

2023 PULSE REPORT FOR IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Virtual Support Agent Strategies for Today's Hybrid Workforce

The world has changed significantly since COVID-19 mandates thrust IT service management teams into the reality of supporting a hybrid workforce. Today, those same ITSM teams are faced with continuing hybrid support, but with the added pressure of cutting costs in the face of economic uncertainty. Has emerging technology helped change how they deliver support? Or is it still being done the same way that it was in 2020?

Gatepoint Research and Espressive surveyed senior decision makers across a broad range of industries to understand how IT has responded to supporting an ever-evolving hybrid workforce and what challenges they are facing.

Despite significant improvements in AI for employee self-help, most IT leaders are relying on outdated technology, so most interactions involve a live agent.

Key 2023 Takeaways

- Email is ranked #5 for both onsite and remote employees, moving out of the top 3.
- Remote employees are prioritizing self-help, with portals moving from 5th to the 1st position. However, with phone in the 2nd position, portals are not working.
- Chat has gained in popularity for onsite employees, but remote still prefer the phone.
- When analyzing the top three, opening a ticket and phone are consistently there, suggesting the help desk is overwhelmed and self-help is not working.

How do your ONSITE employees most commonly request IT support?

Top Five	2023 Ranking	2022 Ranking
Open a ticket	1	2
Chat	2	4
Phone	3	1
Portal/Knowledgebase	4	5
Email	5	3

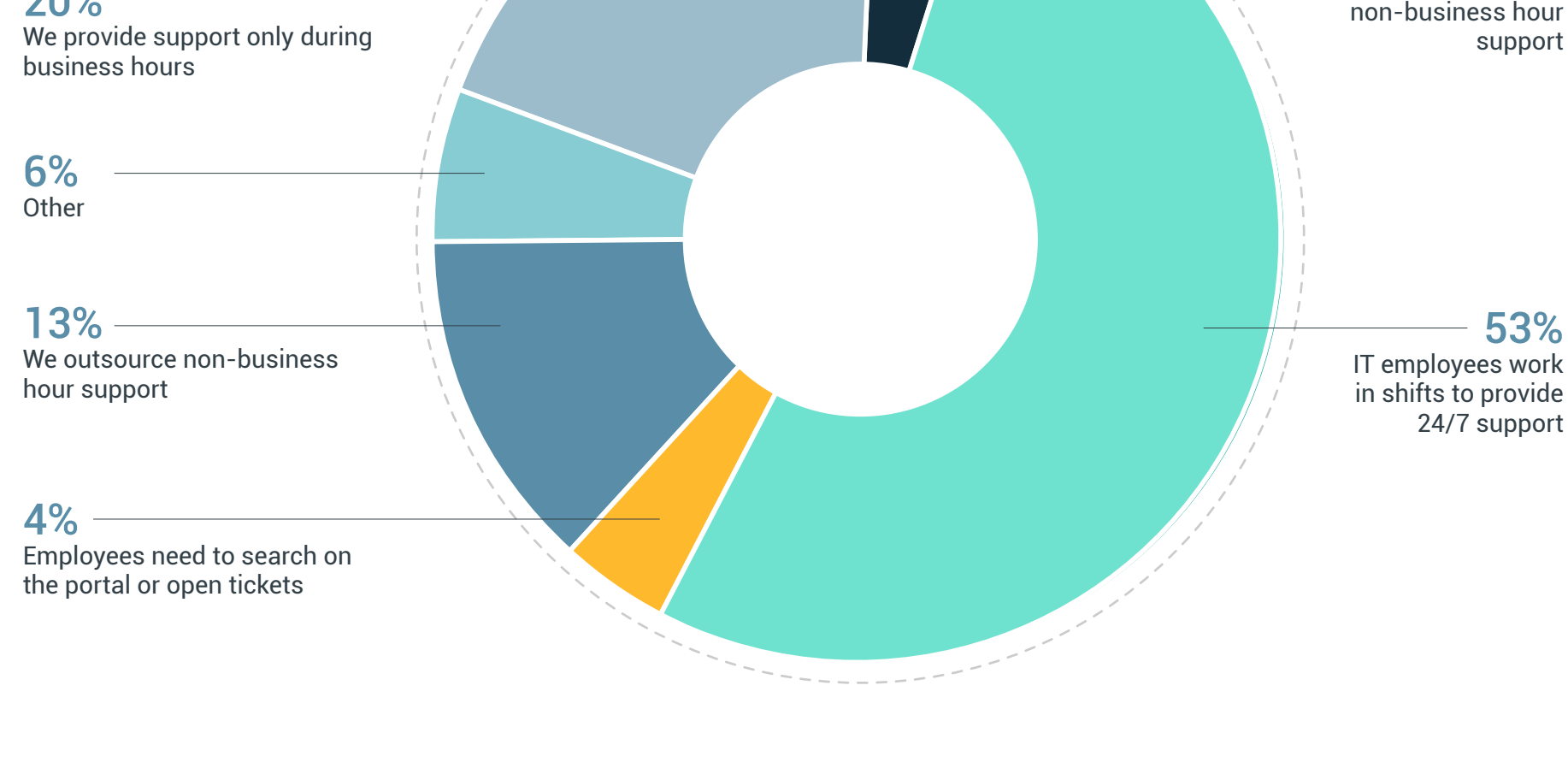
How do your REMOTE employees most commonly request IT support?

Top Five	2023 Ranking	2022 Ranking
Portal/Knowledgebase	1	5
Phone	2	1
Open a ticket	3	2
Chat	4	4
Email	5	3

One key impact of using outdated technology is the high cost of delivering 24/7 employee support. Unfortunately, this does not translate to delivering a positive employee experience.

53% of organizations have IT employees that work in shifts around the clock to provide 24/7 support. Another 13% outsource non-business hour support. Both of those options are costly. Worse yet, 20% of organizations leave employees to fend for themselves during non-business hours.

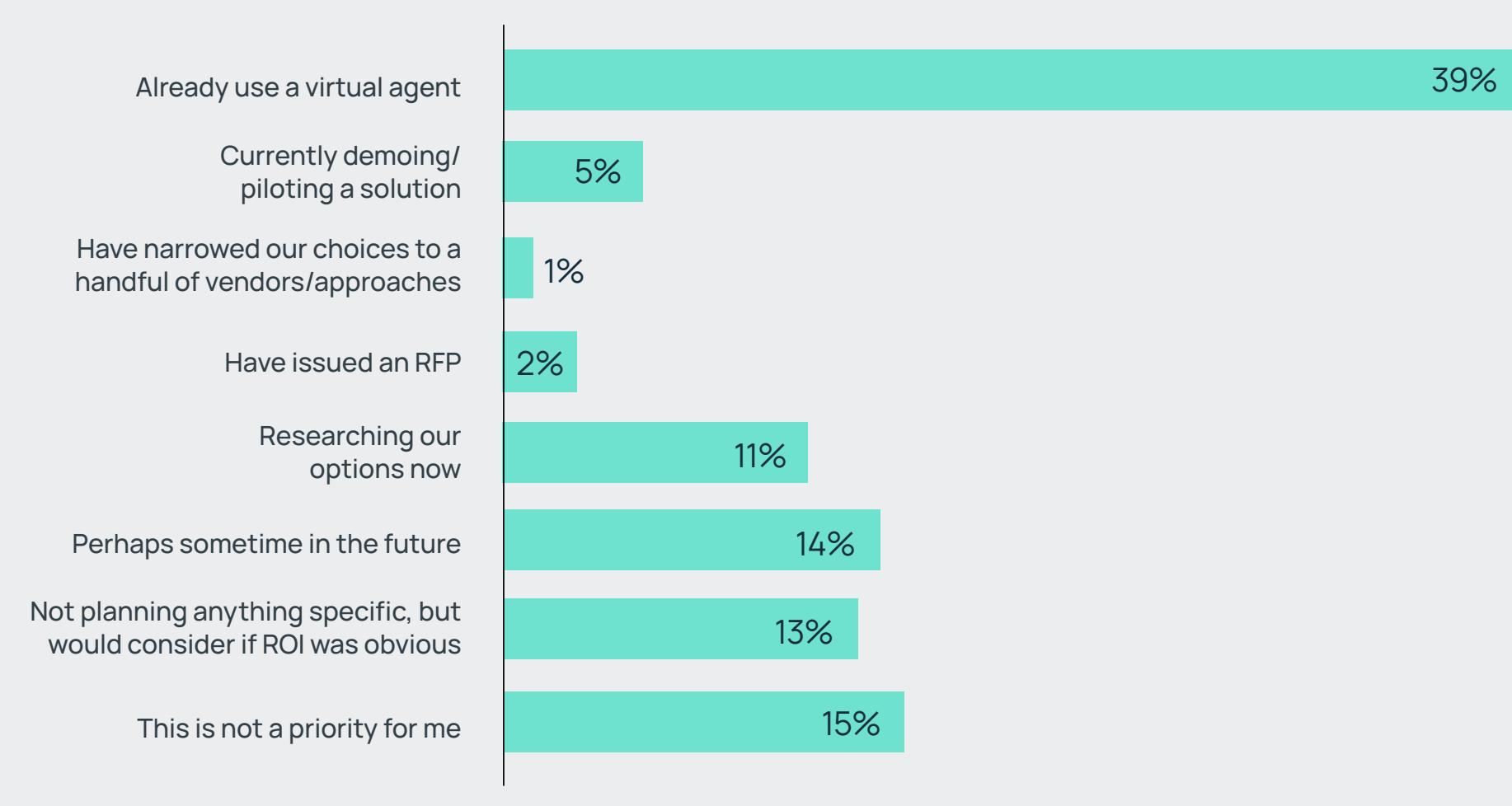
How are you providing 24/7 support?



There was a 50% increase in the number of respondents using a virtual agent in 2023 vs. 2022, suggesting an increase in willingness to try new technology for employee self-help.

This trend is likely to increase significantly by 2024 with the emergence of generative AI and LLMs. **A recent study conducted by McKinsey Digital** concluded that "generative AI and other technologies have the potential to automate the work activities that absorb 60 to 70% of employee's time today."

Where are you in terms of adding a virtual agent to your ITSM tools?



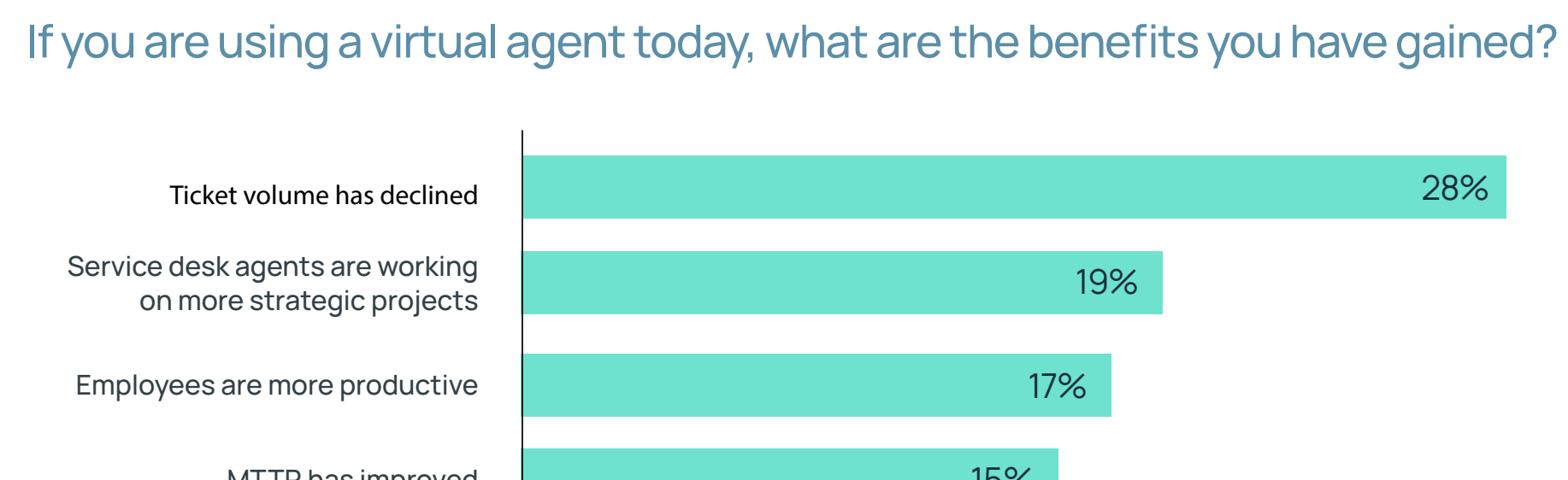
Enterprises who have deployed a virtual agent for employee self-help are realizing significant cost savings with improvements in employee productivity.

The number one benefit of a virtual agent cited by survey respondents was ticket deflection, which translates directly to cost savings because every ticket that is handled autonomously reduces the load on the help desk. The second benefit is that agents can work on more strategic projects, which correlates to improved retention of agents. The third benefit was that employees are more productive. That makes sense because it goes hand in hand with improved MTTR, which was in the fourth position.

Note in the recent **HappySignals Global IT Experience Benchmark** study they found employees lose 4 hours 31 minutes per month trying to get help from IT. That is 1.35 weeks of lost productivity per employee per year. A virtual agent leveraging generative AI is becoming an imperative.

HappySignals, "Global IT Experience Benchmark H2/2022."

If you are using a virtual agent today, what are the benefits you have gained?



Nearly half of the enterprises surveyed are moving away from outdated technology by putting a virtual agent strategy in place to save costs, improve retention, and reduce MTTR while increasing employee productivity.

44% of those surveyed have an IT driven virtual agent strategy, while 56% do not. Of those that do have a strategy, 57% are deploying a single virtual agent to cover the entire enterprise, while 43% are allowing individual virtual agents per department.

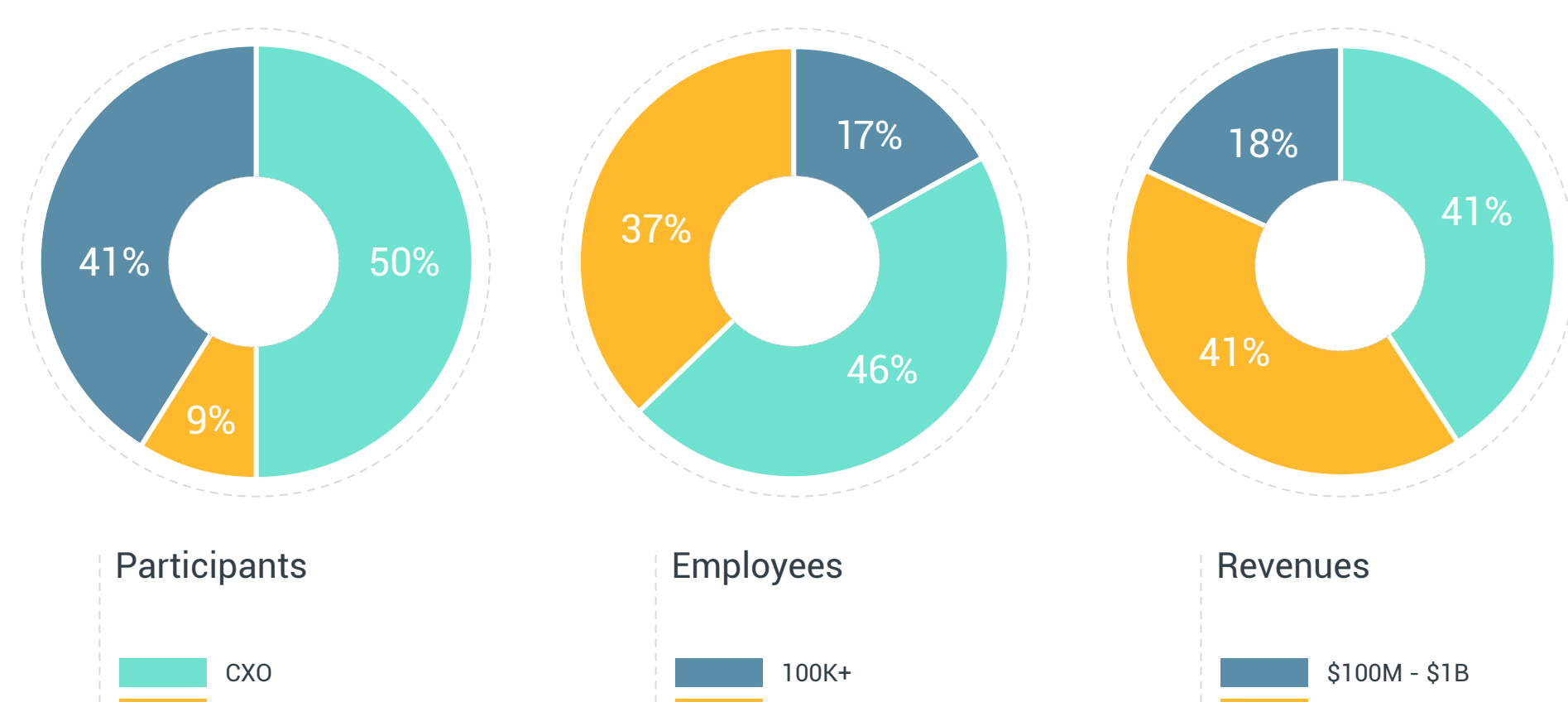
If you are developing a virtual agent strategy, we invite you to evaluate **Espressive Barista, a generative AI-based virtual agent** that delivers:

- 55 to 67% deflection rates on average, the highest in the industry, plus a contractual guarantee that you will achieve 40% or more
- Advanced automation framework with 1000s of integrations, 100s of out-of-box automations, and the ability to dynamically create automations on-the-fly
- Managed Services that include ongoing and proactive monitoring of the language model with automated learning

- Highest employee adoption of 80+% on average due to omnichannel, automation, and our Employee Adoption Program

Learn more today at Espressive.com today.

Respondent Breakdown



Data collection: November and December 2021
Respondents: 116 ITSM decision makers