

The human experience of IT service management

Putting people first in your digital transformation





Businesses that put empathy and emotional intelligence at their heart outperform their more robotic rivals by 20%¹¹

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Technology absolutely has to be in the service of humans, not the other way around. This is where automation comes in—automating all the mundane, repeatable, error-prone tasks, that frankly no human wants to do anyway.

Paul Hardy, Evangelist, Chief Innovation Office, ServiceNow



People must be at the center of digital transformation

Radical changes in how and where we do business—sparked by a worldwide pandemic—have sped up need for digital transformation. But successful transformation doesn't just involve new technologies. People drive the change. They play a foundational, critical role in enabling organizations to achieve business resilience, fuel innovation, and provide excellent customer experiences. A recent ServiceNow report found that providing positive employee experiences drives real results for organizations in terms of productivity, retention, and customer satisfaction.¹

But positive workforce experiences can easily be derailed if employees are saddled with technology, tools, and processes that don't let them work efficiently and painlessly.

The Impact of empathy

Happy employees are integral to increased customer satisfaction, productivity, and the bottom line. According to several recent studies:

- 
87% of CEOs agree
 the company's financial performance is tied to empathy²
- 
Happy workers were 13% more productive
 than their unhappy counterparts³
- 
29% of employees
 wish organizations would act with more empathy⁴

Human-centered IT service management enables business innovation

Today, human-centered IT service management, defined as putting technology in the service of humans, represents an innovative way for organizations to structure, deliver, and measure IT services—and provide the positive employee experiences that generate business results and digital transformation success.

Not your typical approach to IT

With a focus on people, human-centered IT service management differs sharply from how IT departments have typically worked. Too often, IT teams have implemented and deployed technology because the IT department liked it—not because people wanted or needed the technology. It used to be fine for IT to adopt technology without ever communicating with the business. Afterwards, IT teams would wonder why employees in finance or HR complained, “We don’t like this. It doesn’t work the way we want it to. It doesn’t do what we want it to do.” Then, business users would go rogue without informing IT and purchase technology that they did want to use.

With human-centered IT service management, IT no longer stifles business innovation. Instead, IT becomes an enabler, allowing people to work seamlessly and frictionlessly.



Human-centered IT service management: the great differentiator

Human-centered IT service management is based on the principals of human-centered design, a framework for creating products and services to meet the specific needs of clients, users, or customers.

The core principals of human-centered design include:

- ✓ A dedication to improving the human experience
- ✓ Reducing stress
- ✓ Avoiding discomfort for clients, users, or customers⁵

Human-centered IT service management is the great differentiator and provides enterprises with competitive advantage. Why? It improves the productivity of users by incorporating human-centered design concepts to streamline IT processes. It can then be used to structure IT services and products that are designed to be intuitive, easy to use, and created to provide exactly the level of service to match the need.

Companies that embrace human-centered IT service management are dedicated to considering the shifting needs of customers and workforces when defining and delivering IT service experiences.

The goal is to create processes and experiences that harness technology to serve—not impede—employee experiences and customer experiences.

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Technology may change rapidly, but people change slowly. The principals [of design] come from understanding of people.

Donald A. Norman, Director, The Design Lab,
University of San Diego



What's stopping enterprises from adopting human-centered IT service management?

The simple answer? Lack of trust.

Paul Hardy, Evangelist, Chief Innovation Office, at ServiceNow, who has worked with many organizations, observed, "The IT department in the past was not trusted. They put up barriers because they hadn't tested a solution and weren't certain it worked. IT was perceived as all the things that effectively slowed down and stifled business innovation."

Building trust requires transparency, openness, and communication. As IT departments embrace human-centered IT service management, they build trust and become enablers and valuable advisors for the enterprise.



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While leaders spend considerable time and effort trying to envision markets and pushing out innovation, empathy can often generate simple, yet breakthrough ideas.

John Gerzema, CEO, The Harris Poll

Human-centered leadership: Listen and learn

As empathetic leaders, we know it's our duty to help support our workforces, clear a runway for them to do their best work, and ensure that our teams stay balanced, focused, and productive. While our first instincts for ensuring employee happiness usually focus on perks and recognition, leaders have an opportunity to make work lives better every single day by applying the principles of human-centered design.

How can leaders create more human IT service management experiences for their workforces?

It all starts with empathy and active listening. Through direct observation and feedback, learn these key things about the humans you lead:

- What does your day-to-day work experience look like?
- What does a "perfect" work day look like to you in terms of people, processes and technology?
- What persistent pain points do you experience at work?
- Are our processes designed in a way that is intuitive to how you work as an individual and with your teams?
- Are technology solutions reasonably easy to use? Do they accomplish the tasks you need to use them for?
- Are processes designed in a way that is intuitive to how you work as an individual and for your teams?

Increased workforce stress and the impact of empathy

Between juggling work, family, uncertainty, and increased job demands, employees are reporting stress, exhaustion, and burnout like never before. Here are findings from recent research⁶:

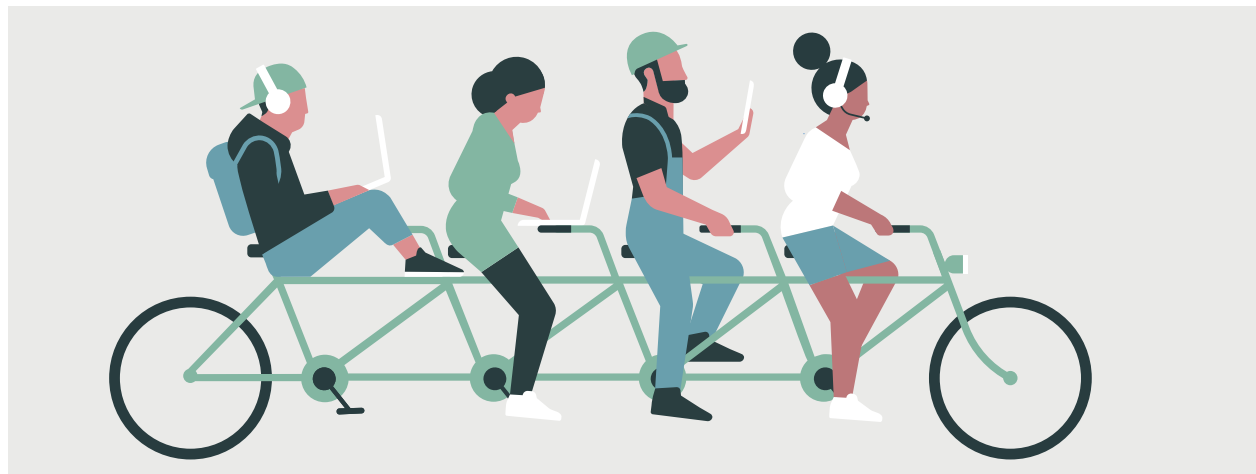
43% of employees (both remote and in a physical workplace) experience burnout and fatigue

59% of employees and business leaders say their organization has taken at least some measures to guard against burnout

46% of parents reported their stress level is higher

28% of adults without children say their stress level is higher

70% of employed adults say work is a significant source of stress in their lives (up from 64% in 2019)



Observation is key.

What people say and what they do can sometimes be at odds, especially when it comes to tools and processes they use daily. They can be so accustomed to how things are that they no longer give processes a second thought even if they are cumbersome, overly complex, and time-consuming. A day in the life “ride along” is always eye-opening. Follow people throughout a typical day. You will gain incredible insight into what is working and what’s not.

Next, review your team structures, work methodologies, and service delivery practices, checking in often.

It’s important to identify ways to increase intuitive, friction-reducing work experiences for your employees.

And make it personal.

Don’t send out a long survey or cold email. Set up time (or have your functional leaders set up time) to talk one-on-one with your people. Then, you’ll be on the path to fostering a human-centered IT service management culture.

The solution? Empathy.

80% of employees, HR professionals and CEOs agreed in a recent study that an empathetic workplace has a positive impact on business performance, motivating workers and increasing productivity.⁷



Stressful world, stressed-out customers

The post-COVID effects on how we work and live have impacted more than just our workforce. Customers expect more human and efficient services today:

90% of consumers

regard resolution as their most important customer service issue⁸

59% of consumers

care more about customer experiences when determining purchases and loyalty than pre-pandemic⁹

71% of customers believe businesses that have shown more care and empathy this year have gained more loyalty¹⁰

Human-centered services: Why every customer experience matters

Employees aren't the only ones working through unprecedented times. Customers are humans, too, and each one has their own stressors, unique experiences, and needs.

How can leaders create more human IT service management experiences for customers?

The same empathy-forward approach for workforces applies to customers, too. As an IT leader, explore the following questions directly with customers through interviews, observation, and co-creation exercises:

- What does your typical customer experience look like?
- What does a "perfect" customer experience look like to you? How does it feel? How are you treated?
- What pain points do you experience with our services?
- Are our services, technology, and products designed in a way that is intuitive to your needs? What works well (and doesn't)?

When you prioritize listening to the *voice of the customer*, you can use their feedback to review how you structure, deliver, and measure IT services.

Flip your perspective. Instead of looking at how to frame and deliver your products and services to customers, focus on creating the best experience for them.

In today's competitive marketplace, making customer experience conversations a part of your IT service delivery DNA is a smart business decision. With human-centered IT service management, listening to customers is woven into processes and interactions as a standard.

Technology can help make these critical customer connections. Consider chatbots (make sure they have "human" features like Natural Language Understanding and Natural Language Processing), user forums, websites, social channels, and review sites to gather feedback opportunities.

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Empathy makes you
a better innovator.

Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft

Leadership is about
empathy. It is about having
the ability to relate to and
connect with people for the
purpose of inspiring and
empowering their lives.

Oprah Winfrey

Human-centered leaders: You matter, too

Ask any leader about who comes first on their priority list—customers, employees, or themselves? They'll likely quote author and motivational speaker, Simon Sinek, "Leaders eat last." While the mantra is a powerful one for reminding us to get out of our heads and think about the people we lead and serve, it's important to remember that even leaders deserve human-centered experiences at work.

The empathy and respect we give ourselves as leaders together sets the stage for how we expect our teams to treat themselves—and our customers. By addressing our own pain as leaders and putting ourselves in the place of our employees and customers, we power-up our empathy into a business-changing powerhouse. That ripple effect creates the potential for happier leaders, happier employees, and happier customers.

How can you lead IT service management experiences that serve you?

Ask yourself these questions to ensure you're leading with your own human experience in mind:

- What would my experience be as our customer?
- What data, information, and intelligence would reduce my stress and empower me more to lead?
- What don't I know about my teams, technology, processes, and customers that I wish I did?
- What does a "perfect" customer experience look like? How does it feel?
- What persistent pain points do I experience as a leader?
- Are the services, products, and technologies we're employing intuitive, flexible and solving my needs as a leader? What works well (and doesn't)?

Create a work session for yourself to address these questions. Consider how you can redesign your strategies, methodologies, teams, technology, and processes to align with the visibility, information, and metrics you need to transform your company's IT service delivery to be more human-centered.

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I think the biggest problem is people ask, 'How can we take IT from the past and convert it to work in the future?' The reality is that many things no longer need to be done because they can be automated, integrated, or done differently.

Paul Hardy, Evangelist, Chief Innovation Office, ServiceNow

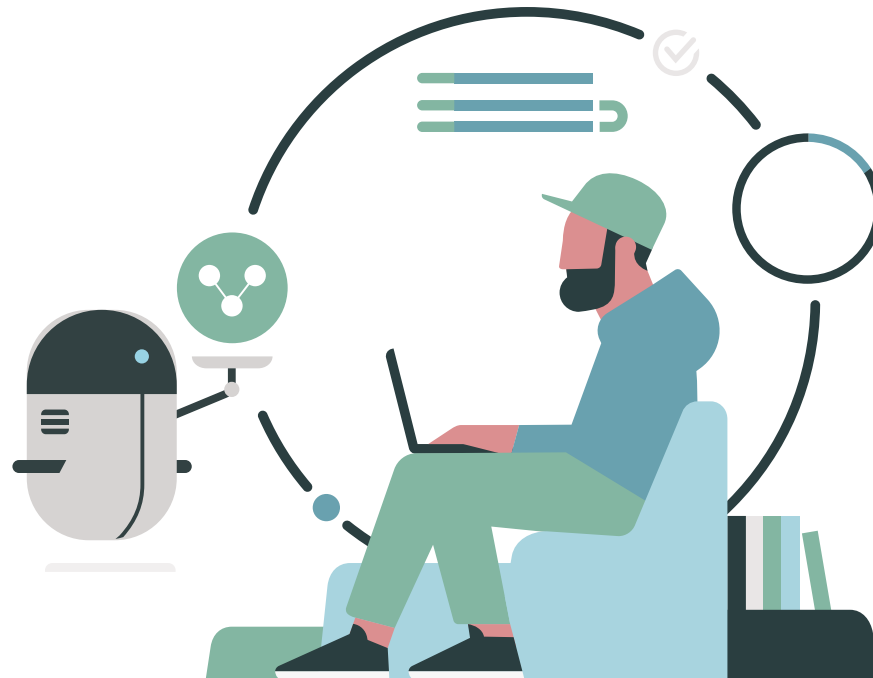
Getting started with human-centered IT service management

So, beyond the words, how do you put this concept into practice? As an evangelist with the ServiceNow innovation Office, Paul Hardy has sound advice: Start where you are.

Rethink what's possible

Paul has seen companies try to start with the mindset of taking existing IT operations and making slight tweaks. But implementing human-centered IT service management requires redefining IT from the ground up. IT organizations need to define what “good” looks like and then examine what's in place and determine what will need to be changed.

He observed, “I think the biggest problem is people ask, 'How can we take IT from the past and convert it to work in the future?' The reality is that many things no longer need to be done because they can be automated, integrated, or done differently.”



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IT service management technology, alone, won't transform a business. What it will do is protect and mitigate some risk and add a bit of engagement to customer care.

Paul Hardy, Evangelist, Chief Innovation Office, ServiceNow

Human-centered IT service management isn't about technology

IT leaders need to have conversations with IT teams and people across the business. Ask, "Are we doing right by our customers, our clients and partners?"

Human-centered IT service management at the enterprise level should center on providing technology that works the way consumer-focused technology works. Consider, for example, how people use mobile phone apps. They can download an app, use it for a week, and delete it if they don't like it. The enterprise world needs to move toward this goal by:

- ✓ Thinking about how people interact with technology
- ✓ Speak to people constantly about their experiences
- ✓ Evaluate outcomes

Paul Hardy said, "Embracing human-centered IT management isn't actually a conversation about technology at all. IT service management technology, alone, won't transform a business. What it will do is protect and mitigate some risk and add a bit of engagement to customer care."

To truly transform IT service management, IT leaders need to take an enterprise-wide view and start focusing on the differentiator of better processes that are still auditable and governable.

- Better processes are connected processes.
- Better processes are simpler, frictionless processes that take less time
- Better processes require people to spend less time interacting with IT.



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We design our products not just based on a deep understanding of how our users work and what they need, but also respecting them as humans; they are so much more than ‘users’. That is human-centered design.

Paul Hong, Director of Product Design,
ServiceNow

Human-centered IT management design in action at ServiceNow

For ServiceNow, where our company mantra is “Make work, work better for people,” human-centered IT service management is much more than just a concept. Paul Hong, Director of Product Design at ServiceNow, leads design for all ServiceNow IT products. Paul said, “Human-centered design is intrinsic to my team. It’s our charter. It’s what we do.”

He observed that it’s still fairly rare for an enterprise software company to invest so heavily in experience design because until recently user experience was not a huge consideration when creating enterprise technology. ServiceNow is a different breed of enterprise company, having almost 400 people in its Experience Organization, including UX designers, visual designers, UX researchers, content designers, and writers, all dedicated to creating world-class experiences rivaling the most admired consumer brands.

When creating or updating products, designers and researchers within the Experience Organization get in the trenches and visit ServiceNow customers at their workplaces (or do so remotely if in-person is not possible) to watch how they work; learn the nuances of each customers’ ecosystem; and discover friction points, unmet opportunities, and unsolved problems we can address. It is key to get this direct customer exposure. “People never use a product 100% the way you intend them to,” noted Paul. “Knowing how people have tailored our products and adapted their workflows to suit their particular contexts are key data points for us to reimagine and innovate our experiences.”



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AI and all technology for that matter should elevate and enhance the human experience. That is the very heart of being human-centered

Paul Hong, Director of Product Design, ServiceNow

Using human-centered design to tailor ServiceNow ITSM

ServiceNow ITSM used to sport a more classic user interface (UI), affectionately nicknamed “lists & forms,” but the next-generation ITSM Agent Workspace was created by re-thinking the service agent experience. Now, it’s a much more modern UI and incorporates human-centered design in large part due to extensive research with real users.

We’re not stopping there. ServiceNow’s commitment to world-class experiences is a never-ending effort. “Humans are emotional beings. Pure function is not enough. If a product is not pleasing to the senses, it is perceived as less intuitive, less effective, and less satisfying.” said Paul. With Agent Workspace and all our products, we continue to evolve the UI architecture and visual design quality to resonate with people at an emotional level.

For all product experiences, we focus on three general principles developed by the Experience Organization:



Focus: help people focus on what’s important, hide complexity through automation, and make everything elegantly simple and inclusive



Flow: generate an effortless state of flow for people where they are doing things at a level even they hadn’t imagined



Love: create emotional connection through beauty, attention to detail, and moments of joy

One thing to call out about the Focus principle is the aspect we call “inclusive.” A key component of that is accessibility, which is something we weave into the experiences we create. There is nothing more human-centered than supporting and embracing the diversity of perceptual, cognitive, and physical abilities across all the people we serve.

ServiceNow is also leveraging cutting-edge AI in ITSM and all other areas. AI has incredible potential but also poses significant challenges when it comes to human empowerment, unintended bias, informed consent, and transparency. With the mind-boggling possibilities, scale, and power of AI, human-centered design is even more critical. This is top of mind as ServiceNow leverages AI capabilities to automate the mundane and routine and empower people to focus on the more sophisticated and nuanced aspects of their work.



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It's not enough that we build products that function, that are understandable and usable. We also need to build products that bring joy and excitement, pleasure and fun, and, yes, beauty to people's lives.

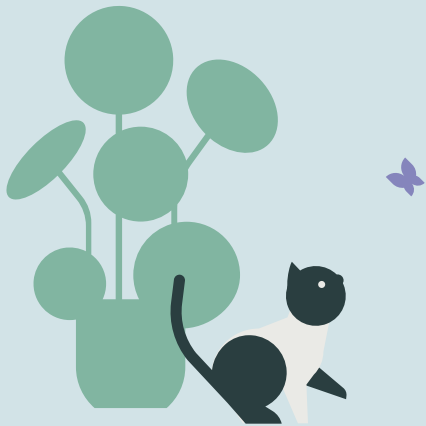
Donald A. Norman, Director, The Design Lab,
University of San Diego

The payoffs of people-first design

To start the human-centered IT service management journey, work with other executive decision-makers to determine what your empathy-forward IT organization will look like and how it will function.

Only then does technology come into play.

But, if you use a solution like ServiceNow ITSM that embodies human-centered IT service management, you'll likely resolve critical IT issues faster—positively impacting cost, speed, and productivity. And by putting people first, you can achieve better business resilience, fuel innovation, and provide excellent customer experiences.



Want to further explore the benefits of human-centered IT service management?

Learn more:

Ebook: Deliver smart, responsive IT services in an always changing world

Ebook: Broken to Boundless

About ServiceNow

ServiceNow provides the smarter way to workflow. Our cloud-based platform and solutions deliver digital workflows that create great experiences and unlock productivity to approximately 6,900 enterprise customers worldwide, including almost 80% of the Fortune 500. Visit us at **ServiceNow.com**.

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