“Back to box” unlocks game-changing future for Aon

50k colleagues using My Service mobile app
5k employee hours saved
70% self-service rate

We have a fantastic partnership with ServiceNow and they provided great support, bringing in the best expertise for each program stage.

Bharti Sharma, Senior Director, Head of Enterprise Service Management, Aon

Confidence in decision making

In today’s volatile, fast-moving and uncertain business world, decision making has never been more complex, which is why thousands of organizations in 120 countries seek Aon’s support to help get those decisions right.

Across its portfolio, in risk management, health, wealth, and insurance, Aon’s goal is refreshingly simple—to provide its clients, large and small, with the clarity and confidence to make better and more informed decisions.

Industry:
Professional Services

Location:
Chicago, Illinois, USA

People:
50K employees

Products:
• IT Service Management
• IT Operations Management
• Customer Service Management
• Financial Services Operations
Tackling the impacts of customization

In the early years of Aon’s digital transformation, ServiceNow played an important role in delivering the enterprise-wide technology platform and solutions—IT Service Management, IT Operations Management, and Customer Service Management—to put its philosophy of one inclusive, diverse team into practice.

But when customization began to create challenges for Aon, the company asked its award-winning IT leader, Bharti Sharma, to plan the next stage of its ServiceNow journey.

“The pandemic accelerated the need for digitalization at an unprecedented pace,” reflects Bharti, Aon’s Senior Director, Head of Enterprise Service Management.

“Aon is dedicated to driving better experiences for colleagues and clients alike. With this in mind, we launched our revamped ServiceNow unified service portal, My Service. This is a one-stop, self-service shop, not just for IT but all workplace needs, such as HR, procurement, finance, and security, seamlessly connecting our people, applications, and systems.

“This is a real demonstration of the power of the ServiceNow platform to deliver great experiences, a place where people can request services, find information, manage their own working day, and so much more, rather than calling a service desk. It’s really empowering our people.”
Getting back to basics

When Bharti joined Aon there was an opportunity to re-strategize and simplify an overly complex platform that was damaging the user experience.

“The platform was underutilized due to complexity,” recalls Bharti. “For example, people were abandoning self-service in favour of assisted service. Customization over a long period of time meant that upgrades were difficult and as a result we were missing out on new features and innovation.

“We concluded that we needed to do something disruptive, eliminate as much customization as possible, reset and get back on track to enhance the colleague experience and improve return on investment. We decided to go ‘back to box’ across the board, which would bring its own challenges but would enable us to set the right foundations and move forward with confidence.”

Going ‘back to box’ enables organizations and users to maximize the value of the ServiceNow platform and unlock a range of important benefits. These include improved platform stability and performance, shorter upgrade cycles, access to all the latest features and functionality, and lower maintenance costs.

As an eminent IT practitioner, Bharti was confident that, with the ongoing partnership and support of her ServiceNow colleagues, the technical challenges of going ‘back to box’ could be successfully overcome.

The key to success was taking a huge, dispersed, international business with multiple stakeholders and decision makers with her on a long journey of change.

Building trust through communication

To do so, Bharti took a leaf out of Aon’s own business philosophy. With in-depth communication and engagement throughout every stage of the change, she shared her plans and her rationale to convince colleagues of the wisdom of the decision and the benefits that would accrue for all.

“Targeted communication was vital so that everyone felt that they had a stake in this journey, that we understood their priorities and that they were part of a collaboration and not just on the receiving end of change. We have a fantastic partnership with ServiceNow and they provided great support, bringing in the best expertise for each stage of the program and being proactive with ideas for further developments and enhancements.”

Canadian proving ground

The first few applications of the new, revamped ‘back-to-box’ ServiceNow platform were in Aon’s internal ITSM platform, redesigned as MyService, and its Commercial Risk department in Canada, with standardized CSM processes and redesigned, fully digitized workflows.

By integrating ServiceNow with existing business applications, users in Canada could enjoy the power of a single unified platform, enabling personalization and access to a centralized service catalogue—a single system of action.

ServiceNow is the most powerful platform of platforms—a single source of truth and system of action, which can integrate with existing business applications to enable seamless operations and seamless experiences.

Bharti Sharma, Senior Director, Head of IT Service Management Practice & Service Management Platform, Aon
Simplifying the experience gives colleagues more time to devote to serving customers better.

Enabling convergence breaks organizational silos and drives operational efficiencies.

The success of this approach also enabled Bharti to plan for the launch of ServiceNow Financial Service Operations—Aon’s first ever client-facing solution. This solution will extend the capabilities of a unified solution with automation, workflows, knowledge management and self-service capabilities, reaching beyond colleagues and directly impacting Aon’s clients.

“Our experience in Canada has been very encouraging. We have streamlined sales processes across 30 different locations, eliminating silos and inconsistent experiences. We’ve automated manual processes, unlocking time for colleagues to add value for clients—we estimate that our program in Canada saved colleagues more than 5,000 hours to spend on more productive tasks.”

Mobile app completes the picture

Bharti’s vision is to offer a unified platform across all of Aon’s business units and geographies, based on standardization and centralization, enabling all external facing colleagues to bring the best of Aon to clients.

“Taking ITSM ‘back to out-of-the-box’ has improved the platform health score by 15%, with a 70% increase in upgrade speeds. ‘Back to box’ has lifted positive sentiment about ServiceNow to 68%—a huge achievement—while self-service is up 20% and is steadily increasing month by month.

“The success of My Service is all about ease of use—the ability to self-serve rather than calling someone up. And on the back of that, we’ve launched a mobile app for all 50,000 colleagues, available in eight languages, which puts a great ServiceNow enterprise service management experience in their hands, on the go, wherever they are in the world. Self-service now accounts for more than 70% of all interactions with My Service.

Aon is also expanding its use of ITOM following the successful application of Discovery and Service Mapping by shifting from a legacy system to ServiceNow ITOM for all Event Management and AIOps requirements.

“Service Mapping unearths insights, knowledge, and information to assist faster decision-making and can pinpoint the root cause of an issue that occurred 15 minutes ago; that’s the level of detail available in ServiceNow.”

Achieving enterprise-wide service management

“Going ‘back to out-of-the-box’ has been truly transformational for Aon,” concludes Bharti Sharma. “Colleagues can see the outcomes for themselves; they are now coming forward to ask how they can use ServiceNow to help achieve their goals.

“ServiceNow is the most powerful platform of platform—a single source of truth and system of action, which can integrate with existing business applications to enable seamless operations and seamless experiences in one place, for the benefit of colleagues and customers alike.”
“My Service is a great example of how, by simplifying the experience, colleagues have more time to devote to better serving customers. The platform enables convergence, breaking organizational silos, and driving operational efficiencies. Now, we’re not just reacting—we’re predicting. With ServiceNow, predictive intelligence automatically routes incidents to the best place for fast resolution and assesses the risk of implementing a change.

“We’ve scaled far beyond IT service management all the way to enterprise service management, from technology operations to business operations, which was inconceivable before ‘back to out-of-the-box’.

Bharti Sharma’s five-step formula for a successful ‘back to box’ program for a strong and sustainable ServiceNow platform

- Disrupt – start by revamping design standards, defining the difference between configuration and customization
- Simplify – make complex processes simpler, as that is the key to platform simplicity and better experiences
- Agility – remove bureaucratic barriers to speed and innovation by shifting from change management to change enablement
- Experience – with the foundations in place, focus energies on improving the colleague experience which in turn improves the customer experience
- Future-ready – align with the ServiceNow Common Service Data Model (CSDM) for interconnected shared data to power enterprise-wide value.