

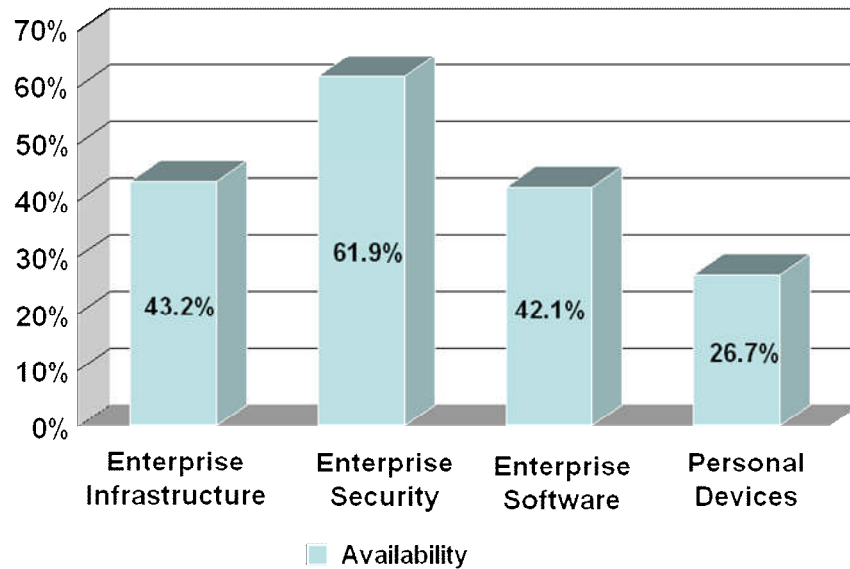
Overview

According to a recent survey by ServiceXRG of enterprise users, availability of support when the customer needs it is the leading characteristic of service excellence. Availability of services is at the heart of service excellence. What makes this characteristic particularly important is that no other element of service, including quality or timeliness, matters if services are not accessible.

Impact on Business

The emphasis on service availability is also directly related to the impact on the customer's business. Over 80% of enterprise users that request support classify their problem as important to severe with varying degrees of lost data and/or productivity. This alone suggests a primary reason customers place an emphasis on service availability as key component of service excellence.

The Importance of Service Availability by Product Category



Source: ServiceXRG

While service availability is important to most enterprise users, there is a notable increase in the emphasis on this characteristic by customers of Enterprise Security products. This is likely related to the potential devastating business implications of a virus outbreak or security breach.

Users cannot predict when they will need assistance, so when problems arise immediate access to assistance is the difference between average and excellent service. The importance of service excellence is tied to the potential impact on the customer's business. As the severity of an issue grows the importance of availability grows. Thus as the mission critical nature of the product increases availability of service must rise to meet customer expectations for availability of service.

Recommendations

- Understand the potential business impact of a problem with your products. Make sure that services are available to provide an appropriate level of response to minimize impact on customer's business.
- Assess the needs addressed by current offerings to determine if an opportunity exists to provide extended service coverage, and if so at what price. Not all customers need, nor are willing to pay for extended service coverage.

For More Information

Ladd Bodem has been involved in the planning and delivery of service excellence for over 25 years. This and other topics are covered in more detail in 2004 ServiceXRG *Users' Perception Study*. To download a free summary of this study please go to www.serviceXRG.com. If you have questions about this topic or other service industry issues contact Ladd at 781-237-9614 or by email at lbodem@servicexrg.com.

About ServiceXRG

ServiceXRG's research provides a balanced perspective of the IT services industry with views from users, service professionals and suppliers to the IT Services industry. Service Excellence Research Group (ServiceXRG) focuses exclusively on research about the service industry, with an emphasis on Technical Support. ServiceXRG provides custom benchmarking, competitive analysis, customer satisfaction assessment, and a series of reports on industry trends and best practices, visit www.servicexrg.com.