



“Researchers are able to do more as a result of the ServiceNow platform. It allows the University of Sydney to automate standard processes giving back to researchers valuable time to focus on their ground breaking work.”

This ServiceNow case study is based on an interview with Geoffrey Brown, Director of Innovation, Solutions and Engagement Services in Communications Technology, University of Sydney.



Highlights

Enabling University staff to undertake ground-breaking research through automating standard processes with ServiceNow

University automates and standardizes IT services management and pursues shared services model to address other departments enabling staff to focus on more valuable core business initiatives.

Business

Education

Company Size

50,000 students and 10,000 staff

Geographies

Australia

Challenges

Disparate applications and fragmented processes for every function impeded efficiency

A long history of poor IT service management made groups outside of IT reluctant to give shared services a chance

Inability to collect and analyze metrics meant that it was virtually impossible to gauge effectiveness of operations

Results

Standardized workflow and processes paved the way for Enterprise Service Management

Metrics like first day resolution help the IT department continually improve services

More efficient workflows have freed up IT staff, who can be redeployed to improve core business functions

Free to Research and Innovate - Transforming University Services

Geoffrey Brown has a vision for the future of IT that some may call radical, but he says is inevitable. He firmly believes that over time, the IT function in most organizations will be largely overtaken by automation and managed services to the point where the IT department will be unnecessary in its current form.

Brown, Director of Innovation, Solutions and Engagement Services for Information Communications Technology (ICT) at the University of Sydney, is preparing for that day by standardising IT processes and implementing a shared services model with the help of ServiceNow.

The University of Sydney is one of the top 100 universities in the world, is a leading global research organization, has over 50,000 students per annum and turns over \$1.7 billion per year.

Brown is positive about the shift. “If you do it right,” he says, “You can move your IT people to more meaningful functions that can really benefit the business. That’s really the goal of any organization—to improve the business.”

Consolidating to one platform

The processes and technologies used throughout the University of Sydney grew in a highly fragmented manner over the years, with each group using and championing their own systems. Brown’s team identified 145 email systems alone throughout the university.

Reliance on a centrally managed ecosystem for technology services and support was counter to the cultural and history of the organization which has been rooted for decades in an “empowerment management model.”

Brown knew that he was going to have to win back the trust of external groups including faculty members, schools, departments and colleges if he was going to achieve his vision of shared services. In the past 8 years, through a strategy of growing central capabilities and a service-oriented culture, the ICT group now has responsibility for approximately 95% of the entire organization. “You are never going to achieve complete control in a University!” said Brown.

As an important first step, Brown introduced ServiceNow to facilitate the service management framework needed to manage and deliver IT services, workflow and reporting. “ServiceNow has been the core foundation capability that fulfilled all of our requirements for incidents, requests, change, problems, service catalogue and more. In the ICT space we deal with 250,000 incidents and requests per year through TrackIt (how we’ve branded our portal) and have seen a growth in customer satisfaction - 98% rated of our customers rated the service of the Helpdesk Officers as ‘Good to Very Good’.”

"I knew that with ServiceNow we could do much more than the basics of IT service management," he said. "ServiceNow has been a catalyst delivering major transformation to a shared services model across the university. That transformation would not have been possible without the use of workflow capabilities inherent to ServiceNow and the introduction of Knowledge Management. We've been successful in breaking down the silos and promoting greater efficiency while reducing costs."

As an example, to manage onboarding today, the University has a myriad set of complex processes that are often paper-based and very little is coordinated. Brown explained, "I'd like to bake the workflow management concept throughout the process so everything is automated. A workflow platform such as ServiceNow could manage and automate everything, from setting up email accounts to desk space allocation and producing business cards."

With the help of Keystone Management Solutions, a ServiceNow partner who was recently acquired by UXG Limited, the University's ICT staff started by implementing four applications from the ServiceNow Service Automation Suite: Incident Management, Problem Management, Change Management and the Service Catalogue. The applications provide standardised workflow processes that allow university staff to raise incidents and see them followed through to completion. Customers can order products and services online using a self-service and track progress using a portal customised with the University of Sydney look and feel. "We have branded our implementation as TrackIt (and

purposely not TrackIT) to indicate our focus on enterprise business processes going forward."

The applications proved their worth fairly quickly, as division after division within the university became convinced that, finally, IT services could deliver on their promises.

Benchmarking progress with improved metrics

Today ICT is able to track the number of server requests, modifications performed and decommissioning requests. All this is available at the push of button via the ServiceNow Dashboard. Previously, this was managed by 12 excel spreadsheets across multiple departments.

In the area of knowledge management, the organization held vital support data in no fewer than 8 repositories. Today, this will be a single location allowing the support teams to access the same source of truth. Most importantly, customers will be able to access the same information as part of the self-help portal anytime, anywhere, and from any device.

In terms of reporting, for the first time, IT has daily visibility of its major incidents, support load and the performance of the service teams via ServiceNow. This level of transparency provides the IT team and leadership with actionable data to adjust to demands as needed.

To improve stability and increase customer confidence, Change Management offers users complete visibility of all changes. Most importantly, changes are now approved by the right person using the automated workflow. This ensures that changes are properly authorised.

"This is the first time we could track and benchmark our services," Brown said.

"Automating workflows for basic processes has freed the University to redeploy staff to focus on the University's core business functions of research and education with the benefit of added efficiencies."

Products

- ServiceNow® Incident Management
- ServiceNow® Problem Management
- ServiceNow® Change Management
- ServiceNow® Service Catalog
- ServiceNow® Project Portfolio Module
- ServiceNow® Knowledge Management

Creating a true shared-services culture

Enterprise service management is already making headway at the University of Sydney. “We know that we have to deliver services in ways that people can consume, in language they understand, around processes they are used to,” Brown said.

IT worked with the Human Resources Division to automate important HR processes within ServiceNow to generate, sort and route requests—such as questions about benefits or workplace issues—for its staff of 10,000 employees. “For us, HR service automation has been another example of a true partnership quality change,” reflected Brown.

In addition, IT is partnering with the organization’s infrastructure division in support of a billion dollar campus upgrade initiative that involves new building construction as well as refurbishments across 600 campus facilities, Leveraging ServiceNow as the single system of record that both divisions use to manage the workflow required in these projects for tracking incidents, requests and tasks associated with this initiative.

Brown said, “The conversations we are having today are different to those that we had before ServiceNow was introduced. Now, we lead conversations about how IT can support the University’s core business functions of research and education. With ServiceNow automating our basic tasks in terms of process, this frees up IT to focus on the innovations that are driving real value across the University.”

Redeploying IT staff to provide greater value

As service delivery improves and workflows become automated, IT staff can be redeployed to meet core business needs that require a greater individual attention. Freeing the team from the mundane drudgery of repetitious administrative tasks fosters true innovation.

“That was our goal all along—to free up capacity from the IT staff so they can become valuable consultants to the business,” Brown said.

“Creating jobs that are more meaningful and add greater value to the organization is a real privilege.”

Brown plans to redeploy some of his staff to help advance TechLab, an innovative, experimental effort that explores new and emerging technologies with the potential to help transform business—technologies like virtual and augmented reality and 3D printing.

“IT as we know it, has changed. It will continue to change and continue to make foundational shifts,” Brown said.

“Service Now has freed the University of Sydney to focus on its core business of research and education. Automated workflow and service reporting have been fundamental drivers in the success of establishing Shared Services. It’s a single platform that binds us together and takes out the drudgery of day to day paper pushing. In this way, it has revolutionised the way we operate.”

“Shifting routine process work to ServiceNow has allowed us to create new, more fulfilling roles for staff. This has led to an increase in staff morale and satisfaction while promoting greater creativity within the organization.”

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