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Modern ITSM Requires Autonomy With Alignment

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Abstract: Traditional command-and-control approaches to IT service management (ITSM) lead to limited visibility across teams and a slower pace of work. Now, the rise of digital business and distributed work is ushering in a new generation of ITSM that balances autonomy and alignment. Service delivery teams can move faster within a managed environment that IT can oversee. To fully experience the benefits of modern ITSM, organizations need solutions that enable better collaboration and automation.

Digital Business and Distributed Work Drive Change in IT Service Management

The rapid rise of digital business and distributed work is transforming the traditional team structures, working styles, and the pace of work—challenging conventional approaches to ITSM. Traditionally, IT departments have acted as central conduits for ITSM, with extensive change review processes and an emphasis on documentation and repeatable processes. This approach leads to limited visibility across teams and slows the pace of work. Consider the following:

- The number of companies that require employees to be in the office full time has declined to 42% from 49%, according to a recent article from the *Wall Street Journal*.[2] Employees need better ways to resolve issues via self-service approaches, while IT teams have to contend with providing distributed, around-the-clock support.

- Digital transformation continues to be a high priority for organizations as a way to unlock additional market capi ta li za ti on .[3]

> **Traditional ITSM**
> 98% of organizations using traditional ITSM models or methods report challenges that inhibit their ability to support the changing needs of the business and developers within their organizations.[1]

- The proliferation of tools across departments creates additional challenges for IT teams that are trying to rein in disparate systems while also trying to ensure data can flow freely to improve collaboration.

In the traditional approach to ITSM, IT maintains alignment through a "command and control" approach to standardizing service delivery. This is most visible in change review requirements, the emphasis on documentation, and the standardization of process and tooling across an enterprise—an understandable response for organizations looking to minimize risk from incidents.

Unfortunately, though, this traditional approach limits visibility and slows down the pace of work in an environment where velocity is critical to maintaining a competitive edge. It also constricts business teams that expect to be able to customize their services to their unique needs, thanks in part to the rise of enterprise service management. This

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[1] Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research, *Trends in Modern IT Service Management (ITSM),* 2023.
[2] Source: The Wall Street Journal, *The Return to the Office Has Stalled,* May 2023.
[3] Source: Deloitte, *New Deloitte report finds digital transformation can open up US$1.25 trillion in additional market capitalization,* February 2023.

leads to slowed operations for business teams, frustrated customers, and a high cost to extend service management to business teams.

Modernizing Operations: Improving Development and IT Collaboration

Improving collaboration between development and IT is a crucial step for modern organizations. A more aligned ITSM approach enables development teams to automate and streamline work.
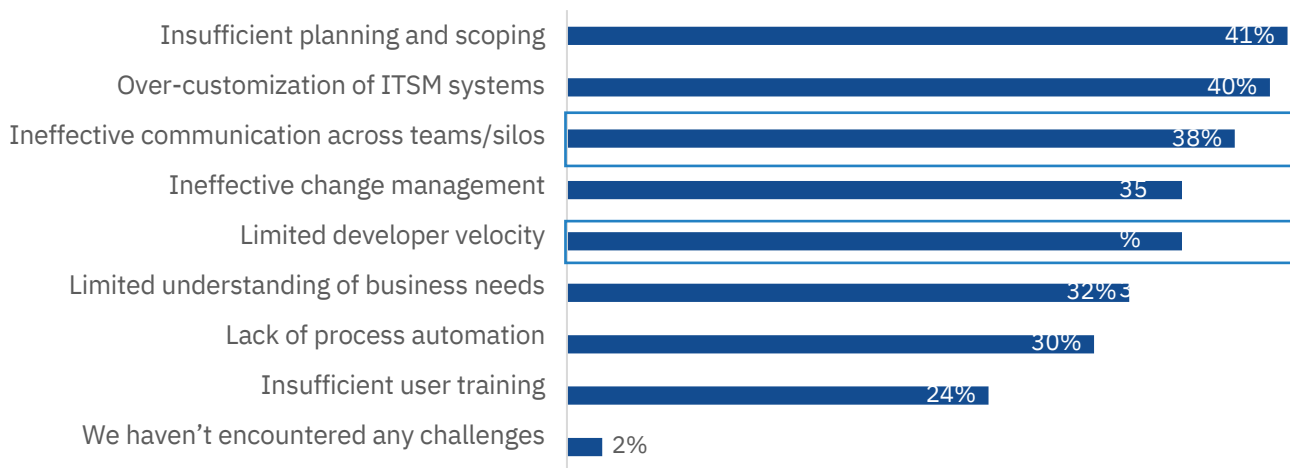
Traditionally, IT teams attempted to protect their organizations from risk by carefully assessing and approving changes from the development teams. However, those development teams were eager to ship updates quickly to stay competitive and meet their delivery objectives. Those somewhat conflicting responsibilities often led to technology silos and limited visibility across teams, slowing the pace of work and delaying innovation and revenue opportunities.

Research from TechTarget's Enterprise Strategy Group (see Figure 1) reveals that IT teams encounter the following challenges when using traditional ITSM systems:

- 38% of respondents say ineffective communication across teams/silos is a challenge when employing a traditional ITSM method.
- 35% say limited developer velocity is a challenge when employing a traditional ITSM method.4

Figure 1. Challenges With Traditional ITSM Solutions

What challenges, if any, has your organization encountered using a traditional ITSM model/method? (Percent of respondents, N=128, multiple responses accepted)

Insufficient planning and scoping	41%
Over-customization of ITSM systems	40%
Ineffective communication across teams/silos	38%
Ineffective change management	35
Limited developer velocity	%
Limited understanding of business needs	32%3
Lack of process automation	30%
Insufficient user training	24%
We haven't encountered any challenges	2%

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

A modern approach to ITSM involves two essential factors:

- Development teams and IT operations teams working together via a shared platform to enable smoother collaboration.
- Automation that reduces manual effort, giving teams flexibility to move faster within the bounds of a well-managed, risk-regulated environment that IT can oversee.

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[4] Source: Enterprise Strategy Group Research, *Trends in Modern IT Service Management (ITSM)*, 2023.

Adhering to a modern ITSM approach brings benefits: faster innovation with better risk management, quicker post-incident service restoration, better decision making, and better prioritization of critical development work including problem management.

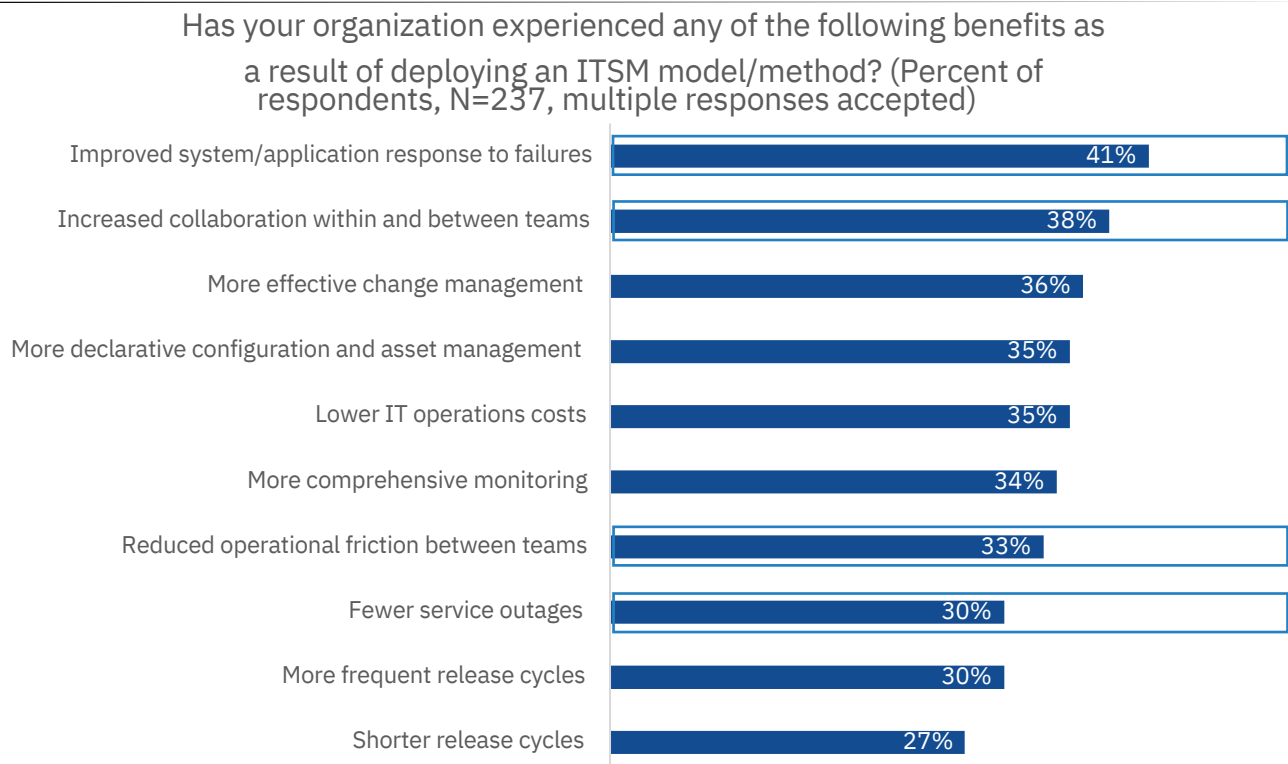## Modernizing Support: IT as a Force Multiplier for Teams Across the Business

Sticking with traditional processes complicates operations, and it complicates support as well. Support-related challenges include:

- Slowed (or blocked) operations for business teams.
- Frustrated internal customers.
- High cost/effort to extend service management to business teams.

A modern approach to IT support involves business teams building and customizing their own services on an as-needed basis via a shared, unified platform that IT oversees. This strategy reduces reliance on IT teams and improves autonomy for teams across the organization while maintaining alignment; for instance, it could enable HR to develop a service desk on a unified platform that IT oversees. Overall, the benefits of this approach include better customer experience, streamlined request intake, and centralized resources, reporting, and management.

According to recent Enterprise Strategy Group research (see Figure 2), organizations that adopt modern ITSM strategies report improvements in technical outcomes, with 41% indicating improved system/application responses to failures and 30% reporting fewer service outages.[5] These organizations also report cultural improvements, with 38% noting increased collaboration within and between teams and a third (33%) experiencing reduced operational friction between teams.

Figure 2. Modern ITSM Delivers Benefits

Has your organization experienced any of the following benefits as a result of deploying an ITSM model/method? (Percent of respondents, N=237, multiple responses accepted)

Benefit	Percent
Improved system/application response to failures	41%
Increased collaboration within and between teams	38%
More effective change management	36%
More declarative configuration and asset management	35%
Lower IT operations costs	35%
More comprehensive monitoring	34%
Reduced operational friction between teams	33%
Fewer service outages	30%
More frequent release cycles	30%
Shorter release cycles	27%

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

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[5] Ibid.

The autonomy with alignment approach enables support teams—from IT to HR to marketing and across the business—to deliver services better and faster.

The Anatomy of a Modern ITSM Solution

To fully experience the benefits of modern ITSM, organizations need solutions that enable better collaboration and automation. Therefore, when considering solutions, look for these capabilities:

- Connection to software tools: To accelerate innovation between ops and dev teams and streamline service practices, including change, incident, and problem management.
- Pre-built templates and low-code/no-code capabilities: So teams across an organization have the flexibility to deliver service in the ways they need.
- Common platform functionality: Including centralized reporting and controls for visibility across teams and more strategic decision-making.
- Integration with other business systems: Including applications in HR, finance, and facilities management that are used to deliver services to the enterprise.
- Cloud-first: To provide scalability, resilience, and global accessibility to enable a distributed workforce to be empowered to deliver services and participate in workflows.

Consideration of these factors ensures that a new ITSM system has been developed with flexibility and scalability in mind as opposed to the traditional command-and-control approach to ITSM. A modern architecture takes into consideration how team members outside of IT can easily and productively leverage the solution while maintaining a common platform and data model.

Spotlight: About Jira Service Management

Jira Service Management is an ITSM solution built for modern IT teams. With Jira Service Management, all service teams can come together on one unified platform for better collaboration. This platform empowers teams across the enterprise to respond to business changes and deliver high-impact service experiences for employees and customers, opening up work across the organization and unleashing the full power of teams. Jira Service Management is modern ITSM for organizations looking to deliver autonomy and alignment. Atlassian shared with Enterprise Strategy Group a few examples of businesses that are seeing benefits.

Jira Service Management Is Autonomy Plus Alignment: Real-world Examples

As organizations shift the way they operate, it's clear that the traditional ITSM approach is no longer sufficient. Companies such as CBS, Nextiva, and Canva have all leaned on Jira Service Management to modernize their approach to ITSM.

By operating on a common platform, their teams can streamline collaboration. For instance, Nextiva, whose team adopted Jira Service Management to improve cross-team collaboration, has streamlined service delivery. Catherine White, Atlassian solutions specialist at Nextiva, said "We're able to share the same platform as the rest of the organization so that we can work more efficiently."

Conclusion

Adopting a modern ITSM approach that balances the need for autonomy with alignment is an appropriate approach for organizations today. The benefits of modern ITSM are evident, with organizations reporting improvements in technical outcomes, reduced operational friction between teams, increased collaboration, and improved response to failures when they occur. With multiple teams working together on a shared platform, organizations can automate and streamline work processes, enabling faster innovation, better customer experiences, and improved operational

efficiency. Additionally, the adoption of modern ITSM empowers business teams to build and customize their own services, reducing reliance on centralized IT teams and improving autonomy across the organization.

Jira Service Management is a great example of a modern ITSM solution that enables organizations to achieve these outcomes with autonomy and alignment.

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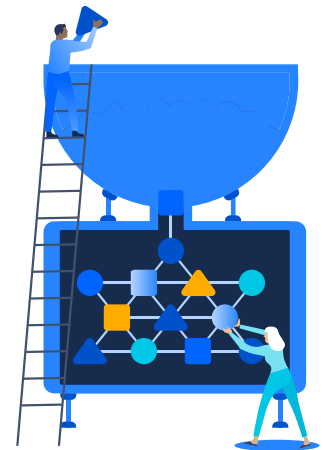
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