

**Employees want
service their way —
here's how to
deliver a digital
support experience
that works**

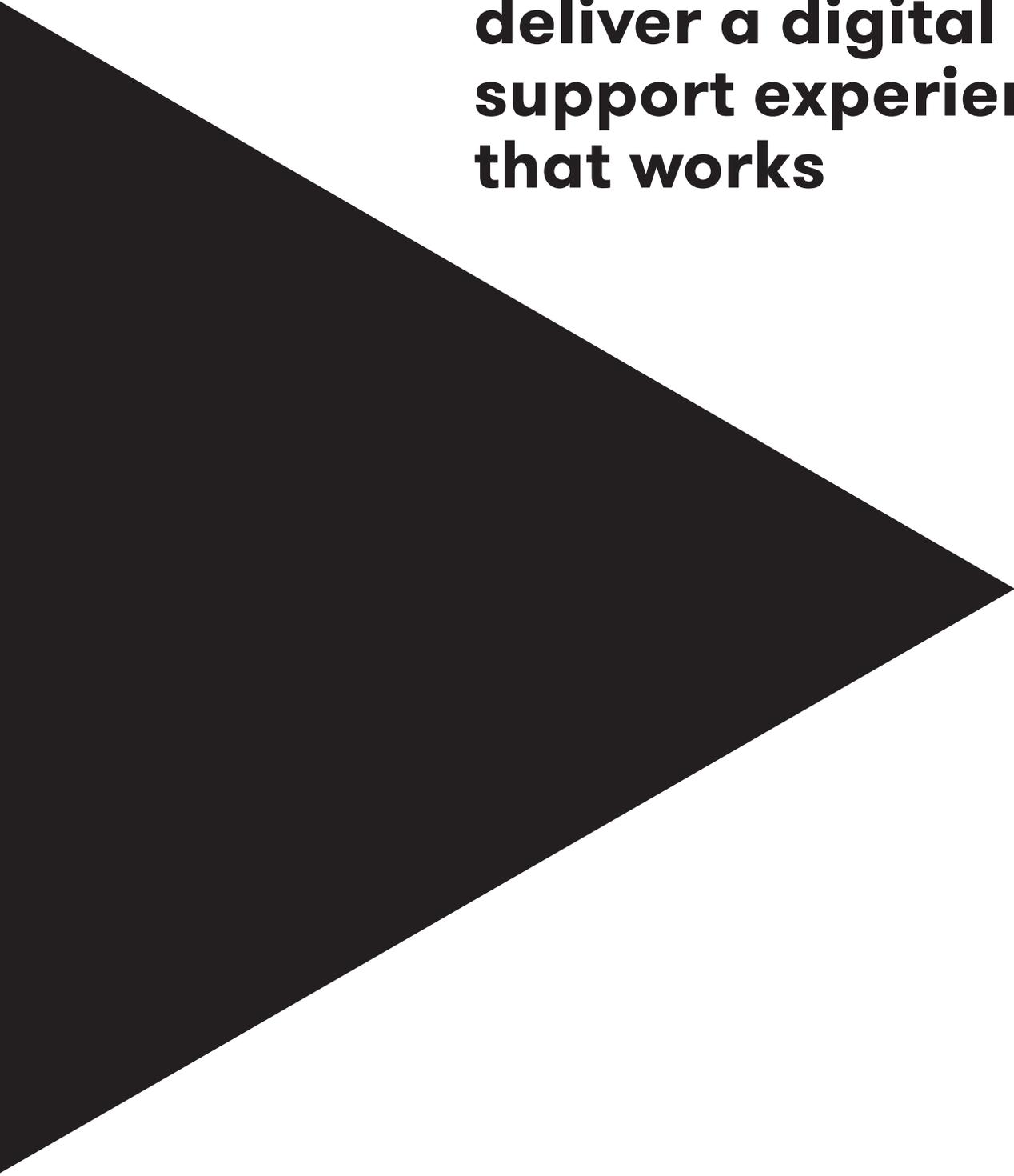


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To address employee support needs, IT departments are increasingly turning to self-service channels. Effective self-serve solutions continue the trend of shifting simple tasks from IT support staff to employees, speeding resolution and boosting user experience while freeing support staff for more complex items.

By employing user-centric design thinking and taking advantage of the raft of new technologies available today — including analytics orchestration and cognitive computing — IT can now deliver solutions that go beyond simple self-serve to provide an even richer experience for employees.

Although digital technologies are redefining how we work and play, one area that is underserved, ironically, is IT support. In many companies, digital technologies are not being optimized to meet employees' support needs. In fact, most IT departments struggle to provide support in the face of ever-decreasing budgets. And employees are feeling that pain.

When it comes to support, employees want easy-to-use options that are consumer-like, fast and enjoyable. But in many corporations, the employee experience is far from that. Employees are often faced with support sprawl — they must interact with diverse support tools, different service desks and apps across corporate functions, which often sit on top of outdated and fragmented channels. In fact, service desk contact volumes are on the upswing as employees feel their environment is more complex now than ever before.¹

To address support and budget challenges, IT departments are increasingly turning to self-service channels. The portal — a tried-and-true option that's been around since the inception of the internet — can be a sound solution, especially when integrated with the best of today's cognitive and analytic technologies to provide a level of personalization that today's employees expect. Enterprises should consider such solutions to provide effective self-serve support while meeting budget constraints.

This paper discusses why now is a good time for enterprises to implement self-serve support, pitfalls to avoid, benefits to enjoy and the characteristics of a successful solution. Those who ignore the opportunity to deploy robust self-service support risk continued user dissatisfaction and rising support costs. But those who move forward with a solution built on user-centric characteristics will position themselves well to meet the growing needs of their employees and the business.

¹ Jon Strobel, C Space survey conducted with worldwide IT decision makers responsible for workplace productivity, March 31, 2016.

Why self-serve now?

Employee experience is becoming an overarching theme in today's enterprises. Many IT departments that are improving digital experiences for their employees are starting with IT support, as that is where user experience hits home. When employees need support, it means their work has been disrupted. The best IT support experience is one that leads an employee right back to work as fast as possible.

As such, effective support solutions are being sought by IT in response to demands from the business — to improve employee productivity, satisfaction and retention — and employees, to improve their work experience. Typically, IT is being asked to deliver all of this within a corporate mandate to reduce costs.

To balance these demands, IT is increasingly turning to do-it-yourself strategies to complement traditional help desk and onsite support. This means shifting repetitive and uncomplicated support tasks to an employee self-serve domain, freeing up support agents to resolve more complex items, thus optimizing cost and time. For this model to succeed, a robust self-help solution is paramount.

A unified self-serve portal solution can be IT's best path for delivering on the self-serve promise. For example, most universities around the world have embraced this model.² With university students being groomed in a self-serve world, and consumers already enjoying personalized apps, it's time for IT to bring the same support experience to workers in the enterprise.

Pitfalls to avoid

From a user experience perspective, not every self-service solution is created equal. Companies should be aware of potential land mines that could challenge a successful self-serve rollout:

- **Outdated support sites.** Although many companies have existing support portals providing basic self-help, many have been in production for years and are built on outdated, nonintuitive models of navigation that don't meet the expectations of today's users. In addition, most corporations operate multiple portals that support different corporate departments, creating support sprawl. This makes it harder for users to remember where to go for help. Further, fragmented sites often lack consistent tools or "look and feel," putting an unnecessary burden on the employee, who isn't able to find support answers quickly.
- **Outdated information.** In terms of the knowledge base, which is the workhorse of any self-serve solution, many enterprises have an abysmal mix of low-quality and disorganized articles that aren't ready for prime time. If users can't find an answer to their problem the first time, or if the answer doesn't resolve the problem, that's a bad experience. Support portals that turn people off may in fact drive help desk volume up — exactly the opposite of what companies want.

² "World's Top Universities Through Student Eyes: Overall Research Findings — Top 500 US & Canada," StudyPortals Intelligence Unit, British Council, 2015. http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/ResearchReport_Through_Student_Eyes_-_Top_500_US_and_Canada_v2.pdf

Big opportunity

In today's environment, up to 66 percent of users feel their current self-serve tools do not bring the right experience because of confusing navigation, slow performance and lack of good content. Users want personalized support options, yet 62 percent of IT organizations have no plans to address this demand.

Source: HPE C Space survey conducted March 31, 2016, with worldwide IT decision makers responsible for workplace productivity.

- **Unnecessary data entry.** Further, self-service solutions that aren't built to take advantage of systemic information already tied to users miss a huge opportunity to personalize and speed up the support experience. For example, to address certain classes of issues, key environmental data related to the employee may be required, such as hardware specification, operating software or configuration of the employee's device. If the self-help site forces the employee to enter, or even worse, to look up information that the system should already know, the self-help site isn't helping at all. Instead, it's wasting the employee's time, killing productivity.
- **Overlooked employees.** Some employees resolve issues themselves. Others lean on support personnel to assist. As such, there will be employees who will likely need to connect (via chat or phone) to a live agent or chatbot. Companies that don't consider the needs of the entire population when moving to self-serve may doom themselves by creating a solution that not enough people will actually use.

Any self-serve solution must address these challenges as the first step in driving employee satisfaction and desired savings. By understanding what land mines to avoid, IT can design self-serve solutions that work. Further, by taking advantage of new technologies — analytics orchestration, cognitive computing — IT can deliver solutions beyond simple self-serve and provide an even richer experience for employees.

Benefits from analytics

Plenty of data and technology exist that can be used to deliver self-serve benefits. The proliferation of monitoring and management products has made capturing the health of IT servers and desktops commonplace. Information is available on application and network usage patterns and resource utilization — such as performance, device health, asset information, problem diagnostics and event logs. This data can be harnessed and translated into meaningful and personalized self-serve use cases that benefit employees and make any do-it-yourself task simpler.

For example, by applying today's big data analytics best practices to collected diagnostics, self-serve solutions can provide personalized dashboards that offer users a real-time, end-to-end view of their ever-changing environment. Analytics-driven personalization can enable a self-serve solution to do amazing things:

- **Direct employees to relevant how-to articles.** The idea is to take an Amazon-like "recommended for you" approach to support. When a monitored event in the employee's environment reaches a warning state, a filter in the knowledge base can identify the best articles relevant to that event, and they can be presented to the employee in a personalized message area.

For example, an employee's device may be running slowly, and the employee doesn't know why. In the background, smart analytics detected that the device's hard drive capacity had crept beyond a certain threshold and triggered the portal (via orchestration) to present an article on how to condense a hard disk. In this case, the user is notified about how to resolve a potential issue before a larger problem surfaces. The experience is personalized to the employee; the self-serve solution knows about the user's device specifics and triggers an appropriate self-serve action, simplifying — if not eliminating — the employee's search-for-support experience.

- **Identify “actionable moments” and guide users to a fix.** As a follow-on to the previous scenario, dashboards can be further personalized by including prompts to scripts or links that address user-specific warnings or trouble that is detected. For example, if the user’s password is about to expire, the self-serve dashboard can point the user to the enterprise’s reset script or automatically invoke it if the person so chooses. In this scenario, users are able to skip searching and reading how to address a problem, and instead jump immediately to the resolution.
- **Suggest how to simplify repetitive tasks to save time.** Application usage and performance data can be integrated into the self-serve solution to create a personalized “Did you know?” approach to help increase employee productivity. For example, an employee may have a set of highly used applications. The system can identify relevant articles pertaining to apps that share common hacks or shortcuts to speed up work, or that other employees already have found useful. Here the solution is self-serving up ideas to optimize the employee’s time — arguably the best support of all.
- **Reinforce that IT is taking good care of employees.** Smart IT groups are now leveraging analytics and workflow orchestration to proactively fix detected problems before they become issues. In this scenario, self-serve solutions that inform employees about items that were resolved automatically on their behalf will go a long way toward guaranteeing satisfaction. For example, if memory is running low on an employee’s device, an automatic request for additional memory can be submitted on his or her behalf. Or if a malware event has affected devices similar to the employee’s, an automatic protective action could be taken to safeguard the employee’s environment.

In both cases, the self-serve solution informs the user. Instead of having employees wonder whether anything is being done, the solution can emphasize how IT is safeguarding employees and freeing them from support tasks. Employees will know they are being well cared for, the same way they care for the business.

Gains from cognitive computing

Not only analytics but cognitive computing also has great potential to improve self-serve solutions. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are already being used throughout the web and are gaining traction in the enterprise. Chatbots, as virtual agents, are starting to act as front-line support in many enterprises. As these technologies continue to mature, they promise to deliver enhanced support capabilities and user experience through self-serve portal solutions.

By embedding artificial intelligence and machine learning, self-serve solutions help users:

- **Find better answers faster.** A virtual assistant dedicated to knowledge-searching can help an employee find the best answer the first time by learning from prior queries. For example, if the employee’s previous search took five attempts to find the right answer, the next time the same search is requested, the assistant will find the right article the first time. The assistant can also be taught to learn typical nomenclature used by the employee, so the next time the employee uses a particular phrase or word — even a nonintuitive request such as “move my .pst file” — the assistant remembers that and immediately fetches the right article. By taking advantage of dedicated agents, a self-serve solution can easily handle requests from employees who span varying levels of technical expertise — from beginner to novice — in a personalized way.

- **Provide assistance based on context.** For employees who are searching for or lingering over specific topics, a proactive chatbot can pop up and a virtual agent can offer guided help, similar to a consumer experience. By integrating a standby chat capability, or one that allows the user to summon a live agent, the solution minimizes user frustration and improves the entire self-serve experience.

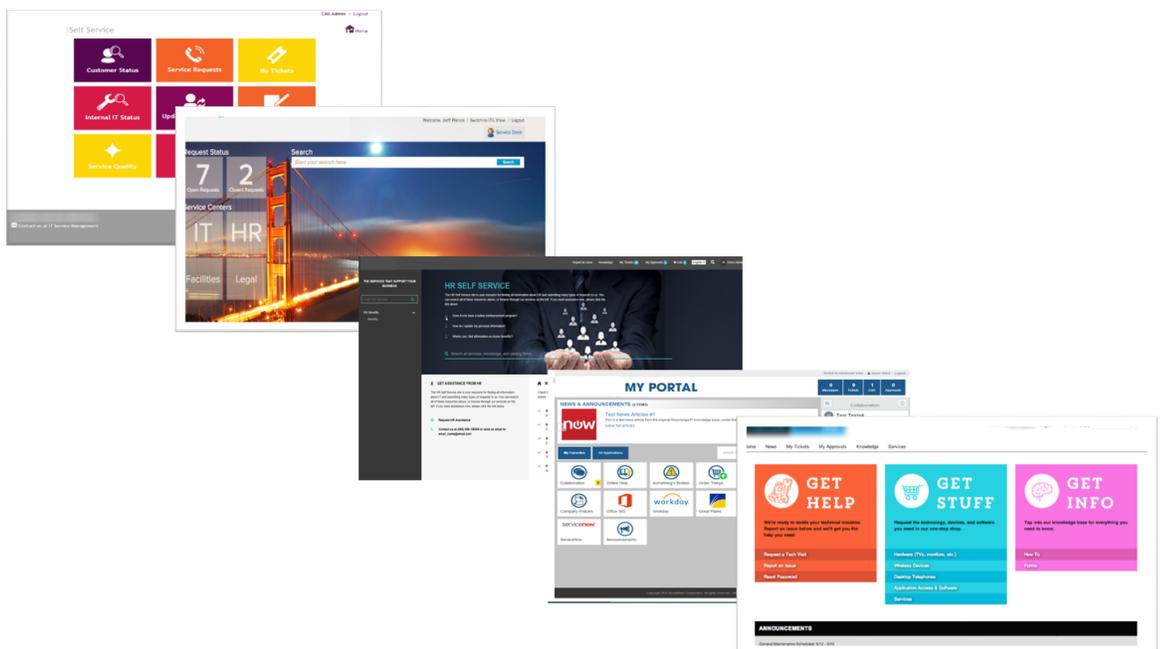
There are many use cases that lend themselves to simplifying and personalizing self-serve support. To pinpoint those that would yield the highest value, IT should understand what people struggle with the most, what problems are distracting them from performing their best, and where efficiencies can be created. Researching service desk incident and trending data is a good first step toward shaping user-centric scenarios and architecting the right technologies to create an optimum self-serve experience and meet financial goals.

What does a good self-serve solution look like?

To successfully implement an effective self-serve solution, IT must consider these imperatives:

- **Put user experience first.** The primary tenet for any self-serve solution is to build it from an employee lens. User-centricity must come first. The design should be visually interesting and emotionally engaging — one that users find enjoyable to use and will gladly revisit. (See **Figure 1.**) The structure should be intuitive, designed from the employee’s perspective. Navigation should be obvious to minimize search time. It is important to engage users early in the design process to solicit feedback; this is essential for ensuring repeated usage, which is the backbone to achieving the enterprise’s productivity and bottom-line goals.

Figure 1. Self-serve solutions should be visually interesting, intuitive and emotionally engaging.



- **Extend into non-IT functions.** End-to-end employee care means a solution that spans non-IT functions. Incorporating corporate functions such as Human Resources and Facilities in the same self-serve solution will provide cohesion across the user's work life.
- **Build on mature knowledge content.** In many ways, a self-serve site is only as good as the knowledge it's built on. How-to information should be tagged and categorized according to the enterprise's environment and support history to promote fast and accurate searching. Articles must be kept up to date via disciplined processes and tested prior to rollout to ensure that users don't encounter low-quality information and become frustrated.
- **Harness technologies to personalize and simplify self-serve tasks.** Building solutions that leverage emerging digital technologies will personalize and speed up the support experience. For example, cognitive technologies and automation can be applied to deliver support that is tuned to contextually match what employees need to get work done. Ask: What would matter most to the individual? The enterprise will benefit as well.

Self-serve offering from DXC Technology: MyWork Portal

Clients no longer want just help desk or onsite support. They are asking for an end-to-end digital solution that optimizes the entire experience for their employees across all possible channels of support — whether that's getting guidance from a self-serve solution, connecting to an agent, engaging with a smartbot, receiving face-to-face support, or having proactive analytics fix issues without users even needing to ask.

DXC Technology's MyWork Portal is a key part of DXC's Digital Support portfolio that takes supporting an enterprise's greatest asset — its people — to the next level. As part of the DXC MyWorkStyle philosophy, we understand that when employees need support, their work has been disrupted. Our well-designed services, across a broad set of options, make sure that the support experience leads employees right back to work as fast as possible.

DXC's MyWork Portal is built on the expertise of DXC professionals who have delivered over 700 client workplace implementations. Our MyWork Portal service provides a unified, personalized, delightful experience. It delivers self-serve options that are contextually simple — adapting to user needs via embedded intelligent analytics and bot automation — and match information and action to the individual employee's needs. And as the underlying technologies evolve, so does the service — ensuring that clients quickly reap the benefits of DXC's intelligent digital platform. With the MyWork Portal service, DXC delivers a transformation that enriches the employee support experience and enables enterprises to achieve their self-service goals and accelerate business outcomes.

About the author



Carol Rizio, lead principal for Workplace & Mobility at DXC Technology, brings innovative and market-pleasing support services to clients. Carol leads the services strategy for the digital support portfolio, self-serve solutions and user experience support solutions.

Prior to this role, she was a leader in the Office of Strategy and Technology at Hewlett Packard Enterprise, where she successfully led global initiatives and alignment of technology and business strategies to deliver best-in-class portfolios that met client demand and business growth.

Carol has also served as an account delivery executive, where she was responsible for the overall customer service experience, delivering innovative roadmaps and managing global operations for Fortune 100 clients.

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