Babington College's IT helpdesk improves service levels with help from

SITEHELPDESK.COM

key facts

→ Time taken to resolve an IT issue is reduced by at least 25 per cent

→ IT department can provide evidence to senior management to maintain service levels

→ Reporting function makes it easier to monitor staff productivity and efficiency

→ Workload is spread evenly across the department by the centralised IT helpdesk

→ Asset management and software licensing is kept up to date

Teaching reliance on IT

Babington Community Technology College is a school for 11 to 16 year olds and also offers daytime and evening adult learning courses. It provides learning for approximately 1000 students with 200 teaching staff.
The IT department is responsible for ensuring that all equipment, whether it is hardware such as computers, interactive whiteboards and printers or software such as the skills information management systems, are all operating efficiently. The department has a total of four technicians as well as a computer services manager, Arthur Jackson who responds to IT issues from teaching staff and students.

The lessons learned from home grown systems

The department recently reviewed the time it takes to respond to IT issues as the previous method of responding to calls was becoming inefficient and unreliable. Jackson explains,
"I went through a process of reviewing the way the IT department operates around two years ago and this involved looking into how we log and respond to calls from staff. We had been relying on a system that we had developed ourselves using an electronic calendar to log each call; however the team was finding it increasingly difficult to share the workload. There was no efficient way of recording notes each time an issue had been fixed, so it was difficult to pick up a task that another technician had been working on. This made it a nightmare when staff went off sick.
"We then tried using subfolders for each technician and writing notes on each job but we still encountered problems as some tasks were mistakenly ignored and left in folders. IT problems often repeat themselves so if we had a new technician join the department, there was no way of them searching back to find the solution quickly so the issue would take longer than necessary to deal with; this was not an effective use of staff time."

Improvements in support efficiency

In October 2008, the department implemented Sitehelpdesk-IT, a web based IT support software which was recommended by Havant College, as it met all of its requirements and at a fraction of the cost of competing systems.
Since implementing Sitehelpdesk-IT, the department is finding the process of logging calls far more efficient as it stores all emails sent in by an end user so the system knows what time the call came in and who logged it. It is also easier to view what other technicians have been working on and at what stage of the process they are up to so they can take on additional work if they have the capacity, helping to make the department operate more efficiently. Jackson estimates that the time it takes for technicians to respond to IT issues has been reduced by around 25 per cent.
Technicians are now able to prioritise tasks so that their time is used more carefully on issues that may take longer to resolve. Another unexpected benefit of Sitehelpdesk-IT is that end users are also kept updated on the progress of their IT issue and are informed when the task is completed. This is another way of improving the overall service that the IT department can offer to staff at the college.

Satisfied Senior Management

An important aspect of Sitehelpdesk-IT for Jackson is the ability to report back to senior management about workflow levels and how the department is operating as a whole. Jackson explains, "Implementing Sitehelpdesk-IT has allowed the department to build up a knowledge base of past and current IT issues; who is responsible for fixing them, how long it takes the technician to respond and what the outcome is. I can then report this information back to senior management which was never possible before. This reporting function gives me sufficient evidence to maintain a level of service; so if management plan to cut staff I can prove how much less work the department will be able to sustain."

Library records for software and hardware

Another requirement of the college was being able to keep up to date with what software licenses and hardware it owned and being able to access detailed information about this. The college purchased WMImonitor, an add-on auditing tool from Sitehelpdesk.com. "I wanted to keep a software library without the need for multiple databases on the server", explains Jackson, "it was important to keep it all in one place so that we can easily track equipment and software. We previously used spreadsheets which constantly became corrupted and lost information easily and there were also numerous user errors where older copies of the spreadsheet were updated instead of the most current.

"WMImonitor is an uncomplicated tool that pulls information automatically, allowing myself and the technicians to see which software licences are owned by the college, which systems they are operating on and even allows us to see whether all hardware and software is working as it should."

Having implemented Sitehelpdesk-IT and WMImonitor into the IT department and built up a knowledge base, the next step is for all teaching staff at Babington College to receive training to log calls directly into Sitehelpdesk-IT via the web. Jackson plans to initiate this training after Christmas. He concludes:

66 Sitehelpdesk-IT and WMImonitor is the most cost effective system as it costs less than a software licensing package alone and it has a number of clever applications which has helped us to improve the way we operate as a department. We have been so impressed with the way that Sitehelpdesk-IT has been working and it is exactly what we needed. 99