

CHANGING PRIORITIES: THE RECOVERY AND REGENERATION OF ITSM EBOOK

...in your
words

Practitioner
insights...

Based on research
findings collected by
SDI in collaboration
with Sunrise Software

Introduction

Between the 23rd of June and 22nd of July 2021 Sunrise Software, in conjunction with Service Desk Institute, published an industry survey to research the changing priorities, and the recovery and regeneration of IT service management as a result of COVID-19. The survey output has been analysed to formulate the findings of a research report, which can be found [here](#).

The summary data shows that:

- Business continuity practices were in place for a majority of respondent organisations. The vast majority of respondents said they were very well or reasonably well prepared for transitioning staff to working remotely and supporting end users working from home.
- A staggering 92% of all respondents said that their organisation had adapted very well or reasonably well to the transition to home working. 91% said that their service desk had adapted very well or reasonably well to the transition.
- Over half of all respondents, 56%, implemented a collaboration platform to support the shift to remote working.
- 65% of respondents said that the businesses perception of IT support improved as a result of the pandemic, and 62% of respondents said that end user perception of IT support improved as a result of the pandemic. Only 4% of respondents said that the businesses perception of IT support got worse.
- As a direct result of COVID-19, 47% of respondents said that their main service strategy will now focus on shift left and enabling the self-sufficient user. A similar number, 46%, said that they will continue to move forward at the same pace and be more agile as a direct result of COVID-19.

The impact of the pandemic - in your words

As a supplement to the report we wanted to share the knowledge, insight, thoughts and learnings from the survey respondents **in their own words**, to support the quantitative data and provide some more context.

Here are some of the first-hand responses to the open-ended questions included in the survey:

Q: How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your IT team's/business' priorities?



- We mostly focused on people being able to work from home with minimized impact
- Our priority is maintaining our clients' operations before and during pandemic
- We are overwhelmed with the amount of new business opportunities in our pipeline
- It didn't change the priorities, well not after the workforce was enabled to work remotely
- We are an acute hospital in the NHS, the priority was to enable patient consultations from home while enabling shielding and isolation for staff. We shifted support to remote working overnight where this wasn't a requirement pre pandemic
- It made us more aware of nurturing relationships with our clients and helping them to survive Covid impacts to their businesses
- It affected the way we provide new or replacement equipment to end users. We had to improve logistics and delivery processes that were seldom used before COVID-19
- Remote connectivity was enhanced to manage the extra load





- 'New ways of working' groups were implemented
- Automation is now the priority
- Digital transformation accelerated
- Priorities remained the same, but deliverables changed somewhat. We were no longer replacing like-for-like hardware, but giving everyone a laptop as standard
- On demand and extended support hours for service desk members, along with providing adequate hardware and application access to the service desk
- Income generation through web sources increased in priority
- Extra workload to help our customers work from home, and ensure the appropriate risk assessments were in place for site visits
- Stricter rules were made by the company to make sure that employees logged in on time
- Cloud & collaboration services became highest priorities
- Some priorities were put off, either to support the increased workload or because they would be difficult to complete under a homeworking model. Other new priorities were introduced to help support staff at home, such as moving our service desk to Teams within a few days.
- The priority is to ensure business continuity and employees have the necessary support and tools to do their work
- We had to ensure that all admin users were able to successfully work from home. Processes such as recruitment also had to be delivered remotely including example interviews, so we had to ensure we provided the support needed to make that happen
- we had to drop less critical activities to get everyone working from home as quickly as possible - that was the company's main priority due to the nature of our business
- The number of new projects and change requests from the business were many, it's been a challenge juggling them with remote support which just seems to take longer





- Digital Adoption took off and security needs were heightened
- Priorities were to retain as close to a 'business as usual' support as possible - and then capitalise on this to improve as we learned and adapted
- Other sections of the IT department escalated roll outs of new services with limited information and business processes due to changing working practices. This meant the service desk had to react quickly in terms of training staff and producing our own guidance to support customers
- We experienced increased service desk call volumes, but priority remained on core business services along with a new emphasis on device performance for remote workers
- Infrastructure upgrades took priority in terms of improving secure remote access
- Remote working, access to on site devices, access to mobile telephony solutions, increased security, more ergonomic devices for home workers
- Additional focus was placed on remote workers and the need to keep them working to support the business
- It reaffirmed a 'cloud first' strategy, the focus on core services and also increased the reliance on self-service for end users. Importantly, that service desk was used more as the single point of contact than in the past when legacy services and shadow support were at play
- We focused on business continuity and saw a huge increase in demand for our products, which meant projects were put on hold temporarily



Q: What positive impact has the pandemic had on the way you deliver service?



- It tested our ability to support in a true business continuity mode
- It's helped us become more mobile, now we have a better work experience and everything we need to work remotely. We've also implemented several processes to make our work more productive and our life easier.
- Improved collaborative tools
- Our processes and procedures to effectively and efficiently implement our remote capabilities via our digital workplace strategy was greatly improved and proven
- It pushed the need for self-service and for internal customers to take more ownership
- It's led a more connected meetings strategy through teams/zoom. Also remote video consultations with patients was introduced, this didn't exist before the pandemic
- We implemented a new version of our telephony platform that introduced a Chat Bot
- We were already almost completely cloud-based, this just cemented that and it also drove home to our clients why it was important to move away from that traditional system of internal servers and move to the cloud
- We started using chat bots, automated more processes and stimulated the use of self-service within the user community
- Less reliability of staff visiting site to fix common IT issues, more self service. Our agile working idea was accelerated
- The pandemic accelerated digital transformation and usage of newly introduced remote working tools
- It's enabled us to use of technology in different ways
- Greater emphasis on web services, cloud provisioning, consistent connectivity etc. Improved remote collaboration (Teams).





- In my experience of continuity planning, client computing requirements are always last to be considered. This has now changed since COVID-19. Also, SaaS has been expedited, although the jury remains out on whether that will have a positive impact in the long term. It is certainly true that it is now more possible to get resources than it was before the pandemic. The pandemic has triggered the development of a digital strategy.
- It seems to have adapted and accelerated customer roadmaps in regards to working from home and digital transformation
- Accelerated digital transformation & improved team collaboration
- What the pandemic has done is to accelerate how quickly we moved to homeworking and change people's perceptions of it. We are likely a few years ahead of where we would have been.
- It acted as a positive catalyst for the rate of change
- It's been a positive catalyst for take up of our self-service channels and permission to home work
- We had a lot of mature processes in place already which helped, we had to adapt some ways of communicating and working to ensure we still provide a quality service to our customers
- It improved cross team collaboration in some respects, and proved that we can be more flexible with working patterns and situations
- Digital means and support channel adoption took off, team collaboration increased and morale boosting efforts had to be adapted to the new ways of working
- It escalated roll outs of self-service password resets and audits of the existing remote access. Along with escalating the roll out of MS Teams





- It proved that technology can give us what we need in challenging times. Due to the nature of our service (24x7 and public serving) we were still able to have some staff based on site. We have learned that we can do our roles flexibly from various locations and we have extended our reach to our customers with more support channels
- Improved collaboration options enabled remote working on a huge scale, it's been a positive catalyst for the rate of change
- it definitely improved collaboration and also acted as a positive catalyst for the rate of change in terms of improvements to infrastructure
- Our team's approach to communication changed and improved
- We moved to online collaboration tools over night
- Accelerated digital transformation, increased the need for self-service and automation
- Reinforced cloud-first, gave the organisation a new appreciation for technology "keeping the lights on" - demystified some of what we do in IT and put that front and centre. We have worked so effectively from home, that we could continue to do so as a department and as an organisation
- IT Operations in my organisation particularly coped well, improving lines of communication and collaboration.



Q: *What would be your main lesson(s) learned from the events of 2020 and 2021?*



- Preparedness for pages that could be accessed from the internet, good communications to reach staff as issues develop
- Prepare for anything and test your DR and remote working plans regularly
- Processes and technologies must be more flexible so that we can work remotely if necessary. I think we need to change the organization's strategy for working remotely
- It's very important to teach end users about self-service tools
- Having enough resources to support the massive changes in an adequate time beforehand
- To be open about its impact both personally and professionally
- We are able to adapt to a major shift in support requirements
- The need for flexibility, open-mindedness and empathy
- Planning for business continuity, as well as testing those plans, is worth the effort when confronted with unusual circumstances
- Self-service is an option as long as guidance is promoted and it's easy to follow
- I have the ability to prepare myself and ready myself to adapt to a new normal
- Our resourcing model is too inflexible and too inelastic. We need a larger resource pool in order to be more agile/dynamic. The oligopoly of cloud service providers has consolidated power through the pandemic. Top of the pack is Microsoft. We will all be doing what they want and when they want it from now on
- That technology is more than the IT department stuff, every department has to work with technology every day





- People are resilient and willing to adapt in times of need. Collective aims promote better team working and results. Remote working is doable, but not always desirable
- Remain flexible and always ensure business continuity plans are refreshed and have ownership
- Maintain a substantial stock of peripherals. The importance of communication - early notice is critical
- We have to be well prepared to handle disasters
- Our employees can work remotely successfully
- Prevention is better than cure
- Agile is better
- How people can adapt to change if needed and the importance of having the right systems in place so you are ready to adapt
- Regular reviews and testing of business continuity plans and processes
- Be open to innovation and creativity, always seek out new ways of working
- Make sure we had enough assets as everyone was looking for them at the same time
- Make sure you're adequately staffed and have some slack built in to use for new things and emergencies that crop up
- Old habits can be changed for IT and customers. Technology is stronger than what people first believed. You can still deliver when not in person. Remote working offered up time for continual improvement - and gave real life and different examples of that to focus on
- Collaboration and communication is key, and where it is not forthcoming, fight for it
- We can be efficient working remotely. We don't need face to face meetings
- The mental health and wellbeing of staff is as important as any business targets. That we "can do" in the face of challenges





- That we can cope and still deliver a good service
- The need for team work and remote support, we had inadequate technical solutions and that's now changed
- Increased skills are needed at first line and, in some circumstances, you have to force users to use self-service
- Remote working can be productive and resilient. The reliance on home broadband infrastructure is key and the need for mesh wifi for effective connectivity within domestic households where conflicting user demand for bandwidth is high. Task based flexibility and outcomes more important than time-driven. In many situations the service experience is more important than service level agreements
- Be prepared, and also be prepared to be flexible



Reflecting on the changes all organisations have had to endure since the start of COVID-19, along with coming to terms with the impact on people and teams, will always require sensitivity. Many people have been irrevocably impacted by COVID-19, in many cases lives have changed forever.

Thank you to the practitioners who took part in this research, it's brilliant to see the dedication that's been shown during the pandemic is being recognised at the highest level in industry.

The full report with statistics from each survey question plus analysis of cohorts such as public and private sector can be found [here](#).

About SDI

SDI sets the globally recognised best practice standards that provide clear and measurable benchmarks for service desk operations and professionals. The standards are designed to encourage service desks to embrace and value best practice in order to raise the quality of service delivery. For more information please visit www.servicedeskintstitute.com

About Sunrise Software

Sunrise Software's expertise in Service Management is built on its work with hundreds of clients across all sectors for over 25 years. In an age where customer and employee dependencies on technology are high, we assist organisations to better manage business processes and achieve their goals. Sunrise's customers use our software to easily create, track and report on workplace tasks, events and activities and to build related process workflows, delivering greater productivity and satisfaction across the organisation.

Sunrise's software provides the backbone for delivering and managing IT and other services enterprise-wide. Our service management solutions are implemented via configurable templates for IT, MSP and HR service desks on a platform which is further adaptable across departments such as Customer Service, Finance or Facilities. Headquartered in Chessington, UK, Sunrise solutions are delivered as SaaS on IBM Cloud, or installed on-premise.

For more information about this research please contact:

Zoe James, Head of Marketing, Service Desk Institute
zoej@sdi-e.com +44 1689 889100

Ann James , Marketing Director, Sunrise Software
ajames@sunrisesoftware.com +44 208 391 3244