



# Metric of the Month: Tickets per User per Month

By Jeff Rumburg

Every month, in the Industry Insider, I highlight one key performance indicator (KPI) for the service desk or desktop support. I define the KPI, provide recent benchmarking data for the metric, and discuss key correlations and cause/effect relationships for the metric. The purpose of the column is to familiarize you with the KPIs that really matter to your support organization, and to provide actionable insight on how to leverage these KPIs to improve your performance.

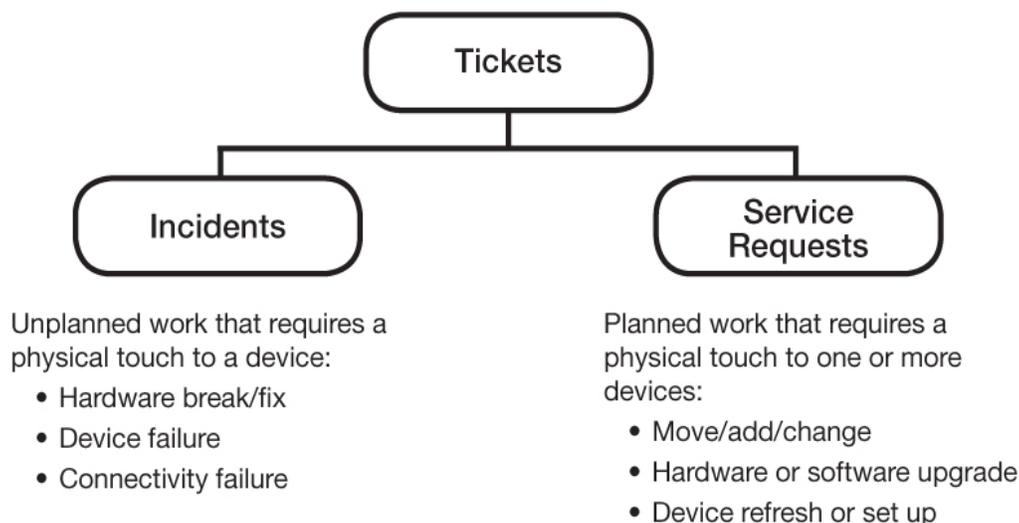
## Tickets per User per Month

Tickets per user per month is both a service desk and a desktop support metric. There are, however, important differences in the key drivers of these two metrics. So, in this month's article, we will focus on *desktop support* tickets per user per month.

As the name suggests, tickets per user per month is simply the total number of monthly tickets logged by desktop support divided by the number of users supported by desktop support.

For purposes of this discussion it is important to remember that desktop support tickets comprise both incidents and service requests. An **incident** is typically unplanned work that requires the assistance of an on-site technician to resolve. Common examples include a desktop or laptop computer break/fix, a printer or server failure, connectivity problems, or any other issue that cannot be resolved remotely by the level 1 service desk. By contrast, most **service requests** represent planned work. Among the most common service requests are moves/adds/changes, hardware refresh/replacement, and device upgrades. **Tickets** represent the sum of all incidents and service requests, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Tickets, Incidents, and Service Requests



$$\text{Incident Volume} + \text{Service Request Volume} = \text{Ticket Volume}$$

### Why It's Important

Tickets are the primary unit of work in desktop support. As such, ticket volume drives the headcount of technicians needed by an organization. A common misperception in desktop support is that user population alone defines the number of technicians needed. This approach wrongly assumes that the ratio of desktop support technicians to the number of users is fixed (for example, 12.5 desktop support technicians are needed for every 1,000 users). The error in this approach is that no two user populations have the same needs, and therefore no two user populations generate the same workload. As such, staffing decisions in desktop support should be based upon *workload*, not user population. With this in mind, it is easy to see why two organizations with exactly the same headcount may require very different staffing levels in desktop support.

## Benchmarking Data for Tickets per User per Month

The number of tickets generated by an organization is driven by a number of factors, including the average age of the devices supported, the mix of laptop and desktop computers, the number of remote users, the number of mobile devices, the refresh rate of devices, the standardization (or lack thereof) of the IT environment, and the degree of virtualization.

Figures 2–4 below show just how dramatically the incident and service request volume can vary from company to company, and from industry to industry. Average monthly ticket volumes range from a low of just 0.41 tickets per seat per month in healthcare to a high of 0.99 tickets per seat per month in financial services.

**Figure 2: Monthly Ticket Volume by Industry**

	Statistic	Financial Services	High Tech	Equipment Manufacturing	Telecommunications	Business Services	Healthcare	Energy Utilities
Incidents per seat per month	Avg	0.67	0.56	0.39	0.43	0.72	0.30	0.36
	Min	0.19	0.14	0.11	0.12	0.22	0.12	0.07
	Max	1.95	1.82	1.24	1.56	2.07	0.65	1.01
Service requests per seat per month	Avg	0.32	0.42	0.22	0.31	0.42	0.11	0.20
	Min	0.10	0.29	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.05	0.10
	Max	1.20	1.41	0.62	0.94	1.44	0.36	0.59
Total tickets per seat per month	Avg	0.99	0.98	0.61	0.74	1.14	0.41	0.56
	Min	0.29	0.43	0.25	0.25	0.36	0.17	0.17
	Max	3.15	3.23	1.86	2.50	3.51	1.01	1.60

Since ticket volume drives technician headcount, one would also expect to see a wide variation in headcount requirements from company to company, and from industry to industry. Figures 5 and 6 below show that the average desktop technician headcount ranges from a low of just 5.4 technicians per 1,000 seats in healthcare to a high of 28.4 technicians per 1,000 seats in a high-tech company.

Figure 3: Monthly Incident Volume by Industry

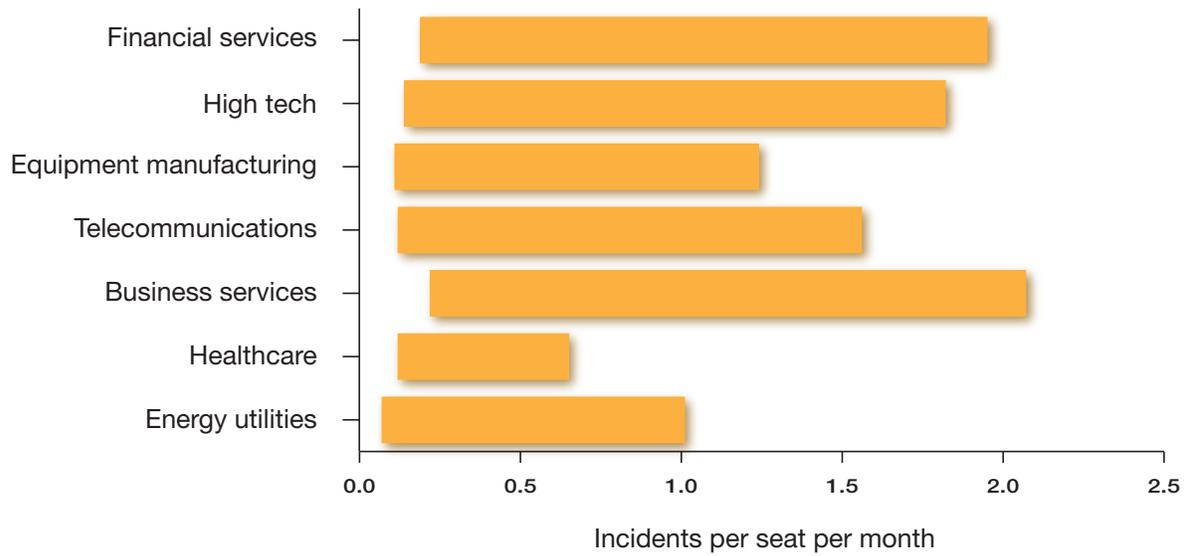


Figure 4: Monthly Service Request Volume by Industry

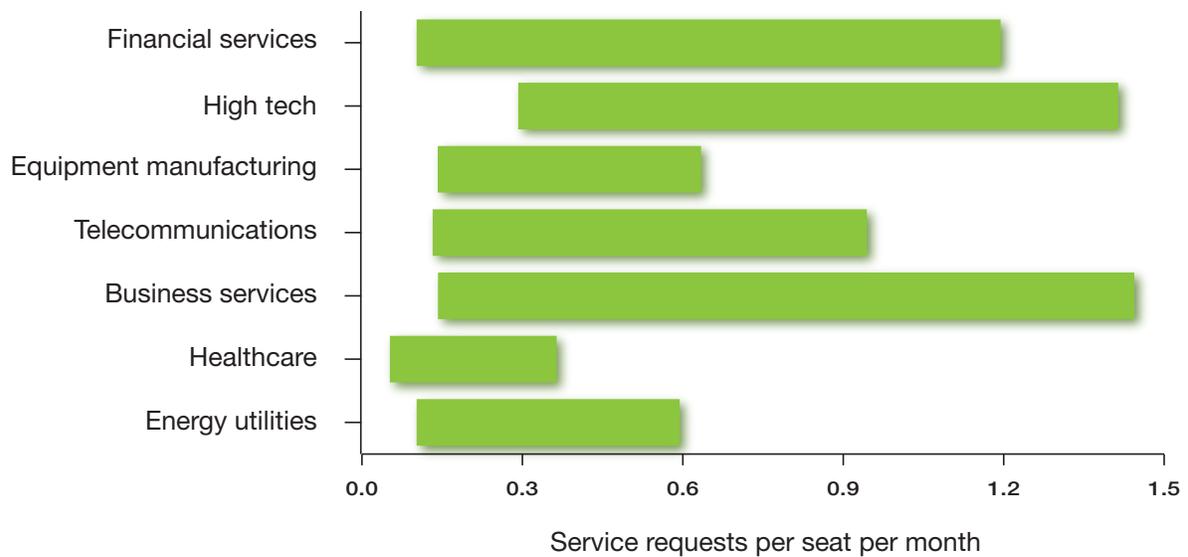
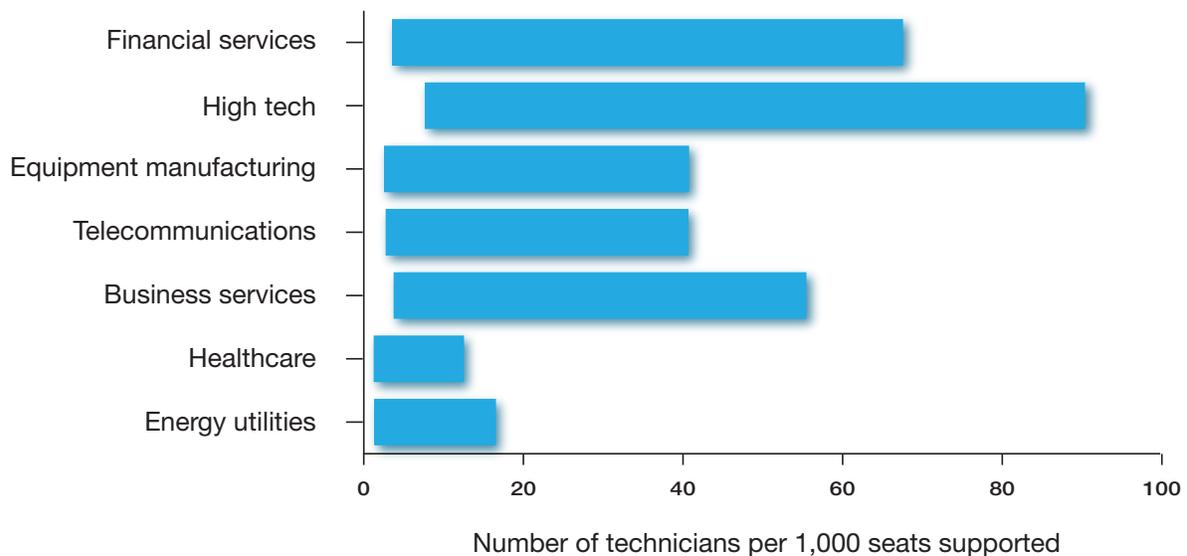


Figure 5: Desktop Support Technician Headcount Ranges by Industry

	Statistic	Financial Services	High Tech	Equipment Manufacturing	Telecommunications	Business Services	Healthcare	Energy Utilities
Desktop technicians per 1,000 seats supported	Avg	21.9	28.4	12.7	15.5	27.0	5.4	7.7
	Min	3.4	7.5	2.4	2.6	3.6	1.1	1.2
	Max	67.3	90.1	40.5	40.4	55.2	12.3	16.3

Figure 6: Desktop Support Technician Headcount Ranges by Industry



Please join us for next month's Metric of the Month, **call abandonment rate**, a widely tracked service level metric that has important implications for cost.

*Jeff Rumburg is a managing partner and cofounder of MetricNet, LLC, the leading source of service desk and desktop support benchmarks for IT service professionals worldwide.*