

# IT Customer Interactions in Vast Organizations

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**Abstract:** This article covers various types of relations that IT holds with a large base of internal customers which are normally employees of the same organization for which IT provides services. Be it the need to resolve an issue, or the desire to request additional services, or the courtesy of providing feedback, IT must have the proper channels in place to allow customers to reach out and have their needs addressed. Such channels can't be standardized as the structure of IT itself is not standardized across various organizations. As such, IT must ensure to cover all the potential customer interactions through processes and channels which customer can easily understand and go through. Designing such processes and channels requires knowledge of the structure of IT, engagement with customers, planning and resource allocation, as well as continuous improvement and technology adoption. Typically, processes in place are supported by systems and tools that automate and speed up the process of customer care and service and simultaneously provide a direct channel for customers.

**Keywords:** IT, customer relations, interactions, demands, self-service, know-how and customer satisfaction.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The way IT is structured and IT operations are carried out differs significantly from one organization to another. As such, the nature of the needs for IT customer, or in other words users, to interact with IT cannot be standardized and have to be tailored to cater for the customers' needs in alignment with the IT structure. This is where best practices as well as frameworks such as ITIL become more meaningful. From the need to resolve an issue, to the demand of introducing a new application, to the request of authorization, all the way to providing feedback on periodical and instant surveys are different types of interactions for which defined processes and channels need to be in place to achieve the most important goal of service providers, customer satisfaction.

## II. TYPES OF IT CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

### A. Issues and Know-Hows

The first thing that comes to mind when technical difficulties arise is the IT helpdesk. IT helpdesks are considered the first and most important channels that customers reach out to as soon as they are faced by an issue which is commonly referred to as an incident. Helpdesks within themselves have their own process and categorization and that differs from one organization to another, but what is common the main channel that an IT helpdesk has which is a basic phone call. Helpdesks often provide alternative channels such as emails, web forms, or chatbots which are driven by the need to adopt emerging technologies and artificial intelligent solutions to enhance IT processes and services. Know-hows, otherwise known as knowledge inquiries, are another need for customers to approach IT and the channels for such are normally the same as the channels for incidents with the addition of Knowledge base and FAQs pages. Needless to say, that manual intervention for resolving incidents or providing knowledge might be required where personal engagement with customer, physically or virtually, is needed. The personal or manual intervention is also common when dealing with senior management and high-profile personnel.

### ***B. Software and Hardware Requests***

The needs of IT customers are normally never-ending and it varies from the request of simple hardware devices to the demand of a new application. This is normally handled as part of IT demand management which handles planned as well as unplanned demands. With this arises a need for entities that receive and analyze demands and negotiate with customer and advise them through the requesting process. These entities also work as channel between customer and the internal technical IT teams for more than one reason. First, it shields the technical teams from the heat and pressure of customer. Also, it provides the customers a unified go-to entity instead of needing to follow up with multiple technical team. It should be the responsibility of a customer-facing team to accept requests and provide products and regular updates to customer on their current and future demands.

### ***C. Approval and Authorization***

In vast organizations, the hierarchal structures of organizations call for the need to request and obtain approval for certain activities. Various levels of authorizations are granted to different types of customers based on the business needs. For authorizations related to IT infrastructure such as systems, a mechanism needs to be in place supported by a business process and an IT system to request and grant such authorizations. Customers need to be aware of such mechanism and the number of channels for different kinds of access should be minimized. Ideally, customer should have a one-stop-shop where they can find and request any kind of authorization required.

### ***D. Feedback***

Feedback is crucial to the continuous improvement of any organization. Therefore, IT invests in providing channels for customer to provide feedback to improve current services or address on-going concerns. The most common channel is to conduct periodic surveys that seeks customer input on specific or general perception of the services that IT provides. Another channel for customer feedback is the instant survey whereas the opinion of the customer is sought right after delivery of a service or resolution of an issue. It is as important as surveying to provide an open channel for Ad-Hoc feedback. This can be done through many channels such as helpdesk, email, web forms, or chatbots.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

Taking all of that into consideration, it should never be a struggle for an IT customer to find a channel through which they can approach and communicate with respective IT entities. These channels have to be supported by a backbone of a strong business process and augmented by user-friendly front-end systems and/or customer-oriented personnel. Customers should never have to bounce from one IT team to another for a single request or inquiry. It is always preferable to have a dedicated team that serves as a frontline for receiving customers interactions and orchestrating the necessary backend activities. This team can be further split based on the type of the interactions to be handled. Communicating such channels to customers is key to the success of customer management and increased customer satisfaction. It is of utmost importance to conduct performance analysis and continuous improvements of these channels to accommodate customer needs and adopt emerging technologies and best practices. Another target should be minimizing the number of steps the customer needs to go through to have their request fulfilled. At the end of the day, IT is providing the organization's employees with services to drive the business, not to hinder and waste customers' time and efforts.

## **REFERENCES**

[1] ITIL® Information Technology Infrastructure Library