Managing IT services has rarely been as challenging as it is today. Service and support staff face continuously escalating demands and complexity, which increase costs, drag down productivity, and hamper the effectiveness of the IT department in supporting business goals. The solution is to tame the complexity by adopting a standards-based strategy that automates, simplifies, and evolves IT service management.

And yet, companies are finding it hard to design and implement such a plan, according to a recent survey by IDG Research Services. According to the survey, only 2 percent of companies have a fully integrated approach to service management; more than 75 percent are not integrated at all or only partially integrated. This white paper examines what’s holding IT back and offers a potential way forward.

**Taming the complexity**
As increasing demands are put on IT departments, managing IT services is becoming more and more complex. There are multiple systems managing the business and many types of business services that need to be supported. Add to that the need for improved automation and analysis of the overall IT business flow, and it all leads to disjointed support from the IT organization and poor service levels for the business. At the same time, IT services are being deployed in a variety of ways: Some applications are moving to the cloud, while others remain on-premise. Without an overall strategy to evolve IT service management, this complexity will continue to escalate costs, drag down productivity, and threaten the effectiveness of the IT department in supporting your company’s goals.

Organizations seem to recognize that strategic integration of IT service management would help. According to the IDG Research Services survey, almost 80 percent of respondents are at least somewhat interested in a more integrated approach, and 40 percent are extremely or very interested.

Integrated service management refers to a complete service management solution that includes features such as integrated voice automation and client management capabilities, or self-service and service catalog options. Integrated solutions typically feature consolidated service and IT processes; Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practices; process automation; Integrated voice automation; self-service and service catalog options; Configuration Management Database (CMDB); and choice of deployment (on-premise, cloud, hybrid models).

Many organizations report that they are having a hard time achieving integrated service management. Among the issues holding them back, according to the survey, are:

- **Cost of integrating technologies:** Budget constraints are an obstacle at nearly 60 percent of the organizations, while 41 percent cite technical challenges and the cost of integrating point solutions.
- **Process and organizational obstacles:** Barriers include several issues related to segregation, such as disparate users, service or client management functions, and inventory (36 percent); disparate processes (34 percent); and organizational silos (34 percent).
- **Lack of leadership:** Thirty-eight percent cite a lack of strategic direction, and another 30 percent cite difficulty in building a business case or demonstrating return on investment (ROI).

A full 42 percent of those surveyed report that they are expanding IT’s role in the business by, for example, creating new partnerships. Another 39 percent say they are consolidating IT in order to provide a better end-user experience. For instance, they are merging service desk and infrastructure teams. Only 32 percent report that IT has remained unchanged.

This reflects not so much a lack of interest as a lack of time to focus on strategy and reevaluate priorities. “I know there is probably something out there that will help,” said Barr Snyderwine, CIO at events and trade show company Hargrove, in the
survey. His biggest challenge is finding the time to do the research and calculate the ROI. But even then, he’d need to have the time to deploy the solution, he said. “I have 190 projects we need to do this year,” said the CIO. “I just don’t have the bandwidth.”

**Lurching toward integration**
Companies are trying to deploy a more integrated approach, but in fits and starts, and seemingly without a strategy. More than 40 percent of respondents are doing things like establishing service-level agreements (SLAs) for service delivery or building a central repository of inventory information. A majority—55 percent—is using a mix of cloud and on-premise solutions.

One respondent said she is deploying much of her service and support to the cloud, for example. Julie F. Butcher, CIO for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, said the majority of her applications are SaaS, including her ticketing system. Some remaining support services on-premise are the help desk and some business analysts to provide first-level application support. The next step is to evolve the cloud-based ticketing solution into a full-blown self-service knowledge database allowing users to look up and resolve their issues rather than waiting for an IT technician to do it for them, she explained.

“Happily, we’ve gotten to the point where our users are creating their own trouble tickets online,” Butcher said. “Now the trick will be to make the knowledge base so robust and useful that it’s more enticing for them to solve their own problems.”

**Companies need help**
Companies can take a large step toward integrating service and client management by following the best practices outlined in the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL). And they needn’t do it alone. A new generation of service management applications offers ready-to-implement solutions. FrontRange Solutions’ ITIL-based integrated management solution, for example, supports on-premise, cloud, and hybrid deployments. The software uses a common platform approach that reduces the complexity of the IT service management infrastructure, and with integrated voice automation and client management enables organizations to lower their total cost of ownership by up to 70 percent. In fact, FrontRange’s solutions reduce time spent on application deployment by up to 95 percent.

Most companies (80 percent in the IDG survey) want an integrated approach to IT service management. If you’re one of them, it’s time to look at what the latest generation of software tools can offer. Seek tools that are:

- **Flexible:** The solution works in the cloud, on-premise, or as a combination of both. This allows you to use both operating and capital expense budgets.
- **Advanced:** The service automation platform should have fully integrated voice-enabled capabilities. This feature can enhance efficiency and reduce service resolution costs.
- **Complete:** The package should provide end-to-end client management that enables the standardization of business processes across the enterprise.

For more information on Best Practices in Service Management, please visit [www frontrange com](http://www frontrange com)