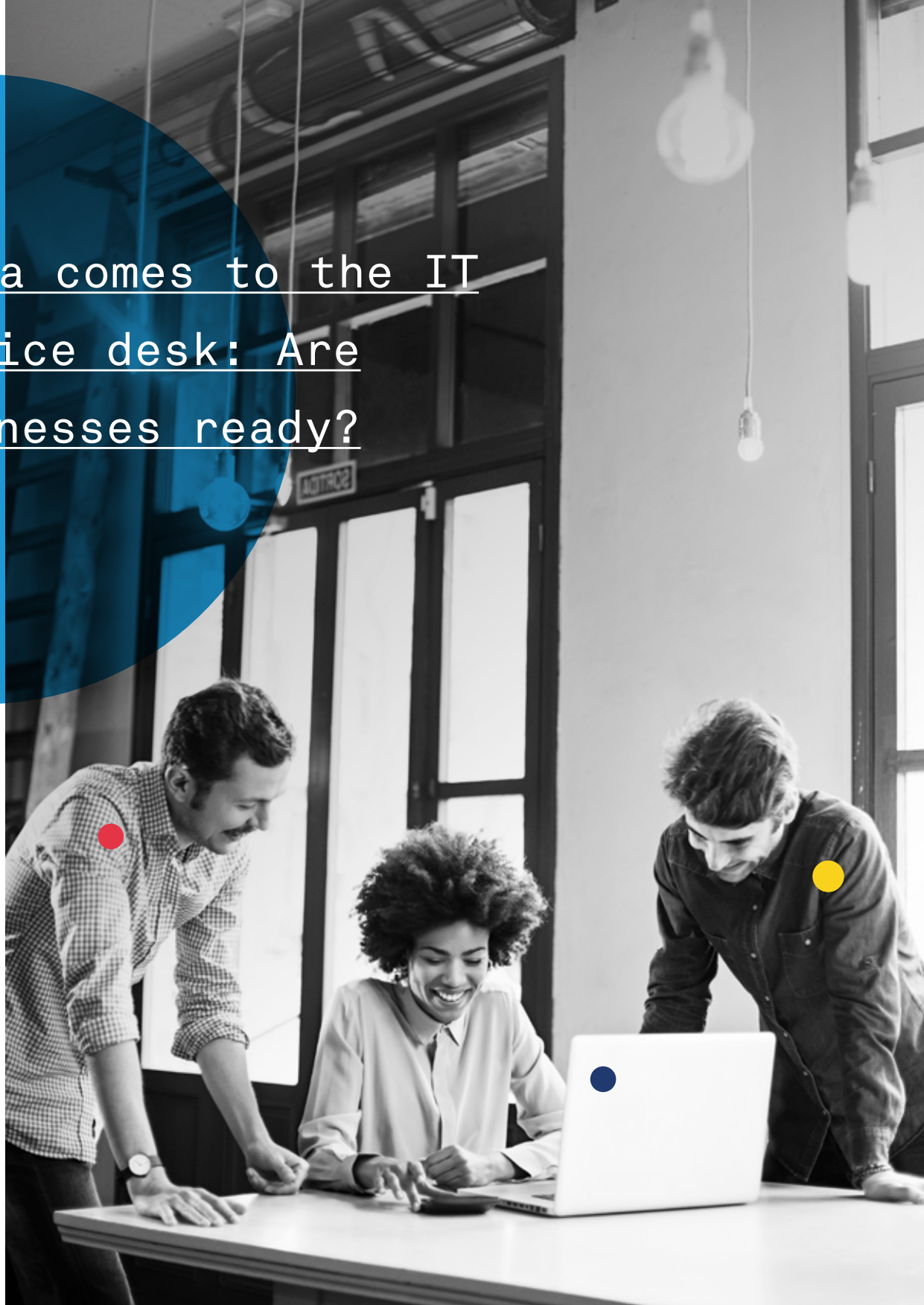


Alexa comes to the IT  
service desk: Are  
businesses ready?



Enterprise IT service desks face challenging times today, trying to balance shrinking budgets and headcounts with demands for greater efficiencies and better customer experience. Add to it an increasingly complex computing environment disrupted by the onslaught of emerging technologies, and it's no surprise that most organizations struggle to put their customer experience promises into action. Thankfully, that's changing.

Artificial intelligence (AI), voice technologies, and the increased use of automation are poised to make the IT service desk a highly efficient and productive arena. While over 1.8 million people already use Amazon's Alexa to control lighting, temperature, etc. in their homes, IT service desk users will soon be able to leverage Alexa for Business, a new service from AWS<sup>1</sup>. According to research and markets, the number of enterprises using virtual digital assistants (VDAs) such as Alexa, Siri, Cortana and others, will touch 843 million by 2021, with total VDA revenues touching USD 15.8 billion<sup>2</sup>.

Let's take a closer look at the changing role of the IT service desk and how VDAs can revolutionize service desk management to deliver personalized and contextualized services that are highly cost-effective and scalable.

## Commoditization of the IT service desk: The challenges

Gone are the days when the role of the service desk was to fix issues and fulfill requests. Service desks in the digital age serve as the shop window for IT – end users come, browse, and depending on the experience they receive, decide whether or not to access support in future. But are IT service desks prepared to make the leap from a reactive function to a strategic business enabler to meet the growing digital demands of both business and users? With business processes increasingly moving to the Cloud, it's time enterprises invest in a Cloud-based IT service desk model to convert the service desk from a cost function to one that drives competitive advantage (see Figure 1).

### Current IT service desks

#### The pitfalls and challenges



# Next-gen service desk in the cloud

## The advantages

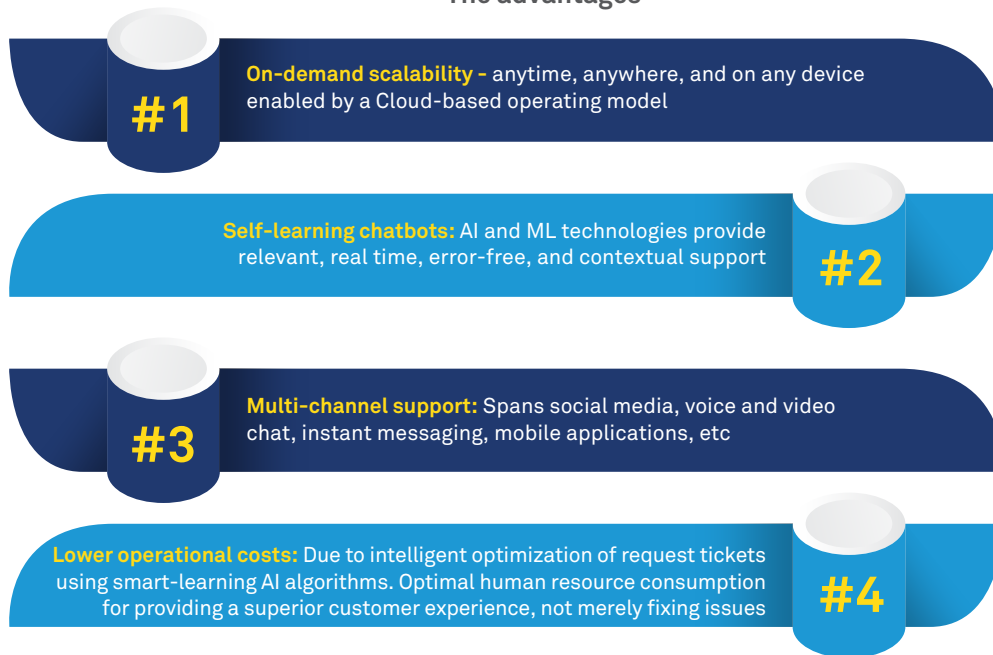


Figure 1: A comparative analysis of current vs next-gen service desks

Here are the three key challenges plaguing IT service desks today:

**#1 High cost of operations:** 67% of service desks spend the majority of their time fire-fighting or simply keeping the lights on, which steals time away from looking at new service improvement initiatives<sup>3</sup>. Given that 'always-on' availability is non-negotiable today, modern enterprises are under tremendous pressure to reduce service desk costs as well as headcount.

**#2 Fluid customer expectations:** Today's customers want support – anytime, anywhere, and across channels and devices. IT support is no longer simply a service for end users – it's an experience - and they want it to be at par with what they get in highly consumer-centric industries such as retail and e-commerce. Modern customers place a premium on their time. 66% of US online adults say valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide them with good online customer experience<sup>4</sup>.

**#3 Long resolution time and quality issues:** Straddled with legacy technologies, unbalanced workloads and insufficient agent training, IT service desk staff find it challenging to resolve

issues at the pace of business and provide the level of quality users demand. Only 79% of service desks measure the 'average speed to answer' metric, which stands at 34 seconds<sup>5</sup>.

## Hello, Alexa for Business: The next-gen service desk is here

As the world becomes increasingly mobile, IT services and support function must reinvent itself to keep up. This is where VDAs a la Amazon's Alexa for Business come in. According to Gartner, by 2020, 25% of customer service and support operations will integrate virtual customer assistant technology across engagement channels<sup>6</sup>. Powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, Alexa for Business enables a contextually-powered support experience to improve efficiency, engagement, and relevancy. Here are four use cases for Alexa for Business in the IT support domain:

**#1 Maximize people resources:** Besides taking over routine IT support tasks such as scheduling and monitoring, Alexa for Business can optimize resource planning to avoid bottlenecks and congestion. How? By leveraging its AI algorithm, it predicts support traffic and workload patterns,

and matches them with available resources. Alexa can also source relevant and contextual knowledge from documents and help service agents do their job faster and more accurately.

**#2 Improve IT support services and decision-making:** Leveraging its predictive analytics capabilities, Alexa can predict common as well as high impact support issues, future service trends, demand for new IT support services, impact on existing services, and the number of support personnel required.

**#3 Enhance IT self-service:** Self-service now constitutes 21% of methods customers use to contact the service desk<sup>7</sup>. Alexa's voice interface can significantly reduce the number of email and call tickets as users find voice support more convenient. Alexa can also be trained to close email requests and tickets on a CRM system without much human involvement. In IT self-service portals, Alexa's intelligent search capabilities can be leveraged to deliver more accurate search results by combining search history, user intent, and context.

**#4 Enable a superior customer experience:** Customer experience is becoming the #1 indicator of service desk success<sup>8</sup> as service level agreements (SLAs) are giving way to experience level agreements (XLAs). Alexa for Business is equipped to measure user

satisfaction with IT support services and the factors that improve/hinder it. It can also match the results with other parameters such as resolution time, customer demographics and more, to generate in-depth data insights on consumer expectations.

## Is the IT service desk ready for the Alexa revolution?

There's no denying that enterprises are more global today than ever before, and the 'future of work' as we often refer to it, is already a reality for many companies. Leveraging its vast language processing capabilities, Alexa for Business can elevate support services to transcend language and geographical barriers by delivering real-time service to all end users, regardless of their location. The best part is- VDA scan constantly train themselves using a dynamic knowledge base to become smarter, helping IT deliver a consistently superior user experience while remaining compliant with changing industry regulations.

It's clear that the combined power of voice technologies and IoT-enabled smart devices is poised to breathe new life into the IT service world. The question is: how ready are organizations to take advantage of this trend?

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