

# TREND REPORT: **The Importance of Remote Support IN A SHIFT-LEFT WORLD**

**HDI**<sup>®</sup>



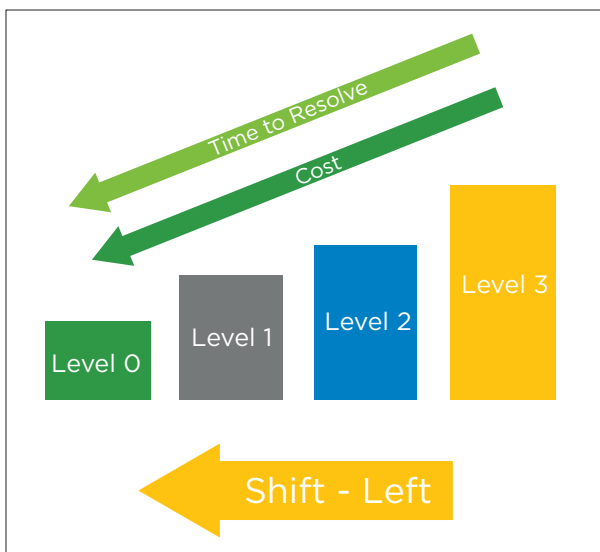
## INTRODUCTION

More and more organizations are using a Shift-Left approach to support, bringing more complex work down to Level 1 and moving more repetitive work to self-service. This approach makes sense from multiple perspectives, including:

- Controlling costs
- Minimizing lost time
- Improving the customer experience

### Why Shift-Left?

Shifting work left—that is, to lower levels of support—not only decreases the cost of support, since (generally) Level 1 costs are lower than Level 2 and 3—but also gets the resolution to the customer faster. Each escalation level has fewer people, and those people are often dedicated to moving time-sensitive projects forward. Level 1 analysts spend about two-thirds of their time working on support tickets; at Level 2, this is down to 41%, and the percentage of time spent on projects doubles from 7% at Level 1 to 14% at Level 2. These factors create a “funnel” effect; backlogs often build up when issues are escalated and customers wait longer for resolutions.



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Shifting left most often happens in stages. It shouldn't be assumed that work will move directly from Level 3 to Level 1 or 0. The process works this way:

- Level 3 documents work done to resolve an issue
- Level 2 receives the documentation and any additional permissions, training, and authority needed to perform the actions described
- Level 2 takes over resolving the documented issue
- Over time, the process can be repeated to bring the resolution down to Level 1

If it's a repeatable solution and end users have the ability to perform the actions needed (i.e., if they have the rights and permissions and/or access), the resolution information can be pushed out to Level 0, unassisted self-help. Not all solutions are suitable for Level 0, of course. Some may require more technical knowledge or elevated permissions, and those solutions should be reserved for assisted support. The key is to move simple, repetitive work as far left as possible, freeing the upper-level analysts and engineers for the most complex work as well as the projects they are working on. For the remaining incidents and requests, it's important to get resolutions or fulfillments done accurately and rapidly.

At the same time, since we now have more customers seeking to solve their own problems before contacting support for assistance, the work remaining at Level 1 has become more complex and more urgent for customers. Customers want fast, accurate solutions, request fulfillment, and answers. Remote support tools can be used to expedite a large percentage of those solutions and requests. In fact, by using robust remote tools analysts are able to provide quick resolution to half or more of these issues in high-performing organizations.

Add to that the high percentage of today's workforce that is mobile—and the percentage continues to grow—causing many incidents to be reported from locations outside the office or office campus, and/or from devices that are not the standard desktop or laptop computers of days past. For these reasons, 85% of organizations [provide support through remote control](#).

## Customer Experience

Whether a support center is assisting internal customers (employees of the same company) or external customers (people who purchase that company's products or services), the experience of those customers is increasingly important. People are used to the simplicity of Google and the rapid responsiveness of Amazon. Customers expect—and need—rapid response and fast, correct solutions. Today's organizations are leaner, making each employee more critical to business success.

Many support organizations have taken to using the [Net Promoter Score](#) and/or the [Customer Effort Score](#) to measure the likelihood that customers will use the support services again and to gauge the level of difficulty they experienced in getting their issues addressed. These survey types are being used for both internal and external customers. Some organizations are also building [customer journey maps](#) to discover bottlenecks or flaws in their support plans.

Customers generally want the same thing when they require support: a quick and correct solution. The more a support analyst can understand about the customer's issue, the better and faster the solution will be. Seeing the issue from the customer's viewpoint via remote support tools has substantial positive effects on the results of that support.

## HOT TOPIC: How Remote Support Meets Evolving Support Needs in a Shift-Left World

When simpler, more repetitive work is shifted left to Level 0, the remaining work coming to Level 1 is more complex. Often, this work involves getting access to the customer's computer, or troubleshooting the performance of an application installed on that computer. For these tasks, remote control systems are efficient and cost-effective, and allow the handling of more complex work at Level 1. Analysts can quickly see exactly what the customer or end user sees, as well as verify that the solution works.

But it isn't all just about dollars and cents. Time demands on end users are high; businesses need to accelerate every process to remain competitive. No one has a lot of time to wait for an essential piece of software to be installed, an incident to be resolved, or a request to be fulfilled. Faster is better, as long as solutions are implemented correctly. Providing remote assistance can expedite these processes and maintain critical business velocity.

The question then arises: How can the work be smoothly shifted without adversely impacting customers? The answer lies in the key elements of the Shift-Left strategy:

- The work to be shifted must be thoroughly documented and tested.
- The analysts or technicians who are absorbing the work must be trained in the new skills.
- The analysts or technicians who are absorbing the work must have the access and permissions needed to accomplish it, including access to knowledge articles on the subject.

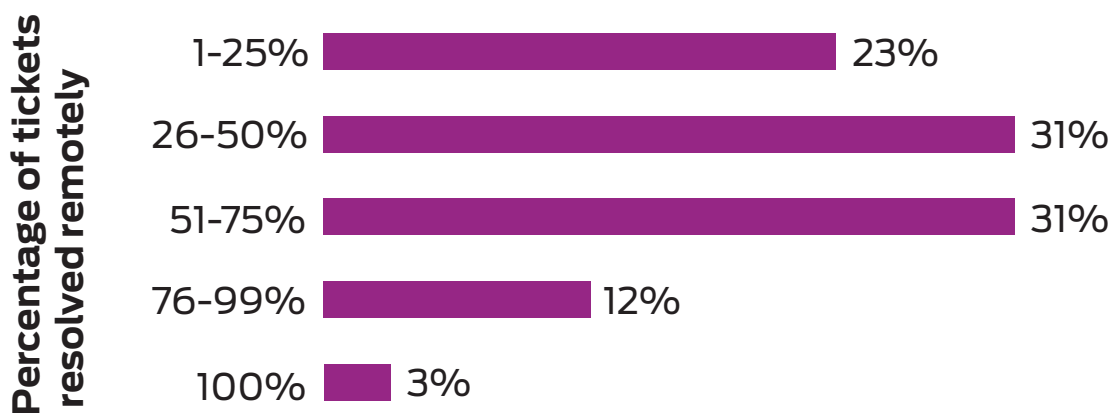
The third point, about access to knowledge, shouldn't be overlooked. Knowledge managers must be fully involved in the Shift-Left strategy.

## RESEARCH BRIEF: Remote Control in the Support Center and Desktop Support

The [2016 HDI Technical Support Practices & Salary Report](#) shows that remote control is the most widely used technology tool in the support center—more than even incident management (ticket management) tools. An additional 9% of organizations are planning to add it. The report shows similar statistics for desktop support groups, where 85% of the respondents are providing support through remote control technology.

More than the adoption of tools, however, the proof is in the use of those tools, and remote control is used heavily (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Use of Remote Control by Desktop Support



### Percentage of desktop support teams

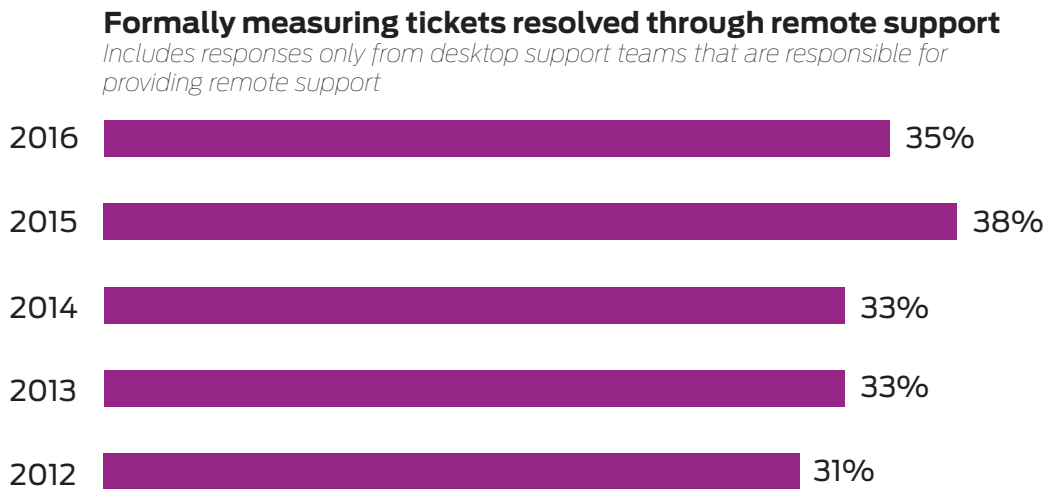
*Source: 2016 HDI Technical Support Practices & Salary Report*

In 2016, 3% of desktop support organizations were able to resolve 100% of incidents or requests through remote support, while about one-third of desktop teams were able to resolve between half and three-quarters of their assigned tickets using remote support technology. These are large numbers, especially in light of the relatively expensive and time-consuming process of dispatching a desktop support technician to an end user's location.

Although the statistics here are provided by desktop support organizations, the majority of those organizations do not formally measure and track the resolution of tickets via remote control (Figure 2). This leads us to suspect that the number of resolutions provided via remote support may in fact be higher than it appears.

Using the remote support option saves money for the support organization, since tickets can be closed rapidly and with minimum escalation, if any. Further, it saves

Figure 2: Formal Measurement of Tickets Resolved by Remote Support, in Desktop Support



Source: 2016 HDI Technical Support Practices & Salary Report

time for the customer, who isn't waiting while an escalated ticket makes its way through the queue and is addressed by desktop support or a Level 3 support analyst. Depending on the escalation group and its location, providing a solution for a given end user costs a minimum of twice as much and often much more than if the resolution happens at Level 1. While the 2016 median cost per ticket for the support center (Level 1) is \$18.50, the **median cost per ticket** for desktop support was \$82.03 in 2014, **according to MetricNet**, and has undoubtedly increased since. If, as is the case according to HDI research, 72% of incidents are **resolved at the first level**, the remaining 28% are escalated, and solutions cost many times as much. The savings can be upwards of \$70 per ticket or even more.

**In order to fully realize the value of remote support, support centers should be tracking the delivery method of the solution. If a resolution is provided via remote support, the costs associated with that ticket will be substantially lower than if a technician is dispatched to the deskside, and the time to resolve will be shorter.**

Figure 3: Use of Remote Support by the Support Center and Desktop Support

**Remote support is provided by:**



**Percentage of organizations**

Other includes application support, network operations, engineering, L2 support, consultants, exchange support, system and server administrators, and more

*Source: 2016 HDI Technical Support Practices & Salary Report*

HDI research shows that the support center (service desk or help desk) and desktop support teams use remote control technology equally (Figure 3).

This in itself is an illustration of Shift-Left at work, and it shows how remote control enables it. Much of the hands-on work that used to automatically be sent to desktop support for a technician dispatch has been brought into the support center, where it's often resolved by Level 1 analysts, or by a specialized group of analysts sometimes called Level 1.5 support. The user isn't asked to wait for contact from an escalation group, and solutions happen faster.

**According to predictions from IDC**, nearly three-quarters of the workforce will be mobile by 2020. This always-on, increasingly mobile workforce expects and needs service where they are, without the need to wait for a technician to come to them.

Technologies used by the workforce are also increasingly diverse, especially in organizations practicing **BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)**, which is now an option for all employees in 40% of companies. To the support center, this means that Level 1 will be receiving contacts about a wide variety of devices, software, and operating systems, not just one or two standard corporate configurations.

The choice of remote control tools, then, is critical. The tool must be able to establish a secure connection to many different types of devices. Robust remote support allows the rapid resolution of issues arising on customers/end users laptops, tablets, and smartphones, and can even take advantage of the capabilities of those devices, such as transmitting live video back to the support center so that an analyst can step the user through a solution on a printer or other peripheral.

## TRAINING TIP: Providing the Best Remote Support

Support center analysts need to be familiar with troubleshooting techniques across multiple operating systems and devices, as well as be familiar with all aspects of the remote support tool. To provide the best support for customers, support centers need to:

1. Define those empowered to use remote control support tools or components of report control support tools. This can be a selected group of Level 1 analysts, or even all Level 1 analysts, depending on their level of expertise.
2. Train and coach the analysts who will use remote control in best practices for using the tool as well as all the aspects of the tool itself, so that they can maximize the benefit to the customer and to the support organization.
3. Provide troubleshooting guidance across multiple devices and operating systems such as Windows, Mac OS, iOS, Android, and any other operating systems that are part of your user environment.

For the support center in general, begin formally measuring the number and percentage of tickets resolved via remote control. Also, do an assessment to discover how many tickets could have been resolved using remote connections. Those metrics will provide insight into potential cost savings not yet realized, and the most effective use of your escalation groups' time.

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## SPONSOR'S PERSPECTIVE: What Can Rescue by LogMeIn Do for Your Organization?

Rescue by LogMeIn is an enterprise-ready remote support platform designed to address the key challenges associated with providing remote support both internally, to employees, and externally, to customers. Rescue enables companies to deliver support that is smart, simple, and fast- saving users time, money and effort. Rescue customers have achieved higher NPS scores, significant cost-savings, increased product adoption, and greater customer satisfaction after deploying Rescue as their remote support tool.

Rescue helps companies shift-left by creating more efficient support processes in an easy to learn - easy to use tool. Rescue allows teams to optimize their output by ticket routing and technician grouping, to ensure they are maximizing technician time and skill sets. Additionally, Rescue has APIs as well as out-of-the-box offerings to integrate with many ticketing and CRM solutions, which helps Rescue customers streamline and centralize their support efforts.





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- Facilitating collaboration and networking
- Hosting acclaimed conferences and events
- Producing renowned publications and research
- Certifying and training thousands of professionals each year

*Our Mission:* Elevate the customer experience through the development of the technical support industry.

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