



Eliminate Magic When Selecting The Right IT Service Management (ITSM) Support Tool

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

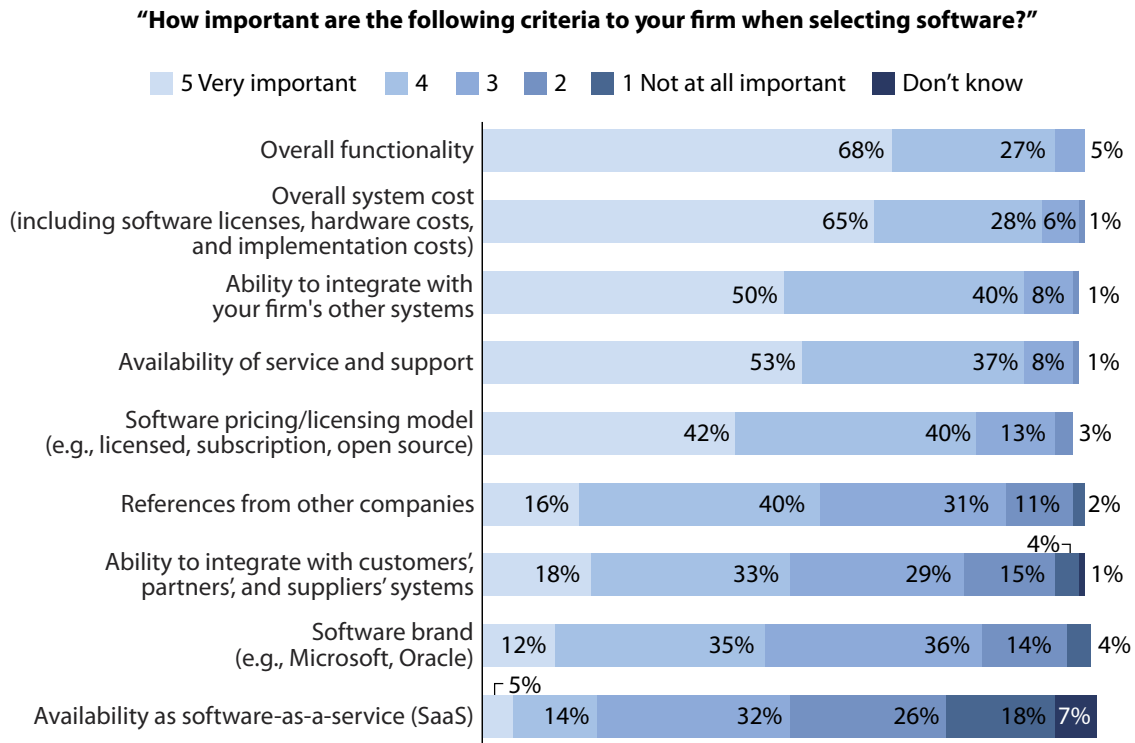
To improve customer experience and reduce service desk staffing costs, IT infrastructure and operations (I&O) professionals are turning to IT service management (ITSM) support tools. Unfortunately, the sheer number of solutions available makes it very difficult to understand which is best suited to ultimately deliver bottom line results for your company. When selecting ITSM support tools, identify those that accomplish your goals, such as end-to-end incident management, and that perform at the level you expect. To do this, I&O professionals must understand their requirements and use cases first. Next, employ this knowledge when evaluating vendors and solution capabilities. This report provides I&O leaders and their service desk teams with a methodology to select the right ITSM support tool, along with an RFP/RFI template to compare multiple vendor solutions.

IT BUYERS STRUGGLE TO DIFFERENTIATE THE LANDSCAPE OF ITSM SUPPORT TOOLS

The consistent upswing in demand for ITSM tools is fueled by IT's drive to improve customer satisfaction and reduce service desk staffing costs. To keep up, the number of vendors and their solution capabilities has evolved significantly over the past two years, so much so that it's now very difficult for IT buyers to differentiate one solution from another. While IT buyers primarily rely on functionality and cost to make software purchasing decisions, the maturity of the ITSM support tool landscape makes this a challenge:¹

- **Differentiating on functionality is challenging when all vendors have comparable capabilities.** In 2010, 60% of the 105 client inquiries that the Forrester infrastructure and operations team received were on differentiating the functionalities among the leading ITSM support tools. The challenge is that of the 18 leading ITSM support tools evaluated in Forrester's March 2010 market overview, many offer nearly identical functionality and breadth.² As a result, IT buyers struggle to differentiate on functionality when many of the available solutions offer comparable capabilities.
- **Differentiating on cost is less than straightforward.** When purchasing software, the price of the solution is always important (see Figure 1). Vendors of ITSM support tools have typically offered user and floating user licensing models concurrently. But to reduce the total cost of ownership, open source and SaaS solutions are becoming more available. Traditional vendors, such as BMC Software, CA, HP, and IBM, have introduced SaaS solutions in parallel to their on-premises offerings. And new ITSM support tool vendors have emerged, such as InteQ and OTRS, that offer open source or SaaS-only solutions. While these new forms of ownership may indeed reduce costs, do you have a handle on your current costs to really know for sure? And are the service levels and support the same?

Figure 1 Functionality And Cost Drive Purchasing Decisions



Base: 1,007 North American and European enterprise software decision-makers (percentages may not total 100 because of rounding)

Source: Enterprise And SMB Software Survey, North America And Europe, Q4 2009

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

HOW TO SELECT THE OPTIMAL ITSM SUPPORT TOOL

When selecting vendors and their respective solutions, companies should focus on several key areas, including the results of the maturity assessment, the makeup of the selection team, the definition of the requirements, and the readying of the RFP.

Four Critical Steps To Selecting The Optimal ITSM Support Tool

When ITSM support tools are well implemented, they ensure an effective management of the services IT has to offer, which in turn improves customer satisfaction and reduces service desk staffing costs. Although the process of selecting an ITSM support tool is similar to that for any other major IT software expenditure, there are nuances due to the mature vendor and solution landscape. In addition to your existing guidelines to identify and purchase capital goods, Forrester recommends that I&O professionals take the following steps to successfully purchase an ITSM support tool:

- 1. Determine your current state of process maturity.** Before evaluating the ins and outs of ITSM service tools, your first step is to understand the maturity of your processes. Leverage Forrester's IT Service Management Maturity Assessment Model, a self-assessment tool designed to help you identify your current ITSM maturity level and your desired process maturity end state.³ This baseline serves to justify improvement plans such as selecting ITSM service tools.
- 2. Assemble your evaluation team and assign a project leader.** Assuming your ITSM maturity assessment determines that your ITSM support tools are deficient, define the roles of the evaluation team and appoint its members. Assign a single project lead who is accountable for the entire process from defining the requirements to gathering information and making a final tool selection.⁴ The supporting team members should include key process and service owners (e.g., incident, problem, change, and operations managers). The evaluation team will gather all necessary details about current state and future strategy that ultimately serve as your ITSM support tool requirements. Additionally, a VP-level contract negotiator who is unbiased toward a specific solution should be part of the team.
- 3. Define your requirements and identify vendors.** With your project leader and team in place, the next step is to define your ITSM support tool requirements. To get started, the team should determine the required and desired functionalities based on the maturity assessment and desired end state. There are certain helpful evaluation categories you should be using (see Figure 2). Even at this early stage, map each requirement to a benefit to justify your investment and to determine ROI. With these needs and wants in mind, develop a list of six to eight potential vendors that can meet your requirements. Create a list of available vendors that offer ITSM support tools today (see Figure 3). To get to your final evaluation, customize the evaluation categories and weightings as necessary to your organization's specific needs. To do this, use Forrester's ITSM Support Tools Product Comparison.⁵
- 4. Issue an RFP to your top five vendors.** Once you've defined your requirements and self-assessed the vendors you deem to be the best fit, issue a formal RFP to the top five vendors. Make it clear that their response should only address your specific requirements without the boilerplate verbiage and that their responses will be compared with other vendors, making it critical that they follow instructions. As a starting point, leverage Forrester's RFP Template For IT Service Management Support Tools And Implementation Services to determine what to include in your RFP.⁶

Figure 2 ITSM Support Tools Evaluation Criteria

High-level evaluation category	Detailed evaluation category
Solution overview	Solution architecture
	Key ITSM integrations
	Key ITSM functionalities
	Workforce management
	Customer satisfaction management
	Supports mobile environment
	Escalation management
	Remote support
Vendor overview	Client geographic distribution
	Partner commitment
	Regional partner representation
	Deployment styles and requirements
	Service transformation
Solution penetration	Total customers
	New customers

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 3 ITSM Support Tool Vendors

Vendor	Capabilities
Axios Systems	Axios Systems has maintained a 100% focus on ITSM with its ITIL-based enterprise software solution, assyst. Rather than being module-based, assyst is a single, integrated product that supports and automates all ITIL v2 and v3 framework processes, including, but not limited to: incident, problem, change and release, event, asset and configuration, availability, and service-level management. The assyst Service Catalog comes pre-integrated with assyst or as a standalone product. Axios offers the same solution in both SaaS and on-premises models.
BMC	BMC's IT Service Management suites (Remedy, Service Desk Express, Remedy OnDemand, and RemedyForce on the salesforce.com platform) include applications for the service desk, asset and configuration management, change and release, knowledge, self-service, and service-level management. The unified platform, with embedded best practices, guides organizations toward functional maturity, enriched user experiences, and efficient management of IT costs.
CA	CA Technologies' portfolio of service-management solutions delivers ITSM capabilities across the following functional and process areas: service desk, knowledge, change, self-service/end user collaboration, asset and configuration, release and fulfillment, IT asset, IT client, service level, service catalog, service portfolio, and IT financial management. Key CA Technologies products enabling ITSM are CA Service Desk Manager (on-premises or on-demand), CA Service Catalog, and CA IT Asset Manager, which are supported by a common CMDB, workflow and reporting engines, and security models.
Cherwell Software	Cherwell Software offers an ITIL v3 service desk solution that supports IT professionals with out-of-the-box functionality and customization and configurability for users with its Codeless Business Application Technology platform.
FrontRange Solutions	FrontRange offers two solutions. Its IT Service Management with FrontRange solution offers service management from a service desk, and its HEAT product is a help desk solution.
helpLine	The workflow-based helpLine out-of-the-box service management suite covers 13 Pink Verify-certified ITIL v3 processes for ITSM. It also offers function- and industry-specific solutions for service management in non-IT areas such as customer service and support centers and field service management (thus improving any service process). helpLine also has incorporated workforce management into its solution.
Hewlett-Packard	Hewlett-Packard's Service Manager is an integrated service management software suite that enables IT to improve service levels, balance resources, control costs, and mitigate risk exposure to the organization. It has a set of modules and components to manage the IT service life cycle.
Hornbill	Hornbill offers three ITSM solutions, each designed for different levels of IT service management maturity. Supportworks applications enable customers to get up and running quickly. Human Touch features improve the service experience, while workflow automates ITSM processes. The configurable Supportworks platform and design tools enable customers to tailor the application or build service desks for HR, facilities, customer service, and other areas of the business.
IBM	IBM product capabilities include service request fulfillment, incident, problem, change, configuration, and release management. Comprehensive IT asset management capabilities include both hardware life-cycle management and software license management. These capabilities are available under an on-premises license model and a subscription-based SaaS model. Service desk for the SMB marketplace is also available through a service desk appliance product.

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 3 ITSM Support Tool Vendors (Cont.)

Vendor	Capabilities
ICCM	ICCM's e-Service Desk is a configurable in-house or SaaS service management solution that sits on top of the Metastorm Business Process Management Software and provides practical functionality through the extension of business technology into critical business processes. The pragmatic approach delivers turnkey capabilities while helping evolve IT as a line-of-service.
iET Solutions	iET Solutions offers an ITSM solution with additional modules for process analysis and optimization, smartphone accessibility, phone system integration, and entitlement-based software asset management.
InteQ	The InfraDesk solution of InteQ is a SaaS Service Desk that covers IT service management, managing the entire life cycle of a service.
LANDesk	The LANDesk Service Desk solution is a process-driven, ITIL-verified solution encompassing any combination of service management processes — such as incident, problem, and change management in one solution. It combines out-of-the-box functionality with codeless configuration capability and the ability to automate processes as required. LANDesk Service Desk also has integration to the LANDesk systems management and security products and other industry toolsets. LANDesk Service Desk suite is available as on-premises and SaaS.
ManageEngine	ManageEngine's ServiceDesk Plus is an ITIL-ready help desk solution with asset management capabilities.
Microsoft	Microsoft offers System Center Service Manager as part of its Microsoft System Center product portfolio. The solution is a service desk solution. It delivers a platform for automating and adapting ITSM best practices.
Novell	Novell Service Desk provides industry recognized best practices (ITIL) out of the box, to help IT organizations more proactively manage services. It offers incident, problem, change, configuration, and knowledge management and is integrated with Novell Endpoint Management solutions and other external systems.
Numara Software	Numara offers ITSM with its Footprints solution. Numara also offers FootPrints, a competitor of FrontRange's HEAT help desk solution.
OTRS	OTRS is an open source ITSM solution that allows customer relationship management and service request management.
Prolin	Prolin provides customers facing HP Service Desk end-of-life with a seamless, risk-free continuance to ITIL-based ITSM-as-a-service, for on-premises or cloud-based computing.
Staff&Line	EasyVista.com (Staff&Line) is an integrated enterprise ITSM SaaS solution that covers the entire service life cycle (15 ITIL v3 processes verified by Pink Elephant), including IT asset and configuration management. Through its codeless approach, EasyVista allows agile customization, rapid implementation, seamless upgrades, and TCO reduction.
Service-now	Service-now offers enterprise IT service management automation, data center and cloud services management, as well as social IT through SaaS.
SysAid	SysAid's IT help desk software provides IT administrators with a variety of tools to better manage their infrastructure and centralize user data, service request history, hardware, and software inventory into a single, accessible web interface. The solution is available as a hosted on-demand service (SaaS) solution.
Symantec	Symantec's ServiceDesk is a solution based on Symantec Workflow for process automation and end user self-service requests. It provides incident, problem, change, and release management best practices.

Figure 3 ITSM Support Tool Vendors (Cont.)

Vendor	Capabilities
TechExcel	TechExcel ServiceWise streamlines IT service desk activities and automates business process management with configurable workflows, advanced process approvals, asset management, and integrated knowledge management. The point-and-click interface enables businesses to dynamically customize processes.
USU	USU's Valuation suite offers solutions for knowledge-based service management within four major topic areas: Service Economics (service portfolio management, service catalog, and IT financial management for calculating, budgeting, and chargeback of service costs); Service Asset Lifecycle Management (IT asset management, software license management, contract management, procurement); Service Operations (incident, problem, and change management, request fulfillment, configuration management); and Service Monitoring (service-level management, monitoring of IT services and related assets).
VMware	The VMware Service Manager solution enables IT organizations to deliver service excellence across both physical and virtual environments. Organizations can implement ITIL best practices to deliver IT and business services using an open and configurable platform.

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Additional Vendor Screening To Determine Commitment And Leverage

To understand what kind of technology partner your vendor is going to be over the long term, assessing them purely on your own needs and wants isn't enough. In particular, Forrester recommends an additional layer of vendor screening to determine commitment and leverage:

- **Determine the commitment and financial stability of your vendor.** Selecting a committed and financially stable vendor is critical given the long-term nature of ITSM support tools. Forrester recommends those that are not only profitable but have been in this business for more than three years. If the company is privately held, it doesn't need to disclose its annual revenue, but to gauge their success, try to uncover if the company is growing and at what percentage. For public companies, understand the revenue split between licenses and services. If a higher percentage is spent on licenses, the vendor is more serious about product development than system integration or custom work.
- **Understand your vendor's staffing breakdown to validate their commitment.** Beyond revenues from licenses or spending on research and development, go one layer deeper. Understand the vendor's level of product commitment by asking for a breakdown of employees by executive management, sales, product development, engineering, technical support, and professional services. Seek out vendors for which the majority of staffing resources are engineers and technical support rather than sales, executives, and managers.

- **Investigate the vendor’s sales model to understand how well you are supported.**

Understanding your vendor’s sales model can give you a good indication during the negotiation phase if you’re dealing with a direct sales force or working with a partner of the vendor. Some customers prefer to deal with the direct sales team of a company, and others might prefer partners who have more regional focus and can play implementation and support roles.

- **Find independent customer references to gain a more objective view.** While many vendors have established customer reference programs, remain cautious, since these are not always objective or complete. Find customer references that are independent and that can offer both positive and negative experiences with the vendors in question.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAKE A DECISION

After much of the work on continuously updating, gathering, analyzing, and weighing the pros and cons of each solution against the other is done, the evaluation team must recommend a solution. Ideally, select two vendors, as it allows a bit more flexibility during your negotiation phase. Upon selecting the two final vendors, the contract negotiator will move into action for final contract discussions. Remember to document, understand, question, and ask for proof from the final vendors so that your decision can be supported, justified, and explained. Your decision will impact many organizations, functions, and in the end, your IT group’s reputation.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ A 2010 Forrester survey showed that functionality and cost drive software purchase decisions. See the February 12, 2010, “[The State Of Enterprise Software And Emerging Trends: 2010](#)” report.
- ² The service desk market generated more than \$1.3 billion in 2008 and is expected to grow at about 10%. However, the market segment has experienced very little innovation in the past few years and is filled with vendors that have all developed tools that look very similar. See the March 22, 2010, “[Market Overview: IT Service Management Support Tools](#)” report.
- ³ Forrester’s Process Maturity Model is a maturity-based assessment designed as a starting point to help organizations identify their current state as a necessary first step in reaching their desired state or process maturity. The assessment is designed to evaluate key operational and process activities and provide a snapshot of maturity as a baseline that I&O professionals can use to create process improvement plans. See the November 5, 2010, “[Introducing The Forrester IT Service Management Maturity Assessment Model](#)” report.
- ⁴ The leader should be drawn from middle management with experience in managing a budget, defining requirements and objectives, and coordinating a team.

- ⁵ Forrester's IT Service Management Support Tool Product Comparison is a tool to help you compare and evaluate ITSM support tools. See the January 27, 2011, "[Forrester's ITSM Support Tools Product Comparison](#)" report.
- ⁶ Forrester's RFP Template For IT Service Management Support Tools And Implementation Services is a tool that provides a starting point for thinking about sections to include in an RFP for IT service management (ITSM) support tools and implementation services. See the January 27, 2011, "[RFP Template For IT Service Management Support Tools And Implementation Services](#)" report.