Ascertia Support Services Guide

ASCERTIA LTD

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1 Ascertia Support Services Guide

1.1 Introduction

This document provides an overview of Ascertia's Support Services. The focus of the Ascertia Support Team is to ensure effective delivery of support and maintenance services to our clients and partners. This must be done with sufficient proficiency to ensure that Client operational effectiveness is maintained, system issues and downtime are minimised and that any product upgrades are handled effectively. The support service offers:

- Web-based management tools to open support tickets on-line, make updates, and review the ticket history, plus email integration

- On-line assistance using multiple channels including web, email, chat and if required escalation to web-conference and telephone

- Defined response times with an escalation process

- Automatic routing to the correct product support team

- Automated alert notifications, formal action plans and timely status updates

Support must be logged through a formal channel, there is no provision for inbound phone calls to announce an issue. This is deliberate to stop calls from people who choose not to read the manuals themselves and also to ensure there is clear structure and relevant information in the support ticket.

1.2 Support hours

Providing a support and maintenance agreement is in place and payment has been completed then a 12 hour x 5 days product support service is available from 06:00 to 18:00 GMT Monday to Friday. The web support centre is available 24x7 to receive support tickets.

Extended support over weekends can be arranged on a chargeable basis (although at Ascertia's sole discretion this may be provided without charge for short, reasonable hour durations once or twice a year). This can help with specific planned events, such as managing upgrades to production systems. Ascertia's products are robust and well proven and when running in production mode they can be relied upon to continue operating without issue for months. Little oversight is required beyond regular database and software and logs data backups. Although extended support is typically not required, cover for Saturday, Sunday or even 24x7 support services can be made available at an additional charge – ask for details.

1.3 Emailing support tickets

Email-based support tickets can be sent to support@ascertia.com. These are automatically added to the relevant user's web support account and thus form part of the support history. If an account does not already exist for this email address then one will be automatically assigned to it. It is important therefore to use a consistent official email address when submitting tickets via email. The use of generic web-mail services such as hotmail, gmail, etc is not recommended.

1.4 Creating on-line support accounts

To register for support services complete the web form available from the online support area: http://www.ascertia.com and click on support.

The web support area allows you to create new support tickets, review past ones & conduct real-time chat session with the support team. The web-system is linked with emailed support tickets for tracking purposes.

1.5 Logging support requests

Opening a new support ticket is simple, either send an email or login to the support area and click the "Submit Ticket" option. The following information should be provided

- The product for which you are seeking support

- Ticket type, such as enhancement request, incident, installation issue, etc

- Priority level (critical, high, medium, low)

- Summary plus any details to reproduce the issue

- Environment information

- Product log information, screenshots and other relevant information

1.6 Reviewing support tickets

Users are notified automatically via their registered email address whenever one of their support tickets is updated by the Support Team. To review the updates simply login to support area and click "View Tickets" option. This will show users their support tickets and they can simply click on one of the tickets to see the latest updates from the Support Team. Further information can be provided, priorities can be changed or the ticket can be closed.

1.7 Instant Message Chat Sessions

Support tickets can often be resolved much faster if an interactive chat session can be held between key Client staff and the Ascertia support or technical teams. Ascertia offers this facility using three optional methods:

- Web chat: Click on live chat icon from top of the Ascertia homepage

- MSN: support@ascertia.com

- Skype: ascertia.support

It is not advised to try to start a request for support using Chat – there are so many options that it is always simpler and easier to document everything in an email and supply the relevant log files. Chat is most effective when insufficient or ambiguous information is provided via email or on-line and different options need to be checked.

1.8 Web Conferencing

For complex issues it can be very useful for the Support Team to share their screen or share the user screen so that both sides can witness product behaviour in a defined environment or to demonstrate a complex feature. In such cases Ascertia can schedule an online webinar at a mutually convenient time. We generally use TeamViewer or Citrix GoToMeeting both have security controls to ensure that Ascertia Support can only carry out actions that are overseen and authorised by the local user.

1.9 Voice Communication

Ascertia Support Team will switch to voice communication when deemed necessary, using VOIP (Skype, TeamViewer and GoToMeeting) or normal phone lines. In such cases prior arrangements will be made to ensure the Support team call at a convenient time and using the preferred channel.

Customers can also request voice based communication by sending emails to support@ascertia.com or escalation emails to the relevant account manager and finally the account manager can be contacted to escalate a support issue.

To ensure the fastest resolution time, it is essential that the initial support request is submitted electronically with a full set of information as described above.

1.10 Priority Levels

Within a support and maintenance agreement support priority levels define the degree of impact to the Client's business as a result of a technical issue with an Ascertia product.

Ascertia assigns all tickets a priority level, which determines the response time, deployment of resources, and other rules of engagement. It is important to note that the Client must notify Ascertia promptly, taking all reasonable measures to supply all the information necessary for Ascertia to reproduce the error. Once this is done the call can be effectively handled and prioritised.

Ascertia defines priority levels as:

- Level 1 - Critical:
  A production service is stopped because of an Ascertia product error that renders the software inoperable. A response time of less than 4 working hours will be provided. The issue is closely monitored and escalated as appropriate until it is resolved. The target is to remedy the error or supply a work-around solution as soon as operationally possible and within two working days.

- Level 2 - High:
  A production service is severely impacted through an Ascertia product error that impacts the normal performance of the software. A response time of less than 4 working hours will be provided. The target is to remedy the error or supply a work-around solution within five working days.

- Level 3 - Medium:
  A production or test or development system has identified errors within an Ascertia product that affect the functionality of the software but do not degrade its former normal use. An initial response time of less than 10 working hours will be provided. The target is to remedy the error or supply a work-around solution within thirty working days or within the next patch release as may be agreed.

- Level 4 - Low:
  These issues are minor in nature and do not affect the performance of the software. An initial response time of less than 24 working hours will be provided. The target is to respond to the Client within five working days and define if the issue will be addressed in a future release of the product.

Test Systems must always be used to prove that a release of a supported product meets the business need. An issue that has not been properly tested in advance of moving into production environment cannot be classed as a Level 1 issue and at Ascertia's sole discretion will be treated as a Level 2 or Level 3 issue.

1.11 Ensuring Effective Support

Effective support can only be provided if adequate information is provided:

- Communicate the level of impact on your business and set a reasonable priority rating for your call (not everything is not priority Level 1)

- Provide clear and detailed descriptions of problems encountered and any steps taken prior to the problem being seen

- Provide all product Log files, and where appropriate screenshots and any other support files (e.g. test files, certificates or CRLs)

- Confirm the issue can be duplicated on a separate test system

- Document specific instructions for replicating the problem

- Confirm the product version number, as well as the version of any third-party products that are related to the issue

- Identify the most recent update that was applied to the environment and when this was

- Determine if anything has changed in your computing environment since the last time the affected application worked successfully, e.g. access to database servers, external information sources, firewall rules, proxy settings, username/password expiry, SSL certificate expiry, access to HSMs, etc.

All of these items help the Ascertia Support Team make a quick diagnosis of the issue. Until effective information is provided the support team cannot act with any certainty.

1.12 Support Process Overview
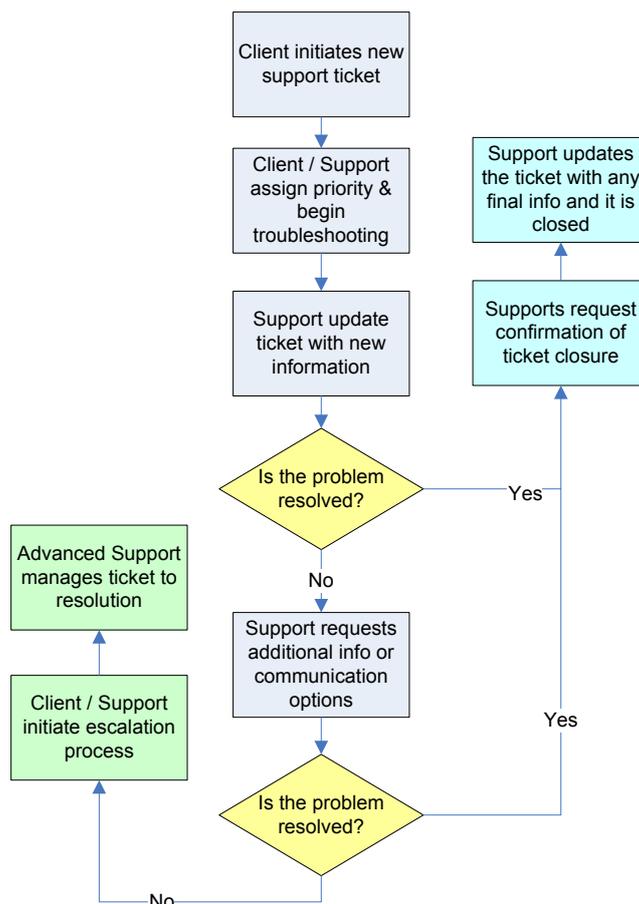
Where a Client is supported by a local business partner then the Client shown above is the Ascertia partner on behalf of the real Client.

1.13 Using the Escalation Process

The escalation process is intended for business-critical issues that require a higher level of attention from Ascertia's senior management. The process should only be used when:

- Lack of acceptable progress is being made affecting a Level 1 or Level 2 issue

- There is a need to communicate important issues to the management team

- There is dissatisfaction with the resolution or response to a ticket.

Ascertia requires that its responses to escalated issues are also treated with priority within the Client organisation. Should this not be the case then the priority status will be lowered accordingly to match the response times being applied by the client.

If a critical problem is encountered, consider the timing of when to escalate an issue. Immediate escalation may leave little time to research the root cause of the problem and

determine the most effective solution. Large, complex problems can take a reasonable time to review and resolve. Advise the Support Team of any target dates and deadlines you have for critical issues, and document this information in the ticket. Be clear about how the problem impacts your business and/or the risk it poses to implementation plans. This information will help Ascertia Support manage the ticket effectively and promptly assign the required resources to resolve your problem.

Escalation can be requested via tmt@ascertia.com cc support@ascertia.com or your Ascertia account manager. Ensure you provide your contact telephone numbers.

1.14 Product Download Area

The Client support account also allows access to the product download area of the Ascertia website. The release notes for the latest versions of the products can be seen and the products can be downloaded from here:

http://www.ascertia.com and click on downloads.

Once logged in, additional products and supported platforms can be requested by filling the web-form.

If a support contract is in place then the current license file can usually be applied to the latest release of the relevant product. Occasionally a license file update is needed.

1.15 Product Manuals

Often the initial source of information about a problem is the product manuals. Ascertia provides extensive installation and configuration advice in its documentation bundled within the Product download zip file in the /Docs folder.

For the ADSS Server product range, Ascertia also provides a dynamic online help system: http://manuals.ascertia.com/ADSS-Admin-Guide/

For SigningHub Ascertia provides this dynamic online help system: http://manuals.ascertia.com/SigningHub

This online manual provides the most up to date information and should be consulted before creating a support ticket.

1.16 Additional Product Information

Additional product information including specialised training slides is available on demand. This is currently downloaded from a secure FTP site using separately provided credentials. Contact your account manager or the sales team via sales@ascertia.com for access to this additional information.