Delivering User Excitement in the Digital Era Through an Enterprise Service Hub

IT organizations can enhance enterprise value and create differentiating user experiences by leveraging analytics to proactively prevent user issues as well as by approaching problem resolution from a “total case ownership” perspective.

Executive Summary

Across industries, significant opportunities and challenges are arising due to ongoing changes in customer profiles and expectations, as well as regulatory compliance mandates, market dynamism and emerging markets. As mobility and social collaboration become table stakes, established companies the world over are working to realign and redefine their internal structures and strategic focus areas to leverage the virtues of digital technologies and beat back the competitive pressures of digital native companies.

Digital technologies render organizations increasingly transparent, thereby reducing the layers between stakeholders. As a result, enterprises must meld their internal structures (both human and technology resources) to more effectively serve internal users (employees) and external users (end customers). To do this, companies must elevate IT from a business support function to one in which IT drives the business. This means the CIO and the head of digital business roles will eventually converge to help companies not only fend off the advances of digital native companies but also to convert the massive amounts of transactional and interactional data generated by modern digital organizations into operational and market insights that inform, if not power, IT-led business models.

To excel in this new world, organizations must deliver experiences that excite customers and partners, as well as internal users. This is defined by the business value of such interactions, delivered through seamlessness and insightful experiences that suggest to users that the system understands who they are, anticipates their informational and service needs, and delivers a seamless experience across channels (i.e., consistency) by calling information from disparate IT resources and enabling a collaborative approach across IT disciplines.

Seamlessness can be achieved by merging siloed organizational functions to deliver omnichannel experiences; insights can be delivered by leveraging big data and behavioral analytics to deliver a personalized user experience via a
service desk; a collaborative approach brings individual users (i.e., super users) into the mix to serve other users (via enterprise social platforms). A collaborative approach typically leverages peer-to-peer collaboration tools such as Yammer and Chatter to augment traditional service desks (for internal users) and help desks (for customers and business partners). When aligned, this approach can, over time, help bring business and IT closer, helping business come to terms with IT’s virtues, illuminating the challenges and perhaps giving them one less reason to embrace shadow IT solutions.

This white paper highlights the shortcomings of trying to address these issues through quick fix service desk strategies, which tend to be disconnected, and thus create issues later. In our view, organizations need to focus long term on an IT model that centralizes service for both internal users and customers/partners. To do so, they must leverage digital tools and techniques to proactively address user issues before they arise, yet stay true to the decentralized objectives many enterprises have to help unlock the creativity and spirit of individuals needed to contribute business value across the ecosystem.

Understanding User Needs, Operating Model Imperatives

Figure 1 reveals the service-desk transformation of a traditional company to a new-age digital company. At digital native companies, technology reduces the layers between customers/employees. This is critical given the always-on nature of digital customers. As a result, such companies tend to start with a digital service desk. At a traditional company, the internal and external user service desk will simultaneously serve internal stakeholders (employees) and external users (customers). The next step in the transformation journey is to form a converged service desk powered through what we call an enterprise hub and spoke model.

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Many companies have invested heavily in customer-facing, next-gen service desks to address the growing needs generated by mobile/Web/social platforms. As this user base grows and matures, greater interconnectivity with internal systems is required.

To better serve all users, we believe, organizations should use digital tools and merge their internal- and external-facing service desks into what we call a digital service desk. In our view, this will positively impact customer relations (by delivering a more satisfying experience to users) as revealed by KPIs that measure brand performance.
Getting there will require IT organizations to infuse their service desks with the same tools digital native companies use to accelerate business. These tools not only advance IT support through more innovative ways of interacting with users, but significantly reduce support costs. Moreover, as business becomes more IT intensive, IT support is being extended deeper into the organization and embedded within key operational functions such as HR, finance, legal, etc. This means IT support must be nimble, extensible and all-encompassing across business disciplines.

While user satisfaction was the primary objective of the traditional service desk, user excitement is the goal of the new SD.

To remain relevant amid the onslaught of new digital tools, and as more company employees bring their own devices to work (which raises the bar on data protection, particularly in countries across Europe with more stringent data privacy laws), the IT organization must evolve into a technology-led business function to drive growth. To suit this role, the scope of the IT service desk must similarly evolve.

• **Role:** Traditional service desks (SDs) tend to solve the issues that come through their agents. However, many users are increasingly willing to help themselves via self-help, self-heal and peer-to-peer support tools. Nevertheless, they expect the service desk to be proactive and prevent a deluge of issue inquiries or service requests and, if possible, to help users plan better without disrupting the business. And we believe that with user experience knowledge, the SD can have a seat at the table to represent the user community for important IT decisions.

Many users have little patience for a “helpless desk.” Hence, the role of the SD must evolve in such ways to not only enable problem resolution but to represent the user community when it comes to strategic business decisions. For example, the SD can see the impact technology decisions have on users. As such, it can play a key role sharing its learnings with business/IT decision-makers to help shape strategic plans and rollouts. For that reason, the SD needs a seat at the table, alongside the CIO, on all IT strategy discussions.

• **Expectation:** As users increasingly expect seamless resolution of their issues via multiple channels, the SD is increasingly seen as the “total owner of the issue.” This means the SD must proactively track progress across multiple resolver teams and is accountable for successful completion (hence, the total case ownership mantra). While user satisfaction was the primary objective of the traditional service desk, user excitement is the goal of the new SD. Based on applying analytics, proactively handling issues and preventing issues from arising, the SD is better positioned to deliver against ever-changing user expectations. By successfully handling all calls and tickets from the get-go, the SD can exhibit full ownership and instant updates to the users across various contact channels, hence satisfying users—be they internal or external.

• **Scope:** As technology seeps into the business and end-customer functions, the potential scope of the SD should move beyond the boundaries of IT and into the enterprise. The next level could entail selective hybrid service desks that are part of the end-customer contact center or call center. The final stage could be a converged internal/external user service desk that acts like a digital service desk. This would enable the SD to support self-help, self-heal and persona-based services. Depending on the industry, the end-customer experience would be tightly integrated with some enterprise applications and the internal landscape.

Introducing the Enterprise Service Hub and Spoke Model

As global enterprises digitally transform, they must balance a centralized SD approach, which generates operational efficiency advantages, with a decentralized approach that facilitates service customization for particular business units/user groups.

In line with this, we believe, global enterprises with multiple businesses would benefit from an enterprise service hub (ESH) that would act as a centralized means for driving operational maturity, technological innovation, applied analytical insights and the means to cross-pollinate ideas across various business/IT functions. Once constituted, this hub can then power and inform numerous service spokes that serve internal users across the extended enterprise, including customers and business partners.

The ESH approach provides transformation-led continuous improvements, with the mandate of enabling service spokes to create a service desk that maintains the traditional problem
resolution focus but takes the next step to work proactively to generate sustained customer excitement (see Figure 2).

To deliver customer excitement on a year-over-year basis (keeping in mind that services which deliver excitement over time becomes table stakes), the ESH focuses on innovation (i.e., new ideas, solutions, technologies and their applicability across spokes by working collaboratively with them), cross-pollination of best practices across spokes and the creation of shared-interest forums for spokes. These can be physical or virtual. Thus the ESH works with all spokes to triangulate proactive problem prevention and share best practices with one another by leveraging operational data to carry out insights that drive business transformation programs, as well as lead skills and competency initiatives across organizations. The end result: the SD is better equipped to fulfill, if not exceed, user expectations.

The ESH also provides a way for spokes to explore and adopt new technologies, tools and operational improvements within and across channels.

- **The service spoke delivers operations-led customer excitement with a mandate of running the spoke function.** The SD normally resolves internal IT issues by responding to tickets raised, calls, chat windows, etc. If each spoke is focused on only existing operational discipline, it may be able to achieve one-off user satisfaction, but minimal excitement. Therefore, the ESH enables each spoke to be future-ready in addressing user issues through digital technology, tools and collaboration channels to better serve internal users across operational functions (e.g., HR, IT, finance, etc.), business functions (e.g., loans, cards, etc.), external customers/users (e.g., banking, insurance customers using mobile apps, online, social platforms to consume a service) and geographies (e.g., the Americas, Europe, etc.). All spokes would leverage specific channels, tools and relevant technologies to serve various user personas – VVIP (or very very important person), millennial, functional and traditional IT users.

As business digitization accelerates, end customers consume services or augment their customer experience by using mobile,
website and social platforms. And when there is an issue, they contact the customer service center/call center. A spoke that’s focused on this user group can work closely with the contact center and apply advanced analytics to understand the possible issues even before the user group starts contacting them.

Considering the increased level in connectivity through devices and data, the spoke could also take the form of a network operating center (NOC) to solve issues and deliver customer excitement. The service spoke will continue to be the single point of contact between end users and support functions across the enterprise.

- Since the spoke is persona-driven, avatars are used to guide the user journey and interaction with the SD. The avatar in turn could facilitate communication via one or multiple channels. For example, the persona of a VVIP user is most likely to prefer an avatar that resembles an executive assistant with full support and a human touch. In the new operating model, traditional communication channels must be enhanced, while new ones must be introduced to provide a seamless end-user experience. Also, technology drivers will play a key role in determining how service spokes progress over time (see Figure 3).

- Key to the success of the ESH and spoke model is a KPI-driven approach that measures how well issues were solved proactively (see Quick Take, scenario 1, next page) and how reactive issues were resolved in a seamless and personalized manner. As the Internet of Things (IoT) evolves across business ecosystems, it becomes critical to monitor more devices and applications. As users become accustomed to using IoT data or apply derived insights to augment their jobs, new types of issues will emerge over time that the ESH and spoke model can address.

Looking Forward

Customer excitement is gaining momentum among CIOs who want to leverage the goodness of IT consumerization, the entry of millennials into the workplace (see Quick Take, scenario 3) and changing internal customer expectations. Navigating such organizational realignments requires a modular approach that allows customer services to be customized for various user groups (i.e., function, geography, etc.) within the organization and at the same time steer users in line with the organizational direction. The ESH and spoke model addresses these transformational and operational goals, helping companies attain digital and traditional business objectives in tandem.

With an ever-increasing number of devices, applications and data usage, customer excitement attained through user services will soon become a differentiator for leading organizations. As internal and external users move closer (see Quick Take, scenario 2), so do the spheres of value creation and value consumption – and companies have a great opportunity
Quick Take

The Enterprise Service Hub Vision

To better understand future-state IT support, we’ve created three possible scenarios to illustrate the proactive, self-help nature of tomorrow’s service desk.

Scenario 1: Mind-Reading Troubleshooting
Mark Hazdi, a managing director of a global bank, is at the Frankfurt airport waiting for his connecting flight. He tries scheduling a flight for the following day using the bank’s travel app on his smartphone. The app unfortunately crashes three times in a row and Mark proceeds to a coffee shop with the thought of calling his secretary to complete the booking.

As Mark is sipping his coffee, his phone rings and he is greeted by a service desk agent who says “Hello Mr. Hazdi, I believe you are at the Frankfurt airport and are experiencing difficulty scheduling your next travel. Please allow me to guide you through the process.” A couple of minutes later, an ecstatic Mr. Hazdi disconnects the call after having successfully scheduled his travel. Little does he realize that the intelligent travel app had sent a notification to the premium channel of the service desk with all necessary details to facilitate this transaction.

Scenario 2: Delivering Seamless Multichannel Support
Dave Jones, a client advisor in the wealth management division of a global bank, is at the swanky office of Mr. Peng, EVP of a global logistics company. Dave is trying to showcase the powerful analytics tool that his bank offers to its premium clients but the application doesn’t respond. After a couple of tries, a self-help notification appears almost instantly.

Dave clicks “yes” for the self-help utility to resolve the issue but the problem isn’t resolved. After a few seconds, a chat window appears and an expert agent connected with Dave using a “remote assist utility” resolves the issue. The whole process takes around eight minutes.

Not only was Dave happy about this overall service experience, but Mr. Peng was also thoroughly impressed with the promptness and professionalism of the bank’s service desk. He was thinking if the internal service desk of the bank was so customer-focused, as an external customer he also can rely on them.

Indirectly this automated and integrated service desk platform actually helped Dave to close the deal successfully with Mr. Peng.

Scenario 3: Enabling Self-Help
Ed, a young technology graduate, is looking forward to his first day on the job at a global investment bank. Since he is highly accustomed to using his personalized devices and gadgets, Ed wonders what his workplace experience with technology will be.

Part of Ed’s induction schedule is a 10-minute visit to a “walk-in” support desk. During this visit, Ed is pleasantly surprised when all his personal devices are configured for use at work with the necessary security features.

Soon enough, Ed walks to a nearby work center to start working. As he tries using one of the apps, he experiences technical difficulties operating it. Right then, a self-help notification appears and Ed opts to leverage it. Within seconds, his issue is resolved. Ed is excited and looks forward to the proactive, personalized, technology-driven support offered by the bank to its employees.

to build successful business models centered on serving and exciting these two user groups. IT organizations (including traditional SDs) need to redefine their goals, realign their units, functions and roles and become the enablers and drivers of sustained user excitement. This will shift the focus on leveraging technology for better user experiences (instead of IT for IT’s sake), and better user experiences will lead to top-line growth and will bolster the brand.
Footnote

1 Excitement is about delivering issue resolution in a proactive way and/or leveraging analytics to prevent an issue and/or by approaching the issue resolution in a “total case ownership” manner.

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About Cognizant

Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSH) is a leading provider of information technology, consulting, and business process outsourcing services, dedicated to helping the world’s leading companies build stronger businesses. Headquartered in Teaneck, New Jersey (U.S.), Cognizant combines a passion for client satisfaction, technology innovation, deep industry and business process expertise, and a global, collaborative workforce that embodies the future of work. With over 100 development and delivery centers worldwide and approximately 218,000 employees as of June 30, 2015, Cognizant is a member of the NASDAQ-100, the S&P 500, the Forbes Global 2000, and the Fortune 500 and is ranked among the top performing and fastest growing companies in the world. Visit us online at www.cognizant.com or follow us on Twitter: Cognizant.

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