HOW AIOPS POWERS ITSM/SERVICE DESK

Does this sound familiar? A single disruption to service and your IT staff has to handle hundreds of new tickets. Without the necessary context, however, too many of these tickets are escalated beyond Level 1, but your unintegrated ITSM and ITOM tools means your agents are duplicating their efforts. The result is unsatisfied end users and headache-ridden service desk agents.

You may be asking whether this is what ITSM is supposed to be.

What if, instead, your IT staff had to handle fewer tickets? What if these tickets were more sophisticated, requiring some challenge and thought—not just rote adjustments? This is possible with AIOps tools that automate simpler, repetitive tasks and promote proactive problem management instead of reactive.

AIOps might be just the technology you need to transform your service desk. This trend, picking up major steam in the last two or so years, is one that's here to stay. It's not about whether we'll adopt AIOps, but how. Let's take a look.

What is AIOps?

If it's new to you, expect to hear a lot more about AIOps. Short for artificial intelligence in IT operations, AIOps applies machine learning (ML), data science, and AI technologies to IT operations problems, with the purpose of not just handling, but harnessing the massive streaming datasets that are standard in IT environments.

Technology analyst Gartner says AIOps platforms should "consume and analyze the ever-increase volume, variety and velocity of data generated by IT and present it in a useful way." This useful way could mean replacing, wholly or partially, manual tasks like ITSM, automation, availability and performance monitoring, and event correlation and analysis. Gartner also predicts that 30 percent of large enterprises will exclusively deploy AIOps and digital experience monitoring tools to monitor applications and infrastructure by 2023, up from only five percent use in 2018.

AIOps in ITSM and service desk environments

AI has the ability to automate and benefit a variety of business needs, but ITSM environments are often forgotten in the rush to AI. One reason may be how we think of ITSM. In theory, IT service management should support a range of IT operations, beyond service desk routines to better align ITSM as a whole with IT operations management (ITOM). In reality, however, ITSM efforts focus inordinately on end-user issues—the service desk.

Another reason AI may seem to forget ITSM is that IT teams and service desk environments in particular often struggle to automate smaller, repeatable tasks. That means they're spending the majority of their time on manual tasks, instead of approaching ITSM from a macro, more holistic point of view.

But AIOps can solve this time waste, reducing the volume of service desk tickets by up to 85 percent. That means service desk agents can better focus on the work that does come through (which, as a benefit, may promote their job satisfaction because they aren't repeating the same tasks every day).

New AIOps tools are focusing directly on these ITSM tasks, making it possible to automate common issues like slow computers, inability for users to log in, and printer and plug-and-play device failure. Automation thanks to AIOps results in a number of benefits:

- Reduced volume of tickets
- Reduced time spent per ticket
- Quicker MTTR and MTBF
- Freed time for IT staff to focus on issues that require humans
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased team agility

But AIOps goes far beyond automation. By harnessing massive datasets inherent to ITSM teams, AIOps can help service desks pivot from reactive to proactive problem management. The best AIOps tools should be able to synthesize real-time and historic data in order to:

- **Predict outages.** AIOps can examine your entire monitoring dataset, then use ML tools to identify event patterns that could indicate more severe issues. IT would then be alerted to this potential problem.
- **Prioritize events.** Training on ITSM incident data, AIOps can predict a service event's business impact. This allows IT to prioritize events based on context and business need.
- **Analyze and determine root cause.** AIOps identifies root causes of issues faster than humans can, using event patterns and service topologies.

How to initiate AIOps in ITSM practices

You may ready to deploy AIOps solutions for your IT team, but your company decision makers might not be there just yet. Here are some tips on how to launch an AIOps initiative in your IT department:

1. **Understand the technologies.** Even if AIOps adoption isn't imminent, understanding AI, ML, and data science can help your case when it's time to jump in.
2. **Teach what you know.** Take your new knowledge, then share it with colleagues and executives via simple technologies and applications.
3. **Choose test cases smartly.** Roll out AIOps on a small scale, understand what did and didn't work, and iterate from there.
4. **Recognize your gaps.** In new technologies, skills and experience gaps are normal, so overcome objections by recognizing those gaps and proposing solutions.
5. **Modernize the ITSM platform.** A current, AIOps-promoting ITSM platform should offer self-service, cost insights, process automation, and more, all rolled into a single, consistent ITSM process record that harnesses data for accurate real-time, end-to-end insights.
6. **Sync your ITSM and ITOM platforms.** Doing so can unify workflows across IT, from ITSM to help and service desks to ITOps.
7. **Break down data silos.** AIOps needs more data, so break down siloed monitoring tools. The best ones should have a robust feature set, pre-integrated tools, customization options, and an AIOps roadmap.
8. **Go beyond IT.** Once your data is trustworthy and widely accessible, use AIOps to gain insights into problem areas that cross business units.

Choosing the best AIOps tool for ITSM

Getting started with any tool can be difficult, and that's especially true when it involves new technologies and ways of thinking. An AIOps tool for ITSM is no different.

When choosing the best AIOps tool, do keep these factors in mind as you navigate from AIOps theory to AIOps practice:

- Business needs
- Use case prioritization
- Existing and future data sources
- Necessary skillsets
- Time to value
- Integration with existing tools
- Easy adoption, from installing and learning to using and maintaining
- Clarity and trust versus "black box" approach

At BMC, AIOps is informing every step of our approach to ITSM, and we're incorporating AIOps into every piece of the modernization puzzle.

Additional Resources

Want to learn more about how AIOps can help you? Check out our AIOps webinar series. For more on AIOps, these on-demand webinars might be just what you need:

- The Roadmap to AIOps
- Automated Event Remediation and AIOps