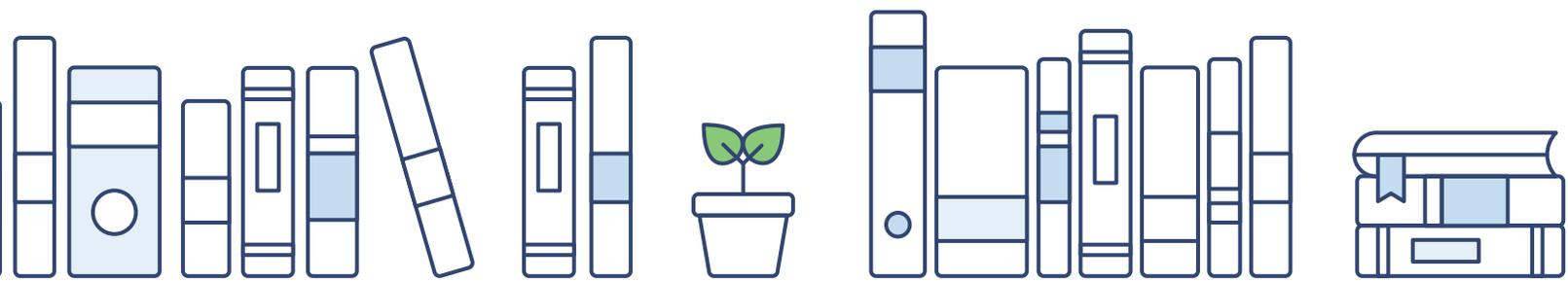
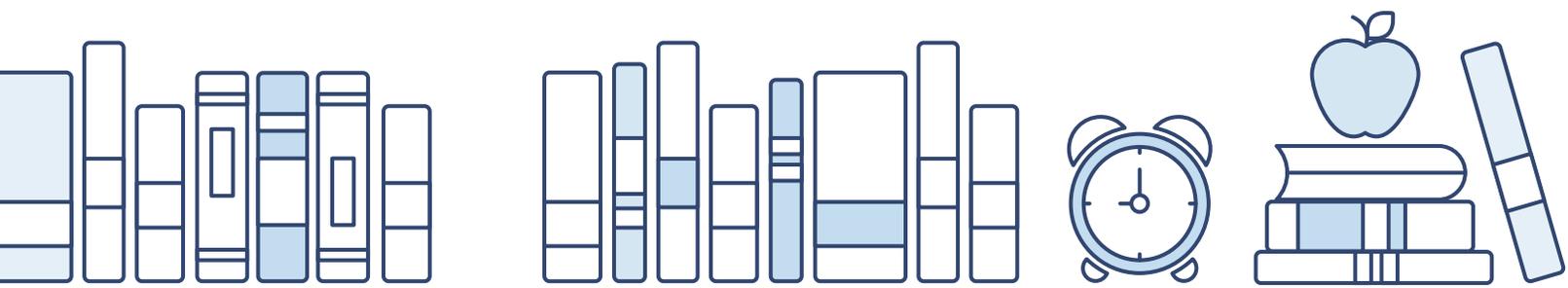
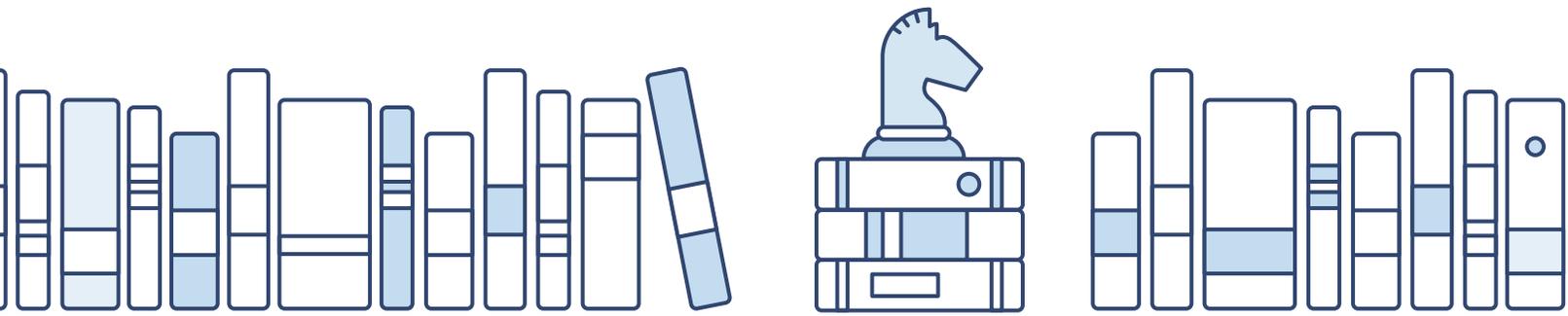
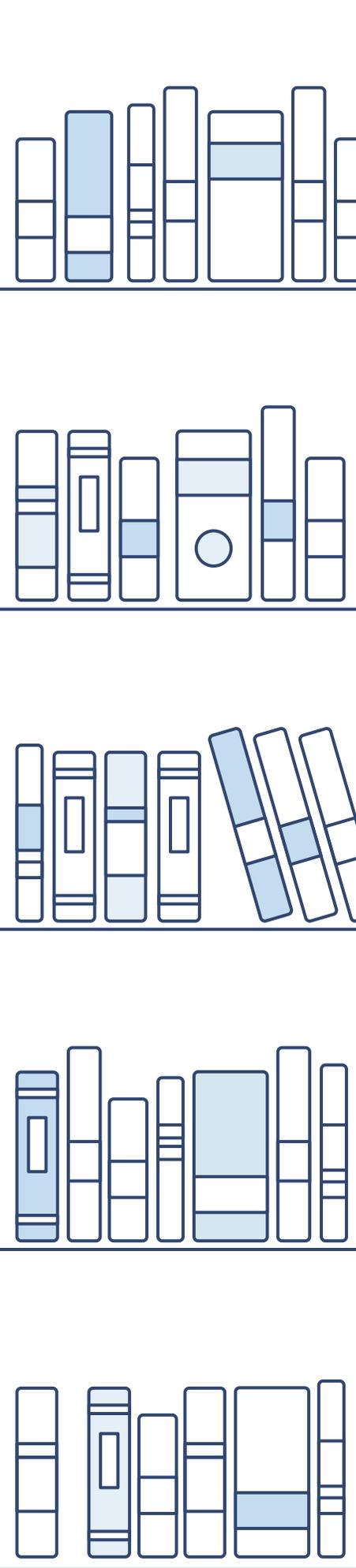


# How Educational Institutions Can Improve Their IT Support



By Oded Moshe,  
VP Product at SysAid Technologies Ltd.

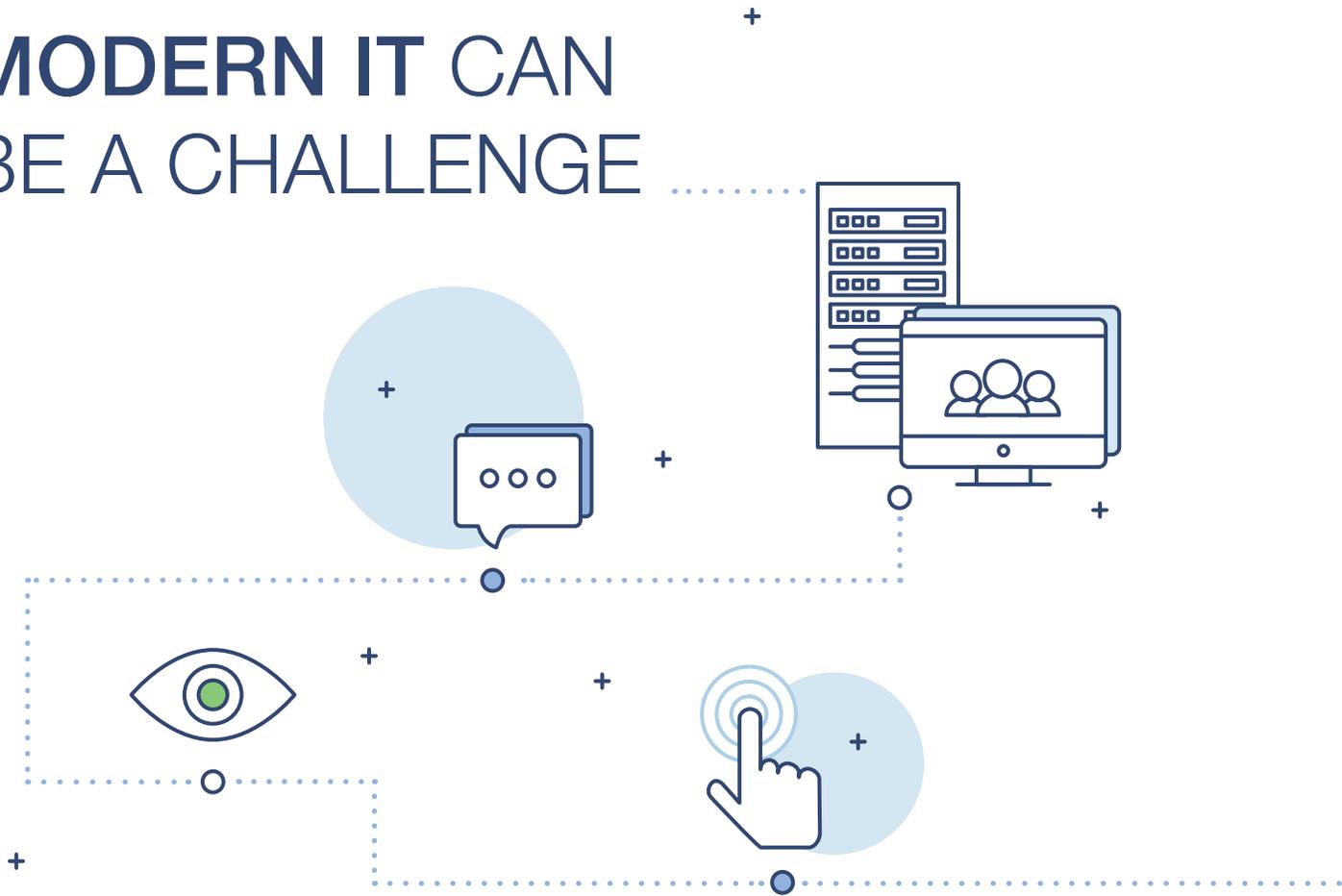




Like most IT organizations in any sector, private or public, educational institutions are having to provide IT support to end users – students, faculty members, and other employees – in what is a classic “doing more with less” scenario.

On the downside, the likes of BYOD, with the myriad of mobile devices and apps, and personal cloud services, potentially make IT support trickier. On the upside, the use of cloud service providers is a potential opportunity to both improve service and reduce costs – as long as cloud services can be easily managed and integrated into the existing IT ecosystem.

# MODERN IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE

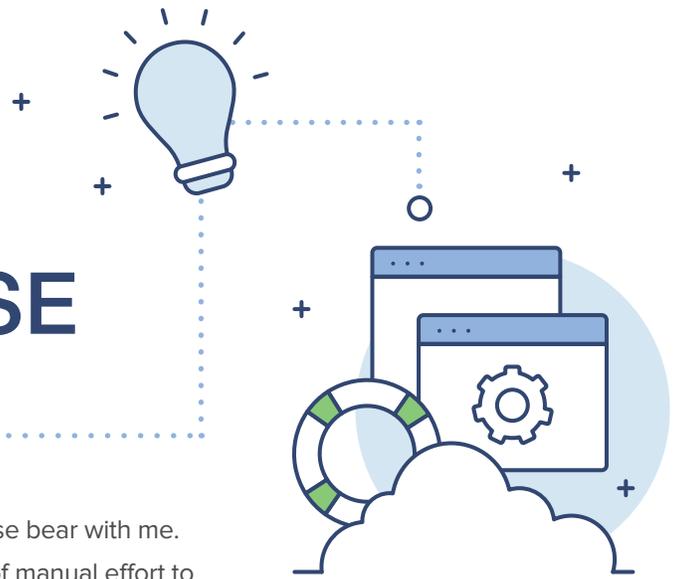


However, it's not just the new technology and its support that provide educational institutions with an IT support and service delivery challenge. The majority of end users are tech-savvy students, or staff members, who are potentially not only using the latest in personal technology but also:

- ◆ Use different ways of contacting and receiving services and support in their personal lives. For example: self-service and self-help, chat, social support including communities, and support via remote control.
- ◆ Have higher, consumer-world-driven expectations around IT services, IT support, and the overall service or customer experience. If they don't like the services and/or service from a given supplier they just move to another.

So the challenge of delivering IT today relates to so much more than the technology itself. More importantly, what can under-pressure education-IT organizations do to stay relevant, and to cope, in such a consumer-driven IT landscape?

# EMPLOYING A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE IT SOLUTION



You might already have help desk technology. If you do, please bear with me. However, if you are still using email, spreadsheets, and a lot of manual effort to manage IT support, then fit-for-purpose technology can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of IT operations – raising end-user satisfaction and potentially reducing costs.

Various options apply to technology adoption; these include:

- ◆ Operating your own help desk (and therefore invest in your own help desk software) vs. outsourcing the capability and thus the need for such technology. Both have their pros and cons – with the latter often cited as a cheaper option, but sadly “cheap” can be at the expense of the end-user experience. After all, how is a third party ever really going to understand your organization’s operations and your end users’ needs and wants?
- ◆ Using on-premise software vs. migrating your help desk to the cloud – the latter taking away the need to manage and host the application locally (so you can concentrate on supporting your end users), getting new capabilities more quickly (due to a more rapid software release cycle), securely accessing the solution from anywhere, and potentially reducing the total cost of ownership, including the ability to grow and shrink user number as needs and demand change.
- ◆ Operating a help desk vs. using ITIL<sup>1</sup> to move to a service desk and possible other ITSM capabilities such as change management.
- ◆ Using the technology purely for IT vs. extending the help desk or ITSM solution to outside IT – the latter taking a campus-use approach to your technology investment and service provision, and supporting processes and people.

Beyond the technology, and the process-based workflow and automation benefits, there are benefits to be reaped through a number of other ITSM best practices. I offer the following four:

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1. The IT service management (ITSM) best practice framework formerly known as the IT infrastructure library.

# 4 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR IT SUPPORT

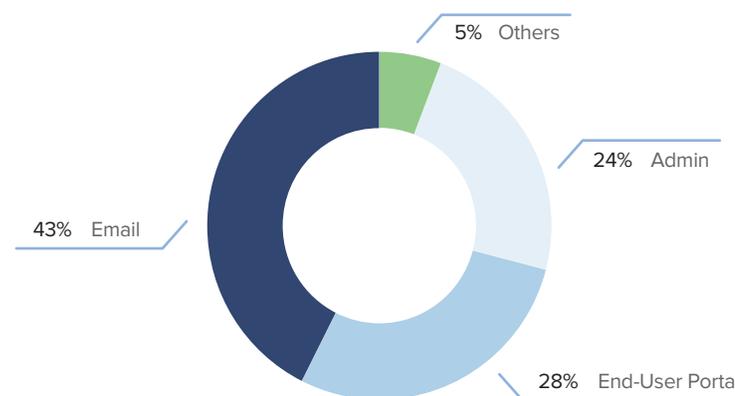
## 1

### Moving from Contact via Telephone Calls to a **Self-Service** Capability

There's a lot of interest and investment in end-user self-service right now, across all industry sectors. If done correctly it can be a win-win for both IT and end users:

- ◆ End users can use a self-service portal to log issues and service requests, reset passwords, or they can access a knowledge base (including FAQs) for self-help. It saves them time and gives them a better, consumer-like experience. Plus, of course, they can check on the progress of incident resolution or service request fulfillment without needing to call the service desk.
- ◆ From an IT perspective, it takes some of the volume burden from the service desk – in terms of physically logging tickets, as well as the fact that many service desk tickets are avoided due to end-user self-help. Consequently, self-service should save IT money – especially when the adopted ITSM solution offers unlimited end users, thereby saving additional licensing costs.

The proof is in SysAid's customers' successes, or more specifically a sample of them who elect to anonymously share their performance statistics with other customers, globally, via a facility we offer called [IT Benchmark](#).

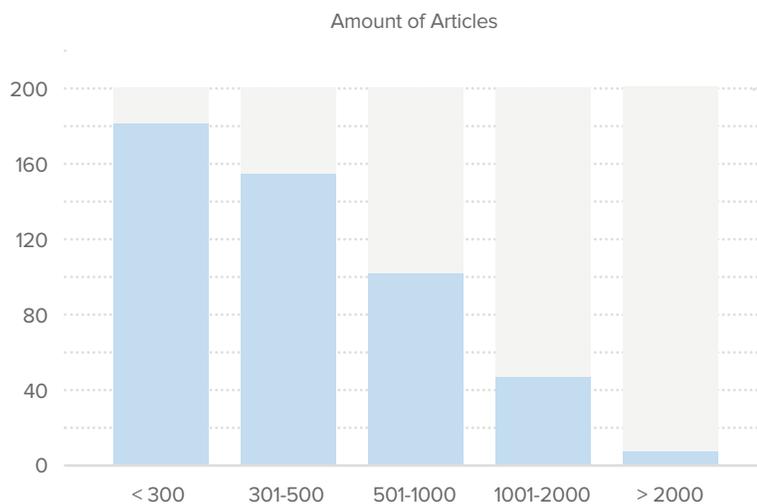


Source: SysAid IT Benchmark



In terms of our customers' use of self-service, and knowledge management in particular:

- ◆ 28%, so just over a quarter, of tickets now come in via self-service. This of course doesn't show how many potential tickets have been avoided by the use of the self-help capabilities.
- ◆ The top 500 customers (in terms of knowledge base use) have between 200 and 8000 knowledge articles, with an average of 500 articles per customer. Customers can also share knowledge articles via our customer community.



How do our customers check the value of their FAQ knowledge articles to their end users? They can of course assess the number of views but they can also see the number of end-user votes just like with YouTube and other consumer technology – either thumbs up or thumbs down based on the article's usefulness.

Reducing the number of telephone contacts not only saves the service desk time, it also allows it greater flexibility to deal with incidents based on priority rather than in a first-come, first-served basis. Don't forget though, modern IT support should cater for choice of access and communication across self-service, email, telephone, chat, and other social channels.



# 2

## Benefiting from Automation

Most service desks are under-resourced and overworked, especially as we continue to see a greater reliance on technology, and thus they experience more IT issues. Education-IT teams are definitely not alone in this. The use of a fit-for-purpose service desk or ITSM solution can help through process workflows, notifications, and knowledge reuse.

However, IT pros can go beyond this with the use of automatic routing rules that do specific things within the ITSM solution, “automagically,” based on the scenario and given variables. For example, our top 100 SysAid customers, with an average of 160 service desk agents and other IT users, have an average number of 150 routing rules each. Customers that have 10 to 20 IT staff members have an average of 13 routing rules.

Also, don’t forget that automation, and the associated benefits, doesn’t need to stay within the ITSM solution – third-party technologies can be called up and executed to extend the power of automation.



Look for the  
**SysAid Barcode app**  
 in the App Store

# 3

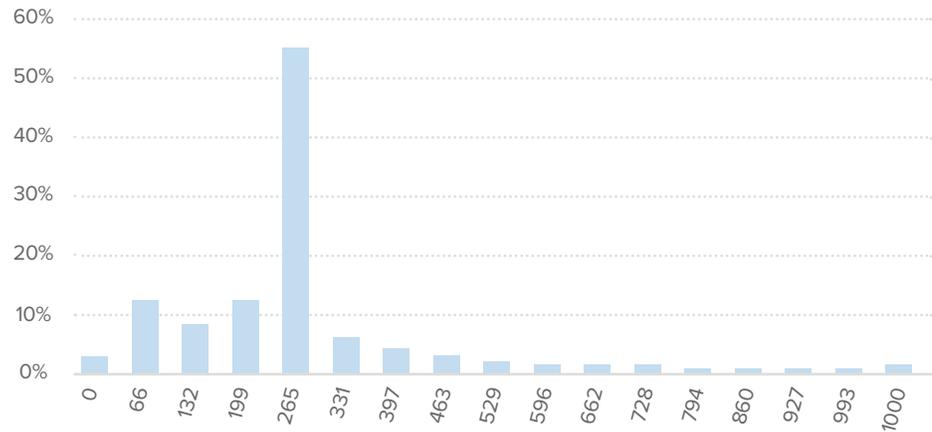
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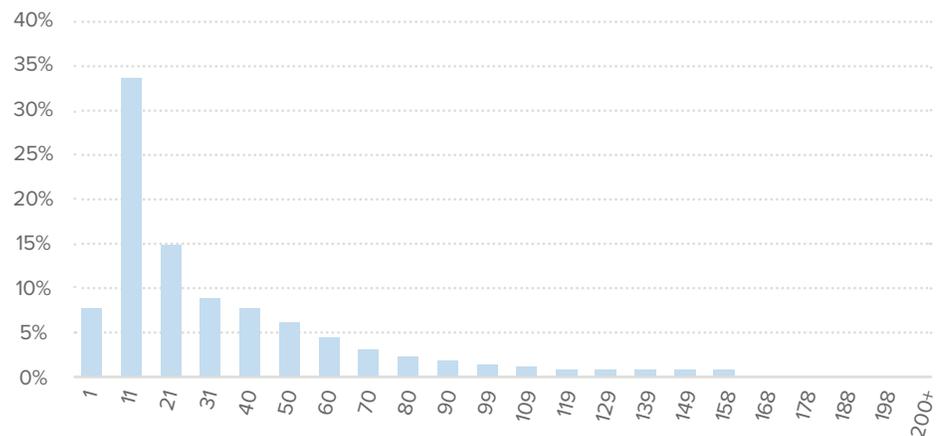
## Simplification

ITSM can get overly complicated, often through the best of intentions. Overly complex ticket classification hierarchies is a great example – our customers, on average, have a total of 205 categories, defined across three levels but, again on average, only 34 categories are actually in use. The rationalization of ticket categories can save time during ticket logging and make management reporting easier.

On average, customers have a total of 205 categories defined in three levels:



BUT, on average, only 34 categories were actually in use for the past 30 days:



IT asset management can be difficult at the best of times. So look to use a [barcode asset management app](#) to make the logging of asset details, including asset moves, and the auditing of asset data easier. Plus it doesn't have to just be for IT assets – you can use the same technology for facilities' assets, such as tables, chairs, or portable electronic whiteboards.

# 4

## Outside IT

While ITSM solutions were originally created to support IT pros in the delivery and support of IT services, many customers – especially educational institutions – now use them outside of IT. Example campus non-IT use cases include, but are not limited to, managing the services of:

- ◆ The admissions office
- ◆ The alumni office
- ◆ Faculty services
- ◆ Legal
- ◆ Libraries
- ◆ Medical centers
- ◆ Research departments
- ◆ Shared services such as facilities, finance, and HR

Why shouldn't all internal service providers benefit from a fit-for-purpose service management solution and best practice processes for handling issues, requests, and changes?





So how could you improve both IT and non-IT support and service delivery?

Want to learn how SysAid can help? [Talk to us.](#)

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