

Service Delivery Flexibility for the Enterprise

Separating Customer Experience from Fulfillment Chaos

Today's internal business users are more demanding than ever. They see the intuitive set of online tools used at home, and expect that same level of customer experience in the workplace. It makes sense. Easy access to information is what they need to get their job done quickly and effectively without any hurdles to request services or report issues that get in their way. Anything outside of what employees are paid to do is a distraction that not only affects job satisfaction, but reduces productivity and the overall profitability of the company as a whole.

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Think about it: If you are a sales executive, your job is to sell goods/services and you are incented to do just that. You don't want to be searching around for "which phone number to call" to get support for a broken printer while facing a deadline on a critical proposal that has to go out. All customers, internal and external, desire a great ordering experience, fast delivery and the least amount of interruption.

In order to keep these customers happy, we need an approach that will support not only the business needs of the foreseeable future, but also those of **the unforeseeable future**. This means prioritizing enterprise flexibility, where evolution in service delivery can continue quickly, without so much negative impact to the experience of the customer.

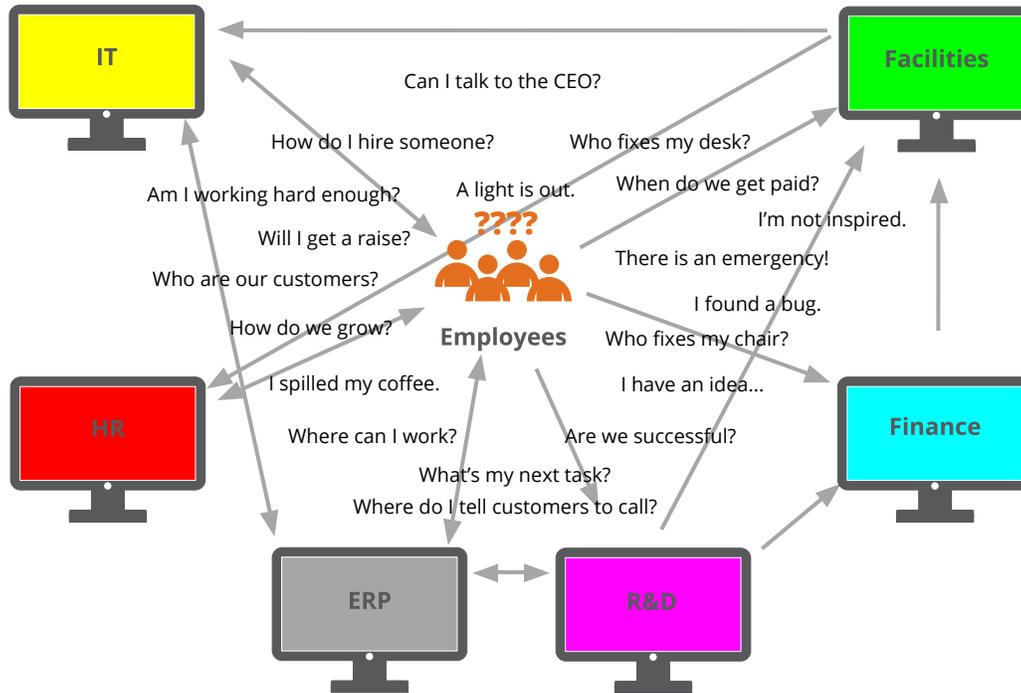
The Problem

For decades, global companies have spent volumes of energy researching, developing and formally sourcing projects to procure solutions to automate, manage and report on key organizational processes. These projects vary greatly, from operational support systems including IT Service Management (ITSM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS). Typically, these projects involve highly specialized software packages to run key business functions.

This type of project often requires the deployment of a chosen solution set or application which either forces a major upgrade of an incumbent system ; or a "**rip and replace**" of existing fulfillment platforms in favor of new, industry leading commercial applications. Sometimes, the cycle is as short as a year and is repeated in some fashion not long after go-live.

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Today, when enterprise fulfillment platforms are implemented, they often have some included “self-service” capability built-in that has integration points and references the source system. Multiple systems with differing understanding and approaches to self-service exacerbate the confusion and happen to only work best with the source system’s original functionality.

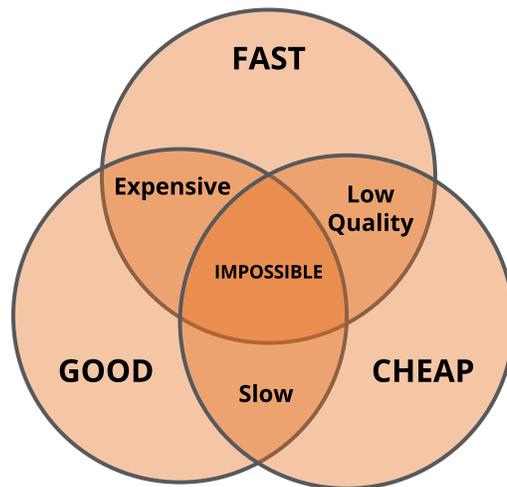


For a global organization to ensure an effective long-term approach that supports easy, self-service driven customer experiences, a best-of-breed solution¹ should be chosen to support that strategy across the enterprise.

Keep in mind: **No company has a single system managing their entire organization.** Department-based shared service organizations act as service providers to their customers; the business users. Teams are structured to provide operational support to ensure enterprises can provide value and efficiency at scale. While a single department may often use a centralized system, there are many systems and tools that make up overall delivery models and enable key services across the enterprise. Due to the fast pace of change in our economy, service providers are challenged to provide an exceptional customer experience, evolve operational delivery at the speed of business, and do so on as tight a budget as possible.

This challenge is best described in the Project Management “Iron Triangle,” and is also portrayed well in the famous saying: “Good, Fast or Cheap: Pick two.” Service Providers must be prepared to be in “the department of Yes” if you want to be perceived as a strategic partner. However, project managers familiar with the “Iron Triangle” all know that fundamentally, no project can have all three.

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Great service experience that is delivered quickly at the price they require? Perhaps with the right approach, this impossible paradigm can be achieved.

Functional Silos; expanding the problem.

In the enterprise shared service model, responsibility for operational support functions are typically grouped under a specific department or area. For example: The HR department is setup to manage delivery of all personnel-based services (recruiting, benefits administration, payroll etc..).

Function-specific fulfillment platforms serve as systems of record and provide the back-end automation of specific service fulfillment process needs, usually aligned to industry best-practice models. They normally contain pre-defined reporting structures and are designed to allow system managers to configure support processes related to that functional area.

Similarly, Enterprise ITSM platforms are designed around the configuration management database (CMDB) and are focused on managing IT-aligned support functions. The ultimate value of a platform to the organization is in enabling it to effectively manage the delivery of services to customers.

The function of an IT platform is focused on enabling organizational IT service management. Since these platforms are robust systems aligned to supporting enterprise needs and aligned to a best practice frameworks, legacy platforms are not designed to be effectively used by untrained users. **They are complex systems designed to be used day in and day out by trained professionals** requiring depth of knowledge and experience with the functionality of the tool.

For almost every operational support function, there

Customer expectations have evolved beyond what these systems are capable of providing; a more consistent and exceptional experience.

are many specialized tools used today to support fulfillment of key service functions. And while there are excellent fulfillment capabilities built into these platforms that allow for efficient service delivery, it doesn't make a difference to the business user (customer).

These end-users simply want to get their job done with the least amount of hassle as fast as possible. When they have to request help, they don't want to be bothered with understanding the tools and processes the support group is using. They want EASY.

Disparate Systems Excuse Bad Experiences

Systems of record used across the enterprise are often effectively case management applications. Whether used as a CRM, ITSM, ERP or HR tool, these platforms effectively track data in a relational database model allowing information to be managed, reported and for execution of specialized fulfillment workflows. By design, each of these systems has foundational data that needs to be defined and implemented within the system for it to function appropriately.

While these systems may support customer-facing interaction, **systems of record are not primarily designed to provide robust self-service capabilities.** Customer expectations have evolved beyond what these systems

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are capable of providing; a more consistent and exceptional experience. Customer experience suffers when systems don't work well together and don't offer a seamless experience. This is only exacerbated when there are multiple self-service options for multiple functions within an organization. This degrades the customer experience, adds overhead and hinders the ability for the enterprise to evolve.

One Rotten Apple Spoils the Whole Barrel

Delivering Information Technology is an expensive and painful challenge to overcome for any global enterprise. As the functions managed within IT platforms have become heavily commoditized, organizations that once utilized on-premise, robust best-of-breed systems to manage their IT operations have looked to reduce costs and complexities associated with maintaining their IT

operations by moving to cloud-based tools and outsourcing capabilities to external service providers.

These projects often are driven by perceived costliness of maintaining on-premise systems, as well as business users' displeasure of having to interact with complex systems that are not truly designed for self-service and offer (at best) a subpar customer experience.

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Scope of products, microservices - parts of an organization do not grow at an even rate - to keep it balanced you must have the ability to grow in a flexible way.

If a fulfillment system has self-service built into it, and it is being used within multiple functions beyond what it is designed to fulfill, the enterprise is at a costly and painful crossroad. If the best business choice is to abandon a specific vendor, the teams may have to rebuild and redeploy self-service capabilities they already spent time and effort implementing and adopting. Additionally, service process functions such as business approvals and/or notifications are built into the existing self-service system. If the fulfillment system is going to be changed, now business users are negatively impacted due to a behind-the-scenes change that really offers them zero value.

In order to achieve maximum flexibility for the business, a proper architecture must be leveraged to provide self-service. Any user-facing functionality should be deployed in a system that is purpose-built and designed to provide enterprise self-service.

Self-Service: Architecting Your Future

Why is Kinetic's platform approach different?

- Designed as an enterprise-wide self-service platform that can leverage data from anywhere - in real time
- Designed to provide an exceptional, intuitive Customer Experience for your brand increasing adoption and success
- Designed to speed an organization's digital transformation through a myriad of integration points
- Designed to quickly adapt to system of record changes no matter how small or large the change is
- Designed to be managed by non-developers - where service owners can manage their own content

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Strategically, it makes sense to architect a system where key components are purpose-built for each critical function they are aimed at providing. As an example, a system designed to offer robust fulfillment and reporting for telecommunications circuits would probably not be the right system on which to build HR functions and vice-versa.

As such, global enterprises must embrace a strategy focused on a quality customer experience with the best application stack, purpose-built to deliver a particular solution, no different than choosing the right CRM database. Regardless of whether the "customer" in question is an externally supported paying customer or is an internal hourly employee, solutions must focus on delivering the right experience for the right user. Enable the customer to be delighted in their experience and the fulfiller to be delighted in theirs .

Also consider not only initial or current business requirements, but also account for future *unknown* needs. In any long term project, requirements will change over time. Since self-service is a customer facing functionality, it is critically important to design for flexibility up front so the system does not become a burden that drags service improvement to a halt in the future as new requirements emerge.

Harmony, ease of use, no growing pains, balance

As consumers, the method for procuring goods and services has been simplified through self-service oriented delivery and is now the norm. Hence a lot of innovation is focused specifically on self-service driven customer experiences. Whether it is “App-based” or done via a customer portal, corporations want to ensure their services are perceived positively. A positive customer experience is enhanced when supplemented with intelligent and empowering self-service.

These self-service systems are also designed for flexibility so they can quickly evolve to keep up with the demand of the business in providing the needed customer experience. To remain competitive, companies can't afford to wait for months for improvements nor the evolution of their customer experience.

A lot can be learned from these experiences - as customers in our daily lives. There are some patterns that can be applied:

- **Accessibility:** Easy access from anywhere in the world - on any device (Mobile Enabled). This also empowers customers to not have to wait on someone else to help them. The more accessible, the more customers.
- **Simplicity:** Service Experience should be designed around making it easy for the customer interact with the provider. Complexity Kills.
- **Speed of Delivery:** Automation is critical to ensuring fast delivery as well as low cost. It is critical that the system drives automation, not only within the self-service platform, but also in conjunction with back-end fulfillment systems.
- **Service Visibility:** Customer empowerment comes not only from providing access to knowledge and the ability to request service, it also comes from enabling easy access to status and optional notifications.
- **Constant Evolution:** Customer facing services evolve continuously. Therefore, the system enabling self-service should be designed to allow for iterative improvement. This requires a design that allows for distribution of the management of services to the appropriate fulfillment areas so there's no logistical bottleneck preventing fast evolution.

Benefits to this Approach

In designing an approach that ensures service providers can evolve at the speed of the business, the most critical path to follow is in choosing an enterprise architecture that enables self-service driven automation with the required flexibility to address future “unknowns.”. To achieve this, a best-of-breed system purpose built for delivering tailored customer experience should be utilized across the enterprise.

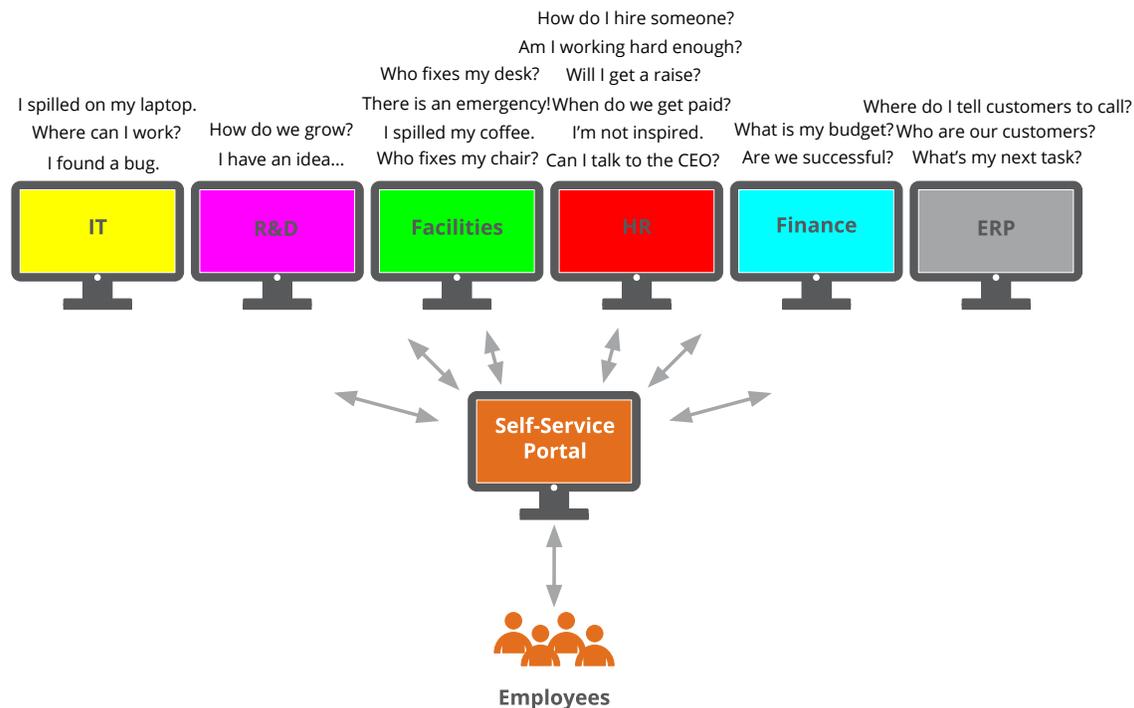
Solution vendors that focused on enterprise self-service, offer a depth of capabilities in the systems they offer that will support a continuous improvement model that will meet the changing demands of the business for years to come. This maturity in these best-of-breed self-service tools will ensure the required flexibility exists to meet new business demands as they arise.

In setting up this architecture, there is effectively a layer of abstraction between the customer (the business) and the chaos of the various back-end fulfillment organizations, which enables many benefits.

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These benefits include:

- Reduction of software license spend across the enterprise
- Elimination of Vendor Lock-in
- Centralized enterprise business-process governance
- Distributed management of enterprise self-service capabilities
- Consistent customer experience, keeping employees productive
- Helps in achieving an effective SIAM model



Summary

As a shared services organization, you need to provide cost effective, quickly-delivered service at scale across your supported user (customer) community. But, it's not enough to just provide low cost services. It's critical that the service delivered is perceived as top-notch by those customers. In many cases, you have to integrate your delivery model to incorporate vendor provided systems and processes, seamlessly for those customers you support. Plus, you have to contend with competition in the form of outsourcers locally and offshore that claim they can deliver the same (or better) service at a lower price point.

It's certainly not easy to compete as a service organization, especially given the fast-changing landscape of technology in the "as-a-service" driven global economy. But, if you plan and architect for the flexibility required to quickly adapt as new challenges arise, you will be in a much better place to do so.

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Separating your system of engagement from the back-end chaos of operational service fulfillment is the right model to maintain the needed flexibilities to adapt quickly to the changing needs of the business. Choosing a purpose built system for self-service automation ensures great customer experience be delivered, while chaos abounds throughout the corporate operations delivery landscape.

About Kinetic Data

Kinetic Data creates business process software that delights customers, making them heroes by transforming both the organization and the people who work there. Since 1998 Kinetic Data has helped hundreds of Fortune 500 and government customers—including General Mills, Avon, Intel, 3M and the U.S. Department of Transportation—implement automated request management systems with a formula that is proven, repeatable and ready to implement. The company has earned numerous awards for its superior products and support. Kinetic Data serves customers from its headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., offices in Sydney, Australia, and through a valued network of reseller partners. For more information, visit www.kineticdata.com, follow [our blog](#), and connect with us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

¹ <https://www.gartner.com/doc/2684018/critical-capabilities-it-service-catalog>