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This ServiceNow case study is based on an interview with Antony Mayo, Support Director at Fairfax Media.



Highlights

Large Australasian media conglomerate standardizes on ServiceNow to centralize support model across countries

Business

Publishing: Magazine and Digital media

Headquarters

Sydney, New South Wales Australia

Company Size

10,000 employees

Geographies

Australia and New Zealand

Challenges

- Different service desk systems used by different parts of the company made it impossible to share resources between service desks
- Customers were unhappy about the time it took to resolve issues
- Lack of SLAs meant that it was difficult to ensure that incidents and service requests were completed in an appropriate time frame

Results

- Self-service capabilities have reduced call volumes and improved customer satisfaction
- Improved cross-border incident management because all support staff are using the same system regardless of location
- Managers can quickly view metrics on how well service teams are performing and where they are falling short in responding to customers’ needs

Fairfax Media Centralizes Support Model with Great Success

With 90 print and digital titles and counting, Fairfax Media is a true media conglomerate, reaching millions of readers in Australia and New Zealand. The company’s steady growth and series of acquisitions and mergers has created a complex and varied array of IT processes and systems. To combat the complexity, Fairfax Media focused on integrating and standardizing processes across its numerous locations.

In the area of service management alone, the company had four ITSM systems—one for New Zealand and three different systems in use throughout Australia. There was no integration, so teams couldn’t support each other. Often, there were unacceptably long waits for issues to be resolved, which frustrated employees. With the lack of SLA standards, service was wildly inconsistent.

“The importance of centralizing our support model was integral to efficiency,” said Antony Mayo, Support Director in New Zealand helping to spearhead the consolidation and integration project. “We wanted to be able to use the shared teams across our network, infrastructure and enterprise applications to more efficiently allocate the most appropriate and available skills to calls, tickets, incidents and requests.”

The IT support and services team, including Mayo and IT Services Manager Joanne Wadey, dove deeply into the requirements, coming up with about 500 specific items and capabilities that needed an integrated system enabled with self-service.

The fact that ServiceNow would allow all service-related tasks and processes to come from a single system was a major selling point for Fairfax Media. The group could also see that eventually ServiceNow would allow the company to move beyond parity with what it had into newer service-related areas and even into areas beyond IT.

ServiceNow Professional Services Helps Prioritize and Map Strategy

Once the decision was made to move forward with ServiceNow, Fairfax Media’s IT support staff worked with ServiceNow Professional Services to map a strategy and prioritize which workflows to tackle first.

Once priorities had been determined, the first order of business was replacing existing processes with new functionality in ServiceNow. That meant starting with Incident and Change Management. Those functions were already automated to some degree, but the processes and systems used in different areas of the company were at odds with one other. For example, the New Zealand service desk used a total call ownership model where the service desk staff was responsible for the ticket through completion, while the Australia service desk was only responsible for recording incidents and performing first call resolution. Once a ticket was assigned to 2nd or 3rd tier support, it was no longer owned by the service desk. ServiceNow’s Incident Management application would enable all service desks to move to a total call ownership model.



In addition, while both Australia and New Zealand followed the same change management workflow, the lack of visibility of changes for the service desk meant that active reporting was spotty, and it was very time-consuming to link incidents to changes.

With ServiceNow's Professional Services starting the team off, Fairfax Media implemented the Incident and Change Management applications across the board. Once implemented, the team saw noticeable improvement in the quality, consistency and speed of communications. For incidents, this was mainly due to a move from manual to automated task routing and the ability for incidents to be escalated to multiple groups when the root cause is unclear.

The most important benefit of the incident and change application upgrade was the move to a shared-services approach, integrating the Australian and New Zealand service desks. It allows, for example, some Australian apps to be supported by New Zealand experts. It also allows one service desk to take calls on behalf of the other and ensure that the right support team is responding to a ticket. Most importantly, it allows all support teams to follow the same processes for communications, approvals and resolution.

Today, both the Australia and New Zealand IT service desk staff can provide first-level support for either country. This helps

extend normal business hours of support and each service desk functions as backup for the other.

Automating Approval and Delivery Through Self-Service

Fairfax Media's consolidated service desk project took another leap forward with the implementation of a new service catalog—a stepping-stone to self-service. The implementation of Service Catalog, fronted by ServiceNow's Content Management System (CMS), would eliminate the paper forms and emails that were used to manage service requests and fully automate the approval and delivery process.

"We wanted to provide our users with a service catalog where they could select products, find information to resolve their own issues, and complete service requests themselves," Wadey said. "And in the process, we would be able to reduce call volumes and speed up service."

With the new system, Fairfax Media has met those goals, and then some. All requests move through standardized and automated processes, eliminating phone calls by enabling users to track and view requests.

"We have seen a steady call volume reduction over the last 12 months and we attribute it to the self-service capabilities of ServiceNow," Wadey said.

"The importance of centralizing our support model was integral to efficiency. We wanted to be able to use the shared teams across our network, infrastructure and enterprise applications to more efficiently allocate resources."

Products

ServiceNow®
Incident Management

ServiceNow®
Change Management

ServiceNow®
Service Catalog

ServiceNow® Configuration
Management (CMDB)

And the process is ongoing; the Melbourne service desk, for example, would like to provide a concierge-type service to help manage walk-up requests from staff, and Mayo says it's only a matter of time before that happens.

Service Level Agreement

SLA management has been another big win for Fairfax Media with ServiceNow. Before, there was very little standardization in SLAs between service teams and virtually no SLA or management reporting available to IT support managers. As a result, it was very hard to ensure that incidents and service requests were completed within agreed-upon timeframes.

"We needed to find a way to develop and enforce uniformly negotiated SLAs across the company because we have many different businesses to coordinate," Mayo said.

Part of the reason for the success of the SLA endeavor is the reporting available in ServiceNow. Instead of having to resort to custom-developed reports that rely on accessing the ITSM database directly, service managers can view volumes, trends, resolution and SLA compliance. "I can also get a finger on the pulse of my counterparts in Australia to see how well we are doing compared to them and where we could be doing better," Mayo said. "Most importantly, we have a single management view of IT service across Australia and New Zealand."

The Beginning of a Service Revolution

For Fairfax Media, integrating the service teams is just beginning. With self-service and basic functions up and running, the team plans to further improve service by implementing several ServiceNow applications over the next year. Next up is Problem Management, which will increase the visibility of known problems and ensure that problems are linked to incidents.

Also, the support team will work to upgrade its configuration management database, which is currently implemented in its most basic state. Expanding beyond a third-party wiki for knowledge management is on the to-do list as well.

One of the biggest changes Mayo expects to see is the expansion of ServiceNow applications such as Incident, Change and Service Catalog beyond IT. "We knew from the beginning that ServiceNow could be used to manage service relationships outside of IT; that was one of our deciding factors," Mayo said. "At some point we'll begin to leverage that in areas like human resources and disaster recovery. It's definitely on our radar."

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