Transforming End-User Support With Next-Generation IT Service Management

EMA

IT & DATA MANAGEMENT RESEARCH,
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Executive Introduction

IT service management (ITSM) is growing in importance as a unifying hub across all of IT, while also being expected to perform more efficiently, with lower operational costs associated with routine ITSM processes.

EMA's research, "Next-Generation IT Service Management: Changing the Future of IT" (Spring 2017), underscores the fact that ITSM is becoming a hub of innovation, helping to unify IT across its many silos, promoting and measuring IT operational efficiencies, and consolidating insights critical for IT-to-business planning. This research also puts a spotlight on the need for ITSM teams to streamline how they work.

This report will address both ITSM directions and needs overall, with a focus on optimizing user experience, enhanced mobility, and advances in self-service-related technologies. It will spotlight innovative new technologies to support higher levels of automation, self-service, knowledge management, and analytics. The report will conclude with guidelines for more effective ITSM adoption in the face of shifting requirements and needs.

Demographics

The research supporting this report was conducted in Q1 2017. Of the 264 respondents, 164 (62%) were located in North America and 100 (38%) were located in Europe (England, Germany, or France). All respondents were active in ITSM-related initiatives, although we did not restrict the research to ITSM professionals. In this way, EMA sought to better understand ITSM from multiple lenses in terms of its broader role across all of IT and to examine how ITSM can serve as a conduit between IT and business stakeholders.

What Is Next-Generation IT Service Management?

The traditional approach to ITSM centers on the service desk per se. But ITSM-related technologies—a from workflow and automation to analytics and integrated asset management to innovations in self-service—are becoming enablers for a broad range of activities across an equally broad range of stakeholders. In our research, we saw the following active role-related activities, with the **average respondent involved in four areas**.

- Core service desk/help desk operations (incident and request management)
- Integrated cross-silo support for IT asset management
- Integrated cross-silo support for IT governance analytics for OpEx efficiencies
- Integrated cross-silo support for the Internet of Things
- Integrated cross-silo support for change management
- Integrated support for business process workflow creation (HR, facilities, etc.)
- Integrated cross-silo support for problem, incident, or availability/performance management
- Integrated cross-silo support for security/fraud/risk management
- Integrated cross-silo support for DevOps
- Integrated cross-silo support for portfolio planning and optimization
- Integrated cross-silo support for endpoint management

There are several takeaways from this data. The first is that ITSM teams have multiple dimensions to them and engage many stakeholders far beyond the service desk. The second is that in order to fulfill those demands, ITSM teams need to become far more efficient with core requirements, such as incident management and request management, or else their professionals will become trapped by routine internal processes. Moreover, by improving critical areas in user support, ITSM teams are enhancing their value in a way that's pivotal to making ITSM, and IT as a whole, a more respected part of the business or organizational community it serves.

> **ITSM teams have multiple dimensions to them and engage many stakeholders far beyond the service desk.**

With this in mind, EMA saw some other trends worth noting. Eighty-three percent (83%) of organizations surveyed were managing ITSM teams and customer service desks as a single group—pointing a finger at the need for a more unified approach to customer support. Along with this, the number one ITSM strategic priority was "improving end-user experience."

Why User Experiences Really Count

Understanding user requirements and optimizing their experiences is central to IT. But it often gets neglected or passed over, or reduced to a single linear dimension. Is it all about minimizing mean time-to repair incidents or about minimizing the number of incidents themselves? Or is it all about self-help in letting end-users get the services they want and need?

The answer is that it's about all of these things and more. As ITSM teams seriously involved in user experience management know, user experience can be about latencies in application transactions as well as hard-to-use-software, or even poor IT service design. Access, availability, and usability are all key. In addition, end users, just as IT service consumers, are not all the same. The services they need vary. Their comfort level with different forms of self-help will also vary. And their ability to optimize IT-delivered services will change dramatically based on their skill sets and their needs.

In the face of all this complexity, ITSM teams need to assume a versatile and multidimensional approach to end-user support. This approach should recognize that success depends on bidirectional dialog, as it enables end users to learn more about the IT services they can access and enjoy while allowing IT teams to learn more about the unique needs of their end-user service consumers.

How Responsive Design Improves IT Service Performance

Responsive design allows end users to leverage a range of endpoint choices—mobile devices, laptops, or desktops—with consistent levels of usability and productivity. The need for responsive design, both for IT professionals and for end-user service consumers, is on the rise. Digital transformation is increasingly centered on versatile endpoint access and effective mobile communication, as IT organizations are expected to support a mixed population of desktops and laptops along with a growing assortment of mobile devices.

Moreover, the benefits of responsive design can be striking. In our research, **87% of respondents offered end consumers responsive design with the option of mobile access to IT services**. And 99% of those offering the option of mobility viewed their ITSM initiative as "extremely successful." Moreover, when asked if the choice of mobile access between ITSM professionals and IT consumers improved customer support, almost all of these respondents reported "meaningful" or "dramatic" levels of improvement.

Similar patterns emerged for those ITSM teams leveraging **mobile devices as options for ITSM and other IT professionals**. In this case, the percent leveraging some mobile access was 86%, with equally strong correlations to overall ITSM success.

Figure 1 shows these benefits, **with improved efficiencies and improved responsiveness** dominating the value proposition. It's also significant to note the diversity of roles that can profit from ITSM-enabled mobile access—from ITSM professionals to operations and development to IT managers and executives.

Which of the following benefits does ITSM-driven mobility provide in terms of your organizations service desk effectiveness?

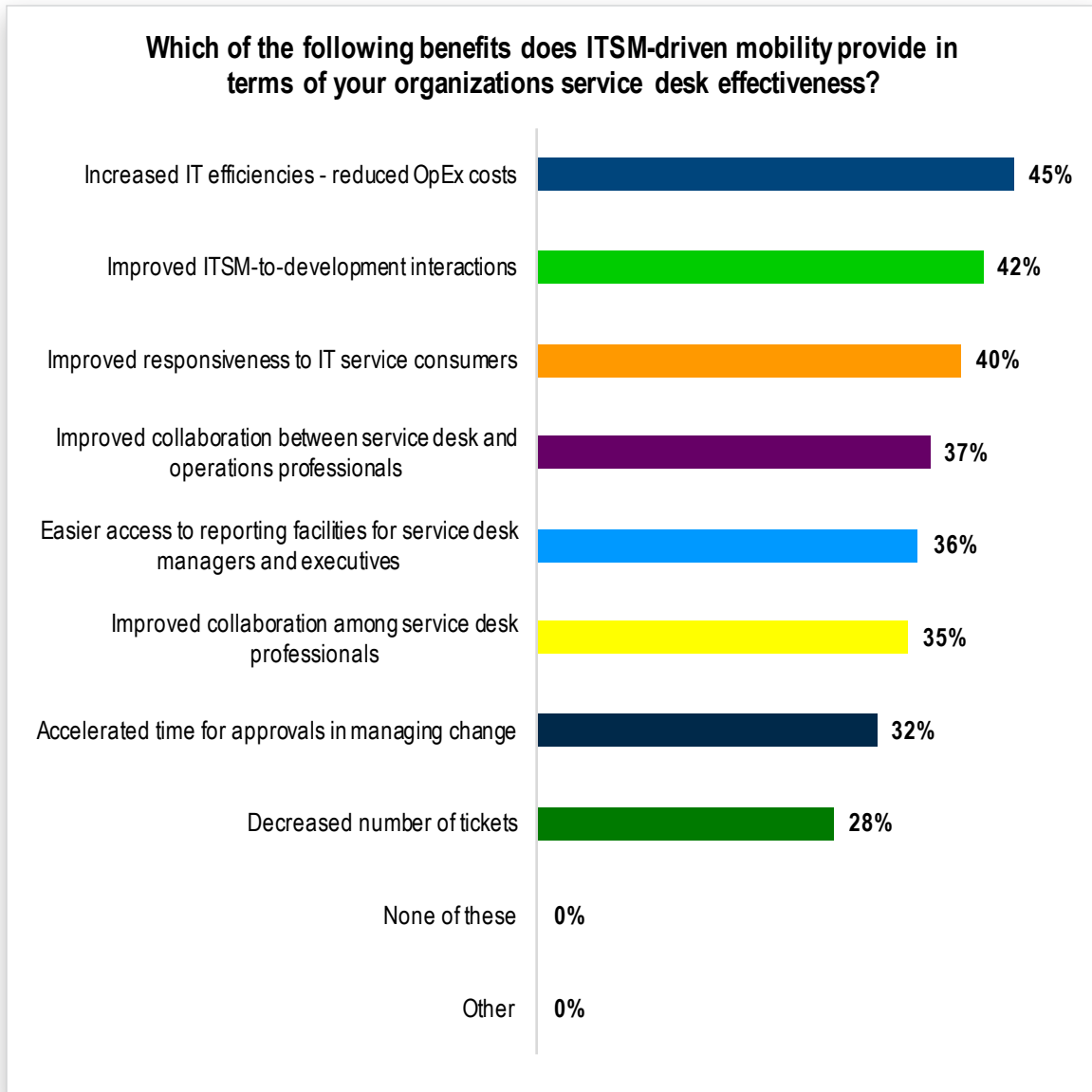| Benefit	Percentage
Increased IT efficiencies - reduced OpEx costs	45%
Improved ITSM-to-development interactions	42%
Improved responsiveness to IT service consumers	40%
Improved collaboration between service desk and operations professionals	37%
Easier access to reporting facilities for service desk managers and executives	36%
Improved collaboration among service desk professionals	35%
Accelerated time for approvals in managing change	32%
Decreased number of tickets	28%
None of these	0%
Other	0%

Figure 1. Responsive design, with the options of mobile access across ITSM teams and between ITSM teams and IT overall, delivers a compelling array of benefits.

The New Era of Self-Service

Effective self-service depends on multiple technologies. In this section, we look at three of these technologies: service catalogs, knowledge management, and advanced analytics.

In the age of cloud and agile, **service catalogs** and app stores are becoming yet more central to ITSM teams, both in terms of enabling service delivery in a more efficient and consumer-friendly manner and in terms of aggregating services into an accessible central venue for superior governance and management.

The importance of **cost and usage insights** in service catalogs is significant, as these insights not only improve end-user support, but also provide a strategic look at how, where, when, and by whom IT services are being used. In other words, in addition to empowering flexible, role-related access to end-user service consumers, service catalogs can become a record of IT service needs and wants—whether this takes the form of delivered applications or other delivered IT services, such as onboarding new employees, or other forms of end-user support. In effect, service catalog access can provide a documented history of what's needed for IT organizations to optimize their value.

Service catalog support for **enterprise services** is also growing—and shows considerable promise in accelerating IT value to the business while improving OpEx efficiencies across the broader enterprise. Some of the leading enterprise teams profiting from ITSM-enabled service catalog support include human resources (HR), facilities management, transportation, and sales and marketing teams.

Knowledge Management and Analytics

Knowledge management was at the top of the list in our research when it came to top technology priorities for self-service. Shared approaches to knowledge management can become a valuable and dynamic forum for IT to improve both its efficiencies and its effectiveness, and for end users to gain better and faster access to their own support requirements. A shared approach means that learning can be assimilated on both sides, as ITSM teams learn from their ongoing end-user needs and experiences and end users gain immediate insight into the best wisdom IT has to offer. Knowledge management should also extend to incorporate insights from subject-matter experts (SMEs) from Operations and other groups within IT as appropriate.

Analytics is becoming increasingly important as a means to improve end-user support. This is true both in terms of analytic capabilities directed at end-user access and in terms of analytics to provide an improved handshake between ITSM teams, Operations, IT executives, and even Development.

In terms of end-user access, one of the top strategic priorities for ITSM in our research was to *transform end-user support through mobility, self-service, and intelligent bots.* Indeed, EMA is seeing a small but growing array of cognitive bots emerging in the ITSM and IT arena overall, with capabilities to help direct both IT professionals and end users toward more effective outcomes through plain English interactions.

Conclusion: Demand Functionality *and* Ease of Use!

The formula for ITSM success in the digital era centers on effective expansion of both core capabilities, and related strategic values, all of which may impact the quality and level of end-user support. These include:

- A growing role as a center of governance to help improve ITSM and IT efficiencies
- More effective engagement of operations stakeholders for incident, problem and change management, as well as enhanced user experience management
- A growing role in supporting unique line of business requirements including growing support for enterprise as well as IT services
- Improved support for IT-related hardware and software assets
- Improved support for DevOps requirements in helping to enable more effective application delivery into production for end-user consumers

But the challenge in doing all this, and doing it well, is most often blocked by *ITSM software that's hard to deploy and administer* (see Figure 2). Indeed, the growing importance of ITSM and its outreach too often gets stymied by software investments that do more to get in the way than they do to enable.
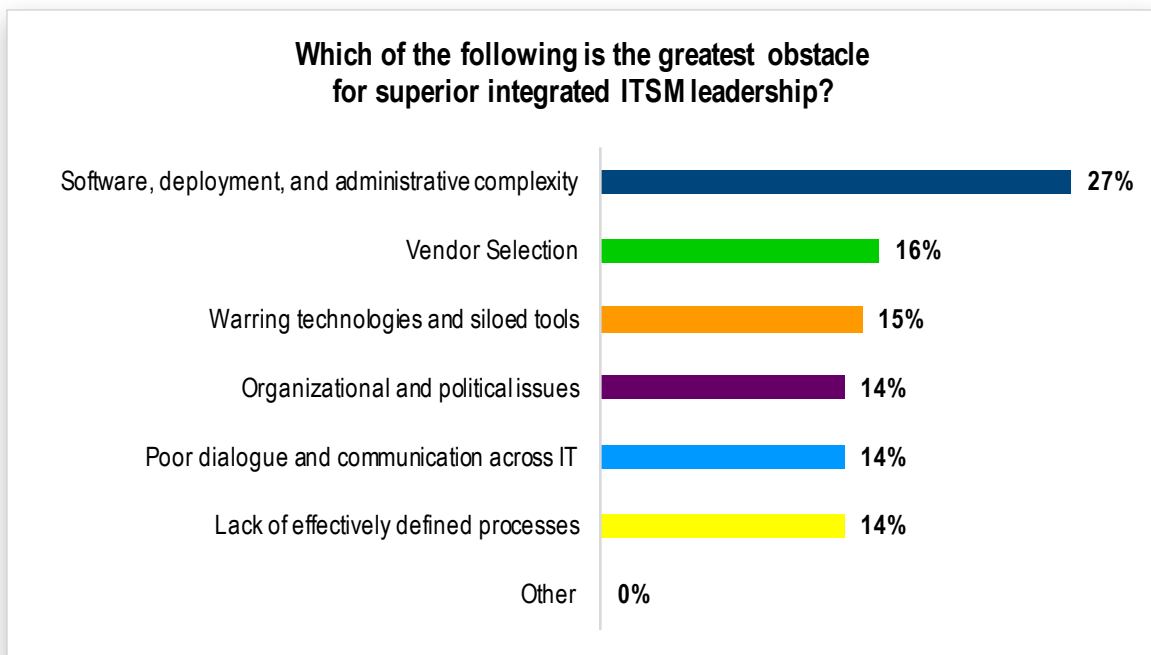
**Which of the following is the greatest obstacle
for superior integrated ITSM leadership?**

Software, deployment, and administrative complexity	27%
Vendor Selection	16%
Warring technologies and siloed tools	15%
Organizational and political issues	14%
Poor dialogue and communication across IT	14%
Lack of effectively defined processes	14%
Other	0%

*Figure 2. Complexities in ITSM software deployment and administration overshadow
all other issues impacting next-generation ITSM leadership.*

As we have seen, broad capabilities for improved end-user experience and self-help knowledge for driving improved return on investment in self-service, enhanced support for mobile access and responsive design, and serious investments in service catalogs, knowledge management, and analytics are all part of the formula for improved end-user support. But to do this well requires adoption of ITSM solutions that can demonstrate both fast time to value and low administrative overhead. It is not unreasonable to look for both. In fact, for next-generation ITSM to fully evolve, it is 100% necessary.

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About EasyVista

EasyVista simplifies IT Service Management by making it easy to use and easy to deliver for today's enterprise. EasyVista's service management platform was created to help companies automate and personalize service delivery to improve IT efficiency and increase staff productivity. Today, EasyVista helps 1,000+ enterprises around the world radically improve service user experience, dramatically simplify and accelerate service creation, and reduce the total cost of IT service delivery. EasyVista serves companies across a variety of industries, including financial services, healthcare, higher education, technology, public sector, retail, manufacturing and more. Headquartered in New York and Paris, EasyVista is a rapidly growing global company backed by leading venture capitalists.

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