Support And Documentation: Can I keep this support request open, just in case?

Here is a kind of FAQ we get quite often:

"Hi Support, thanks for solving this issue. It appears to be working as designed. Can we keep this service request open, just to make sure it's working?"

We would like to take some time to discuss why it is not necessary to keep a ticket open for non-active issues. And also explain why it is often counterproductive to keep an issue in an "open" state when it is probably resolved.

When to keep a ticket open when it is pretty much done

Please, feel free to keep open a ticket that is done if:
- There is an unresolved issue we are actively working on. It is helpful to have all the notes for the same issue in one place.
- Your internal tracking system requires us to have the issue open on our side.

Why keeping a ticket open when it is done is usually A Bad Thing

Customers often want to keep tickets open for a wide variety of reasons.

Here are some possible reasons from a customer perspective. Each of these possible perspectives is analyzed, and in many cases keeping the ticket open is shown to be counterproductive:

Customer perspective: You want to keep a ticket open because you have our attention and want to ask us other questions!
Reality: Keeping a ticket open beyond the scope of the *original* issue delays future responses. For example, if the support engineer has to go through earlier ticket notes about a provisioning issue that you were having 9 months ago, while you are now asking about adding a new health check, then it will delay our response.

Customer perspective: Keeping a ticket open "reserves" a support engineer for you, and you do not want to "get somebody else"
Reality: Our global support team works collaboratively on most issues. (Even if it appears that you are only interacting with a single engineer!)

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Customer perspective: Keeping a ticket open means you have a place at the beginning of the line/queue, and therefore get more attention.
Reality: We do not triage/prioritize tickets based on "opening date" or "length of time open".

Customer perspective: Your ticket ID number is lower than it would be for a new ticket ID, therefore you get better/faster/higher service.
Reality: While your ticket ID number is indeed lower than it would be for newer ones, the "length of time open" is not one of our triage criteria. So, it does not provide you with faster or more advanced support.

Customer perspective: We just want to increase our "numbers" and statistics for our management.
Reality: The numbers by themselves simply do not count. Unwarranted closures, on the other hand, would count, and everyone --not just management--would want to know what that was about. Besides, you can simply reopen a closed ticket anytime anyway.

Customer perspective: If a customer closes a ticket, that information is lost forever.
Reality: Our ticketing system retains all the comments and history in closed tickets. We routinely reference older closed tickets as part of our research into resolving current issues.

Customer perspective: If you close a ticket, then later on you will not be able to see the information we have sent you. (For example, you typed in a useful example that you want to reference and perhaps get help with in the future.)
Reality: We are able to access comments in closed tickets. Reopening an older ticket is no problem for us.

Customer perspective: Closing and then reopening a ticket will somehow "look bad" for us.
Reality: Not at all. It is interpreted as meaning: you still have a remaining problem with that issue, and you want help with it from us. Human nature being what it is, closing and reopening would tend to have us look even more carefully at the remaining problem.

You have reached end of the support exchange, and decided the ticket is indeed done. What would be the perfect happy ending?

So, considering once again the original FAQ at the start --- you will recall that it was ending a support exchange by asking to keep a support request open, even though the ticket was done according to both the customer and us.

After these explanations we hope that you are persuaded that it is almost always better to just close the ticket when it is done.

So to end a support exchange: If you would like to keep things optimal for both sides, then here

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is the kind of text you could use instead of the original FAQ message:

"Hi Support, thanks for solving this issue. It appears to be working as designed. We can close this ticket now, and if I need to reopen it in the future, I will just reply to this message. Or I will open a new ticket and reference the older SR number."

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