



THE NEXT-GEN SERVICE DESK IN THE AI-FIRST ERA

TRANSITIONING FROM A REACTIVE ASSISTANT TO
A STRATEGIC BUSINESS ALLY

Abstract

This View Point presents a strategic exploration of the IT Service Desk's evolving role in a dynamic tech landscape — describing the shift from reactive support to a proactive, AI-powered enabler of business value. It spans four horizons of innovation, offering insights into how enterprises can reimagine support and align IT with broader organizational goals.

INTRODUCTION

In today's AI-first landscape, businesses need smarter, more efficient IT support. Traditional service desk models struggle to deliver the agility modern organizations require. The next-gen Service Desk harnesses AI to drive a paradigm shift, spanning automation and self-service to predictive analytics and conversational AI, empowering support agents and redefining IT's relationship with the business.

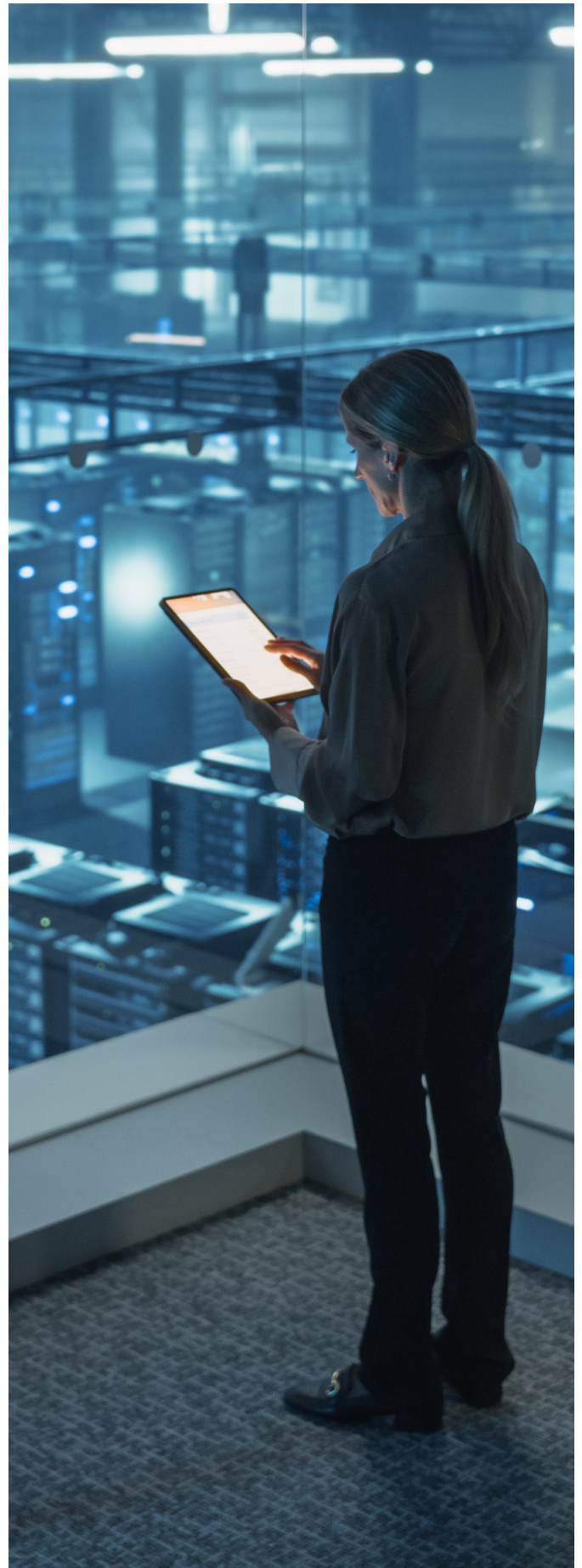
PROBLEM STATEMENT

The traditional Service Desk has long served as corporate IT's frontline — resolving issues and troubleshooting challenges. While foundational, this model is misaligned with today's digitally empowered workforce. Enterprises invest heavily in digital transformation, yet the Service Desk remains focused on optimizing tickets rather than experiences. This disconnect is a business risk. This View Point illuminates the path forward: repositioning IT as a strategic partner and catalyst for the future of work, moving beyond problem resolution towards problem prevention.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT-GEN SERVICE DESK POWERED BY AI ASSISTANTS

Currently, organizations are moving beyond cost-only thinking, setting the stage for a Service Desk environment powered by advanced AI assistants. The Next-Gen Service Desk illustrates the journey from conventional support to a future where it operates invisibly yet efficiently transitioning to a fully autonomous, intelligent service delivery ecosystem.

By harnessing conversational AI, machine learning, and predictive analytics, organizations can optimize support operations, minimize manual intervention, and elevate the end-user experience in support of agility, scalability, and operational excellence.



BEYOND BREAK-FIX: THE RISE AND EVOLUTION OF THE INTELLIGENT SERVICE DESK



HORIZON 1

The Past: Traditional Service Desk

Traditional Service Desks operated with a reactive mindset, stepping in only when users reported problems. This approach often involved high operational expenses, as teams required extensive training and physical infrastructure. Prolonged downtime or confusion over status updates, repeatedly describing their issues to multiple agents, led to a sub-par end-user experience. Organizations struggled to improve services due to sparse and fragmented data, limiting opportunities for meaningful analysis and change. The inefficient processes and manual ticket handling led to backlogs, and it also restricted and impacted strategic contributions.

HORIZON 2

The Transitional Era: Automated and Intelligent Service Desk

The support has transitioned to digital platforms, where centralized ticketing systems streamline the management of requests, which help reduce waiting time. Self-service portals empower users to resolve simple issues and predictable tasks. AI-powered virtual agents handle routine queries, basic resolution and automatic ticket deflection, additionally agent assist tools provide real-time suggestions. While efficiency has improved and response times have decreased, organizations still grapple with predominantly reactive workflows and information silos thus giving rise to the need for human intervention.

HORIZON 3

The Now: AI-Powered and Autonomous Service Desk

Looking ahead, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is set to transform Service Desks by enabling autonomous actions. Advanced AI is already shifting from assisting to automating majority of the functions. It will help anticipate user's needs, deliver predictive support, and implement zero-touch solutions, automatically resolving recurring incidents with humans in the loop. Machine learning algorithms will continuously learn from new data, and generative AI will facilitate smooth integration across tools, providing holistic support experiences that adapt to evolving business contexts.

HORIZON 4

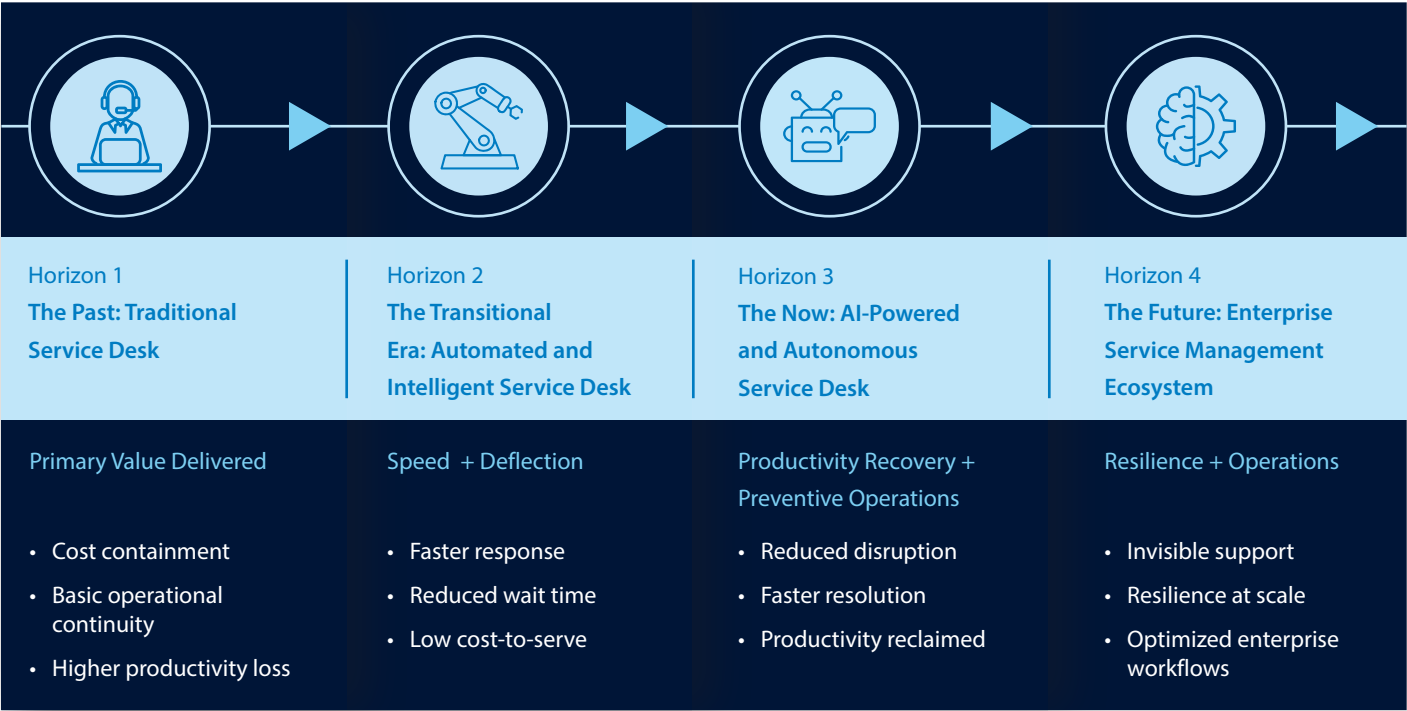
The Future: Enterprise Service Management Ecosystem

The Service Desk of the future will become an invisible yet essential component of a fully interconnected enterprise ecosystem. Highly capable Agentic AI will act as an integral part of unified ecosystem with seamless integration for all services. AI-as-a-partner (AlaaP) will be integral to offering actionable and data-driven insights. It will help streamline workflows, bridging different functions, departments, and technologies, delivering seamless and proactive support that will align closely with broader organizational goals.

INCREASING BUSINESS VALUE ACROSS THE SERVICE DESK EVOLUTION

Each horizon represents a distinct shift in IT’s contribution progressively unlocking higher enterprise value, from cost containment to strategic orchestration.

Increasing Business Value



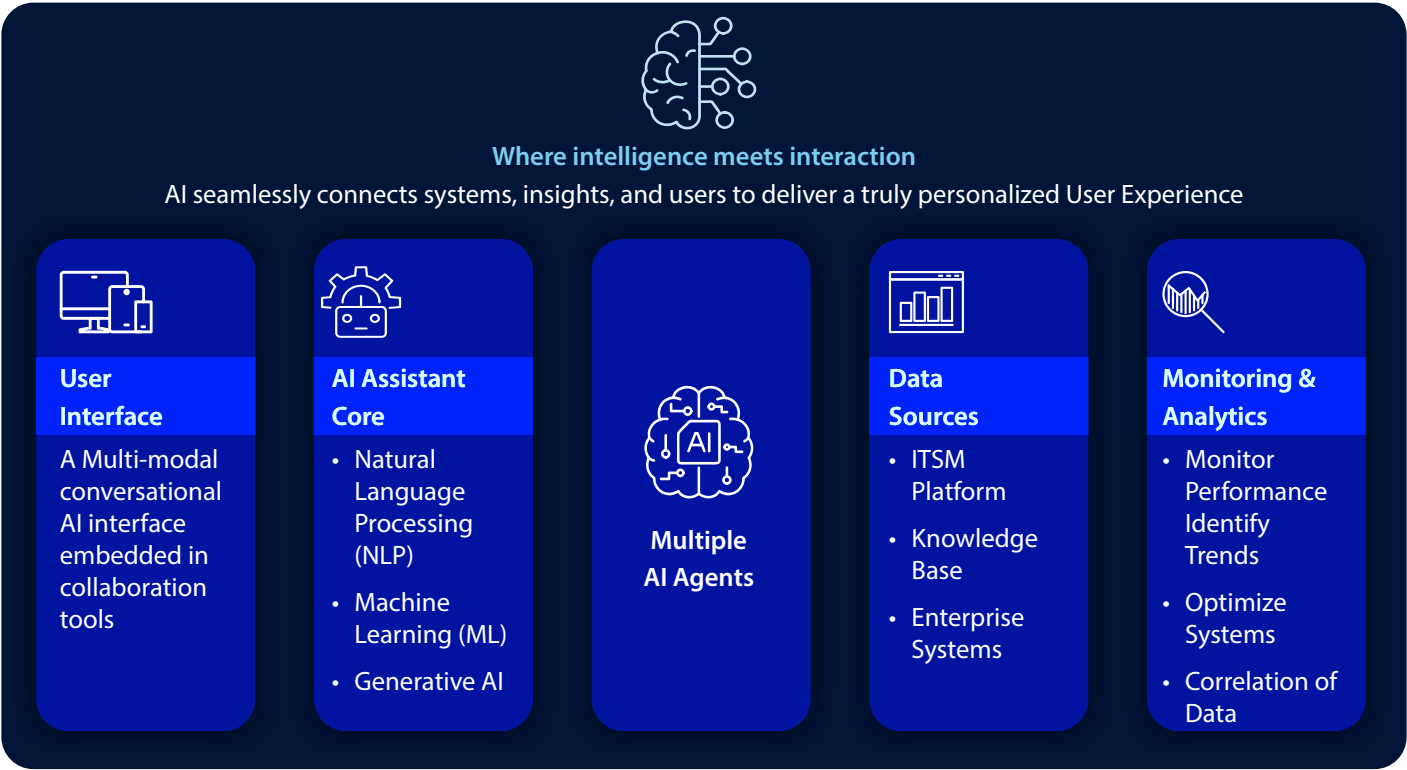


AI-POWERED SERVICE DESK: ECOSYSTEM OF THE FUTURE

Reference Architecture (Conceptual)

Users interact via a conversational interface embedded in collaboration tools. Behind the scenes, an AI assistant applies NLP, machine learning, and generative AI to understand requests,

automate actions, and deliver intelligent responses grounded in enterprise data sources such as ITSM platforms and knowledge bases. A monitoring and analytics layer continuously optimizes the system, creating a self-improving, closed-loop support model.



BENEATH THE SURFACE: THE INTELLIGENCE POWERING NEXT- GEN SUPPORT WITH AI

The Next-Gen Service Desk is not an incremental upgrade, but a fundamental reimagination of IT support—shifting from reactive break-fix to a proactive, intelligent, and value-driven model. At its core is the AI assistant, acting not as a single tool but as an orchestration of advanced, interconnected technologies.

Natural Language Processing

This user-facing layer uses NLP and NLU to interpret intent and context, enabling natural multi-turn conversations. Unlike keyword-based chatbots, the AI assistant asks clarifying questions and recalls past interactions for a personalized experience, which includes:

- Conversational AI capabilities
- Accurately understands user intent regardless of phrasing
- Supports complex, multi-turn dialogues
- Delivers personalized responses with language neutralization

Machine Learning & Analytics

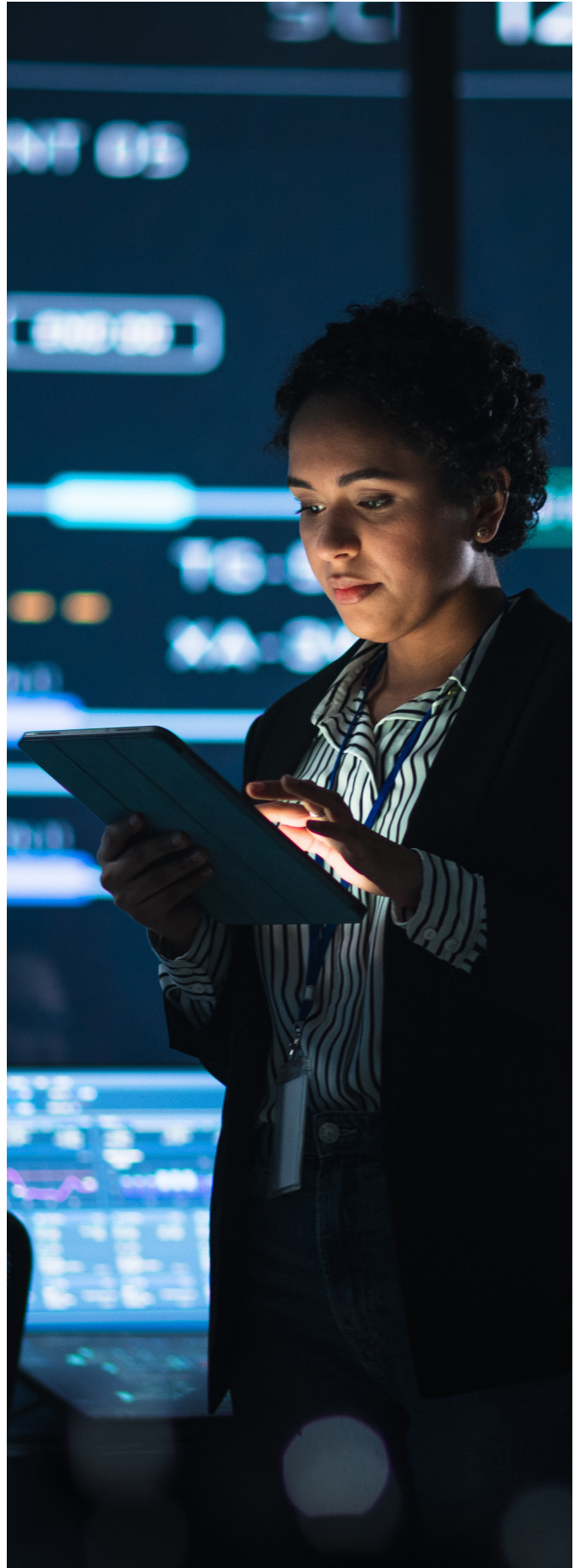
ML serves as the intelligence engine, enabling smarter and more proactive operations:

- Intelligent triage for automated categorization, prioritization, and routing
- Pattern recognition to identify recurring issues
- Predictive maintenance using AI Ops data to prevent failures and downtime

Generative AI & Automation

Generative AI (LLMs) forms the advanced execution layer, enhancing productivity and resolution speed:

- Automated content creation (ticket summaries, communications, knowledge articles)
- AI capabilities providing context-aware recommendations
- Actionable agent-assist insights to significantly reduce resolution time (MTTR)



UNLOCKING INTELLIGENT SUPPORT: EMBRACING THE NEXT-GEN SERVICE DESK

The Service Desk is evolving into an AI-driven support ecosystem powered by Generative AI, NLP, and Machine Learning. This enables contextual understanding, predictive support, and scalable service delivery — creating a proactive, adaptive, and continuously improving model that enhances operational efficiency and elevates user satisfaction.

Key enablers include:

- Strategic repositioning as a value-driven IT enabler
- A multilayered AI architecture integrating NLP, Gen AI, and ML
- End-to-end automation and workflow orchestration
- Sentiment analysis and personalization for superior user experience
- Continuous learning and feedback loops for model refinement
- KPI-driven performance management
- Cross-functional collaboration for holistic support delivery

ENTERPRISE OUTCOMES THROUGH COGNITIVE IT SERVICES FOR A STRATEGIC BUSINESS IMPACT

Strategic impact includes reduced costs, faster resolution, enhanced employee experience, and scalable zero-ops balanced by ecosystem complexity, security risks, and the need for strong AI governance.

AI integration drives four strategic benefits:

1. Significantly lowers operational costs by automating routine tasks and minimizing manual effort
2. Enhanced user experience through personalized, intelligent support
3. Automating repetitive tasks enabling focus on strategic activities
4. Enhancing productivity metrics by lowering resolution time and increasing efficiency



SWOT ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS

AI ORCHESTRATED ENTERPRISE

Capabilities

Invisible Support Layer

Quantification

60-80% of incidents resolved without user awareness

Business Impact

Sharp reduction in disruption; higher employee productivity

Agentic AI Orchestration

70-90% workflows executed autonomously end-to-end

Human effort shifts to strategy, not operations

Cross Domain Workflow Automation

40-60% reduction in cross team handoffs

Faster resolution; less friction across IT, HR, Facilities



WEAKNESS

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Constraints

High Ecosystem Complexity

Quantification

50-100+ system integrations per enterprise

Enterprise Impact

Integration debt; higher design & operational cost

Strong Data Dependency

70-80% AI accuracy directly tied to data quality

Weak data foundations cause downstream AI decisions to degrade at scale

Change Management Challenges

20-30% productivity dip during first 6-12 months

User adoption challenges stemming from capability and trust gap



OPPORTUNITY

EXPERIENCE DRIVEN ENTERPRISE

Opportunity

Enterprise-wide AI Adoption

Quantification

25-40% reduction in cost to serve within 24 months

Value Creation

Opex savings; scalable growth

Experience Led IT (XLAs)

15-25% improvement in experience scores

Strong employee trust and engagement

Self Governing / Zero Ops Operations

50-70% reduction in human interventions

Predominantly autonomous operations designed for resilience at scale



THREATS

SCALABILITY CHALLENGES

Risk

Ethical & Governance Risks

Quantification

10-15% of AI decisions require human override

Exposure

Trust erosion if unchecked

Security & Compliance Exposure

2-3 times larger attack surface via AI integrations

Regulatory penalties; brand risk

Excessive reliance on AI in operations

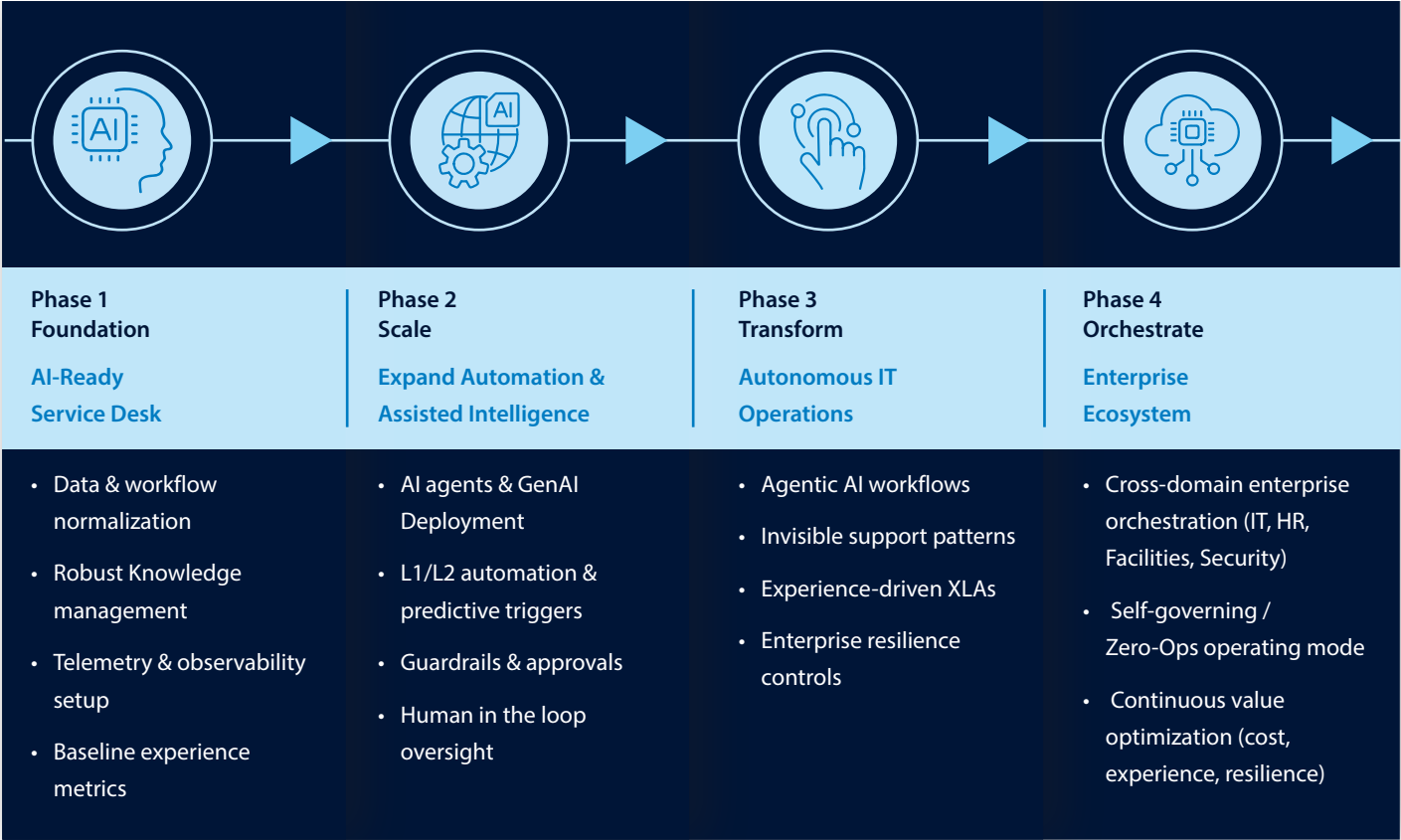
60-80% ops dependency on AI availability

AI outages directly translate into business outages

ADOPTION JOURNEY TO THE NEXT-GEN SERVICE DESK

The adoption of the Next-Gen Service Desk evolves from stabilized operations and AI-driven efficiency to a strategic, autonomous orchestration layer, delivering continuous enterprise value through a progressive, experienced-led transformation.

From Assisted Automation To Autonomous Operations



CONCLUSION: THE NEXT AT WORK SERVICE DESK WITH AI ASSISTANT

The transformation of the Service Desk into a **proactive, intelligent facilitator** marks a defining shift in enterprise IT. **Powered by AI**, it moves beyond issue resolution to **predict challenges, automate solutions, and deliver personalized support**.

Through predictive analytics, automated remediation, and adaptive interfaces, organizations enhance efficiency and responsiveness. Acting as a digital agent, the AI assistant **enables users, optimizes workflows, and aligns IT with business goals**, thus making the Service Desk central to a smarter, integrated workplace.

About the Author



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Senthil Kumar Ganesan is a Digital Workplace Advisor with over two decades of experience in IT. He specializes in Digital Workplace Strategy and Enterprise Transformation, helping organizations modernize legacy environments and adopt future-ready ecosystems. His expertise lies in leveraging advanced technologies to enhance digital experiences, align IT with business goals, and drive sustainable transformation outcomes.

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