



Governance in 1st level support

Good Practices from the IT-ServiceDesk at RWTH Aachen University

Florian Krämer

Governance in 1st level support

Agenda

- Introduction
 - RWTH Aachen University
 - The IT Center at RWTH Aachen University
 - The IT-ServiceDesk
- Problem description
- Measures
 - Reporting Services
 - User Surveys
 - Quality Management
- Evaluation
- Conclusion

Introduction

RWTH Aachen University

- Academics
 - more than 42.000 students in the winter semester of 2013/14
 - 144 courses of study (Bachelor and Master)
- Staff
 - more than 9.000 employees, including 538 professors (as of 2014)
- Annual Budget 2014
 - about 840 Million Euros in total annual budget, including 330 Million Euros in external funding
- successful in the excellence initiative funded by the federal government of Germany

Introduction

RWTH Aachen University

- Focus on Engineering and Sciences → High demand on IT services
- IT is a key factor in reaching the university's goals
- Heterogeneous IT environment
 - Institutes can independently decide on their IT
 - Great differences between institutes (size, budget, staff, demand for IT services)
 - High demand for individual IT solutions

Introduction

The IT Center

- The IT Center provides central IT services
 - Network
 - HPC and Visualization Services
 - E-mail
 - Server Hosting
 - Managed Services
 - Backup/Archive
 - CAMPUS Management System
 - ...
- IT Service Management
- High demand for IT support

Introduction

The IT-ServiceDesk

Functions

- Single Point of Contact (SPoC)
- Supports all IT Services provided by the IT Center
- Takes care of internal and public wiki
- About 65.000 requests in 2014

Staff (May 2015)

- 11 full time employees
- 5 apprentices
- 12 student assistants

Channels of communication

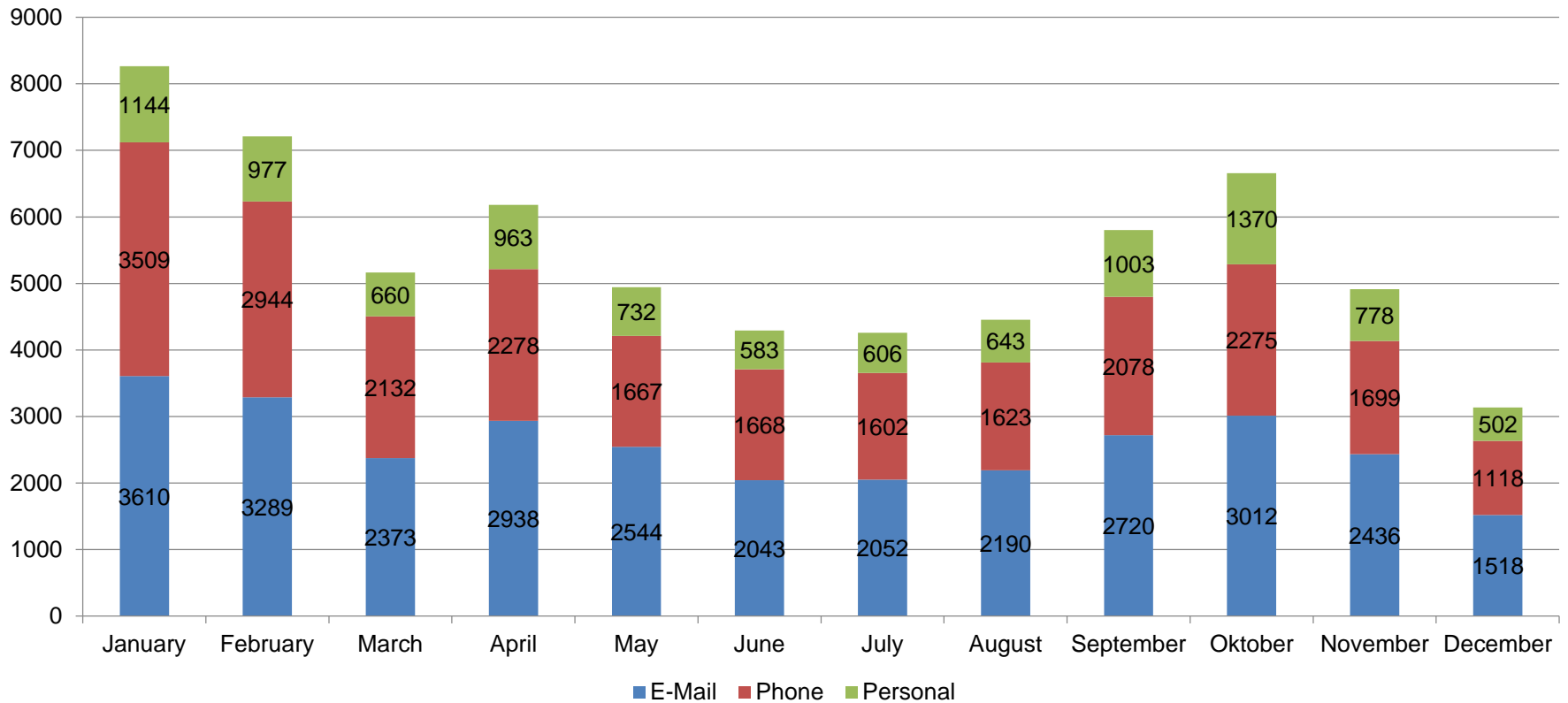
- E-mail
- Phone
- Web-portal
- Personal (3 locations)

User groups

- Students
- Employees
- IT admins
- external partners

The IT-ServiceDesk

Requests by channel 2014



Problem description

Initial situation

- Individual employees had to rely on
 - Information in internal wiki
 - Personal knowledge and experience→ Therefore, support quality fluctuated a lot
- Difficulties in adapting to changes
 - Services change
 - New services are developed
 - 1st level takes over the support for additional aspects of a service
 - Employee turnover
- Lack of information about the support quality
 - (perceived) quality of support was unknown
 - No objective indicators for support quality
- **Governance relied on the daily experience of management personnel**
→ **Need for more objective sources of information**

Reporting Services

- Objective figures as key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Data from the ITSM tool, processed using Microsoft Reporting Services
 - Weekly reports for internal use in IT-ServiceDesk
 - Number of requests
 - by channel (e-mail, web portal, phone, personal contact)
 - by group (ServiceDesk, ServiceDesk expert, documentation)
 - by location
 - by level of escalation
 - Change Requests for phone / data network
 - Monthly reports for use by the IT Center management:
 - Availability by phone
 - Time of analysis for incoming requests
 - First solve rate
- **Important information for planning resources as well as for Quality Management**

User surveys

- Indicator for the perceived quality of the support
- 1st survey
 - paper questionnaire
 - very positive feedback, sample dominated by students
- 2nd survey
 - online survey
 - users were asked to rate a specific support case
 - Response from students, employees and administrators
 - Interesting insight into factors that influence user's satisfaction: topic, number of contacts, time until solution, communication channel
 - Questionnaire was perceived as complicated and extensive
- 3rd survey
 - Simplified online survey
 - More students than employees responded
 - Some weaknesses exposed, no link to influencing factors possible

User surveys

- General problems with these surveys
 - Limited timespan
 - Influence of singular events
 - Participation bias
 - Unsatisfied users more likely to participate
 - Specific groups more likely to participate
 - Sensitive to choices in marketing measures
- Solution: direct feedback
 - Users are asked to rate each support case
 - Simple yes or no question: Were you satisfied?
 - Link to information from the ITSM tool's databank
- IT Center wide project

Quality Management

- Start of introduction in 2014
- Goal: ISO 9001 certification in 2016
- Detailed process descriptions (standardized form, summarizing schematic)
 - Meta-processes
 - General rules for working with the ITSM tool
 - Communicating by e-mail
 - Passing requests to the 2nd level
 - Support processes
 - standard changes
 - HPC project applications
 - ...
 - Processing information (documenting information in the internal and public wiki)
 - Training of new employees
- QM handbook

Quality Management

- Benefits
 - Helpful in training
 - Reference in everyday work
 - Starting point for critique, improvements, changes
- However, the existence of standards does not guarantee high quality support

Where do we stand?

- User surveys
 - Simple version of surveys will be continued
 - Next step: direct feedback
 - **Gives information about the perceived quality of support**
- Reporting services
 - Additional indicators are planned to be reported: duration of phone calls, number of groups working on a case, ...
 - **Reporting services provide objective indicators of performance**
- Quality Management
 - Constant expansion of process descriptions
 - More knowledge management
 - Review of the mentoring and training process for new employees
 - **QM is accepted by employees and enables us to effectively respond to changes and challenges**

Conclusion

A path worth following

- Quality management, Reporting Services and User Surveys already enable the management to react specifically to changes and challenges
- Introducing those measures is time consuming
- A cost-benefit-evaluation is impossible under constantly changing circumstances
- Acceptance by employees is crucial
- **Quality culture needs to become part of employees' mindsets**

Thank you for your attention!

Florian Krämer
RWTH Aachen University
IT Center

kraemer@itc.rwth-aachen.de