



SupportDesk Green, from House-On-The-Hill

Support and help desk services are critical components in the drive to reduce Network TCO (total cost of ownership) as businesses need to ensure that user requests are serviced efficiently to ensure maximum productivity.

SupportDesk has traditionally offered a comprehensive solution for managing these processes and the latest Green version from House-On-The-Hill delivers even more features with SLA management high on the agenda.

SupportDesk Green offers a complete set of tools for IT support staff and help desk engineers, allowing them to log and categorise calls, assign tasks, monitor their progress and track purchase orders.

A wide range of optional modules are also available for monitoring SLAs, escalating problems, providing email integration for acknowledging calls, and assigning tasks to engineers. Additionally, web services allow customers to place support requests, access a knowledge base and perform self-remediation. Asset management and workstation inventory are also possible and SupportDesk Green offers connectors for querying LANDesk, Centennial Software or Microsoft SMS.

For such a large product we found installation surprisingly simple. It requires a database and defaults to loading MS Access, but it can integrate with existing instances of SQL Server, Oracle, MSDE and MySQL. Although SupportDesk can

be accessed concurrently by multiple users, it only needs to be loaded on one server system which takes a few minutes.

For participating systems you simply create a shortcut to the program executable on the server, and locally configure an ODBC data source where we just entered the URL of the .MDB database on the server. Despite the plethora of features on offer, SupportDesk delivers a very well designed interface that is easy to navigate. The various functions are all accessed from a tidy side bar with the relevant details appearing alongside.

After company details have been configured, you add your various users, or logins, and assign job functions to them. Supervisors are granted full access, whereas analysts are allowed to input call information. Usefully, engineers are classed as assignees only, so you can have as many as you like without affecting the license count.

For telephone support calls, the analyst can create a ticket for an incident, a problem or a change request. If, for example, you raised an incident, you receive a form where you add information such as user details, the type of incident, its priority, a description and who the ticket should be assigned to. The process is speeded up as a lot of fields are auto-filled and the QuickCalls! feature can be used to swiftly raise a ticket from a selection of common call types. The optional email

and web services components automate a lot of these functions as calls can be generated automatically on receipt of a correctly formatted email, or a message from the support web site. Once a call has been created, the assignee receives an email advising them of its details and required actions. Once they've remedied the fault, they can add further information about the solution and close the case.

As you'd expect, a searchable knowledge base is maintained to help with problem solving, and call solutions can be added directly from an open call. To improve visibility, custom folders can be used to highlight instances of a single problem causing seemingly unrelated incidents.

SupportDesk Green has acquired Pink Verification and is therefore certified ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) compatible. It delivers a comprehensive support and help desk management system that is suited to both internal business use and for supporting external customer bases. It can be upgraded and customised with an extensive selection of optional modules; basing costs on the number of concurrent users makes it highly competitive. **NC**

Product: SupportDesk Green
Supplier: House-On-The-Hill Software Ltd
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Web site: www.houseonthehill.com
Price: £500 ex VAT per concurrent connection