

# The New Service Desk

## Anywhere, Anytime Incident Response

Research conducted by

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## Anywhere, Anytime Incident Response

**Exclusive IDG Research results reveal the key challenges facing today's IT service and support leaders. Here's how to increase your support capacity, mitigate organization risks and increase customer satisfaction—without breaking your budget.**

Today's businesses face a technology paradox: Employees are increasingly mobile, doing business from office to office and from region to region in a bid to more closely engage their customers. But this mobility requires a new world order when it comes to IT infrastructures. Notebook computers, smart phones and other portable devices must be able to connect to the enterprise from airports, hotels, homes, coffee shops, WiFi hotspots and branch offices.

That type of "fluid complexity"—where a user's physical location and network access can change by the minute—has generated a massive infrastructure sprawl that must be supported, secured and managed by IT organizations.

"Providing adequate support for all the new technologies being consumed by end users working in multiple locations is a real challenge," concedes Kris Brady, IT director for North American business systems at Taylor Morrison, a real estate development firm in Bradenton, Fla.

Many IT executives are echoing Brady's concerns. Nearly one-quarter of employees are now working outside of the corporate firewall at any one time, according to IDG Research Services, an independent firm that surveyed more than 100 IT leaders from enterprise organizations. More than 70 percent of respondents expect the number of remote employees to grow during the next 12 months. The challenges IT leaders face today with supporting these workers will become harder to resolve as the infrastructure continues to expand.

The challenges don't end there. As they search for reliable and cost-effective ways to support their users and systems remotely, IT leaders must also ensure that the solutions don't introduce additional risks into their business. They must maintain their ability to comply with government mandates and privacy objectives.

While organizations typically have some tools in place to help them access remote systems, these legacy, location-based desktop support tools are not flexible, scalable or manageable enough to support the shift to anywhere, anytime business.

"Corporate IT may be familiar with legacy tools, but those tools were designed for static networks with fixed desktops," says Joel Bomgar, founder and CEO of Bomgar Corporation, a company that specializes in remote support solutions. "Businesses must invest in more secure, manageable remote support capabilities that allow them to increase the capacity of their support teams while maintaining high security standards and customer satisfaction ratings."

### The Focus on Security is Intensifying

The IDG Research survey crystallizes the challenges IT professionals are facing in today's world when it comes to supporting both internal and external customers.

Eighty-three percent of organizations say the need to support remote workers and systems will impact their IT budgets over the next 12 months. This impact will primarily come in the form of new investments in remote support technologies and ways to proactively address the associated

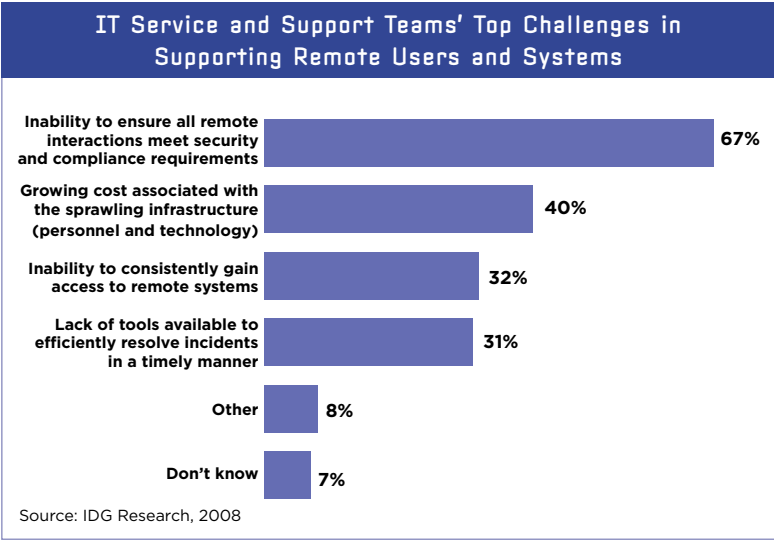
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security risks. In fact, 54 percent of respondents claim that one of their top strategic initiatives for improving customer support is associated with decreasing operational and security risks with compliance-enabling tools for remote support.

Sixty-seven percent are concerned about their inability to ensure that all remote interactions meet security and compliance requirements. This fear is legitimate, based on the weaknesses of many legacy solutions in use today. Most legacy remote support systems fall short of compliance standards and may introduce additional risks into the business. For example, if the enterprise is using a hosted solution to enable its service desk representatives to access critical customer or employee data, that data must pass through a third-party data center. The business is therefore not in control of this sensitive data at all times.



If the business is using a legacy solution that resides on the individual desktop or server, there is no audit trail of who accessed the ailing system and what was done to it during the diagnosis and resolution phases. According to many regulations, knowing who had access to what information at all times constitutes compliance.

“Some people think the government will loosen compliance regulations now that we’re all becoming more familiar with the complexity of Sarbanes-Oxley and Federal Information Processing Standards,” says Ed Golod, president of Revenue Accelerators Inc., a technology consulting firm in New York. “But navigating the compliance landscape isn’t getting easier. Each time an employee walks out the door with a device that works outside your firewall, it introduces a new compliance risk to your business.”

**The Quest for Greater Efficiencies**

In addition to security, one of the highest rated concerns among IT leaders today is the increasing costs associated with supporting their sprawling infrastructures. New remote support applications are considered by 45 percent of respondents as a strategic solution to the growing costs and inefficiencies that come with the increasing number of on-site visits required. In addition, 43 percent are looking to new remote support applications to help increase the capacity of their support teams with better access and diagnostic tools that lead to faster resolution times.

To ensure expectations for reduced costs and increased productivity are met, a remote support solution must be able to access virtually any platform and any operating system that sits behind any firewall, at any time.

“The number of stepping stones between a user and a service desk technician seems to be rising,” says Golod. “You have to get through the company firewall, leap across public Internet routers, and perhaps go through another firewall or foreign Internet service provider at a remote WiFi hotspot to eventually access the troubled remote system. And once the technician accesses the system, it can be very challenging to diagnose and resolve the incident without the proper tools. And the frustrated user on the other end of the phone typically doesn’t have much patience.”

According to the survey, 31 percent of IT leaders expressed concern about a lack of available tools to efficiently resolve remote support incidents in a timely manner. Many of the legacy remote access tools require holes to be opened in the firewall or for software to reside on the ailing system in order to provide support. These requirements contradict what most security and risk management teams demand. The ability to efficiently access, diagnose and resolve incidents on remote systems requires a new kind of solution, like that from Bomgar, which enable service desk technicians and users to meet over the Internet to establish secure connections in less than 10 seconds.

### The Impact on Customer Satisfaction

Another key challenge facing IT leaders today is the ability to provide a positive experience for customers, which is typically measured in customer satisfaction surveys. The perception of the support they receive—whether they are internal or external customers—can have a dramatic impact on the business. In fact, 51 percent of survey respondents claim that inadequate customer support decreases their ability to generate revenue from existing customers and 42 percent say it decreases their ability to generate new revenue.

With this in mind, only 8 percent rate their service and support organizations as “extremely effective” in responding to business and customer needs. So what are companies doing to improve this vital part of their organization?

“It’s a balancing act,” says Brady. “You have to keep new technology issues in mind and measure the effectiveness of your latest [remote support] initiatives. But metrics for success often exclude the end users’ perception of your help desk. If your users aren’t satisfied, your initiatives have failed.”

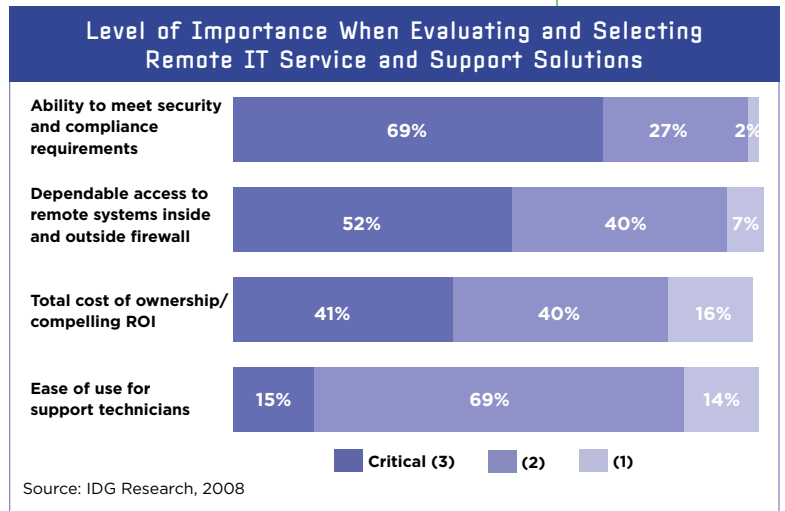
To improve response times, many companies are turning to advanced remote support solutions to equip their service desk technicians with the tools that enable anytime, anywhere access to virtually any system.

Robert Baird, manager of the Technical Support Center at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, a publisher of education software and services, implemented Bomgar’s remote support solution. “Now, educators prefer to contact us instead of their local network administrators or support teams because we are more equipped to diagnose and resolve their problems much faster,” he says. “They don’t have to be technically savvy to let us in and get the problem taken care of. What could take days with other support resources typically takes us less than 12 minutes with Bomgar.”

### Steps to Success

There are four key requirements for companies to bear in mind when evaluating and selecting remote IT service and support solutions:

- The ability to meet security and compliance requirements (69 percent of survey participants consider this a critical requirement);
- Dependable access to remote systems inside and outside the firewall (52 percent);



- Total cost of ownership coupled with a compelling return on investment (41 percent);
- Ease of use for support technicians (15 percent).

A combination of people, processes and modern remote support solutions can address these challenges. An increasingly popular model for success involves appliance-based remote support, which allows secure “any to any” communications between a service desk technician and a remote user. Pioneered by Bomgar, this approach is being used by nearly 4,000 organizations worldwide.

“Integrating Bomgar into our service center gives us the ability to support all customers quickly and effectively,” says Mike Lyons, vice president of Novell Global Support in Waltham, Mass. “By routing inquiries to the correct support team from the onset, we eliminate hours of time switching the customer back and forth between service representatives.”

From any desktop or laptop, a service desk technician can log into the Bomgar appliance solution to support a remote user or system. This approach offers several key benefits to customers. For starters, the technician does not have to be in a central office. If a problem occurs after hours, the technician can log into the network from any approved, designated system and begin to troubleshoot the remote user’s systems—even if the user is outside of the corporate network.

“It has happened more than once that a CEO from one of our big [customers] would wait to work on an important task until they were at an airport,” says Marc Pantoni, a partner and chief technology officer at Precision IT Group, a solutions provider in New York that leverages Bomgar for remote customer support. “Something would go wrong that they couldn’t resolve themselves, often a simple problem. Having the capability to resolve the issue in just a matter of minutes makes us look good and reasserts the quality of service that we provide to our clients.”

The Bomgar solution has a permission-based design, ensuring that the end user grants the technician permission to access and troubleshoot his or her system. This mitigates the risk of a rogue or disgruntled administrator remotely accessing confidential information on a user’s system.

Bomgar also leverages industry-standard Secure Sockets Layer encryption to safeguard the data stream. And each remote session can be recorded and logged, ensuring that businesses have strong audit trails in place.

“Lack of auditing is often the Achilles’ heel that causes many companies to stumble with their compliance efforts,” says Golod. “Too many people focus just on securing a system. Too few realize that they need an auditing solution that provides that extra level of protection.”

The Bomgar solution also integrates with traditional service desk automation software, such as BMC Software applications, to maximize the ability to rapidly respond, resolve and report on incidents. In addition, Bomgar’s open API and Software Development Kit provide all of the tools necessary to easily integrate the solution into existing processes and infrastructure, such as CRM and business intelligence systems.

“At the end of the day, it’s really about delivering a total remote support solution that’s flexible, scalable and secure,” says Joel Bomgar. “Managing the desktop systems within your firewall is no longer enough. Now, you need the ability to reach out to external mobile systems that are constantly on the move.”

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— Mike Lyons, vice president of Novell Global Support

### For More Information

To learn more about how you can leverage a modern remote support solution, please visit [www.bomgar.com](http://www.bomgar.com)