



3 big shifts IT teams are making for 2023

2023 is a make-or-break time to be an IT leader. The world shifted to a hybrid work model and organizations were left scrambling. This is the year that employees start to thrive in this new world — and you're responsible for their success.

There are a lot of things you can do to help your employees thrive, but what's going to be the most impactful? There will be a lot of projects you can undertake, but which ones can you start implementing today? And how will you get your leadership on board?

To help you answer these questions, we're going to summarize what industry-leading organizations across the world have been doing.

By the end of this report, you'll know exactly what your 2023 should look like for your IT team — including benchmarks to evaluate your current performance against.

You will also walk away with the understanding of:

- Definitive ways to support your hybrid workplace
- Why knowledge-centered service is the only way to organize your knowledge
- How service desk automation can transform your organization and enable self-service

This report will be most relevant for:

- Head of Digital Workplace (Director+)
- Head of End-User Services (Director+)
- Head of Service Desk (Director+)
- Other direct reports to the CIO
- Anyone interested in running an efficient IT team

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Chapter 01

The data differentiating industry-leading
from industry-average teams

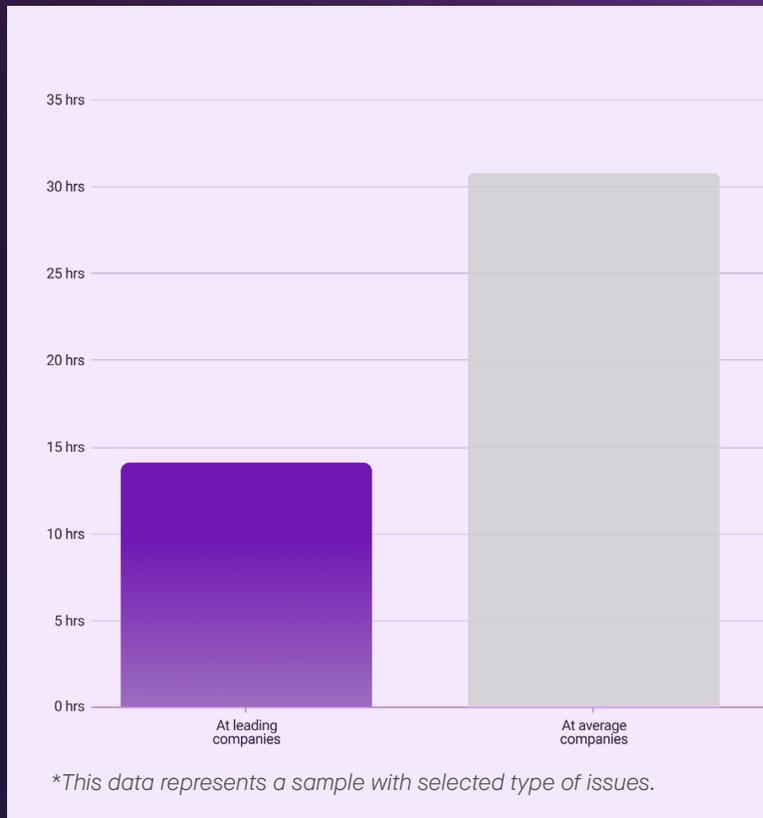
The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

How long are employees waiting for support?

The most important responsibility of your IT help desk is to ensure employees get the support they need — quickly. But how do you measure “quick”? To help you contextualize your team’s performance, we analyzed IT ticket data from over 100 companies.

We found a dramatic difference between industry-average and industry-leading companies in their mean time to resolution (MTTR). Industry-leading IT teams solved issues in less than half the time. This is a direct result of several key innovations in the IT support process, particularly the use of automation and AI.

In this report, we provide help desk benchmarks for high-touch issues, access requests, troubleshooting questions, approvals, and overall MTTR. Across the board, we see a growing divide between the companies that have leaned into innovation and those that haven’t.



The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

High-touch issues submitted to the help desk

Employees with high-touch issues depend on subject matter experts for solutions. Fixing a broken printer or reconfiguring Salesforce requires more than a single help desk agent.

When it comes to high-touch issues, you might assume that automation would hurt, not help. Instead, we've found automation is particularly crucial in solving high-touch issues.

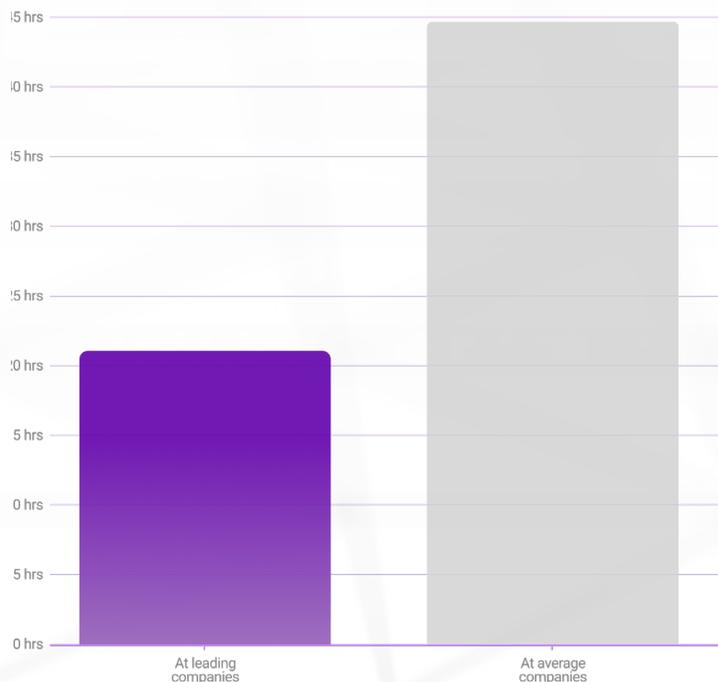
The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

When employees submit a high-touch issue, how long are they waiting for support?

The difference in wait time between average and leading organizations is nearly 27 hours. Why?

Best-in-class organizations triage issues to the right support agent, improve communications between stakeholders, and accelerate comments. But this back-and-forth can be difficult to manage. With AI, however, companies are able to take much of the friction out of solving these complex functions.

To help employees, you need to first understand what they're asking for. Using NLU (natural language understanding) and NLP (natural language processing) models, industry-leading companies can significantly speed up complicated processes.



The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

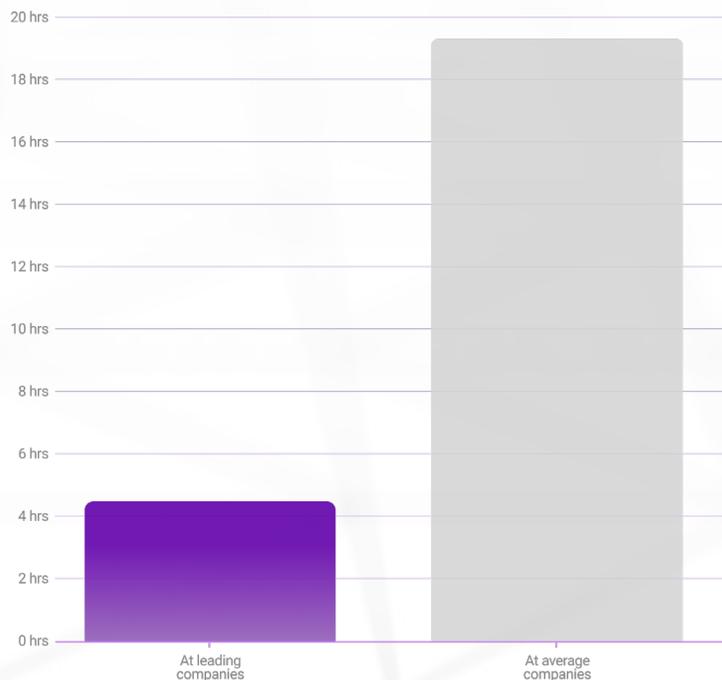
Access issues

There are several use cases — password resets, account unlocks — where it might take an agent minutes to perform the task, but the ticket sits in the queue for hours. Industry-leading companies use this as an opportunity to introduce a back-end automation tool to trigger workflows.

The difference is shocking: a 15-hour discrepancy that employees experience whenever they're locked out of an account.

How long do employees wait for access?

In the age of hybrid work, not all employees are able to walk over to their favorite help desk agent and describe their problem in seconds. Leading companies use AI to transition that experience, seamlessly, to a digital workplace.



The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

Troubleshooting questions

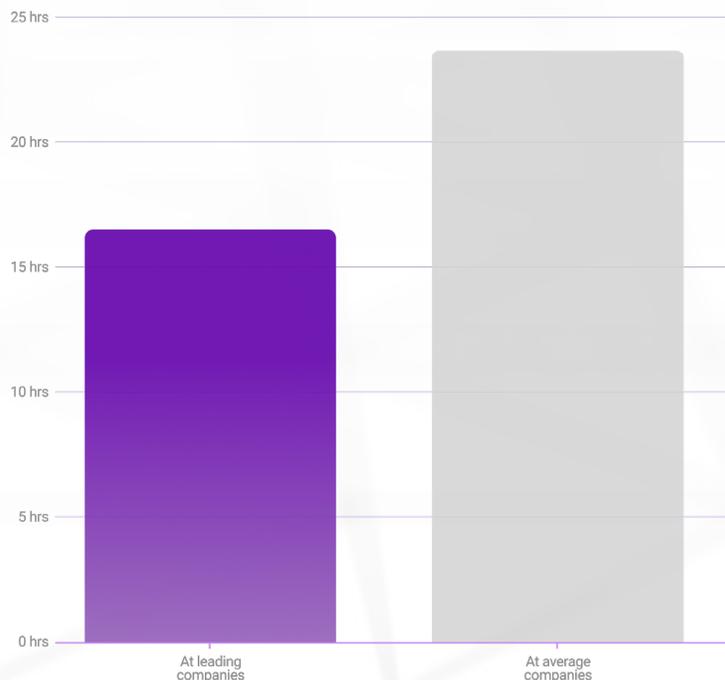
All help desks have a collection of knowledge base articles, documenting solutions that only specialists at the company would know. Innovative leaders use AI to transform these long, hard-to-reach articles into bite-sized solutions.

In conventional organizations, it takes a lot of time and effort from the help desk agent to offer a customized solution to an employee, impacting wait times.

How long do employees wait to get their questions answered?

There's a 10-hour difference in wait time between companies that leverage automation and those that don't.

Employees expect personalized solutions, and IT agents spend hours gathering information before coming up with the perfect answer. At leading companies, this process is automated — AI is used to gather all relevant context associated with employee requests, so help desk agents can have a 360-degree view of what's needed.



The data differentiating industry-leading from industry-average teams

The impact of approvals

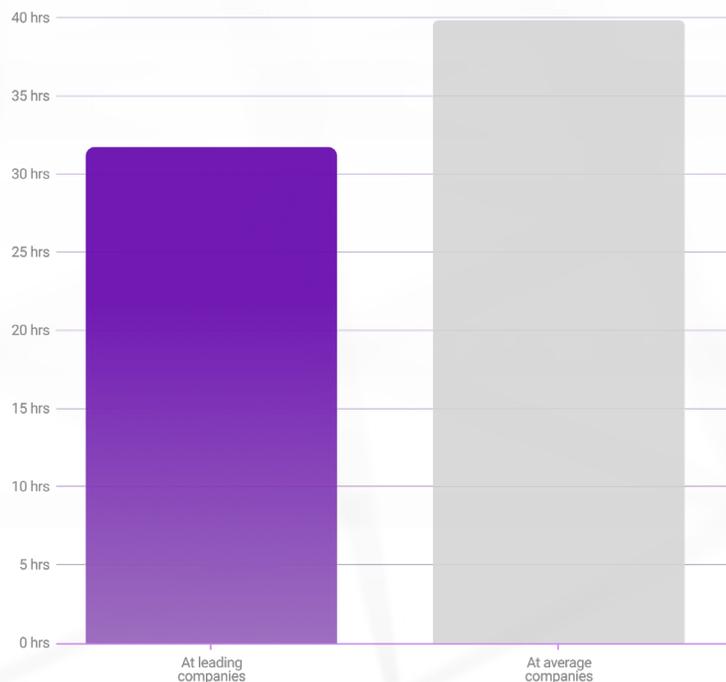
There are some use cases that need managerial input. But getting a manager's attention can be tough at times.

How long are employees waiting for approvals?

People wait nearly 40 hours for approvals due to the primary mode of communication: email and siloed support channels. But automated support happens in real time. In this category, leading organizations are able to attack the root of the problem: poor communication.

Industry-leading companies have incorporated conversational AI to bring these requests to an enterprise chat platform, allowing managers to give approvals the moment they see their employees' messages.

To move from an average company to one that's leading the pack, you have to prioritize an efficient employee experience. **Conversational AI is a powerful tool**, with limitless applications. It can help your help desk agents eliminate their pain points and significantly reduce employees' wait times.



Chapter 02

4 best practices for supporting a
hybrid workforce

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

Now that we've analyzed industry-average and industry-leading companies and found a large disparity between the two — let's turn our attention to hybrid work.

For IT teams, supporting a newly hybrid workforce can be a massive challenge. Employees are dependent on scattered technology, inter-company communication is challenging, and IT teams can only do so much in a day.

It's incumbent for companies of every size, all over the world, to get a handle on hybrid work best practices. That's why we've distilled the four main things industry-leading enterprises are doing to create a seamless transition to our new hybrid world.

[Read about how Palo Alto Networks](#) enabled FLEXWORK — their vision for the future of work in Silicon Valley.

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

1. Integrate employee-facing applications

Whether or not we call it a recession, 2022 has been a difficult year for the economy. The US has seen the highest inflation since 1981. The S&P 500 is down 23%, which would be the fourth largest annual drop since the Great Recession era.

This economic volatility puts a lot of pressure on CIOs, who are no longer expecting their technology budgets to increase. Clearly, now is the time to think hard about where is the most valuable place to put dollars. According to [CIO's 21st annual State of the CIO survey](#), industry leaders are using this budget in two big ways:

- Building a digital headquarters.
- Investing in automation.

Industry leaders use budget in 2 ways

1. Building a Digital HQ
2. Investing in Automation

Based on data from CIO's annual State of the CIO survey

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

1. Integrate employee-facing applications

Build a digital headquarters to support hybrid work

Employees need one place where they can get help — remote, in-person, or hybrid. The solution we've seen ground-breaking companies turn to is a digital headquarters. The digital HQ is a starting point for everything employees do at work, from holding meetings to sharing files to requesting support. This is different from digital tools, which are meant to support a particular task, such as Google Calendar for scheduling.

Having analyzed numerous industry-leading companies, we know that the best of them use an enterprise collaboration hub as the foundation for their digital HQ. Hybrid work best practices for building a digital HQ includes these concrete steps:

- Organize your collaboration hub.
- Bring all your employees into the digital HQ.
- Build seamless integrations between your digital HQ and your digital tools.

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

1. Integrate employee-facing applications

Industry leaders recognize the inequality of IT support within a global workforce — after all, not even the largest IT team can support every single employee, in every location, in every language. As employees decide to return to the office — or not — companies need to prioritize giving them everything they need to do their best work. A digital headquarters helps to make that transition effortless.

For a seamless transition to hybrid work, invest in automation

Across the globe, a crucial hybrid work best practice is investing in automation. Leaders are hesitant to grow their IT teams. Instead, they're leaning on

automation to ease their existing IT team's burden, drive efficiency, and improve company productivity at the same time.

AI and automation can be your ticket to ensuring that your IT teams feel supported and not overworked while also offering white-glove support to your employees. Your AI tool of choice should allow you to:

- Enable seamless onboarding
- Provide personalized help according to your users' locations, roles, and permissions
- Allow employees to return to work or successfully pull off hybrid work

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

1. Integrate employee-facing applications

The first step for technology leaders is to address IT-facing automation opportunities. Developing automation tools and scripts leads to substantial time savings, as proven by the [CIO of Equinix, Milind Wagle](#). Where industry leaders rise to the challenge, however, is by paying careful attention to the final step of automation: enabling self-service for employees.

Successfully solving for self-service can and does take many forms. The core of the challenge — building out a knowledge base, empowering employees to take this new route, and reducing dependency on IT agents — remains the same. The results can bring significant cost savings. [According to HDI](#), a support call can cost as much as \$22, while self-service is \$2 per incident. That's a 11x decrease in support ticket cost.

Automation lets companies do more with less — support more employees, and increase the efficiency of a smaller IT department.

AI and automation enable

1. Seamless onboarding
2. Personalized help
3. Hybrid work models

According to HDI, a support call can cost as much as \$22, while self-service is \$2 per incident. That's a 11x decrease in support ticket cost.

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

2. Send targeted employee communications by geography

A hybrid work best practice is to battle communication exhaustion. Industry-leading companies are telling employees exactly what they need to know and meeting employees where they are. These two seemingly small shifts in strategies have shown to have monumental effects on employees and the business.

Tell your employees exactly what they need to know

Employees are laden with messages — from their peers, their direct reports, managers, etc. There's a very likely chance that company-wide alerts get lost in their inbox, buried in portals, and overlooked due to irrelevancy.

To combat this, industry leaders are choosing to send out hyper-targeted messages based on their role, department, distribution lists, type of employee, location, and any other information that might be relevant to the communication.

Secondly, they use these hyper-targeted messages to drive action. They lead employees to exactly

where they need to go. Need people to update their personal information? Add a link to the portal where they can do that. Innovative IT teams make it as easy as possible for people to do what they need to do.

In an era of hybrid work, meet your employees where they are

More and more employees are spending the majority of their time on enterprise chat platforms. Slack and Microsoft teams have been the primary mode of immediate communication, while portals and emails have the reputation of being overlooked.

When employees need IT support in a hybrid work environment, they often don't have the luxury of walking over to their favorite IT agent. They have to muster thorough often chaotic backends.

With the shift to enterprise chat, industry leaders can:

- Improve response time.
- Enrich ticket workflows.
- Manage software licenses at scale.

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

3. Connect back-end systems

At home, people are used to Netflix's personalized recommendations and Spotify's curated playlists. This lies in stark opposition to their experience at work — disjointed, clunky processes that largely wait for IT agents to comment on tickets.

Qualtrics research found that only 30% of employees say that their experience with their company's technology exceeds their expectations.

Hybrid work threw this problem into a new light. Across industries, companies were seeing a massive uptick in tickets as remote work began in March 2020. Now, as companies start to define hybrid work best practices, they're starting with back-end systems.

Updating back-end systems

In large organizations, there are an increasing number of tools and portals that employees can use to their advantage. Except, employees don't know what to use. Industry leaders approach this problem at more than just the surface level.

The real problem lies in the disarrayed back-end systems. In automating and connecting the many back-end processes that exist in organizations, you can provide a cohesive front to your employees. And because your back-end systems will be ingesting information from every tool, you can drive adoption and usage across every software.

Only 30% of employees say that their experience with their company's technology exceeds their expectations.

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

4. Create an experience your employees need

Data suggests the average enterprise uses 288 different SaaS apps across the board. Industry leaders optimize to reach the full potential of each software. So how do you ensure that employees have everything they need?

How to optimize for employee adoption

We know that the most common place employees work and engage today is in enterprise messaging platforms, like Slack and Microsoft Teams. We also know that other employees prefer enterprise portals that they've been navigating for ages. Others like the dependency of email.

Successful adoption requires

1. One place for everything
2. Enjoyable UX
3. Long-term view

4 best practices for supporting a hybrid workforce

4. Create an experience your employees need

Proper employee adoption requires a multifaceted approach. Here are the three pillars to your success:

- **Create one place to go to for everything.**
Don't make employees remember dozens of passwords to different portals. There's plenty going on in their roles without having to learn a new system every time they want to put in PTO or upgrade their laptop.
- **Make the user experience enjoyable.** In a hybrid work environment, employees are overloaded with messages, emails, and alerts. Don't add to that cognitive load. Instead, tell your employees

only what they need to know. Give them exactly what they ask for.

- **Think long-term.** Partner with a strategic team that's dedicated to creating behavior change. It won't happen overnight, and setting unrealistic expectations will cause your project to fail before it fully takes off.

Each company will evolve its own hybrid work best practices, but industry leaders will address each 4 of these concerns in their foundations in order to better serve their employees.

Chapter 03

What knowledge-centered service is and why it's crucial to your business success

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

IT leaders want to provide fast, comprehensive support to their employees. To do that, they need powerful knowledge resources — and the means to track their effectiveness. In fact, we know that the best knowledge-centered services are also the most organized and actionable.

But this presents a challenge: Agents struggle with knowledge management because it's hard to write, maintain, and track within the enterprise. So, how

can we make sure our knowledge-centered services are actually creating an impact?

This guide will provide a comprehensive look into what knowledge-centered service is, the benefits and challenges of providing it, and how you can incorporate it into your organization.

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

What does knowledge-centered service (KCS) mean?

Organizations use knowledge-centered service to gain visibility into every aspect of the knowledge support environment within their business. By managing, distributing, and tracking knowledge across the whole enterprise, leaders can more quickly resolve employees' problems — and in many cases, prevent incidents from happening before they arise.

In action, this looks like detailed documentation, knowledge sharing, and data-driven insights into how knowledge actually gets used.

What's the difference between knowledge-centered service and knowledge centered support?

Until recently, the more commonly used term was knowledge centered support. The focus of this process was always to offer the best customer and employee support, while also creating and maintaining documentation.

Knowledge-centered service was adopted to expand the focus from simply offering support to improving every aspect of the ITSM.

Agents struggle with knowledge management because it's hard to write, maintain, and track within the enterprise.

3 Benefits of providing knowledge- centered service

1. Reduce time to resolution by encouraging self-service
2. Free up agent time to focus on strategy work
3. Decrease cost-per-ticket

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

3 Challenges of providing knowledge-centered service

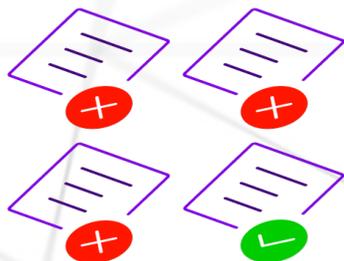
We've discussed some ways KCS can deliver tangible benefits to organizations — even with limited resources. However, successful implementation introduces some challenges too.

1. 75% of all articles don't get shown to end-users

While companies do a great job of encouraging their agents to document solutions, they often fall short in helping employees find knowledge base articles. Useful articles get locked away behind confusing portals. Too many employees forget passwords. And

the support environment can be so complex, that people give up searching for answers before they even start.

Ultimately, employees end up reaching out to their favorite IT agent or filing a ticket instead, waiting several hours or days for a resolution. Vice versa, IT agents end up referencing their own articles over and over, caught in an endless loop of mundane question-answering processes.



$\frac{3}{4}$ of all articles
don't get shown
to end-users

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

3 Challenges of providing knowledge-centered service

2. Articles aren't written with end-users in mind

Articles are written by — and for — IT agents. In fact, our data shows that half of all articles are almost impossible to read given their length.

The cycle of knowledge article creation typically follows these steps:

Many employees submit a ticket, complaining of a similar issue.

1. An IT agent notices the pattern and writes a knowledge base article documenting their fix.

2. Their fix is centered around their process of fixing the problem — most useful for other IT agents who encounter this ticket.
3. Other employees can't make heads or tails of the KB article and submit a ticket to get help.

Instead, industry-leading companies get very prescriptive about how to write knowledge base articles. They templatzize what a good article looks like. Agents are enabled to write for employees — and self-service increases.

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

3 Challenges of providing knowledge-centered service

3. Defining the success of a knowledge base article is difficult

Many companies don't have metrics defining the success of a knowledge base article. They may track views — but have no way of connecting those views to the next course of action taken by employees who viewed the article. As a result, the IT team may report an increase in views on the knowledge articles they've been working on, even though ticket volume hasn't slowed down.

Clearly, there's a disconnect at play. Industry-leading companies clearly define what a good knowledge base article looks like, and how it's effective. For example, if a particular article is getting a lot of views, tickets relating to that problem should see a drop in volume — an indication that employees are choosing the self-service route.

...more views means less tickets and less tickets means self-service is working!

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

How to find and interpret knowledge opportunities

Many industry-average companies are aware of the task facing them: They need to overhaul how their employees approach support. But many IT leaders are discovering that it's hard to determine which knowledge topics actually yield impact for employees.

There are two big actions you can take to find and interpret these knowledge opportunities:

- Identify article gaps
- Improve existing articles by improving content

Find knowledge gaps

According to data across our customer base, 40% of issues employees raise go unanswered because of knowledge gaps.

While a knowledge gap may be evident to IT agents, it's often much less evident to leaders. By conducting a thorough content audit, however, you can connect the dots between what employees are actively searching for and what knowledge articles you have currently available.

40% of issues employees raise go unanswered because of knowledge gaps

Improve existing articles

All IT teams have a library of knowledge articles — but are all of them effective employee resources? To answer that question, conduct an audit of your existing articles, keeping an eye out for the following:

- **Incorrect content:** Is there any important information that's outdated or stale? (i.e. an old wifi password)
- **Incomplete content:** Is there any critical information missing? What's common knowledge for IT agents is often critical information for employees who want to self-serve.
- **Difficult to process:** Is the article easy for employees to read and understand? Watch out for long paragraphs, overused jargon, or a failure to outline steps.
- **Discoverability issues:** Is your article easy to find? When employees raise an issue, were they directed to the article that could've enabled them to self-serve?
- **Article grooming:** Is your article still relevant? Many articles will reach their expiration date naturally — it's important to have a process in place to determine which articles to retire or update.

What knowledge-centered service is & why it's crucial to your business success

Knowledge as a service

To be the most effective organization in building and maintaining KCS, leaders have to start thinking about knowledge as a service they're providing to their employees.

Industry-leading companies often empower centralized knowledge teams to oversee the process of creating and maintaining knowledge. They also:

- Set the standards of success at every level of KCS
- Manage change in the overall strategy
- Direct teams within other departments on how to build and document knowledge to support employees

- Have the formal authority to address knowledge gaps

Ultimately, employees crave a seamless employee experience — they don't want to **wait several hours** for simple tasks that block their productivity. And for IT teams, they want to operate as efficiently as possible, not wasting time or energy doing the same thing, again, and again. Adopting knowledge-centered services is a significant first step to addressing these concerns.

To go beyond, consider **creating a conversational AI strategy**.



Chapter 04

Automating service desks and how
to do it successfully

Category-leading companies know that operational efficiency — without sacrificing employee experience — is important now more than ever. That's why the best organizations pride themselves on being able to deliver incredible support to every employee — instantly.

But, only industry-leading organizations know how to deliver the best support while also:

- Minimizing burnout within support teams
- Meeting their employees where they are — in enterprise chat platforms
- Delivering equitable support across global teams at a scale

Here's how Equinix manages to do it all — with automation.

In an era when personalized experiences are the norm, organizations are far behind in providing the same. Employees are burnt out. The last thing they need is to wait multiple days for help.

So, organizations are using service desk automation to unlock a frictionless employee experience while optimizing the IT team's efficiency.

What is true service desk automation?

Service desk automation is the process of using machine learning and conversational AI to streamline repetitive tasks. It provides service agents with a single platform to resolve customer issues with minimum effort so that they can focus on high-impact work. True automation will offer employees end-to-end support, without relegating your IT agents to building out workflows.

Automating service desks and how to do it successfully

What problems does automation solve?

Right now, agents and employees alike are having a tough time solving for fast employee support.

Employees are unable to get fast support for three main reasons:

- Crucial information is scattered across multiple knowledge bases — making it impossible to find the right one in a timely manner.
- Enterprise search systems can't match employee issues with solutions.
- Employees send thousands of emails to IT agents to solve simple issues, effectively overwhelming support.

IT agents are overwhelmed because:

- They're stuck on mundane tasks, like finding the right knowledge base article.
- They don't have any visibility into employee issues — preventing them from addressing the root of the problems — relegating them to a world of nonstop, low-level maintenance.
- Onboarding is an endless cycle of answering the same questions.

To solve all these issues, organizations are turning to an AI service desk and adopting knowledge-centered services — with great results.

Automating service desks and how to do it successfully

Building an in-house tool versus buying a tool that integrates

When it comes to introducing service desk automation into your organization, there are two approaches you can take:

- Build your own automation processes in-house or
- Onboard an out-of-box solution for end-to-end automation

There are benefits and challenges to both, so let's dive in.

Build-your-own tools

Some organizations choose to build tools in-house. This can offer up a lot of flexibility for service teams to incorporate edge cases, save money in the long run, and align your automation strategy with your organization's "build in-house" culture.

If you have a large team of developers that are passionate about building dialogue flows, customizable scripts, and getting into the nitty-gritty of the building process, building your own tools can be beneficial.

It's important to consider what resources you have on offer before building your own in-house automation tool — this approach requires a lot of manual effort, but can be hugely beneficial in the long run.

Out-of-the-box service desk automation

Other organizations choose to implement an existing automation tool. the most effective way to rapidly scale your service desk, without piling work onto your IT team or having to onboard new members. Industry-leading organizations are choosing to pursue this route for many reasons, including:

- Faster time to value. Because you don't have to spend time building out each automation, you can start solving problems and creating impact right away.
- Lower cost of ownership. The right tools will need very little oversight — it won't be necessary to dedicate an entire team to maintain it.

Automating service desks and how to do it successfully

Benefits of Service Desk Automation

No matter which way you choose to automate your service desk, there's a whole host of benefits that can create a wide-ranging impact. Automation can easily transform your business processes and make your entire organization — from IT agents to employees — a more productive, happier workforce. Let's take a closer look:

1. Transform business processes

Employees are constantly interacting with existing business processes — through onboarding, requesting access, routine communications, and so much more. Automation is an opportunity to streamline all interactions employees have with the help desk to ease massive amounts of day-to-day friction.

Automation is also a massive cost-savings method. It takes, on average, 30 hours for a service desk agent to resolve a ticket, whereas automation can enable self-service and give agents back their time.

2. Increase IT efficiency

Right now, service desk agents may spend their days running after mundane tasks — resetting passwords, routing tickets, or directing people to the right knowledge base article. With service desk automation, organizations can turn the corner towards faster resolution without overburdening agents with manual help.

3. Decrease employee support wait times

Automation can solve common problems instantly, dramatically reducing wait times for employees. Of course, there will always be issues that only a help desk agent can solve. While agents are working on that, you can automate standard employee communications — updating them on the ticket, and keeping them in the loop.

With the right automation strategy, you can even proactively engage with employees — solving issues before they become tickets, answering questions before they become blockers.

To put this into context, let's apply these benefits to some everyday use cases.

Top 3 service desk automation use cases

Based on Moveworks data, we know that successful organizations use machine learning and automation for the following three use cases the most effectively:

- Resetting authentication
- Provisioning software
- Sending employee communications

These use cases come up on a daily basis and every employee is blocked by them multiple times during their tenure.

At first glance, an employee facing several challenges during their tenure doesn't seem like a

huge problem. But multiply that with every employee you have. And others who are blocked as a result. Easing day-to-day friction for every employee can be a game-changer.

Automation is able to alleviate that pain — and more — exponentially.

