Asahi Group Japan boosts employee satisfaction

ServiceNow provides the ideal bridge that connects our legacy systems to the cloud.

Tomokazu Yamakawa, Executive Officer of Digital Transformation Department, Asahi Group Japan

Launching a dedicated DX department in Japan

Asahi Group is a Japanese food and drink manufacturer renowned for producing Asahi Super Dry lager, Mitsuya Cider, MINTIA breath mints, and various other alcoholic beverages and sweets. The company has spent the last 10 years growing its global business, and today nearly 50% of its sales come from overseas.

In 2022, it launched Asahi Group Japan, which is dedicated to operations solely in its home country.
“Domestic business used to be managed by the Japanese division of Asahi Group Holdings, but in January 2022, we established Asahi Group Japan to take over management in that market,” says Tomokazu Yamakawa, Executive Officer of Digital Transformation Department, Asahi Group Japan.

Asahi Group Japan consolidated the domestic departments tasked with the business’s digital transformation (DX) that were spread across internal companies such as Asahi Group Holdings and Asahi Breweries, and created one new consolidated DX department responsible for promoting and managing DX initiatives across Asahi companies in Japan.

“To make it easier for our companies to work with the newly established DX department, we needed dedicated infrastructure, processes, and databases.

The DX department is pioneering a wider business transformation, with a focus on promoting innovation across processes and business models.

Tomokazu Yamakawa, Executive Officer of Digital Transformation Department, Asahi Group Japan

“To us, DX is business transformation. The DX department is pioneering a wider business transformation, with a focus on promoting innovation across our processes and business models among each of our organizations,” says Yamakawa.

Treating employees like customers

To establish best practices, Asahi Group Japan is working to transform the employee experience by harnessing the power of digitization. ServiceNow plays a pivotal role by eliminating inefficient processes and automating operations with digital workflows.

“We started our digital transformation by introducing ServiceNow IT Service Management, which streamlines and automates IT operations,” says Hiroshi Shimizu, Manager of Digital Transformation Department, Asahi Group Japan.

“That allowed us to reduce the number of time-consuming daily tasks that employees find frustrating. We also switched our mindset to give employees the same high-level experience that we give to customers.”

Under the previous application approval process, multiple departments were involved in cross-checking for errors around application content, processing, and instructions, which cost time and effort.
“We realized we could simplify this workflow and eliminate unnecessary steps. Not only would that speed up the application approval process, but it would also improve the employee experience,” explains Shimizu. To achieve this, the DX department decided to centralize a range of internal service applications on the Now Platform.

Application approvals in minutes, not weeks
Transforming the internal service application process with ServiceNow is already delivering results. For example, when Asahi Group Japan rolled out cloud services such as web conferencing and file sharing, ServiceNow automated approval and provisioning for these applications.

“Previously, when an employee created a shared folder, the IT team would need to seek approval from a manager or head of department before setting it up, and that could take up to a week,” explains Shimizu. “With ServiceNow, the process is fully automated. We have all the information we need to approve the request and provision file sharing via an API in just a few minutes.”

Being able to flexibly connect cloud services through a loosely coupled architecture is a major advantage of the Now Platform. “Integrating ServiceNow with other cloud services is convenient and gives us the best functionality. We want to use this single platform to seamlessly integrate with other systems to optimize operations,” says Shimizu.

“ServiceNow is a highly versatile solution, and we don’t intend to restrict its usage to out-of-the-box applications. It’s not a puzzle with one correct answer: it’s a platform with building blocks that support infinite opportunities,” he continues.

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Hiroshi Shimizu, Manager of Digital Transformation Department
Asahi Group Japan
Connecting systems of records with systems of engagement

Asahi Group Japan is also using ServiceNow HR Service Delivery for human resource management, and App Engine which supports the low-code development of business applications. This also means the DX department can use workflows that sit outside the IT department.

In the future, Asahi Group Japan also plans to use ServiceNow to connect its system of records (SoR) and system of engagement (SoE) to build a single architecture for its entire domestic business.

As Yamakawa explains: "ServiceNow flexibly integrates APIs with cloud services, which makes it easy to connect the platform to legacy systems. This makes it the ideal bridge between cloud services and existing systems. We're still working out our ideal IT architecture, but we know that with ServiceNow it will be resilient and scalable, and will free up our employees to focus on more satisfying tasks."

Bridge to legacy systems
ServiceNow’s flexibility connects cloud services to existing legacy systems via APIs

Ideal IT architecture
ServiceNow provides scalable architecture to reduce time spent on repetitive tasks, improving employee satisfaction