Why Your IT Managed Services Need a ‘Human Touch’
Introduction

We’re living in a world where almost everything is digital. Technology has transformed how service is delivered and has multiplied the interactions between companies and customers. It’s now easier than ever to engage with businesses wherever and whenever we want. Chatbots, virtual assistants, automated management tools, and the growth of digital communication mean companies rarely miss an opportunity to offer customer support to those that need it.

However, digital experiences aren’t the only thing that consumers crave. For IT managed service providers, cultivating a human touch and putting people first is essential, and critical to long-term success.

While the growth of digital communication channels and automated systems has had a positive impact on customer service, 71% of consumers still choose to interact with a real person when given the option. Sometimes, there’s simply no replacing human interaction.

In this whitepaper, we’ll explore:

- Why a human touch matters in the digital era
- How to strike the right balance between technology and people
- The main questions to consider when choosing an IT managed services provider
Why the Human Touch Matters in the Digital Era

In the digital era, it’s all too easy to forget about the human element of customer experience.

Technology is transforming the traditional roles of managed service providers. But the empathy and professionalism offered by the human element of customer service shouldn’t be traded off for the simple speed and efficiency offered by new technologies.

Intercity’s Julie McNally, Customer Experience Director, describes the importance of the human touch:

“Today’s managed services practices are using increasing levels of automation to succeed. Automation allows us to deliver consistent, efficient services for customers. However, automation cannot substitute to the human touch. The human touch is the flexibility to help the customer, finding workarounds to tricky queries. It’s the personal touch that we put into our service. If we can’t deliver a personal touch, we risk pushing customers to a competitor who can. “

Julie McNally
Customer Experience Director
Building Trust is Important

Trust is a key measure of a solid, long-lasting relationship with a managed services provider. To get the most out of your partnership, you need a dependable provider that understands your business, can offer tailored advice and services, and will always work in your best interest.

It’s important to look for a managed service provider that doesn’t just discuss technology, procedures, and metrics. While those factors do matter, your provider should be able to build on them, and describe how their services and technology offerings will drive the results you want.

A managed service provider shouldn’t work solely because of their technology. Their technology should work as an extension of their expertise and experience.

Ultimately, the role of your managed service provider isn’t to sell you a ‘one-size-fits-all’ package of IT services and solutions. They should work with you to address your individual issues and challenges and find the best fit for your business.

Personalisation Makes a Difference

A common reason many customers are apprehensive about contacting companies for support is the growing probability they’ll be greeted by a chatbot, rather than a human. When customers reach out for technical support, they don’t want to navigate through virtual menus or talk to robots. They want to be greeted by someone who has the expertise and industry knowledge to help them solve their problem quickly.

Chatbots have their uses and can be a great way to handle smaller queries or direct customers to the information they need. But they’re no substitute for in-person support and businesses shouldn’t delegate customer experience to them entirely. People don’t want to feel like a number on a screen – they want to feel valued.

Empathy, active listening, and real-time support is something that sets managed service agents apart from automated technology. A live agent is better equipped to understand an issue from a customer’s perspective and can foster a long-term relationship with them.

A managed services provider that offers a personal, tailored approach to handling IT queries will be able to provide more value than relying on AI or a chatbot. You can use these platforms to add value, but not at the expense of real, human interactions.

59% of all consumers feel companies have lost touch with the human element of customer experience

PwC
Striking the Balance Between Technology and People

With the rise of artificial intelligence, automated systems, and self-service portals, it’s easy to think that the future of customer service will be completely driven by automation and technology, without the need for human interaction. Advances in technology create many operational, service, and customer experience benefits, and it isn’t going anywhere.

Companies that find a balance between automation and the human touch – using AI and technology to empower service agents to create more complex conversations – will be able to offer the most effective support in the future. Technology is the enabler, but it’s not the silver bullet. It’s all about striking a balance.

“People want that human-to-human connection, and the more you exclusively rely on AI, the more that’s taken away. AI technology is fantastic, but it has its limits, and that’s where the human touch has to take over.”

Davoc Bradley
IT, Security and Product Director
Why Automation Matters

Automation is getting more attention because AI systems can carry out common repeatable tasks humans can’t perform as efficiently or effectively. In seconds, a computer can sort through large amounts of data that may take a technical support agent hours. Additionally, a machine will be able to make inferences – identifying relevant trends and highlighting any abnormalities.

In managed services, this allows systems to predict a server breakdown, network issue, or an application crash. The machine detects the problem and automatically contacts the relevant IT manager for a fix. As systems gradually get more complex, human intervention becomes less common because the AI takes the appropriate action on its own.

For managed service providers, increased automation allows them to be more efficient and productive. This means staff are free to focus on strategic tasks and deal with more demanding issues. But as important as it is to leverage advancements in automation, it’s important to never lose sight of the human touch.

Putting People First

As good as technological advancements are, they can’t replace the human element of managed services. And while monitoring and diagnostic systems are getting better at predicting and preventing problems in IT environments, AI still lacks the finesse to directly address customer concerns or questions. In some cases, only a human can provide the needed reassurance or satisfactory answer.

With data from AI, managed service providers can deliver substantial value when it comes to customer planning strategies. But ultimately, the data needs an expert eye to interpret and present it in a persuasive, impactful way.

When looking for an IT managed service provider, it’s important to look for a provider that strikes a balance between technology and human interaction. An effective balance will result in a better customer experience and a stronger, more profitable future for your business.

26% of respondents reported job increases after adopting AI

Gartner
The Questions to Ask When Choosing an IT Managed Service Provider

Today, there’s no shortage of competition between service providers. The sheer breadth of offerings can make it difficult to tell one company apart from the next, especially as many businesses are all promising the same things: the latest tech, tools, and IT management applications.

But what differentiates the best from the rest is how they treat their customers. A managed service provider should work with existing in-house teams, putting people first and leveraging technology to empower customers and support their success.

The key questions to ask when choosing an IT managed service provider:

- What level of support do they offer?
- Do they rely too heavily on indirect technology?
- Can they deliver a localised service?
What Level of Support Do They Offer?

While some managed service providers will offer 24/7 service support, others might only operate within the traditional 9-5. For many, this could be a deal-breaker, so it’s important to ensure that your provider can offer you critical support around the clock if required.

Additionally, a managed service provider should act as an extension of your in-house teams. They shouldn’t serve as an isolated body that only acts when there’s a problem. The best managed service providers will be proactive, working with you to investigate strategic issues alongside managing everyday technical and IT concerns.

Ultimately, your managed service provider should be flexible and adaptable, working as a business partner and offering a tailored support strategy that suits your specific needs. Your provider should be invested in your future and maintain a consistent dialogue throughout your partnership.
Do they Rely Too Heavily on Chatbots or Indirect technology?

Most managed IT service providers will be using technology like chatbots, self-service portals, and interactive platforms to support customers.

But as useful as these technologies are, they shouldn’t be relied on completely. A managed service provider should still retain the human element of customer service, amongst this technology.

For example, offering a centralised point of contact for helpdesk support and enquiries. So when you want to speak to a real person directly, you can.

Can they Deliver Localised, Timely Service?

Almost half of the UK’s workforce is working remotely. That means employees are adapting to spending time at home, in shared spaces, or on the move. And as the office becomes less of a focal point for daily work, it’s important for businesses to rethink how they manage their IT and an increasingly dispersed workforce.

The proximity of your managed service provider to your business can be a defining factor in receiving timely, on-site support. If you need on-site assistance, support for remote workers, or require help across multiple office locations, it’s worth considering a UK managed service provider that can offer local resources to support this new, hybrid workforce.

Most providers will be able to manage services remotely. But in an emergency, it’s reassuring to know that you have access to on-site technical support in case you need hardware fixes or additional IT infrastructure.

46% of businesses say outsourcing their IT lets them access skillsets that aren’t available in-house.

Fortunly
In a world with digital innovation around every corner. Technology has the potential to deliver some exceptional experiences, but amongst all the advancements, it’s important to not lose sight of the human touch.

At Intercity, we understand the importance of combining the efficiency of the latest technology and digital solutions with the empathy and professionalism of expert in-house support.

To find out how Intercity can help take the complexity out of managing your IT, get in touch.

Get in Touch Today