



The Gateway to a Modern Employee Experience:

IT Service Desk

Introduction

MODERN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN 2024

Digital transformation is becoming a necessity in today's technology-driven environment. But what exactly do we mean by digital transformation? [Techopedia](#) defines it as “the changes associated with digital technology application and integration into all aspects of human life and society.” According to [Salesforce](#), it is “the process of using digital technologies to create new, or modify existing, business processes, culture, and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements.”

While it applies broadly to the shift toward a digital-first mentality, Digital transformation is about how organizations use technology as a key element of the business, from streamlining processes to supporting the employee experience.

With the escalation of consumerization and emphasis on digital transformation within the workplace, the role of IT is rapidly evolving. IT departments are critical in driving employee engagement, especially through the service desk.

The service desk connects data, technology, processes, and people. It helps ensure employees have access to the resources they need, and IT can quickly and efficiently resolve issues. Modern IT service management (ITSM) platforms bring together technology assets with the people who use them, creating an audit trail of data. This allows IT professionals to resolve and prevent issues with the help of smart technology.

In the consumer world, customer service is arguably as important as the products or services. Those expectations are infiltrating the modern workplace. For IT teams, it's about more than providing state-of-the-art devices and business technology. It's about supporting helpful technology with a positive experience—when and how employees need it.



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ITOM and ITSM: Connecting IT to Employees

With technology becoming more widespread in the workplace, a [SolarWinds survey](#) found more than half of IT professionals recognize that organizational leaders see IT as crucial for leading digital transformation. Another one-third believe IT is at least somewhat important in this role.

However, with technology spread across the organization, **IT needs a better way to manage the daily tools and systems employees use.** This is especially important in large organizations where it's challenging to justify IT spending or prove its return on investment.

The first step toward a unified approach to managing technology and delivering services is to break down the traditional silos within and around the IT department. By doing so, IT can operate more cohesively, making managing and optimizing the tools and systems that support employees' daily work easier.

BREAKING DOWN IT SILOS

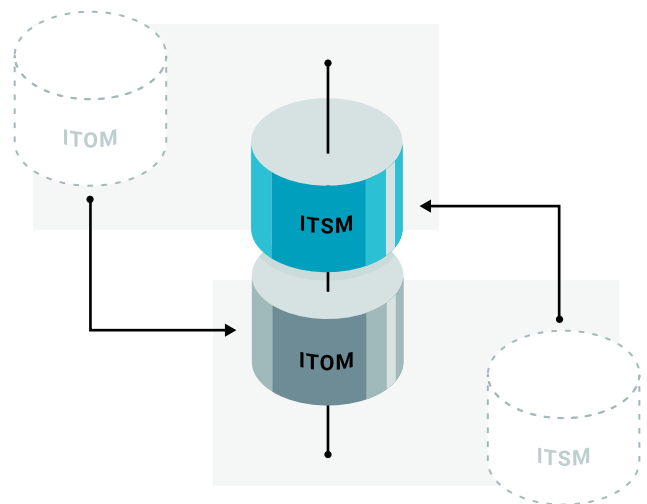
IT departments should operate as a cohesive, well-oiled machine as it aims to lead digital transformation. IT operations management (ITOM) and IT service management (ITSM) offer ideal opportunities to create unity within the department.

While ITSM is a subset of ITOM, the two disciplines often feel distinct. ITOM focuses almost exclusively on the world of IT, playing a vital yet often unseen role in keeping business systems running smoothly. On the other hand, ITSM is IT's employee-facing arm, providing services directly to end-users, i.e., employees, and managing the technology assets employees use.

Both areas are essential to the organization and to employees who rely on the technologies managed by IT, but in unique ways.

When it comes to ITOM, there are two main responsibilities: monitoring and service delivery (distinct from ITSM's service delivery). Monitoring involves keeping a pulse on applications and infrastructure to identify issues. IT needs to know which applications and infrastructure exist and how they perform. They must then alert teams to any issues. Ideally, systems and processes should be sophisticated enough to identify and prevent significant problems proactively.

In addition to monitoring, IT operations are responsible for delivering services, such as provisioning servers or laptops, installing arrays, and setting up critical infrastructure and applications based on business needs. This often involves a reactive approach.



When a network or application issue arises, an alert typically goes to a small IT operations team, which then reactively addresses the problem. Imagine if IT monitoring system alerts could reach a broader group, pushing alerts directly to the service management system. This would empower IT teams to better determine how to respond to issues and know when and how problem management should come into play.

For example, a monitoring alert could automatically create an incident in the service desk, tracking these alerts as incidents and deciding whether they need to be put into the problem management process. It would also provide visibility into which configuration items within the configuration management database are affected. This data is essential for IT teams when making infrastructure changes and ensuring employees experience minimal disruption and maximum benefit.

Without this handshake between ITOM and the service desk (ITSM), achieving this level of maturity is difficult. The goal should be to shift to a service management focus instead of purely monitoring. Restore services quickly, prevent future issues, and efficiently work through the problem management process.

With this mindset, IT teams can evolve from reactive to proactive, creating better alignment between the business and IT. By proactively addressing and preventing disruptions, employees can maintain productivity. When employees are fully supported through the technology they rely on, whether directly or indirectly, to do their jobs, it positively impacts employees, customers, and the business.

ALIGNING IT WITH THE BUSINESS

Budgets and resources are often limited, so the ideal scenario of IT operations and ITSM working seamlessly together is still out of reach for many organizations.

How can IT teams move toward this ideal? IT professionals have emphasized the need for closer alignment between IT and the broader business for years. This is especially important in large organizations where IT spending is often hard to justify or measure regarding return on investment. IT must gain control of spending, find ways to support the business and its employees better, and become a true business partner.

Managing costs, headcounts, service delivery objectives, and planning for a proactive approach are critical to increasing the maturity of the IT organization. One fundamental way to enhance the proactive nature of IT operations is to **identify opportunities for automation**, whether for alerts or tasks.



The role of IT is evolving. More than 90% of IT professionals who responded to [the survey](#) feel that IT is somewhat or fully aligned with their company's long-term goals. Additionally, 44% of IT professionals believe that IT plays a larger role in the business's overall success.

As IT teams continue to integrate more deeply with the business, improve their proactive measures, and increase efficiency, the positive impact on the business and its bottom line can only grow.

CREATING BETTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN IT AND EMPLOYEES

With room for growth in aligning ITOM, ITSM, and IT with the business, it's essential to consider the effect outside of IT. If a network or application goes down, employees cannot do their jobs while a fix is in progress. Fortunately, if ITOM and ITSM are fully integrated, IT can quickly identify the affected devices and employees. Moreover, with the service desk directly interfacing with employees, IT can readily communicate the issue and provide information on how and when it will be resolved. Employees are no longer left in the dark about what's happening or when they can expect to get back up and running.

For example, if an employee in a conference room loses connection to the nearby Wi-Fi access point, they cannot continue their work. The employee needs someone to tell them what is wrong and when it will be fixed. Restoring service is the job of IT, and a service desk with a service mentality is the gold standard IT should work toward for an optimal employee experience.

Ideally, as IT systems and processes mature, common or recurring issues will be prevented from occurring in the first place, meaning employees would no longer experience disruptions. Out of sight, out of mind.

Leveraging IT Asset Data and ITIL 4 Practices

The latest ITIL 4 practices offer comprehensive frameworks for improving IT asset management and service delivery. ITIL 4 emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and holistic approaches to IT service management. By adopting ITIL 4, organizations can better align their IT services with business needs, ensuring they can respond quickly to changes and deliver value to employees and customers.

One of the key components of ITIL 4 is the focus on continuous improvement. This means regularly assessing and enhancing IT processes to keep up with evolving



business requirements and technological advancements. ITIL 4 encourages a proactive approach, where IT teams anticipate and address potential issues before they impact operations.

Data analytics plays a critical role in enhancing IT asset management. By analyzing data from various sources, IT teams can gain valuable insights into asset performance, usage patterns, and potential risks. These insights enable IT to make informed decisions, optimize asset utilization, and improve overall efficiency and effectiveness. For example, predictive analytics can help identify when an asset is likely to fail, allowing IT to take preventative measures and avoid downtime.

Advanced Asset Discovery and Management

In today's complex and dynamic technology environments, automated asset discovery tools are essential for collecting complete and accurate data. These tools continuously scan the network to identify and catalog all connected devices, ensuring that IT has an up-to-date inventory of assets. This comprehensive view is crucial for managing assets efficiently and supporting service delivery processes.

Automated asset discovery tools can integrate with other IT management systems, such as configuration management databases (CMDBs) and IT service management (ITSM) platforms. This integration enables IT to have a single source of truth for asset information, improving visibility and control over the IT environment. It also streamlines processes like incident and change management, as accurate asset data is readily available when needed.

Integrating IoT devices into the IT infrastructure adds another layer of complexity to asset management. IoT devices often have unique requirements and can generate large volumes of data. Advanced asset management tools are crucial for handling these challenges, helping ensure IoT devices are properly monitored, maintained, and secured. These tools can also help IT teams analyze IoT data to gain insights into device performance and optimize their use within the organization.

Advanced asset management also involves lifecycle management, including tracking assets from procurement to disposal. This holistic approach ensures IT assets are used effectively throughout their lifespan, and they can be scheduled for replacements and upgrades promptly. Proper lifecycle management helps reduce costs, minimize downtime, and ensure employees have access to the technology they need to perform their jobs effectively.

By leveraging advanced asset discovery and management tools, organizations can enhance their IT operations, support digital transformation efforts, and provide a better employee experience.

AI-Powered Data Collection and Analysis

AI and machine learning advancements have significantly transformed data collection, analysis, and decision-making processes. AI-powered tools can automatically collect and analyze vast amounts of data from various sources, providing real-time insights that help IT teams make informed decisions. This capability is particularly useful for identifying patterns and trends that may not be immediately obvious through manual analysis.

Predictive analytics, a branch of AI, allows IT teams to anticipate and address potential issues before they impact employees. By analyzing historical data and identifying patterns, predictive analytics can forecast future incidents and suggest preventative measures. For example, AI can predict when a particular piece of hardware will likely fail, allowing IT to replace it before it causes downtime. This proactive approach helps reduce disruptions and enhance overall productivity.

AI-powered data analysis can help optimize IT operations by identifying inefficiencies and recommending improvements. Machine learning algorithms can continuously learn from data, improving their accuracy and effectiveness. This continuous improvement helps ensure IT operations remain efficient and effective, even as technology and business needs evolve.

Intelligent Automation in ITSM

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and AI technologies are crucial in automating routine IT tasks, which helps reduce response times and improve service efficiency. RPA can handle repetitive tasks such as password reset, data entry, and system monitoring, freeing IT staff to focus on more complex and strategic activities.

AI technologies, such as chatbots and virtual assistants, can provide immediate support to employees by answering common questions and resolving simple issues. These AI-driven tools can simultaneously handle many requests, helping ensure employees receive prompt assistance without waiting for human intervention.

Automation also helps manage increasing workloads, particularly in large organizations where the volume of IT service requests can be overwhelming. By automating routine tasks with generative AI, IT teams can maintain high-quality service delivery without becoming overwhelmed. Generative AI can dynamically create responses, resolve common issues, and even generate code snippets, significantly speeding up issue resolution times. Generative AI supports consistency in service delivery, reduces the risk of human error, and improves overall service quality by continuously learning and adapting to new challenges.

Omni-Channel Engagement for Modern Workplaces

In today's digital age, employees expect to access support through multiple channels, such as mobile apps, social media, live chat, and email. Providing support across these channels meets the diverse preferences of employees and ensures they can get help whenever and wherever they need it.

A unified service experience across all channels is crucial for maintaining consistency and efficiency. Omni-channel engagement allows employees to switch between channels seamlessly without repeating their issues. For example, an employee might start a support request through a live chat and then continue it through email or a mobile app. A unified system ensures all interactions are tracked and integrated, providing a cohesive support experience.

Omni-channel support also helps IT teams respond more quickly to requests. Employees can use the most convenient channel, reducing the time it takes to report issues and receive assistance. This flexibility helps enhance the overall employee experience and increase satisfaction with IT services.

By leveraging omnichannel engagement, organizations can ensure their IT support is accessible, efficient, and aligned with the expectations of modern employees. This approach helps improve the employee experience and contribute to higher productivity and better overall business outcomes.



Conclusion

THE FUTURE OF IT SERVICE DESKS

Looking ahead, IT service desks will continue to evolve, integrating emerging technologies and trends to enhance service delivery and the employee experience. The focus will remain on providing employees with a seamless, intuitive experience, leveraging advanced tools and practices to meet and exceed their expectations.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND TRENDS

- 1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML):** AI and ML transform IT service desks by enabling predictive analytics and automation. These technologies help anticipate issues before they occur, allowing IT teams to address potential problems proactively. For example, AI can analyze historical data to predict hardware failures and automate routine tasks like password reset, reducing downtime and improving efficiency.
- 2. Robotic Process Automation (RPA):** RPA is increasingly used to handle repetitive tasks, freeing IT staff to focus on more complex issues. Automated workflows streamline processes such as incident management and service request fulfillment, enhancing the overall efficiency of the IT service desk.
- 3. Omni-Channel Support:** Modern IT service desks are adopting omni-channel support strategies, providing employees with multiple ways to access help, including mobile apps, live chat, social media, and email. This approach helps ensure employees can get assistance through their preferred channels, leading to quicker resolutions and higher satisfaction.
- 4. Advanced Analytics and Reporting:** Advanced analytics tools provide deeper insights into service desk performance and user behavior. These tools help identify trends, track key performance indicators (KPIs), and make data-driven decisions to improve service quality and efficiency.

SOLARWINDS® SERVICE DESK

SolarWinds Service Desk exemplifies these advancements by offering a comprehensive IT service management solution to enhance efficiency and user experience. Key features include:

- 1. AI-Powered Automation:** SolarWinds Service Desk utilizes AI to automate routine tasks and streamline workflows. This automation reduces the burden on IT staff and helps ensure faster issue resolution.
- 2. Integrated Asset Management:** The platform includes robust asset management capabilities, allowing IT teams to track and manage all IT assets from a single interface. This integration helps maintain an accurate inventory, optimize asset utilization, and support proactive maintenance.
- 3. Omni-Channel Support:** SolarWinds Service Desk supports multiple engagement channels, enabling employees to access help through web portals, mobile apps, email, and chat. This flexibility means employees can get the support they need when needed.
- 4. Advanced Reporting and Analytics:** SolarWinds Service Desk provides powerful analytics and reporting tools offering insights into service performance, user satisfaction, and operational efficiency. These insights help IT leaders make informed decisions and continuously improve service delivery.

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STAYING INFORMED AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING

To ensure IT service desks remain at the forefront of digital transformation, organizations must stay informed about the latest trends and continuously improve their IT service management practices. This involves:

- 1. Regular Training and Certification:** Ensuring IT staff are trained and certified in the latest technologies and best practices, such as ITIL 4, helps maintain a high standard of service delivery.
- 2. Adopting Best Practices:** Implementing industry best practices, such as those outlined in ITIL 4, helps ensure IT services are aligned with business objectives and delivered efficiently.
- 3. Leveraging Feedback:** Regularly collecting and analyzing employee feedback helps identify areas for improvement and enhances the overall user experience.

By integrating these strategies and leveraging advanced tools like SolarWinds Service Desk, organizations can ensure their IT service desks remain at the forefront of innovation, driving positive outcomes for employees and the business at large. This mindset of continuous improvement helps enhance service quality, boost employee satisfaction, and significantly increase productivity.

ABOUT SOLARWINDS

SolarWinds (NYSE:SWI) is a leading provider of simple, powerful, and secure IT management software built to enable customers to accelerate their digital transformation. Our solutions provide organizations worldwide—regardless of type, size, or complexity—with a comprehensive and unified view of today's modern, distributed, and hybrid network environments. We continuously engage with technology professionals—IT service and operations professionals, DevOps and SecOps professionals, and database administrators (DBAs)—to understand the challenges they face in maintaining high-performing and highly available IT infrastructures, applications, and environments. The insights we gain from them, in places like our [THWACK®](#) community, allow us to address customers' needs now, and in the future. Our focus on the user and our commitment to excellence in end-to-end hybrid IT management have established SolarWinds as a worldwide leader in solutions for observability, IT service management, application performance, and database management. Learn more today at www.solarwinds.com.



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