



7-8 JUNE 2017
OLYMPIA, LONDON

SITS16 hailed as ‘one of the best ever’ by attendees

London’s Olympia played host to the biggest gathering of IT service and support professionals of the year last month at SITS – The Service Desk & IT Support Show 2016.

It welcomed 3,500 visitors (up 4% for 2016) through its doors on 8-9 June and garnered a wealth of positive feedback – making SITS16 one of its most successful editions in years.

As ever, the show provided the perfect backdrop for the UK’s service desk and help desk managers, technical specialists, consultants, CIOs, CTOs, IT directors, and senior IT decision-makers to network and share best practices, research the latest technologies, tools and trends, and get inspired by expert speakers.

Emerging new technologies, such as Cloud, SaaS, PaaS, BYOD and DevOPs, have transformed the way that IT services are delivered within the workplace. And, once again, as it has for the last 22 years, SITS provided an essential platform and business forum for sharing ideas and innovations to help evolve, improve, and re-define the way today’s IT professionals deliver their service desk solutions.

“The reaction to the show this year has been fantastic,” says group event director David Maguire. “Visitors gathered in their thousands and there was a real ‘buzz’ on the show floor of business being done. Not only was there a 4% increase in visitors, but many exhibitors have been praising their quality as our best attendance to date. Our CPD-accredited seminar programme was also a real highlight – attracting speakers from the likes of Spotify, Skyscanner, and Tesco, plus technology thought leaders including Jamie Bartlett, Charles Araujo and Dr James Stanger.

“IT is both an exciting and challenging space to be working in right now. There are new technologies appearing each day, new expectations around value to the business, and new generations of workers entering the office space. Which makes attending SITS more vital than ever. It’s the biggest and best platform for uniting this vibrant community – bringing everyone together to connect, support, share and learn from each other.

“As always, we have listened to exhibitor and visitor feedback across the year, implementing everything from a new silent seminar theatre and a Training and Consultants Pavilion to additional free content, and we look forward to introducing more fresh approaches and new ideas for 2017.

“95% of our surveyed visitors have already said that they plan to be back at SITS17 – so we really couldn’t be happier with how the show’s been received,” he says.

Over nine out of ten visitors (93%) also rated the show as good to excellent. Whilst the calibre of attendees, high level of engagement, and quantity of new business leads impressed countless exhibitors – prompting over 60% of them to rebook for 2017 before the 2016 show had even closed.

“SITS is our best show. It’s a no nonsense route straight to engagement with customers. Discussions are really focused and always progressive,” says Matthew Coughlan, enterprise sales manager EMEA at Atlassian.

“SITS is a key lead generation event for us,” agrees Mike Beale, managing director at TeamUltra. He now counts SITS16 as one of their “most successful trade shows ever”.

TOPdesk, Zendesk, Axios Systems, HEAT Software, Snow Software, Resolve Systems, Webroot, Focus Group Europe, Unisys, Marval Software, Kaseya, Freshservice, Squirro, and SysAid will also be back next year.

“Informative, innovative and insightful” – visitors give their verdict on SITS16

Organisations in attendance for 2016 included HSBC, Domino's Pizza, Waitrose, Arcadia Group, Specsavers, Betfred, PwC, Gartner, Vodafone, Lidl, AstraZeneca, NBCUniversal, Travelodge, Transport for London, Air New Zealand, BT, Sky, AECOM, Saga, BBC, and The Guardian. Plus numerous universities, NHS Trusts, police forces, local councils, and government departments and agencies.

“So many critical changes have happened in the ITSM space. We’ve seen the advent of the Internet of Things, and we’re now busy processing the changes that BYOD, mobility and the cloud have brought over the past several years,” says Dr James Stanger, senior director, products at CompTIA. “It was a true pleasure to compare notes about these changes with fellow IT workers at SITS. It was fun to share ideas, approaches, and perspectives on troubleshooting, authentication support, and managing mobile data. I very much enjoyed talking with service desk and IT support professionals in the UK, where they’ve been able to work out so many of the major issues facing us today. It was an enlightening experience – I’m looking forward to next year already.”

“I’ve been to some presentations [at the show] where I’ve learnt things that I wouldn’t have anywhere else, and it’s a collection of like-minded

people you don't really get anywhere else. There are a lot of exhibitions about, but SITS is the biggest in the IT service industry and fosters the biggest flow of information," says Ollie O'Donoghue, industry analyst at The Service Desk Institute.

"Very informative. I come to SITS to find out what's new in the field of ITSM. Everything and everyone is in one place here – which helps me focus my thoughts over the two days and challenge relevant vendors in one place," says Errol Campbell, systems officer – IAM at London Metropolitan University.

"Over the years, it's just got better. Anything relevant you need to know about the service desk industry is always covered here," says Karen Tay, head of systems: IT service delivery at The Big Lottery Fund.

Get set for growth – The SITS Industry Survey results

SITS16 also saw the launch of the first ever SITS Industry Survey. Completed before the show by a representative sample of over 100 IT departments, the findings provide a 'snapshot' of the modern service desk and their predictions for what's in store over the next few years.

Focusing specifically on their current service desk provisions, 69% of respondents said they are happy with their product solution from existing suppliers. Of those that are thinking of upgrading, 55% said they were likely to stay with their supplier (36% intend to upgrade in the next 12 months, while 46% have no plans).

Functionality, cost and service are the three main factors they consider when selecting a solution. However, if cost (ie budget) was out of the equation, their ideal service desk would certainly include: 1) the ability to manage assets; 2) a self-service portal; and 3) the ability to measure and report on performance technology. It's worth noting that 47% of respondents go on to say that they have seen no change to their budget in the last year (22% actually reported a decrease).

In a world where even the most minor of IT faults can lead to serious disruptions and revenue losses, IT support professionals and service providers (in-house or external) are now a critical component of any competitive business. With much change still ahead for the ITSM role, the survey does reveal a more optimistic outlook concerning growth within service desk departments. With over half (56%) expecting their headcount to increase over the next two years. The vast majority (91%) also believes that the service desk function works well with other departments (facilities, HR, finance and IT, for example).

Looking to the future, 45% of respondents think the biggest challenge for ITSM over the next five years is being agile enough to adapt to the changing needs of the business. While network security (a key theme at this year's SITS), incident response times, and call volumes (in that order) top the list of the most important issues currently affecting their business. Pressure on productivity and staff morale are next down the list. Interestingly, the increasing prevalence of consumerisation within the workplace – namely BYOD and MDM – which has had one of the biggest impacts on the service desk in recent years was rated the least important.

The full results, revealed today, are available to view at www.servicedeskshow.com/event-press/sits-industry-survey-2016-results.

Save the date for 2017

"Attending SITS is an energising break from day-to-day work, which allows us to return with fresh new ideas and perspectives," says Jordan Henwood, SD team leader at Oryxalign.

SITS – The Service Desk & IT Support Show returns to Olympia, London on 7-8 June 2017. To stay up-to-date with the latest news, please visit www.servicedeskshow.com.

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