Case Study

Collaboration, interaction and community are part of Red Hat's DNA. In a culture where “the best ideas win,” it's important for IT to mature in its service delivery while avoiding traditional IT activities that no longer add material business value.

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source solutions, using a community-powered approach to provide reliable and high-performing cloud, virtualization, storage, Linux and middleware technologies.

Lee Congdon, CIO at Red Hat, describes how the close alignment between his company’s strategic goals and the capabilities of ServiceNow help improve Red Hat’s IT maturity while freeing up IT resources to work on innovative projects that are important to business growth.

A “soul-crushing” legacy system

In Red Hat’s early years, there was little need for formal processes because everyone worked closely together and knew the organization’s priorities. Planning a change was as simple as consulting the people sitting nearby. But as the IT group grew and began to provide critical services, it became necessary to add more process rigor, especially around change management, resolving problems, and handling end-user incidents and requests. Red Hat eventually adopted a service management system to support its processes. Over time, shortcomings of this system impacted adoption and effectiveness:

- **Difficult to use** – Onerous processes required multiple steps in multiple screens, creating onerous work that led to internal resistance. One IT associate lamented, “I can’t deal with this soul-crushing process.”

- **Lacked flexibility** – Red Hat’s quickly changing business needs and process improvements outpaced the system’s capabilities, bogging down IT agility and its ability to adapt.

- **Expensive to change** – Relatively simple changes could take days or weeks of programming effort at a substantial cost.

“We were constrained on employee satisfaction with the tool, constrained in our ability to implement new process and constrained from a flexibility and expense standpoint,” says Congdon. “We on the leadership team took this as an alert that we had to provide an appealing environment for folks as we asked them to become more rigorous about doing their jobs.”

Red Hat needed to find a solution that was easy to use and flexible enough to adapt to their needs quickly while keeping costs low.

Provisioning Quality Service at Scale

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Cloud-based ITSM – A strategic fit

Congdon’s priority was to find a solution that was consistent with Red Hat’s strategic direction, offered the right set of capabilities and could integrate seamlessly with existing systems.

As the enterprise IT cloud company, ServiceNow offered the set of capabilities that would allow Congdon’s team to respond more effectively than if they tried to build a solution in-house. Having a cloud-based ITSM system reduced the risk of outages within their data centers. And, ServiceNow already included integrations to ManageIQ, a company Red Hat had recently acquired and whose products it uses internally.

Red Hat’s implementation team rolled out the Incident, Problem, and Change Management Applications following best practices from ServiceNow professional services:

- **Start with a clean slate** – rather than migrate all incidents, changes and requests from the legacy system, associates worked through the backlog in parallel to prepare for data archiving and system retirement.

- **Provide extensive communication** – IT involved business users throughout the design and also conducted user acceptance testing and education.

- **Plan the go-live date carefully** – Red Hat’s go-live was scheduled to coincide with the end of a holiday break so that employees would return fresh and ready to hit the ground running.

Results: Greater productivity, agility, and transparency

Congdon has built a team of 250 to 300 IT associates that use ServiceNow. Approximately 5,600 Red Hat employees and contractors worldwide rely on the system to handle their incidents and requests. Since moving to ServiceNow, Red Hat has benefited in many ways:

- **Greater productivity** – Users no longer struggle with difficult screen navigation and “soul-crushing processes.” Now, interfaces are intuitive and can be accessed from anywhere using any device. Workflows are used extensively to automate activities wherever possible.

- **More flexibility and agility** – Painful and expensive customizations are a thing of the past. With ServiceNow’s ease of configuration and extensibility, IT can now respond faster and provide better fitting solutions.

- **Improved metrics & visibility** – The legacy system hampered IT’s ability to show its value. Now, Congdon can readily demonstrate to business leadership how his team spends its time, where it’s focused and how the business uses IT services.

“I would say that implementing ServiceNow] is very consistent with our direction to leverage the cloud in delivering services to Red Hat and to our customers.”

Next steps

IT service management has traditionally been invisible to users at Red Hat. However, Congdon plans to use ServiceNow to make more IT offerings available through a self-service portal. Instead of tapping IT on the shoulder for guidance, users will be able to submit their own incidents and requests, track status and – most importantly – obtain information that will save them the trouble of opening an incident, problem or change request in the first place.
Providing Quality Service at Scale

“We’ve identified 80 or so IT services that we provide,” says Congdon. “In addition, we have 10 key end user requests such as provisioning a workstation or an e-mail distribution list. Exposing standard solutions to these requests through a portal fits our strategy of self-service in the IT organization. It will also help us accommodate employees who use their own assets to get work done. Instead of sending them through the traditional IT model, a flexible, self-service environment will let them link up with people using similar devices, services and applications.”

Collaboration is an integral part of Red Hat. Congdon sees the social features of ServiceNow becoming part of the mix. Red Hat is currently using the ServiceNow Live Feed social application to provide a place to post and share Service Desk information and is evaluating the ServiceNow chat solution for inclusion in their portfolio of solutions.

Other departments, have expressed interest in using ServiceNow for their workflows. In time, the platform’s success in IT will help it expand across the business.

Providing quality service at scale

Over the next couple of years, Congdon plans to grow the percentage of Red Hat IT services that are cloud-enabled. Congdon considers ServiceNow to be an important part of this strategic initiative proclaiming, “We’ve been able to demonstrate to the organization that we’re continuing to provide quality service at scale, which would have been difficult to do without ServiceNow. We are also excited about the potential to integrate the former ManageIQ, now Red Hat CloudForms, solutions into our ServiceNow orchestrated workflows.”

Congdon summarizes the importance of scale as it relates to innovation by stating, “Let’s face it: no matter how well we run servers, storage and networking, it isn’t going to add value to the business. We need to offer infrastructure, but it is not our highest-leverage activity compared with supporting the introduction of a new Red Hat product or building new functionality into our website, for example. As our organization has grown, we’ve needed to introduce new service and support processes. We have achieved – and believe that we can continue to achieve – with ServiceNow the additional flexibility and responsiveness to the business that would have been much more difficult with our legacy solution.”