

How Freshservice Is Helping to Transform IT Service Management

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Executive Summary

Unifying IT through a cost-effective, versatile approach to service management may sound like one of those stories that's too good to be true. But this report highlights just such an example—a Freshservice adoption that has energized a global transportation services company where IT services and business services 100% coincide. This report also looks at how Freshservice functionality fits in with IT service management (ITSM) market requirements, as a way of positioning both our case study and Freshservice itself in a broader industry context.

A Service Management Marketplace in Transition

EMA research strongly indicates that IT service management (ITSM) is evolving in a number of critical ways toward a “next-generation ITSM” model.¹ This next-generation model features wide-ranging integrations to support roles outside the ITSM team, including operations and even development. It also features increasing attention to mobile and more progressive approaches to automation, analytics, and self-service, along with core investments in the configuration management database (CMDB) and other service modeling capabilities.

Some of the data highlights are as follows:

- 62% of IT organizations view lifecycle mobile support as “completely” or “significantly” impacting the role of ITSM, as well as improving ITSM and overall IT efficiencies.
- Self-service is playing an ever larger role in improving ITSM performance and increasing customer satisfaction overall.
- 65% of ITSM teams are seeking to support development or DevOps requirements. And 55% view integrated DevOps as either “very positive” or “transformative.” The priorities for doing this are shown in Figure 1.

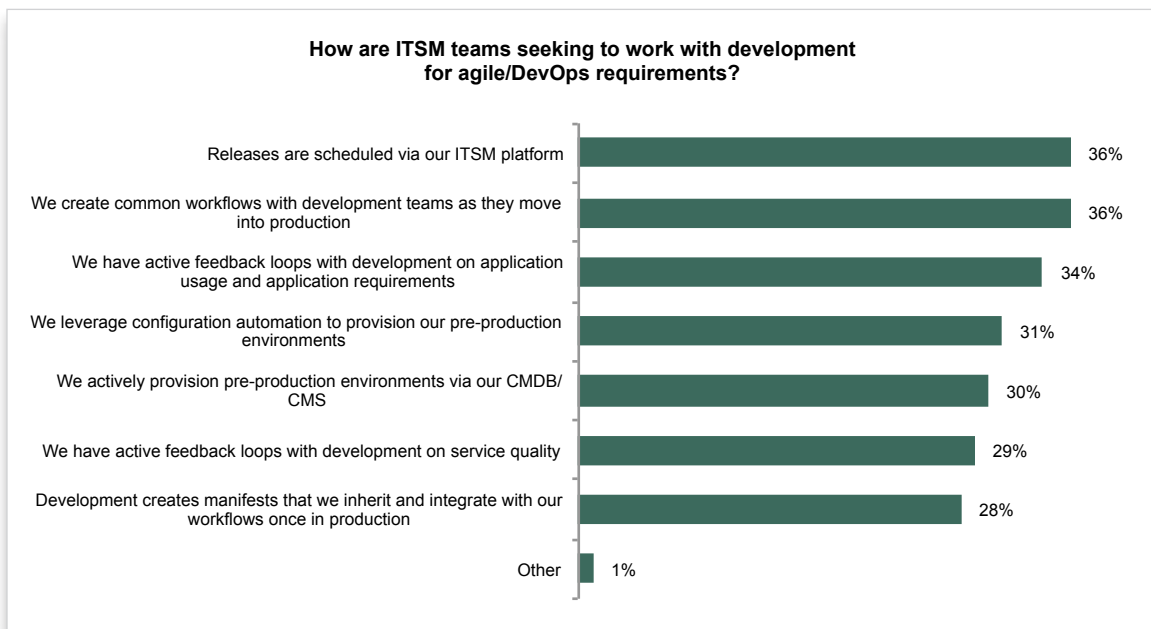


Figure 1. ITSM teams' priorities for supporting agile/DevOps requirements are highlighted here and range from scheduling and workflow/tracking across development and operations to feedback loops and actual provisioning.

¹ EMA, “[What Is the Future of IT Service Management?](#)” March 2015.

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- Looking at self-reported ITSM success rates, EMA found that in comparison to the “somewhat successful” or “not successful” organizations, those that were “extremely successful” were also
 - Consistently more likely to have priorities for integrating IT stakeholders outside of ITSM, such as operations and development teams, with a focus on improving service delivery and end-user experience
 - 2 times more likely to offer a service catalog
 - 2 times more likely to offer CMDB support
 - 2 times more likely to be leveraging mobile, both across IT and in support of IT service consumers
 - More than 10 times more likely to view lifecycle support for mobile users as “critical”
 - 3 times more likely to have priorities for integrating and supporting agile/DevOps requirements

However, these advances, when they are offered in technology products, are often blocked by overly complex ITSM solutions that hold a great deal of potential but require excessive IT overhead for deployment, administration, upgrades, and customization. It’s not surprising then that our data shows that the three priorities for ITSM software adoption are:

1. Easy upgrades
2. Accelerated deployment
3. Minimal administration

Introducing Freshservice

A relatively new company, Freshdesk launched its first customer support product (under the name *Freshdesk*) in 2010 and already claims to have 80,000 customers. Its experienced founding team, with roots in ITSM, understands the value of ease of use, ease of deployment, flexibility, and cost-effective deployments. The team brought those priorities to the fore when *Freshservice* was introduced in 2014. Since then, Freshservice has racked up over 7500 new customers across 100 countries, in just 24 months.

Freshservice is directed currently at mid-market deployments, although more enterprise adoption is expected in the future. It combines versatile and surprisingly rich functionality with fast time to value and minimal administrative overhead. A cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering, Freshservice was, according to its management team, “Built from the ground up, to be easy to use.” It was also designed to support IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices with a flexibility that can promote and facilitate process consolidation across IT.

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Freshservice functionality highlights include the following:

- **Multi-channel support** includes support for email, web portal, live chat, and Slack and robust support for mobile users with iOS/Android apps.
- A wide range of **integrations** with third-party solutions are offered—PagerDuty, Google Apps, DropBox, Slack, and Nagios, just to name a few. Freshservice estimates that it has about 20 fully supported native integrations, along with an API that can extend its reach to well over 100.

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- **Service desk capabilities** include a self-service portal; support for incident, request, and knowledge management; easily defined custom reports; IT project management capabilities; and well-realized workflow visualization so that custom workflows can be easily administered.
- The Freshservice **Self-service Portal** is one of the solution's standout features. The portal can serve as a center for IT and customer interaction and knowledge sharing, whether by handling requests, managing incidents, or facilitating change. Its support for video import is useful in training users on new processes and new capabilities. And its support for built-in automation and integrated workflows can also make it a virtual community center to promote improved IT effectiveness. This is one of Freshservice's most popular features, helping to accelerate time to value and enriching service desk value and customer support on an ongoing basis.
- **Additional ITSM capabilities** include problem management, change management, and release management features.
- **Asset management** is another feature of Freshservice, including a service catalog, a CMDB, inventory management, and contract management. Freshservice contract management extends to support software license terms and conditions and is easily administered with a lifecycle approach.
- **Social gamification** in Freshservice is not merely an afterthought, but rather a relatively rich system that can incent ITSM professionals to contribute content to a growing knowledge base with clear parameters for recognition and rewards.
- **Automation and versatile workflow configuration** is yet another Freshservice feature and is supported by a powerful rules engine.
- **Custom reports** offer out-of-the-box value for ITSM data sharing—an area that Freshdesk is continuing to enrich and expand.
- **DevOps support** is surprising in a mid-tier ITSM solution, but it is already fairly advanced in Freshservice, as can be seen in the following case study. Freshservice's combination of workflow versatility; integration with monitoring tools such as Solar Winds, New Relic, and Nagios; and visibility into public cloud assets is becoming increasingly appealing to a development community too often shut off from core service management processes and insights.

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Interview with Director of IT for a Global Transportation Services Corporation

Can you share some insights into your IT organization and the business it supports?

“Our company delivers value in terms of web-based services for resale and auctions in the area of transportation-related products within the U.S. and internationally in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. So our IT organization has a direct role in supporting revenue generation. This means, for instance, that every month if we have a maintenance window of any kind, we have to coordinate with business and marketing requirements. If we make a change that will impact IT service performance, we have to get business approval first—they have to know when it will take place and how long it will last.

“...our IT organization has a direct role in supporting revenue generation.”

“My role is both in development and management. For instance, I just rolled out a tool called Click-to-Chat to promote better customer interactions with our customer-facing website using Freshdesk. I also manage our Freshservice team.”

In other words, you are using both Freshdesk and Freshservice?

“Yes, we are using both. Click-to-Chat is rolled out with our customer-facing Freshdesk solution. Freshservice offers broader IT Infrastructure Library and IT service management support, so we use it primarily internally across our IT organization. This includes incident, problem, and change management as well as project management, for example. We have about 250 overall in IT including development, and 129 of these are regular Freshservice users or stakeholders. The number goes up to 149 if you include more occasional users.”

How did you come to use Freshservice?

“One of our biggest customers was a Freshdesk user and recommended the company to us. But our first priorities were more centered on core IT support and the service management capabilities we could get from Freshservice. The trigger for this, back in 2014, was a shift away from outsourcing our service desk to bringing it in-house.

“One reason for this move to in-house IT service management was cost savings. We were tired of being billed on a per-incident and per-request basis. Another reason was we wanted an in-house capability that could scale with us as our business grew and as we added more products and capabilities to our portfolio. Yet another reason was the need to optimize support for our legacy base of AS/400s more effectively.”

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What were you using before, and how did you evaluate Freshservice?

“In the past we had used HP Service Manager, but it was too costly and wasn't flexible enough in managing and assigning tickets. So we did an analysis of several different companies and assigned ratings to each. I've had significant experience with BMC and ServiceNow, for instance, in the past.

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“Freshdesk provided us with a temporary portal so we could explore Freshservice functionality. One way it stood out was in its versatility and in its form layout, as well as its time to value and cost advantages. With Freshservice we could change a process and a workflow without writing any APIs or struggling with ownership issues. We saw that it was very easy to manage approvals and workflows. We also saw that Freshservice ticket capture is automated and complete.”

What was deployment like?

“Deployment was easy with Freshservice. In fact the hardest thing was building the workflow and other templates, only because to do this we had to get people to think about the processes they wanted to follow. [For example,] when you submit a trouble ticket on X, what do you really want to look for in addressing it?”

“And Freshservice integrations with third-party toolsets also stood out.”

What kinds of integrations have you tried with Freshservice so far?

“We have a growing number of integrations. We were using Bomgar but are now using LogMeIn, for instance. We also have integrations with Dropbox, Google Analytics, JIRA, and Google Calendar. And we’re integrating Salesforce CRM and Survey Monkey, as other examples. “

What other areas of value can you highlight?

“We have **mobile support** for field techs, which helps to add to our overall IT efficiencies. And Freshservice helps us leverage those mobile devices for incident and problem management when Operations and IT have to work together.

“We’re also using the Freshservice **Self-service Portal** in full force. If someone needs a new phone or a new laptop, they can refer to the portal and the service catalog for requested items. And it’s easy to optimize interactions to unique requirements. For instance, I’ve been working in data service and recently put a form together for Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) requests. It was easy to do. Conversely, if some of our staff or our partners create a new domain, we can easily track what it is, who approved it, and, if needed, [see] if it meets Sarbanes-Oxley compliance requirements. The self-service portal has meaningfully reduced the amount of calls we get.

“We also leverage the **Freshservice Knowledge Base** extensively. For instance, when we migrate over new applications or other software, we can migrate over a lot of vendor documents as resources. These easily get integrated with relevant passwords and login information in support of new capabilities. As another example, most recently we migrated to a Fonality phone server, which replaced Cisco. We can also integrate training videos or other videos. Everything gets posted and made easily and appropriately accessible via the Self-service Portal accessing the knowledge base.

“**Automation** is another Freshservice advantage. Once again flexibility is key. We can easily assign different rules for different processes by establishing consistent subjects and categories across our workflows without having to fight our way through preset hierarchies.

“Given our **breadth of stakeholder support**, Freshservice is also helping to unify ITSM and Operations and help our IT organization work more efficiently as a whole. Development is also a stakeholder

Freshservice is also helping to unify ITSM and Operations and help our IT organization work more efficiently as a whole.

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in using Freshservice Release Management for what amounts to our approach to **DevOps**. We have built a planning stage and a test-plan stage into release management so Development doesn't have to go back and recreate the wheel every time there's an application change or a new application. You can also see and track any notes relevant to the release as it passes through its cycle. It's a really great process, and the development team is happy to see that their requirements don't get lost in the handshake with Operations. As changes are made to a new release, we can jointly track them with currency.

"I should point out that we are using the Freshservice **CMDB** for tracking assets and changes, including cloud-based assets. We can also **track contracts** across their lifecycle with automated notifications for when a contract expires. This also supports our software license management requirements. So, for instance, when Adobe Acrobat Reader is about to expire, we can see who it's assigned to and in what location, how it's managed, and what groups overall are using it."

Is there anything else you'd like to add in wrapping up?

"One of my biggest challenges has been accountability. One of the questions most often asked of me is, "How do you hold people accountable in managing change or handling a ticket?" Now we can follow up with weekly reports that are even shared at the VP level, as well as with our CTO. And not surprisingly this has done a lot to improve accountability overall.

"Perhaps I should add that I like my job, and I like the people I'm working with. And Freshservice has contributed to an even more positive working environment. With Freshservice, we can manage change a lot more efficiently, and this makes our business stakeholders very happy as well."

EMA Perspective

It's rare to see such a solid combination of functional versatility and ease of administration and deployment as Freshservice exhibits here. Some of the Freshservice benefits highlighted in the interview include:

- **Ease of use** for both business end users and IT service desk agents
- **Ease of deployment and adoption**
- **Versatility and flexibility in customizing workflows across IT** – This in turn has resulted in easy adaptability to unique business and IT requirements, as well as broad stakeholder outreach. This breadth of stakeholder support includes an integrated support system for Development and Operations to work together via workflows and an easily accessible knowledge base with strong community outreach.
- Far-reaching **support for third-party integrations** that has helped to facilitate a more cohesive way of working across all of IT
- A **powerful self-help portal** well optimized not only for supporting more effective incident resolution, but also for enabling more effective stakeholder participation across a wide range of processes including (but not limited to) change and request management
- Strong **support for mobility** across IT
- **Lifecycle asset management**, including contracts and software licenses
- **Enhanced levels of automation and resulting efficiencies** in change management, incident management, and other IT processes
- Meaningful **cost savings** in terms of administration and other overhead
- **Flexibility to support dynamic business requirements** across multiple geographies

It is an impressive list.

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In future directions, Freshservice plans to move toward the introduction of more advanced analytics and improved levels of scalability to enable growing levels of adoption among larger enterprises. Already, however, Freshservice clearly deserves a place on the shortlist of mid-tier ITSM solutions. EMA looks forward to watching Freshservice's customer base continue to grow as the solution continues to evolve in both function and outreach.

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About Freshdesk

Freshdesk is a cloud-based customer support platform that was founded with the mission of enabling companies of all sizes to provide great customer service. Our goal is simple: make it easy for brands to talk to their customers and make it easy for users to get in touch with businesses. Businesses such as 3M, Solarcity and Cisco use Freshdesk to increase productivity and win customer satisfaction. Whether it's quickly migrating from basic tools like email and spreadsheets, or even our competitors, we lead the market with features like game mechanics, social media channels and mobile engagement.

For more information, visit <https://freshdesk.com/>.

About Freshservice

Freshservice is a cloud-based ITSM and ESM solution built to help teams provide exceptional support to end users. Over 7500 organizations of all sizes, including Solarcity, Honda use Freshservice for support in IT, and across business functions like HR, legal, and finance. Underneath its intuitive user interface, is a robust solution that helps better manage services and assets. Powerful automation lets teams automate repetitive tasks and workflows, so agents can focus on what matters most, while an easy-to-use service catalog helps drive self-service adoption among customers. Freshservice was recently named High Performer in G2 Crowd's Spring 2016 Service Desk Software report, with the highest overall customer satisfaction score.

For more information, visit <https://freshservice.com/>.

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help EMA's clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or blogs.enterprisemanagement.com. You can also follow EMA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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