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Five IT Help Desk Challenges And What to Do About Them

servicenow

A man with short dark hair, wearing a maroon button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk and looking at a silver laptop. He has a slight smile on his face. The background is a blurred office or cafe setting with warm lighting.

Five IT Helpdesk Challenges – and What to Do About Them

Keeping an IT help desk or service desk running smoothly can be a constant challenge. IT is the backbone of modern enterprises—everyone depends on IT services, and they expect their help desk to respond instantly when they have an issue or request. However, many help desks wrestle with outdated tools and processes, making life difficult for both users and IT help desk staff.

If your help desk is struggling to keep pace with your business, there's good news: modern IT Service Management (ITSM) technology can transform the way your IT help desk works. Integrated ITSM platforms provide advanced ITIL capabilities such as incident management and problem management, dramatically improving the service you deliver — while radically increasing your productivity.



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Here are five common IT help desk challenges ITSM can make a thing of the past.

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Too many phone calls and walkups

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Long resolution times and lost issues

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Issues that keep coming back

4

Difficulty keeping track of assets

5

Repetitive, time-consuming tasks

1 Too many phone calls and walkups



IT help desks get inundated with phone calls – and it's not unusual for onsite users to pay a visit in person. As a result, the IT help desk team is constantly interrupted, seriously reducing their productivity. Users also lose. They wait in a long queue to speak to a IT help desk team member— and once they do, their issue still takes a long time to resolve.



Solution:

Use ITSM to create a self-service portal where users can raise incidents online. This dramatically reduces phone calls and walkups, freeing your IT help desk team to focus on resolving issues. Be sure to choose an ITSM platform with an easy-to-use self-service portal, otherwise non-technical users will keep on making phone calls and personal visits.

2 Long resolution times and lost issues



Users expect to resolve issues quickly and accurately, but without the proper communication tools meeting service-level commitments is a challenge. Emails are the main culprit—there’s no easy way to track the status of user requests, so issues get stalled and even lost. And the problem is widespread. A 2015 TechValidate survey showed that 43% of traditional IT help desks rely on email to track user requests, and 16% use spreadsheets.



Solution:

Use ITIL-based incident management to automatically track and process incidents. Once a user raises an incident through the self-service portal, it’s automatically routed to the right IT help desk resource. Incident management then keeps track of the incident’s status, reminding your staff when the incident needs attention. If an incident is taking too long to resolve, incident management will alert you right away. You’ll also be able to generate reports and see trends at the push of a button, so you can instantly see how your IT help desk is performing.

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3 Issues that keep coming back



Recurring issues consume a huge amount of IT help desk bandwidth.

Often, many users report the same type of incident—for example, dozens of users might lose access intermittently to the same corporate database. In many cases, help desks don't know about these systemic issues, and if they do, they have no processes to resolve them. Instead, they waste enormous amounts of time investigating and resolving the same issue again and again. This is due in large part to a lack of ITIL knowledge. According to the TechValidate survey, 51% of traditional IT help desks have no ITIL processes.



Solution:

Problem management can identify, track, and help you resolve these systemic issues. You can analyze incidents to identify common problems and then create a problem record to drive resolution, similar to the way incident management helps you resolve incidents. Rather than working around the same issue again and again, you'll identify the underlying cause and fix it once. The result? You'll prevent future incidents, do less work, and increase user satisfaction.

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4 Difficulty keeping track of assets



For IT help desks, keeping track of each user's assets is an enormous challenge. For example, when a user reports an issue with their laptop, what is the model and service history, and what software is it running? Similarly, which users are affected when a server is taken down for maintenance? IT help desks typically use standalone tools—or even outdated spreadsheets—to track this asset data, making information unreliable and difficult to find. In fact, the same TechValidate survey found that 33% of traditional IT help desks have no visibility of assets at all.



Solution: Automatically keep track of assets with asset tracking and discovery. You'll be able to maintain an accurate record of all of your IT assets, including who's using them. By discovering assets automatically, you'll drastically reduce the effort of managing your assets, and you'll always have an up-to-date view of what's out there. You can also automatically attach relevant asset data to each incident, rather than having to search for information or ask your users.

5 Repetitive, time-consuming tasks



Help desks don't just resolve users' issues — they also provide a wide range of IT services and answer an enormous number of questions. This is incredibly time consuming, particularly for frequently used IT services and commonly asked questions. Help desk staff are tied up doing repetitive tasks like resetting passwords, spending hours answering the same questions again and again.








Solution:
Add commonly used IT services and a knowledge base to your self-service portal. Rather than users emailing or calling, they'll be able to request IT services and find information online. When they do request a service, you'll be able to automate the service fulfillment process. For example, when an employee asks for access to a secure database, your ITSM platform can automatically request their manager's approval. It can even do things like automatically reset passwords and create new email accounts—there's no need for your staff to get involved.

Let's Recap

With IT Service Management, tackling IT help desk challenges doesn't have to be difficult. Just follow the checklist below to transform your IT help desk or service desk into an efficient, user-friendly powerhouse.



	Challenge	Solution
	Too many phone calls and walkups	Create a self-service portal where users can raise incidents online.
	Long resolution times and lost issues	Use incident management to automatically track and progress incidents.
	Issues that keep coming back	Identify, track and resolve systemic issues using problem management.
	Difficulty keeping track of assets	Automatically keep track of assets with asset tracking and discovery.
	Repetitive, time-consuming tasks	Add commonly used IT services and a knowledgebase to your self-service portal.

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To find out more about how IT Service Management can help you to tackle your IT helpdesk challenges, visit us at www.servicenow.com/itsm-journey.

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