

THE NEW IT PLAYBOOK:

Transforming IT Service with AI

Discover the latest trends for building employee support models, informed by insights from 2,000 global IT leaders and employees.



Introduction

Today’s IT leaders are now the architects of the workplace—designing modern, intentional, AI-powered experiences that help their organizations move faster. They’re no longer solely focused on core tasks like troubleshooting and uptime. They’re also shaping the systems and services that employees rely on throughout their workday. And without them, day-to-day operations crumble. Employee productivity—and satisfaction—falters.

This evolution isn’t happening by accident. In future-looking organizations, IT leaders are broadening their scope—taking on greater responsibility across departments and playing a more strategic role in HR, finance, legal, and facilities.

As their scope of work expands, leaders are both embracing new opportunities and facing novel challenges. Key performance metrics, like employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, are now at stake. Meanwhile, IT leaders are realistic about the difficulties of delivering service at scale.

To better understand IT’s evolving role across organizations around the world, we asked 1,000 global IT leaders to share how they’re navigating this strategic shift; their vision for the AI-powered workplace; and how they’re redefining success in this new era. Their answers reveal the keys to building sustainable support models designed for both today’s expectations—and tomorrow’s scale.

Zendesk research methodology

We surveyed 1,000 IT leaders and 1,000 employees about the state of IT and employee experience in June 2025.

RESEARCH AT A GLANCE:

The key stats IT leaders need to know

93%

of IT leaders are beyond the pilot phase, using AI regularly within their organization

87%

of IT leaders agree that experience-focused metrics provide better insight into service gaps

72%

of IT leaders’ time is now spent outside of traditional IT work

86%

of IT leaders believe their department’s work has an impact on employee productivity

Table of contents

04

The state of IT: Expanding scope strains an already taxed IT department

→

06

Boosting employee satisfaction to yield a more productive workforce

→

09

Modern, AI-first solutions pave the way for streamlined service

→

12

Lead the IT transformation at your organization

→

13

Methodology

→

For a quick summary, [view the infographic](#)

→



The state of IT: Expanding scope strains an already taxed IT department

IT is now more central than ever to your company’s productivity and how well it operates.

This change is largely due to the explosion of SaaS, tool sprawl, the proliferation of AI—and the need for AI governance and consistency—across the organization.

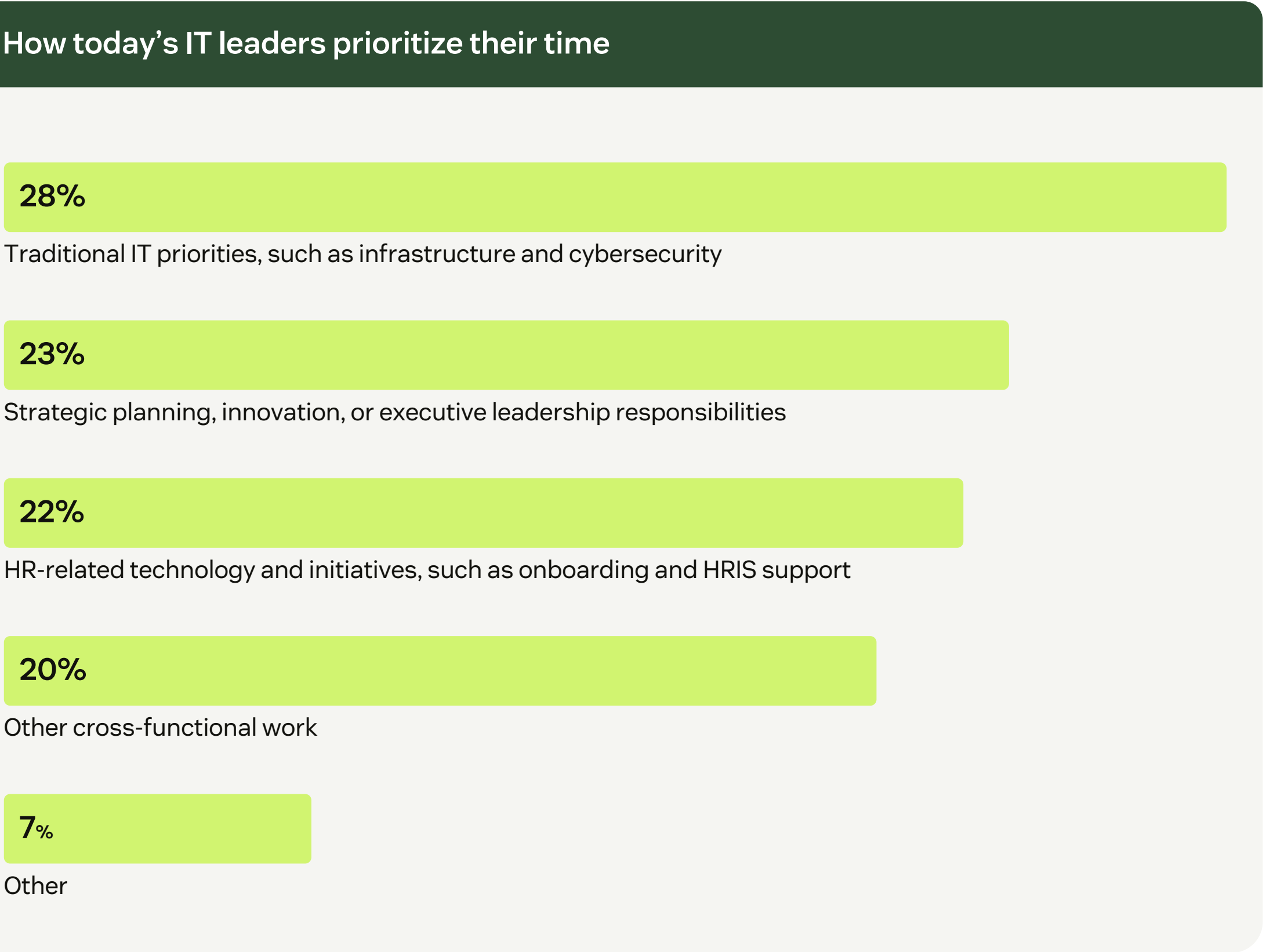


IT’s job has moved beyond maintaining infrastructure. They’re now responsible for ensuring that systems integrate seamlessly, permissions stay aligned, and data flows securely and consistently across platforms.”

Employees often rely on dozens of different applications—from HR platforms and productivity tools to compliance systems and communication channels. As a result, IT has been thrust into the role of orchestrator of these systems.

Meanwhile, IT’s job has moved beyond maintaining infrastructure. They’re now responsible for ensuring that systems integrate seamlessly, permissions stay aligned, and data flows securely and consistently across platforms. Enabling critical workflows like onboarding, offboarding, access provisioning, device refreshes, policy updates, and cross-functional support across teams (like HR) allows operations to run smoothly.

Indeed, IT is a core stakeholder in nearly every functional workflow. But their scope goes even further—extending beyond utilization to ensuring employees’ experience with systems and tools not only meets their needs, but enables their productivity.



The state of IT: Expanding scope strains an already taxed IT department

CONTINUED

In turn, IT leaders are shifting their goals to reflect their widespread, strategic positioning in the business—prioritizing work that touches multiple parts of the business, like ensuring a clear, secure AI strategy is in place. As such, IT leaders are focused on bolstering the security of that strategy, creating governance across their organization, upskilling their own team for an AI-first service desk, as well as implementing AI across functions with diverse needs and technical backgrounds.

These new responsibilities, however, are leading to new challenges. As IT leaders take on organization-wide initiatives, they don’t always have the right tools to meet the moment. And while IT leaders largely agree AI is bringing newfound benefits to their businesses, it also brings new complexity.

These challenges mean that IT leaders are not only taking on more work across the business, but doing so with teams that may

feel burned out or underskilled for the work ahead. Challenges that, left unaddressed, could pose further difficulties in effectively delivering service at scale.



IT leaders are focused on bolstering the security of that strategy, creating governance across their organization.”



IT leaders weigh in: Top opportunities and obstacles			
TOP 3 PRIORITIES		TOP 3 CHALLENGES	
1	Strengthening cybersecurity and data privacy	1	IT team burnout
2	Improving overall employee experience	2	Talent gaps and skill shortages
3	Expanding self-service capabilities through AI and automation	3	Tool sprawl/complexity

Boosting employee satisfaction to yield a more productive workforce

Despite the obstacles they face, IT leaders understand the critical role they play in elevating employee experiences. In fact, nearly all IT leaders believe their department’s work has an impact on employee productivity, job satisfaction, and employee trust.

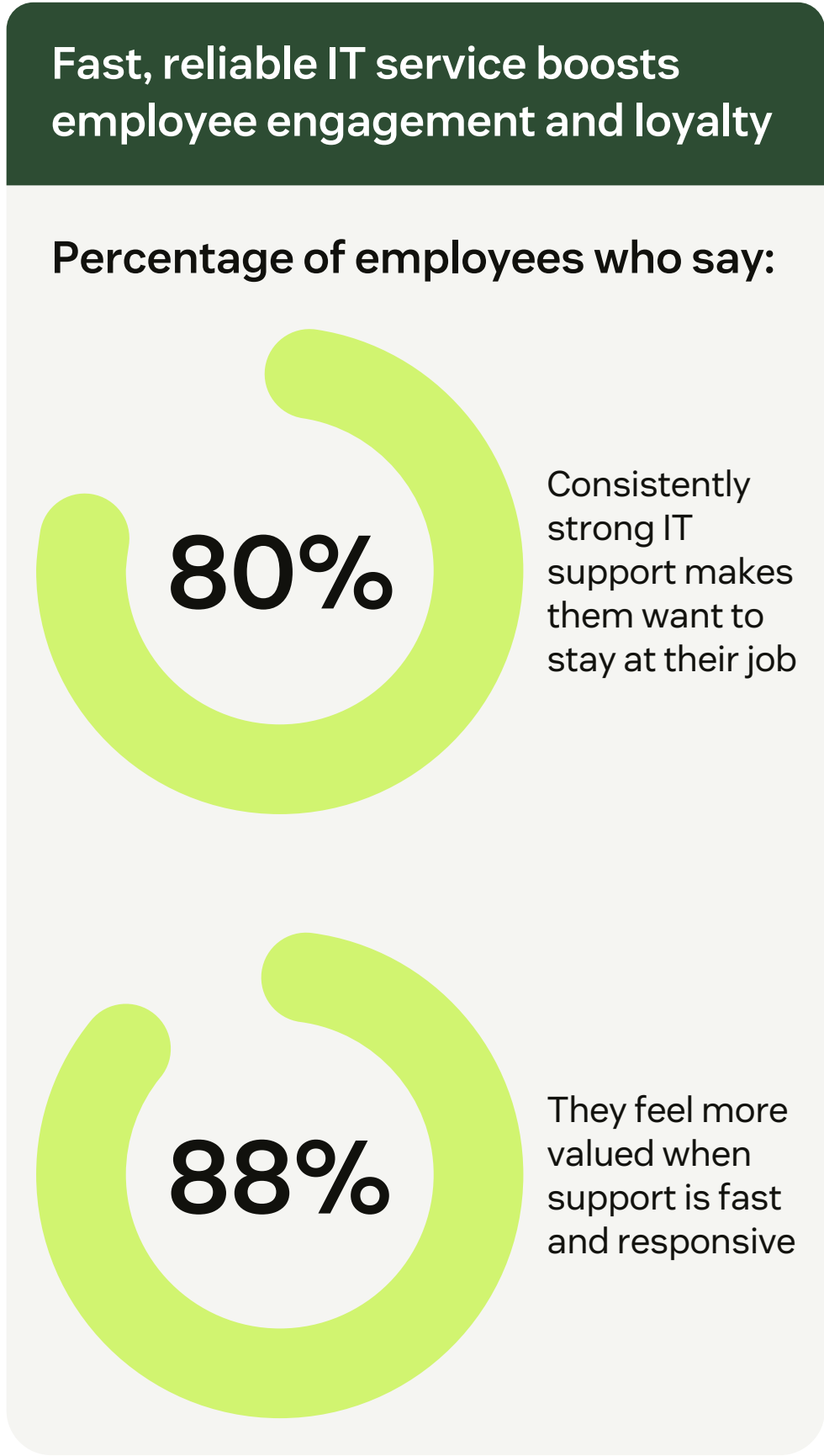
As a result, IT leaders are moving beyond purely operational metrics to experience-driven metrics. Our data shows IT leaders rank employee satisfaction as their top metric over the next 12 months. To IT leaders, elevated service delivers more than happier employees—though that matters, too. An increase in employee satisfaction yields other real business outcomes, such as higher retention, better productivity, and not to mention, happier customers.

They’re also focusing on how to deliver better resolutions at speed and without hefty cost. And, in turn, leveraging more holistic metrics that speak to the overall productivity of the organization and efficacy of the resolutions they provide.



The pressure to meet rising employee expectations

Delivering top-notch service is a win-win for organizations. According to our research, nearly all employees agree that timely IT resolutions support their productivity (92%), help them feel engaged at work (90%), and make them feel valued as an employee (88%).



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Leveraging seamless integrations within the Zendesk platform, GitHub enables its IT agents to instantly view and act on employee asset context—such as assigned laptops and onboarding tasks—without switching solutions. The results?

- They’ve reduced time-to-resolution by 15% for asset-related tickets
- Improved asset provisioning security
- Decreased manual escalations across HR and IT—boosting company-wide CSAT to 95%.

[Learn from GitHub](#)

Boosting employee satisfaction to yield a more productive workforce

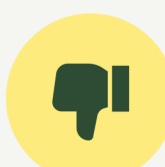
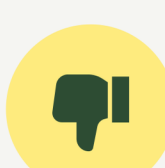
CONTINUED

And while our research shows that IT departments are effectively meeting employees’ foundational needs (think: resolving issues and keeping employees informed), there’s room for improvement.



Waiting hours (or days) for resolutions is a real dealbreaker.”

For starters, it doesn’t take a company-wide IT outage to derail productivity. According to our research, **nearly three in four employees (74%) say their day can grind to a halt over a simple technical issue.** Meanwhile, nearly half (40%) of the employees we surveyed said they dread reaching out to IT. They’re wary of having to jump through hoops to get help, repeat themselves, or not feel heard. To them, waiting hours (or days) for resolutions is a real dealbreaker.

Employee scorecard: What’s working and what’s not with IT	
WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY THEIR IT DEPARTMENT DOES WELL	WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
 Resolving technical issues	 Repeating an issue to multiple people
 Maintaining secure data practices	 Reopening tickets across multiple departments
 Building employee trust in AI for basic tasks, such as handling policy questions, password resets, and software installs	 Building employee trust in AI for complex or sensitive tasks
 Feeling informed	 Speed, clarity, and empathy

Boosting employee satisfaction to yield a more productive workforce

CONTINUED

Instead, employees want a quick fix that doesn't involve jumping through hoops. Better yet, they'd love their problems to be solved before they even happen. That way, they can be more productive, have smoother work days, and feel less stress.

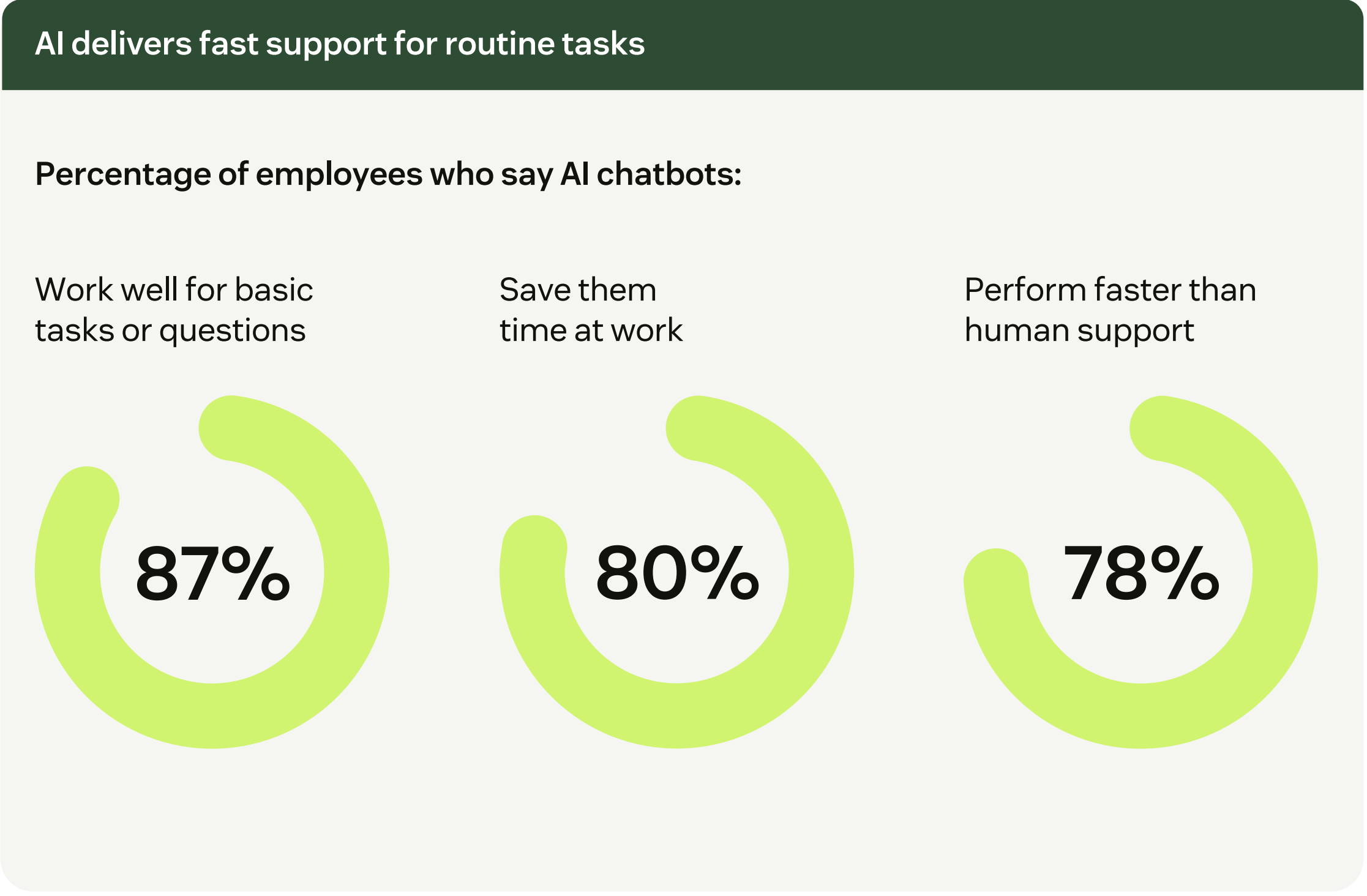
IT leaders recognize AI as a means to meeting employees' needs—deploying AI solutions that deliver on their expectations. In turn, employees appreciate using AI for simple and routine requests—finding it efficient, time-saving, and often surprisingly effective.

Yet, while many employees have grown more comfortable with AI, they still have some trust issues—especially when it comes to complex topics. To earn employees' trust, IT leaders need to continuously deliver fast and consistent service that proves AI can handle those very issues.

What does that level of service look like? When an employee reaches out with an IT issue, they can't wait days or weeks to hear back—or to get a resolution. They need to feel confident that not only will they receive a timely response—every time—but that the interaction will be streamlined and the fix will be accurate. Only then will employees walk away with feelings of satisfaction and trust.



Employees appreciate using AI for simple and routine requests—finding it efficient, time-saving, and often surprisingly effective.”



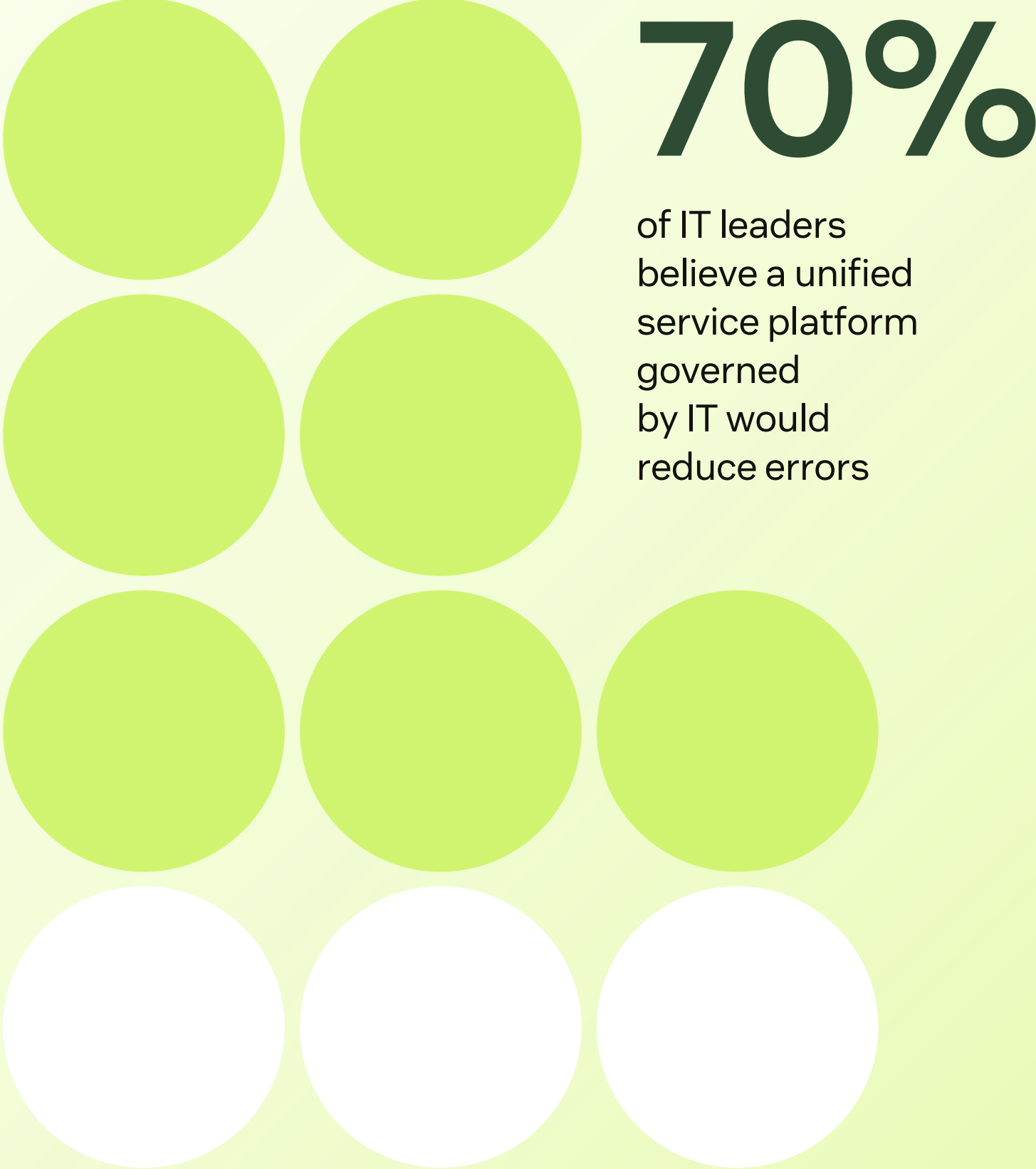
Modern, AI-first solutions pave the way for streamlined service

As organizations evolve, IT leaders are looking for simplified solutions that not only reduce tool sprawl, but also make both employee and support role experiences easier.

Employees crave this simplicity, too: 78% expect to reach out to one central place for help with an issue—whether it’s related to IT, HR, or company policy.

As IT leaders look to the future, they’re investing in service solutions that deliver just that: simplicity, ease of use, and the ability to bring AI into their organizations at scale. In other words, a service solution that works not just for IT, but every department.

What matters most in an ITSM solution?	
THE TOP CRITERIA ACCORDING TO 1,000 GLOBAL IT LEADERS:	
1	Security and compliance
2	AI and automation capabilities
3	Ease of use
4	Integration with existing systems
5	Vendor support and service quality



Modern, AI-first solutions pave the way for streamlined service

CONTINUED

Closing the employee experience gap with AI

IT leaders are seeing AI’s promise to help close the gap between what employees expect and what their teams can realistically deliver. According to our research, nearly three-quarters (74%) of IT leaders are using AI in IT service management, either across most workflows or fully embedded within operations.

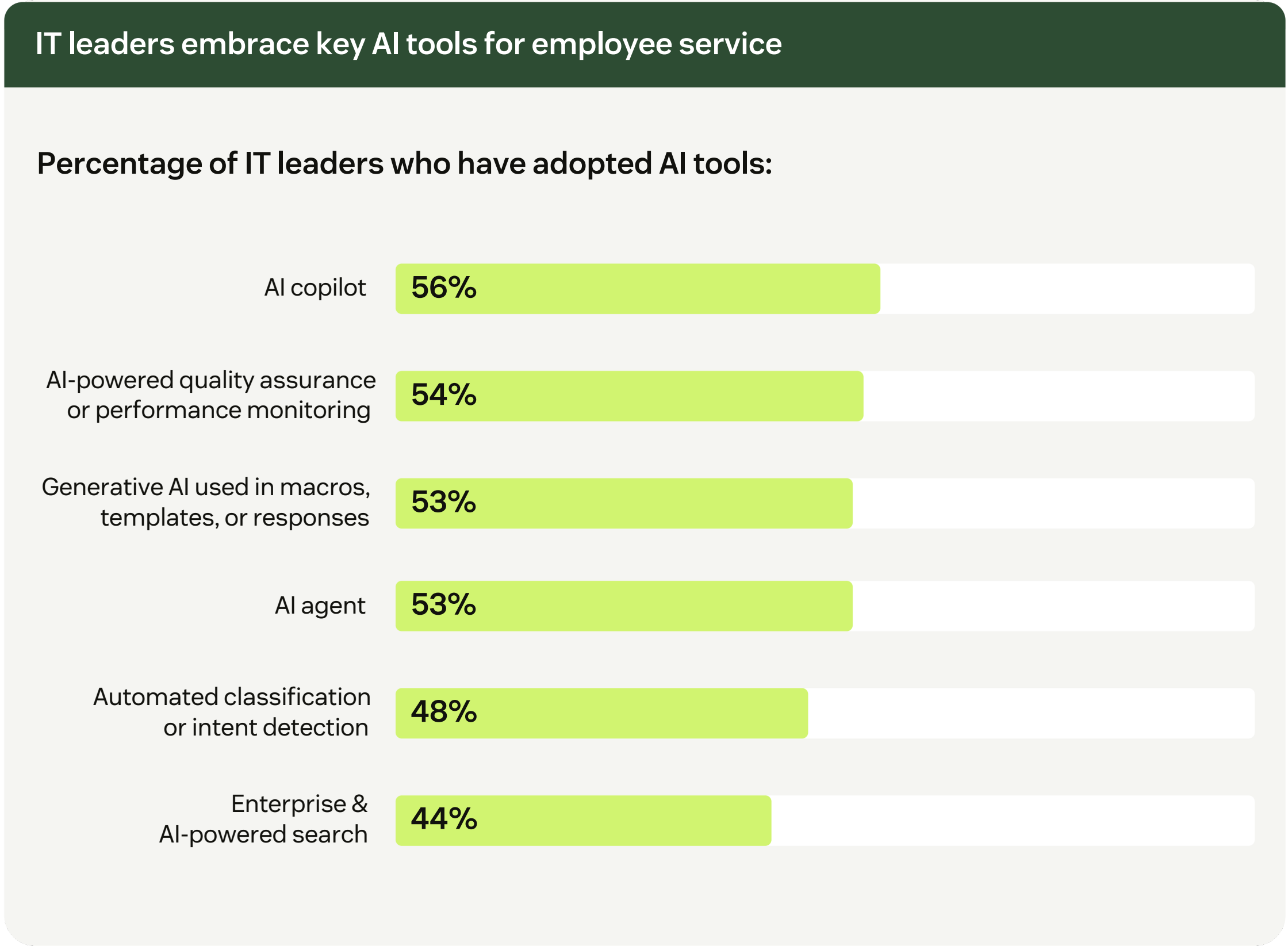


Thanks to these AI-powered efficiency gains, IT teams are able to scale their reach and better anticipate employee needs.”

AI is also helping IT leaders advance their core metrics: 95% reported measurable improvements from AI in their IT service KPIs, including boosting employee satisfaction by 17%.

Thanks to these AI-powered efficiency gains, IT teams are able to scale their reach and better anticipate employee needs—delivering on expectations without burning out.

Looking ahead, IT leaders are envisioning how AI will redefine service desk operations. Many are planning a fundamental restructure of service desk roles in anticipation that Agentic AI will play a larger role.



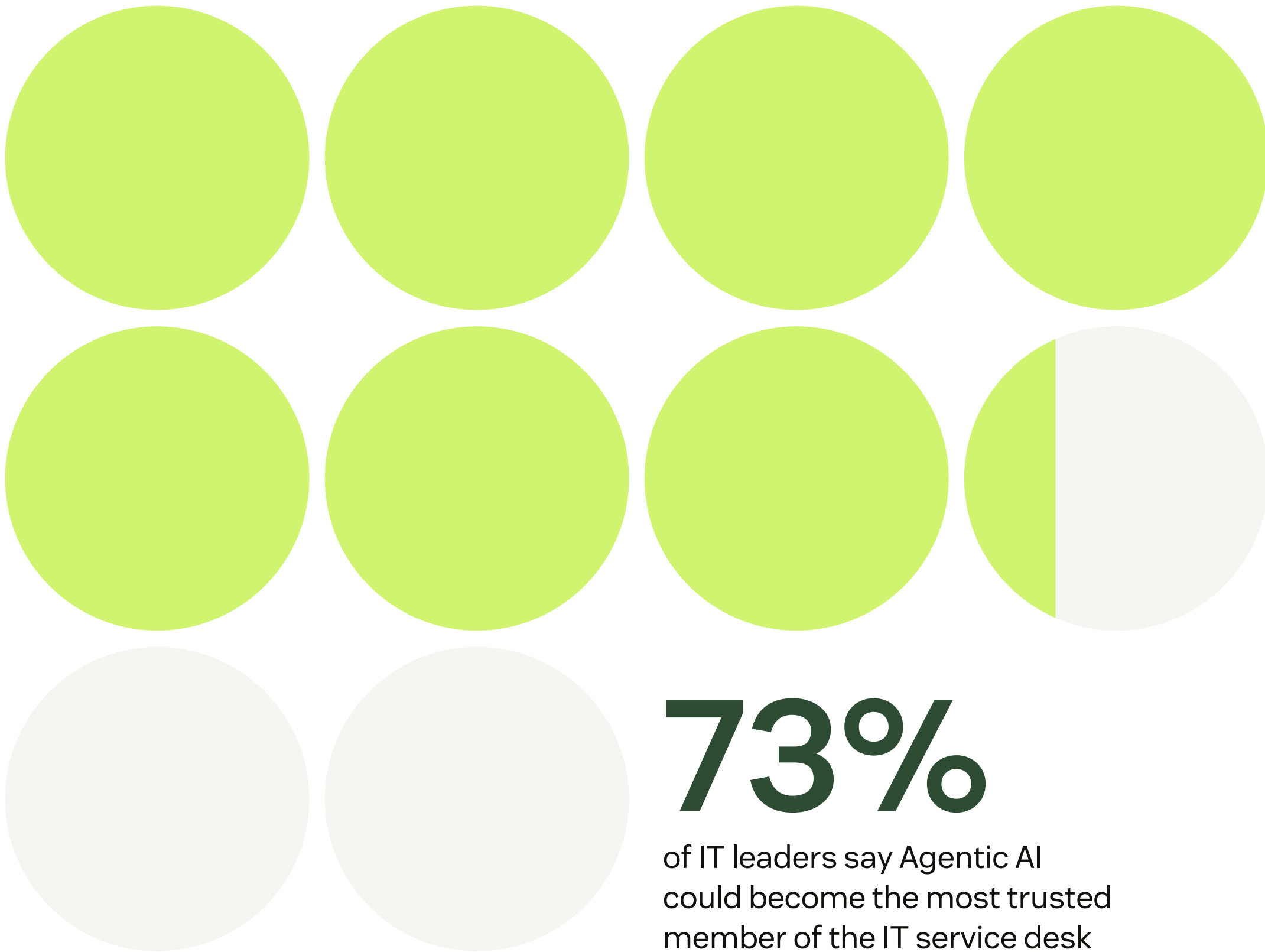
Modern, AI-first solutions pave the way for streamlined service

CONTINUED

IT leaders told us that, in the near future, AI will not only transform the service desk experience, reducing the need for the traditional tier model, but elevate human agents' roles, as well. Instead of resolving tickets, human agents will partner with AI, with Agentic AI taking on some of the lower-level support that can be fully automated. Human agents will also supervise AI—ensuring it delivers the level of service employees expect, without losing the human touch.



AI will not only transform the service desk experience, reducing the need for the traditional tier model, but elevate human agents' roles, as well.”



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



A suburb of Chicago, DuPage County, Illinois, delivers critical services to its one million residents, including public works, community services, and emergency response. Leveraging Zendesk Suite with AI to modernize its support functions, the internal IT service desk has seen a:

- 95% decrease in resolution time
- Responds to employees 95% faster
- Averaging a near-perfect CSAT score of 99.6%.

[Learn from DuPage County](#)



Lead the IT transformation at your organization

Our data is clear: better employee experience isn't just about happier employees. It's a core driver of productivity. Consistent, streamlined IT service will be the key differentiator for the modern enterprise.

In this era of consumer-grade expectations, the cost of inaction is high. As IT teams are pulled in more directions, more issues will inevitably arise. Organizations that continue to operate without a clear AI strategy will see dips in productivity, diminishing employee trust, and ultimately, attrition of top talent. Future-focused organizations are investing in the employee experience to avoid productivity delays, propel their business forward, and ultimately, yield better bottom-line results.



Lead the IT transformation at your organization

CONTINUED

Navigating the next wave of employee experience

Modern IT teams must deploy AI to meet rising employee expectations—or risk falling behind. These tips can help you get started:



Tip 1:
Deliver pain-free IT service with always-on AI support

On-demand support elevates the employee experience. With AI agents, your employees have access to 24/7 support to resolve their requests without human intervention. You can also use generative AI to instantly build a help center, allowing employees to help themselves at any moment.



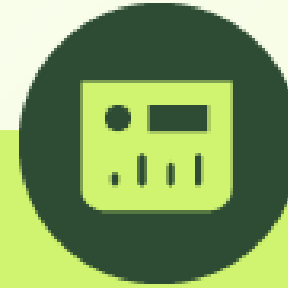
Tip 2:
Integrate AI support seamlessly into the flow of work

Put AI to work wherever your employees and IT teams need help. AI agents can move beyond the help center to deliver instant support wherever your employees are—from voice and chat to SMS and email. Copilot, an AI-powered agent assistant, works directly within service systems to provide real-time suggestions based on standard operating procedures, so your IT teams can resolve issues faster and reclaim time to focus on more strategic work.



Tip 3:
Deliver personalized support at scale with intelligent, context-aware AI

Build employee trust by leveraging AI agents that not only handle complex, nuanced requests but also seamlessly escalate to humans when needed. These AI agents use standard operating procedures, user history, and role-specific context to provide tailored, relevant support for every situation.



Tip 4:
Move from reactive to proactive IT with AI-driven insights and analytics

Leverage AI-powered analytics to gain real-time visibility into IT performance and user behavior. Predictive insights also help prevent issues before they occur—allowing your IT team to proactively improve operations and reclaim time for high-impact, strategic work.



Tip 5:
Extend AI-powered support beyond IT for scalable impact

Choose an AI-powered service platform that can easily empower other departments (like HR, Finance, and Facilities) to manage their own workflows and knowledge bases independently. This allows IT to retain oversight through a unified system, while also promoting team autonomy, reduces silos, and simplifies system maintenance—lowering TCO and ensuring consistent, high-quality support across the business.



Only Zendesk provides an easy-to-use, scalable solution designed to deliver real resolutions and drive measurable outcomes across every team from efficiency to employee satisfaction.

From building an AI-powered help center that enables employee self-service to an AI copilot that supports your IT service desk team (and much more), we offer the AI and automation capabilities you need to make delivering employee-centric IT service simple.

The future of IT service is here. Together, we can help you deliver efficient, personalized IT service at scale—empowering employees with the tools and motivation to drive better business results

Ready to transform employee service? [Get started now.](#)



Methodology:

Zendesk surveyed 1,000 IT leaders and 1,000 employees about the state of IT and employee experience in June 2025. IT leaders were VP level and above; employees were spread across age, gender, and industry. Survey respondents were based in the U.S., UK, Germany, France, Brazil, and Australia.

