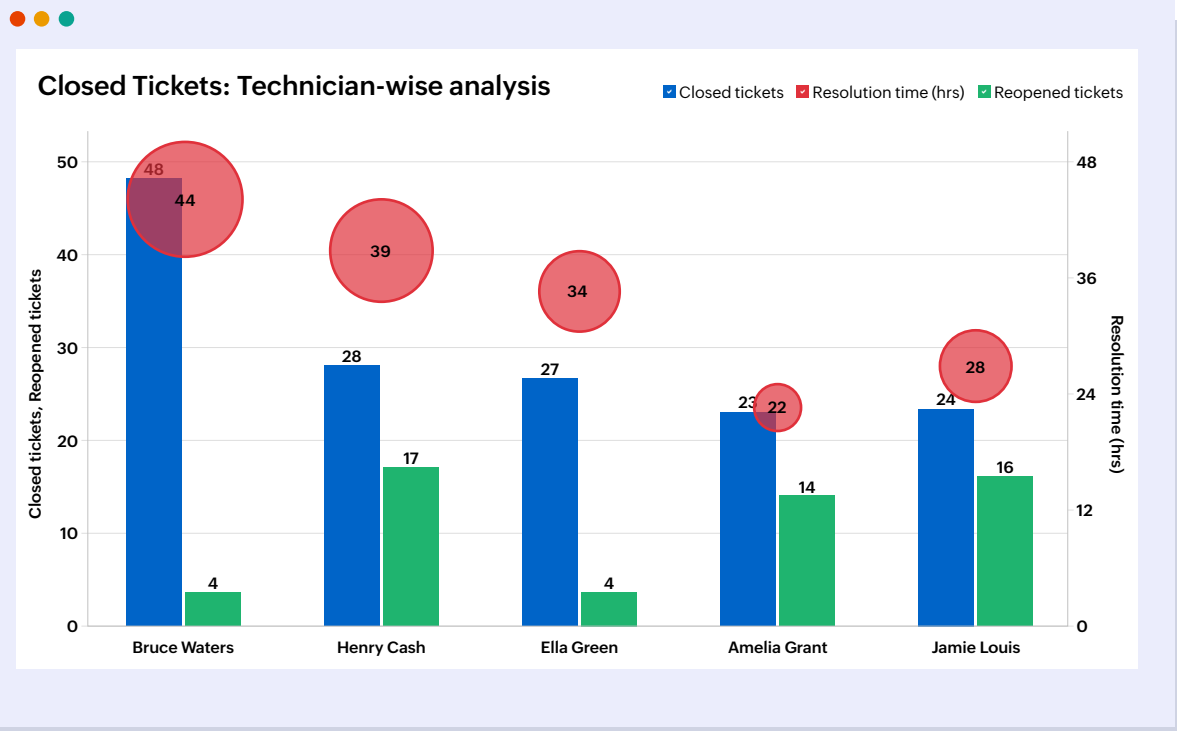
As shown in the above visualization, a significant portion of daily technician hours is spent on resolving tickets by referencing existing knowledge base articles. The time expended by technicians on handling these tickets, as observed from the visualization, can be tagged as wasted effort as these tickets can quickly be resolved by end users without the service desk's interference. On catching such inefficiencies, organizations must step in and encourage employees to employ self-service and the knowledge base solutions in place to address their issues.

06

Resolutions done right: Focusing on quality over quantity

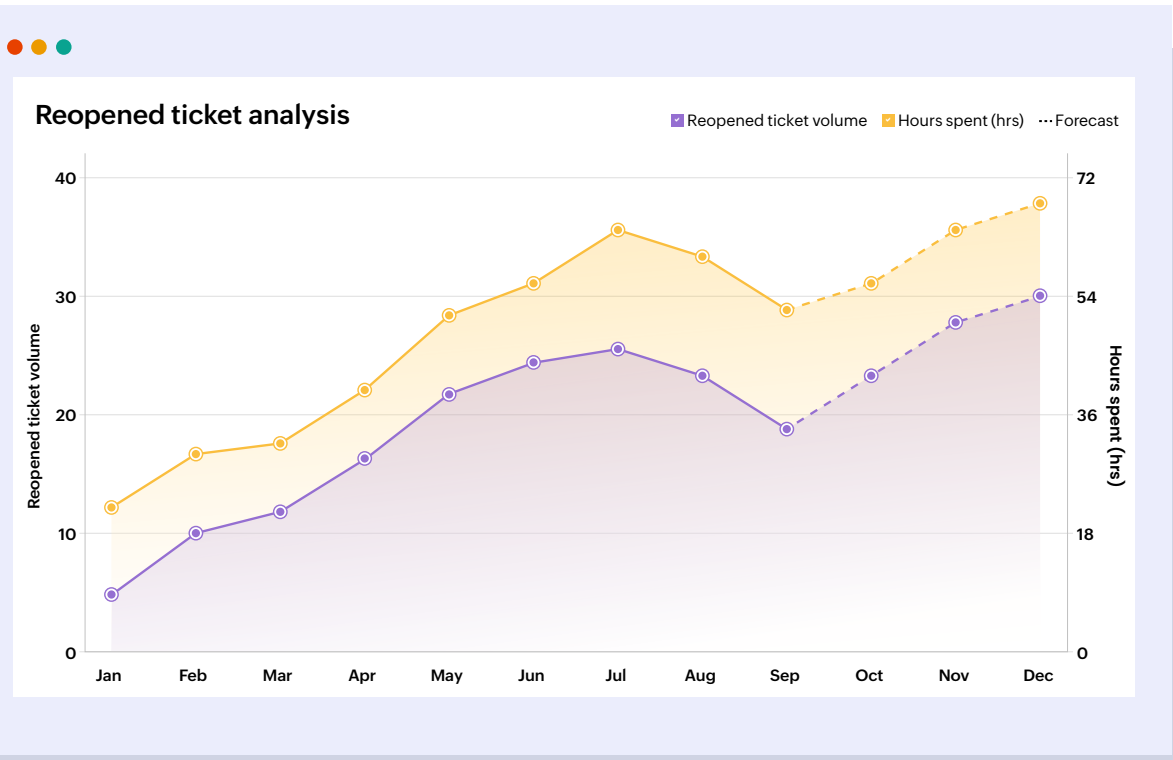
Clearly, inefficient service desk practices can create bottlenecks at all stages of the service desk life cycle, from request creation to resolution, resulting in lost productivity and wasted time for technicians and users alike. However, the negative consequences of inefficient processes do not end with request resolution; they can be felt post-resolution as well.

This scenario arises when technicians resort to quick, temporary fixes to meet service level agreements. Providing quick-fix solutions without mitigating underlying issues leads to recurring incidents and reopened tickets down the line, consuming more time than if the issues were addressed effectively the first time around.



The visualization highlights technicians with low-quality ticket resolutions, despite providing seemingly prompt resolutions. IT managers can catch these scenarios by looking beyond resolution SLAs to additionally understand technician's ticket reopen rates. Three technicians have reopened tickets greater than 60% of the total volume of closed tickets, indicating inefficiencies in troubleshooting and ticket resolution.

This inefficiency extends to handling reopened tickets as well, with the reopened ticket backlog impacting the entire service desk's ability to resolve new requests promptly. This phenomenon can be clearly observed from the below analysis that showcases month-on-month comparison between the number of reopened tickets and the time expended by technicians in resolving them.



The analysis demonstrates how a reopened ticket backlog consumes technicians' work hours and hampers critical incident resolution. Higher resolution time and an increasing number of reopened tickets signal an alarming trend for the service desk. Predictive analytics empowers IT teams to foresee where this trend leads, enabling them to promptly course-correct by improving resolution practices and get back on track.

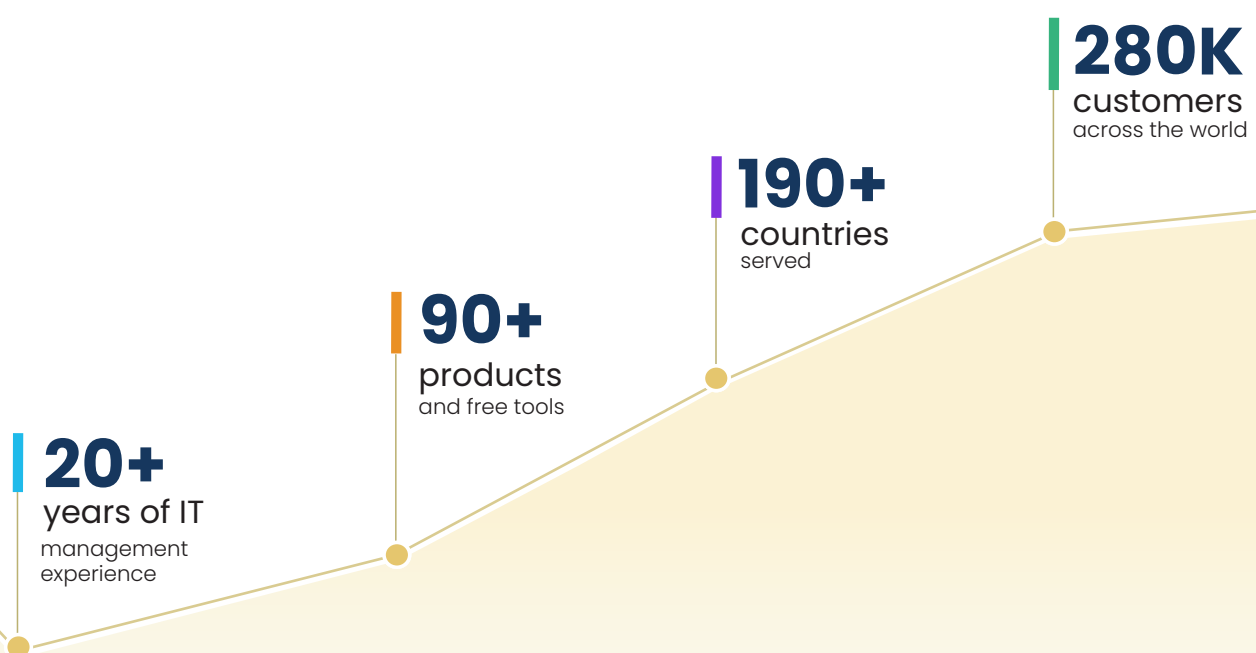
Conclusion

In today's dynamic landscape of IT service management, the journey towards optimum productivity begins with a clear understanding of where time is being lost. Through targeted interventions of time-consuming inefficiencies, organizations can streamline their operations, minimize disruptions, and propel the IT service desk towards greater tangible outcomes.

About

ManageEngine Analytics Plus is a self-service, AI-driven IT analytics solution that helps organizations implement complex initiatives to address the requirements of expanding businesses. Available on-premises and in 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, ServiceNow, 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 IT managers and reduces report building time while enabling organizations to make faster, data-driven decisions.

For more information about Analytics Plus,
visit: www.manageengine.com/analytics-plus/



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