

# Second-Line Support as a Service Delivery Resource

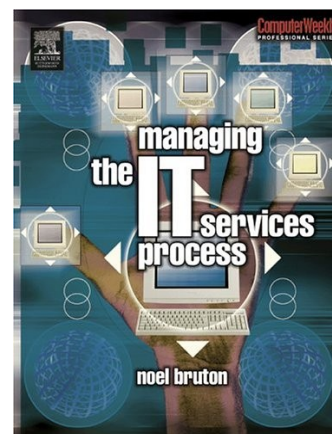
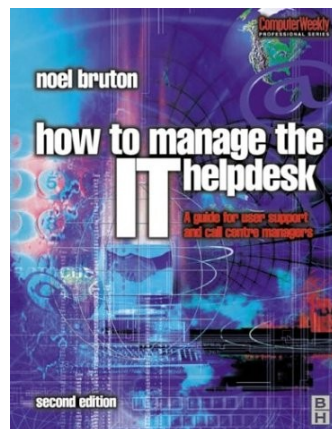
Noel Bruton



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“I fix IT helpdesks”



**The ITIL Experience**  
*Has it been worth it?*

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# A Profession Under Pressure

- Virtually left out of ITIL
- Stagnant salaries and career opportunities
- Losing permissions
- Few training opportunities - falling skillsets
- Replaced by remote control software
- Left behind by user-oriented business IT
- Often managed by technicians, not managers
- The forgotten function IT can't do without

# Implications of ITIL Omission

- No standard practice method
- No identity – seen as ServiceDesk extension
- Mixed skill ServiceDesk = diluted skillsets
  - Largely first line and quasi-administrative skills
  - Where will the next second-liners come from?
- Remuneration left to market forces alone
- No means of defining own success
- In effect, stagnation of a profession

***Don't you sometimes wish ITIL didn't matter?***

# Common Negatives

- “They're OK on the 'phone, but if they have to send someone out, it can take ages”
- Too technical, uncommunicative, arrogant
- Whereabouts unknown - unreliable
- Won't offer a guarantee of response
- Favouritism, cherry-picking
- Don't record fixes properly
- Don't keep customer informed = repeat calls
- Break something else by fixing original problem

# Lines of Support

- Traditional, technocentric view
  - First Line
    - Fairly simple enquiries, fix over the phone or by remote control
  - Second Line
    - More complex enquiries, requiring diagnosis or deskside visit
  - Third Line
    - Highly complex issues, probably vendor or developer
- The higher the ordinal, the further from the user

# 'Lines' of Resolution

- Alternative view:

- First line

  - Includes 'Triage'

- Second line

- Third line

Fix from existing knowledge, in current parameters

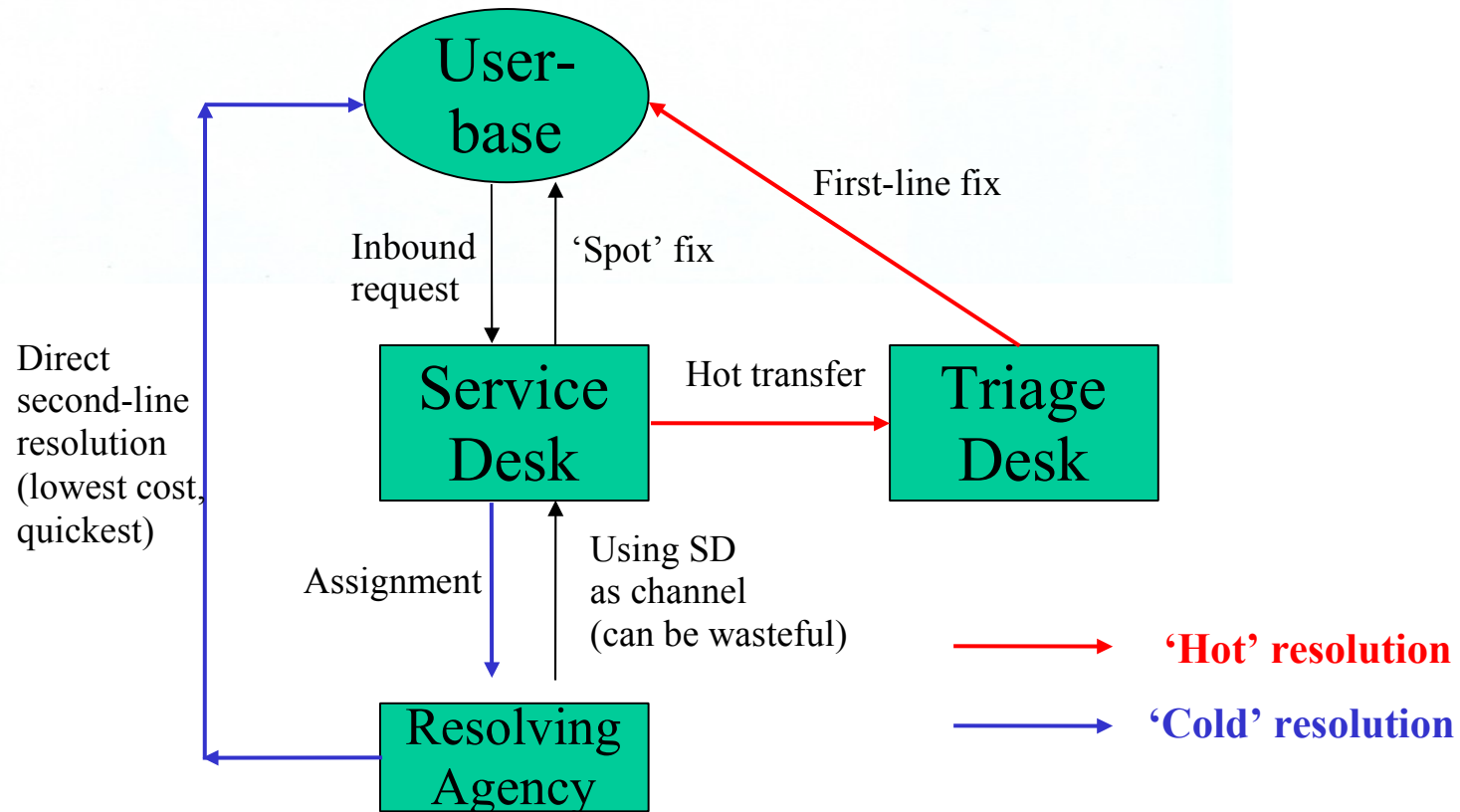
Diagnosis creates new knowledge, from current parameters

New parameters needed: something must change to resolve this

*All non-immediate fixes from within existing parameters are really 'second line' - even if network technicians, developers or the 'Service Desk' resolve them*



# Incident Handling



# Triage Desk Benefits

- Isolate time-consuming enquiries
- Free up first line to take high quantity quick calls
- Improve service quality
  - Customer sees first-time fix
- Career path for knowledgeable 2<sup>nd</sup> line staff
- Clear route for 'difficult' or specialist enquiries
- Improves diagnosis
- Saves money

# Opportunities

- Only visible face of IT
- Prove IT's business worth
- Only route into systems support
- Way of increasing first-line-fix rate
- To identify nature of second-line work from any IT department and accommodate it

# A Second-Line Strategy

- Merge all second line functions into one
- Merge that with Service Desk
- Rotate first, second and triage lines
- Remunerate triage most highly
- Set response, production and fix targets
- Make backlog avoidance a priority
- Actively train multiples of staff in all business apps
- Professional (ie non-technical) management

# Second-Line Support as a Service Delivery Resource

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