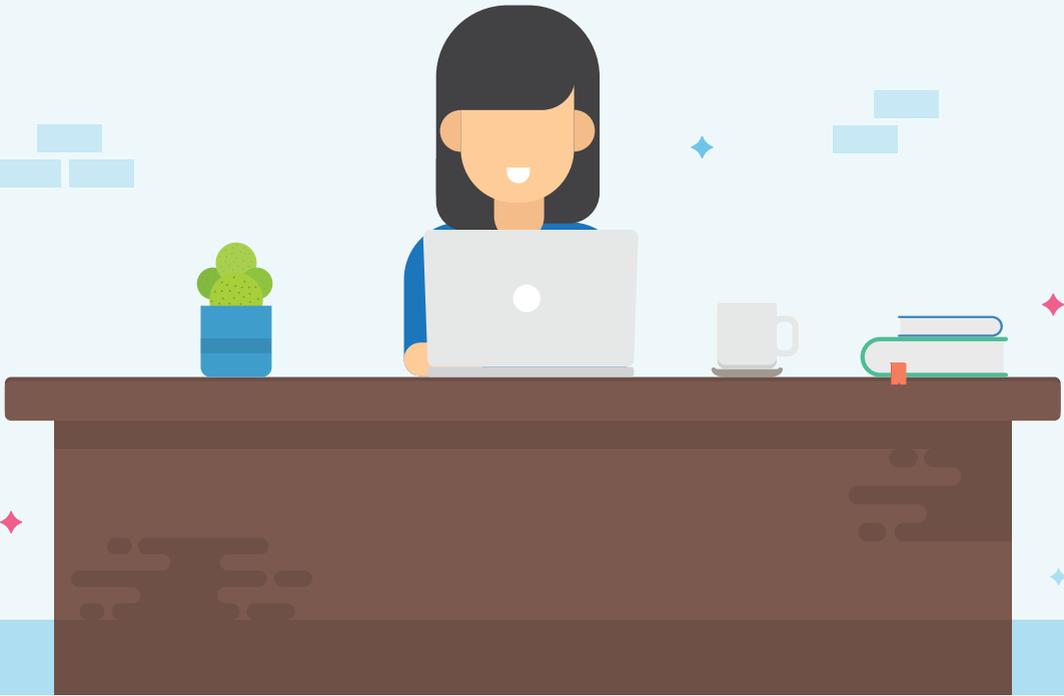


ITAMSoft



# The State of the **SERVICE DESK**

2017 REPORT



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State of the Service Desk is proudly presented by Freshdesk.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
The Modern IT Service Desk - Doing More With Less .....	4
Proactive vs. Reactive Structures .....	9
Efficiency, Efficiency, Efficiency .....	13
Freshservice Perspective .....	19

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# Executive summary

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Customer experiences are getting transformed like never before as new technologies enable novel experiences that transcend work and life today. At Freshservice, we believe **great employee experience, in turn, drives great customer experience** and this remains a top priority for our customers.

At the core of great employee experience in corporations is the IT organization – providing the tools and technologies for employee productivity, with the service desk acting as the lifeline of the organization. IT service management (ITSM) provides strong foundation and guideline practices for planning, designing, operating, and implementing services to employees. **Service desks today have helped the IT department evolve from a cost center to an innovation catalyst and revenue driver.**

A key driver in this evolution is the theme of proactive support – the ability to provide real-time support to employees even before they come to your IT organization asking for it. **How do service desks predict incidents even before they occur?**

Such a transformation will entail collecting data at every stage of the IT service management lifecycle, convert real-time data into actionable intelligence and enable machine learning to solve the obvious, and escalate issues intelligently to the right person for the right solution.

**This report summarizes data from thousands of service desks powered by Freshservice, and presents a view of how the best in the industry are solving for these grand challenges.**

## Key questions covered in the first edition of the State of the Service Desk (SOSD) include:

- ◆ What are the critical customer support challenges that are hampering the abilities of all stakeholders in the support system value chain, thereby throttling scalability?
- ◆ How are IT service desks keeping pace status quo without support models that follow a proactive approach?
- ◆ What are some of the most commonly used capabilities in a cloud-based ITSM solution that's helping IT organizations increase adoption and ease the service desk workload?
- ◆ What's the impact of IT in defining and delivering overall business outcomes and how is it evolving?

Freshservice, built on the Freshdesk platform, delivers exceptional ITSM capabilities to over 13,000 customers worldwide across industries.

In this report, we've gathered data, insights, and interviews from over **12,000 service desks across the world** and bytes from service desk professionals across industries to understand how the service management community can learn from the best and make simple changes that can create a lasting impact on employee experiences.

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# The Modern IT Service Desk - Doing More With Less

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The bottom right corner of the page features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping geometric shapes. These include a large light blue triangle, a smaller medium blue square, and a dark teal triangle, all arranged in a way that suggests a staircase or a series of steps ascending towards the right.

In recent times, doing more with less, as a rule of thumb, is being executed in areas of business that are labeled as operational overheads, and hence, slotted under cost-cutting strategies.

While there are many business process disciplines such as Agile, Lean IT, or the like driving operational efficiency, doing more with less as an overarching principle has narrowed the vision of IT departments to focus on smaller, unit-level metrics rather than overall business outcomes.

In the early 1990s, the IT help desk was still a reasonably new idea – with dedicated resources focused on the day-to-day communication with users of IT services. This idea soon became accepted as good practice and de rigueur for most IT organizations. The fallouts were quite obvious from then on.

The IT help desk evolved into the **‘service desk.’** Add to that the constant scrutiny on IT budgets as an overall business mandate.

*The modern IT service desks were soon construed to be an **‘expensive necessity’** in the eyes of CIOs and CFOs.*

In recent times, with increased pressure on bottom lines, companies are also pursuing new areas of cost optimization.

As a result, among the levers that get pulled hard include the now low-cost, high-volume service desk.

This accepted need for lower-cost service desk capabilities has, in turn, generated some clear trends, all driven by a presumption that the service desk's role is now:

-  **Routine (think automation and self-service)**
-  **Predictable (think proactive management) and**
-  **Scalable (think collaboration)**

Service desk professionals rely heavily on ITSM tools and techniques to serve their customers. While the measure of efficiency and standard service desk metrics have been under constant scrutiny to get better, the tools and their vendors have faced an uphill task of keeping up.

Based on the presumptions outlined above, we mapped the same with Freshservice's research in association with SDI, "*Life on the Service Desk in 2016: A View From the Frontline,*" and found that in choosing an ITSM vendor, the same presumptions hold true for:

-  **Automation in core processes**
-  **Self-service capabilities**
-  **Innovation to be ahead of the curve**
-  **Mitigating reactive support fire-fighting**
-  **The capacity to scale to meet more requirements**

Looking at this outline, we mapped it to our customer database of over 12,000 service desks and found a very similar story.

To corroborate the minimalism concept in companies today, below are the stats to prove its workings for the above findings:



Average of **15** agents for **1500** employees



Average time to resolve a ticket: **10 hours**



Ratio of tickets to technicians: **120:1**



↑ 25%

### Increase in efficiency with automation

It's clear that service desk technicians are overworked, and expending their resources on superfluous support tasks, which can be automated to increase efficiency by up to 25%.

*"The general who wins the battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but few calculations beforehand."*

“

Sun Tzu

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# Proactive vs. Reactive Structures

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Modern IT service desks need to be aligned with core business outcomes. Leadership teams also need to understand that the service desk management needs to be aware and align itself to the organization's critical success factors in order to be able to operate efficiently within the service desk constraints. These are ideal world situations.

Unless ITSM tools keep pace with improved features and up the innovation quotient that will help service desk professionals, service desks will continue to operate under extreme stress. Unfortunately, as described in the SDI survey, 52% of responders were not satisfied with their current service desk solution.

Fire-fighting problems attribute to the most amount of time spent by service desk professionals. **In another joint research project with SDI, we found that 69% of responders (service desk professionals) spent most of their time fire-fighting due to heavy workload and inefficient problem management processes.**

In principle, reactive and proactive incident or problem management depend on several service management components, with the dependency tilting more towards the heavier side for a proactive approach.

*"People put quite a bit of focus on incident management, in many ways they 'value' it the most of all support practices. In reality, incident management generates the least value as this is something we do in a reactive way to manage shortcomings on the way we deliver services to our business"*



**Ryan Ogilvie**

*Inter Pipeline*

While incident management looks to resolve incidents and restore normalcy or usable levels, problem management looks to identify the cause of the incident itself. It is also a common occurrence that problem management sometimes hinders the operations of incident management in order to effectively look at the root cause.

But it is one of the evolutionary methods to achieve service desk efficiency.

*"My belief is that the next big thing in IT/ITSM are tools allowing us to be more proactive about logging tickets for more than just failures – to be able to raise a ticket for degradation of service and prevent interruptions altogether."*



**Grant Harris**

*Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust*

**Proactive problem management processes are meant to:**

- ◇ Identify incident patterns through their root cause
- ◇ Analyzing incidents based on the types and the affected business unit
- ◇ Ensure routine documentation and follow-ups
- ◇ Map recurring incidents as problems and formulate efficient resolutions
- ◇ Minimize turnaround time and negative business impact

During our SOSD customer research, we found that service desks that used the problem management module in Freshservice managed to reduce incidents by 40%.

Below is the list of modules most used by our customers:



Incident management



Service request



Change management



Problem management



Release management

The correlation between incident and problem management is evident based on this data and how some of our customers have identified recurring incidents, bucketed them as problems, and been able to achieve reduce their overall incident numbers – thus, improving their service desk efficiency. Bucking the rise of incidents is the tepid usage of proactive problem management, which can reduce incidents leading to increased efficiency.

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Efficiency, Efficiency,  
Efficiency

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Minimalistic business disciplines, as cost drivers, are no doubt helping optimize the bottom line but in turn, they add more pressure on service desks. However, there are strategies that can guide service desks to streamline their support structures and towards the end goal of achieving operational efficiency.

These strategies or frameworks can also help ease overworked service professionals. The average tenure of support agents is less than 11 months, and their frustration directly translates to unhappy customers. However, it is good to note that service desk professionals are also aligned with their leadership mission and goals.

*"In my opinion, management, IT or otherwise, should be focused on the fallout from stress: a high employee churn rate and the cost of training replacements, dwindling performance levels and then the lower performance levels of new replacement staff, or the adverse effect of "unhappy" or unmotivated staff on the customer experience."*



**Stephen Mann**

ITSM.TOOLS

## The top 3 responses by service desk professionals to top service desk priorities in 2016\* (SDI Report) were:

- ◇ Improving service desk performance
- ◇ Increasing their value to the business
- ◇ Using more automation

Some strategies that could be adopted include the *Lean IT framework*. From a streamlining customer support perspective, Lean IT is a framework that can offer continual improvement by increasing value, through the reduction of unnecessary or redundant practices and activities.

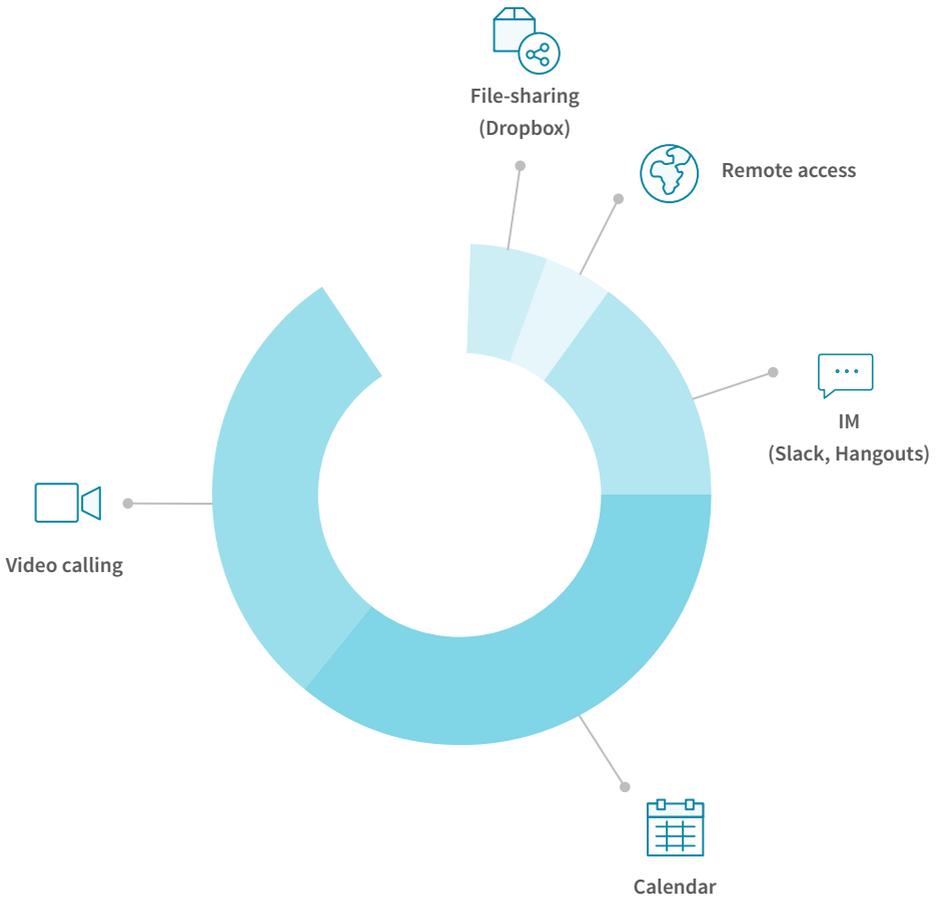
Another strategy could be *Agile* that focuses on releasing incremental changes quickly over bulky and slow approaches.

As with many service management principles, the defining characteristic of successful adoption of these frameworks is through demonstrably building a culture of customer centricity and value recognition.

To bolster such framework requires a careful understanding of the service desk support infrastructure, and how organizations can adapt themselves to enable teams to drive efficiency in operations.

**In our SOSD findings, we see that collaboration is also a key success factor for organizations as IT engages in critical collaborations across teams.**

## Popular apps used within Freshservice:



And despite the strong presence of technicians in channels like Slack and Hangouts contributing to 2x faster ticket resolution for users, e-mail continues to dominate as their preferred method for raising tickets in the service desk.

## Top channels used for raising tickets include:



Email



Service desk portal



Mobile app

**Self-service** is playing an ever larger role in improving ITSM performance and increasing overall customer satisfaction. It helps accelerate time-to-value, and enriches service desk value and customer support on an ongoing basis.



↓ 20%

### Reduction in cost

Our customers have leveraged self-service capabilities to cut down L1 tickets by 15% and reduce costs by 20% per ticket.

*"Two decades of exposure to tech means self-service is no longer a negative and should be embraced to reduce the number of tickets to the help desk."*



**Bob Bolin**

*Connectednerd.com*

**Automation and versatile workflow configuration are also key drivers to achieve improve IT effectiveness. Notably, automation boosted service desk efficiency of our customers by 25% and reduced workload. Thanks to automation, only 7% of service requests required approval.**

Freshservice has helped customers reduce the number of tickets with the help of knowledge base – by populating it with articles, customers find the solution to their problems right away. Eventually, the amount of time taken for agents to solve a ticket has also seen a considerable reduction.



↓ **20%**

### **Decrease in the time taken to resolve a ticket**

Due to workflow automation and self-service, around 20% of time spent on solving basic aspects of the tickets have been reduced.

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# Freshservice Perspective

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The IT landscape today is more business outcome-driven than ever. This evolution, triggered by a fundamental need to deliver a consistent level of service, is driving IT departments to focus and integrate itself deeply in all areas of the business – engineering, product development, developer operations, marketing automation, human resources, financial operations, customer support, etc.

This brings into play the larger role of IT departments to develop a mindset of service delivery across functions through Agile, Lean principles, DevOps, and many such disciplines. While each one of these disciplines is great in their own right, they need to be integrated with business outcomes to deliver timely, reliable services when the business expects it.

*"35% of IT organizations report 1 - 3 major outages per week and 80% of IT organizations cannot clearly articulate their service to the business."*



**Randy A. Steinberg**

*Author - High Velocity ITSM*

This transformation from departments and disciplines operating in silos towards a common goal brings in the adoption and capabilities of **Enterprise Service Management (ESM)**, which is the larger umbrella under which IT is the canopy that oversees the sum of all parts by enabling the use of ITSM principles and capabilities in other business areas to improve their performance.

Given that there are hundreds of tools available in the market, infrastructure and operations (I&O) leaders need to understand the maturity of their organizations, match the same with the capabilities of the tool they choose and prioritize their requirements to plan for the future.

**The State of Service Desk Report** is entirely based on Freshservice customers and the statistics are based on an independent survey conducted with 12,000 service desks across the world, from January 2016 to December 2016.

**Service desks are becoming nimble and its overall mission as part of the IT organization has a direct role in supporting cost minimization and revenue generation through cloud-based SaaS ITSM solutions that are fast catching up with the features and functionality of on-premise options.**

The usage-based data for these customers within the Freshservice product clearly indicates that the adoption of ITSM tools is of utmost importance for ITSM modules, particularly incident and problem management for organizations with a sharp focus on fast time-to-value and minimal administrative overheads.

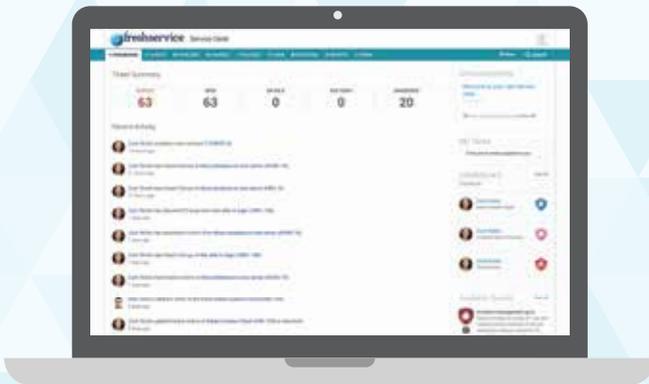
Freshservice offers a rock-solid combination of versatility and ease of IT administration which helps in driving adoption and eases the service desk workload resulting in positive business impacts, such as cost savings and increased efficiency across the value chain of organizations.

# About Freshservice

Freshservice is a cloud-based IT service desk and IT service management (ITSM) solution that is quick to setup and easy to use and manage.

Freshservice leverages ITIL best practices to enable IT organizations to focus on what's most important – exceptional service delivery and customer satisfaction. With its powerfully simple UI, Freshservice can be easily configured to support your unique business requirements and integrated with other critical business and IT systems.

Native integrations are provided “out-of-the-box” with many of the most popular cloud services such as Google Apps, Dropbox, AWS, and Bomgar to speed up deployment and reach. Freshservice is built on the proven Freshdesk platform, whose flagship customer service offering supports more than 100,000 customers worldwide, including Honda, 3M, Macmillan, Bridgestone, and Unicef.



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