

# A View from the Frontline.

---



In partnership with  
 freshservice

The author of this report is SDI's Industry Analyst Scarlett Bayes. Scarlett is dedicated to providing insightful and practical research to the service desk industry through investigating trends, analysing data and engaging with the IT service community. You can find more of Scarlett's work on the SDI blog and can follow her on Twitter @SDIScarlett

# Contents

[ITSM Tool Deployment](#)

[ITSM Tool Frustrations](#)

[Vendor Frustrations](#)

[Influences for ITSM Tool Selection](#)

[Key Innovations and Improvements](#)

[Pain Areas](#)

[Industry Analysts and Commentators](#)

[The Last 12 Months](#)

[The Next 12 Months](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[SDI Predicts](#)

[About SDI](#)

[About Freshservice](#)

# Introduction

This is the third instalment of A View From The Frontline. Our first two reports were set against an economic background, and the effect that this had on the service desk industry. The 2015 report found that a better economic climate led to a more positive outlook of service desk professionals. This year, while the economy is stable and still a significant factor, there are other influences on the ITSM industry, For example, technological advances.

The 2015 report found service desks wanted to focus their attention on customer experience and improving their service. As technologies develop and are introduced to the service desk industry, this places a question mark over how these technologies can be implemented to improve their service to benefit the customer. Recently, Artificial Intelligence has



been combined with ITSM, which has changed the industry's future. Furthermore, several trends, such as self-service, automation, and Enterprise Service Management, have become more prevalent in the service desk industry since 2015. These advancements will significantly impact the role of service desk professionals, and therefore it is important to utilise their experience and views from the frontline. As a result, with some minor changes, the questions asked in the 2015 research are still relevant in 2017.

The results of this survey, which was sent out to ITSM professionals during March and April 2017, provide a valuable insight into the frustrations and challenges service desk professionals experience on a daily basis, with a particular emphasis on ITSM tools and vendor relations. As well as this, we will look at the developments that service desk professionals would like to see in the future.

# Main Findings



## ITSM Tool Deployment

- 50% of respondents' tools are provided on premise, and 50% are provided by SaaS, hybrid, or other.

## Frustrations

- Usability has become the most significant ITSM tool frustration for 25% of respondents.
- Respondents have identified ITSM tool frustrations which have lent themselves to four new categories needing to be added since 2015.
- Respondents have seemingly less vendor-based frustrations compared to 2015, with 8% of respondents identifying that they had no problems with their ITSM tool vendor.
- Cost has become a significant frustration with vendors, with 13% of respondents highlighting this.

## ITSM Tool Selection

- Self-service has become a more significant factor in ITSM tool selection for 65% of respondents since 2015.
- Enterprise Service Management capability, a new option, was highlighted as a significant factor of ITSM tool selection for 24% of respondents.

## Key Innovations and Improvements

- Automation has become a key innovation that 6% of respondents would like to see in their ITSM tools the next 12 months.
- Features has remained as the most popular innovation respondents want to see, but the percentage of respondents identifying this has fallen significantly.
- No respondents highlighted the need for a social media component of their ITSM tool.

## Pain Areas

- 60% of respondents have identified that a lack of budget and resources, limiting the ability to meet business expectations, is the most significant pain area regarding their ITSM tool. This figure has almost doubled since 2015.
- Low self-service adoption rates are still a problem for almost half of respondents.
- 46% of respondents struggle with a lack of recognition or profile within the business.

## Industry Analysts and Commentators

- Over 50% of service desk professionals now think that industry analysts and commentators truly understand the service desk industry.

## The Last 12 Months

- The proportion of respondents who have identified that they have spent the most time over the past 12 months fire-fighting has reduced, but this still remains as the highest usage of time.
- 24% of respondents have identified that their service desk has focused on implementing ITSM based processes and tools in non-IT business units, otherwise known as Enterprise Service Management.

## The Next 12 Months

- A higher percentage of respondents want to focus on using more automation on their service desk, succeeding with self-service and/or service catalogue, and more use of chat and remote control.
- More respondents have focused on specific priorities, such as increasing first time fix rates and reducing inbound calls/emails, rather than broad statements, like improving service desk performance and reacting to business change.
- 73% of respondents expect to see a greater focus on the end user support experience over the next 12 months.
- 44% of respondents expect that their service desk will focus on Enterprise Service Management (greater use of ITSM tool and processes in no-IT business units).

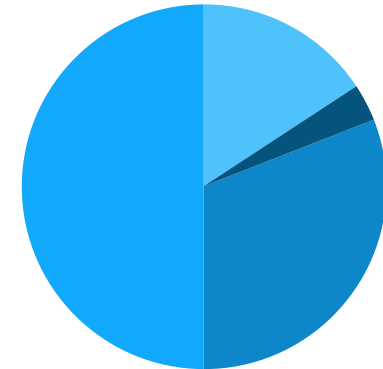
# ITSM Tool Deployment

## How is your ITSM solution provided?

It is important to ask how an ITSM solution is provided, as the answer will usually lead to predictable frustrations with the ITSM tool. It also gives some insight into the diverse needs of the service desk industry. Cloud-based ITSM tools have become more pertinent in 2017 compared to previous years, thus generating a need for this question.

Half of the respondents have an on-premise ITSM solution. There are benefits and challenges to this; for example, there are less of a security risks and the tool is more customisable, but there also needs to be on-site IT staff who have the skill this solution also requires on-site system administration and support staff, who have the skills to maintain and upgrade the tool, thus increasing overheads.

Just over 30% of respondents' tools are provided through the cloud services (SaaS). The benefits and challenges of a cloud-based tool are essentially the opposite of on-premise solutions. Clearly there are benefits to both, and it is possible to cherry-pick the right solution for you, as evidenced by the 16% of respondents who have opted for a hybrid solution.



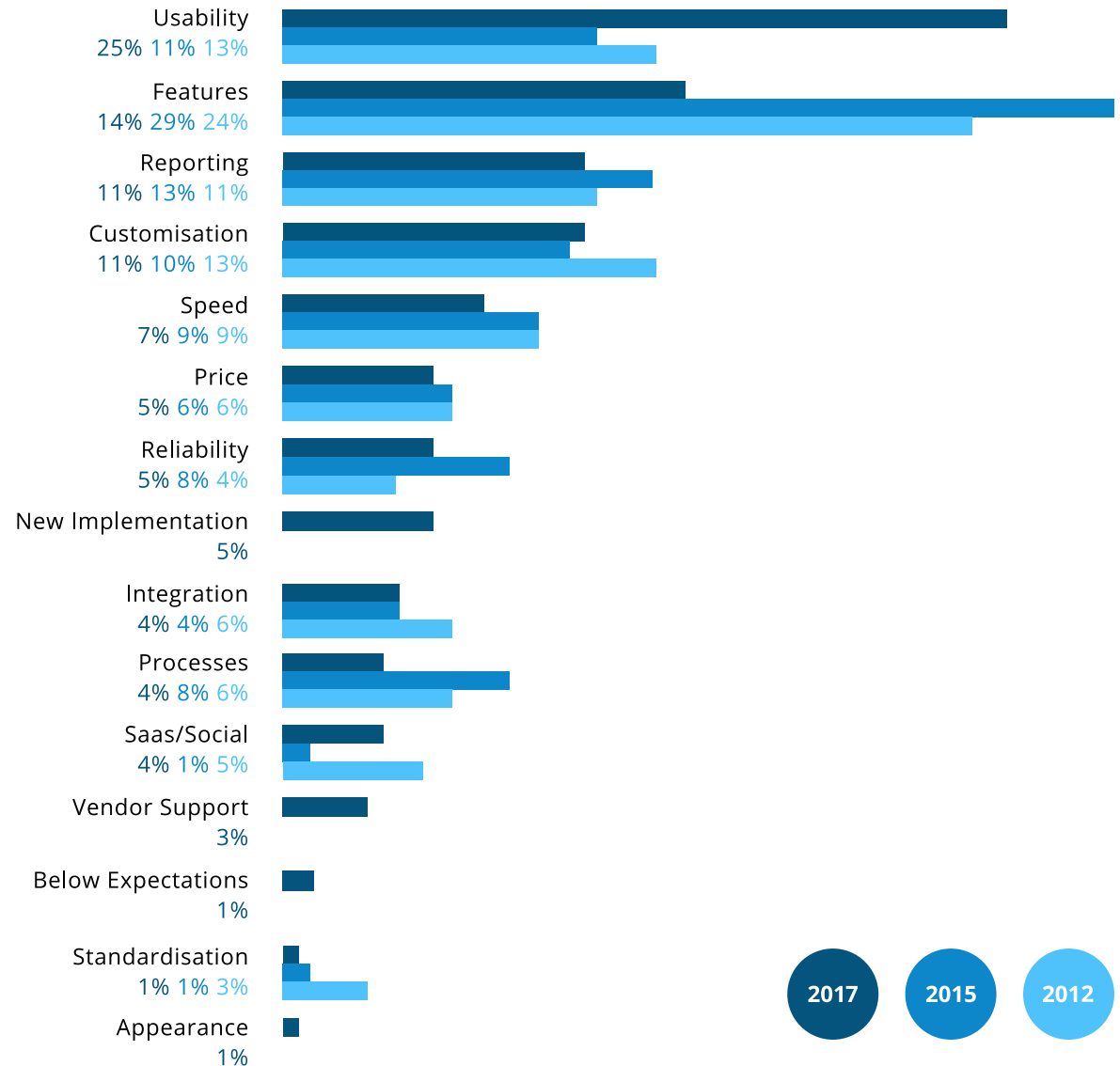
- On Premise: 50%
- SaaS: 31%
- Hybrid: 16%
- Other: 3%

# ITSM Tool Frustrations

## What Are Your Top Five Frustrations With Your Current ITSM Tool?

Respondents were asked to list five frustrations with their current ITSM tool. These were then placed into eleven categories to allow comparison with the 2015 and 2012 research.

Some of the qualitative responses have been listed below under each category overleaf.



# ITSM Tool Frustrations



## Usability

- Layout
- Outdated Interface
- Interface is not user-friendly
- Mobility
- Poor search function
- Navigation

## Features

- No dashboards
- No self-service
- Cloud limitations
- Limited “out of the box” abilities
- No archiving

## Reporting

- Lack of built-in reporting
- Restricted categorisation
- Insufficient reporting abilities
- Ad Hoc Reporting

## Customisation

- Unable to customise
- Hard to customise
- Lack of development resource
- Limited configurable items
- Need for Business Specific Requirements

## Speed

- Slow performance
- Doesn't improve fast enough
- Slow to process tickets
- Time and effort to implement modules

## Price

- Developer skills expensive
- Expensive
- Development expensive
- Features require expensive customisation

## Reliability

- Freezing
- Customer portal site non-responsive
- Performance issues
- In need of upgrading

## New Implementation

- Getting everyone up to speed
- Lack of take up from other teams
- Assigning process owners
- No uptake
- Assigning content owners

## Appearance

- Dull-looking
- Outdated GUI

## Integration

- Few integration options
- Asset management integration
- Integration with 3rd party MI/BI
- Knowledge integration

## Processes

- Processes not fit for purpose
- Lack of connection between processes
- Work flow design
- Not slick enough

## SaaS/Social

- Lack of phone integration
- Encryption and data security concerns
- Client version is resource hungry

## Vendor Support

- Vendor job follow up
- Poor leadership
- Support does not align with services
- Poor support

## Below Expectations

- Promises of the tool and ROI are yet to be seen
- Too many people think that the tool is the answer

## Standardisation

- Difficulty in administration

# ITSM Tool Frustrations

An ITSM tool can make or break a service desk. As this industry relies more and more on technology to improve their service, tools become more integral to the running of a service desk. As such, negative aspects of a tool are easily identifiable and can quickly become a frustration to the professionals that use it.

The two major differences since the 2015 report can be seen in usability-based and feature-based frustrations. In both the 2012 and 2015 reports, service desk professionals' biggest frustration was feature-based. Surveying at 24% in 2012, and increasing to 29% in 2015, you might expect features to take an even higher proportion in the 2017 survey. While feature-based frustrations remain high on the list, the features of an ITSM tool have become less frustrating in 2017, dropping to 14%. This can be accredited to significant vendor advances providing more add-on features for their ITSM tools.

Usability has more than doubled in prominence since 2015, increasing to 25%. In the 2015 report, it was noted that complicated or cumbersome user interfaces were the main usability-based frustrations. In 2017, this is true still, as evidenced in the results of this year's survey. However, it is possible that the usability of

ITSM tools has been effected by poorly implemented features. This can be inferred from the responses to the survey; for example, a handful of respondents found frustration in their tools' search functions, while another was frustrated by the User Portal function. The need to implement new features quickly can lead to a tool feeling disjointed, thus affecting how easy that tool is to use. It is important to know that any new feature will run seamlessly with your tool, and not impede on its usability, as this will cause more frustration than it resolves.

Reporting and customisations are still among the top contributors of ITSM tool frustrations, though reporting has slightly dropped in prominence since 2015. Corresponding with the previous report, limitations in reporting capability are still a common frustration. Similarly, the customisation-based frustrations in 2017 are almost identical to those in 2015. The lack of development or addressing of customisation is interesting to note, as a tool needs to fit a business' needs. Therefore, a tool which cannot be customised to best fit its purpose will impact the efficacy of the tool, and have a negative effect on the organisation itself. Interestingly, four new categories have presented themselves since our 2015 report. Some respondents'



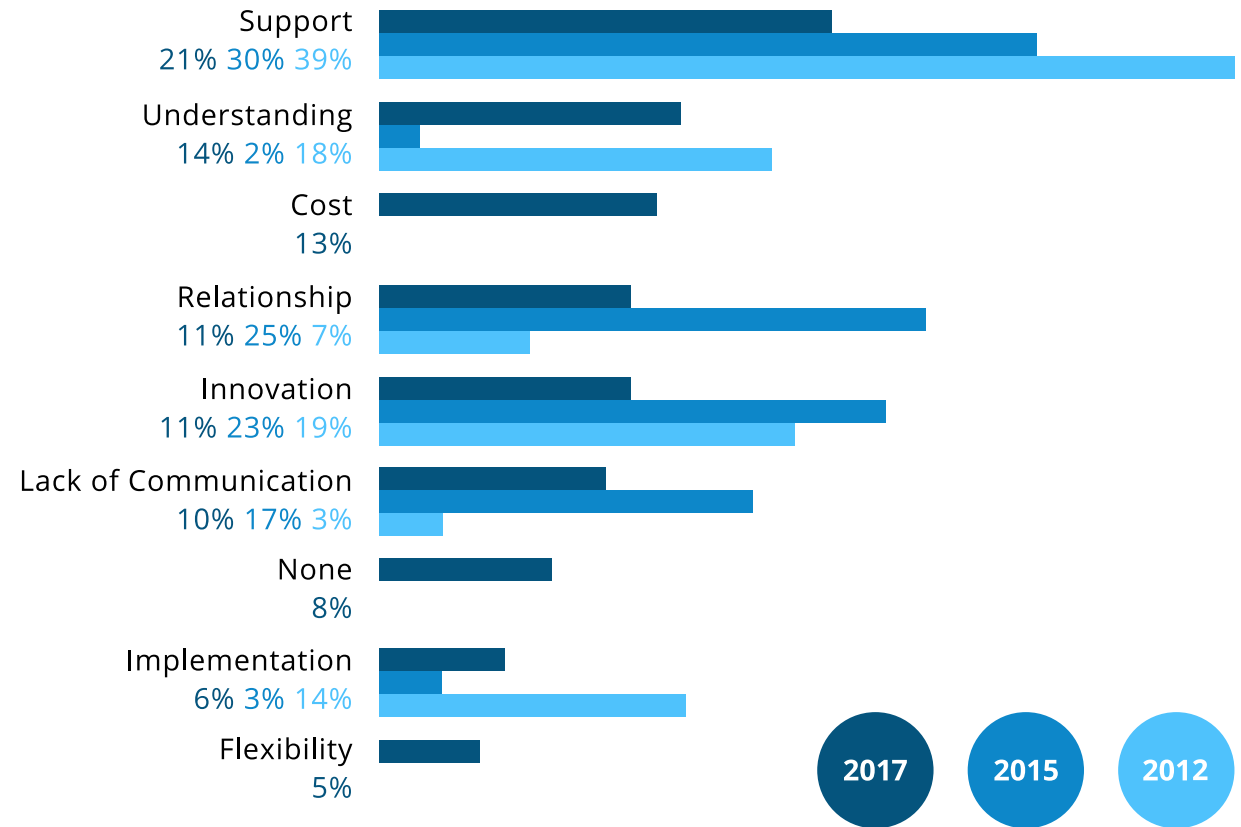
ITSM tools have reported that their ITSM tool is a new implementation, so there are some teething troubles as their tools are implemented, for example, with employee adoption. Vendor support also cropped up as a frustration for some respondents. Support from vendors is essential to the running of a tool, and this new category can be explained by two possibilities; either vendors are offering little to no support after purchase, or; service desk professionals are setting their expectations too high with regards to what support they expect from the vendor. The survey also found that some respondents believe their tool does not meet their expectations and there has been no ROI. It is possible that these responses are linked to the new implementations we have seen in the results of this survey. However, in the SDI 2015 Benchmarking Report, 34% of respondents revealed that they had not achieved the ROI for their ITSM tool. Therefore, it is likely that these respondents tools are not fully fitted to their organisations' needs, thus they have not seen any ROI.

[1 The Service Desk Institute, "The Service Desk Benchmarking Report 2015", published by SDI in 2015.](#)

# Vendor Frustrations

## What are your top 5 frustrations with your current service desk or ITSM tool vendor?

Respondents were asked to list five frustrations with their current ITSM tool vendor. These were then placed into six categories to allow comparison with the 2015 and 2012 research. Some of the qualitative responses have been listed below under each category heading.





# Vendor Frustrations



## Support

- Lack of accountability when things go wrong
- Lack of in-country support
- It takes too long to get things corrected
- Long waiting periods
- No pending job follow-up
- Poor level of support

## Understanding

- Lack of business process expertise
- Lack of product knowledge
- Poor alignment to our industry
- Unable to capture business needs
- Complicated licensing model
- No understanding of Service Desks

## Cost

- Costly enhancements
- Expensive
- Costly integration
- Costly professional services

## Relationship

- Lack of engagement
- Sales focused
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of customer service
- Contract based relationship
- Innovation
- Not simple to make changes
- Lack of vision
- Unclear roadmap
- Complex to upgrade
- No development

## Lack of Communication

- Inconsistent in advice
- Long hold times
- Unresponsive
- Support hours
- Length of time to respond

## Implementation

- Unstable
- Attempting to maintain two products
- Long loading times

## Flexibility

- Lack of flexibility
- Poor mobility options

## Other

- We are the vendor

# Vendor Frustrations

There are several aspects of the partnership between service desk professionals and ITSM tool vendors; some centred around the tool itself, and others stem from customer service. Often, problems with one aspect or another can lead to frustrations within a service desk professional's relationship with their vendor.

Support should be a major component of the relationship between the service desk and the vendor. As such, it is surprising to see that support has surveyed as the highest frustration for the third time. However, looking at the data, the overall response has shown a decrease of around 20% since 2012. Therefore, although support-based frustrations have surveyed, yet again, as the highest source of vendor frustration, there has been an overall decline across these reports.

Understanding comes in at second place for vendor frustrations, but it has increased significantly since the 2015 report. In 2015, understanding-based vendor frustrations dropped dramatically to 2%. However, this year understanding-based frustrations have increased almost back to where they were in 2012. One aspect of this that stands out in the responses is that it seems business/industry knowledge or alignment is now almost a necessity for vendors, as service desks may

need specific specialist features of solutions which a generic ITSM vendor may not be able to offer. If service desks require specialist tools, then vendors may need to specialise their service in order to best fit their customers.

Cost has become a major source of vendor frustration for service desk professionals. 13% of service desk professionals find that their vendors are charging too much for their services, be it upfront, to customise, or to upgrade. It is possible that respondents who feel that their tool is too expensive do not feel like they are getting their money's worth from the vendor themselves. There was a trend in the survey data that some respondents who specified cost as a frustration also identified lack of vendor support. Therefore, perhaps service desk professionals who feel like their vendor provides them with adequate support, among other things, will bear the costs of their tool.

One common frustration among the respondents was the flexibility, or lack thereof, of their vendors. This has not been noted in previous reports. The service desk industry covers a broad spectrum of industries; therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect vendors to be flexible in their service in order to satisfy the



needs of the service desk. With the increased focus on Enterprise Service Management, which becomes apparent later in this report, it is also more important for vendors to be flexible in the services they provide, as one tool needs to be able to serve an entire organisation as opposed to one service desk.

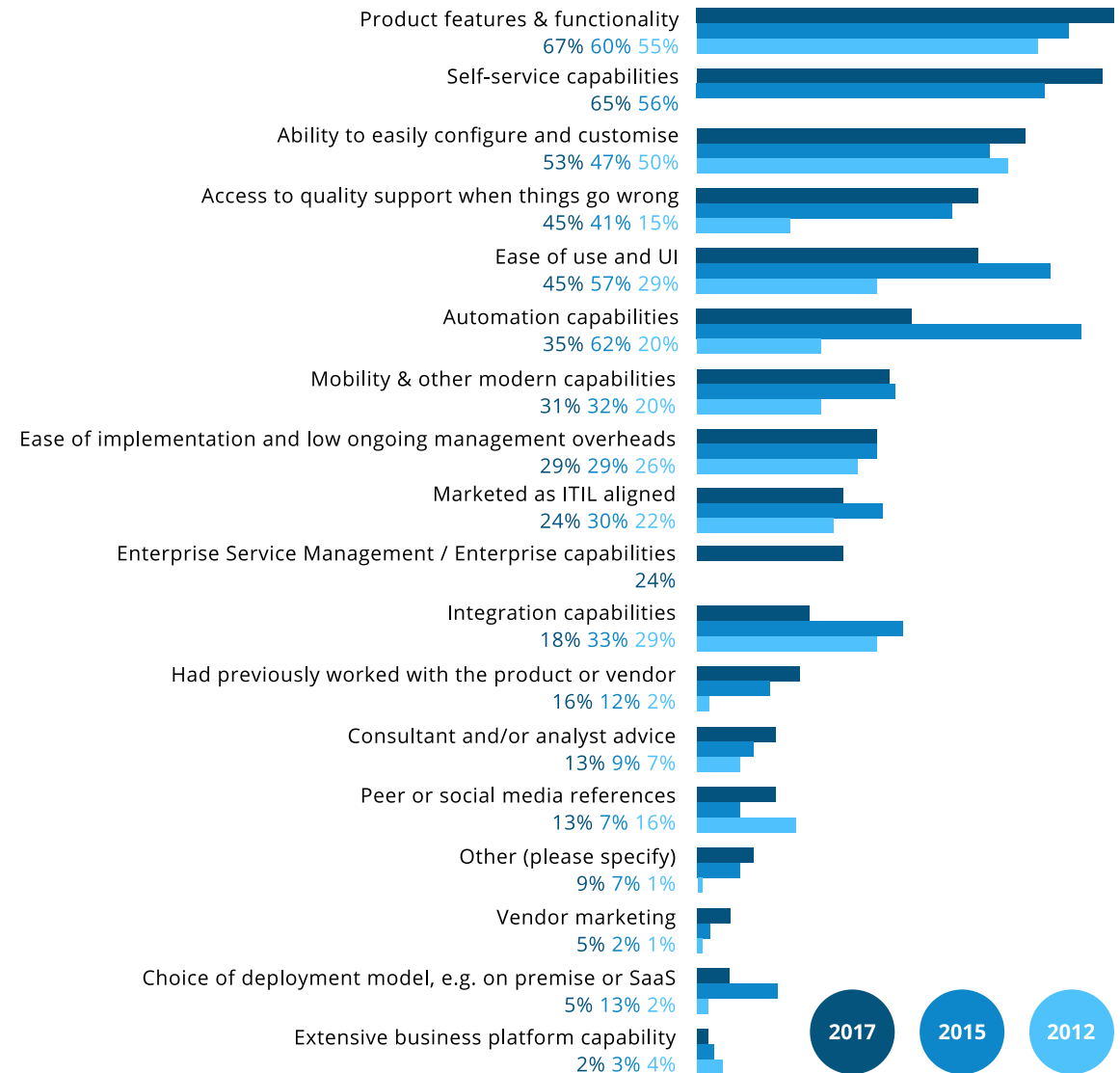
Vendor frustrations stemming from relationship, innovation, and lack of communication have all decreased since 2015. This could be because the number of frustrations is greater, therefore there is a spread of frustrations rather than a reduction. On the other hand, 8% of the respondents stated that they had no frustrations with their vendor, which has not been noted in previous reports. This suggests that vendors, for some part, are now catering to service desks' needs better than in previous years.

# Influences for ITSM Tool Selection



## What would influence your selection of a new ITSM tool?

Increasing by 7% since 2015, 67% of respondents said that product features and functionality is their main influence for choosing a new tool. ITSM tools have the ability to be incredibly diverse with add-on features, and service desks respond to this, as generic tools may not best fit their clients' needs. This can also be seen in the 53% of service desk professionals who placed ability to easily configure and customise their tool as an important factor. Furthermore, features which are relatively new in the service desk industry, such as automation and self-service, can be the specific reason that a service desk chooses a tool.



# Influences for ITSM Tool Selection

This survey demonstrates a drop in the demand for automation capabilities, and a rise in the demand for self-service since 2015. The decrease in automation could simply be because automation capabilities are not yet quite sophisticated enough for vendors to offer it, or because service desk professionals have higher priorities when selecting an ITSM tool. Nonetheless, both features are time savers for service desk staff by taking repetitive tasks out of their hands, whilst still improving customer service. As self-service becomes more sophisticated and is able to fulfil user needs better, it will become an essential feature for an ITSM tool to have.

Self-service capabilities - up 9%

Integration capabilities - down 5%

Ability to easily configure - up 6%

Ease of use and UI - down 12%

It's not unreasonable for a service desk to expect support from a vendor after purchasing software, as a service desk may not be able to provide a full service if there is an issue with the tool. However, as seen earlier in this report, service desk professionals' highest vendor frustration was lack of support, which corresponds with the response to this question, which depicts 45% of respondents as considering access to quality support when selecting a tool. This correlation was noted in the 2015 report, and unfortunately the statement still stands that service desks' expectation of support is not fully met by vendors.

45% of respondents have identified that ease of use and the user interface of their tool is the highest influence in their selection process.



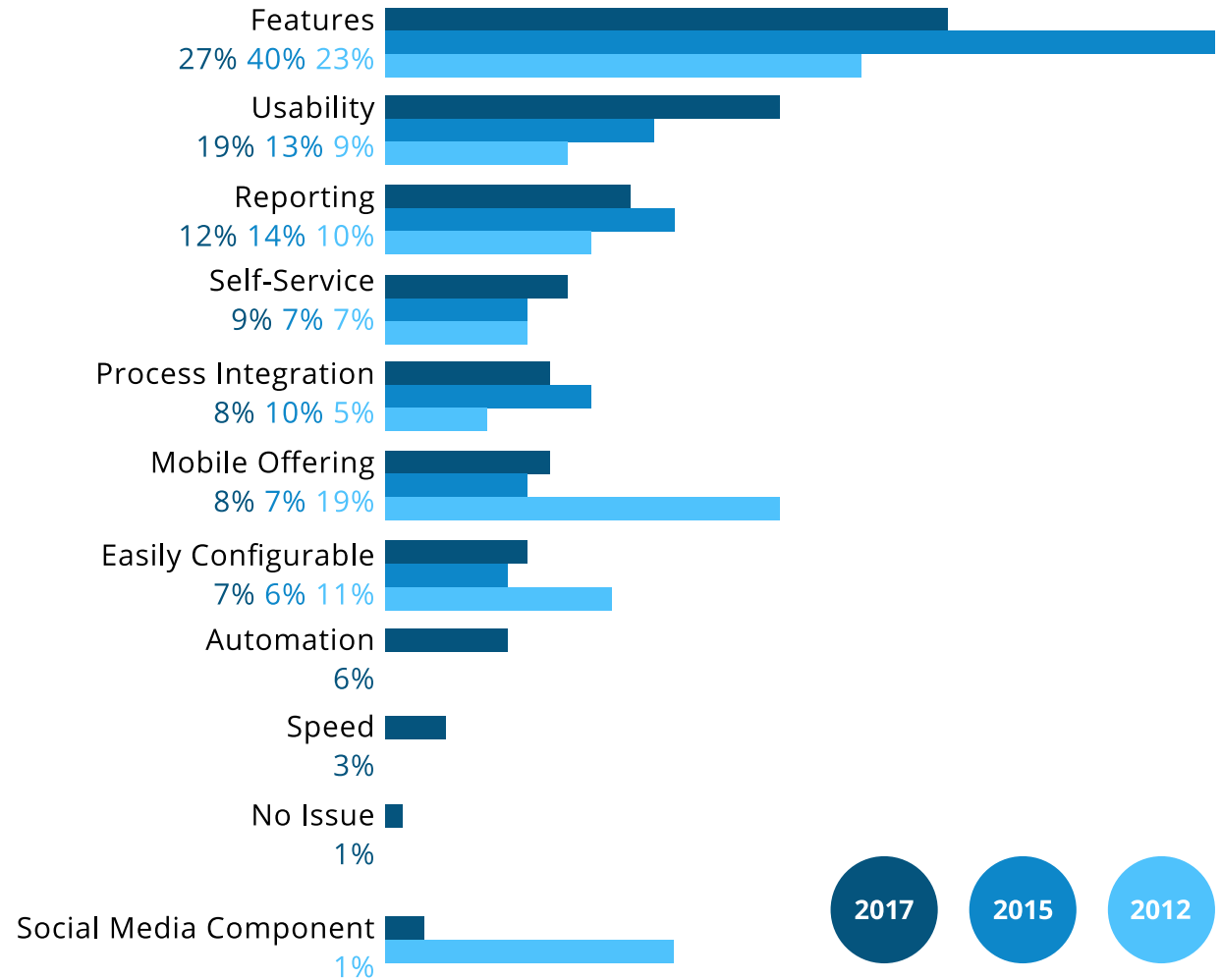
This is corroborated by the fact that respondents' uppermost tool frustration was usability, as revealed earlier in this report. It is important for service desk staff to be able to easily use a tool for a service desk to run efficiently.

In this survey, we offered the option of Enterprise Service Management/Enterprise capabilities, which 24% of respondents identified as the main influence in selecting an ITSM tool. For an ITSM tool, ESM allows the tool to be used by other units across a business. The benefits of this include improved efficiency, reduced operational costs, and better ROI on the tool itself. ESM is becoming more prevalent in the service management industry, and it is feasible to anticipate that it will become a more influential factor in selecting an ITSM tool over the next few years.

# Key Innovations and Improvements

## List 3 key innovations/improvements that you would like to see in your ITSM tool in the next 12 months

Respondents were asked to list three innovations that they would like to see in a future ITSM tool. These were then placed into nine categories to allow comparison with the 2015 and 2012 research. Some of the qualitative responses have been listed below.



# Key Innovations and Improvements



Features have remained at the top of the list for innovations and improvements for the third time running. Throughout this report, and indeed through the 2015 report, we have seen that features are a major element surrounding ITSM tools. This demonstrates the demand for increasingly feature-rich ITSM solutions, especially as newer technologies, such as automation and AI, become more commonplace in the IT service industry. Some feature-based improvements and innovations include:

- [Voice call analysis](#)
- [Built-in remote user support function](#)
- [Additional Categorisation](#)
- [Auto routing of tickets based on keywords or subject](#)
- [Manage personal user interface](#)
- [Interactive forms](#)
- [Knowledge base](#)

Although feature-based innovations and improvements have taken the top spot, usability is not far behind, comprising 19% of respondents. Usability also surveyed as the highest category for ITSM tool frustration, so it could be surmised that usability has become a more prominent aspect of ITSM tools since 2015.

Three new categories presented themselves from the survey responses. One respondent stated that there were simply no issues with their ITSM tool, which has not been noted in previous reports. Automation was listed often enough to warrant its own category. While it is technically a feature, automation capabilities are becoming more sophisticated and offer a lot of benefits for service desk professionals, so it is clear why service desk professionals would specify automation as a desired innovation to their ITSM tool.

As time goes on, people want results faster and faster as technology becomes more instant. Therefore, understandably, the speed of a tool or its features also came up several times. A tool which runs slowly or has too many processes can have a negative impact on the service desk, ultimately affecting customer experience.

Despite the new additions, the mid-range category percentages have remained roughly the same since 2015. This could signify one of two things; that since 2015, there has not been much innovation or improvement to ITSM tools, or that service desk professionals simply want to continually improve their tools and enhance their service further.

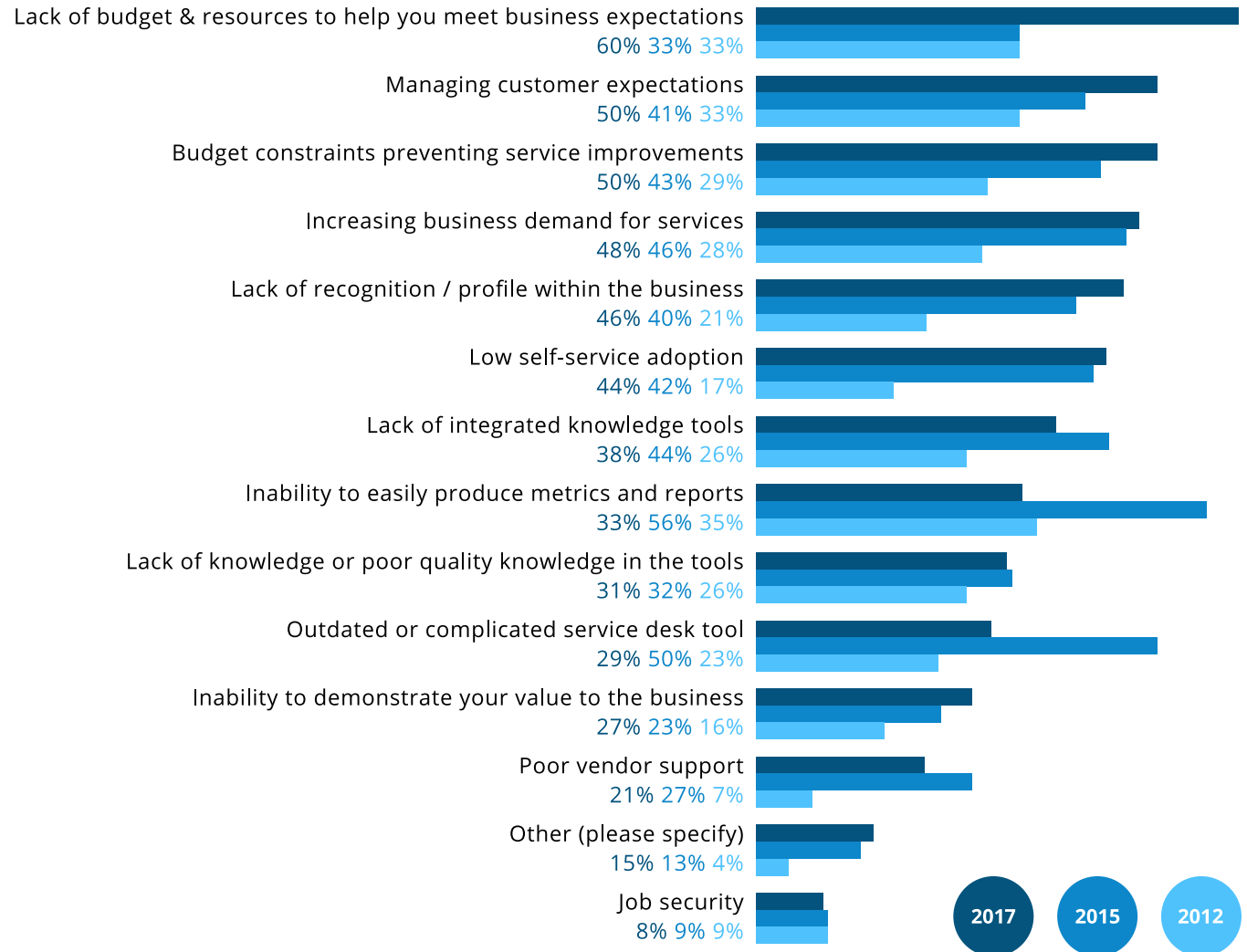
In the last report, we saw the demand for a social media component fall from 14% in 2012, to 2% in 2015. This year, no respondents expressed the need for a social media component for their tool. Social media has become a massive part of our society, and many organisations have engaged with it. It is more likely than not that service desk professionals have at least attempted to implement a social media component into their tool, thus the demand for this has practically disappeared.

# Pain Areas



## In your daily service desk life, what causes you the most pain?

Most notably, respondent's most significant source of pain stems from lack of budget and resources, which has almost doubled since 2015. Similarly, budget constraints preventing service improvements have increased as a pain area by nearly 10% since 2015. Budget and resources are an incredibly significant factor in ITSM, as restrictions heavily limit the innovation of a tool. We have seen that service desk professionals want to see improvements to the features of their tool. Therefore, the link could be made that the lack of budget and resource is restricting the innovation of the features of ITSM tools, which in turn prevents service desk professionals from meeting business expectations.



# Pain Areas



Conversely, the inability to produce metrics and reports has dropped to 33% in respondents' highlighted pain areas. This research has revealed that reporting is still an important issue associated with ITSM tools, but now there are more important factors that respondents are considering. This would explain why lack of budget and resources has become a more prominent pain area. Alternatively, this could signify that vendors are responding to customer needs, thus causing it to be less of a pain area.

Respondents have identified slight increases in managing customer expectations and increasing business demand for services as pain areas. There is probably a link between these two; of course, the greater your business demand is, the harder it is to keep your customers happy. An ITSM tool with self-service capabilities, which 65% of respondents have identified as a significant factor in ITSM tool

selection, can allow service desk professionals to balance increased business demand and managing customer expectations.

Nevertheless, while an ITSM tool can help resolve this, there are several factors that can impede a tool's efficacy. We have seen the different frustrations linked to ITSM tools, and this section shows that budgeting can restrict service improvement, which could include tool innovation. Interestingly, in 2012, during a recession, budget constraints were only considered a major cause of pain for 29% of respondents. This figure has increased to 50% in 2017 despite the improved state of the economy. It is possible that this is because tools are expected to have better features, and as we have seen, some respondents believe vendors' products are too costly. As such, some respondents believe that a smaller budget stunts innovation. 44% of respondents have identified low self-service

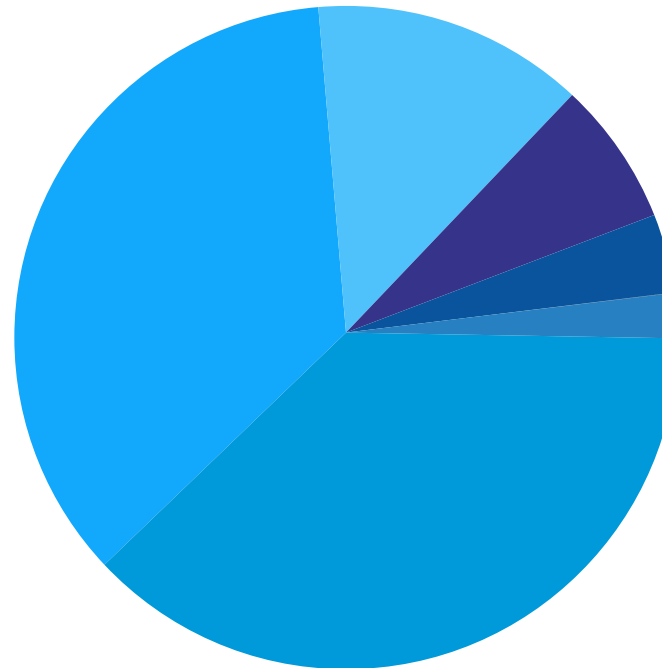
adoption as a cause of pain. Self-service has many benefits for service desks, such as reduced support costs, increased customer satisfaction, and round-the-clock support. This figure has actually increased since 2015, so adoption rates are still a problem two years later. There are a few possibilities to explain this; firstly, some customers may simply refuse to use self-service and prefer to call in; secondly, users may be unaware of a self-service option; and lastly, the self-service tool may be overly complicated, or not fully able to solve users' problems, therefore it is easier to call in. Two of these obstacles can be overcome, and so increasing user adoption rates may be more obtainable than previously thought.

Low self service adoption is a problem for 44% of respondents, but less respondents are struggling with an outdated or complicated ITSM tool.



# Industry Analysts and Commentators

Do you think industry analysts and commentators truly understand the service desk industry?



- Maybe - It depends who they are, 36%
- Yes - I find them somewhat helpful, 38%
- No - But they are harmless, 2%
- Indifferent to analyst and commentator opinion OR I don't see or hear any opinions, 4%
- No - I think they do more harm than good, 7%
- Yes - I find them really helpful, 13%

Service desk professionals are divided over the role of industry analysts and commentators in the ITSM industry. Therefore, it is important to investigate how analysts and commentators are perceived by these professionals.

# Industry Analysts and Commentators

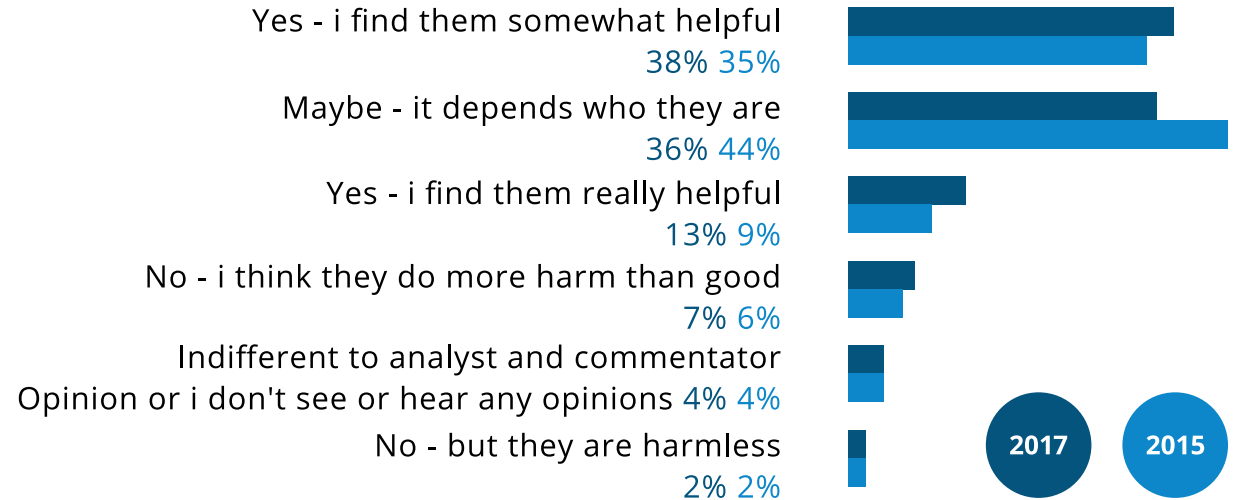


Over 50% of service desk professionals now think that industry analysts and commentators truly understand the service desk industry, with 13% finding them really helpful. The largest proportion, comprising 38%, finds them somewhat helpful.

Less than 40% now argue that industry analysts and commentators have varying levels of understanding about the service desk industry, depending on the individuals. 7% of respondents think that they do more harm than good, 4% are indifferent, and 2% think they are harmless.

Compared to 2015, the overall percentage of respondents who find industry analysts helpful has increased. The proportion of who are indifferent, or do not think analysts and commentators understand the service desk industry, have stayed roughly the same.

Therefore, it can be assumed that service desk professionals who had previously believed that understanding depended on the individual now find analysts and commentators at least somewhat helpful.



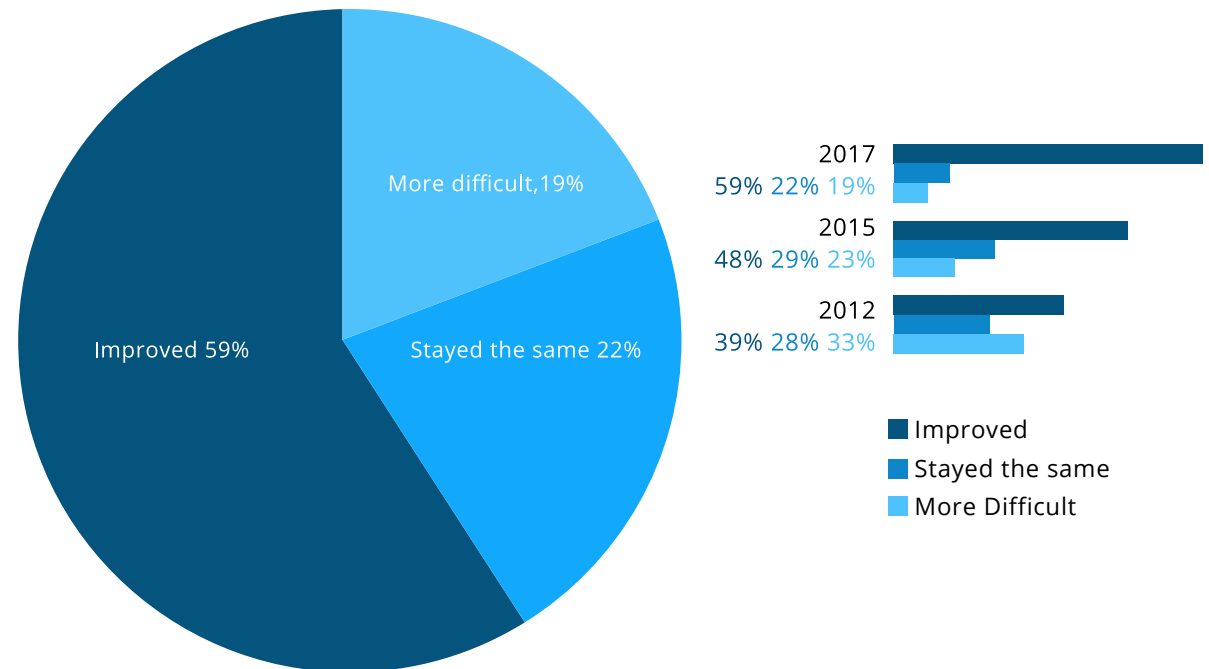
# The Last 12 Months

During the past year, has life on your service desk...

In comparison with the 2015 report, service desk professionals have found that their life on the service desk has been more positive, with around 60% now claiming that their past year on the service desk had improved. In 2015, under 50% had stated that their year had improved, and in 2012 this figure was even lower (39%).

The percentage of respondents who felt that their service desk life had become more difficult, on the other hand, has dropped from 23% in 2015 to 19% in 2017. The number of service desk professionals who felt that their year on the service desk has stayed the same has also fallen to 22%. In 2015 and 2012, this percentage had stayed roughly the same at nearly 30%.

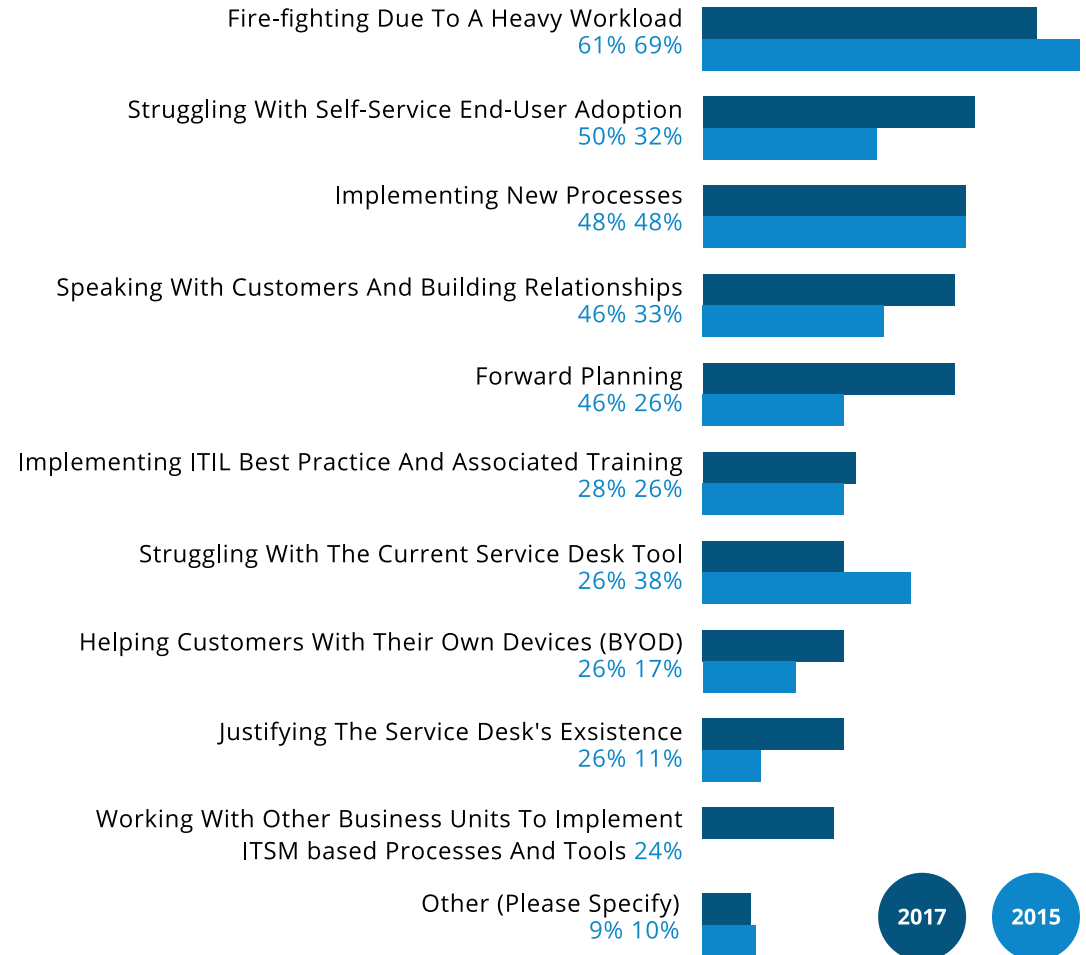
Whereas in previous data, we can see that the proportions have been fairly close together, in 2017, the disparity between number of service desk professionals who have felt their year has improved, versus those who do not, has greatly increased. This suggests that there is a positive outlook of those on the frontline.



# The Last 12 Months

During the last 12 months, where has your service desk spent most of its time?

In keeping with the two previous reports, fire-fighting has remained as the top amount of time spent for service desk professionals over the past 12 months. This is unsurprising, as we have seen that many service desk professionals struggle with the usability of their tool, while also facing an increase in demand.



# The Last 12 Months

We can see that service desks that are struggling with self-service end-user adoption. The proportion of service desk who have spent most of their time on this has increased since 2015, with this matter moving up the list of time spent. Self-service is becoming more and more commonplace, and while self-service has the ability to significantly reduce service desk professionals' time spent fire-fighting, the industry still struggles with user adoption rates.

Despite the frustrations highlighted earlier in this report, compared to 2015, the number of service desks who have struggled with their current ITSM tool has decreased to 26%. This is a positive indicator for the service desk industry, as an ITSM tool's main purpose is to support service desks and allow professionals to work more efficiently to increase productivity and customer experience.

24% of respondents have spent the most time working with other business units to implement ITSM-based processes and tools, which is a new addition to this question. This process is otherwise known as Enterprise Service Management. ESM offers service desks the opportunity to extend their value across the business by attempting to share best practices from these different business units to boost performance. The benefits of ESM range from improved collaboration between business services to placing ITSM at the centre of an organisation's success. As such, it is easy to understand why service desks are attempting to incorporate ESM into their organisation.

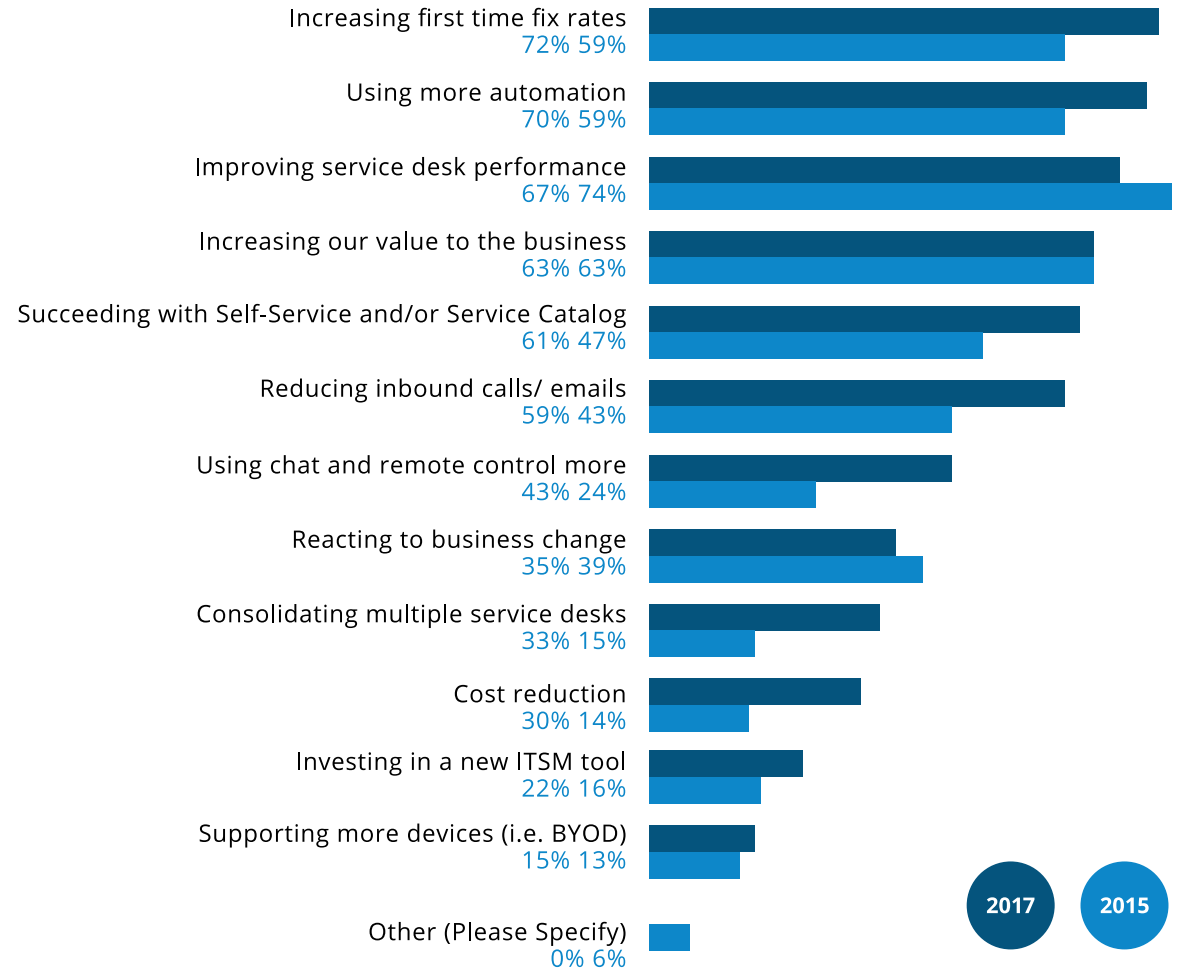


“...the number of service desks who have struggled with their current ITSM tool has decreased to 28%”

# The Next 12 Months

## What are your top service desk priorities for the next 12 months?

72% of respondents have identified that their key priority for the next 12 months should be improving first time fix rates. In previous reports, this matter has come below increasing value to the business in terms of priority. It could be that more service desk professionals have identified ways in which they can add business value, such as improving first time fix rates, and want to focus on specific targets rather than general goals.



2017 2015

# The Next 12 Months

A similar case can be made for improving service desk performance. In 2015, improving service desk performance was a top priority for service desk professionals, whereas this year, respondents (70%) have identified that they want to make automation a higher priority. Automation is a way to achieve improved performance, but perhaps service desk professionals want to focus on automation to fill two needs at once.

Throughout this report, we have seen that cost has become a greater concern for service desk professionals since 2015. Cost reduction has become a priority for 30% of respondents, which, while still low on the list, is over double the percentage it was in 2015. We have previously seen that high tool costs and budget restrictions are a major concern for service desk professionals, therefore this statistic is not surprising.

A higher percentage (61% in 2017 vs 47% in 2015) of respondents want to focus on succeeding with self-service and/or service catalogues. Again, self-service has been a common theme in this report. More and more service desk professionals are understanding the benefits of self-service, and therefore want to implement this in their tool.

**Firefighting - up 13%**

**Using more automation - up 11%**

**Consolidating multiple service desks - up 18%**

**Cost reduction - up 14%**

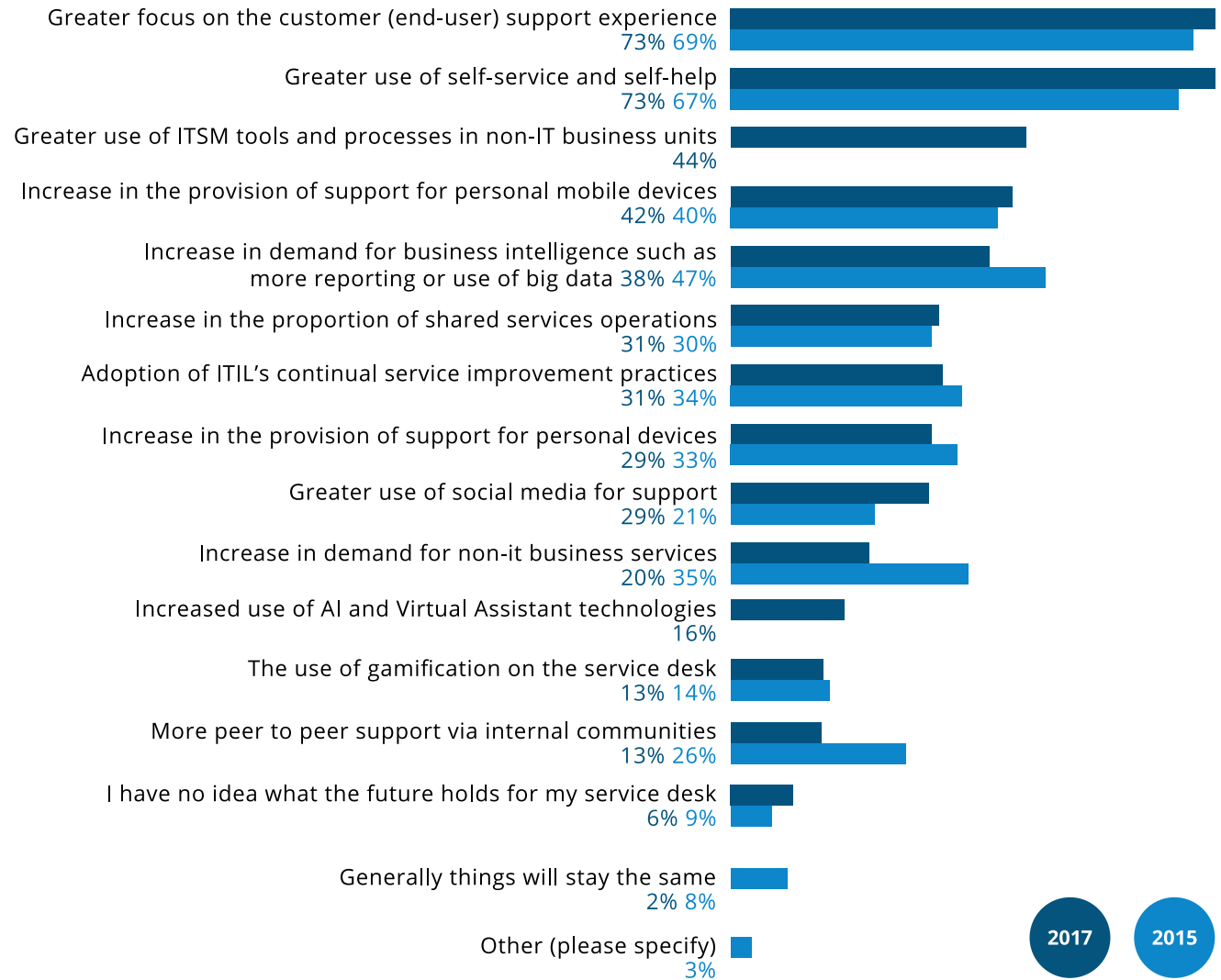


# The Next 12 Months



During the next 12 months, which of the following do you expect to see?

In keeping with the 2015 report, service desk professionals expect to see their desk place a greater focus on the end-user experience. This year, however, respondents have also placed an equal importance on implementing a greater use of self-service and self-help. This is understandable, as if implemented correctly, self-help and self-service can improve end-user experience as well as allow service desks to function more efficiently. It is interesting to note that service desk professionals want to see a greater use of self-service, when they have spent the last 12 months struggling with end-user adoption of self-service.





# The Next 12 Months

16% of respondents expect to see an increase in the use of AI and Virtual Assistant technologies. This option was not offered in 2015, but technology has come a long way since then, and AI has the ability, like self-service, to take the menial tasks out of a service desk professional's hands and improve end-user experience. As such, this was a necessary option to include. It is highly likely that AI will become commonplace in the serviced desk industry in a few years' time.

Automation has remained a significant aspiration for service desk professionals, with 70% previously identifying this as a priority for the next 12 months, and Artificial Intelligence can facilitate automation in a service desk. Today, AI is capable of providing real-time assistance and support to IT professionals, and multiple ITSM solution companies are providing their users with

this feature. AI is also becoming commonplace in the consumer market. As such, these technologies have the potential to develop exponentially in the near future, and will continue to advance the ITSM industry.

Another new category, which was clearly necessary, was greater use of ITSM tools and processes in non-IT business units. 44% of respondent believe that their service desk will focus on this process, which we have previously defined as ESM. 24% of respondents have spent the last 12 months focusing on merging processes and tools across an organisation, and it is interesting to note that a larger proportion is expecting to focus on this in the approaching 12 months.

ESM was pin pointed as something 44% of service desk professionals expect to see, despite being a relatively new topic for ITSM.



# Conclusion

The ITSM industry is incredibly versatile. The term “service desk” is so broad, and it is difficult to comprehend the scope of industries which rely on service desks. ITSM tools need to be able to support all the tasks a service desk may require and services it offers. Vendors need to be able to stand out in a competitive market, while providing the products that service desks require. However, vendors also need to build a good relationship with service desks, and

offer them support beyond the purchase of their product. It seems that there are more service desk professionals who are satisfied with the service their vendor provides, but a large proportion are still unhappy with this relationship.

There has been a considerable shift towards self-service and automation in the ITSM industry. New technologies have made it easier than ever for these features to be integrated into ITSM tools, and service



desk professionals have highlighted the demand for them. With 73% of respondents expecting their service desk to focus on implementing self-service and self-help into their tool, the future of ITSM seems to be headed in that direction. Vendors would be remiss not to offer these services to service desks.

# SDI Predicts

There are several predictions that could be made from the data gathered in this report, with regards to what to expect in a few years' time. We have seen that new technologies have been at the focal point of service desk professionals' attention. It is likely that the use of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Assistant technologies will rise exponentially by 2020. A service desk can benefit greatly from AI technology, starting with taking

care of menial tasks, and ending with increased customer experience.

In this report, we have also seen that Enterprise Service Management has become prevalent among the service desk industry. As 44% of service desk professionals predict that they will see a greater use of ITSM tools and processes in non-IT business units,

it would be reasonable to assume that the percentage of organisations that practice Enterprise Service Management have increased significantly by 2020. This is especially likely considering the fact that the number of vendors supplying ESM-compliant software is also growing.

# About SDI



The SDI company mission is to inspire service desks to be brilliant. To achieve this mission SDI has developed a set of goals by which it aims to inspire service desks to:

**Embrace:** To raise the quality of service delivery by valuing best practice

**Engage:** To create an inspiring and engaging customer experience

**Invest:** To empower their teams to be inspired, take action and be better

**Shine:** To demonstrate and deliver exceptional business value

SDI sets the globally recognised best practice service desk standards that provide clear and measurable benchmarks for service desk operations and professionals. The standards are designed to encourage service desks to embrace and value best practice in order to raise the quality of service delivery.

For more information about SDI please visit [www.servicedeskintstitute.com](http://www.servicedeskintstitute.com)

# About Freshservice



In partnership with  
 freshservice

Freshservice is a cloud-based IT service desk and IT service management (ITSM) solution that is quick to set up and easy to use and manage.

Recognised as an ITSM Leader, Freshservice has been named best software for mid market IT teams, the most usable service desk software and #1 in customer satisfaction by G2 Crowd.

Freshservice leverages ITIL best practices to enable IT organisations to focus on what's most important – exceptional service delivery and customer satisfaction.

With its powerfully simple UI, Freshservice can be easily configured to support your unique business requirements and integrated with other critical business and IT systems. Native integrations are provided “out-of-the-box” with many of the most popular cloud services such as Google Apps, Dropbox, AWS, and Bomgar to speed up deployment and reach.