

Support: Moving Through The Maturity Levels

How to progress your organisation's Support maturity from Reactive to Optimised: ticket deflection and self-service across both incident and query management.

Support measures how much of your incident and query volume customers can resolve themselves, before it ever needs a person. It's not about the incident management tool itself; it's about how well self-service and deflection are built around it, and around every other kind of customer query, so effort scales without headcount growing at the same rate. It's one of four Retain dimensions in NextCentric's **maturity assessment**. This guide breaks down what each maturity level looks like and the specific moves that get you to the next one.

DRIVE	Enablement	Understanding	Consistency	Time-to-Value
RETAIN	Support	Adoption	Value Realisation	Health & Risk
GROW	Personalisation	Active Listening	Expansion	Trust & Advocacy

1 LEVEL REACTIVE	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE - Every incident and query, however simple, requires a person to pick it up and respond, so headcount must grow in lockstep with volume - There's no self-service option, so speed and accuracy depend entirely on who happens to be available	MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL - Identify your five most repeated incidents and queries as your first deflection candidates - Publish basic self-service answers for those five, even in a simple FAQ, to prove the model works
2 LEVEL EMERGING	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE - A basic help centre or FAQ exists, but it only covers general queries, so incidents still pull a person in every time - Deflection isn't tracked, so you can't yet prove self-service is actually reducing the load on your team	MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL - Extend self-service content to cover common incident-related questions, like status and workarounds - Start tracking deflection rate so you can see how much volume is genuinely being absorbed without a person
3 LEVEL DEFINED	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE - Self-service systematically covers both routine queries and common incidents, and volume is visibly starting to decouple from headcount - Deflection is tracked by type, and customers are guided toward fast, accurate self-service before reaching a person	MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL - Introduce automation, chatbots or guided flows, for the highest-volume deflection candidates to push speed and accuracy further - Set deflection targets by type so headcount growth can start to slow relative to volume growth
4 LEVEL MANAGED	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE - Deflection and self-service performance are tracked and reported on a regular cadence, with headcount growth demonstrably lagging volume growth - A named owner is accountable for keeping self-service fast and accurate across incidents and queries alike	MOVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL - Automate the surfacing of new deflection candidates as incident and query patterns shift, so coverage keeps pace with volume - Continuously retire or refresh low-touch self-service content that isn't actually deflecting, protecting accuracy as coverage grows
5 LEVEL OPTIMISED	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE - AI proactively resolves or deflects the majority of incidents and queries before a person is needed, so volume can keep growing without headcount following it - Humans are reserved for complex, sensitive, or genuinely novel cases, where judgement matters more than scale	SUSTAIN THIS LEVEL - Monitor AI-handled deflection for accuracy, not just volume, so speed never comes at the cost of getting it right - Keep escalation to a high-touch human fast and easy whenever low-touch self-service falls short, so scale never comes at the cost of trust

COMMON PITFALLS WHEN ADVANCING SUPPORT MATURITY

- × Building self-service only for queries and ignoring incident-related deflection
- × Publishing self-service content and never tracking whether it deflects anything
- × Chasing deflection rate at the cost of customers actually getting resolved
- × Making it hard to escalate to a human when self-service genuinely can't help

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