

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **New Research on Consumer Technical Support Reveals Preference for Phone Service, Fear of Downloads and Age Bias Against Offshore Support**

*Technology Companies to Plan Future Customer Service Strategies Using 2005 Support Demand Research Series from the SSPA and Tech Strategy Partners*

**San Diego and Redwood Shores, Calif.** – Oct. 4, 2004 – Consumers of software, hardware and peripherals still prefer to get technical support over the phone despite vendors trying to push them to the Web, according to new research by the Service & Support Professionals Association (SSPA) and Tech Strategy Partners. The research also shows consumers fear installing downloads and patches might cause problems or infect their systems, younger consumers are more accepting of offshore support than their parents, and most consumers say that good support is an important factor when deciding on what product to buy – although many still refuse to pay for it. 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](http://www.sspaconferences.com/savannah)).

“The majority of today’s consumer technology customers don’t want to pay extra for technical support, but demand high-quality, affordable products. This presents a real challenge for the companies that serve this market,” said J.B. Wood, President and CEO of the SSPA. “By utilizing the findings of this study, companies can map appropriate support delivery methods and price options to different consumers based on their demands.”

“In the consumer technology market, unlike the enterprise market, technical support does not have a viable recurring revenue model”, added Rahul Sood, principal at Tech Strategy Partners. “To fund technical support with their limited budgets, vendors need to be much more creative and effective when it comes to self-service, product design and offshoring. The key challenge will be presenting these alternatives in a way that is acceptable to consumers.”

#### **Key Findings from the 2005 Support Demand Research Series**

Key findings for the consumer market include:

- 44% of consumers still prefer the phone over other means of receiving service or support.
- Half of consumers report that “self-service” tools do not work for them.
- 60% of consumers fear that installing downloads and patches will cause problems or infect their systems.
- 7 in 10 consumers over the age of 45 discourage technology companies from moving support offshore – even if the service levels are high. Younger consumers are more accepting.
- 47% of consumers rate the customer service skills of offshore representatives as poor compared to just 12% of onshore representatives.

- 79% of consumers say the quality of support is a factor when purchasing a technology product. 53% view it as one of the three most important selection criteria.
- Only 27% of consumers said that they don't mind paying for technical support.

### **About the 2005 Support Demand Research Series**

The consumer market portion of this study was based on over 2,000 surveys of online consumers across America in the month of September 2004. The survey sample was balanced to the total US online population. Survey results were determined at a 95% confidence level with a five percent margin of error.

### **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 2005 Support Demand Research Series and to purchase, visit [www.thesspa.com/supportdemand](http://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](http://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](http://www.techstrategypartners.com) or call 650-593-3815.

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