

7 Areas to Consider Before Selecting a Service Desk Vendor



A Guide for Identifying and Analyzing
Key ITSM Considerations and Costs

Presented By:



Go With Confidence

So you've been tasked with finding a new replacement IT Service Desk for your organization? This project often comes with its share of challenges and can leave IT leaders unsure in how to proceed. Questions that may be coming to mind are, how are ITSM software tools licensed? What do I need to consider beyond the scope of the initial vendor agreement? How long will the implementation process take? What kind of technology do I need to keep up with the demands of my end users?

In order to achieve the best ROI, you must take into account all variables that come with approaching an ITSM tool vendor. Don't worry, that's why we created this guide to help people like you! **This guide breaks down the 7 most common considerations when selecting an IT Service Desk.**



User Interface

The user interface of a high-functioning IT Service Desk tool should boil down to one key metric, ease of use. The UI and day-to-day functionality is an important, yet often overlooked, component when it comes to deciding on an IT Service Desk vendor. Here are a few things to look for.

Personalized - The UI should be fully customizable to help better serve the various roles of your IT staff. A Service Desk tool that accommodates organizational personas through customized dashboards and workspaces gives each staff member a personalized view into various ITSM metrics and KPIs.

Responsive - It's important to have a solution that's easy to use and streamlined for each individual team member to maximize productivity, especially your self-service. Daily operational tasks should be performed with minimal training and little hassle. Having a snappy interface built upon responsive technology helps improve overall efficiency and enables it to be used on various devices from mobile to desktop.

Tailored - Many vendors offer software platforms with huge suites of features, but deliver bloated and unwieldy user experiences. At the end of the day, it should be easy for your staff to perform daily operations like escalating incident tickets and create ad-hoc reports and easy for your end users to quickly find solutions in the knowledge base.



Seek a Persona-Based Interface
Get the information you want for your role.



Require Custom Dashboards
Take advantage of customizable access to metrics & KPIs.



Don't Skimp on User Experience
Choose a modern interface for the sake of your staff & end users.

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Licensing

Each vendor has its own models for licensing, but the two most common types are named user licensing and concurrent user licensing. It's important to understand these two types in order to find the most cost-effective licensing for your organization.

Named user licensing (or fixed licensing) refers to a specific, or assigned person, granted access to the software. That means access is limited to a single user per license. These licenses are best reserved for users in the organization that require daily, continual access to ITSM controls, such as help desk operators or service desk staff.

Concurrent user licensing (or floating licensing) allows multiple users, but limits simultaneous access. These licenses work best for users that only need limited access to ITSM controls, such as overseeing IT executives.

Many ITSM vendors will push you to buy only one type of license, but it's considered a best practice to purchase the right mix of both named and concurrent licenses in order to reduce costs and maximize ROI. Also, be sure to take into account the fees that may come with requester licenses. Try to find a vendor who does not charge for requesters.

*REMINDER: You don't want to put limitations on your organization as it matures. That's why we recommend choosing an ITSM vendor that offers cost-effective and flexible user licensing for when your organization begins to grow.



Ensure Flexibility

Seek vendors who let you buy both named & concurrent licenses.



Understand the Costs

Know the total costs for named, concurrent, & requester licenses.



Evaluate Impact of Requesters

Don't overpay for requester licenses.

Delivery Options

There are two common methods when it comes to delivering a Service Desk tool: on-premise delivery or cloud (SaaS) delivery. Consider the following when approaching a vendor.

On-Premise delivery has been the common delivery model for enterprise-grade ITSM software implementations. This is delivered and licensed to be deployed and accessed from the organization's local host platform. There are no time restrictions placed upon the users, and the software can be accessed forever often including version upgrades. Be sure to understand ongoing maintenance, support, hardware/software upgrades, and other costs when considering this delivery model.

Cloud (SaaS) delivery has emerged as a more flexible alternative to common ITSM implementations. Cloud platforms are subscription-based, and users depend on the vendor or hosting company for access. Subscription pricing can vary depending on user licensing (named, concurrent, etc.) and time (month-to-month, annual, etc.).

While each delivery model has its benefits, it's best to consider an ITSM vendor who offers both cloud and on-premise delivery models to give your organization the most scalable options.



Understand the Financial Impact

Calculate the TCO for both delivery options.



Weigh the Costs

Determine how the delivery model will affect pricing/licensing.



Anticipate the Future

Select a vendor who offers multiple delivery options.



Implementation

Implementation plays an important role in Service Desk selection, so you'll need to find a tool that can fit the size and maturity of your organization today and for the future. Be sure to consider the following when researching ITSM vendors.

Initial Implementation - Consulting and professional services may be required in order to set a clear roadmap. They can help your organization with configuration, training, support, and other challenges so your implementation stays on course. These fees vary depending on the size and scope of your project, so budget accordingly.

Future Changes - Some solutions are so complex that when it comes to any kind of configuration after initial implementation, it can be expensive. You'll need to take into consideration the amount of time and cost for any future changes. This will be discussed further on the next page.

Framework - You'll need to decide on a framework of best practices from which your Service Desk solution will be based upon. ITIL is a great start to set your implementation on track. Some vendors provide ITIL out-of-the-box, but others will require it to be configured entirely, which means more time and money spent.



Avoid Lengthy Projects

Look for vendors who can implement in days, not months.



Ask About Upgrades

Figure out what services & costs are required to upgrade.



Look For ITIL Out-Of-The-Box

Avoid choosing a vendor who requires too much configuration.



Configurations

For many smaller businesses, ticketing and incident management is the extent to what they need. But for organizations with business requirements that expand beyond the scope of a tool's out-of-the-box functionality, they need a solution that allows them to configure when they want without breaking the bank. Here are some things to consider.

Complexity - Before approaching a Service Desk vendor, you must understand the maturity level of your environment. Do your business requirements demand specific processes for regulatory compliance? How often will you need to configure forms or workflows? How fast can changes be implemented? This will determine the type of configurations you'll need to account for when seeking your new solution.

Time - Before making your ITSM tool selection, be sure to consider all of your organizational intricacies and processes and the time it will take to configure it to your needs. A vendor who provides a solution that easily grows with your business will help cut down on time, therefore cost.

Cost - Certain vendors have bloated legacy systems, making it more complex and time-consuming to configure. This will require the need of a consultant or professional services team to walk you through the process, which can affect your budget.



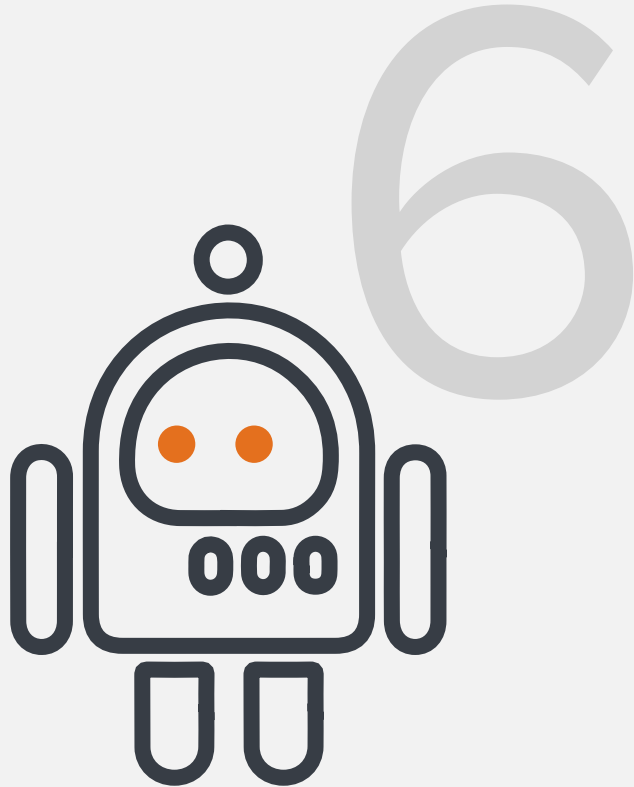
Select a Configurable Solution
Find an ITSM platform that provides codeless configurations.



Avoid Hiring Consultants
Choose a tool that is configurable by an administrator.



Understand the Level of Expertise
Limit the need for on-site experts to maintain.



Artificial Intelligence

According to Gartner, by 2019, IT service desks utilizing machine-learning-enhanced technologies will free up to 30% of support capacity. They recommend organizations “invest in machine learning, big data and other smart-machine technologies to make current and future IT service desk operations proactive”.* So what does that mean for you?

AI for the Service Desk - If you use applications like Google or Netflix, then you’re already engaging with AI. The more we use these applications, the smarter they get in making recommendations for searches or TV shows. It wouldn’t be any different with service desk software. Investing in an AI-powered service desk will help your IT staff work faster and make smarter decisions by leveraging the data you already have.

AI Out-of-the-Box - Try to avoid the complexities that often come with managing big data and machine learning technologies on your own. Look for service desk software that has AI out-of-the-box, so all you’ll need to do is plug in your data and let it do the work for you. It’s not worth worrying about whether the system is properly trained or can’t access certain data.

Know What You’re Getting - Many enterprise applications claim to be “smart”, but are vague on the details of exactly how their technology works. You’ll want technology that uses your data to serve up recommendations for ticket resolutions, gives your end users an engaging experience on the self-service portal, and provides predictive analytics in real-time.

*Gartner, Apply Machine Learning and Big Data at the IT Service Desk to Support the Digital Workplace, Colin Fletcher, Katherine Lord, 29 February 2016



Use AI to Speed Up Onboarding

Find a service desk that delivers real-time recommendations for fast & accurate ticket completion.



Add Chatbots to Your Workforce

Better engage employees & customers by adding a Chabot to your self-service portal.



Reduce Resolution Times with AI

Let AI quickly mine through historical information & knowledge to provide faster resolutions.

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Costs

Take into account the costs for licensing, professional services, implementation, and the TCO of using the platform itself, when gauging the costs of your next Service Desk solution.

Licensing - According to Gartner, the average price range for on-premise delivery for 300 users is \$315,000 to \$410,000. The average price range for a cloud (SaaS) delivery for the same amount of users falls between \$150,000 and \$220,000.*

Implementation - Administrative overhead and cost of infrastructure will vary depending on the size of your organization, the complexity of your operations, how your software tool is delivered, etc. Remember to also account for support and consultancy fees that arise during implementation and beyond.

Management & Maintenance - Calculate factors like ongoing maintenance, data center fees, help support, upgrades, security, and downtime, to get the most accurate TCO. Avoid vendors who offer solutions that require a high level of technical expertise to implement and maintain as it will greatly impact costs.

Calculating your TCO is the last and most crucial piece before selecting an IT Service Desk. If you want a healthy return on your investment, you must strive for the most accurate costs and account for any extraneous factors that may impact your ITSM operations.

*Gartner. Before Purchasing an ITSSM Tool, Compare Pricing and Licensing, Chris Matchett, Alexa Bona, Gary Spivak, 18 September 2015



Determine Licensing Costs
Find the right mix of licensing & delivery options.



Determine the TCO of ITSM Ops
Calculate costs for implementation, management & maintenance.



Weigh Options within Your Budget
Consider all the costs & try a few variable pricing options to achieve buy-in.

You're Ready!

The primary focus of an effective Service Desk software tool is to facilitate ITSM operations through automation via a framework of best practices. A service desk platform tool should not be so cumbersome and complicated to use that it bogs down operational resources and becomes a black hole in your budget.

If you take the time to look at the internal workings of your organization and prioritize the things that matter most before you begin researching ITSM software vendors, you'll have more confidence in your efforts to choose the best solution.

