

# Seven Considerations for Selecting an EHR Service Desk Provider

Learn the top trends and concerns for choosing the right service desk provider.

The success of an outsourced service desk initiative really comes down to one thing: the satisfaction of your clinician users. As you seek a provider, keep that in mind. Any cost savings or operational efficiencies you generate can quickly be negated if your EHR users can't get its technology issues resolved quickly and painlessly.

It's also important to keep in mind the distinction between a service desk and a help desk. Help desks aid end users in fixing common technology problems. Service desks aid organizations in ensuring their users can use technology in pursuit of business goals with maximum effectiveness, including set processes and best practices. Commonly, help desks are seen as a component of a larger service desk solution.

## What do you need to consider when selecting an EHR service desk provider?

### 1. Location, language and culture

As you seek the right service desk provider for your organization, it's important to keep in mind the location, language and culture of their workforce—and more importantly, how it aligns with your organization. Providing service desk to a hospital can be very different than for manufacturing or finance. We understand healthcare.

“Outsourcing can present unique communications problems that not only encompass language, but also culture,” says Mary Shacklett of TechRepublic. “In some cases, onshore managers tasked with managing an offshore outsource firm relationship should receive special training in 1cultural sensitivities, and CIOs should plan for this.”

The best providers for your needs will have a team that can easily communicate and work with your organization. Be sure to ask the right questions of them to fully understand the kind of people they are employing, from language fluency to background and expertise—which may mean sticking with a partner who has an onshore workforce.

### 2. Dedicated versus shared resources

Many service desk providers spread their employees' workloads over multiple customers—meaning that your team also works for other organizations. A shared resource model can be efficient, but may not meet the requirements of all customers. For those who require it, many providers offer dedicated service desk solutions, with resources dedicated to the individual customer.

Both approaches have benefits. A solution that offers a hybrid model of dedicated resources during critical hours and shared resources outside of critical hours provides the best of both. Look for a provider that can help you assess your needs, determine the right approach for you and provide best-in-class support regardless of whether they're dedicated or shared, on-site or off.

### 3. Quality and expertise

One of the most crucial components of service desk success is an expert, experienced team to carry out actual day-to-day operations. Without a best-in-class team, your results will suffer, and that trickles down across the entire organization. You should ensure that your EHR Service Desk team has EHR certifications and training.

Unlike a call center taking orders or messages, a technical service desk is supposed to be just that—technical. The people hired by a service desk as their first-level responders need to have a strong technical support background. The more qualified the service desk's first-level responders, the more likely incidents are to be solved at level one rather than escalated.

To ensure that you select a provider that can deliver an expert service desk team, ask questions about their experience, expertise and track record: How fast can they resolve incidents? What tools do they use? How heavily do they utilize scripts? What is their turnover rate?



## DEBUNKING 4 COMMON SERVICE DESK MYTHS

**Low quality of service:** The fear is that many providers don't have a vested interest in preserving the company's image or culture. The solution: Engage with a service desk provider that creates a branded experience that is transparent to the end user. Choose a provider that delivers support on a dedicated phone line, answers with the client company's call script and incorporates the client's corporate messaging.

**Cost savings won't materialize:** Even in sizeable organizations, it's typical to see a service desk staffed by a small number of full-time employees, which gives employers the impression that partnering couldn't improve their costs. But many companies don't have the bandwidth to offer the 24 x 7 x 365 support end users want today. Doing so would require the organization to hire many more full-time people, whereas with a service desk, its resources are its people and they can be leveraged across accounts, particularly when call volumes are lower.

**Service levels won't be met:** This is a valid concern, but only if the service level agreements (SLAs) don't specify the metrics by which the provider will be measured. Choose an organization that records every call so it can be referenced and reviewed in the event a complaint is lodged. Make sure the service desk team performs regular quality checks and that SLAs define exactly what is expected—average answer speed, rate of dropped/abandoned calls, how many incidents are to be resolved.

**Current in-house team is enough:** Your in-house service desk may be efficient and effective. But if they don't have a 24 x 7 x 365 offering, an outsourced solution can extend what they are already doing well by offering after-hours service. In today's 24-hour, instant results society, around-the-clock access to IT support is no longer a luxury, but an expectation.

## 4. Call resolution performance

No one likes to make multiple calls to get a technology issue resolved, least of all when they're relying on technology to do their job. Thus, the amount of calls it takes to solve end user problems is a great metric for assessing the quality of an EHR service desk provider. The gold standard is first-call resolution—meaning the user only has to pick up the phone once to get back to business as usual. Look for providers who can provide real-world examples of how their solution meets this standard.

## 5. Central metrics and reporting

Effective service desks must have detailed tracking and reporting capabilities. With these metrics, the service desk can identify patterns and help you become proactive in addressing recurring issues, instituting user trainings or inserting knowledge-based directives into a self-service portal. As you look for an EHR service desk provider, be sure to inquire about the metrics and reporting capabilities they can deliver—and how those capabilities align with your business needs.

## 6. Flexible service hours

Most service desks today operate on a 24/7 schedule. But what if you need to outsource service desk capabilities only at night, on weekends or during some other custom set of hours? It's important to look for a provider whose service hours match your unique business requirements.

## 7. Single point of contact

Leading providers offer a single point of contact for all service desk questions. Even if the calls are not tech related, a single point of contact centralizes a client's inbound service calls to one source, and then escalates non-IT calls to outside vendors or appropriate departments. These simplified contact methods are important to look out for because they lead to smoother processes and a better experience for your employees.

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