MKS Instruments sees things more clearly with SPM

29% increase in projects delivered per quarter
80% of projects solve a business problem (up from 57%)
30% increase in projects completed on time

“ServiceNow is providing us with transparency and increased efficiency on active projects and pipeline across the company.”

Lori Krikorian, IT PMO Director, MKS Instruments

Perfecting performance and productivity

Semiconductors are increasingly involved in every aspect of our lives today, from our smartphones and wearables to autonomous vehicles, our smart home IoT devices that regulate thermostats and appliances, the cameras that make our streets safer, and the medical devices that monitor our health. Businesses and industries rely more and more on data and advanced electronics. MKS Instruments is foundational to the semiconductor ecosystem and enables technologies that transform our world. Essentially every semiconductor chip manufactured in the world is produced with MKS products.

Industry:
Manufacturing

Location:
Andover, Massachusetts, USA

People:
5,500 employees
(at SPM implementation)

Products:
• Strategic Portfolio Management
The company has a long history of excellence and solving its customers’ most complex problems. But with its rapid growth came the challenge of managing hundreds of projects being carried out at the same time for multiple customers. Its system of project management was outdated, and the process of portfolio management kept growing in complexity. It was time for the company to upgrade its process performance and productivity.

**From hours of work to minutes**

MKS was introduced to the value of ServiceNow capabilities as a company that it acquired was already using ServiceNow. MKS continued to expand its use of ServiceNow, but it was still lacking a reliable project management solution. When Lori Krikorian joined MKS as the IT Project Management Office (PMO) Director, she was immediately faced with an inability to track and report on projects.

"Prior to SPM, it took me a day to create project status reports. Now, I go to the Alignment Planner Workspace and we go through the roadmap as a team."

Lori Krikorian, IT PMO Director, MKS Instruments

She comments: “We were using PowerPoint, Word documents, and Excel spreadsheets. I couldn’t look across the portfolio and efficiently report on the health of the projects.” Lori pushed for the implementation of ServiceNow Strategic Portfolio Management (SPM) to help improve the processes in the IT PMO, but also knowing that it would positively affect the rest of the company.

As part of the move to ServiceNow, MKS was able to replace multiple legacy products with a single platform. Microsoft Office Excel sheets, PowerPoint decks, and Liquid Planner were all replaced with ServiceNow, providing streamlined access to project management and project data.

Now, work is easier for her. “Prior to SPM, whenever I presented portfolio information to MKS executives, it took me roughly a day to create a 90-page deck with a project status report for each project. Now, I go to the Alignment Planner Workspace Roadmap Planning, show the roadmap, and we review it as an IT organization. I can then download that information and share it with the stakeholders.”

The IT department has been using Alignment Planner Workspace to create roadmaps not only for projects by portfolio for stakeholder presentations, but roadmaps by division and program roadmaps.
Manufacturing better internal processes

SPM makes projects and data clearly visible, including the value that each project delivers to the organization, not only at the IT PMO level, but at the Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) level. Alignment Planner Workspace and Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) provide an immediate view and enable informed discussions about projects, as well as aligning work to goals and strategy. Given all these varied projects, aligning work to strategy is crucial in order to drive strategic outcomes.

Lori explains: “We use SPM for anything that comes through the demand pipeline. Application projects, infrastructure projects. I even track upgrades. It’s pretty much everything. And I want to see all the work.”

SPM is increasing productivity, as the hours previously wasted on manual processes are now used in other ways. For example, project managers in the IT PMO are saving approximately four hours per week by not having to create PowerPoint presentations for their project statuses. Instead, the project managers use SPM’s Alignment Planner Workspace, the Investment Portal, and the project record itself to conduct their meetings and send out project information to stakeholders. The solution also positively impacts end-user experience, thanks to a redesigned Demand Management solution.

Ryan Healey, Principal Business Systems Analyst and ServiceNow Product Owner at MKS, explains: “Before this deployment, access was siloed, and you needed to be placed into an assignment group before you could submit a demand or an idea into our demand process. We now consolidate all intake to evaluate and prioritize to deliver work. Anybody can see it, it’s more user friendly, and I think we’re getting a little more traction.”

Agility with hybrid project management

The organization has more transparency on demands, active projects, and projects in the pipeline across its three divisions with Demand Management, Project Portfolio Management, Alignment Planner Workspace Roadmap Planning, and other tools within SPM.

Leveraging the Investment Portal, reporting, and dashboards to share information in real time instead of offline decks with static data has also made a big difference. “I can easily slice and dice the data interactively and create a shared understanding among stakeholders for efficient planning and delivery of the whole portfolio of projects,” comments Lori, as she hopes to improve on her use of all SPM’s applications.

Another benefit of the platform is the ability to use hybrid project management, with some teams using waterfall with PPM and others using Agile, pulling in enhancements and other work to triage boards, which optimizes delivery.

We’re getting a lot of employees asking: ‘Can ServiceNow do this?’ And the answer is always: ‘Yes, it can’.

Ryan Healey, ServiceNow Product Owner
MKS Instruments
“We’re breaking down our projects by iterations to show value to the customer sooner,” comments Lori. “We really get all the benefits of Agile: speed to delivery, transparency, flexibility. I can organize the work, everybody on my team can see it, and it’s all clearly laid out.”

**Getting customer requests out of the black hole**

SPM impact also extends to customers, who have a clearer view of their projects and enhancements with MKS. For example: “We send enhancement information to our customers, and they can see our velocity,” says Lori. “They see how many stories we’ve been able to complete for them compared to what we had previously.”

Ryan adds: “It’s not just on some Excel spreadsheet somewhere. It’s in the system and it’s in real time. Before, they would submit an enhancement request, and they would lose visibility. It fell into this black hole until it came out on the other end ready for testing. It’s made everyone’s lives easier.”

**Asking for more**

Lori has worked with ServiceNow previously and has been its champion at MKS. With clear benefits to the company and its customers, the team wants to build on the success of SPM.

There are tools that the team is hoping to start using soon, including status reports and performance analytics. “We’re going to continuously improve,” says Lori. “We want to implement more and turn more functionalities on.”

“The more we get people in there using the platform, the more interested they are,” says Ryan. “They ask about what’s possible, what can be done. We’re getting a lot of employees asking: ‘Can ServiceNow do this?’ And the answer is always: ‘Yes, it can’.”

With the company’s continued growth, the ability to streamline acquisitions for the IT integration will come in handy. In fact, MKS has just acquired Atotech, a leading chemistry company based in Germany that has over 4,000 employees globally and, not surprisingly, has decided to move to ServiceNow.