

# 5 Steps to a Great Tech Bar

Five tips to improve in-person and scheduled service.



## Expand Hours

Add scheduling to any tech bar so employees can get their issues resolved before or after work.



## Optimized Experience

In-person service creates a personalized experience and creates the opportunity for added value.



## Increased Satisfaction

Reducing employee downtime and developing personal relationships improves user satisfaction.

## What is a Tech Bar?

A growing number of enterprises are embracing “genius bar” type walk-up service tech bars to resolve employee IT issues. Per HDI’s 2018 technical support practices study<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of organizations offering tech bar support jumped from 35% in 2017 to 44% in 2018 and is expected to reach 49% in 2019.

Implementing a tech bar provides a number of benefits to the organization, including:

- Increased employee satisfaction
- Increased satisfaction with IT interactions through other (non-tech bar) channels
- The ability to efficiently extend service hours
- Reduced employee downtime

Beyond these operational advantages, deploying walk-in IT services is often simply a response to a changing workforce. More employees are mobile, working in the field, while traveling, or from home. Laptops and mobile devices have largely taken over for desktop machines in many companies. Creating a place where people can show up, seek help, and interact with IT service desk workers in person has offered promising results.

# I Deploying a Tech Bar

Deploying a tech bar doesn't require a huge investment in resources. The basic requirements are dedicated space, staffing, and tech bar software that provides capabilities like appointment scheduling, ticket management, and team collaboration.

Per SysAid, "Any good IT service desk is focused on the following three things:

- Minimizing IT-caused business disruptions
- Providing a great support experience
- Optimizing operational efficiency and costs"<sup>2</sup>

A tech bar supports those objectives, while also minimizing business user disruption of IT. Instead of an employee having to interrupt an IT staff member with a face-to-face question, the tech bar creates a space designed for that type of interaction.

If your organization is among the just-over-50% of organizations still considering implementation, the next page contains five key steps for a great tech bar launch.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sysaid.com/blog/entry/is-it-time-to-reconsider-the-it-support-walk-up-channel>

## Three types of Tech Bars



### Walk-in and Scheduled Service

From reception desks to technical service centers and hospital waiting rooms; walk in service centers take a lot of different forms. Each has unique needs and specific considerations.

These locations usually have a greeting location, a desk or other furniture designed to facilitate a comfortable wait and experience.



### Learning and Exploration

First found at universities and higher education institutions, the learning center was originally designed for students to touch, use and ask questions about specific tools or practices.

Although they have been adopted by enterprises, they serve much the same role and take a relatively similar form.



### Hybrid

Perhaps the most flexible of both tech bars is the providing both experiences in a hybrid location. These types of spaces are usually larger, more flexible and staffed with highly skilled service employees that can also teach and empathize with those learning new things.

This unique model is usually challenged to clearly set expectations.

## 1 Pick a highly visible area

Picking a highly visible location or a high-traffic area will maximize awareness and utilization. Make your tech bar easy to find and convenient to visit.

Signage can also direct customers to the right location; making your services and expectations known.

Testing the location is also important, if it's too loud or visitor volume is too high, you may need to adjust or add a way for customers to schedule, return, or be notified when staff is available.

## 2 Offer extended hours

Provide service before and after core business hours, by appointment. Communicate these hours clearly so employees know when the tech bar is staffed, and that they have some flexibility in scheduling an appointment.

This does not necessarily mean you need to have IT professionals staffing the tech bar for all of those hours, however. Using tech bar software that enables users to schedule a time slot for their visit lets you optimize the time of your talented tech people. There's no need to staff the tech bar at 7:00 a.m. if the first scheduled appointment isn't until 8:00 (unless you want to offer true drop-in, first-come-first-served service during non-scheduled times).

## 3 Communicate services

Tech bars aren't right for solving every type of IT issue, but they are ideal for fixing simple, common issues, especially for problems with mobile devices (tablets, smartphones, and laptops). To help users resolve their issues most expediently, make it clear what kinds of problems the tech bar does—and does not—deal with.

## 4 Manage interactions

You'll probably want your tech bar to be open before and after normal business hours. But to optimize staff efficiency, use scheduling so you don't need to have an IT pro staffing the tech bar at 7:00 (a.m. or p.m.) if there are no appointments at those times.

Using Tech Bar software can also improve the flow, communications and expected wait times to customers before and during their visits.

These types of software could also include tracking, measuring and post-service follow up. Not to mention, integrating with existing systems.

## 5 Tell people

Once you have a firm launch date for your tech bar, start marketing it to users. Spread the word through multiple channels. Create signage. Put flyers in employee mailboxes. Promote it on your intranet or employee portal. Send out an email announcement, then also embed word about it in the email signature of all internal messages sent by IT. When your launch date arrives, hold an open house event to celebrate the opening of the tech bar.



With the right location, staff, communication, and software, a tech bar can simplify resolution for many types of tech problems. Though the average fully burdened cost per ticket is slightly higher for walk-up than for other channels (e.g., email or chat), the difference is more than offset by the reduction in employee downtime and increase in customer satisfaction.

By "putting a face on IT," a tech bar can also provide benefits that are harder to quantify—like making IT more approachable, and making everyone feel more like part of the same team.

