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Rapidly Changing Enterprise Customer Requirements for Technical Support Put New Pressures on Technology Companies, According to Independent Research

Study by the SSPA and Tech Strategy Partners Reveals Enterprise Customers Are Focused on Lower Costs and Greater Accountability, Open to Offshore and Web-based Support

Redwood Shores and San Diego, Calif. – Oct. 4, 2004 – Enterprise customers are demanding more accountability from vendors on technical service commitments, as well as reductions in Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), according to new research by the Service & Support Professionals Association (SSPA) and Tech Strategy Partners. The research also shows that enterprise customers are receptive to offshore and web-based technical support, provided it is effective, as part of a drive to increase quality and reduce costs of support. These are a few of the findings in the 2005 Support Demand Research Series being released by The SSPA and Tech Strategy Partners in early October. Today the research findings and implications will be presented for the first time at the SSPA Conference @ Savannah, (www.sspaconferences.com/savannah).

VERITAS, one of the leading software vendors in the market today, acknowledges these issues and is doing a variety of things to respond to these emerging trends. "VERITAS strives to continuously improve the customer experience through automated and proactive global support offerings," said Michael Wentz, senior vice president technical support, VERITAS Software Corporation. "The latest technical advances in our support offerings enable customers to troubleshoot and analyze their IT environments, fix problems and rapidly escalate technical support cases without picking up the phone or being distracted from their daily responsibilities. The fundamental trends described by Tech Strategy Partners and the SSPA in this study provide strong validation of our evolving technical support strategy."

Key Findings from the 2005 Support Demand Research Series

Key findings for the enterprise market include:

- 60% of customers want more accountability from vendors on agreed-upon service levels.
- 28% plan to address total cost of ownership (TCO) by renegotiating maintenance contract pricing, while 43% will address TCO through product consolidation.
- 58% of enterprise users will accept offshore support, assuming existing service commitments are met.
- 81% of enterprise customers are willing to initiate a support request online, more than twice the industry average for support requests initiated online today. 40% are willing to conduct the entire support transaction online.

"This study is the first ever to take an in-depth look at the demands of enterprise customers in the area of support," said JB Wood, president and CEO of the SSPA. "By utilizing these findings technology vendors can better understand what customers need and expect in terms of

service and support. More importantly, they can use those findings to provide the best customer experience possible.”

“Our research has clearly revealed that while CIOs want their most urgent technical support needs handled quickly and effectively, they also have a vision for simpler, more reliable and lower-cost operations” added Rahul Sood, principal at Tech Strategy Partners. “Today, the technology industry is focused on meeting customer expectations for day-to-day technical support. In order for technology companies to defend their maintenance profits, they need to successfully meet current customer needs as well as address customers’ long-term expectations.”

About the 2005 Support Demand Research Series

The enterprise business portion of this study was based on over 200 surveys submitted by CIOs, IT executives and senior IT managers within small, mid-market and large enterprises, as well as 20 in-depth in-person interviews with CIOs of \$1B+ enterprise technology companies.

Pricing and Availability

The 2005 Support Demand Research Series details the requirements of both consumer and enterprise customers. The series can be purchased as a whole and individual research reports from the series can be purchased. For more information about the research series and to purchase, visit www.thesspa.com/supportdemand or call 858-674-5491.

About the SSPA

Founded in 1989, the Service & Support Professionals Association (SSPA) was formed to focus on the specific needs of service executives who are responsible for support centers and overall customer relations. Today, the SSPA represents over 24,000 service professionals at 2,700 support centers worldwide. The SSPA was created for professionals, managers and executives that make their living in the IT support services community. For more information regarding the SSPA and other related divisions, visit www.thesspa.com or call 858-674-5491.

About Tech Strategy Partners

Tech Strategy Partners, LLC is a premier technology consulting firm. Tech Strategy Partners advises clients on a variety of issues that impact their business including: technology and product development; services, support and maintenance; offshore programs; mergers and acquisitions; and strategic investment. Their expertise is developed over 30 years of strategic and operational experience in technology businesses in North America, Europe, India and Asia-Pacific. Founded in 2003, Tech Strategy Partners is headquartered in Redwood City, California with offices in Bangalore, India. For additional information, please visit www.techstrategypartners.com or call 650-593-3815.

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