AI done wisely delivers better, faster, and more scalable IT

Three ways to drive value with intelligent automation
Introduction: The world of IT services is changing rapidly

The demand for better, faster, cheaper and more scalable IT services and operations has been fueled by advances in technology and a rise in people’s expectations. The benefits to the modern workforce of emerging technologies—specifically artificial intelligence (AI) including machine learning and virtual agents has been proven time and time again during recent world events. And the benefits for IT services teams, has been equally huge.

“Early adopters report an improvement of almost 25 percent in customer experience, accelerated rates of innovation, higher competitiveness, higher margins, and better employee experience with the roll out of AI solutions.

– IDC 2020 AI Adoption Survey
But modern IT service and support still have to deal with old-fashioned issues

Delivering IT services has never been particularly easy, which is why the IT support industry has seen such an evolution over the last 30 years. While each transition—from disparate personnel responding to phone calls and emails, to service desk structures and basic ticketing systems, to self-service and automation—has exponentially enhanced how service is delivered, there’s still more room for improvement. After all, IT still grapples with age-old issues such as:

- Reducing budgets and financial pressures
- Increasing costs and too much of agents’ time spent on simple, repetitive support tasks
- Recruiting and IT staff and high turnover
- Increasing business technology use and support requirements
- Ever increasing expectations from employees
- Desiring a high rate of innovation without significant downtime
- Understanding and using increasingly larger data sets
- Evolving CIO priorities including digital transformation
AI is ready to help with these challenges

With a well-considered application, AI can be used to drive better, more efficient and scalable ITSM and IT operations management (ITOM). It’s no wonder that a recent survey shows 7 out of 10 leading organizations are looking to make these AI and automation investments to improve employee experience and satisfaction.* Intelligent automation and the use of virtual agents move the dial beyond the traditional "better, faster, cheaper—pick any two" conundrum. With AI, organizations can improve operations across all three variables, making it possible to:

• Reduce costs and resolve issues faster
• Increase productivity and scale IT (by relieving staff of repetitive work)
• Improve the employee service experience

*"IT Service Management is Advancing with the time." Forrester research. August 2020
Three ways intelligent automation and predictive intelligence can help your organization right now

**AI Benefit 1: Self-service and self-help via virtual agents**

On average half of employees do not find it easy to resolve an issue with their equipment on their own.* That’s even with many adopting robust self-service systems. Employee and customer adoption and satisfactions have not yet caught up. Why? There’s a continuing disconnect between service design and employee expectations.

AI can help close that gap by helping deliver the digital experience employees already enjoy in their personal lives. Artificial intelligence driven self-service makes help easier to access and consume. Natural language processing (NLP) lessens use frustration by delivering the correct response the first time.

Here are just a few examples of how AI and self-service can already help employees:

- Resetting a password or checking VPN issues
- Searching a knowledge base or receiving outage information
- Opening a new ticket and checking the status of an existing ticket
- Scheduling a walk-up or drive-thru appointment with IT support
- Ordering a new or changed service via chat rather than following a service catalog hierarchy

*ServiceNow, “The Employee Experience Imperative” (2019)
AI Benefit 2: IT support augmentation via intelligent automation and greater predictive intelligence

It’s all about scale. Because AI resolves the high-volume of low-complexity issues hitting the IT service teams, agents are free to focus on higher-complexity, value-add work. AI also helps IT agents in their everyday responsibilities, supplementing their knowledge with predictive intelligence so they can work more efficiently and effectively.

Consider these 3 intelligent automation examples:

- **Repetitive task automation**: Using intelligent automation in for assessing, categorizing, prioritizing, and routing tickets, based on the requester’s description and learned patterns drawn from historical data. While this might seem a trivial task to replace, it’s a high-volume, low-value activity that places a considerable toll on IT support teams, with our research showing that it’s approximately 12% of available IT support time. It’s also a task that’s prone to human error due to a high level of choice complexity. One Accenture survey and report, Enabling Service Excellence Through ServiceNow’s Predictive Intelligence, found that:

  - 21% of IT service agents respondents have more than 100 categories to choose from, with more than 10% facing a choice from more than 300 categories
  - 43% of IT service agents respondents have more than 100 different assignment groups to choose from and nearly a quarter face a choice from more than 300 groups
• **Virtual agents and analytics to assist with process participation and improvement:** Allowing service agents to engage with a virtual agent while participating in ITSM processes such as incident and change management. This in-action assistance helps reduce both mean time to repair or restore (MTTR) and the adverse impact issues have on business operations. Virtual agents can:
  - Resolve and reduce incidents, highlighting known solutions or similar issues in real time
  - Process-based approvals via the agent
  - Update assigned support tasks
  - Update requests for change
  - Identify planned changes and change windows

• **Major incident management facilitation:** Detecting known or potential major incidents and alerting IT service agents. For example, Predictive Intelligence informs agents that the current issue should be linked to a known major incident or the issue they’re currently working on may constitute a new major incident. The agent then propose a new major incident, ensuring that IT support efforts are suitably focused on the issue(s).

This IT support staff augmentation through intelligent automation is an area that will grow and improve IT and business results in the coming years, with the technology assisting increasingly in more-complex scenarios.
AI Benefit 3: Greater insight into services and operations performance and improvement needs

While AI helps with the heavy lifting of handling repetitive tasks, it can also help with the heavy thinking—giving us insight into large datasets that would be a slow, or potentially impossible, task for humans. Machine learning can be used for ITSM-related operations, performance management, and improvement insights such as the identification of problems or greater visibility into IT service desk performance patterns and trends (even predicting performance). And it can be applied to ITOM-related opportunities that similarly help to deliver better business results.

Improvements from an IT operations perspective include proactive analytics and preventative automation—with machine learning used within the context of AIOps, detecting patterns in event data to predict when IT components or services might fail and automatically applying appropriate preventative solutions. These anomaly detection capabilities correlate thousands of events to identify patterns that are likely to result in a future outage or issue, with incoming events are then matched with these patterns.
The takeaway: AI is a wise next move for effective IT

Today, intelligent automation and predictive intelligence improves the customer and employee experience, increasing IT team success and deflecting more incidents and requests while reducing costs. But we’re just scratching the surface when it comes to the possibilities of AI and AI-enabled technologies. When designed with the employee in mind, your IT organization can take advantage of AI today to deliver support that is better, faster, and cheaper than ever before.
Discover how your organization can use the power of AI to transform IT. With ServiceNow, your IT team just got bigger.

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ServiceNow was founded on a very simple idea: that work should be easier.

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