

EBOOK

How Autonomous IT Transforms DEX

Five Shifts Reshaping
Digital Employee Experience

riverbed®

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Artificial intelligence is reshaping enterprise technology at a pace few organizations anticipated. What began as AI-powered assistants and chatbots is rapidly evolving into autonomous systems capable of reasoning, making decisions, executing workflows, and acting on behalf of users.

Most discussions about AI focus on productivity gains, automation, or the future of work. While those outcomes are important, they overlook a more fundamental shift taking place inside enterprise IT.

For decades, the teams responsible for employee technology experiences have operated using a largely reactive model. Employees encounter technology problems. Support teams investigate the issue. IT responds. The process repeats millions of times every day across enterprises around the world.

This model has served organizations well, but complexity is beginning to overwhelm traditional approaches. As digital environments grow more complex, IT teams spend increasing amounts of time reacting to issues instead of preventing them.

Autonomous AI has the potential to reverse that equation.

Rather than simply helping IT teams respond faster, autonomous systems can continuously monitor technology environments, identify emerging issues, recommend corrective actions, automate remediation, and prevent disruptions before employees are impacted.

Most organizations don't have a technology problem. They have a complexity problem.

The modern employee experience now spans devices, applications, networks, collaboration platforms, cloud services, and AI systems, making traditional approaches increasingly difficult to scale.

Autonomous IT offers a different path. By combining AI, automation, and operational intelligence, organizations can move beyond responding to issues and begin preventing them altogether.

This is not another technology upgrade.

It is a new operating model for IT.

DEX platforms help organizations understand how employees experience technology. As enterprises move toward Autonomous IT, that role becomes even more important. While this transition will unfold over many years, the direction is becoming increasingly clear: organizations are moving from reacting to disruptions to preventing them altogether.

**The future of IT is not simply faster reaction.
It is prevention.**

Conversations Replace Dashboards

Key Takeaway

Autonomous AI will fundamentally change how employees interact with technology. Instead of navigating dashboards, reports, menus, and workflows, users will increasingly describe the outcome they want to achieve and allow AI to determine how to accomplish it.

Traditionally, enterprise software has been built around a common assumption: users must learn how the application works. People are expected to understand menus, dashboards, workflows, and reporting structures before they can effectively use the technology.

As environments became more complex, software vendors responded by adding more dashboards, more reports, and more ways to visualize information. The result is that many employees now spend as much time navigating technology as they do using it.

**Most people don't want another dashboard.
They want an answer.**



Autonomous AI introduces a fundamentally different model.

Rather than learning how a system works, users increasingly describe the outcome they want to achieve.

An IT operator might ask:

- Why are employees in London experiencing poor application performance?
- Which technology issues are creating the greatest productivity impact today?
- What changed in the environment before this disruption occurred?
- Show me the devices most likely to experience problems this week.

The AI determines how to achieve the outcome. It gathers information, correlates data, performs analysis, and presents recommendations or actions without requiring the user to navigate multiple dashboards and reports.

The conversation is not the innovation. The ability to express intent and allow AI to determine how to achieve the desired outcome is the real breakthrough.

This shift extends far beyond chat interfaces.

Autonomous systems will increasingly create workflows, execute tasks, automate investigations, and coordinate actions across multiple technologies. Employees will focus less on operating tools and more on defining objectives and desired outcomes.

Dashboards will not disappear entirely. Just as graphical interfaces did not eliminate command lines, dashboards will remain valuable for exploration, validation, and specialized analysis. Their role, however, will change.

Today, dashboards are the primary interface for understanding and managing technology environments.

In the future, conversations will increasingly become the primary interface, while dashboards serve as supporting tools.

This change will alter how employees interact with DEX platforms, observability solutions, service management tools, and enterprise applications. The value of technology will shift from helping users find information to helping them achieve outcomes.

The future interface for enterprise technology is not another dashboard. It is a conversation.

Siloed Data Becomes Shared Context

Key Takeaway

Autonomous AI requires more than data. It requires context. As organizations connect information across devices, applications, networks, collaboration platforms, cloud services, and AI systems, isolated data becomes shared context that enables more accurate decisions and actions.

For a long time, IT organizations have invested heavily in collecting operational data. Monitoring tools generate alerts. Applications produce logs. Devices create telemetry. Networks generate performance metrics. Collaboration platforms track usage and experience data.

The problem is not a lack of information. The problem is that much of that information remains isolated within individual tools and operational domains.

As a result, teams often spend significant time moving between systems, correlating information, and attempting to understand relationships between seemingly unrelated events.



Autonomous AI changes the value of operational data.

Historically, data was collected primarily to support human analysis. In an Autonomous IT model, data becomes the foundation for AI-driven reasoning, recommendations, and actions. This creates a new requirement.

AI does not simply need more data.

It needs more context.

Consider a common example.

An employee reports poor application performance.

Device telemetry may indicate the laptop is healthy. Application monitoring may show the application is functioning normally. Network data may reveal excessive latency. Collaboration metrics may show broader user impact.

Viewed independently, each data source provides only a partial picture. Viewed together, they create context.

Context is what transforms information into understanding. The quality of AI outcomes is directly tied to the quality of the context available to the AI.

Most organizations already collect data from multiple operational domains. The challenge is that not all operational data provides the same level of insight. Surface-level signals may help identify symptoms. Deep operational telemetry provides the context necessary to understand causes.

The difference is not simply how many domains are represented. **It is how completely those domains are understood.**

In an Autonomous IT world, AI outcomes will only be as good as the data available to the AI. The broader the visibility across operational domains and the deeper the insight within those domains, the more precise AI recommendations, predictions, and automated actions become.

Organizations that provide AI with richer operational context will consistently achieve greater AI precision and better outcomes than those relying on partial or surface-level data.

Simply put, better data produces better AI.

This shift is one of the most important requirements for Autonomous IT. Organizations that successfully connect information across operational domains will enable AI systems to make better decisions, automate more effectively, and deliver better outcomes.

Those that continue to operate with fragmented data will find it increasingly difficult to realize the full value of AI. For years, organizations have focused on collecting more data. The next phase of Autonomous IT will focus on creating more context.

Siloed data becomes shared context.

The Service Desk is Elevated, Not Eliminated

Key Takeaway

Autonomous AI will dramatically increase the effectiveness of service desk and IT operations teams by reducing complexity, accelerating investigations, and enabling organizations to resolve issues faster and more accurately. The goal is not to replace the service desk. The goal is to elevate it.

Some DEX solution providers are promoting a vision where AI assistants and self-service technologies allow employees to resolve most technology issues on their own, dramatically reducing—or even eliminating—the need for traditional service desk organizations over the next five years.

We believe the opposite is more likely to occur.

As technology environments become increasingly complex and AI becomes embedded across every aspect of the digital workplace, the capabilities of service desk and support organizations will increase dramatically.



In many ways, this may become the largest shift-left transformation in the history of employee experience service delivery. AI will perform much of the heavy lifting associated with gathering information, correlating data, identifying likely causes, and interpreting complex operational signals, allowing support teams to resolve issues faster and more accurately than ever before.

The service desk does not have a people problem. It has a complexity problem.

Today's support teams operate in environments that are significantly more complex than those of just a decade ago. Employees depend on hundreds of applications, collaboration tools, cloud services, devices, networks, and increasingly AI-powered systems to perform their jobs.

When issues occur, service desk personnel are often required to navigate multiple tools, gather information from different teams, and manually piece together evidence before they can determine the root cause of a problem.

The challenge is not a lack of talent. The challenge is that complexity continues to grow faster than most organizations can scale expertise.

Autonomous AI changes that equation.

By continuously analyzing information across operational domains, AI can help identify likely causes, surface relevant insights, recommend actions, automate routine investigations, and reduce the time required to resolve issues.

Many tasks that currently require service desk personnel to gather information, correlate data across multiple systems, and determine what is actually causing a problem can increasingly be assisted by AI.

As a result, the capabilities of a typical service desk employee will increase dramatically. AI can perform much of the heavy lifting associated with data collection, correlation, analysis, and interpretation, allowing support teams to resolve issues faster and more accurately.

This does not eliminate the need for skilled service desk professionals. **It makes them significantly more capable.**

The future of enterprise support is not employees solving more of their own technology problems. The future is AI enabling support organizations to resolve issues faster, more accurately, and with fewer escalations—allowing employees to stay focused on their jobs rather than becoming part of the support process.

Employees weren't hired to troubleshoot technology. They were hired to do their jobs.

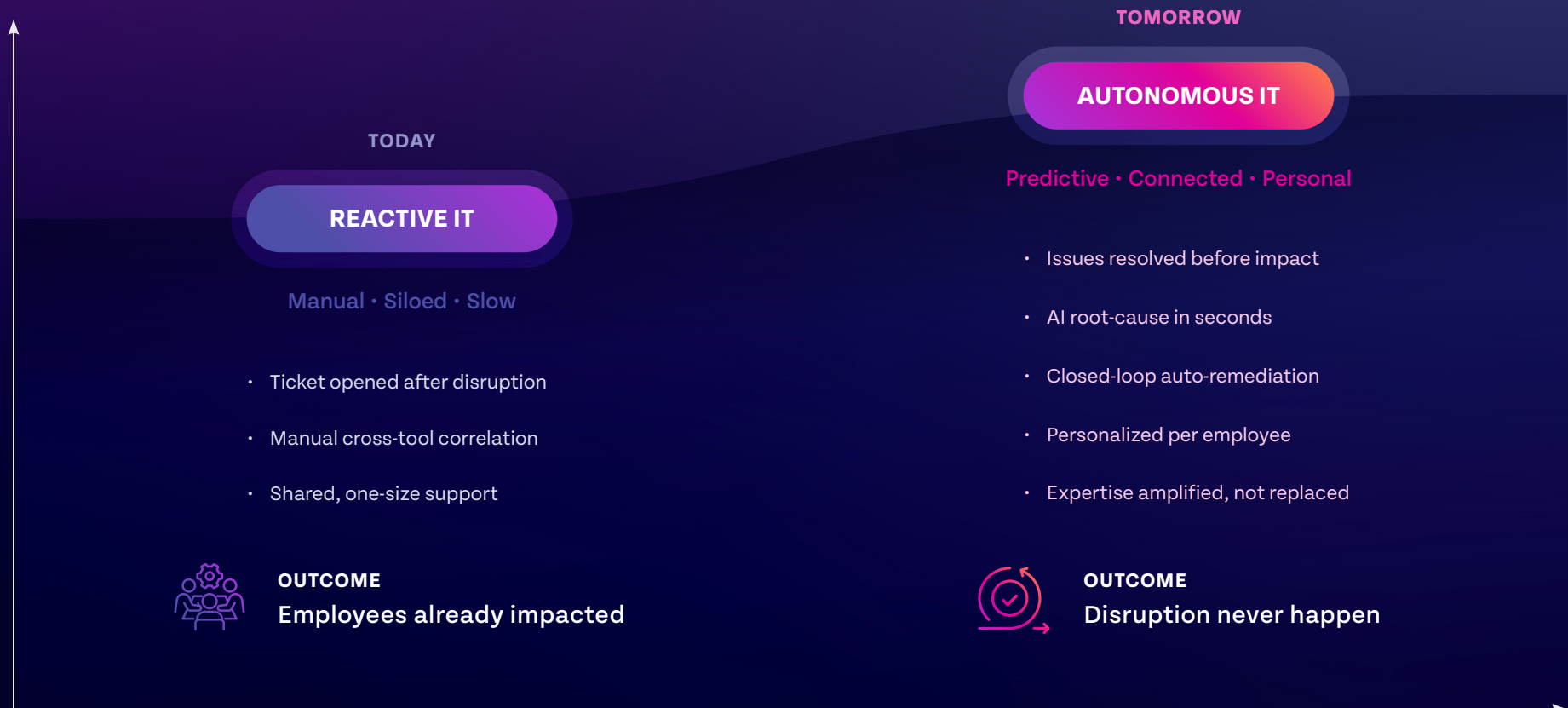
Organizations that successfully adopt Autonomous IT will not eliminate human expertise. They will amplify it.

The service desk will increasingly operate with the equivalent of a team of AI assistants capable of investigating issues, correlating information, identifying patterns, recommending actions, and automating routine tasks. The result is faster resolution times, fewer escalations, improved consistency, and better employee experiences.

Most importantly, support organizations will be able to scale expertise more effectively without requiring proportional increases in headcount.

Autonomous IT will not eliminate the service desk. It will fundamentally expand what the service desk is capable of achieving.

The service desk is elevated, not eliminated.



AI Becomes an Operational Domain

Key Takeaway

As organizations deploy autonomous systems across the enterprise, AI itself becomes something that must be monitored, governed, optimized, and managed. Just as organizations created operational disciplines around networks, applications, infrastructure, and security, they will increasingly create operational practices focused on AI.

Enterprise IT has long been organized around operational domains.



Network operations teams monitor network health and performance.



Infrastructure teams monitor servers, storage, and cloud environments.



Application teams monitor application availability and responsiveness.



Security teams monitor threats, vulnerabilities, and compliance.

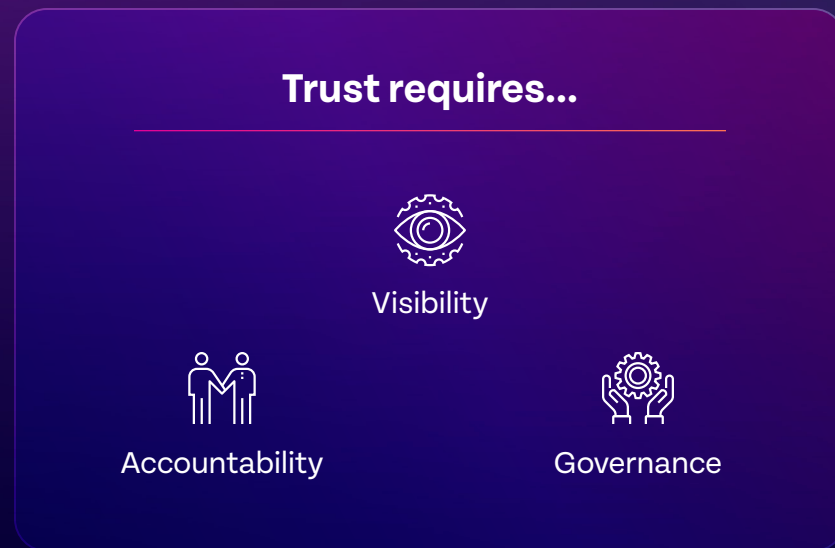
Autonomous AI introduces a new operational domain. As organizations deploy AI assistants, copilots, agents, and autonomous systems, they must answer a new set of questions.

- Which AI systems are being used?
- Who is using them?
- What actions are they taking?
- Are they producing accurate results?
- Are they complying with organizational policies?
- What business value are they delivering?

These questions extend far beyond traditional observability. Organizations will increasingly need visibility into AI adoption, usage, performance, cost, effectiveness, and risk. They will need to understand not only what AI systems are doing, but also whether those systems are operating as intended. **You can't manage what you can't see—and AI is no exception.**

Trust will become one of the defining challenges of Autonomous IT.

Employees and organizations must trust that AI systems are making sound recommendations, executing appropriate actions, protecting sensitive information, and operating within established guardrails.



As AI becomes more deeply integrated into business operations, organizations will increasingly establish policies, processes, and operational disciplines to manage AI at scale.

Just as enterprises created dedicated practices around network operations, application performance management, infrastructure operations, and security operations, they will increasingly create operational practices focused on managing, governing, and optimizing AI systems.

This shift will create new requirements for visibility, reporting, compliance, and operational intelligence.

Organizations will need to understand how AI is being used, where it is creating value, where it is introducing risk, and where additional oversight may be required.

Until now, DEX platforms have helped organizations understand how technology affects employees. As AI becomes part of the digital workplace, organizations will increasingly need to understand how AI affects employees as well.

AI is becoming another technology layer that influences productivity, experience, performance, and business outcomes.

As a result, AI itself becomes an operational domain that must be monitored, measured, and managed.

Shared Support Becomes Personalized

Key Takeaway

Autonomous AI will allow organizations to provide every employee with the equivalent of a personal digital operations team—continuously monitoring, optimizing, and improving their technology experience.

For decades, enterprise IT has operated as a shared service.

A single service desk supports thousands of employees. A centralized operations team manages applications, networks, devices, and infrastructure for the entire organization.

When problems occur, employees enter a queue and wait for assistance. This model has served organizations well, but it has one fundamental limitation.

Most support organizations are designed to scale across thousands of employees, not continuously adapt to the unique needs of each individual. As a result, employees typically receive assistance only after a problem becomes significant enough to demand attention.

Support is shared.



Autonomous AI creates the opportunity for something much more personalized.

In the future, every employee will increasingly benefit from the equivalent of a personal digital operations team working continuously on their behalf.

These systems will monitor technology experiences, identify emerging issues, recommend corrective actions, automate remediation, and optimize workflows long before employees open a ticket or contact the service desk.

Most employees may never interact directly with these systems. In many cases, they won't even know they exist. What they will notice is that technology simply works better.

The best support interaction is the one that never has to happen.

Applications perform more consistently. Issues are resolved faster. Friction is reduced. Productivity improves.

Consider a common example.

Today, an employee experiences poor application performance, encounters repeated disruptions, or struggles with a technology issue. Eventually a ticket is opened, the problem is investigated, and remediation begins.

In the future, autonomous systems will increasingly identify those conditions early, determine the likely cause, and resolve many issues before the employee is significantly impacted.

The experience shifts from waiting for support to continuously receiving it. This is where Autonomous IT becomes personal.

Organizations have always wanted to provide highly personalized technology experiences, but doing so at scale was simply too expensive and resource-intensive. AI changes that equation.

For the first time, enterprises can begin delivering individualized operational support to every employee without dramatically increasing headcount.

The goal is not replacing the service desk.

The goal is extending its reach.

Autonomous systems allow organizations to provide every employee with a level of support, attention, and optimization that would previously have required an army of IT professionals.

The organizations that succeed will be those that use Autonomous AI to move beyond managing technology at scale and begin improving experiences at an individual level.

For years, digital employee experience has largely been about understanding how employees experience technology. The next chapter of DEX will be about improving that experience for every employee, every day.

**Shared support becomes personalized.
Every employee gets the equivalent of
their own digital operations team.**

Implications for IT Leaders

The transition to Autonomous IT will unfold over many years, not months. Organizations do not need to transform overnight, but they should begin preparing now.

The five transformations outlined in this paper provide a roadmap for where digital employee experience is heading and how IT leaders can position their organizations for success. Here's how you can start your journey toward Autonomous IT:

1. Eliminate Blind Spots

Autonomous systems can only act on what they can see. Expanding visibility across devices, applications, networks, collaboration platforms, cloud services, and AI systems should be a priority. **Visibility is the foundation of Autonomous IT.**

2. Add Context to Every Decision

Data alone is not enough. AI requires context to understand relationships, dependencies, and business impact. **Organizations that succeed will not necessarily have the most data. They will have the most context.**

3. Introduce Intelligent Automation

Start with AI-assisted investigations, recommendations, and remediation while maintaining appropriate human oversight. **Automation should earn trust before it earns authority.**

4. Establish AI Governance

As AI becomes embedded in enterprise operations, organizations need visibility into how AI systems are being used, what actions they are taking, and what outcomes they are producing. **Trust requires visibility.**

5. Design for Personalized Experiences

Autonomous IT makes it possible to deliver individualized support and optimization at a scale that was previously impossible. **The future of support is not waiting for help. It is continuously receiving it.**

Conclusion

Autonomous IT is not a single technology initiative. It is a long-term transformation that will reshape how technology is consumed, supported, governed, and optimized. Organizations that begin building visibility, context, automation, governance, and personalized experiences today will be better positioned to lead tomorrow.

These shifts are not incremental. They represent a fundamental change in how IT operates and how organizations deliver digital experiences. The organizations that move first will not simply resolve issues faster. They will prevent more of them from occurring in the first place.

In an autonomous world, the best employee experience is the disruption employees never experience.

To learn more, visit
www.riverbed.com/platform/



About Riverbed

Riverbed, the leader in AI observability, helps organizations optimize their users' experiences by leveraging AI automation for the prevention, identification, and resolution of IT issues. With over 20 years of experience in data collection and AI and machine learning, Riverbed's open and AI-powered observability platform and solutions optimize digital experiences and greatly improve IT efficiency. Riverbed also offers industry-leading Acceleration solutions that provide fast, agile, secure acceleration of any app, over any network, to users anywhere. Together with our thousands of market leading customers globally – including 95% of the FORTUNE 100 – we are empowering next-generation digital experiences. Learn more at riverbed.com.