



FRONTIER FUNCTION GUIDE

Frontier IT: Orchestrating the agentic future

Tech support and service blossom into a platform for AI-powered innovation and business value creation across the organization.

At Microsoft, we believe the future of work is Frontier Firms—organizations that are human-led and agent-operated, buy intelligence like it's electricity, and compound it like interest. That shift should have a profound impact on every function.

Imagine an IT organization where every employee is supported by a team of agents—AI systems that monitor, predict, and resolve issues before they disrupt work—freeing people to focus on what drives real impact. In the Frontier model, IT transforms into a proactive orchestrator rather than a passive responder. The daily experience shifts from chasing tickets to guiding a unified platform that powers every business function, streamlining operations, and elevating employee journeys.

As agent-driven workflows become the norm, the benefits should multiply, enabling smoother launches, faster problem resolution, and more time for innovation. Frontier IT leaders will use real-time insights and continuous experimentation to turn every improvement into measurable business value.

Becoming Frontier

Many IT leaders know all too well that their remit has expanded. They can't just support transformation—they must run it. IT must embrace the Frontier model and empower every other function to do the same, becoming the orchestrator of agents and the co-owner of business value, measured not only in uptime but in journey outcomes, adoption curves, and time to impact.

The operating system of IT itself is likely to change first. Imagine agents monitoring device health, patching and tuning in the background, predicting incidents, and resolving issues without a human ever lifting a finger. The few issues that do escalate could arrive pre-diagnosed, enriched with context, and routed to the right resolver group. The help desk feels less like a call center and more like an air traffic control tower, managing exceptions while the system flies on autopilot. The potential payoff is a better experience at a lower cost and a team enabled to spend more time on the moments that matter—onboarding a new hire, supporting a product release, or managing a crucial handoff between sales and service.

The Frontier IT transformation

With a team of agents integrated into every process, IT is enabled to drive transformation and boost business value across the enterprise.

CURRENT IT PROCESS

Manual infrastructure management

Excessive time spent reacting vs. forecasting

Human intensive end-user support

Overloaded IT desks provide inconsistent quality

Core systems focus

Keeping the lights on prohibits strategic projects

System-first mindset

System stability prioritized over business outcome

FRONTIER IT PROCESS

Agent-native operations proactively optimize and unify platforms across enterprise channels

Human-centered IT partners with business users to own end-to-end digital journeys

AI-enabled value creation transforms IT from a cost center to an enabler of enterprise goals

Zero-touch, agent-led service resolves most issues and escalates intelligently across channels

To serve the entire organization, IT deploys a unified tech and data platform—a reliable surface for the other functions to build on. This means governed data products, AI-ready cloud infrastructure, best-practice reference architectures, and a catalog of reusable connectors and patterns. When HR or Sales wants to prototype an agent, they plug into the same secure fabric, with identity management, policy as code, telemetry, and cost controls built in. Frontier IT does the heavy lifting so the whole enterprise can move faster.

But the impact doesn't stop there. IT also partners with the business to manage the employee experience by mapping end-to-end journeys, monitoring satisfaction and adoption telemetry, and running design, test, and scale loops the way a product team would. Think of an employee experience leader who wakes up to a dashboard showing sentiment hotspots in onboarding, triggers a design agent to prototype a new first-week flow, and uses adoption and monitoring agents to nudge behaviors and measure impact. This is Frontier IT operating as a flywheel for continuous improvement.

What Frontier IT could look like

Consider Simone, an IT employee experience leader at a Fortune 500 company. Her days were once filled with reactive troubleshooting, overloaded support desks, and endless system maintenance, leaving little room for strategic work or partnering with colleagues across the organization. With agentic support, Simone's workflow is transformed. Routine monitoring, backlog prioritization, and user adoption are handled by agents, giving her time to focus on designing better employee experiences, collaborating on business challenges, and driving innovation. Instead of firefighting, Simone leads with insight and impact, supported by a team of agents working quietly in the background.

A day in the life of a Frontier IT professional

Simone's agent toolkit doesn't just speed up her work as an employee experience leader—it enables her to make better decisions, drive continuous improvement, and scale her impact.

Simone, IT employee experience leader



9 am: Review employee needs

10:30 am: Design UX improvements

12 pm: Build prototype of new experience

3 pm: Test and scale design with end users

4 pm: Select and communicate key measurables

Agentic support team



Monitoring agent

Surfaces customer adoption and pain points in real time



Backlog agent

Scores improvement opportunities by impact



Design agent

Supports prototyping employee experiences



A/B testing agent

Automates experience design and collects feedback



Adoption agent

Drives campaigns and enablement for new tools



Knowledge agent

Consolidates learnings and insights for future iteration

3 key principles every Frontier function should follow

1

Make the invisible visible

Frontier functions start by mapping every step of their work, surfacing hidden bottlenecks and inefficiencies. By turning invisible processes into visible, measurable units, they enable targeted improvements and unlock new opportunities for AI-driven impact.

2

Treat AI as core infrastructure

Rather than approaching AI as a side project or innovation showcase, Frontier teams embed AI into their core processes. This means going beyond simply automating tasks. It's about fundamentally rethinking roles and redesigning workflows so that AI is integral to how work gets done, compounding business value and accelerating cycles.

3

Make experimentation a practice

There's no finish line for AI transformation. Frontier functions are always in beta, continuously experimenting, measuring, and refining their approaches. They set up structured tests, track results, and evolve roles and processes based on evidence—not assumptions—ensuring agility, accountability, and sustainable growth.

The difference between a Frontier function and everyone else is not belief—it is behavior. Frontier leaders don't wait for perfect data or a five-year plan. They make the work visible, put AI at its core, experiment and refine, and move forward.