Establishing a Cultural Change in IT

Founded in 2006, DP World Australia provides container terminal stevedoring services in four terminals around Australia. Their customers include shipping lines, cargo owners, freight forwarders, and freight importers and exporters.

DP World Australia also operates two joint venture businesses. One is AWH, a storage, handling, and inventory management provider for general, bulk, and containerised products. The other is 1-Stop Connections, a container management system provider.

Unable to capture “business as usual”

DP World Australia was using a service management system but, according to Simon Lynch, IT service delivery manager, the tool was “very cumbersome and time-consuming.” This restricted take-up of the tool and compromised DP World Australia’s ability to structure IT service delivery throughout the organisation. As a result, DP World Australia was unable to capture and measure IT business as usual, including essential activities such as the volume, impact, response, and resolution of outages.

“There was no assurance to the business of how service delivery was going to be measured and tracked, or responded to in terms of timeliness and resolution,” said Lynch.

The lack of an appropriate system also meant work funnelled into the IT team in disparate ways. This meant the business did not have visibility into when or how IT services would be provided, how they would be managed, or to whom serious issues would be escalated.

New technology leaders delivered new approach

The appointment of industry veteran Martin McManus as chief information officer (CIO) of DP World Australia in November 2014, and Lynch nine months later, heralded a far-reaching change in the role of IT service management.

“When Martin came on board he changed our team’s structure and strategy so that it was focused on delivering repeatable processes and providing a consistent level of service,” Lynch says. “He then brought me on to introduce the policies and systems into the IT function so we could deliver that approach.”

McManus and Lynch adopted the Information Technology Information Library (ITIL) framework to align IT service management within DP World Australia to the business.

“Were very pragmatic about base-lining the processes that were already in place and reviewing how we could refine them to ITIL best practice,” Lynch says. “We looked at how we were responding to ongoing problems, managing change, and defining what best practice was.”
An agile cloud-based system

DP World Australia then reached out to four service management vendors to determine whether their tools could augment the processes and policies being defined. The company’s selection criteria spanned the tools’ fitness for purpose, scalability, and market traction in terms of expertise available in the market to help build the toolset out to support policies and processes in functions other than technology, such as field service and human resources.

In addition, DP World Australia’s small technology team did not want to take on the management and maintenance load of an on-premises service management system. “We very much wanted something that was cloud-based and could be deployed in an agile fashion,” Lynch says. “Because we wouldn’t have to manage the back-end infrastructure, we could focus solely on aligning the toolset with the business and the benefits that could deliver.”

DP World Australia selected ServiceNow just before Christmas 2015 and started planning and implementing its core ITSM modules at the end of January 2016. The business also purchased ServiceNow Orchestration and Performance Analytics.

Also, DP World Australia chose ValueFlow as its implementation partner. ValueFlow brought solid implementation experience and the ability to work in an agile environment to the engagement. The partner participated in weekly project reviews and agile sprints to ensure the implementation adhered to timelines and budgets.

The process started with a series of workshops that gathered requirements based around the ITIL processes defined in 2015. Then DP World Australia’s technology team determined which requirements could be delivered out of the box and which requirements could only be achieved once some additional configuration was undertaken.

“By working in constant collaboration with ValueFlow and using the agile methodology, we were able to bring the project in both on time and within budget,” says Lynch.

Understanding IT workload and productivity

“We initially wanted to use ServiceNow to understand the level of competing demand across business as usual IT support,” Lynch says. “We knew that the IT team was busy, but it was hard for us to quantify what ‘busy’ actually looked like at a day to day, business as usual level.”

Lynch and his team then implemented some soft internal service level agreements (SLAs) once the tool was implemented to support some initial benchmarking. After three months of working with these SLAs and benchmarks, the team obtained enough information to review and take back to the business to formalise SLAs.

Measuring service capabilities

“Using ServiceNow enabled us to identify that as an IT group of about 40 people nationwide, we’re managing about 200 different incidents per week across the business, or around 1,000 service calls per month,” Lynch says. “In addition, we’ve identified that we’re doing a lot more changes than we originally thought we were doing. Before we deployed ServiceNow, we thought we were averaging 20 changes per month across our technology platform, but we identified that we were actually averaging between 50 and 70 changes per month.”

“By bringing structure and repeatable processes and consistency into our environment, we’ve been able to move towards eliminating the previous haphazard approach, and as our business scales out and scales down across the year, we still have that process and policy there to drive consistency and meet the expectations of the business.”

— Simon Lynch, DP World
These changes ranged from standard to emergency level, and included alterations to key systems such as the DP World terminal operating system, and the company’s infrastructure. “These are important in terms of productivity reporting and accountability for the IT team within the business, as well as helping us understand where we can improve in terms of streamlining and reducing the number of changes,” Lynch says.

Deploying ServiceNow has also played a key role in delivering cultural change across the DP World technology function. The technology team is now considerably more business-focused, with IT priorities taking a back seat—even among employees charged with managing back-end systems, where interaction with the business is typically minimal.

“By bringing structure and repeatable processes and consistency into our environment, we’ve been able to move towards eliminating the previous haphazard approach, and as our business scales out and scales down across the year, we still have that process and policy there to drive consistency and meet the expectations of the business,” Lynch says.

DP World Australia is now extending its use of ServiceNow to employee onboarding and offboarding processes. Currently, the human resources-administered onboarding process takes some time to complete, and by automating the tasks and workflow involved, this time can be significantly reduced.

Lynch is extremely pleased with the relationship between DP World Australia and ServiceNow. “The ongoing relationship is consistent and we’ve had a lot of involvement with the account management team at the vendor, and the partner that we’ve engaged to help us extract maximum value,” he says. “We’ve started pulling together roadmaps with the involvement of the partner and ServiceNow, to pull together a more strategic approach to IT and how it matures throughout the business.”

“The strong collaboration between ValueFlow and DP World throughout this project has resulted in the delivery of some great outcomes and real business value. We look forward to a continued partnership with DP World as we have only really just scratched the surface in terms of where ServiceNow can be applied.”

—Paul Thomason, ValueFlow