

# IT Key Metrics Data 2023: End-User Services Measures — IT Service Desk Analysis

Published 8 December 2022 - ID G00779738 - 10 min read

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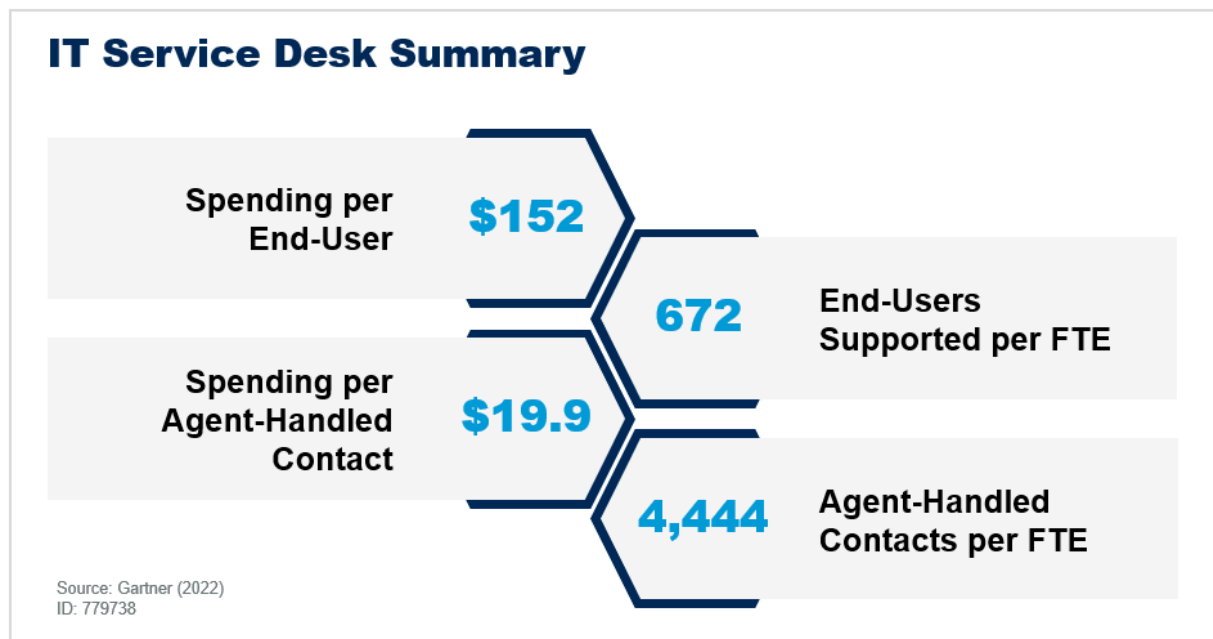
Initiatives: [Technology Finance, Risk and Value Management](#); [I&O Operations Management](#); [I&O Organizational Strategy](#)

The modernization of the digital workplace will bring along new spending requirements, and IT cost optimization will become increasingly important. IT leaders must quantify and communicate the benefits of collaboration, innovation and transformation being promised, as well as the steps they take to keep unnecessary spending in check. This research contains high-level IT Service Desk cost efficiency and staff productivity benchmarks which should be used as part of a perennial cost and value optimization program. The published information includes data collected throughout 2022 from a global audience of CIOs and IT leaders.

## Overview

The aim of this report is to help IT organizations assess their IT Service Desk spending and staff efficiency at high level, as well as the suitability of the spending for their respective user base. These KPIs can be found in the summary figure below as well as throughout the report in more detail and context.

Figure 1: IT Service Desk Summary



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## Key Findings

- Total cost per contact is always lower than Agent-handled cost per contact as the former includes automated contacts. The percentage of contacts using automation has been flat, so we haven't seen the benefits of automation drive total cost per contact down at a faster rate.
- Anecdotally we see that smaller organizations have more difficulty in implementing automation and the managed service providers have the most opportunities through their scale.
- Transaction times for voice and chat contacts have been rising and First Contact Resolution rates have been falling over the past several years. This may indicate that service desks are handling more difficult types of contacts.
- As IT Service Desks mature, the level of self-service is expected to increase and agents to handle more complex contacts leading to lower productivity and increased transaction times.

## Recommendations

- Evaluate your organization by leveraging the available published content or receive a report tailored to your organization by completing the [End-User Services & Enterprise Application Portfolio Budget & Efficiency Tool](#).
- Refer to the available supporting documentation such as the [IT Service Desk Framework Definitions](#) to better understand the consensus model and the methodology behind the metrics.
- Follow the [Practitioners Guide](#) to best prepare your data for comparison.
- Schedule an [inquiry](#) with a Gartner Expert to address alignment questions or to review your results and gain valuable insight based on your submission.

## Analysis

Clients improve business performance by benchmarking their spending, staff and best practices against Gartner's IT performance repository, the largest in the industry, drawing on over 5,000 IT benchmarks a year.

The produced metrics aim to help CIOs and IT Leaders evaluate the full life cycle management of all relevant IT Service Desk assets, both tangible and otherwise. By doing so, they will be better prepared to answer broader strategic questions such as whether it makes financial sense to outsource or invest in automation.

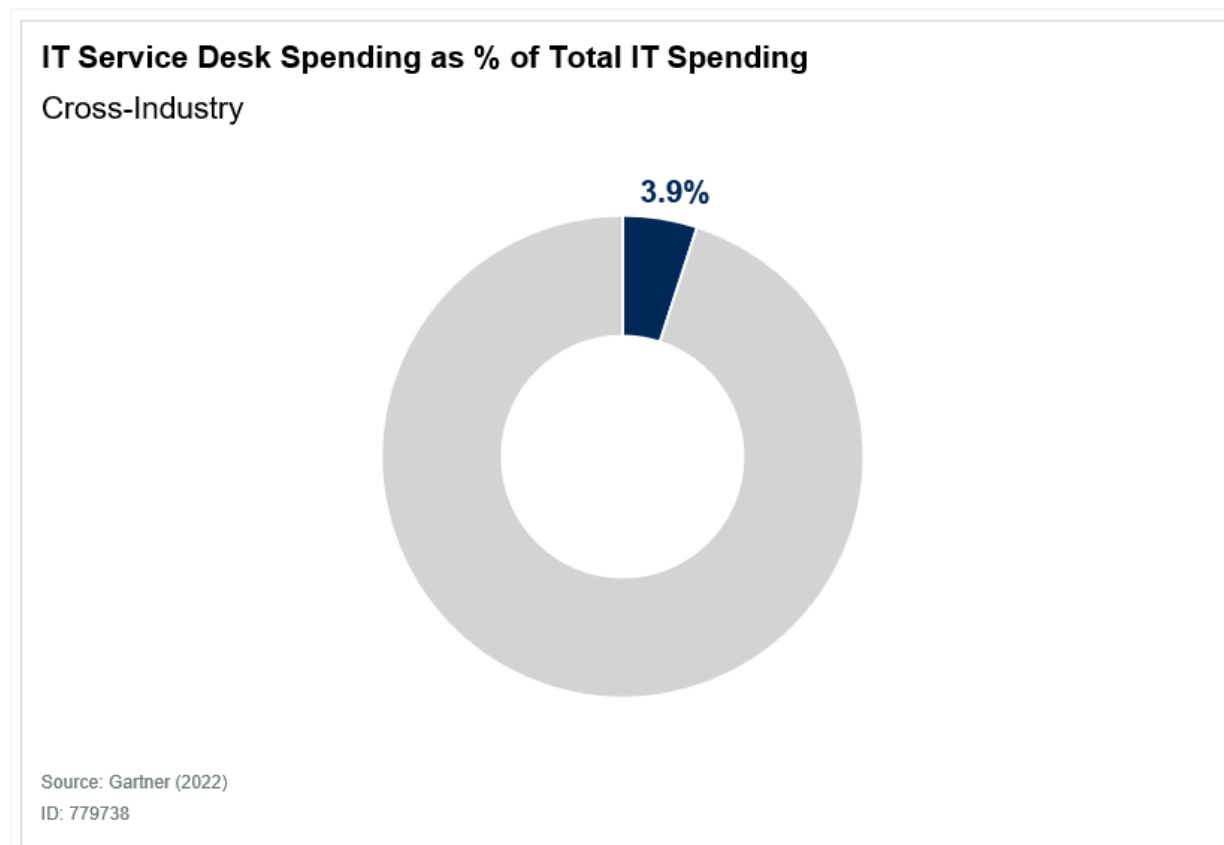
This report follows a top-down approach to the way the metrics are presented by starting with the overall spending and staff metrics followed by unit cost and productivity. We then strive to understand what is the effect of each asset to these high-level metrics by examining separately Personnel, Hardware, Software and External Services. The benefit of this method is that it reveals which elements of spending draw the most funds and identifies the key cost drivers for more actionable recommendations.

The metrics explored are database medians and do not account for individual variations of service quality, complexity or demand which may be justified by specific business needs.

## IT Service Desk Spending as a Percent of Total IT Spending

This is the key efficiency metric that helps understand the relative level of IT spending to support the environment from a total IT portfolio perspective. This metric should be considered within the context of the overall technology & service strategy. Building a robust service desk capability can help an organization save money, as using a centralized contact center is more efficient than sending technicians to the desktop to resolve incidents. Organizations may trade-off a higher IT Service Desk spending for lower Digital Workplace Services spending.

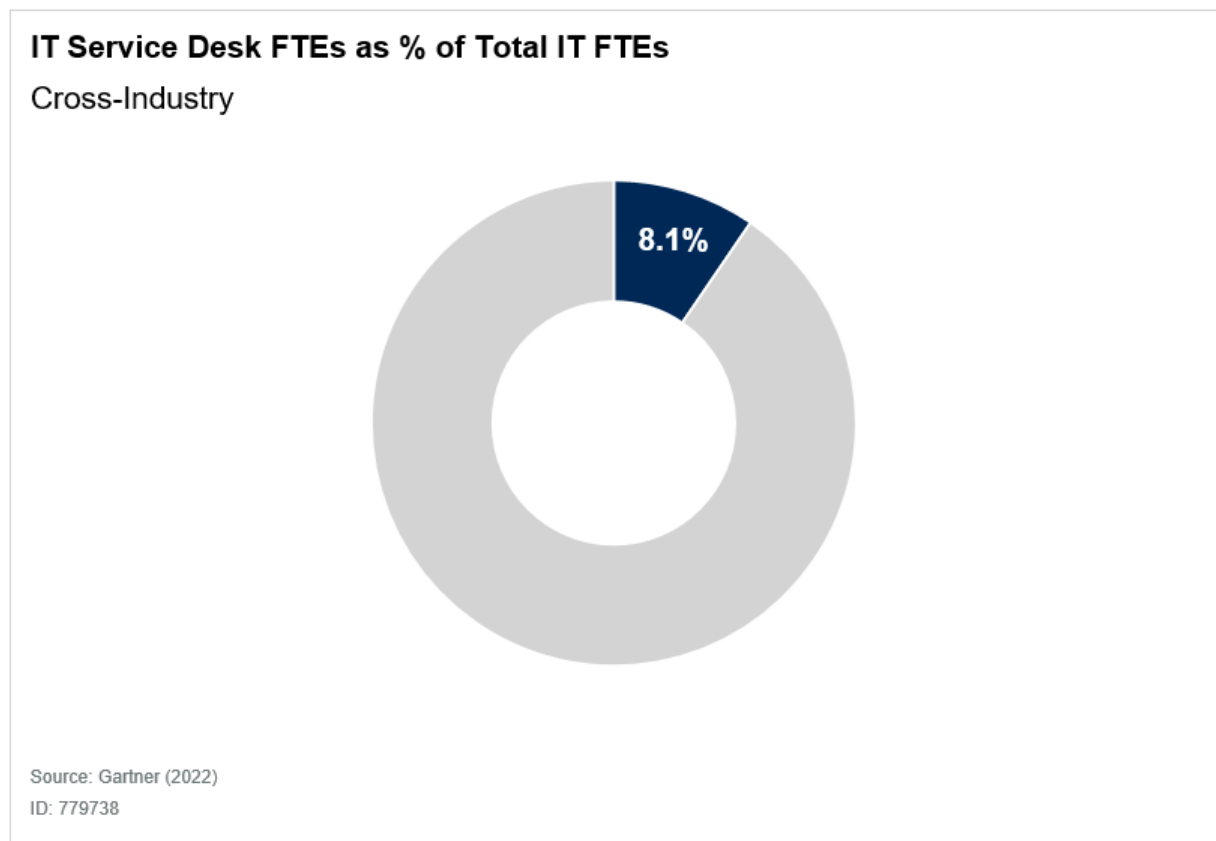
**Figure 2: IT Service Desk Spending as a Percent of Total IT Spending**



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### IT Service Desk FTEs as a Percent of Total IT FTEs

This is the core staff metric and serves as a measure of IT support intensity from a human capital perspective. It can assist in identifying whether staff size is appropriate and should be considered within the context of the overall sourcing strategy and future state objectives. Variables to consider in tandem with this metric include: IT staffing distribution: contractors versus insourced FTE, the percentage of the environment outsourced (supported by a third party), as well as the evolving business requirements.

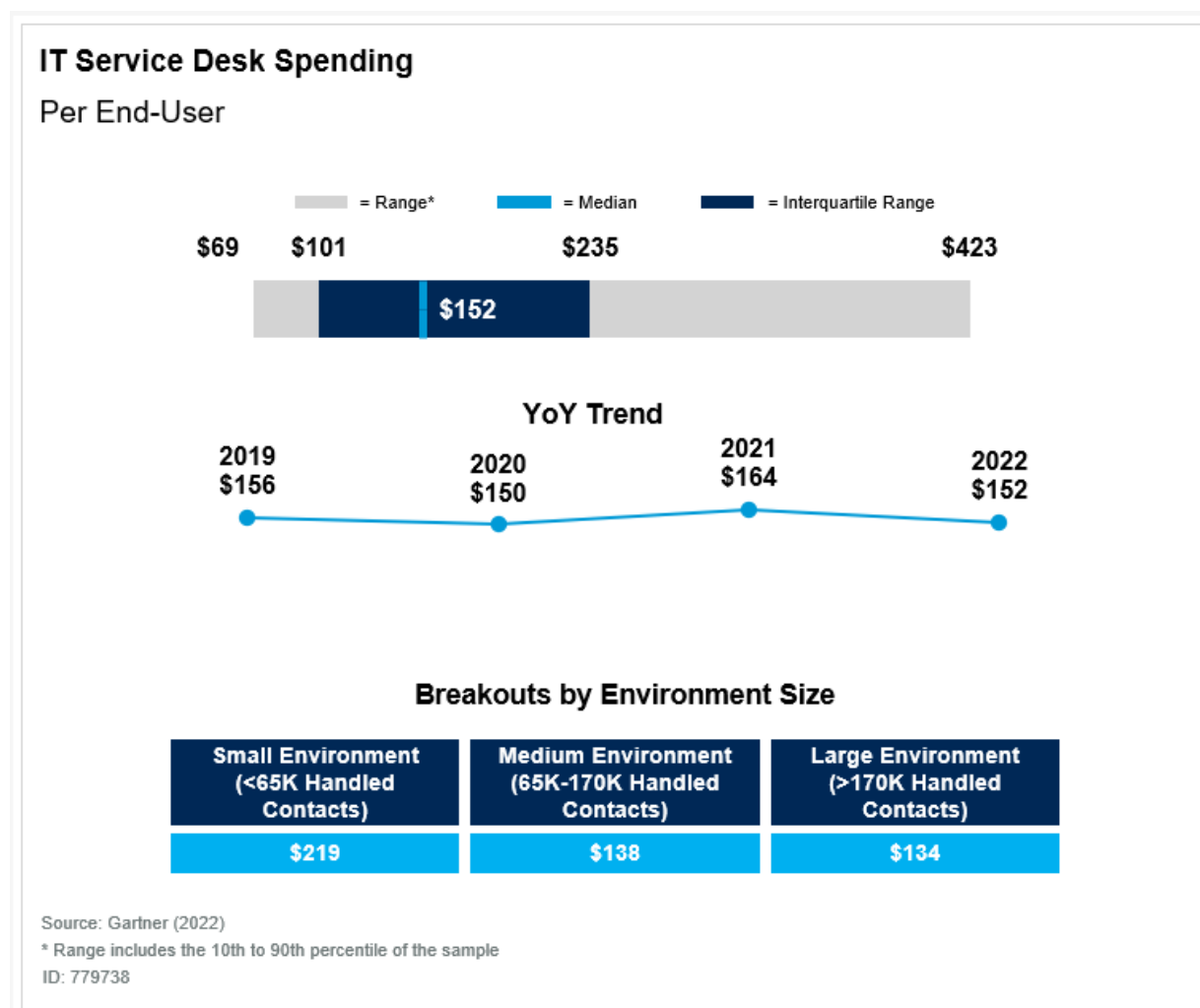
**Figure 3: IT Service Desk FTEs as a Percent of Total IT FTEs**

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### Annual IT Service Desk Spending per End-User

Even though it reflects cost, this metric should be seen in the context of investment. It showcases the level of investment on the demand side of IT Service Desk which is ultimately, the end-users.

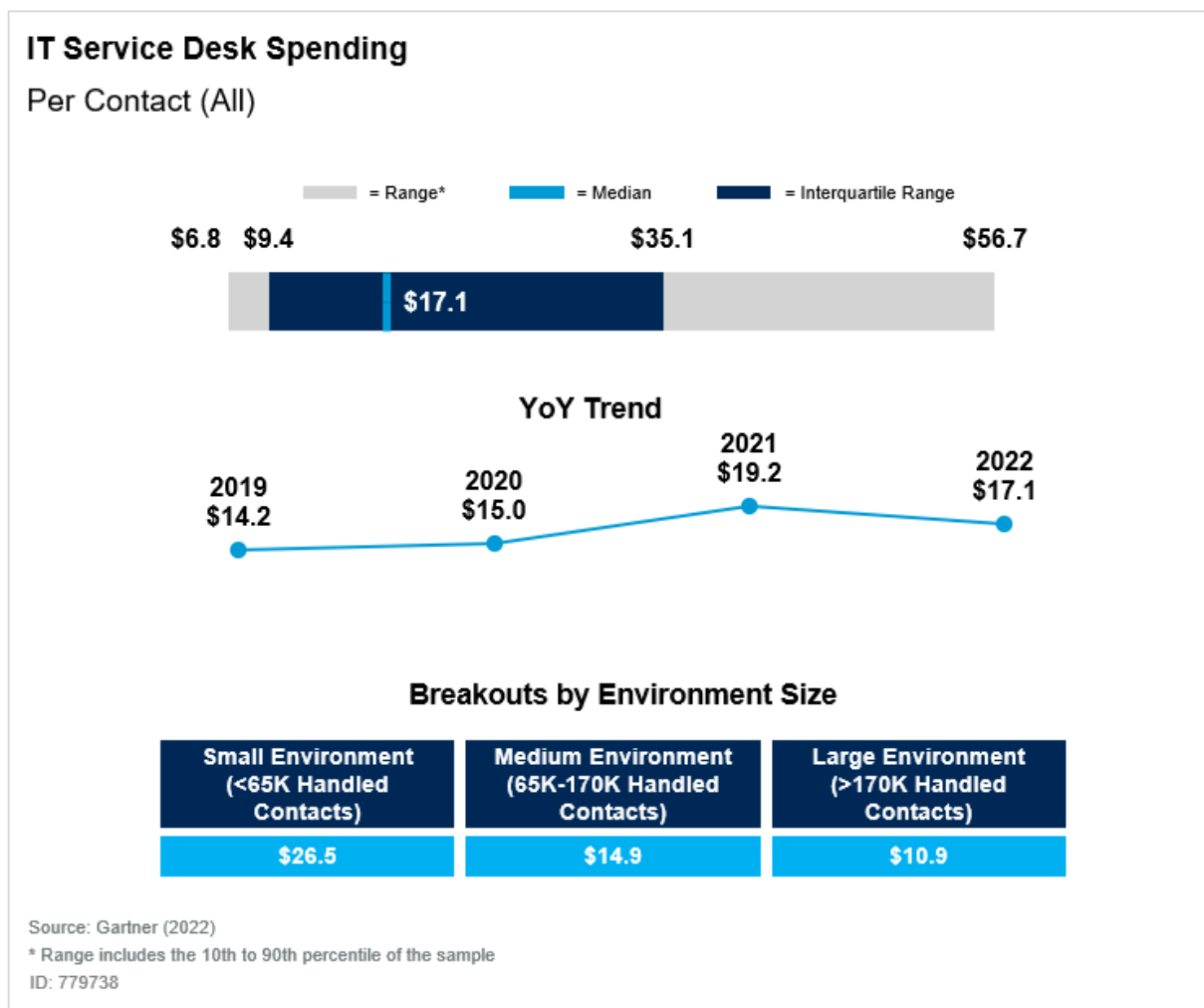
Figure 4: Annual IT Service Desk Spending per End-User (USD)



### Annual IT Service Desk Spending per Contact (All)

Unit cost at its highest level that includes all types of contact; both agent-handled and automated/self-service. This reflects the overall efficiency of the IT Service Desk as it relates to the total incoming contact volume.

Figure 5: Annual IT Service Desk Spending per Contact (USD)



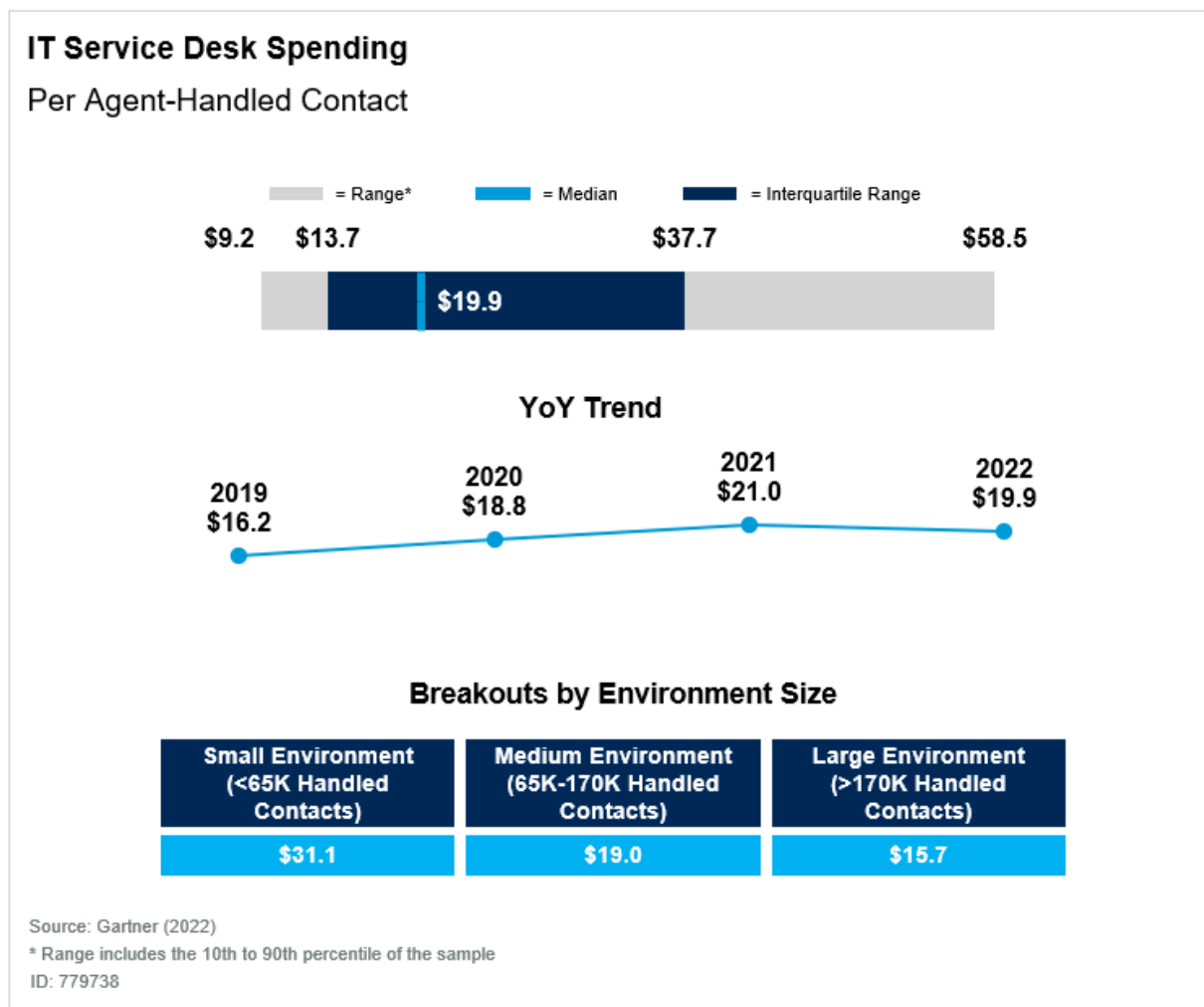
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### Annual IT Service Desk Spending per Agent-Handled Contact

This metric is often used to evaluate the relative cost efficiency level of the overall environment. Given the increasing volume of automatically handled and self-service contacts, it aims to distinguish the unit cost related to human intervention. It should always be considered within the context of business requirements and scale, as well as productivity, service levels and the level of automation.

As organizations automate and eliminate low value contacts, this will leave higher value, business focused contacts for agents to support through omnichannel and cloud-based swarming structures.

Figure 6: Annual IT Service Desk Spending per Agent-Handled Contact (USD)



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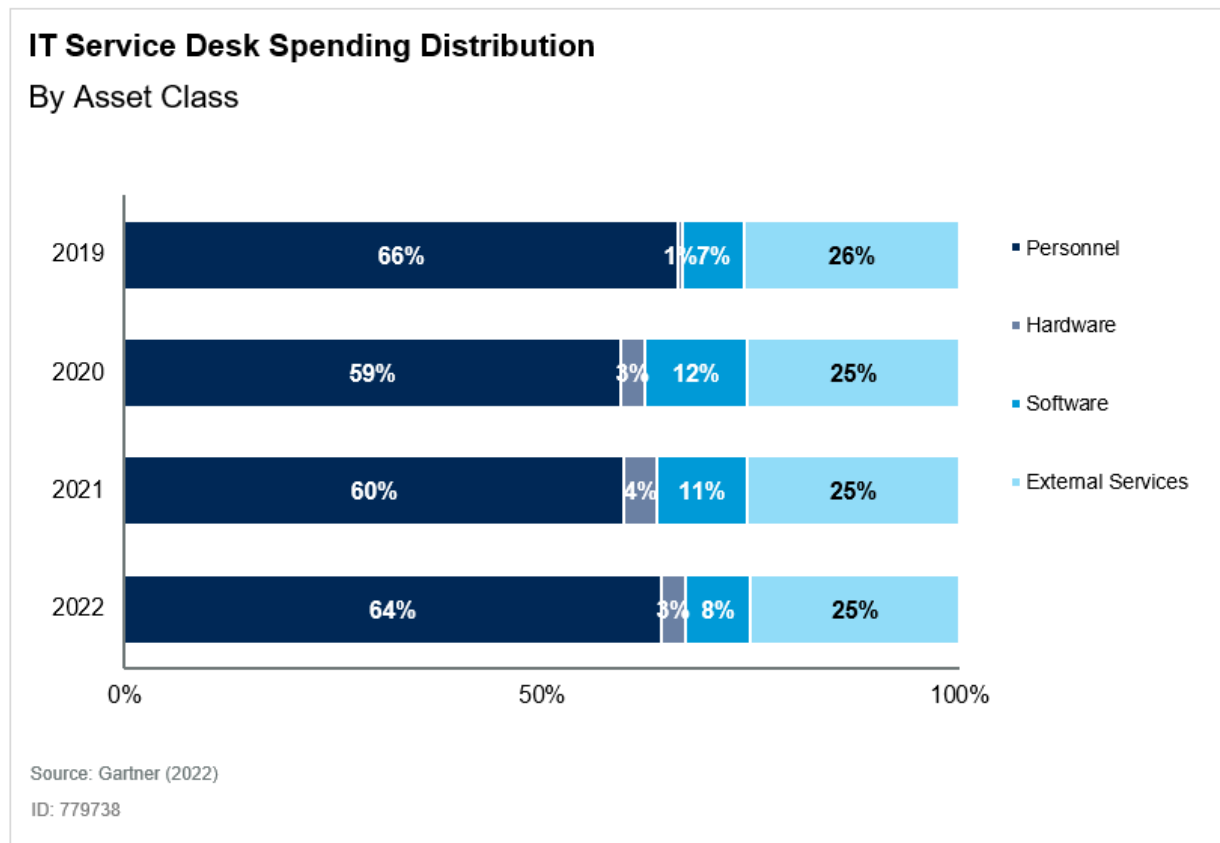
### IT Service Desk Spending Distribution

This metric provides an understanding of how IT Service Desk spending is dispersed across the four Gartner consensus model asset classes. This distribution helps to outline personnel versus non-personnel related cost allocations. The degree in which an organization outsources can play a significant role in altering this distribution as personnel costs are typically the primary expense.

It is not uncommon to reduce spending in one asset only to have the follow-on effect of passing those costs off to another asset. By monitoring investments across all assets, such cost transfers within IT can be more visible.



Figure 7: IT Service Desk Spending Distribution



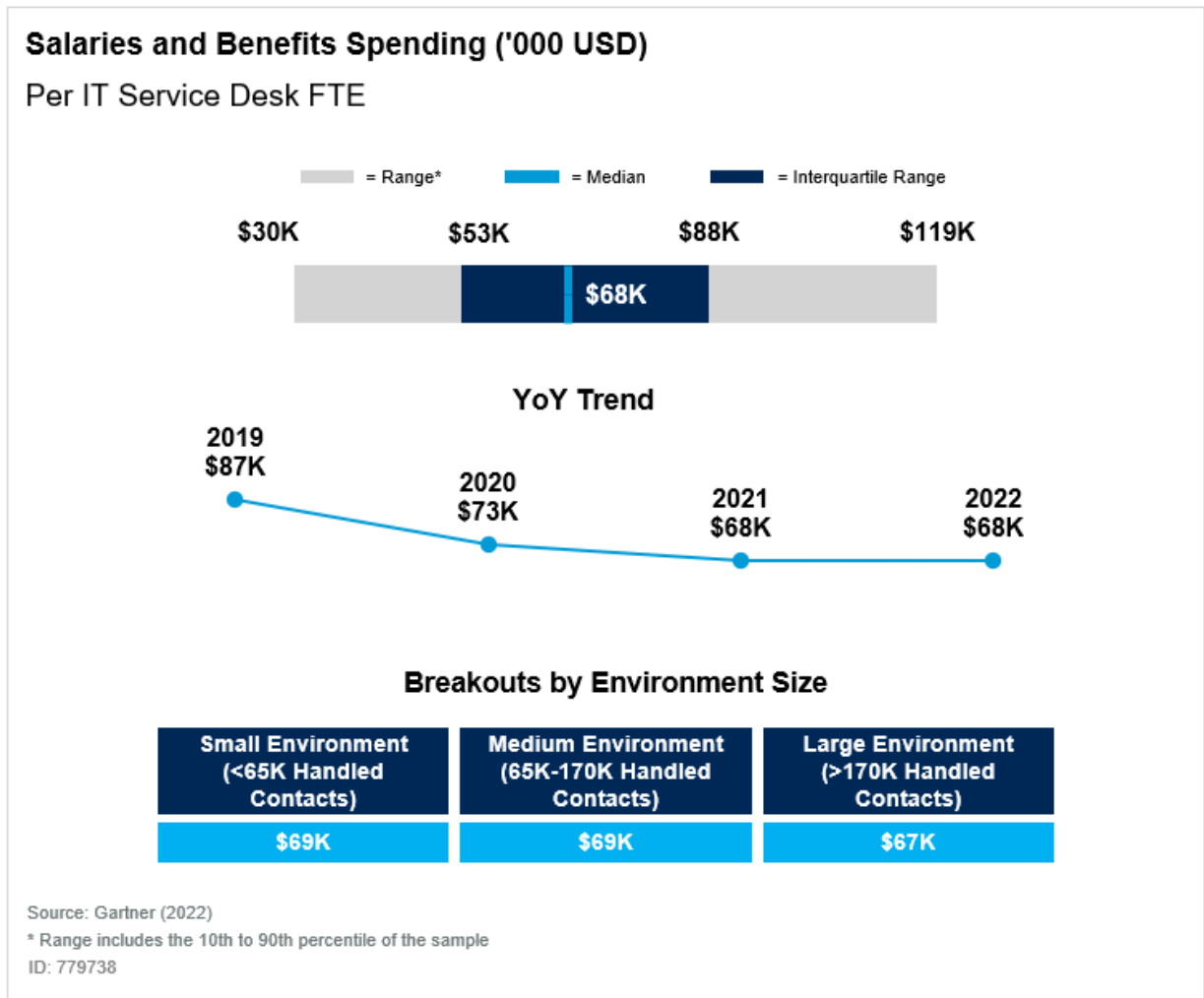
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### Annual Salaries and Benefits Spending per IT Service Desk FTE

Compensation metric that provides the median annual cost of salaries and benefits for an IT Service Desk FTE. This cost will vary depending on geographic location, experience, and expertise. It is best used within the context of the skill requirements for the various roles within the technology environment depending on the environment structure and level of complexity.

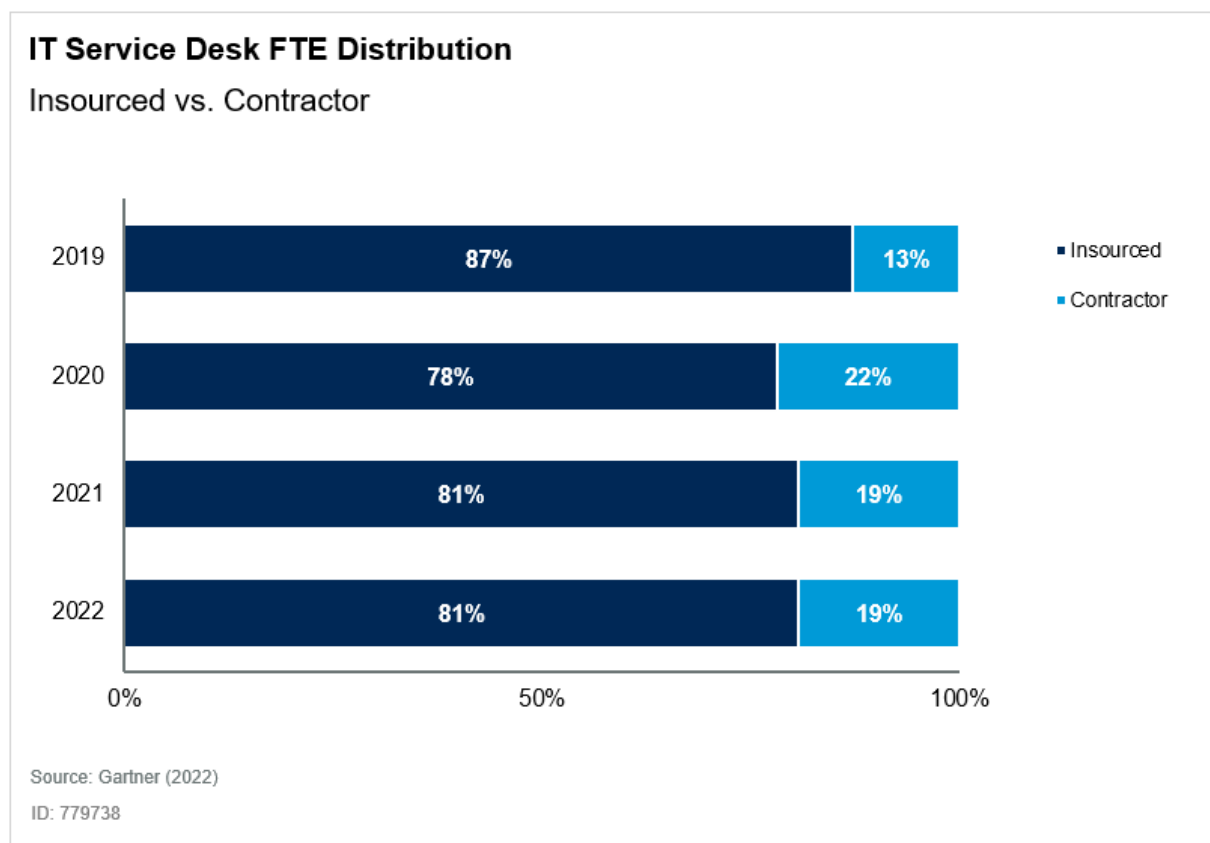
Questions to consider can be along the lines of: *What percentage of the environment FTEs are contact handling agents? What services/roles are outsourced to a third party? How does the use of contractors and/or offshore labor impact your costs? What level of incident complexity can the service desk handle?*

Figure 8: Annual Salaries and Benefits Spending per IT Service Desk FTE ('000 USD)



IT Service Desk FTE Distribution: Insourced Versus Contractor

The distribution of IT Service Desk support between insourced and contract FTEs can help provide a view of the IT Service Desk staffing strategy. IT contract labor or contractor usage can be an effective approach to maintaining flexibility and agility when business conditions are changing. However, keeping contractors for extended periods can be more costly and limit process standardization if the associated knowledge, IP and processes are not well documented and captured within the enterprise.

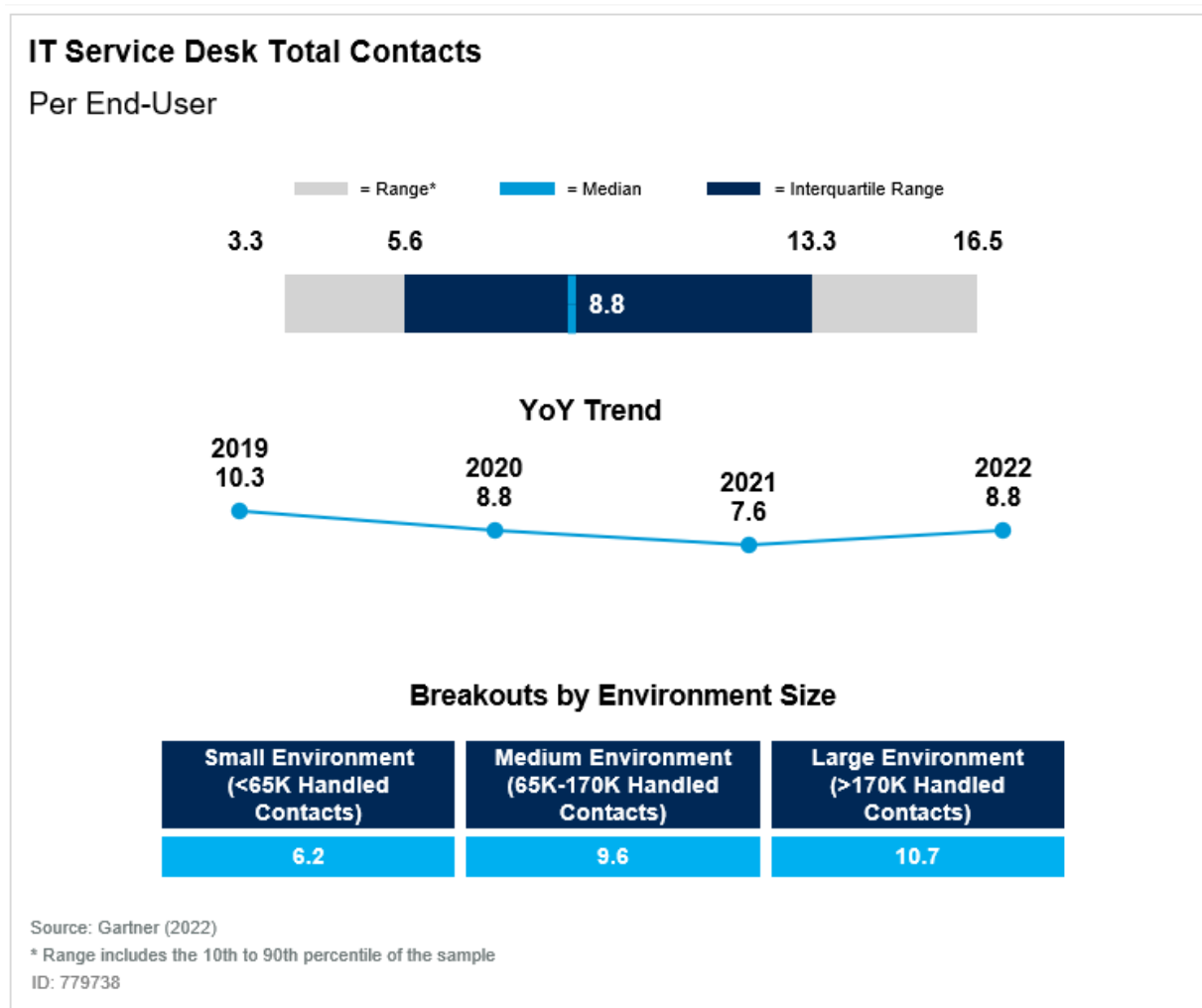
**Figure 9: IT Service Desk FTE Distribution: Insourced vs. Contractor**

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### Total Contacts per End-User

This is the core demand metric that shows how frequently assistance is required from the IT Service Desk by each user over the course of a year. The frequency of contacts can also be representative of the overall quality of IT service throughout the organization. A capable service desk allows IT to collect critical information around common incidents in order to prevent them from happening in the future, and to enhance services provided.

Figure 10: Total Contacts per End-User

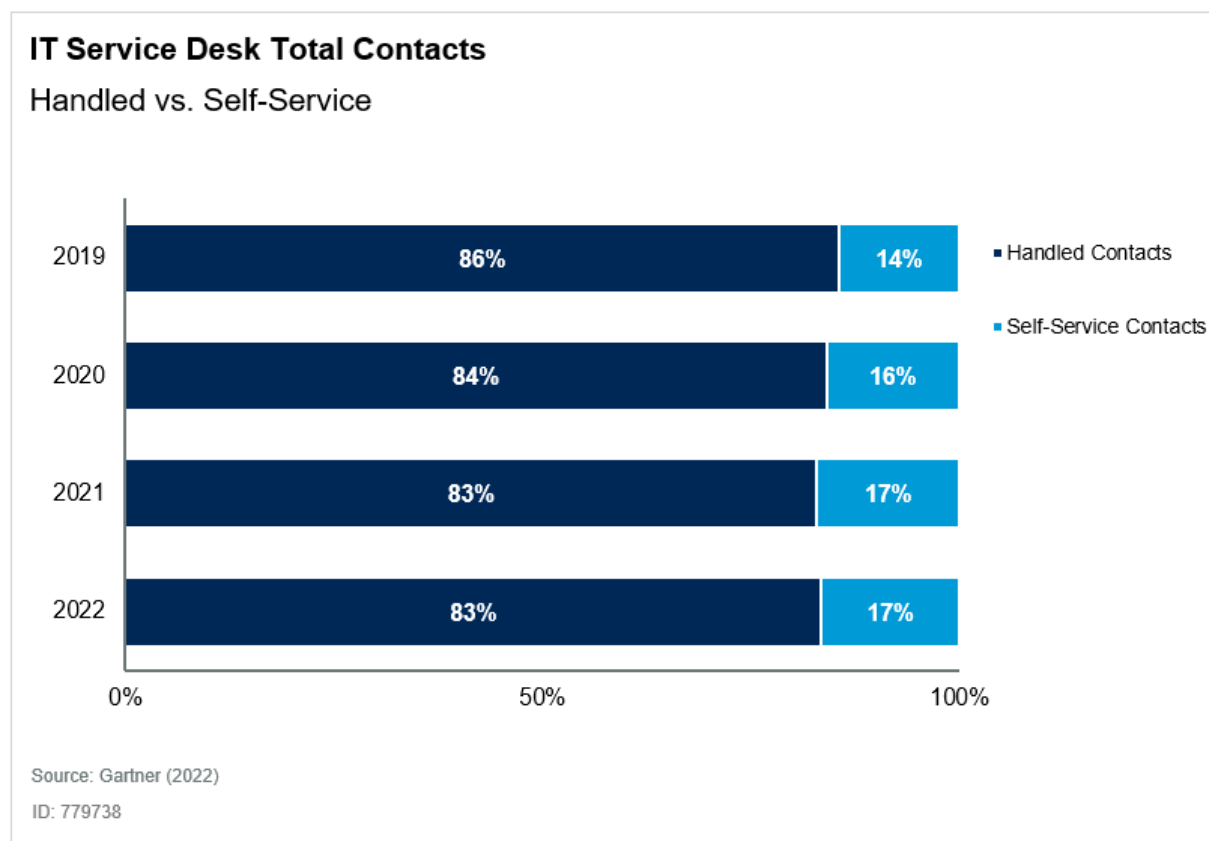


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### Contact Distribution by Type

The level of automation and self-service plays a pivotal role in the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the IT Service Desk. To showcase that, contact to the IT Service Desk have been divided into two categories:

- Handled contacts where an agent is involved in responding to an end-user's telephone call, chat, email, web request, fax etc.
- Self-service where an end-user is able to resolve their problem without the help of an agent through the use of self-help tools such as automated password reset, knowledge management and Interactive Voice Response (IVR).

**Figure 11: Contacts: Handled vs. Self-service**

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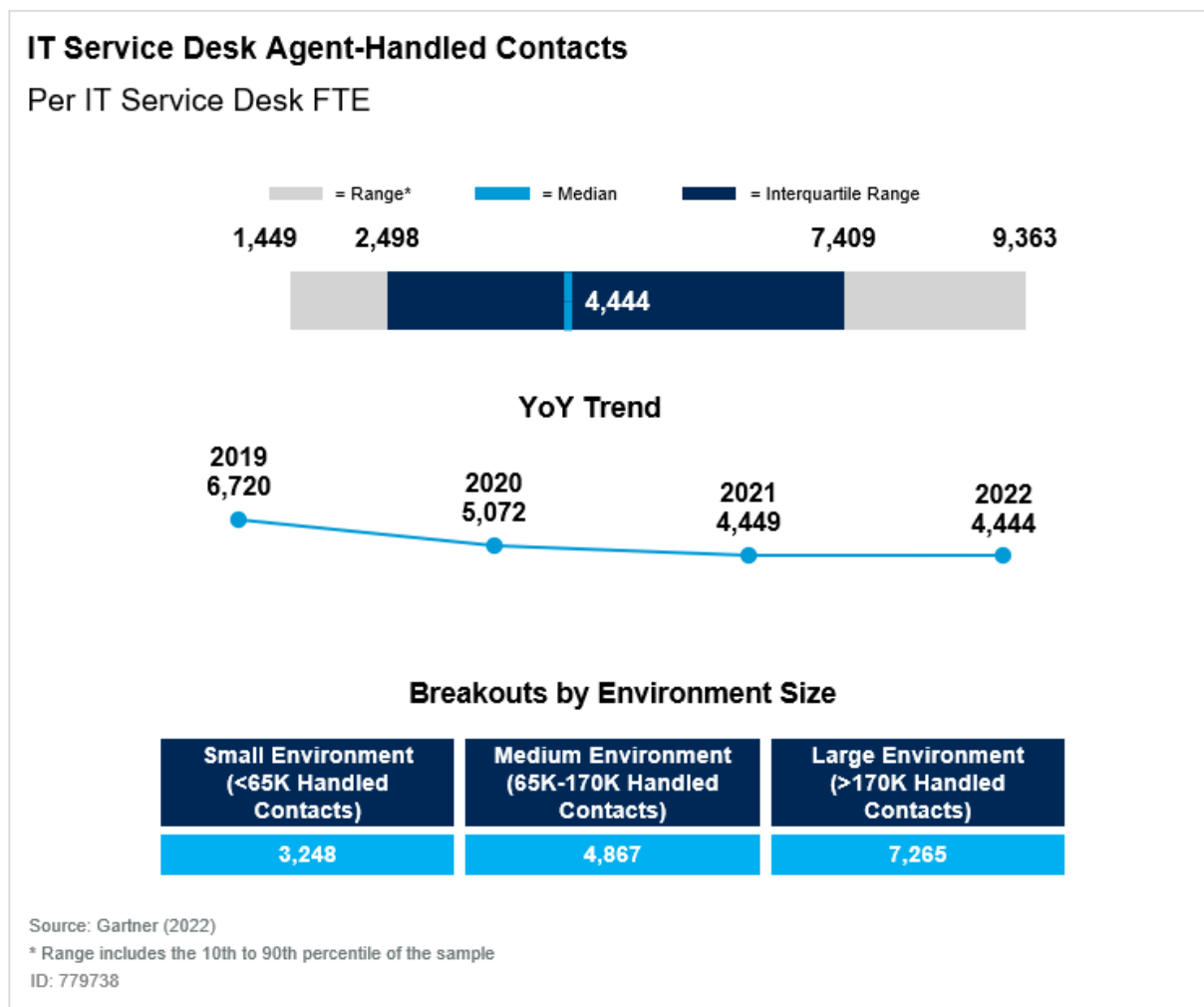
Supplemental information available on the Channel distribution of the Service Desk Contacts in the self-service tool. [Learn more](#)

### Annual Agent-Handled Contacts per IT Service Desk FTE

This is the core productivity metric and provides a look at dedicated FTE output levels. Understanding the productivity of your staff in terms of units supported can be very helpful in establishing efficient and effective workflows as well as ensuring your support staff is the “right size.” Productivity levels can be further understood when examined in tandem with service level metrics such as the first contact resolution rate, abandonment rate and speed to answer. It is important that it is not only viewed as a fixed objective but also be viewed with respect to the quality of service delivered and business requirements.

If your support staff is supporting more than the median of the published sample, you can consider the following questions: *Is this level of productivity sustainable? How will you adapt to required future growth or complexity?*

Figure 12: Annual Agent-Handled Contacts per IT Service Desk FTE

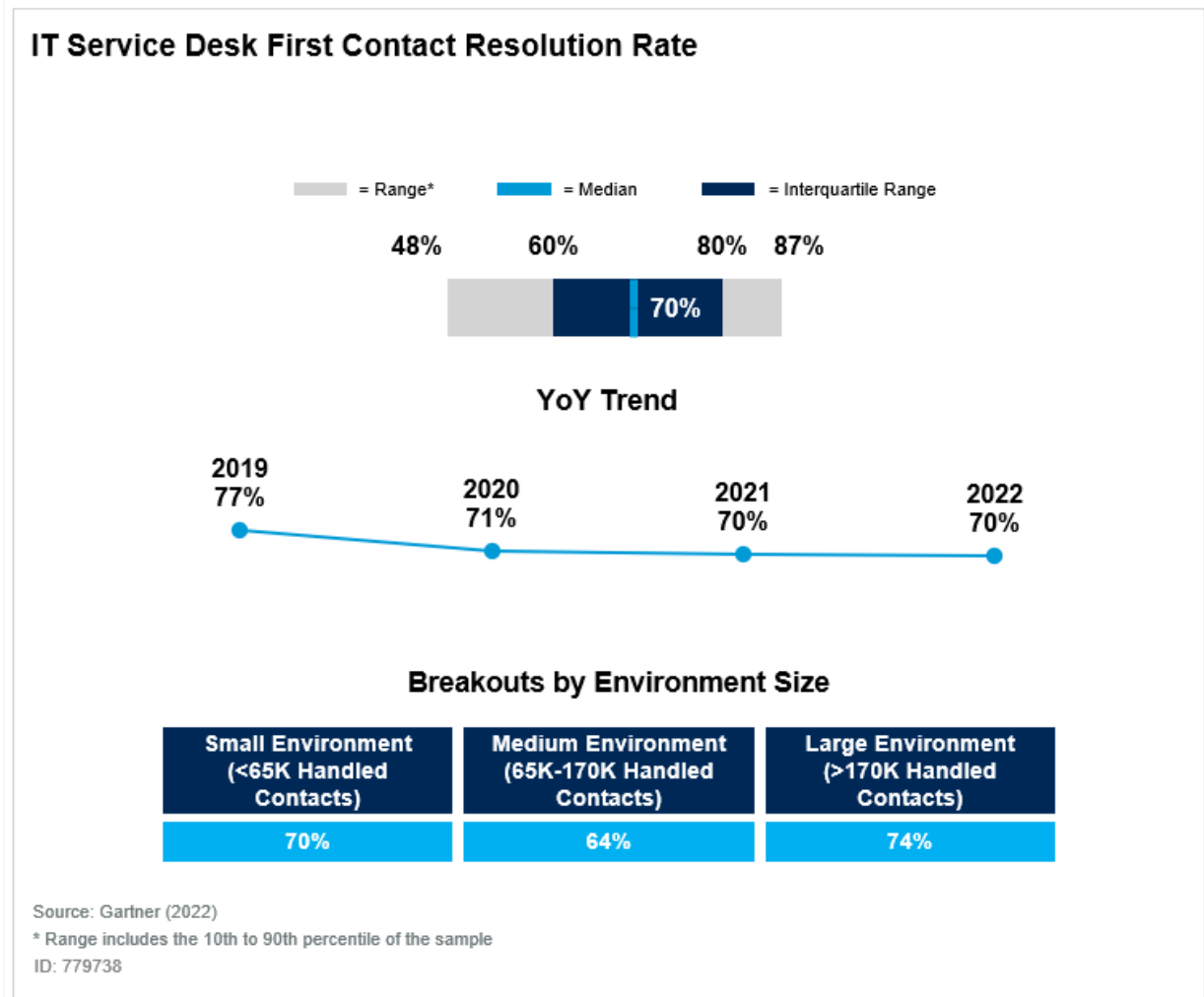


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### First Contact Resolution Rate

First contact resolution rate measures incidents where an end-user receives resolution during the first contact with the IT Service Desk. It is the actual percentage of voice/chat contacts resolved upon the initial contact. Warm transfers, service dispatch and callbacks are not included as they are considered second or greater contact.

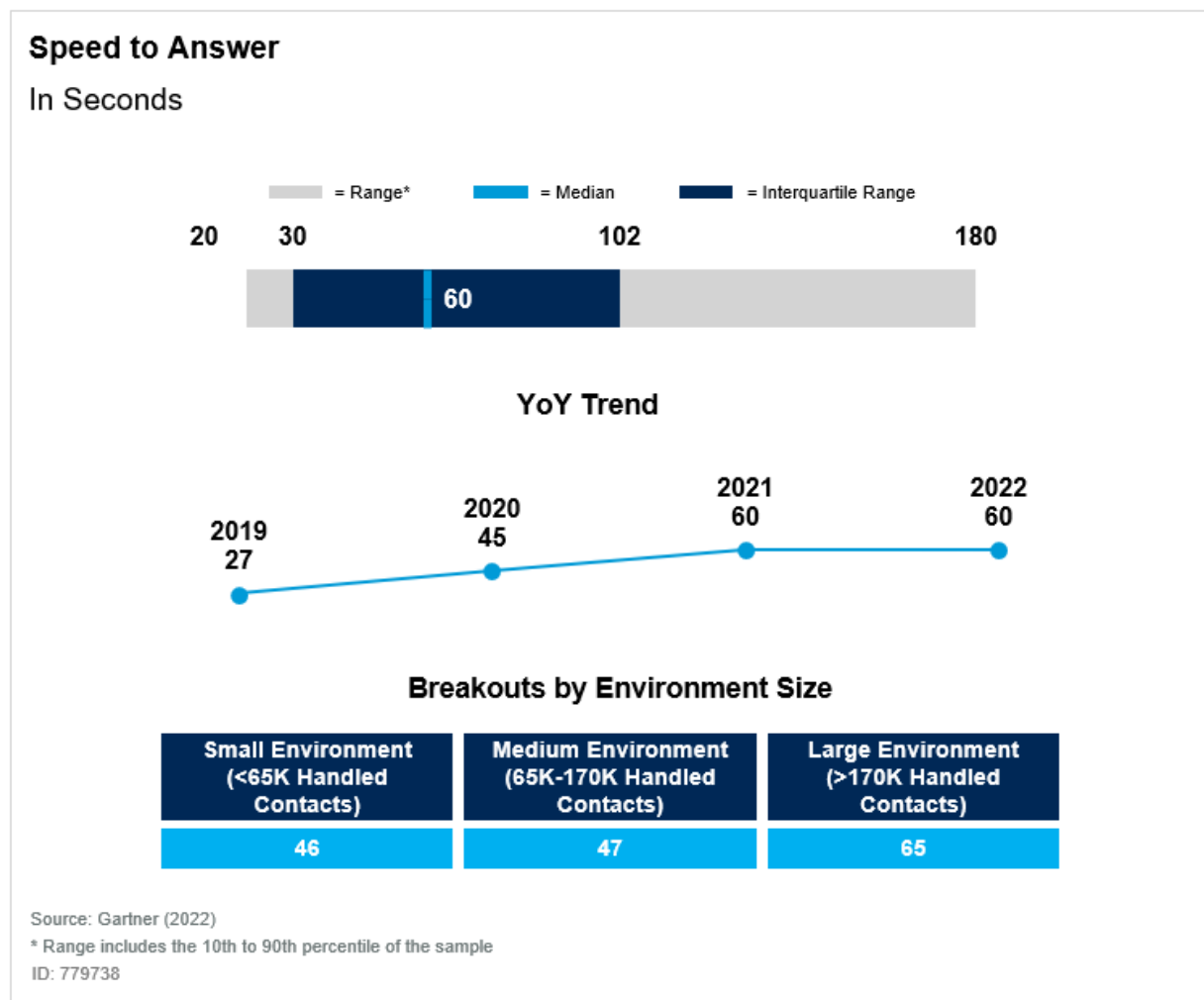
Figure 13: First Contact Resolution Rate



Speed to Answer

The median number of seconds to answer (speed to answer) measures the time a user waits between connecting to the IT Service Desk and having the call answered by a live agent. Transaction Time (Service + Wrap-Up)

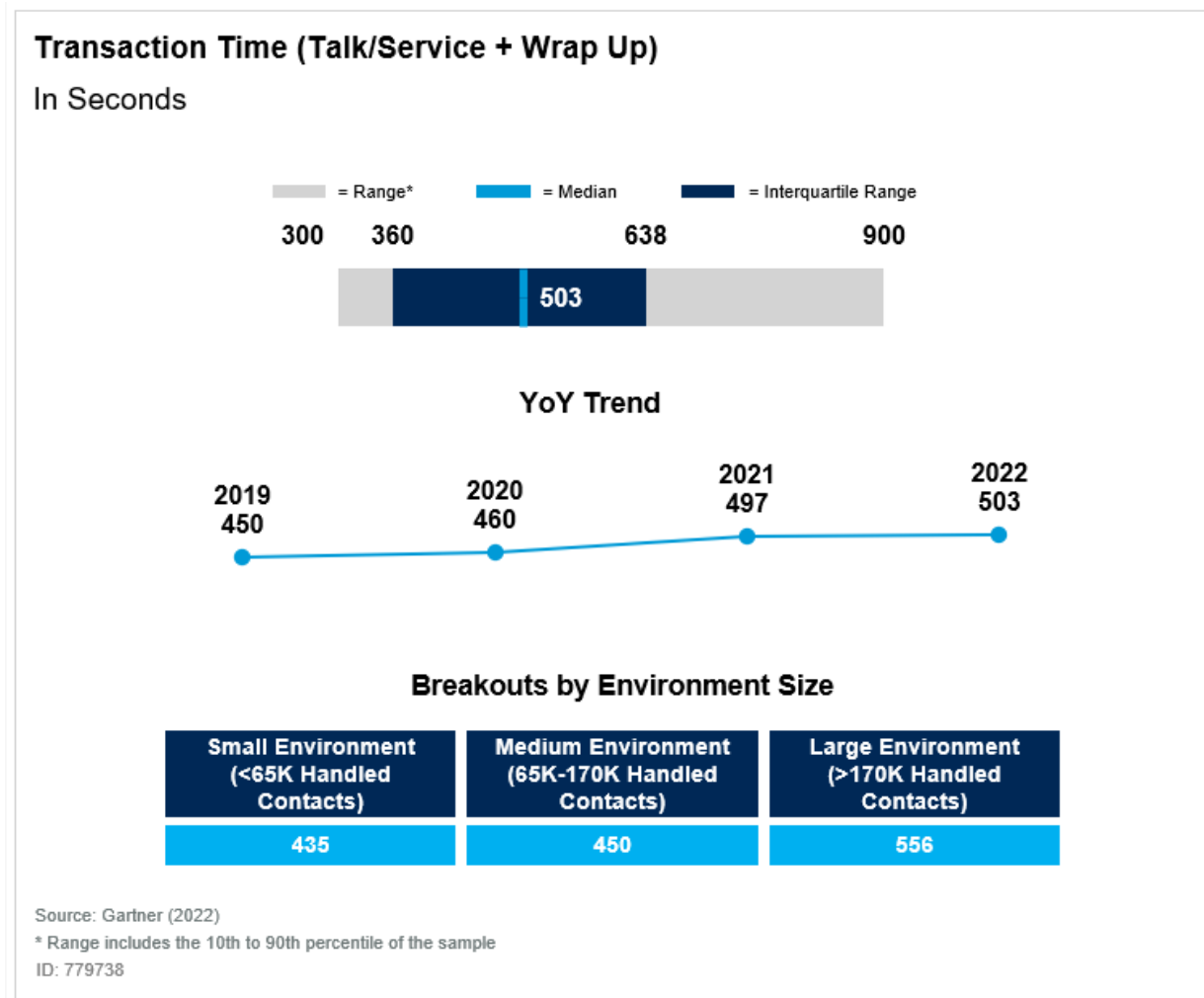
Figure 14: Speed to Answer in Seconds



To better understand productivity, it is important to know the time an agent typically needs to conclude a transaction. Longer transactions lead to increased waiting times and fewer processed contacts.



Figure 15: Transaction Time (Service + Wrap-Up) in Seconds

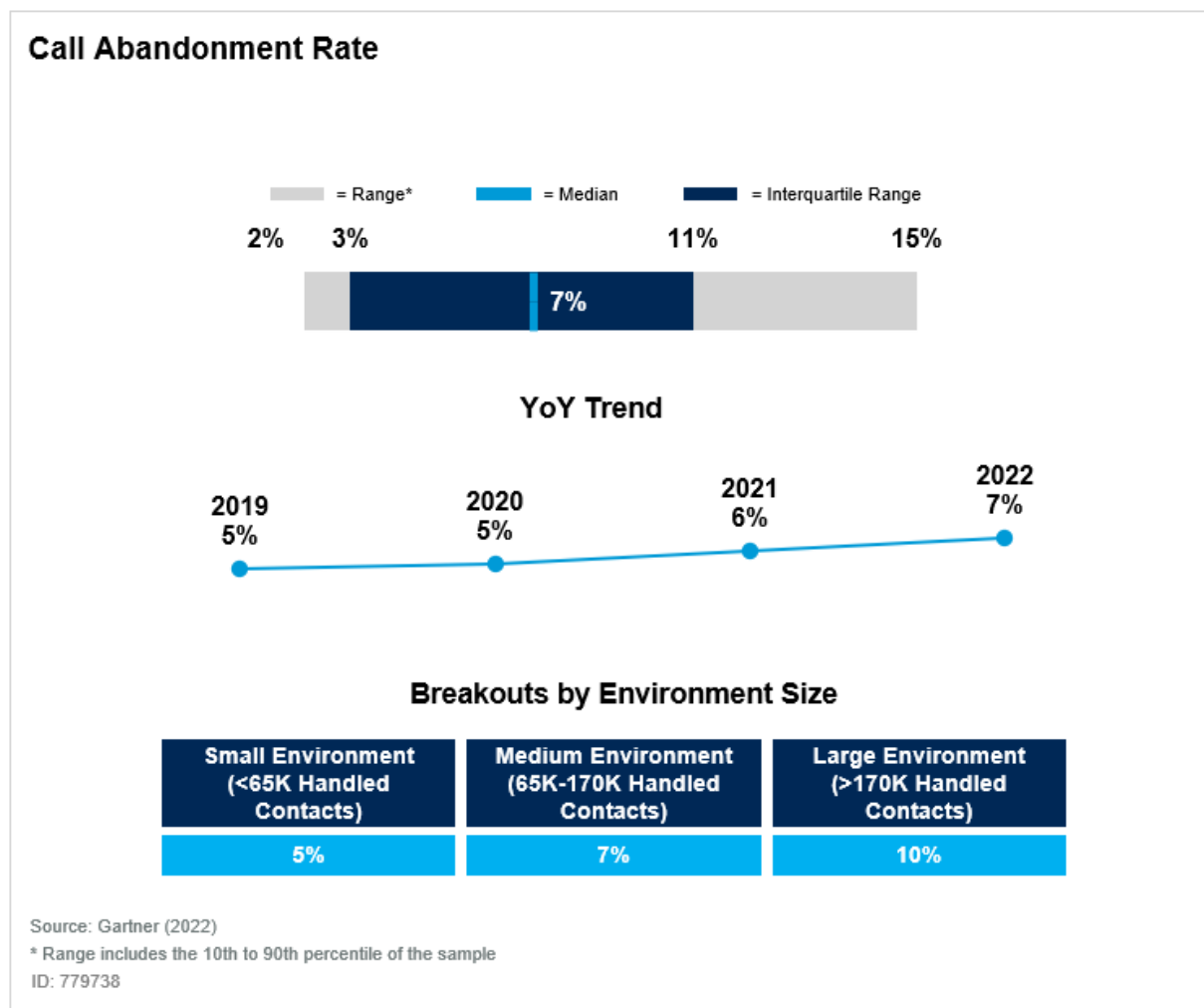


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### Call Abandonment Rate

Abandonment rate measures the percentage of calls coming to the IT service desk that were ended before they were answered by an agent.

Figure 16: Call Abandonment Rate



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## Conclusion

A successful IT performance measurement program communicates metrics that are important to a target audience. [Kick-Start Your IT Value Story With Metrics That Matter](#) provides additional insight into overall performance management beyond spending and staff.

By quantifying spending relative to a defined framework, IT leaders can determine relevant cost drivers through understanding:

1. Top level efficiency and productivity metrics
2. Variances below the top level of spending

3. The relation of one metric to another
4. Environmental factors within the organization

## Recommended by the Authors

*Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.*

[“3 Simple Ways IT Service Desks Should Handle Incidents and Requests”](#)

[“Segment IT Services by Employee Lifestyles, Not Just Work Styles”](#)

[“Tailor Your IT Service Desk Support Based on Business User Personas”](#)

[“Start Measuring IT Service Desk Anti-Dissatisfaction”](#)

[“Running an Effective IT Service Desk During and After a Pandemic”](#)

[“Toolkit: Categorize IT Service Desk Interactions to Eliminate, Automate or Leverage”](#)

## About This Research

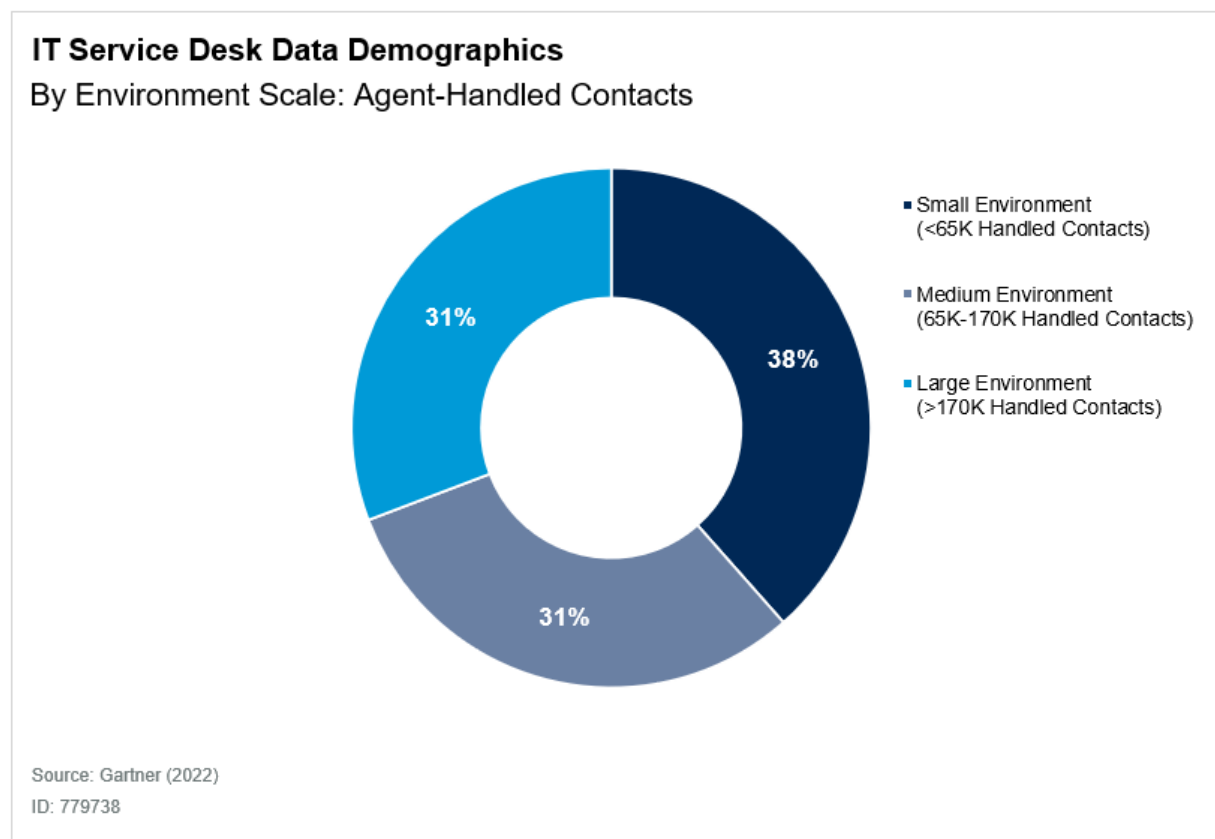
This research contains relevant database averages, medians and ranges from a subset of metrics and prescriptive engagements available through [Gartner Benchmark Analytics](#) consulting-based capabilities.

Calculations were made using worldwide observations.

## Demographics

To offer some insight into the characteristics of the IT Service Desk analysis data, the figure below outlines the distribution of the IT Service Desk analysis data across the “Small,” “Medium” and “Large” environments as defined in the legend.

Figure 17: IT Service Desk Data Demographics: By Environment Size



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## Document Revision History

IT Key Metrics Data 2022: End-User Services Measures — IT Service Desk Analysis - 16  
December 2021

IT Key Metrics Data 2021: End-User Support Measures — IT Service Desk Analysis - 18  
December 2020

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