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**N E X T D C**

#### Highlight

Service-oriented business model improves the customer experience and enables strategic company growth

#### Challenges

- Disparate homegrown and open source tools
- Limited or no reporting capabilities
- Siloed business units across six locations

#### Results

- Streamlined workflows
- Empowered business leaders with real-time reporting
- Simple and intuitive user experience

## NEXTDC Transforms the Customer Experience with ServiceNow

NEXTDC is Australia’s leading Data-Centre-as-a-Service provider, bringing innovative data centre outsourcing solutions, connectivity services and infrastructure management software to customers across Australia. Established in 2010, they have grown into a national network of Tier III data centres in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Canberra, and Brisbane.

NEXTDC has become an integral part of the data centre landscape in Australia, bringing together an array of organisations to meet the unique needs of their customers and open doors to entirely new possibilities. Their Cloud Centre ecosystem is now Australia’s largest independent network of carriers, cloud, and IT service providers—and it’s comprised of more than 250 channel partners and over 50 telecommunications providers.

#### A Rapid Rise to the Top

In six short years, NEXTDC has flourished into an ASX 300-listed organisation consisting of 175 employees servicing some of Australia’s largest businesses. After recently raising \$220 million in capital, the company has grown and will now fund new data centres in Brisbane and Melbourne. Furthermore, NEXTDC has reported a 55 percent lift in data centre services revenue and a 59 percent increase in contracted utilisation for the second half of 2015.

This momentum has propelled NEXTDC to the top of their industry, but it wasn’t without the expected growing pains. Along the way, the organisation started to encounter challenges with multiple support systems. After taking a closer look at those systems and the functions they were driving, NEXTDC decided it was time to embark on a customer experience transformation that would help them revolutionise their service management capabilities in order to achieve their goal of becoming the world’s leading customer-centric data centre services company.

Previously, NEXTDC had been using a range of homegrown and open source tools that were brought together to perform service management functions. Like many other businesses, NEXTDC used email, Excel, phones, and internally created bespoke solutions to cover those needs but rapidly outgrew them. The company realised that, to support their customer-first strategy, they needed to completely overhaul their existing service management functions to deliver the best possible customer experience—currently and throughout their future growth.

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With employees and customers dispersed across six locations, NEXTDC wanted to lead with a shared services approach. In order to achieve this, the company needed to integrate its siloed business units and make a cultural change.

“Like most businesses, we had implemented solutions as and when they made sense for the current state of the organisation,” said Jeff Arndt, head of business transformation at NEXTDC. “However, we reached a point where we had outgrown many of those solutions and were not taking advantage of potential increases in efficiency and customer experience that a more service-oriented business model could provide.”

Initially, NEXTDC wanted to address the problem head on with a massive overhaul of all of the existing solutions. However, after a closer examination of the undertaking, they decided to take a two-phased approach to the problem.

### Phase 1: The Solution

The first step in working towards NEXTDC’s shared services approach was finding a platform that would support its diverse needs. The company-wide shift towards a more service-oriented approach would require a solution capable of meeting the various needs of different business units. NEXTDC also wanted a solution with a robust roadmap able to support organisational transformation and competitive differentiation.

After looking at several providers, the company selected ServiceNow to meet their wide range of needs and to support its massive continued growth. NEXTDC also recognised the value in teaming up with an experienced systems integration partner for the project, which it found in RXP. RXP played an invaluable role in the rollout and the subsequent configuration of the business processes and integration, greatly reducing the time for successful implementation.

“Throughout this process, RXP has been exceptional in configuring the solution to meet our needs while ensuring we leverage the full capabilities of a service-oriented approach with individual operations,” said Arndt. “Their ability to see the big picture and ensure decisions made on the ground all work towards that vision has not only improved the outcome of the implementation but also ensured the new processes did not disrupt current operations.”

As RXP is in a strategic alliance with ServiceNow, its expertise was utilised in the same way NEXTDC’s customers and partners access services through the ecosystem of carriers and ISPs operating in NEXTDC data centres. Partnering with RXP demonstrated the advantage of outsourcing to existing partner networks for business solutions, as opposed to looking in house for the necessary expertise.

The first phase of the rollout was focused on internal processes. This would pave the way for the second, customer-facing phase and enable NEXTDC to streamline processes and solutions internally before fully bringing the external customer into the loop.

One of the first areas NEXTDC addressed was the handling of internal requests, including everything from IT ticketing to booking meeting rooms and car spaces at data centre locations.

Previously, NEXTDC had been using Request Tracker along with a homemade solution, but the systems were inefficient and there was no central reporting. Reports were commonly handled using complex Excel documents, entailing a large amount of manual intervention to transform the data into actionable insight. These monthly reports gave business leaders only brief snapshots of specific information. The lack of a central repository for reporting made it difficult for business leaders to understand trends or make informed strategic decisions.

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After replacing those processes with ServiceNow, NEXTDC could streamline workflows and empower business leaders with real-time reporting. The user experience for employees greatly improved and helped NEXTDC better serve customers, especially at one of the most important points of contact: the data centres.

With ServiceNow, employees could quickly and easily obtain the ID access cards necessary for clients to gain entry to their racks in the data centres and take care of other necessary tasks. Not only was that process made simpler and intuitive, but all the necessary security information was saved to streamline future visits. The system also collated information on visitors to enable real-time visibility into who was accessing the data centres, how often, and other critical information NEXTDC needed in order to improve their customer experience and pinpoint areas that needed attention.

David Dzienciol, group executive of customer and technology at NEXTDC, added, “Since rolling out ServiceNow internally, NEXTDC has reduced the response time to internal requests by as much as 500 percent. This has greatly reduced stress on internal staff who previously had to manually address each individual request, improving the user experience and enabling employees to focus more time and energy on strategic objectives, rather than administrative tasks.”

## Phase 2: Transforming the Customer Experience

The second phase of the rollout will focus on external, customer-facing operations. For a data centre operator such as NEXTDC, this will include elements such as basic incident management, increasing rack space, and other sales processes. Currently, these are manually intensive tasks that require intervention from a variety of players such as sales, finance, and technical teams.

When customers engage with NEXTDC for data centre projects, it is often investment heavy and entails wide-ranging impact to their organisations. Once the second phase of the rollout is complete, NEXTDC will be able to provide customers with real-time progress updates of projects to ensure they are tracking to project goals. This continuous visibility into the customer lifecycle will support a new level of service and be a significant differentiator for NEXTDC.

Dzienciol continues, “The end result of NEXTDC’s ServiceNow implementation is a radically improved everything-as-a-service mentality that encompasses the entire company, our customers and our partners. It’s no coincidence that a company like NEXTDC that seeks to help organisations harness the digital age has itself utilised an innovative platform like ServiceNow on our business transformation journey.”

Further automation after the initial customer onboarding process will help NEXTDC customers make requests for things, such as more data centre space, assistance with IT issues, or billing concerns. Arndt is excited about the one-stop shop that will bring together multiple units from NEXTDC that traditionally operated independently to provide customers with a more seamless, easy-to-use platform they can use to get answers and more easily optimise their data centre operations.

“The future of our customer experience has never been brighter,” says Arndt. “Businesses have a variety of options when it comes to Tier III data centre offerings but with ServiceNow, we will be able to provide an unparalleled level of customer service that will further differentiate us from the competition and maintain the incredible growth we are experiencing.”