

HOW TO OVERCOME 8 IT SELF-SERVICE OBSTACLES



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INTRODUCTION

IT Self-service is any activity where your employee performs work on their own without the assistance from IT support. Even if it was feasible to provide personal human support for every individual, we know that people often prefer to answer their own questions without contacting support.

As a matter of fact, people use self-service tools every day in their personal lives. We visit websites on our mobile devices and computers in search of information on millions of various topics ranging from “how can I install new flooring?” to “what are the symptoms of ...?”. But when it comes to our workplace, we have a different experience. There’s an IT self-service portal but it has its challenges so employees resort to emailing or calling the service desk—defeating the purpose of self-service altogether.

So, to better understand how we can overcome the challenges of IT self-service, we must first understand them. Let’s look at some of these challenges and how they can be avoided.



TOP 8 IT SELF-SERVICE OBSTACLES

01

Understanding Your End Users

02

Employees Don't Know It Exists

03

Low Employee Utilization

04

Low Employee Satisfaction

05

Poor Knowledge Management

06

Information Overload

07

Lack of Relevant Answers

08

Cost Savings

OBSTACLE #1

Understanding Your End Users

Organizations are excited after they create a self-service portal that will finally deflect routine service desk tickets that cost valuable time and money. But, many don't do their homework in the beginning. Successful organizations spend time researching potential solutions so they can begin the process with a solid understanding. They would rather succeed slowly than fail fast.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Get Your End Users Involved

Take the time it requires to learn what you and your users want to see in your IT self-service portal, then plan a controlled and successful implementation and deployment. Conduct an employee focus group and ask what they want their experience to be like. And don't forget to do your research and understand what the most frequent issues that come to the service desk are so you can use self-service to solve them.



According to Gartner, the success of IT self-service rests on utilization, and if portals are not intuitive or designed with value to the user in mind, the business will not use them.

Source: Gartner Report: Design IT Self-Service Portals for Business Consumer

OBSTACLE #2

Employees Don't Know it Exists

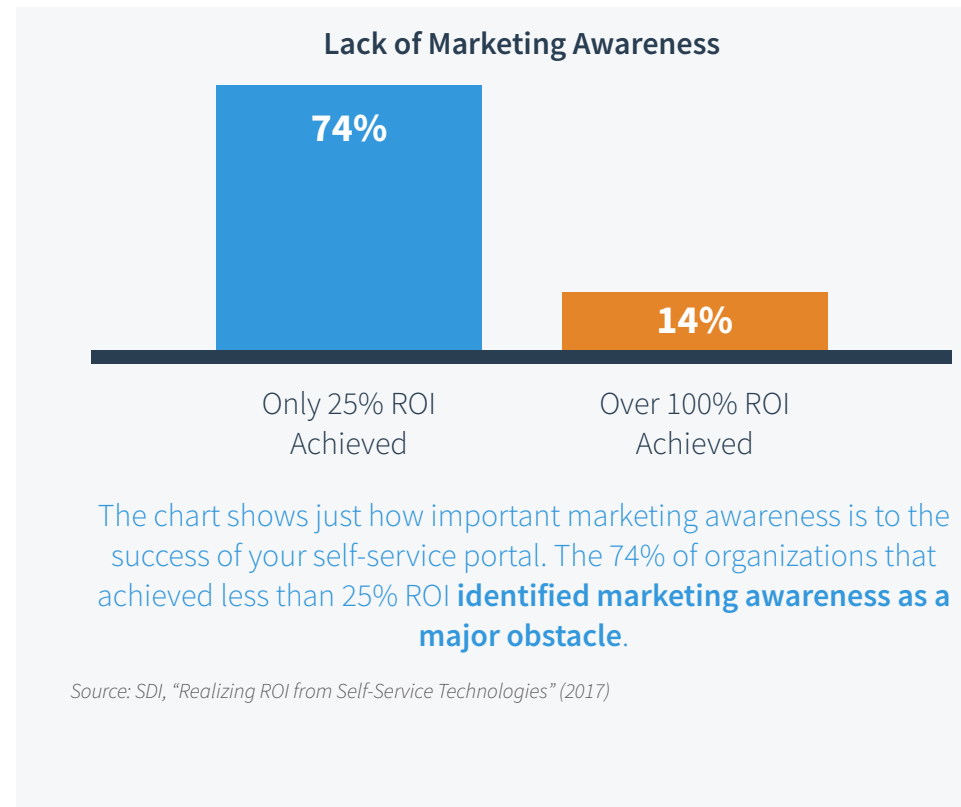
Build it and they will come—but not really. If you want employees to use your self-service, they first must know about it and you need to show them why it's better than calling or emailing the service desk. Sending the link in a corporate email is not enough.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Spread the Word

You need posters, coffee mugs, mouse pads, magnets, pencils, etc. to remind everyone about your IT self-service portal. And to help matters even more, why not give it a unique name that employees will remember and that can be related to your own activities? Make it a company-wide initiative and have a naming contest to boost engagement and make employees feel included in the process.

All in all, you need a marketing campaign. Employees do prefer self-service, but if the presence and benefits of your own resources aren't evident, employees will miss out on the opportunity.



OBSTACLE #3

Low Employee Utilization

Your employees may know where to find the self-service portal, but they don't use it. According to SDI, a key obstacle that organizations face is that their end users still prefer the human touch over any other means of contact.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Show Employees How to Use It

To get your employees to go the self-service route, they must see the value of it, and this may require some encouragement. For instance, when they call for help on an issue or service request that's fully accessible on the IT self-service portal, assist them in finding the information, but don't actually do the work for them. Send a link to the appropriate resources on the self-service portal that provides them the answer they need. The idea here is to refer to the portal as much as you can to make them grow accustomed to it.



91% of people would use an online knowledge base if it were **available and tailored to their needs.**

Source: Coleman Parkes

OBSTACLE #4

Low Employee Satisfaction

One of the most critical hurdles you will face in IT support is employee satisfaction, or lack thereof. Satisfied employees trust you. If they don't, or are not satisfied with your service, they are less likely to try self-service in the future and will instead view it as a dead-end where their requests get forgotten. Ultimately, satisfaction is what makes your employees feel comfortable handing you their issues and requests and it's what drives them back to you.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Provide Value to End Users

You gain satisfaction and trust from employees by delivering on your promises. Get this right and employees will want more through self-service because they will recognize it as a reliable source they can trust.

To do this, make sure you set and communicate SLAs for responding to service requests and issues. You should also understand what content gaps you might have (knowledge, popular resources, etc.). Invest in analytics to better understand what your self-service portal isn't providing and remedy this.



An employee-centric approach has been known to produce increased customer satisfaction, happy employees and happy customers.

“Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients.”

*-Richard Branson,
Founder of Virgin Group*

OBSTACLE #5

Poor Knowledge Management

Many organizations think knowledge management is simply building a massive repository of knowledge articles, and that this act alone will encourage people to use it. Yet in the end, the knowledge base is rarely updated and barely used. This method is not the best if you want to succeed in the long run.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Invest in Knowledge Management & Self-help

Invest in knowledge management and self-help to ensure that the information most relevant to your employees is available when they need it. Keep things simple, especially if you are just starting out. In the early stages, focus on the depth and quality of the information, rather than quantity. Concentrate on what matters most, what would solve the most problems today and grow from there. Users should be confident that the information in your knowledge management system is reliable and accurate, which will naturally build trust between them and the self-service portal.



50% of organizations said they are planning to purchase **a self-help solution** in the near future, and **41%** are planning to acquire **knowledge management technology**.

Source: HDI 2017 Technical Support Practices & Salary Report (2017)

OBSTACLE #6

Information Overload

Many organizations fall into the idea that the IT self-service portal should be a one-stop shop for everything your employees may need. However, it does not mean they should read a 32-step article on how to set up their printer. Information should be clear, concise and simple.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Deliver Clear & Concise Answers

Build your portal around your service catalog, your knowledge and self-help tools. Provide only the right information to help employees resolve issues. If the portal tries to be more than it should be, employees will be lost and may never come back. For how-to's, use automation as much as possible. Self-help tools can assist with this because they guide your employees through the steps that are most relevant to them, so they're not stuck reading 32-steps when they really only need five. If it's too complex, have the option to create a ticket from inside the knowledge base to have someone get back to them.



14% of support organizations saw a **decrease in ticket volume** over the past year, and the **top factor for this decrease was self-help.**

Source: HDI 2018 Technical Support Practices & Salary Report (2018)

OBSTACLE #7

Lack of Relevant Answers

Many people think of self-service as a quick win, but to succeed you need to be in it for the long haul. SDI reports that 43% of organizations who achieved their ROI have had their tools for more than 5 years. So don't expect this to be a done deal just because you built it. You must continually work at it. A self-service platform must be useful and always improving to make your employees want to go there.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Measure Your Knowledge Base Content

Each quarter, evaluate how IT self-service is contributing to the service desk. How many tickets is it deflecting? Do you have the right knowledge base articles? Are they relevant? Do you need new ones based on recent recurring issues?

Additionally, start a knowledge base initiative that focuses on key employee requests. Make your knowledge more contextualized and ensure it's delivered in an interactive format. This way your users will have the confidence to engage with the knowledge and solve problems on their own more often. All of this will help in continually improving your self-service portal.

When assessing your self-service portal, you should measure:

1. The value being realized by those who use self-service
2. The experience of those who use it
3. How often self-service is used before a case is opened
4. How often self-service users find articles that are helpful
5. How much demand is being satisfied through self-service
6. Which articles users find valuable

Source: Self-service Measures; Consortium for Service Innovation (2018)

OBSTACLE #8

Cost Savings

Self-service and cost reduction discussions are never far apart as these are the hopes for any company who invests in self-service. But if that is your only goal, you will never reach success. Cost reduction, while real, should be viewed as an aspirational outcome and not as the end goal alone.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Focus on Employee Satisfaction & Experience

Employee satisfaction should be your focus and ultimate end goal. The cost savings will happen naturally if implemented properly – approximately \$25 per ticket deflected, according to HDI. Invest in the true value of self-service: user experience, knowledge management, self-service benchmarks, analytics and reporting. The more satisfied your employees are, the more they will use your services and the more savings you will reap!

Top 5 factors that contributed to increased customer satisfaction:



Source: HDI 2018 Technical Support Practices & Salary Report (2018)

CONCLUSION

In the end, when investing in IT self-service, you are making an investment in better tools and best practices to prompt a behavioral change in your employees.

Understanding the obstacles of self-service creates an opportunity to deliver a better employee experience in your organization. Investing in the right tools and processes, like knowledge management and self-help technologies, will help you succeed.



Get One Step Closer to Self-Service Success

Learn how the right service desk support strategy can lead you to effective self-service with the **Shift-Left ROI Calculation Worksheet**. This worksheet walks you through the calculation of what savings your organization can potentially see when implementing self-help technology for the service desk.

Start calculating today to see your potential savings!

[GET WORKSHEET](#)

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