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Market Overview: IT Service Management Support Tools

by Evelyn Hubbert

for Infrastructure & Operations Professionals



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An Overview Of The Modern Service Desk And Other Technologies

by **Evelyn Hubbert**

with Peter O'Neill and Ben Echols

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The service desk market generated more than \$1.3 billion in 2008 and is expected to grow at about 10%. This market segment has experienced very little innovation in the past few years. The goals of service desk customers are primarily to improve customer satisfaction and reduce service desk staffing costs. Both of these goals are reached through implementation of process improvements — or entirely new processes — that streamline the work for the service desk team. Additionally, pressure to justify costs drives the need for financial measures and data to prove the value of the service desk to the organization. The market is filled with vendors that have all developed tools that look very similar. The fundamental processes of incident and problem management are comparable across these solutions, but ease of use and implementation time offer some differentiation.

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NOTES & RESOURCES

Forrester interviewed 16 ITSM vendors and 26 end users at enterprises around the world.

Related Research Documents

["Knowledge Management Is A Foundation For Good Customer Support"](#)

March 9, 2010

["The Low-Hanging Fruit That Service Operations Teams Should Consider Now"](#)

November 12, 2009

["The Forrester Wave™: Service Desk Management Tools, Q2 2008"](#)

April 7, 2008

SERVICE DESK REQUIREMENTS ARE CHANGING AS RESPONSIBILITY INCREASES

2009 was a difficult year for IT operations professionals, as many organizations struggled in response to the downturn in the economy and many service desk technology projects were deferred or cancelled. Forrester sees this trend being reversed in 2010, with companies freeing up funds to improve facilities for their service desk groups that were either neglected or on hold for the past 12 to 18 months.

In past years, service desks only recorded and responded to user issues that arose in the environment, and service desk analysts have now become proficient in managing this responsibility. In the meantime though, the role of the service desk has expanded to support a much broader range of IT management activities, and IT organizations need to match their solutions to these maturing needs.

The service desk today functions as the front office of IT and orchestrator for many of the IT service management (ITSM) activities described in the ITIL best practice library. The process areas of incident and problem management, change management, configuration management, release management, and many more all need to be connected and orchestrated to benefit the service consumer. What's changing?

- **The responsibilities of the service desk are expanding.** The No. 1 responsibility of the service desk is still to improve customer satisfaction. This is done by acting as a single point of contact for all IT customers to maximize service availability, restore services whenever possible, and provide business systems support. However, increased pressure on IT to reduce costs has put the service desk front and center as an organization that can develop processes that many other organizations, inside and outside of IT, can use. The service desk team becomes the orchestrator, custodian, and owner of IT services delivered to the line of business.
- **Traditional IT organizations are evolving into modern IT organizations.** Modern IT organizations have very different characteristics from traditional IT organizations. Traditional IT organizations were focused on technologies, were very reactive, and were organized around technology silos (sometimes called “stovepipes”). Their measurement systems were focused purely on technology metrics with little value to the business, and they had very little financial visibility into what it costs to run IT. Modern IT organizations have made the transition to being service providers. They focus on the customer, are demand driven, and have inserted end-to-end processes. They measure their business value and have financial transparency for themselves and consumers of their services.
- **IT is seeking to improve its business orientation.** In a recent Forrester Research survey of more than 92 IT executives, more than two-thirds reported that they had reorganized their IT organization within the past three years with the main purpose of improving business orientation.¹ Today's CIOs are looking to develop their organization's ability to address

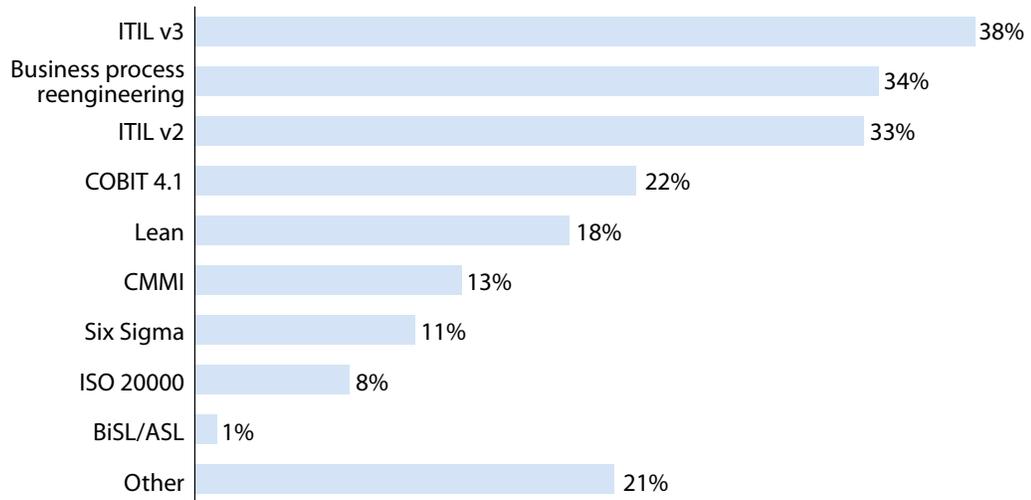
business efficiencies and business innovation. The old IT cliché belongs to the past. The new IT organization is focused on the delivery and support of services as described in ITIL v3.

- **IT is strengthening its service orientation.** The ITIL v3 service-oriented IT management methodology has been adopted more than other methodologies (see Figure 1). ITIL v3 is fundamentally different from the second version in that it's about using IT to improve the performance of the business. It focuses on the alignment with the business and is carried through all five of the Office of Government Commerce's ITIL books — *Service Strategy*, *Service Design*, *Service Transition*, *Service Operation*, and *Continual Service Improvement*.
- **There is a need for redesigning processes.** The need for process redesign inside IT to save costs is nothing new. However, the need to redesign processes that span the entire enterprise to save costs brings new challenges. In a recent survey of senior IT personnel, process redesign was the most important cost-reduction activity.² Seventy percent of the respondents answered that redesigning processes was most important, but only 18% said that they actually had done process redesign and that it was working. When we correlate this with the number of requests Forrester Research receives on ITIL assessments, the picture is clear — IT needs to first understand where it stands on process maturity and then focus on improvement of low maturity processes (see Figure 2).
- **The business is demanding cost visibility.** A new and urgent imperative is emerging in IT. As business users' expectations of IT continue to rise, many IT operations and development groups lack the business maturity to effectively demonstrate the business value of IT investments and operations. Business users are demanding greater IT cost transparency and financial analysis in order to understand the true cost of IT. They believe visibility and analysis are critical in enabling them to intelligently manage demand for IT services and participate in cost management decisions. During recent months, Forrester has seen a wave of inquiries from clients on the topics of IT cost transparency and financial analysis.
- **Organizations are adopting new business models.** Technology advancements and the economic downturn have increased the demand for software-as-a-service (SaaS). Today, software does not need to be delivered in a box, installed, maintained, supported, and upgraded; instead, it can be used instantaneously. This model of delivering software becomes the foundation for innovative new ways of interacting and doing business. Many IT organizations are adopting SaaS for multiple reasons — the biggest one of them being the predictability of associated costs.
- **Mobility is increasing.** In today's business environment, employees are increasingly doing business outside of the office, and this mobile community requires new ways of being supported. The challenges concern the complexity of physical location and access details (which can change quickly during a support call), the security aspects, and the cost of supporting this mobile

community. Security budgets are continuing to grow, with the greatest spending increase in the areas of network security (40% expecting significant increase) and governance, risk, and compliance (34% expecting significant increase).³

Figure 1 The Service-Oriented ITIL v3 Is The Most Applied Methodology For Organizational Setup

“Which of the following methodologies play a major role in your organizational setup and/or reorganization efforts?”



Base: 92 IT decision-makers
(multiple responses accepted)

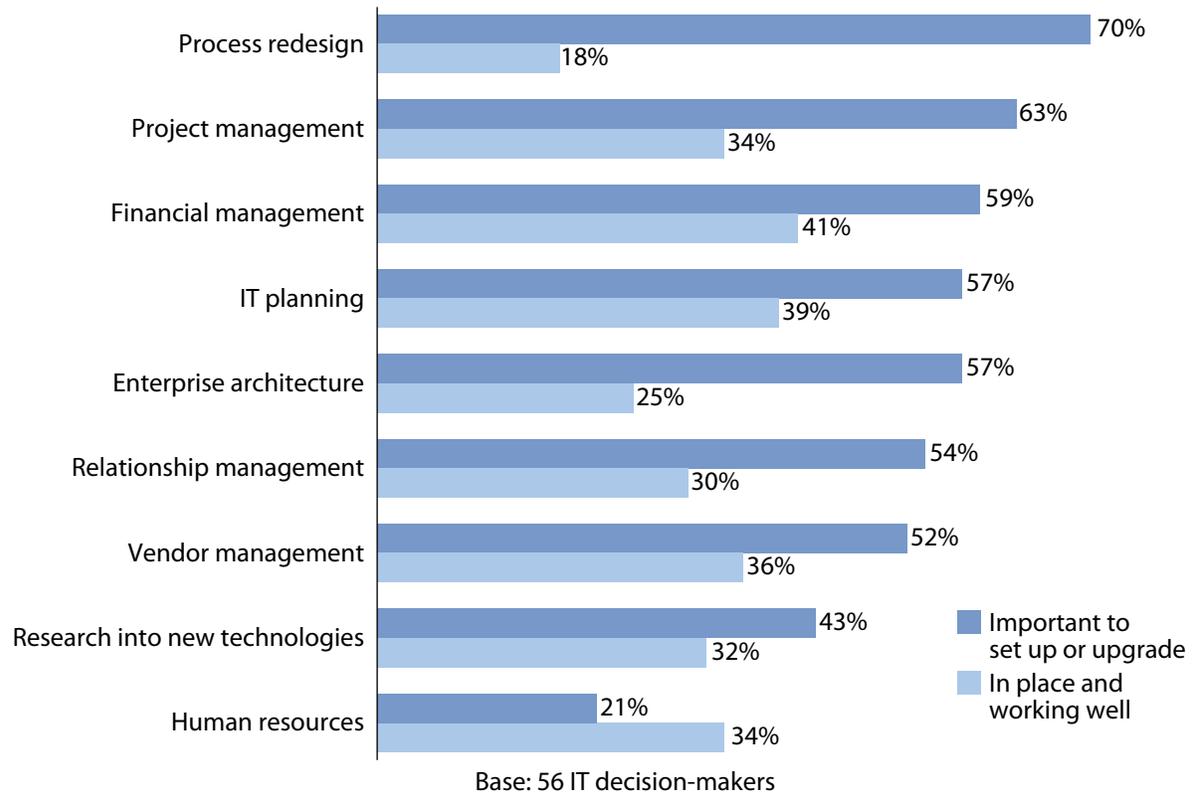
Source: Q3 2009 Global IT Service Orientation Online Survey

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 2 Process Redesign, Project Management Are The Most Important Cost-Cutting Activities

“In order to reduce costs within IT, how important is setting up or upgrading the following functions:”



Source: July 2009 Global IT Cost Reduction Online Survey

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

THE ITSM SUPPORT TOOL LANDSCAPE NOW INCLUDES SEVERAL KEY TECHNOLOGIES

The ITSM support tool market is full of vendors providing solutions that are adequately capable of supporting the customer support process and integrating it with other key process areas such as change management. The ITSM market is therefore quite commoditized, and all of the suite vendors offer very similar functionality as a core system. But some vendors also offer additional capabilities to meet the needs of the more dynamic service desk role described above. Additionally, vendors that specialize in managing the service portfolio or service catalog or that offer financial management (e.g., Apptio, ComSci, Digital Fuel, and newScale) have appeared and are successfully offering their solutions to IT operations teams.

Key Features Are As Good As Standard Across All ITSM Support Tools . . .

ITSM support tools cover these six core processes:

- **Incident to resolution path.** The primary goal of incident management is to restore normal service operations as quickly as possible and minimize the impact on the business. The service desk has the job of managing all incidents and is the single point of contact. Historically, the service desk's responsibility was to restore services quickly, but it has also gained the responsibility to handle service requests as part of the incident management process. This could mean initializing processes that fulfill the service request or answering a question.
- **Problem management.** The goal of problem management can be seen as simply preventing the recurrence of incidents. Handling problems is quite different from handling incidents, as it is possible that a problem may not be identified until several incidents have occurred over a period of time. It requires some detective work and background analysis as well as a level of knowledge that may be beyond the individual incident topic area. Problem management is both reactive, as it solves a problem when one or more incidents occur, and proactive, as it's supposed to identify and solve problems and known errors before incidents occur in the first place.
- **Change management.** The goal of change management is to ensure that standardized methods and procedures are applied to efficiently and effectively handle changes. The service desk organization leverages configuration knowledge and service models to understand and prohibit or minimize impact of change-related incidents upon the quality of a service.
- **Escalation management.** If an incident can't be resolved in the incident management process, the service desk has the responsibility of increasing the stated urgency or priority to escalate the incident to the next instance. A solid escalation management process is a critical component of the support organization's success.
- **Customer satisfaction facilitation.** Since the service desk is the single point of contact for the business community, it acts as a CRM to the IT organization. As such, it owns communication and reaction to customer issues and therefore shapes customer satisfaction. The service desk also has the responsibility of conducting customer satisfaction surveys at regular intervals to assess the quality and performance of the IT group.
- **Infrastructure event capture.** Events are notifications created by a configuration item, either by a service or from monitoring tools. The service desk can receive a variety of events, and based on the event, can determine the appropriate next steps — such as initiating an incident, problem management, or change management action.

... While Additional Capabilities Can Still Be Differentiated

Through the introduction of ITIL v3 and its adoption, many IT organizations — and their respective service desk functions — have embraced a service-centric IT approach. ITIL v3 was released in 2007, and much of the adoption is in the early stages. However, the following topics garner a lot of interest because they tackle new or modified responsibilities for the service desk. The modern service desk tools that are ripe for service-centric organizations include:

- **Proactive problem management.** Receiving data and content from a variety of sources (configuration management database, asset management repositories, other support groups or business partners, performance management solutions) and interacting with these groups allows for a proactive approach to problem management. A dedicated set of resources is continuously investigating available incident data to understand potential service disruptions.
- **Request fulfillment and self-service adoption.** To minimize “clogging up the queue,” many service desk organizations are implementing self-service support and service request fulfillment processes. The implementation of self-service help lets the service desk focus on incidents that have interrupted business functions. The implementation of service requests has the effect of recording comments, questions, and complaints that can be dealt with and serve as inputs to the development or enhancements to existing services. These service requests can come from an already established service catalog.
- **Service catalog.** The service catalog has two major goals: 1) structure the offerings of IT services (or business services) in such a way that the service consumer can see the description, cost, and service-level agreement and therefore decide to leverage it, and 2) allow IT to structure its offerings into standard offerings that can be operated and managed.
- **Knowledge management as a function.** Support teams that have implemented knowledge management solutions as part of their service desk function have transferred their organization to a knowledge-centric service management organization. Leveraging existing knowledge around processes, procedures, or troubleshooting activities improves the efficiency and effectiveness of support staff. Additionally, knowledge management can be made available to the end users in a way that allows them to see and leverage existing knowledge, hopefully reducing incidents and requests for the service desk to handle.
- **Mobile support.** Managing and supporting mobile users while maintaining high security standards and customer satisfaction is a key challenge many service desk organizations are facing today.
- **Identity and access management.** Identity and access management (IAM) ensures that the right people have the ability to access the right services. Solving the user account management dilemma is a process that is spread among many owners inside IT. The service desk function

should be leveraged to provide a single point of management of the access rights. This allows for a consistent view of the access rights and the requirements of the individuals in the systems involved. Additionally, if IAM is homed in the service desk, it enables a transparent way of applying, viewing, and implementing policy decisions in the technology infrastructure and services.

- **IT process automation/workflow.** Automation is a combination of tools and processes. Tools are designed to accelerate process execution, and they also ensure consistency and therefore accuracy of process execution. Because the service desk is a central function to coordinate and orchestrate many of the IT service management processes, it benefits from automation as it allows the service desk staff to do more with less. This will result in not only cost savings but also in the ability to set up (or adopt, as many vendors have ITIL standard workflows as part of their solution offerings) a variety of standard workflows that can be used repeatedly.
- **Asset management.** The ability to track and provide effective reporting for all devices and software across the IT organization is imperative for IT managers. When it comes to the service desk function, asset management technologies give the service desk analyst visibility into the hardware and software that is affected or causing an issue. Additionally, the service desk analyst has visibility into what the requester owns, which is important for problem resolution or decision-making.

SEGMENTING THE ITSM SUPPORT TOOL MARKET

The ITSM support tool market is quite mature, and vendors have had ample time to refine their offerings. There are some vendors that have either modified their go-to-market models or adopted pieces of new technology into the suite since Forrester's evaluation of the service desk space in April 2008.⁴ Each technology decision should be oriented toward at least one of the five key goals of IT for 2010 (see Figure 3).

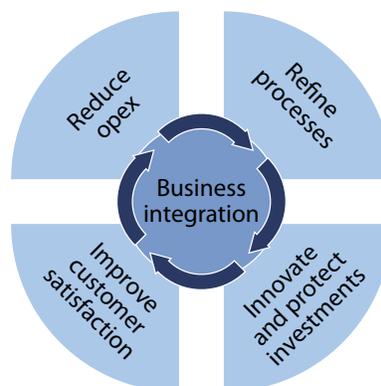
For those trying to keep this all straight, the good news is that the market is filled with vendors that have solid offerings to support the dynamic modern service desk function (see Figure 4). Service desk managers who have decided to replace the existing toolset or who are replacing in-house developed solutions with commercial products have to justify their selection.

- **Incumbent megavendors: BMC, CA, HP, and IBM.** The ITSM support tool incumbents are the big IT management vendors. They have been in the ITSM business for years and have strong offerings for the modern service desk. While some are more complex to implement than others, their functionalities are fairly equal. There are differences in how these vendors price, package, and license their service desk solutions. From a pricing perspective, the options range from module-based pricing, where each module adds additional functionality, to a per user-based price. The packaging can be difficult to understand as well. The vendors in this section typically

package their solution into a suite — most of the time labeled ITSM — which is comprised of multiple modules including incident, change, knowledge, service-level management, and self-service request management functionalities. All of the incumbent vendors offer an on-demand version of their solution. These on-demand solutions are gaining popularity, and Forrester Research expects a sharp increase in the on-demand market for the service desk space.⁵ Their SaaS implementations vary; interested customers should evaluate these different options by leveraging a SaaS maturity model to differentiate among the offers.⁶

- **Emerging leaders: Seven vendors are closing in on the megavendors.** They are Avocent/LANDesk Software, Axios, Cherwell Software, EMC, FrontRange, helpLine, and Numara. These service desk management vendors have less visibility, less market share, and in some cases limited geographic coverage, but their scalability and functionality reach that of the megavendors. These vendors focus on the IT service desk customer and creating solutions that can be implemented relatively quickly. The solutions of these vendors have solid product functionality and features at a very competitive price.
- **Great opportunities: iET Solutions, ManageEngine, and Symantec.** These vendors offer great alternatives mostly for smaller enterprise customers. Some of these vendors are limited by geographic presence, sales and marketing execution challenges compared with the other players, and limited R&D budgets.
- **Unique offerings: InteQ and Service-now.com.** These vendors have realized the trend of providing service desk offerings as a service and have introduced very comprehensive offers with extensive functionality and attractive prices. Both vendors offer their solution in a SaaS way, which reduces maintenance, support, and other tasks in the service desk solution. Service-now.com was the first vendor to introduce service desk in a SaaS model.

Figure 3 Five Key IT Goals



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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 4 The ITSM Support Tools Market Offers A Wide Variety Of Solutions

Criteria	Avocent's LANDesk ITSM Suite	Axios Systems Assyst	BMC Remedy ITSM	BMC Service Desk Express	CA Service Desk Manager	Cherwell Service Management
Version	7.3	9	7.6	10	12.1	3.3
Targets small to medium enterprise support (1,000-10,000 employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Targets large to global enterprise support (10,000+ employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
On-premises solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
SaaS solution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ITIL v3 Pink Elephant certification (no. of processes)	Yes 14	Yes 14	Yes 11	Yes 7	Yes 14	Yes 11
Incident to resolution path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Change management with integrated CMDB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Service-level management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Integrated configuration management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Self-service request management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Separate workflow engine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task and process automation as part of solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Lightweight service catalog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Service catalog builder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Includes self-service portal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Mobile support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Native asset management capability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Security/identity management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

- Vendor offers capability as part of IT service management suite
- Vendor offers capability as a standalone solution, add-on module, or as part of a separate product
- Vendor plans to add capability soon

Figure 4 The ITSM Support Tools Market Offers A Wide Variety Of Solutions (Cont.)

Criteria	EMC Ionix Service Manager	Frontrange ITSM	HP Service Manager	helpLine ITSM Suite	iET ITSM	IBM Service Request Manager
Version	8	6.2	7.11	4.16	5.1	7.2
Targets small to medium enterprise support (1,000-10,000 employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Targets large to global enterprise support (10,000+ employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
On-premises solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
SaaS solution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITIL v3 Pink Elephant certification (no. of processes)	Yes 10	Yes 10	Yes 11	Yes 10	Planned	Yes 11
Incident to resolution path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Change management with integrated CMDB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Service-level management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Integrated configuration management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Self-service request management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Separate workflow engine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task and process automation as part of solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Lightweight service catalog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Service catalog builder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Includes self-service portal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Mobile support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Native asset management capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Security/identity management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

- Vendor offers capability as part of IT service management suite
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- Vendor plans to add capability soon

Figure 4 The ITSM Support Tools Market Offers A Wide Variety Of Solutions (Cont.)

Criteria	<i>InteQ InfraDesk</i>	<i>ManageEngine ServiceDesk Plus</i>	<i>Numara FootPrints</i>	<i>Service-now.com</i>	<i>Symantec ServiceDesk</i>
Version	5	7.5	9.5	Winter 2010	7
Targets small to medium enterprise support (1,000-10,000 employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Targets large to global enterprise support (10,000+ employees)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
On-premises solution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SaaS solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ITIL v3 Pink Elephant certification (no. of processes)	Planned	No	Yes 7	Yes 11	Planned
Incident to resolution path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Change management with integrated CMDB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service-level management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Integrated configuration management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Self-service request management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Separate workflow engine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Task and process automation as part of solution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lightweight service catalog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Service catalog builder	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes self-service portal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mobile support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Native asset management capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Security/identity management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Vendor offers capability as part of IT service management suite
 Vendor offers capability as a standalone solution, add-on module, or as part of a separate product
 Vendor plans to add capability soon

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

DECISION CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT ITSM SUPPORT TOOLS

Many service desks today realize that a gap exists between their current state and an optimal state with regard to end user feedback, costs, staffing, scope, and scalability. All enterprises should assess the state of their service desk to see how well they're leveraging the people, process, and technologies available today. Many of the service desk vendors have the majority of any necessary functionality today. However, once you move past the functionality discussion there are significant differences between the different organizations out there needing service desk solutions. Deciding upon the most appropriate product for your organization will often come down to a number of key factors that include:

- **The size and distribution of your service desk organization.** Large, geographically distributed organizations place greater demands on the service desk management solution than do smaller, localized service desks. The smaller segment may have between 10 and 200 service desk and IT technicians with access to the tools, and the larger segment will have from 60 to more than 1,000 total technicians and other users and approvers of various aspects of the tool suite.
- **The maturity and skills of your organizational processes.** Since the introduction of ITIL, many IT organizations have improved their process maturity in the incident and change management process. Some of the more advanced organizations have introduced knowledge management, problem management, and configuration information connected to change management activities. Many organizations agree that the relationships among the processes in service support and service delivery are critical for the improvement of service quality and efficiency, but many still struggle with moving the organization and the skills of the individuals toward this connected ITSM model.
- **The complexity of the required workflows.** The process of managing change to the infrastructure is compounded by size, complexity, business impact, and new regulatory requirements. Modeling such workflows with the proper approval and change controls requires industrial-strength process and workflow management tools that allow secure, auditable, and controlled processes.
- **The number and variety of the assets and users under management.** Organizations with vast numbers of varied technology assets linked into large, business-critical services will place greater demands on additional service management tools such as asset management and knowledge management. They will expect tools that handle problem, change, and configuration management within this environment to be robust and highly configurable. Smaller organizations may be looking for solutions that manage incidents, changes, and problems with lightweight configuration management and asset management solutions.
- **The volume of incidents and changes.** The more assets and users an organization has, the higher the volume of tickets. The small to medium tier would include up to approximately 10,000 users.

The large to global tier would include 10,000 to 20,000-plus users. To support any of the tiers, the tools must support appropriate platforms, databases, and associated third-party asset and systems management tools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT ITSM SUPPORT TOOL FOR YOU

The downturn in the economy brought a reduced IT budget, but with it a hunger for streamlining IT service and support, not just within the service desk but also across the entire IT organization. This will drive many decisions on ITSM support tool replacements, upgrades, or new installations. When choosing your ITSM support tools, follow these three steps:

- 1. Pay attention to your organization's maturity and needs.** Every IT operations group, and particularly the service desk team, thinks it's special and therefore needs the ability to customize the tools it uses. Unfortunately, customization is dangerous when business rules and business demands are changing. The better approach is to adopt best practices (like ITIL) and then configure the tool to support special needs. To determine the need for customization versus configurability you should look at the solutions and understand how they can support your situation. Most vendors have received ITIL v3 certification from Pink Elephant.⁷
- 2. Develop a business case.** Vendors love for their customers to migrate to the latest product releases. While the benefits of an upgrade are obvious for the vendors, their clients must bear the brunt of often significant upgrade costs. Unfortunately, upgrade processes for many of the leading ITSM support tool vendors' major releases are far from automated. In the worst case, such an upgrade may require a complete new implementation, and it often requires significant staff retraining. Customers with multiple ITSM support tools should target their business case to streamline this ITSM support tool environment by first consolidating multiple ITSM instances and then selecting and standardizing on a single ITSM support tool solution.
- 3. Consider both on-demand and on-premises options.** On-demand (also called SaaS) ITSM support tool solutions have become a viable alternative to on-premises solutions. If you're deciding between an on-demand or on-premises solution, there are a variety of factors to consider, such as the vendor's finances, dedication to SaaS, customer base, architecture, security and privacy, backup/redundancy, and last but not least, support of implementation and support partners. Some technology vendors overlook or misunderstand how customers use SaaS as a pilot phase leading to an on-premises implementation. Determine if the vendor has the capability to transition from on-demand to on-premises deployments, as this could be a great evaluation process and can jump-start adoption.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Companies Interviewed For This Document

Avocent/LANDesk	Hewlett-Packard
Axios Systems	IBM
BMC Software	iET Solutions
CA	InteQ
Cherwell Software	ManageEngine
EMC	Numara Software
FrontRange Solutions	Service-now.com
helpLine	Symantec

ENDNOTES

- ¹ CIOs are changing IT a lot, and Forrester conducted research to better understand how. We surveyed 92 IT executives and performed a few complementary interviews to understand the nature of IT changes in organization and processes. Our interviewees told us that most CIOs drive transformations aimed at increasing IT's business orientation and cutting costs through adoption of standard management processes, shared services, and coordinated IT governance spanning business organizations. And with these changes in IT, CIOs are becoming better business partners through a stronger services orientation — characteristics that will improve their move to business technology (BT). To accelerate IT's transformation, Forrester recommends the adoption of a Lean Thinking approach, using a services portfolio to develop better concepts of the business, focus on life-cycle costs, eliminate waste, and build a culture of continuous improvement. See the February 26, 2010, "[CIOs Are Transforming IT To Enable Business, Cut Costs, And Become More Service-Focused](#)" report.
- ² What cost-reduction activities are important to IT? And how mature are IT leaders at performing those activities? We posed these questions in a survey to 56 senior IT people. The results? Process redesign and project management were the most important but are strongly in need of improvement. Financial management and planning were somewhat less important but more mature. And human resources (HR) practices were the only activities where maturity was rated higher than the importance. Follow-on discussions uncovered that the most important cost-reduction activities have changed. Cost reduction within a single organization has been done for a while — now the focus is the entire enterprise. Therefore, process design, project management, enterprise architecture, and vendor management must operate globally. Many are ill-equipped to deal with the politics and complexity of decisions that cross geographic and business unit boundaries. See the December 9, 2009, "[IT Leaders Lack Skills For The Most Important Cost-Reduction Activities](#)" report.

- ³ IT security investment has been faring relatively well through the economic downturn, and budgets appear to be strengthening, most notably in the area of new product purchases. Data security and network security top the technology areas of investment and attention, and application security continues to show signs of maturing in terms of enterprise practices as well as adoption of tools and services. Meanwhile, interest in and adoption of managed security services continues to grow across a broad array of areas, driven more by the improved protection it offers rather than a pure operational cost-savings argument. IT security groups continue to grapple with changing IT infrastructure and evolving business demands — yet, while cloud computing gets a lot of media attention, consumerization of IT registers the highest level of concern by IT security decision-makers. This document gives highlights of an extensive data set collected across North American and European enterprises via our Enterprise And SMB IT Security Survey, North America And Europe, Q3 2009. See the January 25, 2010, [“The State Of SMB IT Security And Emerging Trends: 2009 To 2010”](#) report.
- ⁴ In Forrester’s 96-criteria evaluation of service desk management tools vendors, we found that BMC Software’s Remedy IT Service Management, CA, HP, and IBM lead the pack for large enterprises because of the depth and breadth of their offerings that integrate the service desk into a complete IT service management framework. Infra (now EMC Ionix Service Manager) and Axios Systems also were judged to be Leaders with robust, scalable offerings that could meet the majority of service management needs for the largest and most complex organizations. Not far behind, FrontRange Solutions’ ITSM, iET Solutions, Numara Software’s FootPrints, Service-now.com, Touchpaper Software, and USU AG also provide service management tools that deliver deep functionality for the service desk. Symantec, with tight integration to the Altiris suite of desktop management tools, is especially suited to organizations with broader PC management requirements. Large enterprises are less likely to be happy with the other products in our evaluation — BMC’s Service Desk Express Suite, FrontRange’s HEAT, and Numara Software’s Track-It! However, midsized enterprises — those with fewer users being supported, less complex requirements, or more limited needs — will find a market with numerous choices and less clear differentiation. See the April 7, 2008, [“The Forrester Wave™: Service Desk Management Tools, Q2 2008”](#) report.
- ⁵ Software-as-a-service (SaaS) is disrupting the IT management software market. Incumbent software vendors are setting up new business units and adding SaaS offerings to existing portfolios; managed service providers are repositioning their offerings to leverage the trend; and new pure-play SaaS operators are extending their success by taking advantage of product churn in various established vendors’ service and asset management customer bases. Forrester has developed a market forecast model for IT management SaaS that shows that SaaS will grow from making up just over 1% of the \$18 billion IT management software market in 2008 to 10% by 2013, by which time many of the brand SaaS providers could be well established. Strategy professionals at IT management software vendors should therefore be planning now to compete in this segment in the medium term. Long term, the more general trend toward SaaS will reduce the total IT management software market by cutting the number of enterprise environments to be managed. See the November 17, 2008, [“How Big Is SaaS In IT Management Software?”](#) report.
- ⁶ Software-as-a-service (SaaS) is the hottest trend in both CRM and the small and midsize business (SMB) market in general. Forrester’s SaaS maturity model provides an assessment of the solutions and underpins

our guidance on realistic strategy transformation for those software vendors and services providers considering a SaaS business model. Targeting the highest maturity level is not necessarily the best fit for every vendor. See the August 14, 2008, "[Forrester's SaaS Maturity Model](#)" report.

- ⁷ In the world of ITSM support tools, a trend can be observed where single process help desk applications and systems management tools are being replaced by more complex service desk and integrated service management tool suites. To support this shift, tool vendors are developing integrated platforms, products, and services to align people, process, and technology based on ITIL processes. As a result, in 1991 Pink Elephant developed PinkVERIFY, an ITIL software tool assessment service, to assist both the software vendor community in developing and marketing tools that enable and support ITIL terminology, processes, workflows, and integration and the software customer community, which selects enterprise software by providing a list of vendors and tools that support ITIL functionality and integration. Source: PinkVERIFY IT Service Management Tool Assessment (http://www.pinkelephant.com/uploadedFiles/Content/PinkVERIFY/PinkVERIFY_Service_Whitepaper%281%29.pdf).

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