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# ONWARD TO THE FUTURE OF IT SUPPORT

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In this Aberdeen report, we look at how new technologies and evolving consumer expectations are transforming IT support. Organizations primed to deliver innovative solutions and meet the high expectations of customers can expedite support, resolve issues faster, increase productivity, reduce costs, and leave end-users satisfied.

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**Accurately predicting the future is nearly impossible, and even the best futurists and predictive models often get it wrong.**

But when it comes to predicting how businesses will deliver IT support, the future is clear. Just look at the technologies consumers have embraced in their daily lives.

Consumer adoption of AI-powered services like Alexa and Google Home, smart devices, and "connected" everything, has created an appetite for newer technologies that are easy to use and simplify daily life. These tech-savvy consumers are mobile first, and use a variety of cloud-based apps throughout their business and personal lives.

On top of that, they've been conditioned by data breaches and scammers. They're wary of downloading anything that would give an individual access to their data or device, and often turn to DIY support first in an effort to avoid these malicious scenarios. Compounding this is the growing complexity of the modern workforce: traditional workspaces are giving way to a remote workforce and the gig economy. These workers bring their own devices with them for use at work, and expect business tools to be as lightweight and frictionless as the technology they use in their consumer lives.

Unfortunately, many support centers are ill equipped to manage this complexity. With limited resources, they've been conditioned to a "put-out-fires" mentality and quickly move through an endless queue of routine, "one-and-done" support interactions that follow a standardized approach. These support teams often lack the modern tools and technology necessary to cater to users who are problem-solvers, or to tailor agent-assisted support to the unique needs of the end-user and their situation. Even worse, existing support tools fail to help IT create effortless interactions while providing a flexible feature set that tailors the support interaction to the unique need of the customer.

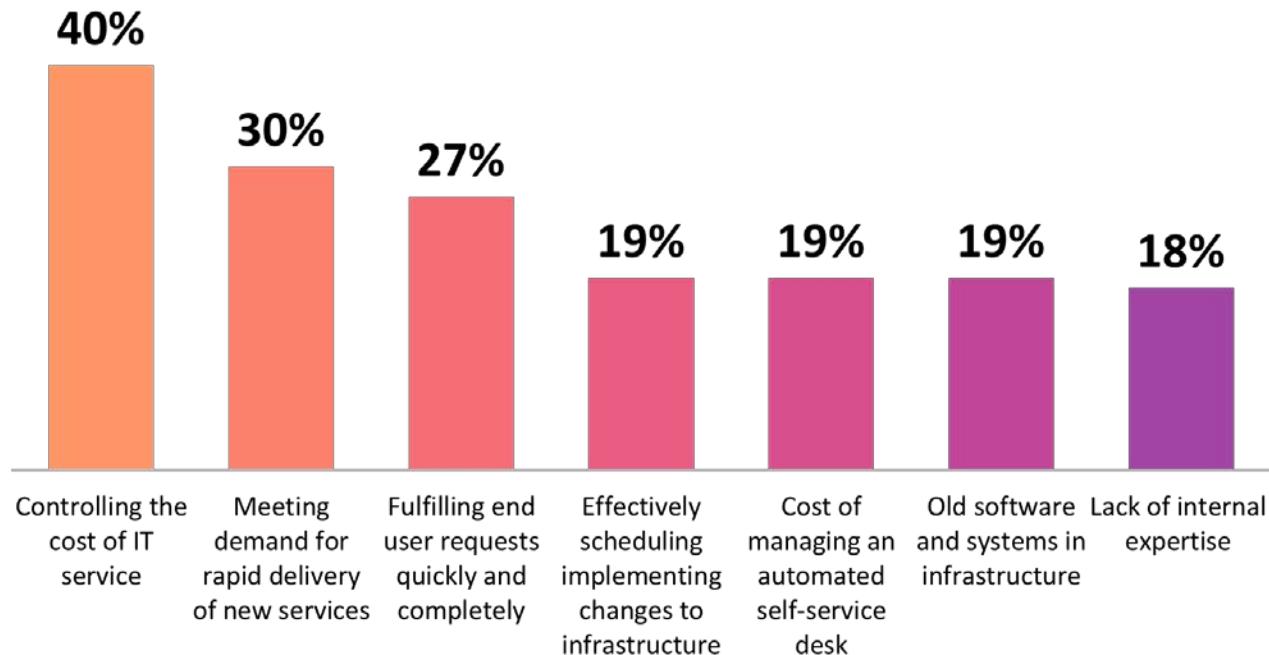
## Revamping Your Old-Timey IT Support

Compared to the way that most of us interact today, dealing with IT support can definitely feel like a journey to the past. Think of the way it typically works: You need support from IT, so you fill out a ticket (which has limited or outdated options), or you try to call someone in IT, or you end up in an endless and frustrating email chain with support staff. Even in the best of situations, this can be a long and unsatisfying experience where resolution is not guaranteed.

This experience was less than ideal in years past, and now, with sky-high consumer expectations, this type of old-school “support” is unbearable. In fact, when Aberdeen asked consumers what their biggest pain points with IT were, poor interactions and out-of-date systems were among the chief complaints (see sidebar).

Of course, IT departments have their own pain points when it comes to providing support, as shown in Figure 1 below. And, not surprisingly, many of the issues that consumers have with IT support are reflected in the challenges that IT faces.

**Figure 1: Top IT Support Challenges**



Source: Aberdeen, July 2018 n=217

### Top Consumer Pain Points with IT Support:

*Slow response time - 61%*

*Lack of critical knowledge - 40%*

*No in-person interaction - 23%*

*No self-service support - 15%*

However, modernized IT support solutions are designed to address many of these problems.

Aberdeen research has shown that many businesses are either in the process of upgrading or have already upgraded their IT support capabilities through the use of modern technologies such as AI for self-service, integration with collaboration tools such as Slack, and cloud-based assistance whenever and wherever they need it (see sidebar).

New support systems, powered with artificial intelligence and machine learning, put increased knowledge and problem solving into the hands of even novice support personnel. And these modern AI-enabled systems are often more affordable and easier to implement than many organizations realize. Aberdeen research shows that by giving employees the ability to self-solve even some advanced problems, they are giving these DIY-oriented consumers the tools they want, as 41% prefer self-service capabilities when they need IT support.

Modernized IT support tools also increase consumer satisfaction. With the use of integrated social collaboration and real-time interactions, the users of today can effectively connect with IT within the interfaces and mediums that they prefer to work in.

## **Becoming a Next-Generation Support Organization**

The capabilities and gains outlined above aren't simply anecdotal. Aberdeen research has found that organizations that adopt modern AI-enabled and collaborative IT support solutions see a number of key benefits and gains.

And these benefits are specifically in the same areas where many of the pain points that both IT organizations and consumers of IT support struggle with. From slow problem resolution and end-user friction to bloated tools and lack of knowledge that can boost IT costs, businesses that take advantage of AI-powered support are defeating these challenges. In fact, as shown in Table 1 below, businesses that have adopted IT support systems with strong AI, automation and social capabilities see significant benefits in reduced costs, faster problem resolution, reduced support calls and increased user satisfaction.

### **IT Support Tech that Businesses Have Adopted or Plan to Adopt:**

***Support for IoT in IT service - 58%***

***Real-time video assistance - 53%***

***Internal collaboration integrated with IT support (Slack, HipChat, etc.) - 52%***

***Mobile video assistance - 50%***

***AI for self-service - 46%***

***External social integrated with IT support (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) - 46%***

***Virtual reality-assisted support - 42%***

***Augmented reality support - 40%***

***Bots - 35%***

**Table 1: Winning the IT Service and Support Challenge with a Modern ITSM Solution**

Businesses with an AI-enabled IT support solution are:

<b>70%</b>	more likely to lower the cost of IT services
<b>2.25x</b>	more likely to deliver new services more rapidly
<b>33%</b>	more likely to see fewer calls to the service desk
<b>40%</b>	more likely to reduce the time needed to solve IT incidents
<b>22%</b>	more likely to have satisfied or very satisfied end-users

These data points clearly show why leaders in IT support and service are more likely to adopt new and innovative systems to drive their organization. Implementing a new IT service and support system is about solving your IT organization’s problems and reducing pain points.

We’ve seen that IT support organizations are faced with a number of challenges. These include:

- ▶ **End User Friction:** By using the wrong support tools, such as online meeting applications, IT departments are sacrificing functionality and making their job harder than it needs to be. This leads to frustration and longer resolution times for the end user.
- ▶ **Evolving Mobile Users:** Support is not flexible enough to support an employee base that is not centralized and often on the go. This audience uses their own devices, as well as cloud solutions, for work technology that can travel with them.

- ▶ **Bloated Support Tools:** Remote support tools are all or nothing. Downloading a full package to solve a simple issue leads to longer connection times and is more intrusive to the end user.

To become like these leading support organizations, businesses should consider several key points:

- ▶ **Right Fit Support:** Not all issues need to be resolved using full remote control. Sometimes a chat or a simple co-browse can resolve an issue in less time.
- ▶ **Frictionless Employee Experience:** Leveraging zero download and a simple browser plugin makes it easy for employees to get into support sessions quickly and with little effort, thus eliminating the need for online meeting tools.
- ▶ **IT Support Integrations:** Modernized IT service systems that are integrated with other systems such as ticketing and CRM allows all session data to be located in one place, increasing efficiency for the technicians and creating a better end-user experience.

For many people, the future can be hard to see. But for leading businesses, the future is today, and it's an opportunity to improve processes, reduce costs, and gain a competitive edge. In the world of service and support, getting your organization primed now for today's transformative technologies will also enable you to leverage future emerging technologies that will transform support even further.

This means having a strong focus on mobile access, real-time support capabilities, social and collaborative processes, video-enabled service and support options, and support systems that are powered by AI and machine learning.

It may not be as exciting as a future with flying cars and hoverboards, but it is one that businesses can benefit from today.

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