



WHITEPAPER

# The Future of IT Service Management with AI





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In the fast-evolving age of artificial intelligence (AI), innovations continually transform how organizations build, protect, and generate value. As AI matures, its integration into IT service management (ITSM) brings ample opportunities to build and improve the industry. AI-driven tools and processes enhance efficiency and accuracy, enabling organizations to meet evolving customer expectations and business models translating into value.

## THE ROLE OF AI IN ITSM

AI offers many benefits for ITSM, from automating routine tasks to providing advanced analytics and predictive capabilities. By leveraging AI, organizations can streamline their operations, reduce manual effort for employees, and focus employee efforts on more strategic activities.

- **Automation of routine tasks:** AI-powered tools can handle repetitive tasks such as ticket categorization, assignment, and resolution, freeing up human agents to tackle more complex issues. This automation speeds up response times and improves accuracy by minimizing human error
- **Advanced analytics and insights:** AI enables organizations to analyze large volumes of data quickly and accurately. This capability allows for real-time monitoring and predictive maintenance, helping prevent issues before they arise and ensuring higher service availability
- **Enhanced customer experience:** AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants can provide immediate support to users, offering solutions to common problems without the need for human intervention. This leads to faster resolution times and higher customer satisfaction

The future of ITSM lies in the effective integration of AI to support human agents and improve the overall employee experience. AI enables organizations to build robust infrastructures and generate significant value. As AI technologies continue to evolve, their role in ITSM will become increasingly critical, driving efficiency, security, and growth in the fast-paced digital landscape.

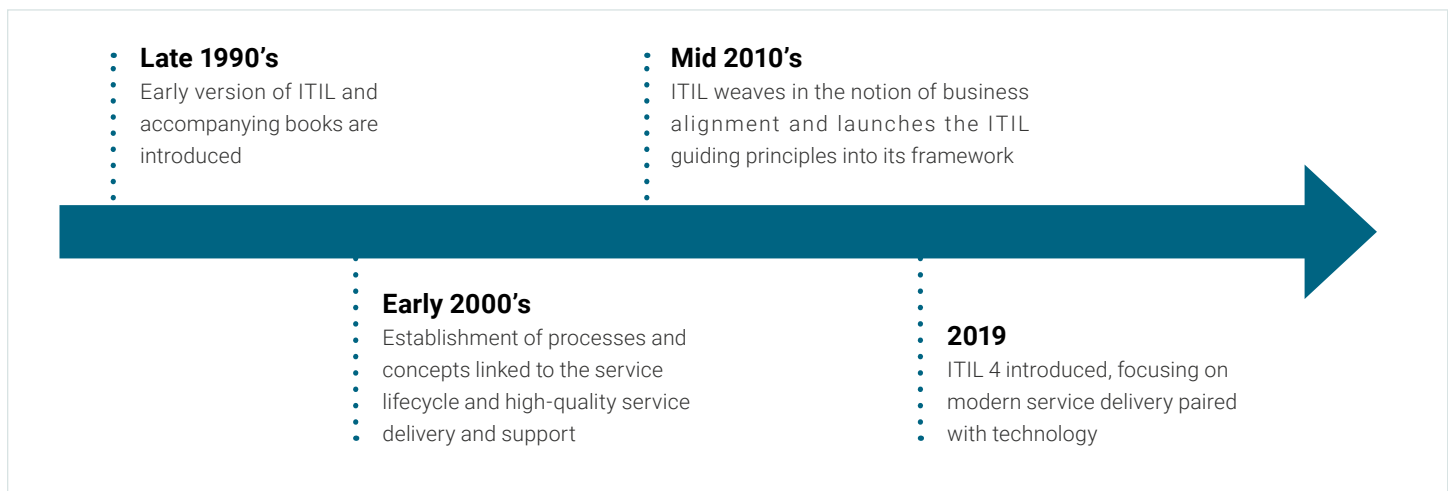
## Generating value through AI

Integrating AI into ITSM to help organizations operate and grow more effectively and safely. AI tools facilitate better decision-making by providing insights derived from vast amounts of data, enabling organizations to adapt to changing business environments and customer needs.

AI processes large datasets to uncover trends and insights, supporting strategic decisions to drive business growth. This data-driven approach allows organizations to make informed choices designed to propel their success. Additionally, AI solutions offer scalability and flexibility, allowing them to grow with organizational needs. This adaptability is crucial for responding to market changes and evolving customer demands, helping ensure your business remains competitive and responsive in a dynamic landscape.

## THE EVOLUTION OF ITIL

The ITIL framework provides essential guidance for designing and delivering services, emphasizing alignment with the holistic values of an organization.



### Where we want to go

Moving beyond strictly linear processes enables easier adaptation to factors like organizational culture and the human element. Instead of rigid rules, ITIL practices can be leveraged as guidelines, allowing teams to mold best practices to fit their unique workflows. This adaptability was evident in 2020 and 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced companies to accommodate remote work and geographically dispersed teams. Organizations swiftly embraced automated processes to meet evolving health requirements, ensuring ongoing productivity, safety, and success without the need for physical training and approvals.

With proof of concept established, there's a strong desire to maintain flexibility as teams efficiently continue hybrid or work-from-anywhere (WFA) operations. Automation and AI are beneficial for today's needs and crucial for the future. Instead of forcing processes into rigid frameworks, organizations should embrace adaptable, repeatable, and agile processes. Efficiency no longer requires in-person interactions; it's time to revolutionize service management with smart technologies.



## Embracing AI-powered automation

AI-powered automation isn't about replacing jobs; it's about freeing workers from routine tasks to focus on those requiring human interaction. This automation enhances the user experience, leading to more positive service engagements. We already benefit from this daily with automated backups, facial recognition, autonomous driving, search engine recommendations, and automatic app and operating system updates.

When integrating automation and smart technologies into your ITSM platform, consider the following areas for improvement:

- **Optimizing service management operations:** Automate data collection and suggest relevant knowledge content to drive efficiencies and promote self-service
- **Shortening response times:** Use AI recommendations to provide potential workarounds or resolutions based on historical trends and insights
- **Eliminating silos:** Streamline processes and routing rules to connect cross-functional internal service providers, supporting enterprise service management

## IMPLEMENTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

When implementing new technologies or processes, ensure they align with your business needs and enhance, rather than disrupt, your operations. Regularly review your current state and determine how automation can enhance service delivery by building on what works and improving what doesn't. This strategic approach will help you stay nimble and efficient in a rapidly changing environment.

Once you recognize the inherent benefits of these smart technologies, the next step is precisely planning how you want them to work for your business goals. As ITIL 4 has shifted from rigid service-related processes to holistic practices centered on co-creating value, you can map your internal service strategy and design to align with your organization's culture and interpret their best practices as your teams see fit. This way you're not automating processes just because you can—you're doing it to optimize efficiency and the human element.

### Plan to plan

Start with strategy. Teams should look to the ITIL guiding principles to:

- **Focus on value** – How can implementing smart technologies like AI maximize the value and perceived benefits your service desk brings to the organization?
- **Think and work holistically** – To drive optimal value and to maximize human and technical resources to deliver services/support, step back and look at the bigger picture (objectives of the organization at large) so your improvements/automation are implemented to complement each other.



- **Keep it simple and practical** – To ensure the introduction of automation and/or removal of legacy manual processes is executed to truly provide value, focus on improving the simplest things. Remember, AI and automation should be in play to drive positive/impactful results, not create more work.
- **Optimize then automate** – Simplify your internal business processes and service practices before thinking about automating. This will give you a firm, effective foundation and put you in a better position to achieve your desired outcome.

Keep in mind: You don't want a fast caterpillar;  
you want a butterfly.

**Look beneath the surface**

With a strategy in mind, you can now thoroughly review your current structure and processes. A simple, effective approach is a SWOT analysis: Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats. The graphic below provides some examples of the kinds of questions to consider during the analysis.





## PUT YOUR STRATEGY INTO MOTION

After balancing your current structure with your strategic goals, you'll be in a strong position to plan out the implementation of your new automation. However, there are still some considerations and potential pitfalls to be aware of. First, be **careful not to overcomplicate** matters by automating just to automate. Carefully consider where you can gain the most efficiency by removing redundancies in practices or manual input elements. When introducing any update, be sure to document all changes should you ever need to revert. Always think beyond today—be agile and open to adapting processes as your organization (or service demand) grows. More on that in a moment.

Next is the ever-delicate dance of getting **stakeholder buy-in**. Plan ahead with simple and direct business cases for investing in smart technologies. Articulating “what’s in it for the bottom line” can help advocate the perceived benefits and how automation can be implemented. Stakeholders can’t argue with saved time and human resources, more efficient fulfillment, or more proactive service motions.

Then, think about how to **make the transition as smooth as possible** (which will also lessen any pushback). Introduce automation and other integrated technologies like AI, so they mesh with your organizational culture and values, and ultimately help drive the user experience. When designing service management practices with automation, recognize the importance of organizational “ABCs” (Attitudes, Behavior, Culture) and how these changes could affect users. It’s beneficial to establish an open channel of communication and foster a transparent dialogue across teams. This can be used to provide ample training, facilitate awareness on updates, and collect ongoing insight. This can also be applied to how you continue to improve post-introduction to follow another ITIL guiding principle: “progress iteratively with feedback.”

During each phase, periodically go back and review your SWOT to see what has shifted, improved, or needs additional work. Evaluate if you’ve met your previously defined criteria for success or your users’ expectations. Then continue to build off that review to find ways to introduce or refine processes you’ve automated to make a holistic impact on the organization.

## CONSIDER YOUR NEXT STEPS

With automated improvements to service delivery, consider how automation and AI can further your visions of enterprise service management to support beyond IT initiatives and unify departments across the organization.

Automating legacy internal processes with cross-functional overlap (such as an employee department move or creating a security badge and access for a new hire)

can see the value of multiple service providers embracing service management practices and a shared ITSM platform.

Other groups and departments may recognize benefits from smart technology-driven service delivery:

- Seeing and experiencing rapid responses paired with efficient service fulfillment
- Centralized visibility in the existing service desk footprint
- Enhanced channels for communication
- More time for technicians to focus on core tasks or larger projects

As a result, these other departments may be enticed to leverage and share the same ITSM solution, creating a comprehensive support resource within the enterprise.

- Fueling self-service initiatives (with enhanced knowledge documentation and using tools designed to leverage AI to make suggestions to help drive users to the appropriate content) and drive case deflection.

You'll ultimately be able to use your successful implementation to drive support for future automation/AI with organizational change through:

- Ongoing education
- Knowledge management
- Furthering visions for digital transformation
- Executing on the user experience you wish to cultivate
- The perceived benefits of automation in action and drive to improve continually

At the end of the day, you can expand your existing ITSM investment and potentially improve efficiency, ROI, and user satisfaction while laying the groundwork to move your entire organization forward with automation.

## ABOUT SOLARWINDS

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