



HDI SERVICE AND SUPPORT AWARDS
NOMINATION TOOLKIT



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Validation feels pretty good, doesn't it? Acknowledgement and celebration goes a long way toward keeping employees satisfied, teams performing at a high level, and leadership engaged. Get the recognition you deserve with an HDI award.

Each year, HDI honors the very best in the technical support and service management profession, recognizing the individuals, teams, and organizations that have achieved and maintained the highest standards of quality and customer satisfaction. *And every finalist gets one free pass to attend SupportWorld Live!*

Do you have what it takes to be a winner? This toolkit provides everything you need to know about nominating a peer, your team, or yourself for one of our awards: dates and deadlines, categories and criteria, tips and tricks, and more. Still have questions? Contact the HDI Awards team at Awards@ThinkHDI.com.



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Call for Entries Opens:

August 3, 2020

Call for Entries Closes:

October 31, 2020

**Local Chapter Finalists Announced
(Analyst and Technician awards only):**

December 2020

National Finalists Announced (all awards):

February 5, 2021

Finalist Interviews (virtual):

February 15-28, 2021

Winners Announced at SupportWorld Live:

April 19-23, 2021

WHY ENTER?

- ✓ **Raise your profile.** Across all sizes and types of organizations, award winners and finalists benefit from industry exposure through a coordinated PR campaign and exposure to some of the most influential people in the profession. Our program offers unique PR and marketing collateral through articles and interviews written by our content team and featured in our newsletter. Also, some of our event media partners highlight finalists in their magazines and report on the results following the event.
- ✓ **Measure your performance.** By entering, you will be able to gauge how your support organization, team, and/or company compare against the very best.
- ✓ **Acknowledge your team's efforts.** In the busy world of service and support, achievements are easy to overlook. The process of completing the entry form allows you to pause and consider what (and who) contributed to your success and where you can go from here. Bonus: finalists are strongly encouraged to attend the awards ceremony and celebrate success with their team!
- ✓ **Land new customers.** Customers like to work with winning companies, and reputation is often a factor in purchasing decisions. When prospective customers see that you've won an award for outstanding service and support, it may motivate them to choose you over your competition.
- ✓ **Retain existing employees.** Winning awards can improve employee morale, too. When employees are proud of their team, organization, or company's achievements, they have an excuse to brag to their friends and family.
- ✓ **Attract new employees.** Awards can help you attract the best new employees. People are drawn to award-winning businesses because they want to work for successful companies. In today's experience economy, potential employees are looking at awards and company rankings to make career decisions.
- ✓ **Celebrate your achievements as a team.** Celebrate your team's success by attending the awards ceremony at SupportWorld Live. Each finalist receives one complimentary pass for the event and a discount code to help you bring even more team members!

Ready to get started? Keep reading for criteria and more. When you're ready to submit your entry, head to our [awards portal](#) to create an account and enter.

Pro Tip: Print and share the application questions with your team.
Work collaboratively, and allow yourself plenty of time.

CATEGORIES, CRITERIA, & NOMINATION QUESTIONS

The HDI Service and Support Awards celebrate both individuals and teams that have achieved the highest levels of excellence in the industry. We accept nominations in the following categories:

- ✓ **Best Service and Support Analyst**
- ✓ **Best Service and Support Technician**
- ✓ **Best Service and Support Manager**
- ✓ **Best Customer Experience**
- ✓ **Best Service and Support Culture**
- ✓ **Best Use of Technology**
- ✓ **Best Service Improvement Initiative**
- ✓ **Best Service and Support Organization**
- ✓ **Local Chapter Officer of the Year**
- ✓ **Lifetime Achievement Award**



BEST SERVICE AND SUPPORT ANALYST

This award recognizes the support industry's top frontline analysts, generalists who possess the knowledge and skills required to provide quality service and support for internal or external customers. The ideal candidates have a positive attitude, demonstrate a commitment to excellent service, and consistently exceed performance objectives. Nominees will be judged on key qualities and characteristics, including:

- ✓ **Problem-solving skills**
- ✓ **Customer service skills**
- ✓ **Commitment to teamwork**
- ✓ **Communication and interpersonal skills**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the nominee's role in your organization, including how long they've been with the organization. (up to 500 words)
2. Explain why you're nominating this individual. (up to 1,000 words)
3. Provide either an example of excellent service or support provided by the nominee OR an example of how the nominee went above and beyond for your customers, the organization, or their peers. (up to 1,000 words)
4. Provide examples of the nominee's commitment to teamwork. (up to 1,000 words)
5. Provide examples of the nominee's drive or motivation to perform at a high level. (up to 1,000 words)
6. Provide examples of the quality of technical aptitude the nominee brings to your team. (up to 1,000 words)
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST SERVICE AND SUPPORT TECHNICIAN

This award recognizes the support industry's top technicians, specialists who possess the knowledge and skills required to provide remote and hands-on service and support. The ideal candidates have exemplary people skills, advanced technical skills, a commitment to providing excellent service, and a record of consistently exceeding performance objectives. Nominees will be judged on key qualities and characteristics, including:

- ✓ **Technical aptitude**
- ✓ **Troubleshooting and problem-solving skills**
- ✓ **Commitment to teamwork**
- ✓ **Adaptability and flexibility**
- ✓ **Communication and interpersonal skills**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the nominee's role in your organization, including how long they've been with the organization. (up to 500 words)
2. Explain why you're nominating this individual. (up to 1,000 words)
3. Provide either an example of excellent service or support provided by the nominee OR an example of how the nominee went above and beyond for your customers, the organization, or their peers. (up to 1,000 words)
4. Provide examples of the nominee's commitment to teamwork. (up to 1,000 words)
5. Provide examples of the nominee's drive or motivation to perform at a high level. (up to 1,000 words)
6. Provide examples of the quality of technical aptitude the nominee brings to your team. (up to 1,000 words)
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST SERVICE AND SUPPORT MANAGER

Leadership is about doing the things that drive action, get results, and improve performance. It is the ability to influence and motivate others, and to provide the tools and environment that allow others to make the best contribution towards the attainment of goals. A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. They might not set out to be a leader, but they become one by the quality of their actions and the integrity of their intent.

This award acknowledges and honors a service and support manager who has excelled at supporting any or all IT services within their organization and who most clearly demonstrates the ability to serve and advance information technology within their industry. Judging is based on the following elements:

- ✓ **Demonstrated leadership skills**
- ✓ **Strong communication skills**
- ✓ **A track record of successfully mentoring employees**
- ✓ **Command of the strategies and tactics needed for a high-performing service and support organization**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the nominee and their role as a leader in the service and support organization. (up to 500 words)
2. Describe the nominee's leadership style. (up to 1,000 words)
3. Describe the nominee's top 3 strengths as a leader. (up to 1,000 words)
4. As a leader in the organization, how does the nominee demonstrate or communicate their expectations and values. (up to 1,000 words)
5. How does the nominee manage the strategic and tactical components of their organization? (up to 1,000 words)
6. How does the nominee mentor their team to grow personally and professionally? (up to 1,000 words)
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

This award will go to the organization that best leverages its people, processes, and technology to drive customer satisfaction and loyalty for the brand. Organizations that set high standards for customer interactions and instill that culture in their employees will be recognized. Judging is based on the following elements:

- ✓ **A thoughtful and strategic philosophy around customer experience management**
- ✓ **Evidence of a strategic methodology for measuring and communicating customer satisfaction to employees, management, and other key stakeholders.**
- ✓ **Evidence of the effective integration of the customer experience initiative with the organization's coaching, analyst training, and ongoing development.**
- ✓ **Evidence of a strategic approach to managing dissatisfied customers.**
- ✓ **Before-and-after evidence of the impact of the organization's customer experience initiative on the customer experience.**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Explain your organization's philosophy around customer experience and how it reflects the corporate mission, vision, and values. (up to 1,000 words)
2. Please describe your methodology for measuring and communicating customer satisfaction to employees, management, and other key stakeholders. Explain the process, the measurement, the scoring and the reporting. Include all metrics that are a component of the program (CSAT, NPS, FCR, etc.). (up to 1,000 words)
3. How is the measurement of CSAT or the customer experience reported on and communicated to the rest of the organization (e.g., via Marketing, Sales, direct communication, etc.)? To the organization? To the customers? (up to 1,000 words)
4. How do you specifically handle DISSATISFIED customers? How do you communicate with them? Do you attempt to convert individual DSAT customers into satisfied ones? How is DSAT reported? (up to 1,000 words)
5. Are you able to provide before-and-after evidence of the impact of the organization's customer experience initiative on the customer experience? If so, please describe. (up to 1,000 words)
6. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST SERVICE AND SUPPORT CULTURE

This category focuses on the employee experience and celebrates organizations that promote a creative and collaborative work environment. Teamwork and innovation are encouraged, and employees understand the mission, vision, and business goals of their organization. Employees are supported and empowered to continuously improve. Judging is based on the following elements:

- ✓ Evidence of a strategic approach to cultivating and developing a positive team culture.
- ✓ Evidence of a strategic methodology for measuring and communicating employee engagement.
- ✓ Evidence that the organization's culture has positively impacted recruiting, hiring, and retention.
- ✓ Testimonial from the corporate level.
- ✓ Testimonial from the employee level.

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe your team culture. (up to 1,000 words)
2. What have you done to cultivate and develop the team culture? (up to 1,000 words)
3. Explain how you measure employee engagement and share any key metrics. (up to 1,000 words)
4. How has your organization's culture positively impacted recruiting, hiring, and retention? (up to 1,000 words)
5. Please share a statement from a corporate executive that explains the impact your organization culture has had on the business as a whole. Please include contact information.
6. Please share a statement from a frontline employee that explains what they love about your organization's culture. Please include contact information.
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This award will go to the organization that has most successfully leveraged technology to improve services. This includes how this technology or tool was identified to meet the organization's objectives; the process in which the technology was selected or developed; the team structure adopting, utilizing, or supporting it; and performance before vs. after adoption.

Please focus on a SINGLE Technology piece or ONE Technology suite of services that was deployed as a SINGLE project. Finalists are determined based on the following criteria:

- ✓ **A clear understanding of the key objectives and expected ROI behind the adoption.**
- ✓ **A clear description of the process in which the organization chose this technology.**
- ✓ **Clear proof of a thoughtful adoption approach, as shown by milestones and benchmarks.**
- ✓ **A unique approach, including key points of distinction from other deployments of similar technology and a focus on continual enhancements.**
- ✓ **Clear evidence of the positive impact this technology has had on both the analysts and customer experience.**
- ✓ **Evidence that the technology product or suite of services has had a broader positive impact beyond the organization.**
- ✓ **Clear articulation of how this technology has driven success for the team, and why this use case is award-worthy.**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe how the organization determined the NEED for this technology product or suite of services. What issue were you attempting to solve or advantage did you want to gain? (up to 1,000 words)
2. Describe the process in which the organization chose this particular technology product or suite of services and the business partner/vendor. (up to 1,000 words)
3. What internal and external resources did you need to adopt this technology product or suite of services correctly? (up to 1,000 words)
4. Describe your adoption process and milestones. How did you measure success? What challenges did you need to overcome within the adoption, and is there anything that you would have done differently in retrospect? (up to 1,000 words)
5. Was there anything unique or innovative about the adoption of this technology product or suite of services? Please describe. (up to 500 words)
6. How has the technology product or suite of services improved the overall efficiency or results of the organization? Please explain the impact on analysts and customers. (up to 1,000 words)
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

BEST SERVICE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

The Best Service Improvement Initiative Award recognizes an organization that has successfully adopted or improved one or more service offerings. There is no limit to the scope of the award beyond service improvement, which could include improved internal process efficiencies or improvements in service quality and the customer experience. The improvement strategy could be based on a published methodology or framework, or it could be a result of innovation within the organization to programs such as knowledge management, change management, and problem management. Finalists are determined based on the following criteria:

- ✓ **A clear understanding of the key objectives and expected ROI behind the initiative.**
- ✓ **A clear description of the process in which the organization chose to adopt the plan.**
- ✓ **Clear proof of a thoughtful adoption approach, as shown by milestones and benchmarks.**
- ✓ **A unique approach and a focus on continual enhancements.**
- ✓ **Clear evidence of the positive impact this initiative has had on the business, from the perspective of both employees/analysts and customers.**
- ✓ **Clear articulation of how this initiative has driven success for the team, and why this case is award-worthy.**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe how the organization determined the NEED for service improvement. What challenge were you attempting to solve or advantage did you want to gain? (up to 500 words)
2. Describe the process by which the organization chose this particular approach to service improvement. (up to 1,000 words)
3. Describe your adoption process and milestones. How did you measure success? Provide evidence. (up to 1,000 words)
4. What challenges did you need to overcome within the adoption, and is there anything that you would have done differently in retrospect? (up to 1,000 words)
5. Was there anything unique or innovative about the service improvement initiative? Please describe. (up to 500 words)
6. How has the service improvement initiative improved the overall efficiency or results of the organization? Please explain the impact on analysts and customers. Provide metrics to illustrate your results. (up to 1,000 words)
7. Upload any relevant documentation in one PDF (dashboards, spreadsheets, etc.).

BEST SERVICE AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

This award recognizes teams that have set and achieved the highest standards of excellence in customer support, technical support, and/or service management. Nominees must demonstrate to what extent and how their organization focuses on the employee and customer experience, strategic business alignment, and teamwork. They must also be able to show how well processes are defined, executed, and improved, as well as how they align with industry good practices. Finalists will be judged on key qualities and characteristics, including:

- ✓ **Clear vision, mission, and strategy**
- ✓ **Alignment with the business's goals and strategy**
- ✓ **Process execution and improvement**
- ✓ **Commitment to customer satisfaction**
- ✓ **High employee engagement and satisfaction**
- ✓ **Teamwork**

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe your company. (up to 250 words)
2. Describe your organization, including scope (e.g., who you support, number of support staff, scope of support responsibilities, volume of issues handled per year, industry, hours of operation) and organizational structure. (up to 1,000 words)
3. Describe how your organization's mission and vision align with the mission, vision, and business goals of the organization as a whole. (up to 1,000 words)
4. Describe how well processes are defined, executed, and improved, as well as how they align with industry good practices. (up to 1,000 words)
5. Describe how you promote and measure employee engagement, and share evidence of success. How is teamwork encouraged? How does management show support for your team and its performance, including any professional development and training provided? Provide metrics to support your examples. (up to 1,000 words)
6. Describe how you measure customer satisfaction, and share evidence of success. Explain how the team uses customer feedback to further improve satisfaction. Provide metrics to support your examples. (up to 1,000 words)
7. Supporting Documentation: Upload any documentation (metrics, testimonials, etc.) that you feel would support this nomination in one PDF. (optional)

LOCAL CHAPTER OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Local chapters are the heart of the HDI community. Run by volunteers, they bring together technical support professionals to connect, learn, and grow the profession and their careers. The Local Chapter Officer of the Year Award honors a hard-working volunteer leader from the local chapter community.

NOMINATION QUESTIONS:

1. Provide a biography of the nominee. (up to 200 words)
2. Explain why you are nominating this local chapter officer. (up to 500 words)
3. Explain the nominee's significant contributions to his or her local chapter. (up to 500 words)
4. Explain the responsibilities the nominee has taken on to improve his or her local chapter. (up to 500 words)
5. Describe how the nominee has demonstrated creativity and leadership in his or her volunteer efforts. (up to 500 words)
6. Describe the nominee's passion for the local chapter community. (up to 500 words)



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award recognizes the lasting contributions, leadership, enthusiasm, and tireless efforts of industry luminaries who've committed themselves to elevating the reputation of the technical support profession and improving the industry.

HDI's panel of judges selects the nominees, and industry professionals are welcome to send nominee suggestions to Awards@ThinkHDI.com. We use the following criteria to evaluate their accomplishments in and dedication to the technical support industry:

- ✓ **The candidate has been active in the technical support industry for at least 10 years.**
- ✓ **The candidate has made noteworthy contributions to the industry, including (but not limited to):**
 - Providing thought leadership on the industry's strategy and direction
 - Sitting on the boards of industry organizations
 - Providing industry mentorship and leadership
 - Contributing timely content to industry publications
 - Providing input on or helping develop industry research
 - Influencing industry best practices, standards, or frameworks
- ✓ **The candidate has demonstrated dedication to his or her own professional growth and the growth and success of the industry as a whole.**



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ENTRY

- ✓ **Allow yourself plenty of time to prepare your entries.** Be sure to set aside plenty of time to write your entry and get input from around the business.
- ✓ **Think carefully about which category you want to enter.** Think about your significant accomplishments and play to your strengths by entering the most relevant category for your team. Also, bear in mind that you will need hard, quantifiable results to really wow the judges. Can't find these? You may want to consider another category.
- ✓ **Stay focused.** It's tempting to tell our judges about every amazing thing your team has accomplished, but it's important to stick to the criteria. Tell the judges about your most notable achievements in a clear, consistent way. If you can, try and tell a story with your entry. For example, the reason for the initiative is the beginning, the middle is how you implemented it, and the ending is the results you have gained.
- ✓ **Read the questions on the entry form carefully and make sure that you are answering them thoroughly.** It sounds simple, but you'd be amazed how many entrants misunderstand the questions or include information that is not relevant. That said, don't skimp on your responses.
- ✓ **Remember that the judges don't know your business – avoid acronyms.** The simpler, the better. Take a step back from the environment and processes you are absorbed in every day. We've seen lots of entries that seem to assume that all service and support operations run in the same way, but this is not the case; therefore, it's best to be as clear as possible.
- ✓ **Involve the whole team.** Ask staff at all levels for input – there may be hidden gems within the business that you don't know about, and employees may have unique ideas about information to include. Your team will gain a lot from looking back and seeing everything they've achieved – and they will feel appreciated. Also, consider the benefits of talking to someone at a high level. This may give you a good idea of how the initiative or the person has affected the business as a whole and how it fits into the company's strategic goals.
- ✓ **Evidence, evidence, evidence.** Keep statements factual, as this will help with the credibility of your entry. For example, instead of saying "We have an excellent training program," say "Our new training program contributed to a customer satisfaction increase of 20% since the program began."
- ✓ **Don't forget the customer!** It's essential that you make it clear how the individual or initiative has impacted customers. Testimonials from customers and internal stakeholders are incredibly powerful – choose the best examples that clearly and concisely demonstrate your excellence.
- ✓ **Presentation, spelling, and grammar matter.** It sounds obvious, but it's difficult to overstate how important this is. Make sure to build time in your entry process for proofreading. Try reading the answers to the questions aloud to a friend or relative – if it makes sense to them, it will make sense to the judges.
- ✓ **Supporting material helps.** Don't overload judges with supporting materials that aren't relevant to your story. Carefully consider how you can most effectively illustrate your success. Feel free to include metrics, testimonials, etc., whatever best supports your story. Package up your supporting documentation in one PDF to make it more accessible for the judges.
- ✓ **Follow the example of past winners.** Need some inspiration? Browse our [award pages](#) to learn about past winners.