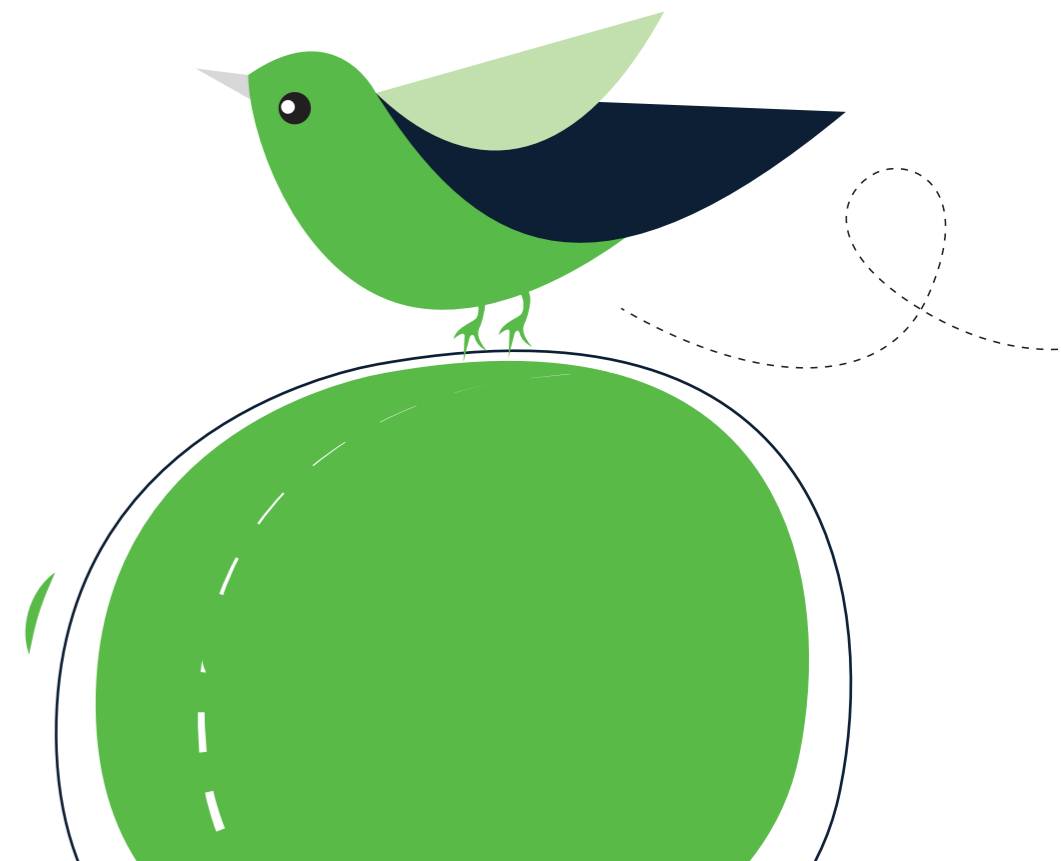





Knowledge Bird's

Top 5 Enterprise
Support Platforms
and their Pros & Cons





The biggest enterprise, operations and customer service management platforms have made considerable efforts to integrate knowledge management functions into their systems of late. The promises of automation in the customer service arena have led to previously underappreciated knowledge management features come to prominence in vendor platforms. Some have built impressive systems from scratch, others have acquired modern knowledge management tools that have been appearing more frequently in the startup scene in recent years.

In either case, the demand is clear. Organisations require service and support management platforms to have built-in knowledge management functionality so they can better serve their customers. For knowledge management to succeed, the actions we're asking our teams to do—capture, update, and reuse knowledge—must be so seamlessly integrated into the normal workflow of problem-solving that it doesn't require context switching and laborious handle-time.

A KMS that is separate from the case management software and can't easily be searched and written to with minimal clicks, runs the risk of becoming an isolated silo gathering rust in the back garden of company tech stacks.

Enterprise-scale organisations have been clear in their request so which of the top platforms have delivered? What are the pros and cons of the best KM-enabled support platforms on the market? In no particular order, here are the top 5 management platforms, what they do well and what needs work.

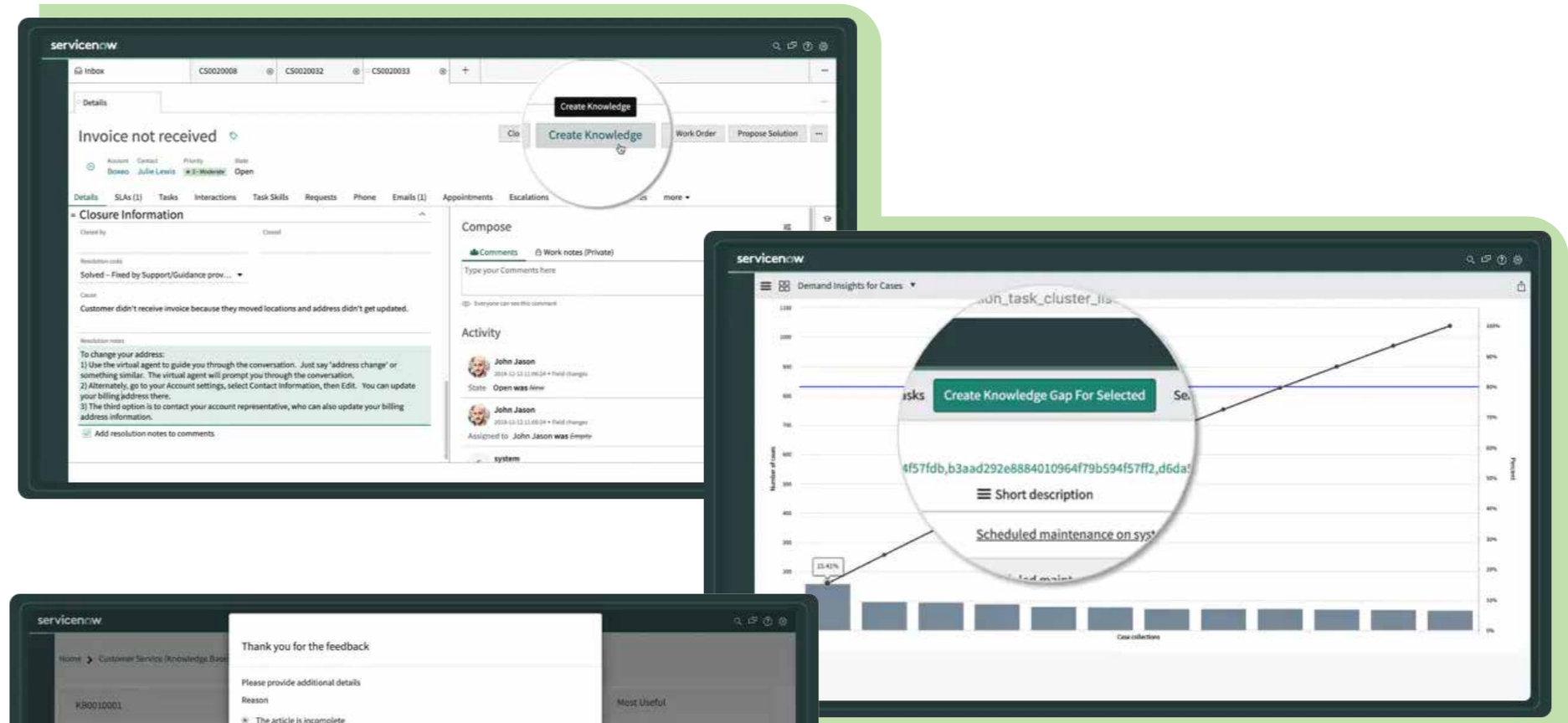
ServiceNow

ServiceNow is arguably the most widely adopted cloud platform in the enterprise service management market. Based in California, they offer workflow management for employees across multiple business functions including HR, IT, and customer service.

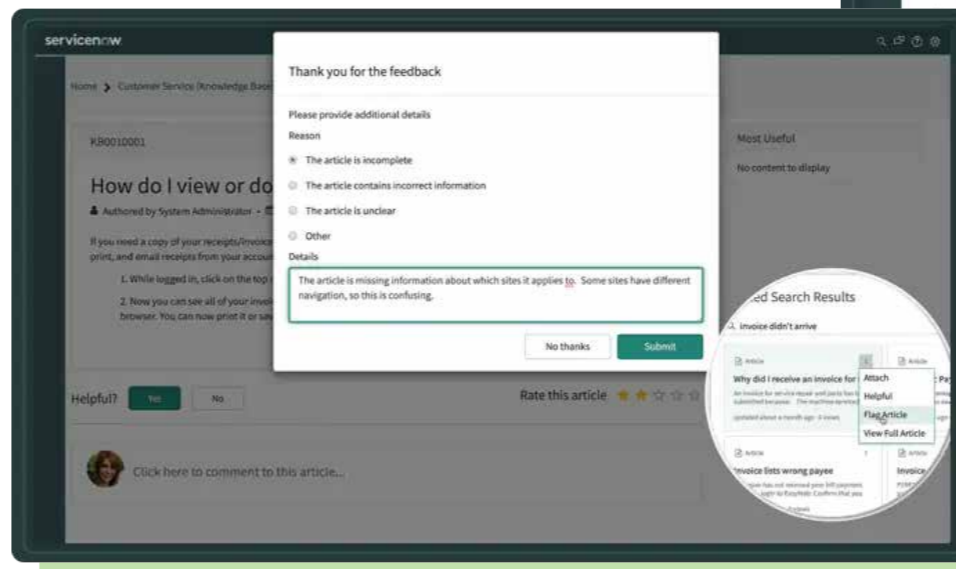
Designed around workflows, ServiceNow comes pre-configured to suit IT services, employee management, customer operations, and those who want to create proprietary products on top of the platform.

Products within the customer operations and IT services workflows, for example, aim to coordinate, automate and solve common requests from customers and staff using accessible tools on the back-end, like Microsoft Teams, and with self-service via customer portals. For each workflow, a handy dashboard provides clear reports and analytics.

Creating knowledge from within the ServiceNow case management screen.
Image from <https://www.servicenow.com/products/knowledge-management.html>



Creating articles from search log analysis. Image from <https://www.servicenow.com/products/knowledge-management.html>



Capturing feedback on articles.
Image from <https://www.servicenow.com/products/knowledge-management.html>



Pros

ServiceNow's knowledge management framework is packed with helpful automated features. Not only does the interface come with all the case management bells and whistles you could possibly need, they are also readily actionable without custom configuration. The system uses *ML to record, suggest, and close knowledge gaps* either from employees or in the customer experience.

The KMS is easy to get going, at least at a technology level, and adapted for cross-department functionality using different communication channels. Clients typically report seeing a reduction of up to 30% in client request tickets freeing up hours of customer care and IT department time. *7Eleven reported a 93% drop in case volumes* and a 75% reduction in customer service response times after installing ServiceNow. ServiceNow, themselves, use KCS internally in technical services and you can read more about how they do it in *this case study*.

A major benefit to ServiceNow is their commitment to self-service. They constantly improve services with innovative changes gathered from from the wider industry.



Cons

As is often the problem with holistic and feature-heavy tools, they can become death by overwhelm. Software lives and dies by the implementation of the functionality and adoption by all users. If the features are too excessive, employees can be deterred, and administrators will be bogged by too much choice, leaving important features underutilised. Start with a lighter package if possible and introduce new features as you go.

ServiceNow's commitment to innovation has its drawbacks. Upgrades every 6 months can require some users to relearn how to use parts of the different tools. While complete retraining isn't required, the inconvenience of figuring out the upgrade can grow frustrating and expensive when further professional services are needed.

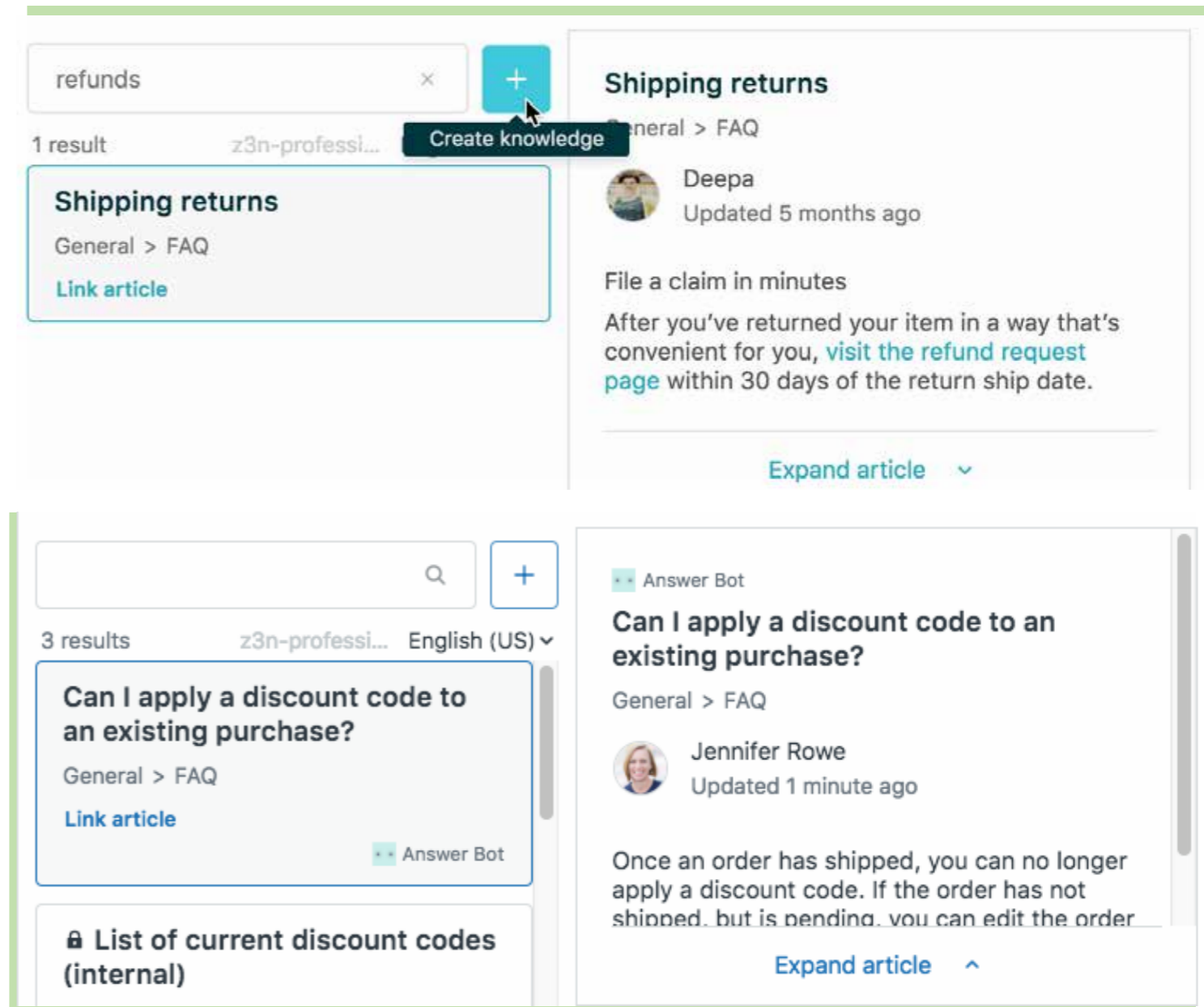
The last con is pricing. ServiceNow gives you a free trial option which provides the demo you need. However, pricing is otherwise elusive; and it's highly likely you'll need to factor in professional services costs to leverage the benefits of the platform. Without transparency, you don't really understand costs until you speak to a sales agent which can be off-putting; and with the addition of extra modules and integrations you wind up with a much bigger cost of operations.

Zendesk

Zendesk began as a dedicated help desk management tool with a built-in help center that, over time, has expanded to become a broader collection of products. Zendesk provides a customer portal with smart features like live chat and a customer-focused help center.

Customisable and extensible via their apps marketplace, integrations with the likes of Salesforce, Slack and Google Analytics makes it a great tool for tech-savvy teams of all sizes. The KMS focuses on solving customer queries with minimum friction. Well integrated with the ticket-handling functionality, customers can easily find previously answered tickets or raise new ones that can be easily answered with reusable knowledge base content. From the agent perspective, it is easy to add frequently asked tickets to the knowledge base.

Creating a knowledge article with Zendesk's Knowledge Capture App.
Image from <https://support.zendesk.com/>



Linking a suggested answer from Answer Bot to a customer ticket in Zendesk.
Image from <https://support.zendesk.com/>



Indicative pricing

Knowledge management and AI-assisted features are available at every price point, but get more advanced, the more you pay. The per agent fee is US\$99 per month for individual suite professionals. For enterprise suite services, this rises to \$150. The top-of-the-line package is \$215. There are more affordable, smaller team packages starting at \$49 but with fewer of the desirable features.



Pros

Everything in Zendesk is customizable with the option to add your own branding, colors, and themes. It might not appear crucial but it adds consistency and familiarity to the customer experience which isn't found in all tools.

Adding to that, the [Guide](#) and [Gather](#) products enable superior customer experience. Gather is the basis for customer community, which is a powerful support channel for products that are complex and highly configurable. The Knowledge Capture app, along with Guide, provides much of the support for Knowledge Centered Service, though there are some minor gaps in creating and modifying knowledge articles in the ticket workflow. Customers can ask questions, raise tickets, and self-serve on their own issues in a fully trackable platform. For the platform purchaser, multiple guides show how to create these portals with ease. Zendesk has certainly been designed with the end-user in mind.



Cons

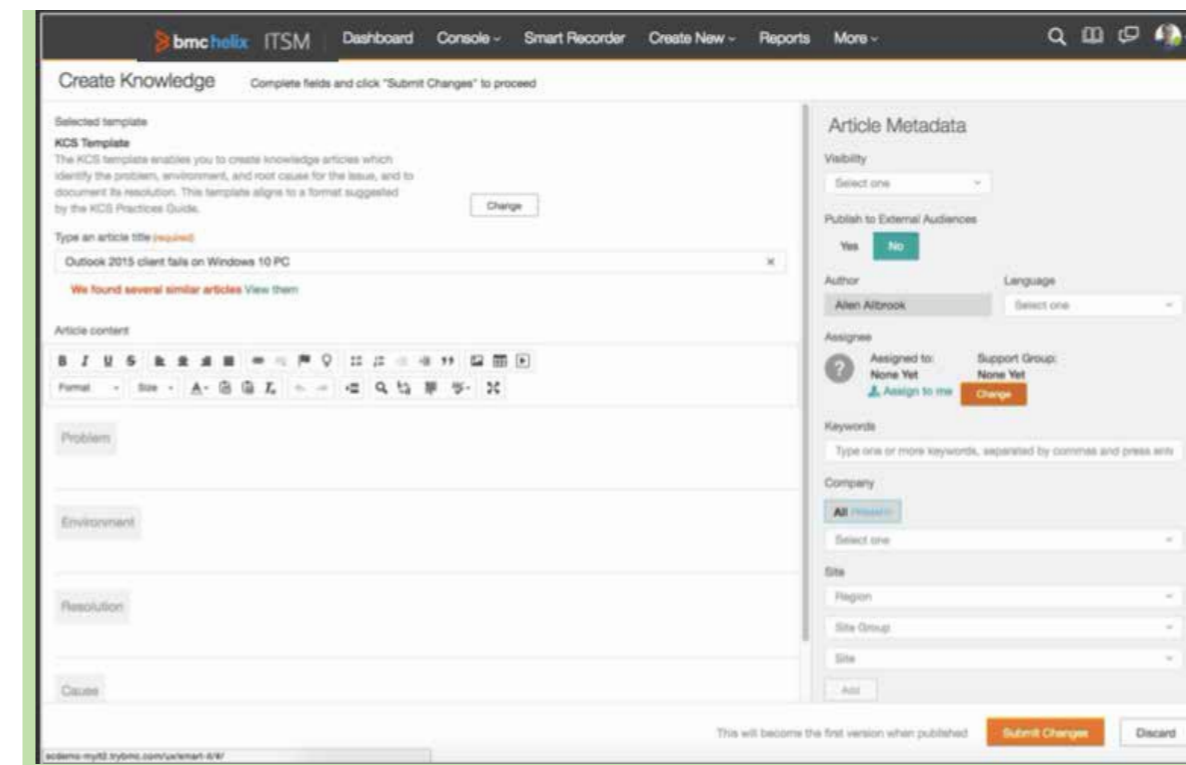
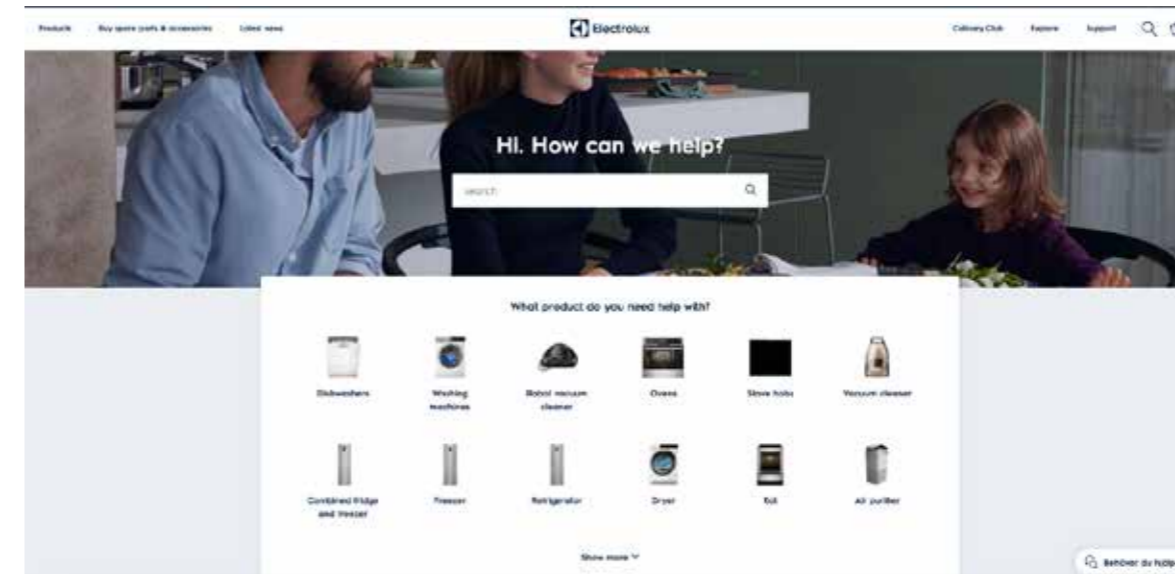
From a practical use and implementation standpoint, the customer care department of Zendesk ironically leaves a lot to the imagination. There isn't a well-developed professional services or partner ecosystem yet, in contrast to ServiceNow, so teams will need some technical capability to get the best from the platform.

BMC Helix

BMC Helix is a service and operations management tool aimed at automating and augmenting various business processes. Perhaps best known for their flagship predictive management solution, Next Gen Remedy, BMC is constantly evolving and innovating throughout the service automation industry.

In 2020, they turned their attention to knowledge management systems. Having developed a reputation for big acquisitions, it was no surprise to see KMS powerhouse, **Comaround**, as their next partnership. Comaround has vastly strengthened the self-service experience and knowledge management practices of BMC.

The Electrolux customer portal powered by BMC & Comaround with KCS workflows.
<https://www.electrolux.se/support/>



KCS template within the BMC Helix interface.



Pros

Comaround is known for exceptional self-service customer and agent experiences. It uses advanced AI and natural language processing software through an omnichannel framework to deliver frictionless resolutions. The software is designed to meet customers where they are with the questions they have.

AI interprets and understands user questions and queries in over 100 languages to deliver a personalized experience for customers. The Knowledge Centre Services are always capturing and analysing data to provide trends reports that empower your agents.

In customizing your KMS, how-to articles, explainer videos, and on-hand support are available 24/7. Statistically speaking, BMC notes that clients report a 60% reduction in resolution time, 50% fewer queries, and 30% more satisfied employees. Not bad savings by any measure.



Cons

BMC is another enterprise platform offering a free trial but not explicitly giving you prices. Obviously operation, services, and knowledge management systems are not a one-click purchase but better transparency is needed. What we can say is that the [Helix Control-M](#), the business control and data workflow tool, starts at \$29,000 for an annual subscription which does not make it accessible to smaller businesses.

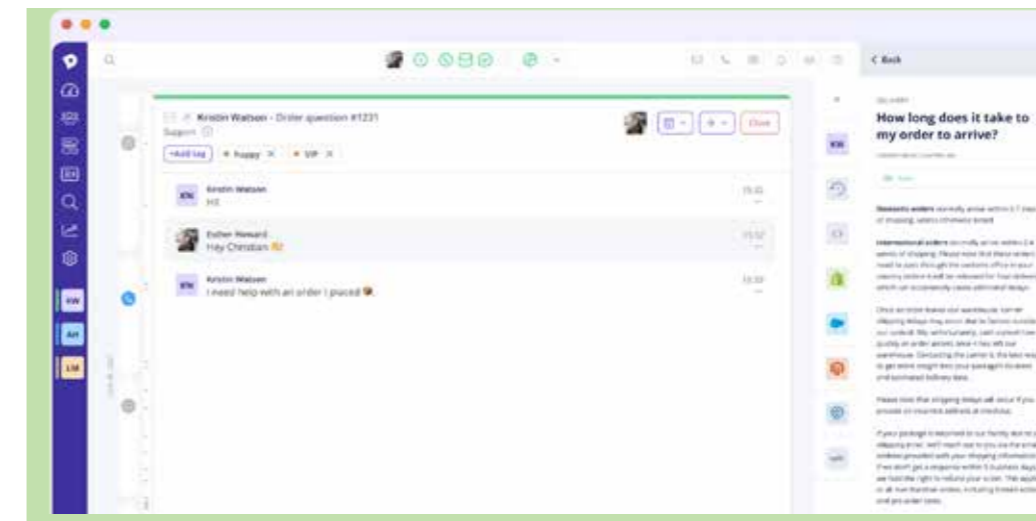
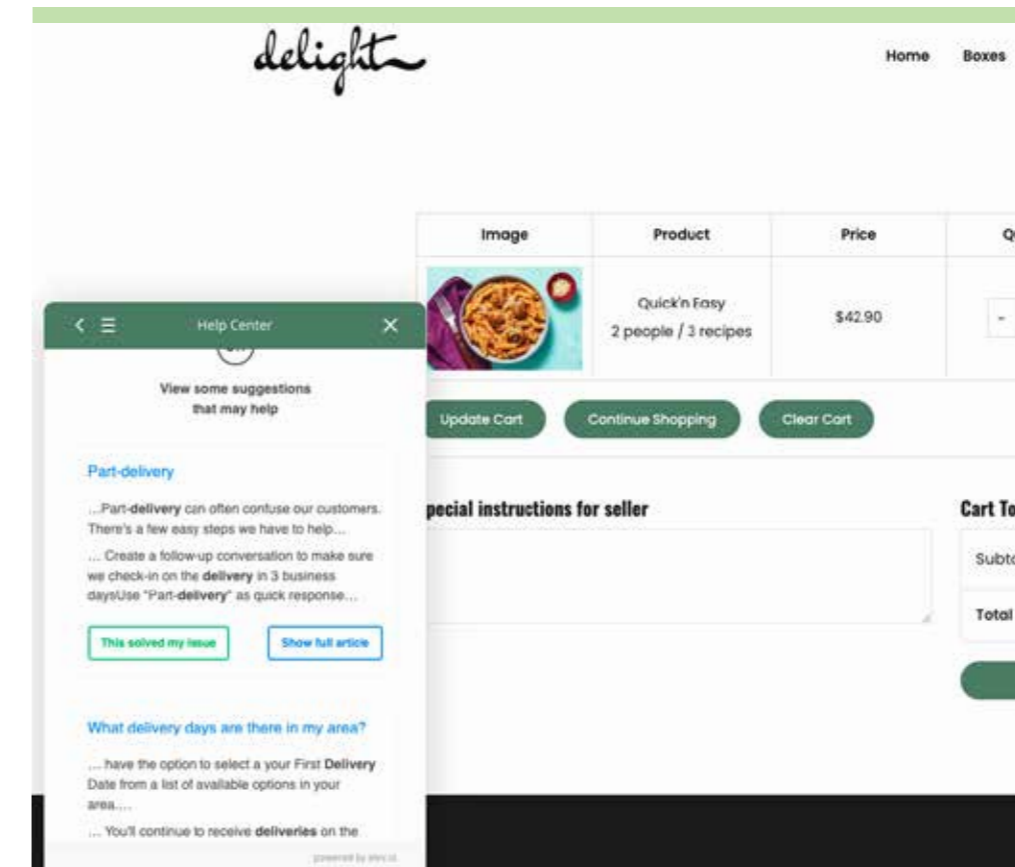
Beyond prohibitive and ambiguous pricing, typical complaints surround the complexity and number of the upgrades. There are excessive add-ons that require you to jump through complicated hoops. The tools are extraordinarily cutting edge, but the accessibility needs streamlining.

Dixa

Dixa is Danish entrant to our list and an emerging enterprise player. The fundamental mission of Dixa started out to stem the impersonal, transactional nature of customer service. To do so, they built a cloud platform that attempts to establish a better relationship between customers and brands while still delivering exceptional experiences for agents and customers alike.

Dixa has also recently acquired and integrated a purpose-built knowledge management system. Having worked with Australian KMS provider, Elevio, since 2019, Dixa acquired the company in early 2021.

Suggested help articles appear within the website or app



The Dixa interface showing knowledge articles at the right hand side



Indicative pricing

In truth, all enterprise grade options are expensive, Dixa included. Starting at US\$99 per agent for the small professional team, the agent per month figure rises to \$179 for the platinum version. Though expensive, the upper-tier program does come with extensive features and a dedicated account manager, which is quite a compelling value proposition compared to the other options in this report.



Pros

The KM system supports customer service, support agents, and internal teams in a human-centered way. The setup and implementation are unlike most in that it can be turned around in 24 hours or less.

Dixa is cutting 20% of agent's time spent answering repetitive queries in an easy-to-use interface. The interface is similar to an email dashboard showing which queries have been answered automatically and which are outstanding.

Dixa has a firm belief in taking customers away from soulless, impersonal experiences. The software prides itself on being conversational, personal, and actively improving based on customer feedback, even when used as an internal helpdesk system.

The confidence in their system is clear for customers. To prove their worth, Dixa provides an in-depth, [free 'savings' calculator](#) to prospective clients so they can see what expenses will be reduced by enlisting their help. It is a masterclass in confident sales.

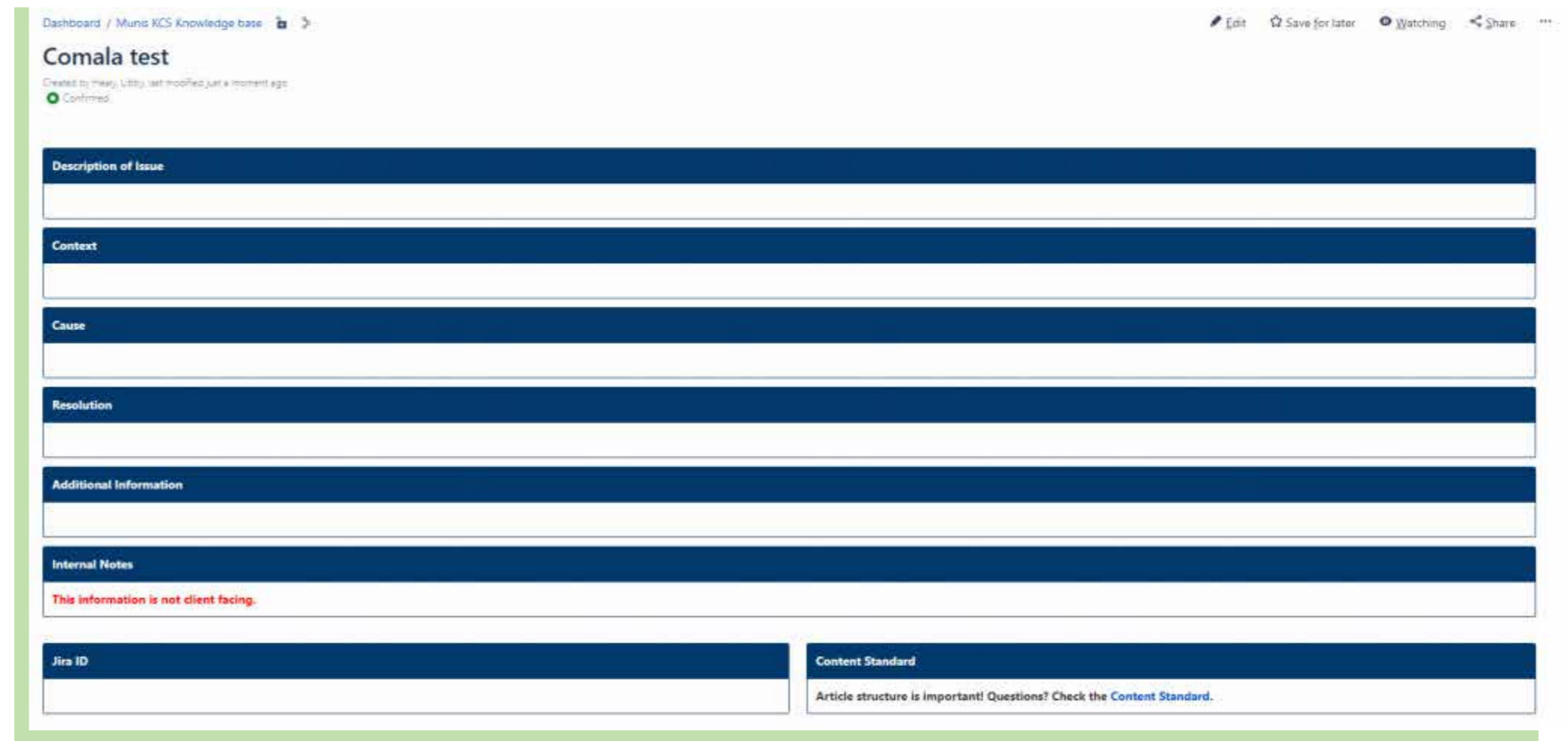


Cons

Because the product is still maturing in the mid-enterprise market, some features considered basic in other platforms are missing and may cause some frustration if you're used to having them. For example, there are only open and closed conversation (i.e. ticket) statuses, so you don't easily know how many new conversations there are in a queue; reporting is still rudimentary, though APIs allow you to export data into tools like Miuros; and speaking of reporting (and SLAs) you can't configure business hours into the maths.

Atlassian Jira Service Management + Confluence

Atlassian is one of the well-known heavyweights in a software market full of tech giants. Confluence is Atlassian's extension into the knowledge management systems field and integrates neatly with Jira and Jira Service Management, which has been designed specifically for the needs of enterprise IT. The first rendition of Confluence was released in 2004 and has come a long way as a collaborative and transparent internal wiki-style tool. While wiki software tools don't have the best reputations for simplicity and usability, Confluence has certainly matured in recent years.



Extract showing Comalatech template with Tyler Technology's Confluence instance.



Indicative pricing

Atlassian provide a [pricing calculator](#) for Jira Service Management, which is helpful, but your agents participating in knowledge management activities will also need a Confluence license.



Pros

Confluence is built to be collaborative and content is organized into spaces and pages. Information is categorised into spaces with global or personal accessibility, and each space is like an independently managed wiki so your departments can have their own internal or external facing KMS.

Pages are the building blocks of the spaces. They are the individual articles and information pieces that consumers look for. To help with the perceived inefficiency of KMS, Confluence provides users with 75 unique and helpful templates to use.

Confluence is naturally integrated with Jira tools making them a more powerful software pairing, with workflow automation from ComalaTech, a KCS environment can be very well supported, as seen in this [Tyler Technologies case study](#).



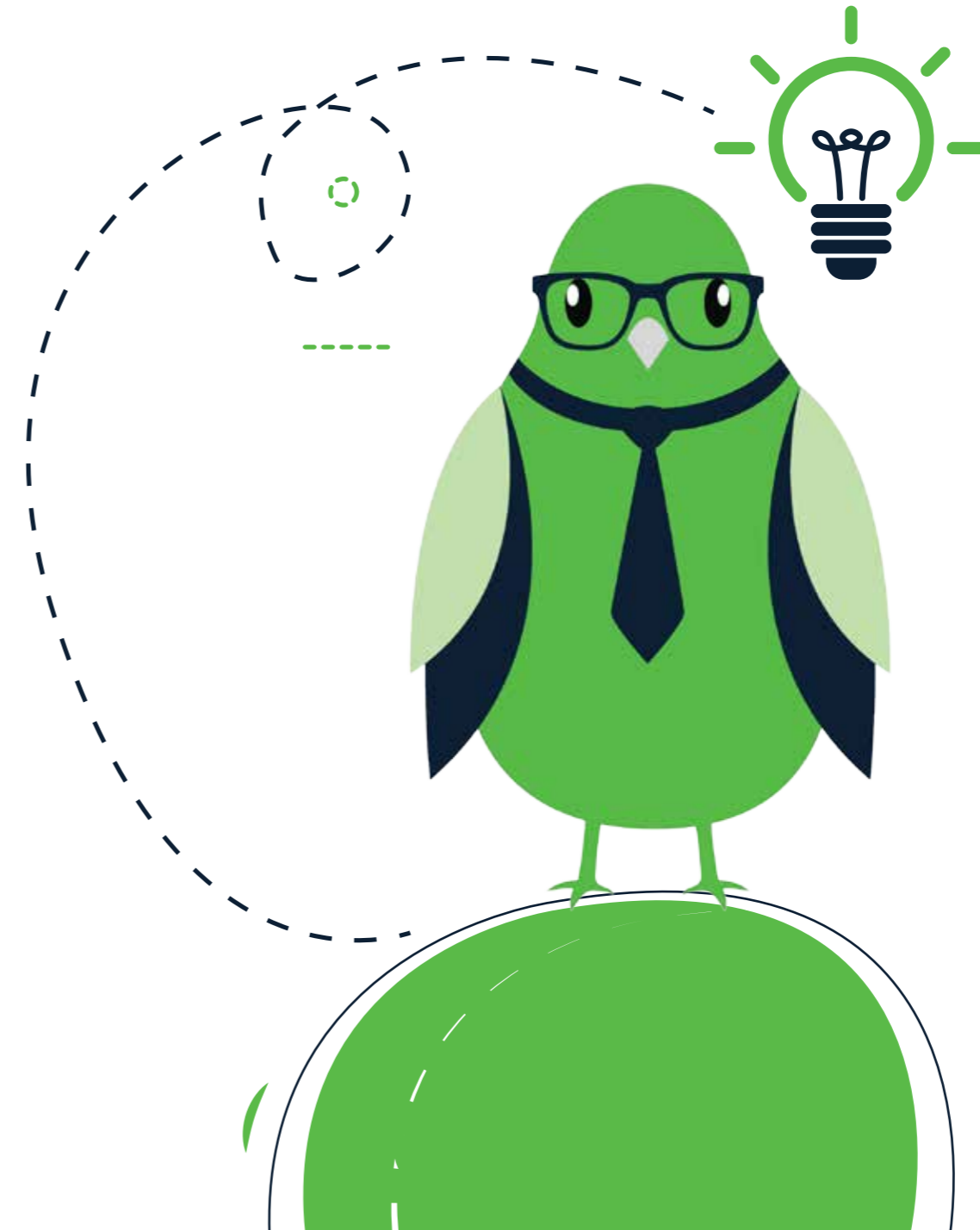
Cons


The Jira pricing, while attractive at scale, can be misleading as add-ons—such as Confluence—and upgrades tend to mount up quickly. Most users will enjoy the pricing initially but to get better value and more functionality, you end up looking at more robust packages. These often come with a reasonably steep learning curve if you are not already familiar with knowledge management or wiki-style systems.

In Conclusion

There's no outright winner because, as you can see, there are a variety of different attributes to each of the enterprise management platforms and it really comes down to the type of customer, the budget, the preferences of the organisation, and the necessary available integrations. What we can say though, is that these platforms have all made impactful improvements to their knowledge management functionality over time, and how much you get out of any of them will depend on your preparation around governance and strategy; your process design; and, of course, your team behaviours and knowledge-sharing culture.

With consumers' expectations only increasing workforce efficiency, through friction-free self-service and high-quality automation, will be the name of the game and that relies on solid knowledge management.





Contact Knowledge Bird today for a consultation to accelerate your digital transformation and KCS adoption journey.



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