



# Brown University

## Summary

Brown University made its support for students and faculty more customer-focused by switching from a legacy helpdesk to Deskpro.

### > The Challenge

As one of the world's most prestigious universities, Brown University strives to offer a high standard of IT support for its core community of around 13,000 students and faculty.

Stephanie Obodda, Assistant Director, IT Communications and Training at Brown explains how customer centric Brown University are; "We really like to make sure the student experience is excellent. We contribute to that by our dedication to customer service. However, our actual help desk software was not up to scratch."

Before adopting Deskpro, Brown University was using the Remedy service desk. Remedy required users to log in and submit a ticket, which was not suitable for the university environment, where guests, parents and summer students all need to request support. Even when users could submit tickets, the inflexible ticket forms made for a bad experience.

"There were a lot of fields you had to drill down into and provide very specific information. People often got lost in that when they just had a very straightforward question."

The IT team at Brown University found the tool difficult to use and discovered issues with back-end processing that created problems for both the agents and end-users. As a result, the customer experience was affected, with "clumsy and clunky" processes that impacted students at Brown as well as a lack of features affecting the support team of agents.

### > The Solution

During their search for a new help desk, Jeff Clark, Associate Director of IT Services, and the IT management team at Brown evaluated at least seven options, including ServiceNow, ShareWell and Zendesk. Each help desk solution was tested within realistic environments to dictate whether it would be a correct fit for the scale of Brown's support operations as well as being user friendly and customizable.

"Deskpro stood out with its simple user interface, flexibility, ease of programming and configurations. Our agents loved the overall look and feel of it."

### About

Founded in 1764, Brown University is an Ivy League institution recognized as a leading research university with a commitment to exceptional undergraduate instruction. Brown has a diverse community of over 13,000 students and faculty.

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**John Spadaro**  
Deputy CIO  
Brown University

Whilst affordable pricing and integrated real-time chat capability were welcome additions to Brown University's check-list, the IT team decided to add on the Platinum Support package. The extra support contract now provides Brown with advanced cover across their servers, upgrades as well as dedicated emergency support and a 15 minute SLA response time from Deskpro support.

"As a company Deskpro was very willing to work with us. They worked with us on the extra support contract and went to great lengths to make us comfortable during the sales process, and that makes a huge difference to our confidence using the product across the whole University."

Adopting an On-Premise helpdesk software was a decision taken due to legislations surrounding data protection of students information. Whilst the Deskpro Cloud solution provides bank-level security and unrivalled up-time, having both options available allows a choice that not many other helpdesk solutions provide.

"There are benefits to using Cloud, but we needed a solution where we could host and store our own data on our own servers. The roll out of Deskpro On-Premise was smooth and we had no problems getting it set up and running."

## > The Benefits

Although the end user experience drove the adoption of Deskpro within Brown, the support staff who use it every day praise the agent interface compared to Remedy (Brown University's previous helpdesk solution). Roberto Lorenzo, a Help Desk Specialist in the customer service centre was incredibly happy with the move to a new on-premise helpdesk.

"Deskpro is a lot easier to navigate, a lot easier to see different teams' tickets, a lot easier to see what I need to work on and help other agents with their tickets as well. There are a lot of settings in Deskpro that help make everything an easier process."

Transparency and tracking ticket workflows was always something that Brown struggled with when they were using their previous helpdesk. Now, with powerful and customizable permissions and departments on Deskpro, the management team has full visibility of all communication with users.

"Nothing falls through the cracks, you see the conversation back and forth, you don't have to worry about who's working from which system and who responded to what, so that's been a great help in terms of speeding up our response time and giving us a good accountability of accuracy."

The improved user experience has increased engagement with the comprehensive self-help content that Brown offers through the integrated Knowledgebase. Visitors to the knowledgebase can also interact with articles, by upvoting or downvoting them, which has helped the team identify which articles are helpful and which have issues.

"Being able to search the chat, tickets and knowledgebase articles gives us an overview of all of our content in one place. Coupled with deeper reporting, it has allowed us to actually find out about our users and tweak the way we work to service them best."

Number of Student & Faculty

13,000



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Number of Agents

250



> **The Future**

The interaction between universities and their students has changed over the past 10 years, none more so than at Brown. With the rise of social media and instant messaging tools such as Live Chat, the number of different ways that a student or potential student can get in touch has increased beyond just email.

“We are really looking forward to implementing Deskpro’s ‘Social’ and ‘Voice’ channels. Not only will it allow us to interact with more students and keep those conversations tightly in our helpdesk, it also means we can get rid of another legacy software package.”

The results of their successful implementation and execution of Deskpro for use as customer support software are plain to see across the support and IT teams at Brown.

“We talk to our peers regularly in higher education. Without question we would recommend Deskpro to other universities. We’ve found a sweet spot that really drives customer service over building metrics.”

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