

Group Test – Outside IT

A competitive comparison of ITSM tools for use beyond the IT department

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Introduction

This is a review of how IT service management (ITSM) tools might be used beyond the IT department.

It explores how traditional ITSM tools, typically used for IT service and support, can be used for broader operation throughout the business such as underpinning internal business processes and handling non-IT business requests.

ITSM providers reviewed:

- Cherwell
- Samanage
- ServiceNow
- TOPdesk

Overview

This report has been unusual in terms of a normal industry product/vendor review – for two reasons:

1. The initial review criteria were quite generic (by necessity) and to some extent vague (i.e. “what have you done with your product outside of IT?”) and
2. The results and outcomes are not particularly (or only) related to functionality or product capability – and this relates strongly to marketing, positioning and implementation approach.

As a review of what vendors can or are doing with their (ITSM) products outside of the IT and ITSM operational area, this review had to be somewhat open-ended, giving the participating vendors specific requirements to follow, but also opening up the options for them to show us what else they can do and are doing outside of IT. This includes not just options on software functionality but also how the vendors are positioning themselves in the market.

Each vendor in this report provides ITSM tools that can be used to build forms and workflow based automation for administration of ‘back-office’ work, this includes: managing workloads; requests; automating approvals and escalations; automating spreadsheets and other databases centrally to remove risk; provide customer service and call centre tools; manage work schedules; provide knowledge repositories, calendars, reports dashboards and customer portals etc. In addition, they each provide this functionality in a modern, social, mobile and intuitive ‘connected’ environment that can be quickly implemented and maintained with minimum technical resources.

So what are the differences between the vendors in this report? How can we distinguish and identify differentiators, pros and cons between them? If all products can be used to develop work automation, logging and escalation/ownership and tracking of tasks etc., does this mean that the differences between vendors go beyond simple software functionality? This review looks at how to differentiate the vendors’ approach for beyond IT across the ITSM market.

Industry Context

There has been a move in recent times to develop more applications and tools that can cross the boundaries of internal service departments. The ITSM toolsets available have helped to drive practice in this area, in particular service catalogues, service portals, automated fulfilment processing, approvals etc. and for many organisations this is a huge opportunity for IT to be the department of solutions and success rather than simply the folks who say ‘no’ all the time.

Most manufacturers of ITSM tools report that their sales engagement process usually now involve the inclusion of non-IT people as the norm which has happened historically although not consistently with many vendors also reporting the fact that, once their ITSM tool has been successfully implemented, their clients in IT then help to ‘sell on’ the wider use of the toolsets within and across their own organisations.

Much of this has been driven by the opportunities offered via Cloud solutions and also via assorted sourcing options. However, the barriers between IT and its internal customers/departments are now also breaking down such that, finally, there is the appreciation that the overall needs of the organisation they support can be met via a ‘supply chain’ approach rather than a siloed one. Commoditisation of IT has led to greater awareness of, and demand for, proper end-to-end solutions and collaborative working. Toolsets are the final piece in this jigsaw, as they offer simple and effective solutions for this.

Opportunities for IT organisations

This is therefore a time of huge opportunity for IT organisations to re-invent themselves and to show their true value to the organisations that they serve. This moves away from just being inward-looking and self preserving around their own (IT) processes but to also being the facilitator, catalyst and ‘solution superheroes’ for the whole organisation. This can help to develop efficiency and remove risk by automating manual and single point of failure processes and systems, e.g. spreadsheets that still provide key business functions.

IT can show leadership in their own businesses if they grasp the nettle and use the skills they have developed via ITSM and the associated toolsets, relationship management, value-demonstration, service monitoring, and cost management. It’s the time and opportunity to take ITSM to the next level and IT organisations and their people are best placed to deliver this.

Client maturity

Whilst this sounds exciting, there is also the question of maturity and awareness, and this brave new world cannot apply across all organisations evenly. There are those IT organisations that have the maturity and drive to take their knowledge and skills forward to capitalise on these opportunities. These organisations will respond well to vendor positioning and messaging around business-led IT and the value of service management beyond IT.

However, there are also many (probably most) IT organisations that don't yet have the vision, awareness, bandwidth and ITSM maturity to do this.

This is where intelligent use of new sourcing models can help to ensure that IT is moving with the times and delivering in response to needs and not just “treading water” and “sweating assets”.

These organisations will also be at risk of being by-passed in the sales process of forward thinking vendors who can then sell direct to other service areas (not IT) with their products and solutions. Vendors with mature implementations and good client relationships can also develop these accounts to “sell inwardly” as mentioned, and get the message across about collaborative working – with variable success depending on their ability to reach and get the right messages to the C-Levels working in their clients.

The new world of corporate collaboration

The message here for the vendor market – and in the context of this review – is therefore that ITSM vendors wishing to retain and increase their market share into new areas need to consider the positioning of their products in a wider context than just IT.

Products and vendors that only focus on internal IT – sold to internally focussed IT departments who don't see the opportunities for collaboration – will be at risk, or at least will risk falling behind in the long run. There may be continuing opportunities for relatively straightforward ITSM-only sales in the short-term, but ultimately this will not be a sustainable strategy.

Vendors also need to be clear on how to reach non-IT people where necessary, as well as having clear strategies for up-selling their products beyond IT in existing and new accounts. Overall they will need to be clear as to the extent to which they take and promote these messages – from presenting either a business-focussed/business-enabled solution, to an IT-internally-focused only approach. So whilst there is still a lively traditional ITSM ‘core market’ that vendors can focus on – where the prospects may not be interested in Outside IT (i.e. applications and their focus is solely on ITSM) – there is also a longer-term and potentially larger opportunity around selling to the wider organisation.

Clearly for vendors this requires some strategic decision making around positioning and marketing, with some implications around sales approach and targeting. This in turn may have significant cost and structural implications for vendors, and some may not have the resources to meet these requirements.

So the traditional sale to mid-management IT Operations may be simpler and easier in the short-term, but longer-term vendors may need to rethink their sales and marketing approach, collateral, and even the language used in the sales process.

So how do we evaluate the current Market?

The four vendors who participated in this review all have the capabilities to provide additional functionality outside of the ITSM/IT area and they also all have varying levels of customer adoption of this. These vendors cover a broad spectrum in terms of size, capability, and corporate coverage and their focus reflects this. All vendors also have different sales and marketing approaches to the concept of Outside IT. Details and examples of their individual offerings are shown below.

All four vendors can deliver non-IT applications with varying levels of toolkits, engagement approaches, and turnkey offerings.

In terms of comparative review, this has been conducted using the following additional questions:

1. What is the scale and extent of your current customer base using the product beyond IT?
2. How are you influencing and driving this approach as a value proposition?
3. Do corporate sales and marketing campaign and materials support this approach?
4. To what extent have you built, marketed and sold pre-canned Outside IT applications?

Vendor Positioning Overview

On the above and defined Outside IT Criteria (see Appendix) ServiceNow is the clear industry Best in Class leader in strategy and execution, message, marketing and experience – in the area of Enterprise Service Management (ESM) they are positively and proactively leading and driving the industry. ServiceNow has numerous impressive implementations of non-IT bespoke applications, and promotes this as the way forward for IT, offering several non-IT packages to the market. Its focus is on work management for business and its sales and marketing efforts reflects this fully.

Cherwell also has a leading focus and capabilities in this area, with strong customer experience. It has excellent examples of IT driven non-IT applications and is focussed on IT enablement and the use of the toolset for collaborative working. Cherwell's marketing and message includes this as a key focus and enabler for IT.

Samanage and TOPdesk all have Outside IT capabilities with good product capability to deliver beyond ITSM. Each has experience in this area (with examples of non-IT implementations) but without strategy as strongly defined or messaging focused towards Outside IT. Their sales and marketing focus tends to reflect the issues and needs of the ITSM market with Outside IT as a secondary offering. It should also be noted that the business requirements of organizations looking to build use of ITSM solutions Outside IT are different depending on company size and complexity. For example ServiceNow and Cherwell are likely to overwhelm very small organizations.

Vendor target client size and scoring

Supplier	Target Client Size				Outside IT Capability	Outside IT Focus / Message	Outside IT delivered apps / clients	
	Small	Medium	Large	Very Large				
Cherwell		✓	✓		***	***	***	
Samanage	✓	✓			**	**	*	
Best in Class ServiceNow			✓	✓	****	****	****	Best in Class
TOPdesk	✓	✓			**	**	**	

Key

- *
Adequate
- **
Good
- ***
Very Good
- ****
Strong

Cherwell – Outside IT

<p>Elevator Pitch</p>	<p>Cherwell is an established vendor within the ITSM market, with a particular focus on Customer Experience. It has a growing emphasis on use of its product and service management beyond the IT/ITSM area, and is seen to market and promote the concepts of IT enablement positively and consistently.</p> <p>Cherwell boasts a number of customer success stories and positive case studies of the use of the product beyond IT. There is a clear connection between their marketing messages and implementation stories in this area.</p> <p>Cherwell provides fully inclusive concurrent user usage for both perpetual and SaaS licensing models. Product is sold as one complete application, i.e. not modular</p>
<p>Strengths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intuitive interface for building and maintaining workflow and extended functionality – attractive object based forms, workflow and reports • Product provides secure framework for user-developed configuration that is protected for upgrades • Vendor promotes positive and experienced approach to customer experience and tools as enabler for service management and business functions
<p>Weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor will need to maintain focus on where to sell and implement – IT and beyond - as organisation is still growing • Product can look extensive and perhaps complicated – turnkey non-IT applications/canned versions would be helpful

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No turnkey Outside IT applications currently available
Primary Market Focus	Based on the information provided, Cherwell Service Management is primarily a mid-market solution with the ability to be scaled-up to enterprise class organisations.

Commercial Summary

Vendor	Cherwell Software
Product	Cherwell Service Management
Version reviewed	4.6
Date of version Release	March 2014
Year Founded	2004
Customers	600+ ITSM customers worldwide.
Pricing Structure	Fully inclusive concurrent user usage for both perpetual and SaaS licensing models.
Competitive Differentiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codeless, flexible and fully configurable Ability to design and build to specific business requirements – or use ‘out-of-the-box’ Cherwell Service Management is a useful enabling toolset to support IT and business transformation due to the ease of use and flexible nature of the product

Independent Review

Cherwell is emerging as a leader in the service management and extended shared services markets due to the scope and quality of its product, its focus on business value and its quality approach to implementation.

In The ITSM Review's opinion, Cherwell is particularly appropriate for medium-to-large sized organisations. Whilst it does have very large (enterprise) clients, its own focus and organisation better fits the medium-large sized demographic. The product has extensive flexibility and capability, and can be developed for large or very large organisations use as required.

Marketing and messaging is focussed on speaking directly to IT and ITSM organisations, providing them with the opportunity to improve their service and provide value to their own customers. We view this as a positive, although we do believe that there is a need to develop more specific and targeted non-IT turnkey solutions in conjunction with associated marketing approaches that may be sold beyond IT.

Cherwell is set on selling to IT people and letting them sell-on the product to other areas of the business, which seems to work well, however we do feel that this may need to become a more proactive channel in order to compete with other Enterprise Service Management (ESM) solutions in the market.

Product

In The ITSM Review's opinion Cherwell offers a strong mix of product capability, and its ease of use and non-technical capability of the product should be well supported by (IT) customers – thus easy to sell-on within organisations.

The simple and inclusive upgrade path also works well as a positive alternative to legacy and large enterprise solutions where bespoke product development can add risk, cost and delay to upgrading. Cherwell have a model which provides a secure technical framework that clients can work within to build their own solutions and which is then protected as part of the upgrade path.

Marketing

The vendors' organisation and approach is focussed on promoting and supporting IT as an enabler and driver for business success. Cherwell take a pragmatic approach to this, depending on the maturity and needs of the client as identified during the sales process.

In terms of industry and media messaging, we feel that Cherwell has adopted a positive and engaging set of value propositions around traditional values, people and customer experience. The focus on traditional values is centred around the need for back to basics implementations, focussed

on customer needs, simple ITSM concepts and the need to engage with people – i.e. Cherwell push out the message that the product is not the answer to everything.

Sales Strategy

Cherwell has had to work to improve its brand visibility over the last few years and is now well placed and recognised in the ITSM market place. Approach to sales is seen to be positive, professional and consultative, developing dialogue where possible to engage and provide prospects with confidence in the product and company.

In our view, Cherwell will need to maintain focus on where to sell and implement IT, and beyond, as the organisation is still growing.

Current Use

Examples of current customers using Cherwell Service Management outside of IT include implementations in HR, Finance, Legal, and Sales and Marketing.

In Summary

We feel that Cherwell Service Manager is a good option to consider for those medium-to-large organisations looking to develop their service management practices starting from their existing ITSM implementation. The product is simple to develop and configure as a business application so should have a fast time-to-value. Our only reservation would be around the need for turnkey non-IT applications to be provided in order to further provide timesaving solutions for IT and non-IT clients.

In The ITSM Review's opinion, in the future Cherwell needs to consider where to focus its sales and messaging for implementation – i.e. marketing/selling solely to IT organisations or engaging with other business areas. As the organisation is still growing it needs to ensure that it does not spread its resources too thinly, as otherwise it risks losing focus on key markets. The approach to let IT customers 'sell-on' is laudable, although this may need to be strengthened with more turnkey offerings in order to compete and provide clear differentiators.

In Their Own Words

“Cherwell Software is one of the fastest growing IT service management software providers. It began with simple goals: to make service desk software it would want to use and to do business honestly, putting customers first. Cherwell Software is passionate about customer care and is dedicated to creating “innovative technology built upon yesterday values.”

Cherwell Software is one of the fastest growing IT service management software providers with corporate headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO, U.S.A. and EMEA headquarters in Swindon, U.K. A global team of dedicated employees and expert partners who appreciate the technology – but love customers – serve in North America, South America, Asia and Australia. Cherwell Software recently received the SDI Best Vendor of the Year award.

Cherwell’s flagship product, Cherwell Service Management™, delivers an innovative, award-winning and holistic approach to service management, allowing IT and support departments to align with organisation strategy and to deliver maximum IT business value. Cherwell Service Management is the affordable, easy-to-use, ITSM suite with maximum portability. With Cherwell Choice™ concurrent licensing and flexible hosting model, you can choose what works best for your business — SaaS or purchase, and hosted on-premises, hosted by Cherwell or hosted by a third party.”

Samanage – Outside IT

Elevator Pitch	Vendor pitch is around speed of implementation and lack of need for technical input and ease of use.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Cloud application and all clients on current version – simple for non-IT people to implement without IT infrastructure requirements • Implementation is focussed on lack of need for training and consultancy - based around ‘intuitive’ product, using videos and other media • Vendor (relatively new to market) reports selling and winning against traditional IT service management (ITSM) products on capability, ease of use and ease of implementation – with experience of non-IT implementation
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workflow tool does not have graphic presentation which may be an issue for non-IT users in particular • SMB focus – limited implementation experiences in larger enterprises
Primary Market Focus	According to the information provided, Samanage primarily targets the midmarket

Commercial Summary

Vendor	Samanage
Product	Samanage
Version reviewed	n/a – continuous deployment
Date of version Release	n/a
Year Founded	2007
Customers	500+
Pricing Structure	For service desk, prices start at \$1,000 per service desk technician for service desk and \$12 for each computer asset for Asset Management
Competitive Differentiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile and continuous deployment model – customer always on latest version and updates protected • Code free deployment using user-friendly interfaces means fast time to value • Integrated and simple to use Service Desk and asset management modules aims to save time for agents

Independent Review

Product

In The ITSM Review’s opinion, the solution has a clean interface, which appears to be straightforward and easy to use. Workflows can be built simply using drag and drop.

The solution offers a useful feature to ask for help across IT on tickets without requiring escalation. Good practical usability for scanning tickets – ‘Eye’ function allows scan of details without need to open ticket.

Marketing

Samanage states that the product can be easily developed to provide work management and admin functions beyond IT – e.g. HR, Finance, Purchasing etc. However, no current off the shelf Outside IT applications are marketed/offered.

Current focus is on existing IT customers with a view to up-selling to internal departments at a later date. This means that there is no focus on Outside IT in external marketing activities, however this may change in the future as the company evolves.

Sales Strategy

Growing business replacing legacy on-premise solutions as well as low-end SaaS competitors. Focus on demo or trial early in new engagements with prospective customers as to allow user experience and ease of use to do the selling.

Current Use

Limited implementation experience in large and enterprise markets, with a limited global reach at present compared to established competitors. Some existing bespoke applications built for HR, payroll, purchasing.

In Summary

Samanage offer a SMB focussed ITSM solution that looks to be easy to implement and develop and, according to the vendor, has been used by several organisations for functionality beyond IT. We believe that Samanage is a good competitively priced option for small-to-medium sized looking for general ITSM capabilities.

In The ITSM Review's opinion, Samanage needs to focus on developing its presence in the ITSM market and find a suitable niche either directly in IT or as a bridge to other Service Management areas. Samanage is currently competing against whole market and this may not be sustainable. The brand could be developed to be more service-specific.

In their own words

“Samanage provides the only true multitenant, unified service desk and asset management cloud solution on the market today. For our customers, that translates into the fastest time to value, higher ROI, outstanding service, and most importantly happy end users. Samanage customers enjoy an “always new” application without ever having to perform any maintenance functions.

Our revolutionary user interface delivers an unmatched user experience, allowing customers to fully deploy a robust IT Service Management (ITSM) solution in less than 2 weeks, easily expand beyond IT, and maximize adoption. End users are empowered through an easy to use self-service portal, and technicians have a full-featured platform available at their fingertips on any device.

Customers achieve instant value with Samanage because they are operational immediately and able to go live in days...in less time than it takes to evaluate other solutions. They have instant, accurate visibility into all hardware and software assets, no matter where assets are located. And because our service desk and asset management is on a unified platform, customers are able to easily connect their people, services, and assets all through the same UI. Visually stunning in-app analytics also enable rapid trend detection and easy access to actionable information.

Samanage’s goal is to help customers deliver a superior service experience to their end users, and real value throughout their organization by improving asset control, empowering end users, and maximizing resources.“

ServiceNow – Outside IT (Best in Class)

Elevator Pitch	<p>A leader in Enterprise Service Management (ESM) – ServiceNow is positively and proactively leading and driving the industry forward in using ITSM technology and practices beyond IT.</p> <p>ServiceNow has numerous impressive implementations of non-IT bespoke applications, and promotes this as the way forward for IT, also offering several non-IT packages to the market.</p>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong strategic focus and messaging/positioning to help support and drive the Outside IT/collaboration/ESM agenda • Toolset provides extensive and mature capability and flexibility for development, plus out-of-the-box ITSM and business process functionality • A large number of established turnkey business (non-IT) applications provided e.g. for HR, finance, facilities and asset management • Impressive number of customers already using bespoke applications Outside IT in areas such as: HR, Finance, Sales and Marketing, Facilities, Legal, Procurement, etc.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor and product positioned for large-to-very-large size organisations – culture, approach and budget may not fit small-to-medium and mid-market organisations • Message and culture may not fit with more traditional organisations/departments not currently looking to integrate or collaborate across internal functions
Primary Market Focus	<p>Based on the information provided, ServiceNow is primarily a large-to-very large market solution.</p>

Commercial Summary

Vendor	ServiceNow
Product	ServiceNow IT Service Automation Suite ServiceNow Service Automation Platform
Version reviewed	Eureka
Date of version Release	June 2014
Year Founded	2004
Customers	2000+ customers world-wide, of which over 400 are Global 2000 organisations
Pricing Structure	“ServiceNow products are sold in suites or individually and are priced monthly on a user basis. Orchestration and Discovery are options that are priced monthly on a node or device basis, respectively.”
Competitive Differentiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong presence as enterprise-wide solution provider, following initial emergence as market-disruptive SAAS option • Leader in the market in terms of promoting and delivering enterprise-wide solutions that extend beyond IT

Independent Review

ServiceNow is an established leading player in the enterprise ITSM market. The product is multi-functional and appears to be highly configurable to customer requirements. Furthermore, it offers extensive options and capabilities in and beyond ITSM for all internal service functions – e.g. HR, Finance, Customer Service, etc.

In the review ServiceNow provided the most extensive and comprehensive list of examples of customer implementations Outside IT, a good example of which is REI, which uses the toolset for HR and Finance as well as for IT requests and functionality.

This, in tandem with an impressive list of existing bespoke and turnkey business applications in the product, in our opinion makes ServiceNow a proactive leader in the Outside IT space.

Marketing

In The ITSM Review's opinion, ServiceNow has taken the lead in the ITSM market by promoting the opportunity for IT departments to re-invent themselves and become the facilitators of change and automation across all areas of organisations, using the basic concepts of ITSM and the toolset capabilities.

This service automation capability is branded as an opportunity for ESM and is promoted as an enabler and differentiator for IT organisations to recover credibility and relevance with their customer base.

Sales Strategy

In our view, ServiceNow's approach to sales strategy is game-changing, given that it can help to re-define value and purpose for IT organisations, by helping them to succeed in ways that traditional IT (and other internal service) departments have struggled for years. It is also clear that the market needs this sort of focus and organisations that are adopting "collaboration" principles are thriving and are focussed on key business needs rather than being weighed down by internal process and functional divisions.

ServiceNow is currently leveraging sales based on this wider business or ESM focus, beyond IT and ITSM, which should continue to support sales growth, as more organisations require internal functions to be integrated and collaborative with the rest of the business.

Current Use

ServiceNow also offers a number of turnkey products, i.e. ServiceNow built non-IT applications, available for areas such as HR, facilities etc. together with customer built custom apps available via ServiceNow Share.

The ServiceNow sales and marketing message and positioning is co-ordinated to drive the message of collaboration across organisations, a refreshed focus on ESM, which is supported by sales and operations teams who are targeting this type of sale.

ServiceNow is established as a global vendor selling to large and enterprise organisations. ServiceNow uses positive IT/ITSM industry and media messaging, high profile events and media to promote their offerings and the ESM approach.

ServiceNow also uses an extensive global network of service providers and partners for building, delivering and implementing its products and business applications.

ServiceNow also integrate with, or are building integrations with, over 85 companies/technologies, thus showing proven experience and accessibility in linking with other technologies.

In Summary

In The ITSM Review's opinion, ServiceNow is an excellent option for large-and-very large sized businesses looking to achieve synergy and efficiency of cross-departmental operations, as well as flexibility in their IT and wider non-IT shared service operations. Furthermore, we believe it is an excellent option for large and very large organisations implementing service management and work automation across and beyond IT.

We feel that ESM is a strong and forward-thinking message and an excellent opportunity for real success through ITSM and wider service management and automation. In our opinion, this is a stronger and more sustainable message than ServiceNow's earlier focus on Cloud/commercial models, community and flexibility (although useful and helpful) as the ESM message transcends IT and straddles business areas and can finally take ITSM to a C-Level audience for sales and delivered value.

In our view, continued expansion via the ESM message and product capability for Global Enterprises should be the ServiceNow goal, possibly with some options on how to take this message to the mid-market market in future.

In their own words

“ServiceNow is the enterprise IT cloud company. We transform IT by automating and managing IT service relationships across the global enterprise. Organizations deploy our service to create a single system of record for IT and automate manual tasks, standardize processes, and consolidate legacy systems. Using our extensible platform, our customers create custom applications and evolve the IT service model to service domains inside and outside the enterprise.

ServiceNow offers a portfolio of robust cloud-based products that automate and manage IT service relationships across the enterprise. Our products have the advantage of being built on a single cloud platform that consists of one user interface, one code base and one data model, delivering easy, automated upgrades. ServiceNow provides an intuitive and approachable user experience complete with expert services to accelerate time-to-value. The ServiceNow Service Automation Platform is a highly configurable, approachable and extensible cloud platform built on an enterprise-grade infrastructure. All ServiceNow applications, as well as custom applications created by ServiceNow customers and partners, are built on this common, underlying platform.

ServiceNow IT Service Automation applications evolve the service model so that IT can spend more time delivering innovative business solutions and less time managing infrastructure overhead. ServiceNow enterprise IT users can replace redundant processes and fragmented service systems with an application suite that utilizes a single data model. This provides a single system of record for IT. With ServiceNow, IT can consolidate legacy systems, automate manual tasks, and consumerize the user experience.”

TOPdesk – Outside IT

Elevator Pitch	TOPdesk offers ‘out-of-the-box’ service management solutions, with standard configurations and integrations for ease of use
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product is already been used by existing customer base for shared services • Product appears to be very user-friendly and simple to build upon and develop for varied use • Contains many out-of-the-box templates for internal/organisational functions, e.g. ordering company car, request cleaning etc.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales approach based around assumption of shared services rather than supporting IT to grow collaborative approach • Limited marketing and sales focus on ‘enabling IT’ – demo based on standard IT service management (ITSM) application which can then be modified • Tailoring/configuration looks relatively complicated and limited for end users
Primary Market Focus	Based on the information provided, TOPdesk markets to organisations ranging from small (-100 users) to very large, multi-national customers (10,000+ users)

Commercial Summary

Vendor	TOPdesk
Product	TOPdesk
Version reviewed	5
Date of version Release	2012
Year Founded	1993
Customers	4000+
Pricing Structure	The licensing structure is based on the number of end users that the customer wishes to support with the software. This structure allows customers to have an unlimited number of agents, operators and technicians working on the tickets themselves. Both on-premise and SaaS options, hosted by TOPdesk, are available.
Competitive Differentiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native web-based tool and vendor with broad experience of service implementation across different business areas • Licensing structure based on the number of end users rather than system users • Product has an excellent 'multi-tenancy' approach – a multiple process view to manage shared services across departments and processes – good for field service management and Managed Services Providers

Independent Review

TOPdesk is an established vendor with good global coverage. The solution is primarily used for standard ITSM, but many customers also use the tool for Field Service and Shared Service management.

In The ITSM Review's opinion, the product looks user-friendly and straightforward to build and develop for varied use. Furthermore, the 'Forms Design Module' looks easy to use to build applications with intuitive non-technical skills, which can then be taken forward by people outside traditional IT operational areas.

Marketing

Marketing is primarily focused on 'Shared Services', as well as ITSM/service desk, with limited marketing focus around enabling IT, although strong positioning on ease of use and bespoke Outside IT experience.

Sales Strategy

In our view, TOPdesk could do more to promote the success and evolution of its IT/ITSM customers via collaboration – this would be especially useful as more market players focus on enabling IT. From what we experienced, its sales and demo approach seems to take shared services for granted, rather than exploring current and future needs.

Current Use

According to TOPdesk, 63% of customers are currently using the solution for shared services or Outside IT functionality, with good experience and examples provided of product being used for HR, Finance, Sales and Marketing. Customers currently using the solution outside of IT include KLM, University of Edinburgh, and Calor Gas.

In Summary

We feel that TOPdesk is a good offering for mid-sized organisations for both Service Desk and ITSM requirements. Furthermore, we believe that those organisations who already know what they want to achieve with their Outside IT plans would benefit from this solution. The solution is also an excellent offering for Field Service Management, Manager Services and shared services providers.

A key opportunity for TOPdesk, in our opinion, is to develop and promote more standard non-IT functionality and experience around their offerings, in order to compete with the expanding Service Management market.

In their own words

“TOPdesk develops ITIL-aligned Service Management Software for IT, Facilities Management, and eHRM helpdesks and is among the top five service management tools offered worldwide. Our award-winning solution, along with our ITIL verified consultants and outstanding customer support has helped over 4,000 unique customers to process questions, complaints and malfunctions. With over 20 years of service management experience, we have assisted businesses, to optimize their services with our 100% web-based and user-friendly application. TOPdesk’s modular structure accommodates a wide range of requirements from different sized organisations. TOPdesk can be hosted as a Service or can be installed on-site. All products include: extensive reporting options, clear overviews and a handy Plan Board for planning your resources. Every day, millions of users across 47 countries trust in TOPdesk as their service management solution. Raising your service levels and reducing your workload and costs have never been easier.

TOPdesk offers out-of-the-box service management solutions, therefore standard integrations, configuration and other imports are all covered by the implementation process. Our customers are able to customise their TOPdesk system, by choosing the modules, processes and functionalities they actually require. We aim to reduce service desk agents’ stress and reduce their workload by applying a well-defined, standardised, yet configurable and flexible service management tool. This is why TOPdesk is modular in structure, allowing customers to add new processes as they grow.

TOPdesk offers Enterprise and Professional products meeting requirements of every type of organisation from small businesses to large, multinational companies. The framework for both products includes our revolutionary resource management planner, the Plan Board and the Task Board that displays daily workflow and the intuitive Dash Board for reports and KPIs.”

Appendix – Requirements

These are the core requirements as specified in the review:

- The System should be shown to be easy to use, with User-configurable forms, tables, and workflows
- Please demonstrate Role-based security access – to allow control of available requests
- You should demonstrate established proven links with other ITSM, CRM and financial management packages, such as SAP
- Demonstrate how your system is Open for real-time integration with financial management and other monitoring tools
- You should be able to show how the system is easy for users to use by providing templates and pre-filled forms and content to act as basic starting date where possible – e.g. for HR, Finance and other non-IT departments
- Vendors should demonstrate how they provide expertise and guidance in the implementation of the tool, particularly with experience to non-IT users
- You should also demonstrate capability in marketing and selling these systems to non-IT users, with appropriate language in collateral etc.
- Demonstrate examples of pre-filled templates that reflect different business or operational environments

Outside IT

- How many non-IT customers use the system?
- Describe your implementation approach - how is this different from the normal ITSM?
- Do you use the same consultants and trainers to implement the system (as ITSM) - explain why they are the same/different?
- Do you provide bespoke versions of the system for different markets - e.g. with non-IT/non-ITSM field labels and different business language?
- Which business areas has the system been implemented in? Please give examples (Call Centres and external customer support, HR, Finance, Marketing, Sales, General admin, Internal shared Services, External Shared Services, Legal, Other - please state)
- What functions has the system been used to deliver? Please give examples (Customer support - service request logging, Customer support - fault request logging, Work/task management, Field service management - engineer tracking etc., Asset or equipment tracking, Knowledge and information management, Issue resolution, Service Level Management, Project Management, Change Management, Other - please state and demonstrate)
- Describe how your tool has been used to 'front end' other systems and services, e.g. using self service portals and request fulfilment processes
- Describe how specific ITSM functions have been adapted to fulfil non-IT functions - e.g. Please give examples. (Incident, Request, Problem, Change, Asset/Configuration, Capacity, Business Continuity, Demand, Knowledge, Service Catalogue, Financial, Service Level Management).
- Demonstrate any process functions that have been developed outside the above ITSM Processes
- Describe any innovations or new ways of using your tool that have emerged from these customers and how this has been brought back to ITSM functionality?
- Demonstrate how a non-IT implementation can be integrated with an ITSM implementation for the same customer
- Demonstrate standard functions:
 1. User portal for request and ticket logging
 2. Approval management
 3. Catalogue and service level management modules
 4. User defined workflow
 5. User defined administration / configuration

6. Forms for ticket logging and escalating
 7. Table management - field validation
 8. Work allocation and tracking
 9. Ticket closure
 10. Knowledge management
- Reporting - please provide examples of dashboards and live status reporting
 - Demonstrate standard user reporting on volumes and SLA performance
 - Demonstrate exception and SLA breach reporting, trends analysis as used by customers

 - Demonstrate innovative and differentiated functions and services developed with non-IT customers using the system - e.g. using areas of technology like mobile, social etc., and/or adding new business functions or areas of work.