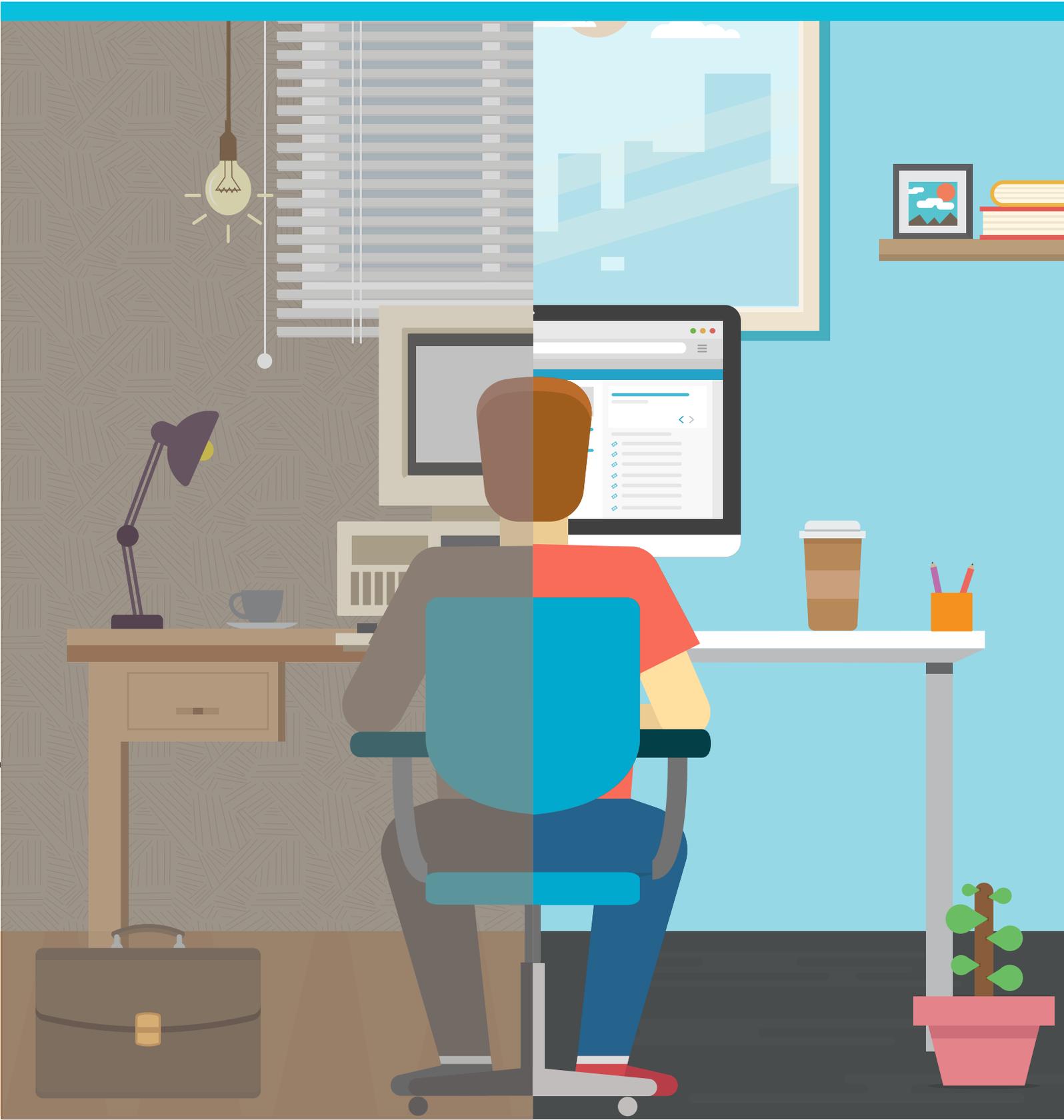freshservice

The 1990's Called.
They Want Their Service Desk Back.

Stephen Mann

How Consumerization and Customer Experience Will Affect Your IT Support Organization

Stephen Mann

The average corporate IT organization has evolved greatly since the 1980s, and IT support in particular. This has morphed from an IT help desk – initially a catch-and-dispatch call-logging capability – to an ITIL[1]-inspired service desk – where scripts and process automation allow less technical personnel to deliver first contact resolution. It's been great for the corporate accountants, with IT support realizing efficiencies to deal with more IT issues[2] at a lower cost. But how has it been for IT's end users or customers?[3]

More importantly, what has changed in the last five years? Corporate IT organizations, and their IT support, might have moved from a technology- to a service-centric approach with the help of ITIL, but have they really understood and adapted to the consumer-driven changes that are driving service delivery and IT support in 2015 and beyond? How many IT organizations do you think have stopped to look at their IT support capability as an overall business solution, rather than just at a process or technology level, to assess how well it's meeting its purpose? Or even to look at IT support's purpose to understand whether business requirements and expectations have changed over time?

Corporate IT organizations and their support functions, or capabilities, need to escape from the solution trap – the situation where "We fall in love with our solution and forget to rekindle our love of solving the problem."[4] They need to ensure that their IT support is both fit-for-purpose and meeting the potentially higher end user expectations – with these end user, and business, expectations being driven by consumer-world experiences. Importantly, this is so much more than the Consumerization of IT[5] – with end users now expecting more from corporate IT support and corporate IT in general not just their personal productivity technology.

[1] ITIL is the IT service management best practice framework formerly known as the IT Infrastructure Library.

[2] Ticket volumes have increased in 57% of support organizations according to the 2014 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report

[3] From this point the white paper uses the traditional IT term "end users" to describe the consumers of IT services, this term can be read as customers, consumers, or something else as required. Please note that there will of course be times when terms like customer service, customer satisfaction, or customer experience are used in the context of end users.

[4] Richard Mulholland, itSMF South Africa, July 2014

[5] The Consumerization of IT is "the growing tendency for new information technology to emerge first in the consumer market and then spread into business and government organizations" (Wikipedia)

IT organizations need to appreciate that consumerization, and its impact, is about so much more than using personal devices, apps, and cloud services in the workplace. That instead, consumerization is driving higher employee expectations, with IT support organizations requiring change on multiple fronts. This isn't just the adoption of new technologies, but also a change in mindset and the approaches taken to IT support.

Thus this white paper covers:

1) The impact of consumerization on corporate IT organizations (and on IT support in particular).

2) Managing consumer-driven expectations and the customer experience.

3) Strategies and approaches for improving customer experience.

It's time for corporate IT support to catch up with the "Google generation."

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMERIZATION ON CORPORATE IT

Consumerization is changing corporate IT and will in particular change IT support forever. In fact consumerization is affecting all corporate service providers, including the corporate HR and facilities functions. Consumer-world support technology has already made inroads into the enterprise, with consumer support expectations hot on its heels.

So corporate IT support organizations still have much to do. The introduction of new support technology doesn't mean that it will actually be used by end users. Then, and probably more importantly, a change in mindset is required. One that looks beyond improving efficiency to see that end user expectations of IT support are increasingly based on their consumer-world experiences. A consumer-world where end users are treated as customers rather than as the inconsequential fleshy-things attached to IT assets.

The Consumerization of IT

The Consumerization of IT is nothing new. In fact, consumerization in an IT context was first formally mentioned by Douglas Neal and John Taylor, of the Leading Edge Forum (LEF), in 2001– so six years before the first Apple iPhone started to change the way that we think about our personal technology and software.

In fact the Apple iPhone, and the Apple App Store, made us forget about the technology – it was technology that just worked and, importantly, it helped us with our personal, and then professional, lives. The iPhone and other brands of smartphone, then tablet devices including the iPad, quickly brought critical mass to what would eventually become known as "bring your own device" (BYOD)[6] – the use of personal technology in the workplace, with or without the backing and support of the corporate IT organization. With BYOD considered the manifestation of the Consumerization of IT in the workplace.

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[6] Gartner defines BYOD as: "An alternative strategy allowing employees, business partners and other users to utilize a personally selected and purchased client device to execute enterprise applications and access data. Typically, it spans smartphones and tablets, but the strategy may also be used for PCs. It may include a subsidy."

The Consumerization of IT Has Been a Red Herring

Sadly, over the last five years, corporate IT organizations have placed too heavy a focus on the consumer technology rather than on its use. It's unsurprising, given that it's what tends to happen in corporate IT despite the continued investment in ITIL and the associated recognition that IT needs to be delivered as a service. For example, the rapid introduction of corporate smartphones, to replace traditional mobiles, was overly-focused on the technology rather than looking at how best to meet the needs, and expectations, of end users on the move. Corporate IT's attention was placed on device selection, security, mobile apps, device management, and security (sic) – with little attention paid to the user or service experience.

But thankfully there was an oasis of future-thinking offered by PwC, a global consultancy firm, in 2011 – with PwC stating that: **"The consumerization of IT is really about societal change."**[7] It was an early call on the wider implications of consumerization when so many others were solely focused on BYOD security risks, and the potential complexity and cost of supporting personal IT in the workplace.

In fact the focus on the technology, and BYOD in particular, has misdirected the IT organization away from the true impact of consumerization. It has misdirected them away from the fact that end user expectations have increased significantly in the last five years, based on end user consumer-world experiences of both services[8] and service.[9] As a result, the IT help desks or service desks created in the 1980s, 1990s, and even the 2000s, are now losing ground on consumer-world technical and customer support.

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[7] The consumerization of IT - The next-generation CIO, PwC, 2011: http://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology-innovation-center/consumerization-information-technology-transforming-cio-role.jhtml

[8] The service supplied, and that the end user consumes, e.g. a managed desktop service or mobile email in the context of the corporate IT organization.

[9] The service, and customer experience, that surrounds the supplied IT service. In the context of the corporate IT organization, this is across the IT service lifecycle and includes access to IT services, support, and customer service.

What Consumerization Really Means for Corporate IT

So while corporate IT organizations have continued to focus on the Consumerization of IT –and managing the risks associated with employees using their own devices, applications, and personal cloud services in the work-place. There has been a bigger storm brewing for corporate IT organizations (or in fact any corporate service provider), and that is: how to meet consumer-world-driven service expectations.

These raised, and possibly new, expectations are based on how end users are treated as customers in their personal lives, with consumer-world expectations only raising the proverbial bar for most corporate service providers around service-based attributes such as:

- Ease-of-use and ease-of-access when engaging pre- and post-purchase
- Self-service capabilities, including issue logging, service request catalogs, and knowledge availability for self-help
- Social or collaborative capabilities, including chat for both pre-sales and post-sales support
- Anytime, anyplace, any device access to services, information, and help
- Customer-centric support

In light of this, how well do you think your corporate IT organization and IT support is meeting consumer-driven expectations? Do you even know what your end users' expectations are?

The Consequences of Poor Service Experiences

Consider this consumer-world example: a customer has a great mobile phone/service contract, having taken the time to source the one that's best for them across price, quantity, and quality. So the price is fine, maybe even good value for money; the minutes, texts, data allowances are all as needed; and they experience great quality calls and good 3G/4G coverage. All is great with the (mobile) service and they would recommend the supplier and tariff to friends.

It all sounds great when everything is working for them, but how is the support and customer service when things go wrong? For instance, they have an issue with the (mobile) service and they want either advice or help. It shouldn't be difficult, help is usually just a quick click or call away in the B2C world, so they:

- Try the service provider's self-service capability but it isn't easy to use and, try as they might, they can't find the help they need.
- Call support or customer services – only they end up waiting in a telephone queue for 45
- Are eventually handled by a non-native speaker – the result of a strategic service provider decision to staff call centers based on cost. So the customer might have misunderstandings and/or have to repeat themselves.
- Realize that the agent is blindly following a script that doesn't fit their needs or issue – it therefore takes longer than needed, and maybe multiple conversations with multiple service provider support staff, until their issue is hopefully resolved.

Post-call, the customer feels more like an account, or asset, number than they do a customer. Their time is valuable and the support call wasn't a pleasant experience, so they decide to change mobile service provider based on "the service" (or customer experience) rather than the mobile service itself – as the service provider failed to meet their expectations. So even consumer-world service providers can struggle to get things right.

How relevant is this to internal IT support organizations? That's the wrong question. The real question is: **"How relevant is this to corporate IT's end users?"** Surely it would be foolish, as with the initial resistance to the influx of personal devices into the workplace, for corporate IT organizations to assume that employees aren't bringing in expectations around services and service driven by their consumer-world experiences?

So how is your corporate IT support organization adapting to meet these raised, or new, end user expectations?

MANAGING CONSUMER-DRIVEN EXPECTATIONS

Customer experience – defined as **"the product of an interaction between an organization and a customer over the duration of their relationship"** [10] – is **"the new black"** for B2B and B2C organizations keen on winning, retaining, and upselling to customers. With product and service providers intent on differentiating themselves from competitors based on delivering superior customer experiences.

"But what does this have to do with corporate IT support?" you might ask. **"Our service desk doesn't have to win, retain, and upsell to end users."** However, this isn't a great viewpoint to have – as corporate IT help desk and service desks are a long way from having a monopoly on IT support, due to the Internet in particular. But this doesn't matter – the real relevance of customer experience for corporate IT organizations is not about "losing business," it's about it losing relevance and importance. That's corporate IT organizations losing relevance and importance to end users, teams, business units, and the business as a whole because they are out of touch with, and fail to deliver against, end user and business expectations. Where these expectations might relate to a number of different areas, including:

1) IT supply

2) Access and communication channels

3) The customer, or service, experience

Increased Expectations Around IT Supply

Corporate IT organizations need to realize that BYOD and its enterprise-application sister "Shadow IT" – that's **"IT systems and IT solutions built and used inside organizations without explicit organizational approval"** [11] – are not the product of a maverick and/or spiteful end user community. That they are instead the result of a corporate IT organization that has for too long failed to meet IT demand, with sufficient and suitable IT supply. It's potentially the corporate IT equivalent of "If you want something doing properly, do it yourself" although it doesn't always pay off for end users.

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customer_experience
[11] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadow_IT

And both BYOD and Shadow IT are nothing new. In terms of the former, employees have been trying to put their corporate SIMs into personal smartphones and Blackberry devices, and expecting their corporate email to magically work, since long before the use of personal smartphones, tablets, and laptops to access corporate applications and data was sanctioned. In terms of the latter, lines of business have long been spending surplus business budgets, at year end, on third-party-created IT systems, and then expecting the corporate IT organization to magically host and support them. The real issue is that cloud services, and the cloud service providers that relish in directly selling into lines of business and circumventing the corporate IT organization, have made it easier than ever for Shadow IT to occur.

As a result, some corporate IT organizations have failed to keep up with their increasingly tech-savvy and expectant end users. Where the battleground ten years ago was that corporate IT provided older, less capable, and more costly hardware than was available in the high street. Now the battle has spread across all aspects of IT provision – such as hardware (phones, tablets, and computers), applications, mobile internet, backup and storage, access and communication channels to service providers and their services, and support and customer service.

Increased Expectations Around Access and Communication Channels

The IT help desk started with two primary means of access and communication – the telephone and face-to-face "walk-ups." Over the years, service desk technology (and then IT service management (ITSM) technology) and best practices have evolved, with contact via email and online forms, and then the automated processing of both added.

In 2015, however, there are a number of additional access and communication channels for corporate IT organizations to consider, offer, and leverage. With these often driven by consumer-world advancement, and with each capability offering different levels of customer service and, importantly for cash-strapped IT organizations, different cost profiles.[12]

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[12]HDI research estimates that chat, email, and self-service tickets cost US$10 each, whereas phone is US$14 and walk-up US$20 (Source: 2014 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report)

One of the key and most common examples of consumer capability adoption is self-service – the ability for end users to help themselves by logging issues, gaining access to new services, or using knowledge articles to avoid the need for IT support personnel intervention. It can be a great relief for overworked IT support organizations given that in 2014 Level 1 support still spent 64% of its time handling tickets.[13]

In 2014, 59% of support organizations were using self-service technology, with 24% looking to replace or update it.[14] The latter statistic is sadly indicative of the issues that support organizations have had in succeeding with self-service, but thankfully much as been learned from early adopters. Also be careful with terminology, given that self-service is sometimes confused with the service catalog or service request catalog – self-service should definitely be more than just an online IT storefront and shopping basket function and can potentially include some or all of:

- Self-help access to FAQs and how-to information – and not just written media
- The ability to quickly log issues for resolution by IT personnel
- The ability to request services, or changes to services via a service request catalog
- Access to other corporate information and knowledge articles
- The ability to self-check the status of incidents and service requests
- Broadcast alerts and individual notifications
- A self-service password reset capability
- The ability to access IT support via chat – as sometimes human-to-human interactions are needed to
- expedite matters
- Access to communities, wikis, and other peer-support mechanisms
- Personal IT-asset profiles and self-audit capability
- The ability to download software and patches
- Calendars, such as known future service downtime
- Links to handy external sites
- As much automation as possible for service fulfillment, incident resolution, and update notification

[13]Source: 2014 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report
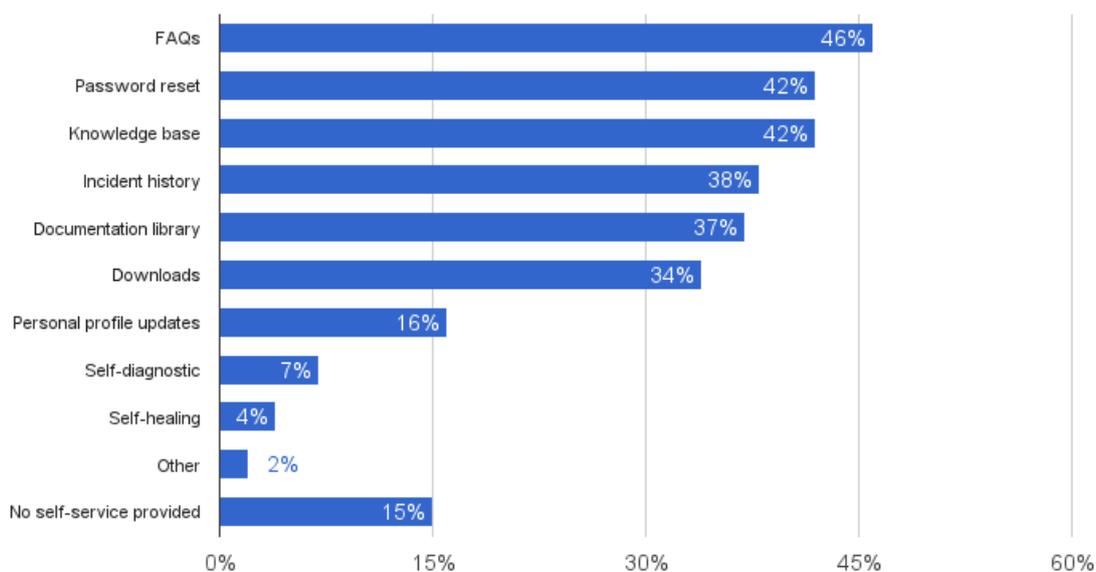[14]Source: 2014 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report

Beyond Self-Service

While self-service can deliver a wealth of benefits for both end users and the corporate IT organization, it's not the only available option. In fact, self-service is just one of a number of new support capabilities that can be added to telephone, walk-up, email, and online forms – with other options including:

- **Genius bars.** Yes, the name is stolen from what works so well in Apple Stores (that is, if you have an appointment). In the corporate scenario, groups of IT support professionals are made available to end users, either via appointment or walk-up, in key work locations. End users can then approach the support professionals for in-person support as-and-when it's convenient for them.

- **Communities and peer-support.** This is already happening whether the corporate IT organization is involved or not. End users find answers, or at least the route to answers, via search engines and collaborative, or information-based, websites. These can be either end user or manufacturer-driven – and progressive IT support organizations will create their own Wikis and communities to facilitate self-help and peer-support internally.

- **Social Media.** "Social IT" is nothing new, again it has been around for half a decade. For corporate IT, this can be a number of capabilities supported by a variety of social technologies. With these technologies including private online communities (such as Jive), internal Facebook–like walls (such as Yammer), the native social capabilities provided by ITSM tool providers or their integration with third-party corporate social technologies, or external social services (such as Twitter). In 2014 only 29% of organizations were using social media for IT support. Ultimately it's about providing additional access channels to IT support and hopefully quicker resolutions.

- **Gamification.** It's an overlay to other channels and, on the face of it, it's about making work fun – perhaps when working on the service desk or contributing to knowledge bases and communities. Look deeper and you'll see that it's really about driving the right employee behaviors and improving team performance. Be warned though, while it has been an ITSM hot topic for a good few years, adoption levels are still very low).

Email and telephone are still by far the most common access and communication channels (see Diagram 1) but expect to see significant growth in self-service (web requests) by the end of 2015.

DIAGRAM 1: COMMON SELF-SERVICE CAPABILITIES

(Survey respondents were asked to select all options that applied to their support centers.)

Percentage of support organizations that make each self-service tool available to end users

Source: 2014 HDI [15] Support Center Practices & Salary Report

Ultimately though, end user access to, and communication with, the corporate IT organization is about ease of use and choice. End users will have consumer-driven expectations around both.

Increased Expectations Around the Customer, or Service, Experience

How quickly does your service desk respond to, and resolve, incidents and service requests? If it's a first contact resolution then this point is somewhat mute, but for the other 30-50%[16] of incidents and the majority of service requests (depending on the IT organization), the end user will have expectations around the delivery. These expectations can be unrealistic – especially if based on end user consumer experiences rather than the agreed corporate service levels. Nonetheless they are the end users' expectations.

But this was the wrong question to ask – as speed isn't everything when it comes to customer services. In fact, all speed might do is make the end user unhappier more quickly. Maybe **"How well does your service desk respond to, and resolve, incidents and service requests?"** would have been better question to ask? The interesting thing is that the answer to this question will most likely still involve speed – that "70% of issues are resolved in the first contact." There might be additional information provided such as **"We have 92% customer satisfaction"** but how valid are such customer satisfaction surveys when:

1) Some end users might avoid the corporate service desk at all costs (probably due to a previous poor experience) – indicative research shows that as little as 20% of issues are directed at the corporate IT service desk, with the Internet being the largest source of help.

2) Response rates to IT support satisfaction surveys are often less than 10% – with people often just too busy or resigned to the fact that their carefully-crafted responses disappear into a black hole.

3) People generally only complete satisfaction surveys if they are either extremely happy or extremely unhappy with the service they have received.

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[16] Many IT organizations aim for 70% first contact resolution, and the 70% figure is often quoted, however the 2014 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report has this figure at just 49% of tickets

And the third point opens up another can of worms – are corporate IT organizations measuring satisfaction with the support given or with the service provided? They are two different things – the content (and resolution) and the delivery. In the same way that the IT organization delivers services and service. Plus, do the survey questions mask the reality of customer satisfaction? This can be demonstrated using a restaurant analogy, where the restaurant's customer satisfaction survey asks:

- Was it easy to book a table?
- Was it easy to park?
- Were staff friendly and courteous?
- Was your food as expected?
- Was your bill correct?

And all customers' answers to these seemingly sensible questions are consistently "yes." Great job restaurant people! Or was it? Would customers go back again? The answer could easily be "no," and the restaurant will never know why because it didn't ask enough about the experience and expectations outside of the mechanics of running a restaurant. Of course the restaurant could have an "Any other comments?" catch-all question, but going back to the second point above, how may questionnaire responses include detailed comments?

Similarly, a hotel might ask questions related to the quality of the room, the price paid, the hotel staff, or the hotel's facilities. But do they ask whether you had a good night's sleep? As why do most people book a hotel, well at least for business trips? It's because they want somewhere to sleep while away from home. The good night's sleep is an expectation and a key part of their hotel experience but it isn't often measured.

Returning to the world of corporate IT, things are thankfully changing. In the HDI report "Service Management: Not Just for IT Anymore" (October 2014) the two top reasons for changes to support centers[17] were:

1) Wanting to provide a better customer experience (67%), and

2) Available technology for providing support (33%)

With the third related to budget – which of course could be an increase of decrease in available funds.

But why are so many support centers trying to improve customer experience? Do they think that end users just deserve better service or is it something to do with increased end user expectations from consumerization? In this world of continued IT budget cuts one can only assume it's the latter.

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Improving customer experience, or the service experience, requires a multi-threaded approach to redefining how the age-old problem of supporting the users of technology is addressed. And, while the aforementioned capabilities and technology will help, it requires both a mindset change, and the introduction of new approaches, to truly make a step-change that will come close to matching consumer-world service and support experiences. In particular that:

1) A new mindset is needed – quite simply a mindset that views end users as people, and people with expectations

2) Technical support needs to become technical customer support

3) Support personnel need to be empowered to use their initiative and to go "off-script"

[17]Please note that these were mostly US-based support centers.

A Mindset that Views End Users as People

In the 1980s, and no doubt before, IT was provided to "users," i.e. the people that used technology. Somewhere along the way we made this sound a little better by calling the users "end users," probably to differentiate between the users in IT and employees. There have been other names for the people that consume IT services, such as business colleagues and consumers, but IT has generally struggled to call end users "customers," and for many this is still true. The logic being that the customer is the person who pays for a product or service, with everyone else merely users or consumers of that product or service.

However, for corporate IT to move forward in the context of consumerization, all IT personnel, not just those providing IT support, need to see more than "end users" when they interact with the people who consume IT services. It doesn't actually matter what they are called, as long as they are viewed and treated with some form of customer-centricity. With IT staff appreciating that those who consume IT services will have expectations around the service and the service experience. That end users, or consumers, can be some form of customer despite what dictionary definitions say.

Consider, for example, a party of four eating in a restaurant where only one person will be paying – let's assume that the server even asks if one or multiple checks are required so that they know that there's only one paying customer. Are the other three people treated any differently to the one with the credit card? Are they called consumers not customers, or ignored by serving staff and management? No, they are all seen as customers from a customer or service experience point of view. In fact one could argue that all four people are just treated as "people," with the underlying assumption that each person will have an expectation of how they want and need to be treated in the restaurant, whether they are paying or not.

So why do corporate IT organizations think that they should differentiate between the small number of people that pay IT's bills and the tens, hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands that consume their services? They are all people and now, thanks in part to their consumer-driven expectations, they are people that want and need to be treated as more than a payroll or asset number. They want to be treated like a customer or at least as a person. They want to be treated like they matter, like they exist. The majority of end users might not need anything more than an acknowledgement that they're real people and not numbers.

Great customer service and support is all about hiring the right people, empowering them, and allowing them to consistently meet end user expectations of IT support and customer service. But it also needs the realization that it's about the people using the technology rather than the technology itself.

Provide Great Technical Customer Support

There is often confusion with IT's terminology – IT organizations have end users, not customers, but they will still use terms such as customer service, or customer satisfaction, in one breath while denying that end users are customers in another. It's a funny situation but customer service and customer satisfaction are great terms if they result in a better service and service experience for end users. But this isn't the only terminology issue. There also needs to be a realization that IT support is a misnomer – that it's in fact people support. That fixing the IT isn't enough, and that it's getting the people, or business processes, working again that's ultimately important – with the IT needing to be viewed as the "means to an end" rather than the end itself.

Again looking to end users' consumer-world experiences, are they receiving technical support or technical customer support – with the difference being a focus on the IT versus a focus on the person or customer? For the more successful service providers it's hard to argue that they aim for the former over the latter.

So what can corporate IT organizations do, beyond changing the way in which they view end users, to better support the people over the technology, and to deliver a better service experience? The answer is probably a white paper in itself, there are however a handful of things that can help IT support to realign itself to consumer-driven expectations:

> **1) Realize the importance of the IT service desk to the overall views of IT** performance. A statistic from circa five years ago – which can no longer be officially quoted and attributed – is that at least 50% of the business' perceptions of the corporate IT organization's performance can be attributed to service desk performance. The service desk, and self-service capability, are the main and possibly the only IT organization touchpoints for most end users.

2) Step back from traditional IT support metrics such as "first time fix" (also known as first contact resolution), and "incident volumes handled," to understand how well IT support is performing in terms of people support rather than IT support. Efficiency is no longer enough.

3) Assess personal skills. If a service desk is only training staff in using the ITSM tool, operating processes, accessing and following scripts, and maybe in telephone etiquette, how good will staff be at dealing with people who have non-standard issues? Or dealing with people in general? The service desk needs to be about more than process mechanics.

4) Assess current customer satisfaction mechanisms. Existing post-ticket and annual surveys might be giving a false picture of performance. IT support organizations need to ask more focused and valuable questions such as "would you use the service desk if there was a viable alternative?" If the answer is "no" or "maybe" then there's most likely an IT support expectations gap that needs to be closed.

5) Commit to improvement. Any form of improvement activity can be difficult, but it's especially so for under pressure service desks. Improvement needs commitment, and it needs to avoid being some-thing started that then fails in execution due to shrinking budgets and the continual pressure of firefighting IT issues.

Finally, returning to the third point on skills, it's not enough to just recruit new people or to develop new skills in existing staff. The required change, in IT support, doesn't only encompass mindsets and skills, it's also about the empowerment of IT support staff to do more than following a script when needed.

Empower IT Support Staff to Use Their Initiative

IT management, and support staff, need to understand that not all issues or service requests can be resolved via a script, well at least not quickly and with an acceptable service experience. And that forcing an end user through a script that doesn't fit their issue is both futile and damaging – it costs in terms of time, money, and IT's business reputation.

There are two key concepts and approaches that can help here:

> 1) **Standard + Case,**[18] created by Rob England, the IT Skeptic, and described in his book: "Plus! The Standard + Case Approach"[19]

> 2) **Intelligent disobedience**, on which ITSM luminary Ivor Macfarlane has created a separate Freshdesk white paper

Where the two approaches are not mutually exclusive.

Standard + Case

Standard + Case defines two different support approaches for two different kinds of support scenario:

> 1) **"Standard"** situations that can be addressed by laid down processes and procedures. These situations are expected, predictable, and for the most part solvable through the application of known IT support techniques and approaches. These are the norm for most modern-day IT support functions.

> 2) **"Case"** situations which are the exception. They are unusual and will often present unexpected symptoms that cannot be dealt with by the use of expected or existing remedies. Each case requires examination and an understanding of the situation. Then appropriate action will need to be determined. At the very least, it needs a variation to standard procedures, often it will need the invention of a new solution.

[18] http://www.basicsm.com/standard-case
[19] http://www.amazon.com/Plus-Standard-Case-Approach-response/dp/1482061740/

The reality for many corporate IT organizations is that they already do this but they do it in an informal way after having wasted its, and the end user's, time trying to fit the issue or service request to an inappropriate script.

Intelligent Disobedience

The term "intelligent disobedience" is not new, having been used in the training of service dogs, such as guide dogs for the visibly impaired, since the middle of the twentieth century. The concept behind intelligent disobedience is that the dog, or the person, with the most accurate and up-to-date information is best placed to judge if the normal rules apply or whether something else is more appropriate because of the circumstances. It's the aforementioned people empowerment in action.

Using the guide dog scenario as an example, imagine a visibly-impaired person walking with their guide dog up to a road crossing. The guide dog sits down at the roadside and their owner presses the button to activate the crossing signal. The audible crossing signal is then heard but the dog doesn't move, and a gentle prod and a word from the owner have no effect – the dog has seen a speeding car that is unable to stop despite the red stoplight. The dog's "disobedience" here has saved a life, or possibly more than one.

Intelligent disobedience can be applied to IT support – where rules (and scripts) are written for expected situations but staff are empowered to use their initiative when faced with the unexpected. It will become a more common occurrence as IT support organizations will need to expect more of the unexpected as many of the expected scenarios are dealt with via self-service and self-help capabilities.

Importantly, this is not the abandonment of rules, merely the option for staff to use common sense and problem solving capabilities when necessary.

NEXT STEPS

This white paper asks a lot of questions of the reader. And there's a lot to take in – the real impact of consumer-ization on corporate IT, new technologies and capabilities that can help, the need for new mindsets and skills, and new approaches to IT support and customer service. There's also potentially a lot to change within your IT support organization, depending on your answers. Change that might appear daunting and potentially out of reach.

But Freshdesk is here to help with an approach that looks at ITSM through a customer service lens. We might not have all the answers yet, but we are committed to supporting customers and other corporate IT organizations through the sharing of thought leadership and best practices, and the provision of solutions that enable corpo-rate IT, and its support organization, to thrive in a consumer-driven world.

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Stephen Mann is an IT service management (ITSM) industry commentator with over 16 years' experience in practical ITSM, IT asset management, ITSM software product marketing, IT and ITSM research and advisory, and ITSM consultancy. Stephen likes to take a fresh view of ITSM and service desk operations – frequently blogging, writing and presenting on the challenges and opportunities for ITSM professionals.

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Freshservice is an online service desk that takes a fresh approach to ITIL. A plug and play solution for organisations that are trying to make everyday IT operations simpler and more efficient, Freshservice boasts of powerful ticketing and asset management capabilities on top of a refreshing user experience. With ITIL best practices out of the box to help IT organisations and professionals get started quickly, Freshservice gives organisations the ability to scale their IT support by leveraging the asset discovery module and CMDB.

Freshservice has been designed to take advantage of the SaaS and cloud platform, turning your focus to things that matter most - delivery exceptional customer service.

To make things even simpler, Freshservice is also integrated with other popular apps like Google Apps, Dropbox, Freshbooks, Harvest, Pivotal Tracker, SurveyMonkey, Bomgar, Box and more. From the makers of popular customer support software Freshdesk, Freshservice is the IT service desk of the future, on a quest to take the boring out of IT.

For more information on Freshservice, and how we can help
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