Support - Organisational Guidelines

MSP’s or Managed Solution Providers need to operate both effectively and profitably and so require a series of structured planned business processes to be in place. The presence of well-constructed organizational guidelines is a key component of these business processes. Accurate and reliable support information from vendors is also very important in this process.

Organisational Guidelines for providing technical support should consider the following:

1. Recording of basic information – Does support information need to be recorded in the helpdesk system?
2. Decide if the issue being reported is under support – does your company provide support for a limited range of products or issues?
3. Known support issue – can the issue be resolved with existing helpdesk or other support information?
4. Research the support issue – Is accurate and reliable online information available?
5. Response times for providing support – two hours or four hours?
6. Communications protocols – emails must be provided?
7. Required level of support not available – escalate to senior technician or supplier?
8. Feedback and reporting – Is customer feedback on support being evaluated?

Sources of information.

Vendor-based information – these are user manuals and problem-solving guidelines provided by the software or hardware vendor. They are often found on the vendor’s website, or on CDs provided with the product. For example, Cisco’s website contains installation, configuration, troubleshooting and maintenance guides for all of its recent products.

Knowledge bases –a knowledge base is a customised information library designed to make information such as FAQs, guides and manuals available in one place. They are often designed to be updated by users, so that the information remains current. In the context of tech support, knowledge bases can be used to provide guidance for support staff in resolving IT problems or made directly available to the client as a self-support measure.

IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) - a set of guidelines for organising IT Service Management (ITSM) organisations. ITIL is organised into five key stages & 26 processes, plus the staff roles required to carry them out. The stages are service strategy, service design, service transition, service operation, and continual service improvement.