Legacy Tools: Not Built for Today's Helpdesk

Why applications like RDP™, pcAnywhere™, VPNs and VNC™ may be costing you time, money and end-user satisfaction

LogMeIn®

Introduction

Today's modern enterprise seeks both efficiency and productivity – constantly looking for new and effective ways to boost employee workflow. This new enterprise includes branch employees, teleworkers, and on-the-go workforces that communicate using a variety of mobile devices. But hidden somewhere in many corporate helpdesk closets are tools being used for support that may impede the effectiveness of both remote employees and the technicians who use them.

Many businesses employ legacy tools that come bundled within a suite of applications even though these tools often can't effectively support helpdesk workers or mobile employees. In fact, they may in certain circumstances introduce more problems than they solve. The reason for this is legacy tools such as Microsoft Remote Desktop or pcAnywhere were not designed for the helpdesk, which must support the growing number of end users who work beyond the corporate firewall.

> "When businesses start adding up the true cost of legacy tools, they may find that their reluctance to optimize their service desks is potentially costing them thousands of dollars in lost productivity and missed sales."

This paper explores the challenges of supporting a remote workforce with legacy tools and the hidden costs of these tools. In addition, it identifies best practices that decision makers can use to choose enterprise helpdesk support tools that better meet the needs of remote employees, while helping to cut costs.

The New Enterprise Mobility

The enterprise of today is in a very different place than it was just a few years ago. Before the dawn of remote workforces, most employees typically worked from corporate offices. Now, there are a number of significant economic and competitive benefits to freeing workers from behind the corporate firewall and unleashing them to every corner of the planet.

This new enterprise mobility doesn't just affect a small portion of the workforce – it's going to include the majority of employees. In fact, by 2011 IDC predicts that 73 percent of the U.S. workforce will be mobile.[1] This remote workforce, armed with desktops, laptops and smartphones, has the potential to increase a company's productivity, decrease its expenses and satisfy worker needs in a variety of ways. But this mobile workforce will face increasing complexities as they acquire multiple devices and IT will face similar challenges supporting these devices.

A helpdesk that uses legacy tools may not be able to meet these complex needs. That's because legacy support tools were never created to be support tools in the first place. In fact, legacy tools such as RDP and VNC were built for remote access and control, with their focus being on systems administration rather than helpdesk functionality. These tools lack the flexibility of helpdesk solutions designed to solve user problems fast and accurately. This new, dynamic environment of the mobilized enterprise calls for relevant, robust support tools that allow fewer technicians to handle more incidents effectively.

Today's workforce is mobile and remote, yet IT must find a way to support these end users who need access to the corporate network from a variety of locations such as an airport hotspot or a customer's warehouse in China.

The Helpdesk Dilemma

Although mobile devices are a boon to the remote worker and promise increased productivity, they also increase the strain on the help desk. Most of the managers responding to a 2005 technology consortium BPM Forum survey reported being under pressure to support mobile and remote workers, and 41 percent reported business disruption as a result of call delays.

The chance of creating a bottleneck that disrupts the enterprise goes up when support technicians cannot see user problems or easily access the remote machine. For example, consider a sales rep who calls his helpdesk because he's unable to access the corporate website from his laptop. Since some legacy tools have difficulty connecting to off-LAN computers reliably, IT support may not be able to view the desktop as the user sees it. The helpdesk technician must ask questions to understand the nature of the problem and, assuming the end user is able to communicate these issues effectively, the technician then must walk the salesperson through a variety of steps to fix the problem. It's like the blind leading the blind, with both parties becoming increasingly frustrated.

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Consider the following legacy tool challenges:

- **To use most legacy tools through firewalls, the remote computer's firewall and the corporate firewall typically need to be configured to allow incoming traffic.** Such configurations are inherently risky, especially since many legacy tools don't secure Internet communications. This means any data transmitted during the connection could be intercepted. While a VPN could be used, it may not be possible based on the location of the user.

- **Whether inside or outside of the network, legacy tools are unequipped to remotely access and control smartphones.** According to the Aberdeen Group, the majority of today's enterprises lack formal programs for managing wireless mobility.[2] This means that troubleshooting on Windows Mobile®, Symbian OS™ or Blackberry® mobile devices is nearly impossible. Traditionally, the only options have been sending a device back for repair or providing onsite user training. Additionally, a helpdesk using legacy tools can't support mobile initiatives, such as the rollout of mobile CRM applications that capture detailed sales information.

- **Many legacy tools may fail to deliver the kind of diagnostics technicians need for fast, accurate problem resolution.** Also, these tools tend to lack scripting capabilities that facilitate automatic processes and file transfer abilities for installing patches and updates to mobile devices. And they lack the time-saving ability for one technician to handle multiple sessions simultaneously.
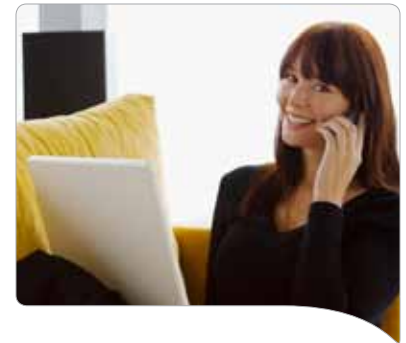
KING & SPALDING

Customer Success Story: **King & Spalding**

International law firm King & Spalding has an Atlanta helpdesk that supports 2,000 users with 2,400 devices. With 14 offices in cities throughout the world, the helpdesk needed the ability to solve any kind of technology problem for its 880 lawyers and staff. Legacy tools could not keep up with the needs of this top firm, which represents many Fortune 100 and Fortune 250 companies as well as hundreds of clients in emerging industries.

Before King & Spalding replaced its legacy tools with LogMeIn Rescue, users could only receive helpdesk support by connecting to the internal network via VPN. With Rescue, users no longer needed to be on the internal network. Rescue solved firewall issues, allowing remote access to secure systems. The firm reported that Rescue was fast, easy to use, and facilitated training with advanced screen-sharing capabilities. Rescue also satisfied the firm's security requirements.

- **Auditing capabilities are non-existent in legacy tools, which means IT managers remain in the dark about helpdesk performance and potential breaches in protocol.** They can't track call lengths or create surveys to gauge end-user satisfaction.

In the past, IT could get by with using legacy tools, when employee access was strictly from within the firewall. But today, they need to support the growing majority of employees who work outside the traditional network. This need to provide support outside of the traditional corporate network has created for the enterprise helpdesk a dilemma that will likely get more complicated as more employees go mobile and remote.

[2] "The Real Cost of Enterprise Wireless Mobility," Aberdeen Group, Jan. 2007, p.3.

4

The Hidden Costs of Legacy Support Tools

At first glance, a legacy tool may appear to meet the basic needs of the enterprise helpdesk, while costing little or nothing to obtain. If this were true, it would be welcome news for corporations in a business climate where IT budgets are staying the same or decreasing while demands for IT support are increasing.[3] However, an examination of several factors show what legacy helpdesk tools can really cost the enterprise.

According to a study by BPM Forum, enterprise business managers as a whole aren't giving good grades to their IT support helpdesks.[4] Ninety-two percent of the study's managers linked the performance of remote workers directly to the quality of IT support. And the quality of IT support is a function of the tools technicians employ to support the enterprise.

But how are legacy tools costing the enterprise money? Supporting mobile employees can be a time-consuming endeavor in the best of circumstances. And reducing helpdesk call length is the ongoing challenge of many support teams. However, slow or unreliable connections like those often found with legacy tools can double or triple the length of a support session and increase the number of support personnel needed to handle the workload. This alone should send up a red flag. But this is just the beginning. Some other potential hidden costs of legacy tools include:

- When an employee is unable to have his smartphone or laptop repaired remotely, he often needs to ship the device to the helpdesk for an on-site fix. The employee experiences downtime at the same time that the helpdesk must deal with equipment returns.

- According to Gartner Group, helpdesk best practices dictate that up to 75 percent of IT service requests should be resolved on the first call at an average cost of $20 per call.[5] Whether or not a company accomplishes this goal could well rest on efficient helpdesk tools that can interact with mobile devices beyond the corporate firewall and give technicians the visibility to make highly technical fixes for the end user.

- When technicians lack the diagnostic tools to quickly correct problems, it can affect user productivity. For example, if technicians can't collaborate with the user to resolve complicated issues or fix problems on multiple machines at once, then employee queues will get longer. And if employees are waiting in call queues rather than working, the enterprise can lose money.

- Mobile device users without remote support lose an average of 75 minutes of productivity each time a device fails, according to a VDC Research group report. This translates to as much as $4,000 in lost revenue per employee per year.[6]

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[3] Service and Support Metrics Survey, SupportIndustry.com, 2006.
[4] "The Remote Revolution, Uptime Issues, Implications and Imperatives in the Mobile Workforce," Business Process Management (BPM) Forum, 2005.
[5] Tech & Trends, Feb. 17, 2006 , Vol.28, Issue 7, p. 28 in print issue. http://www.processor.com
[6] "Total Cost of Ownership—TCO Models for Mobile Computing and Communications Platforms," VDC Research Group, Mobile and Wireless Practice, July 2007, p. 2.

- Legacy tools lack reporting capabilities, which can slow a company's ability to make cost-effective decisions. With legacy tools, IT managers can't consult stored chat logs, watch videos of support sessions, or compile end-user feedback.

- If remote workers are intended to be drivers of enterprise success, then empowering technicians with enterprise helpdesk tools is one way to support them. When you add in the potential to save employee downtime and lost productivity, enterprise-grade tools can be a pretty good investment.

Customer Success Story: **Arise Virtual Solutions, Inc.**

Arise answers customer calls, email and web assistance requests for many of the best-known, customer-driven brands among Fortune 500 companies. But instead of staffing call centers, Arise works with a network of 5,000+ self-employed home-based agents. The service desk that provides support for these widespread home-based agents fields between 400 and 500 support requests per day.

Before discovering LogMeIn Rescue, the helpdesk relied primarily on phone support and a limited remote control tool. By moving from a legacy tool to LogMeIn Rescue, Arise now cites that they are able to handle nearly 80 percent of their support requests without having to provide time-consuming and costly phone support. Their internal research indicates that they increased their first-call resolution rate by 23 percent (resulting in overall lower cost per incident), and decreased repeat calls by 33 percent.

Best Practices for Choosing an Enterprise Helpdesk Solution

Now that the modern enterprise has gone beyond headquarters and the office walls, the decision to improve helpdesk support for remote workers shouldn't be far behind. The voices of under-supported workers and helpdesk technicians lacking the right tools to do their jobs effectively will eventually make themselves heard. To support enterprise decision makers in choosing a helpdesk solution that's right for their increasingly mobile workforce, here are a few best practices:

1. Identify cost-saving goals. Once a company understands the potential hidden costs of legacy tools, the process of identifying goals for cost savings becomes easier. Companies looking for enterprise support solutions should investigate those that offer the following benefits:

- Remote troubleshooting of mobile devices
- Reduced desk-side visits
- Fewer equipment returns
- Increased technician productivity
- End-user satisfaction

2. Listen to employees. Taking employee complaints seriously just might be the most important decision enterprise leaders can follow. When helpdesk technicians and the employees they serve aren't happy, a company can be pretty sure it's time to consider a helpdesk upgrade.

Morale can sink at the helpdesk when technicians must confront displeased co-workers who feel a lack of prompt, effective technical support is hampering their job effectiveness. It can dive further still if resolution rates sink or wait times increase. The morale of the remote worker is equally at stake when s/he misses a business opportunity because s/he can't get resolution on a technical issue.

In a recent survey of over 100 LogMeIn Rescue customers conducted by LogMeIn, 80 percent of respondents who had used legacy tools said their primary business reason for migrating from a legacy tool to Rescue was to improve end-user satisfaction. If excellence in IT support was defined from the perspective of employees, perhaps this would improve worker productivity and cost savings as well.

3. Look for best-in-class features. In the same survey, 83 percent of respondents chose LogMeIn Rescue for its ability to connect to computers beyond the corporate firewall. Once a business defines what its support tool needs to accomplish, it's ready to look for a helpdesk tool that can achieve those goals. Some of those features include:

Incident resolution
- Real-time remote control of a user's computer from anywhere in the world
- Cross-platform support for PCs, Macs and mobile devices
- Simultaneous technician collaboration to resolve a single issue
- Multiple session handling by one technician
- Simple browser-based chat without the need to download an applet
- Predefined replies for common support requests

Management capabilities
- Permissions assigned at the granular level
- Technician groups assigned to predefined support channels
- Feedback on system performance
- Monitoring of service desk sessions

Security
- End-to-end 256-bit SSL encryption
- Permission-based access

Fast connections
- Web-based anytime, anywhere access without pre-installing software
- Multiple ways to connect end users to technicians – via PIN code, email, calling card or instant chat

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By gathering feedback from employees and identifying specific cost-saving goals, organizations can begin their search for a helpdesk upgrade that will meet the needs of mobile workers. Applying best practices can help decision makers choose a solution that significantly improves efficiency, eliminates hidden costs associated with legacy support and provides enterprise-class tools required for today's remote worker.

Conclusion

Many companies still cling to legacy tools even though they don't effectively meet the needs of helpdesk technicians or remote employees. In fact, these tools may in certain circumstances actually impact the bottom line in both lost revenue and employee productivity.

When businesses start adding up the hidden costs of their legacy tools combined with plummeting employee morale, they're ready for a helpdesk upgrade. And these companies aren't alone. According to the Gartner Group, the market for Internet-enabled remote-control tools will experience a growth rate of 20 to 25 percent to become a $450 million market by 2012, more than doubling 2008 figures.

Today's sophisticated mobile devices allow workers to conduct business anywhere in the world. This level of freedom requires advanced support tools designed to handle today's varied business environments. These new tools take the helpdesk out of crisis and put it squarely in the middle of supporting employee efficiency and productivity.

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LogMeIn
➕ Rescue

LogMeIn Rescue is a secure, web-based helpdesk and remote support solution that gives support professionals the ability to connect to a remote computer or smartphone without pre-installed software. LogMeIn Rescue works on Windows-based PCs and Macs, as well as mobile devices running Windows Mobile®, Symbian OS™ and BlackBerry®. LogMeIn Rescue allows support organizations at companies such as 3M, SAP and IBM to cost-effectively deliver high-touch support, training and educational services to customers, partners and employees. **To find out more or to try LogMeIn Rescue free for 14 days visit www.LogMeInRescue.com**