

# Realizing the Business Value of Tific Support Automation

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## Introduction

Utilizing second-generation Support Automation technologies, **Managed Service Providers** who are involved in desktop outsourcing contracts can reap significant business benefits that include: **lowering the overall cost** of desktop service support; **increasing customer satisfaction** metrics; **improving profit margins**.

This white describes how Tific support automation delivers immediate business benefits to MSPs without the requirement for end-user adoption for self-service.



Reducing IT Support Cost Through Automation

## Deriving the Value of Support Automation for MSPs and Desktop Outsourcers

Utilizing second-generation Support Automation technologies, Managed Service Providers who are involved in desktop outsourcing contracts can reap significant business benefits that include:

1. Lowering the overall cost of desktop service support
2. Increasing customer satisfaction metrics
3. Improving profit margins

In today's highly competitive desktop outsourcing market, Support Automation can be leveraged to differentiate what often appears to be a commodity offering – improving competitive positioning and enabling high levels of market penetration.

### What is support automation?

According to Wikipedia, the definition of Support Automation is as follows:

**Support automation** - is the name given to software platforms designed for technical support and service organizations to address problems and to **achieve lower mean time to repair (MTTR) by automating problem prevention and resolution processes.**

*Support automation involves the building of a knowledge base of known issues and their resolutions to support incidents with delivery mechanisms. A **service automation** platform includes a suite of support solutions **including proactive support, assisted support and self-support.***

*With automated support, service organizations can deliver 24x7 availability to their customers by monitoring alarms, identifying problems at an early stage and resolving issues before they become problems.*

***Automated assisted support** enables remote access to sites that need instant problem solving. By automating the collection of information of devices and applications coexisting with the supported application, **problems can be quickly detected and fixed.***

*Automated self-support, automates the self-support process, freeing users from self-help diagnostics and troubleshooting from on-line libraries or knowledge bases.*

### How do MSPs derive value from support automation?

#### Call Deflection

Eliminating or deflecting calls (referred to as level 0 in the support supply chain) from the service desk is the ultimate goal. It offers the biggest payback, but it is the most difficult to accomplish. A successful self-service approach is dependent on end-user adoption and, of course, end-user adoption is dependent on a self-service capability that is fast and easy to use. First generation solutions, largely knowledge bases, failed to meet the ease-of-use requirements and as such end-user adoption was very low.

Second generation solutions have substantially improved the success rate of self-service, but MSPs and Outsourcers aren't ready to invest in self-service without substantial proof that end-user's will adopt in mass.

According to **Gartner** research, only 10% of service requests are resolved at Level 0 by end-users through support automation (self-help or self-service) technology. There are two primary reasons for the lack of adoption:

1. First-generation tools were too technically complex or too difficult for support staff to learn
2. Self-help interfaces did not offer assistance in the context of the problem at hand. Users searched through an excessive store of knowledge to find a possible cure to the problem and often failed to find the right information—finally giving up in frustration.

Gartner predicts that second-generation support automation solutions, like Tific, combined with better standardization and management of desktop configurations, will result in a much improved success rate for self-service. Gartner predicts that as much as 40% of service requests will be resolved at Level 0.

### Assisted Service (Phone)

Immediate payback can be achieved through support automation by taking advantage of Assisted Service where end-user adoption is not a requirement.

With assisted service, MSPs can:

1. Substantially reduce (from 15% to 30%) the call-handling time for the service desk analyst
2. Improve the success rate (from 10% to 25%) of first-call resolution, eliminating costly escalation to level 2 or higher
3. Increase customer satisfaction metrics (by 15% or higher)
4. Consider alternative lower cost support channels, like Chat

For service desk analysts, the Tific Support Analyst Console delivers intelligence about the incident at hand by providing detailed information about the end-users environment, including the hardware configuration, operating system version, recent updates, installed applications, recent downloads and more.

Having this information available eliminates discovery questions that often take up a significant portion of call-time (up to 50%), which only increases the frustration level to the end user.

More importantly this “incident intelligence” information allows the support analyst to start problem solving immediately, improving the success rate of first-call resolution thereby eliminating costly escalations.

### Assisted Service (Chat)

Moving the support channel from phone to chat offers significant business benefits by improving the efficiency for the service desk analyst by handling multiple incidents in parallel. It is difficult, if not impossible, to move to Chat to resolve problems in a desktop support environment without intelligence about the users system. You can certainly utilize chat for simple “how to” questions, but to diagnose and remediate a problem requires more insight. This is where remote control technologies can be applied, but these tools do not generally lower call handling time at level 1 and are often used once an incident has been escalated.

The use of the Tific Support Analyst Console enables a lower cost, chat support channel for problem diagnosis and remediation in the same way it lowers call handling time and improves first-call resolution over the phone channel.

Once assisted service is in place for phone support, the MSP can begin to explore chat as a more efficient, lower cost support channel.

### Automated Self-Healing

As mentioned earlier, deflecting calls from the service desk provides the largest payback for support automation technology. Second-generation self-healing technologies that require little-to-no end user adoption can deflect calls for common, reoccurring problems that result in substantial business benefits.

The Tific Support Automation suite provides a proactive approach to identifying and remediating a problem for the end-user through self-healing, or what sometimes is referred to as automated remediation.

The Tific Client actively monitors the end users configuration (hardware & software) to discover, diagnose and remediate common, reoccurring problems (i.e. network connectivity, printer access, etc.). Additionally, Tific can monitor the Windows device to ensure system settings are consistent with IT policy (i.e. firewall enabled, virus protection up-to-date, etc.). If remediation is necessary, Tific can automatically take the necessary corrective actions to remediate the problem with or without the end-users involvement.

Tific provides an easy-to-use graphical development tool (Tific Creator) that enables the IT operations community of subject matter experts (SME) to rapidly develop and deploy self-healing automation – eliminating the need for professional programmers. Tific delivers a suite of out-of-the-box automations and a toolbox of over 10,000 re-usable objects to quickly construct and rapidly deploy self-healing automation.

Unlike first generation tools that required expensive programmers with deep system-level subject matter expertise and offered no re-use, Tific empowers subject matter experts with an agile development tool that encourages re-use and supports the rapid deployment of automation.

Self-healing is best used to resolve common, reoccurring problems before they affect the end-user and result in call to the service desk. Call deflection rates depend on the environment and service desk analytics. It is not uncommon to see 15% and as high as 30% of calls deflected as a result of automated self-healing.

It is important to note that Tific records all self-healing incidents (as closed tickets) to the Remedy service desk to ensure service desk analytics accurately reflect the value of support automation to the MSP and customer.

### Self-Service

As mentioned earlier, the value of self-service is dependent on end user adoption. This is a case where success breeds more success and delivers exponential value. However, there are many factors that determine the degree and rate of end-user adoption.

Tific's application of predictive analytics plays a big role in providing foundation to build a successful self-service program. When a user is seeking self-help, Tific presents support content that is only relevant to their client-side environment (hardware, operating system, installed applications, etc.) and in the context of their specific problem. This greatly simplifies the amount of content the end-user has to deal with and narrows the scope (akin to how Google ranks content for search results).

Tific provides a self-help template based on the Tific Style Guide that delivers information to the end user in a form that is always consistent and designed to guide the end-user through the problem diagnosis and resolution process step-by-step.

A typical self-service scenario looks like this:

The Tific client takes proactive action by notifying the user that a problem exists. Tific will prompt the user to either have it fixed automatically (self-healing) or to manually address the problem through a step-by-step process (utilizing a Tific self-help wizard). Additionally, the end user can use

### **Typical automation use cases**

#### **Detect and address connectivity problems**

- Reset proxy settings
- Connect to network printer
- Identify and resolve device conflicts

#### **Monitor configuration data to for IT policy**

- Anti-virus software running and up to date
- Firewalls are correctly activated
- Trusted URLs are up to date

#### **Ensure initial installation, set-up, and activation**

- Prepare for new version of MS Office
- Install local or network printer
- Configure VPN access

#### **Perform maintenance/optimize performance**

- Perform routine file clean up
- Monitor disk capacity
- Monitor memory usage

#### **Detect and repair application issues**

- Applications will not launch or shut down
- Applications freeze or won't respond

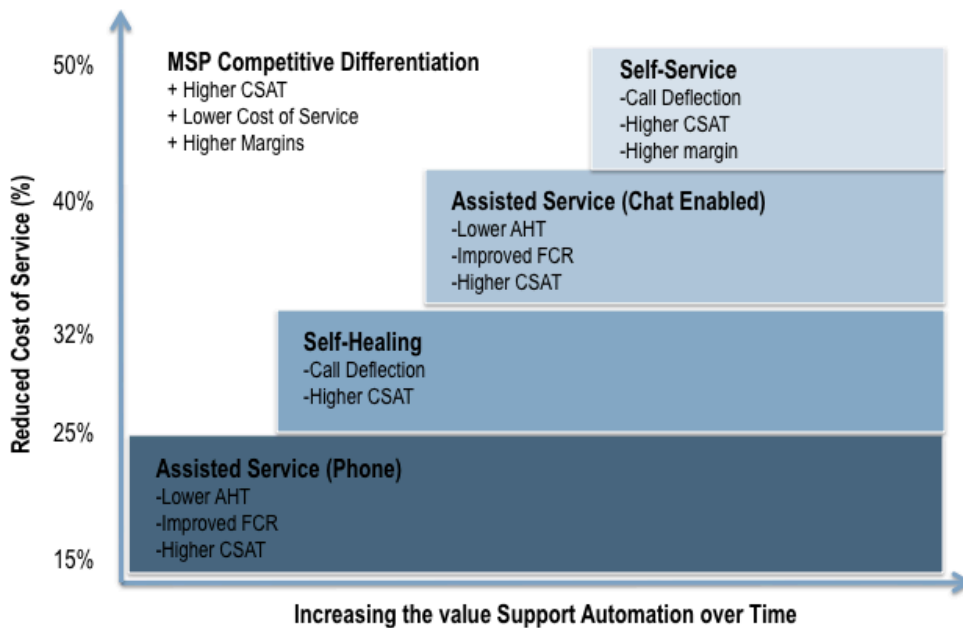
the Tific client to search for automations to assist with an immediate problem or a “how to” task (i.e. configure a new default printer, backup my computer, etc.). Tific continuously monitors the users’ behavior and system configuration to enable them to quickly locate relevant answers, shortening navigation time and frustration.

Reducing unnecessary information by ensuring that all information is relevant is the cornerstone to improving the success rate of self-service.

**Deriving Business Value from Support Automation – a Phased Approach**

MSPs and desktop outsourcers should approach deploying Tific Support Automation in phases.

Immediate results can be achieved by deploying phone-based assisted service integrated to reduce call-handling time, improve first call resolution rates and improve customer satisfaction metrics.



Deploying self-healing automation for common, recurring problems (based on service desk analytics) that touch the service desk can immediately reduce the number of calls and shorten queue length – freeing up service desk analysts to work more pressing issues.

Moving from a phone support channel to a chat support channel is enabled by Tific assisted service and will have a substantial impact on service desk efficiency and overall customer satisfaction. Adding a chat support channel is a natural evolution from phone-based assisted service. Blending phone support with chat offers significant business benefits.

Due to the uncertainty of end-user adoption, MSPs and desktop outsourcers, are cautious to make a commitment to invest in self-service. However, committing to the Tific support automation platform provides a foundation and vehicle to implement a successful self-service program that can lower service desk incident volume by as much as 40%.

**In Summary**

Reducing IT Support Cost Through Automation

Tific's second-generation support automation solution addresses problems along the support supply chain that existed in first-generation attempts. Tific's end-to-end approach excels in the following areas:

1. Shortens call duration for the service desk agent and improves problem resolution success rate by providing incident intelligence to the service desk analyst.
  2. Using predictive analytics, Tific deflects calls from the service desk by automatically detecting and resolving client-side computing problems even before they impact the end-user; that is to say, automated self-healing.
  3. Simplifies the development and maintenance of support content thereby lowering support engineering costs and shortening the delivery time for support automation.
  4. Enables successful end-user self-service through a unique information reduction feature that only presents information to the end-user in the context of the problem and the client configuration, which substantially increases the success rate of end users solving problems on their own.
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### **About Tific**

Tific is a leading provider of self-healing support automation solutions for large enterprise IT operations and IT outsourcers. Our solutions streamline the support supply chain for Global 2000 corporations, and our products represent the leading ideas in the invention, design, and development of second-generation support automation. Our breakthrough technology eliminates support calls and repetitive problems by providing best-of-breed self-healing solutions as well as ease-of-deployment and state-of-the-art migration capabilities that empower end users to succeed at resolving their own problems. For more information, visit <http://www.tific.com>.