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— Stephen Haddad, Southern Cross AustereoGroup

Organisation

Southern Cross Austereo

Business

Media

Headquarters

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Geographies

Australia-wide

Solutions

- ServiceNow® ITSM
- ServiceNow® Incident Management
- ServiceNow® Problem Management
- ServiceNow® Change Management
- ServiceNow® Service Catalogue
- ServiceNow® Service Portal
- ServiceNow® Orchestration
- ServiceNow® Marketing Services Management

Implementation timeline

- Selected ServiceNow – December 2016
- Commenced deployment – February 2017
- Completed initial deployment – May 2017

Southern Cross Austereo Tunes in ServiceNow for ITSM Transformation

If you're watching regional news or listening to rock on a radio station or app in Australia, there's a good chance the service is provided by Southern Cross Austereo. The radio, regional television, and digital business delivers more hours of live content in the local market than any other broadcast media business and connects to 95% of Australians.

Formed from the merger of Southern Cross Media Group and Austereo Group in 2011, Southern Cross Austereo operates well-known radio networks in Australia, such as the Hit Network and Triple M as well as television networks such as Southern Cross Ten, Tasmania Digital Television, and Darwin Digital Television. The company's digital properties include websites that attract more than 1.5 million unique browsers each month, and its mobile and iPad apps have been downloaded more than 1 million times.

Prior to 2016, Southern Cross Austereo relied on a widely available tool to perform basic IT service management (ITSM) functions. Additionally, for job requests and digital design team workflows, the business used an in-house built system.

Restructuring to deliver a service-oriented focus

Then Southern Cross Austereo decided to restructure and reposition its information and communications technology team to give it a more service-oriented focus. The company wanted the group to operate as a trusted broker of internal and external technology services to the business.

The initial steps entailed implementing a technology framework and solutions that enabled the team to make informed decisions based on data. "When we look at what our investments are going to be, what actions we're going to take, and how we can improve services to our business, we need data to drive those decisions," said Stephen Haddad, Head of Technology, Southern Cross Austereo.

To realise its technology transformation, Southern Cross Austereo needed to obtain data about where incidents and problems were occurring most often in its technology environment; whether those issues were being resolved in accordance with service level agreements; and whether the team was providing an appropriate level of service to teams throughout the organisation.

Understanding and managing incidents

"The business problem we faced was how we could capture and manage the lifecycle of an incident and understand how those incidents evolve," says Haddad. "We needed to find out what type of incidents occur, why they occur, whether they occur more frequently in particular technology stacks, what volumes of incidents we were experiencing, and whether we have enough people skilled in particular technologies to service the needs of the business."

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Southern Cross Austereo decided the answer lay in deploying service management software that enabled the technology team to operate to an Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework—practices designed to align IT services with business requirements.

ServiceNow "pre-eminent service management tool"
In late 2016, Southern Cross Austereo evaluated the market to determine the software that would best meet its requirements. Haddad's positive experience when using ServiceNow in previous roles gave the business comfort in selecting the solution to underpin the change program. "I was very comfortable in deciding to use ServiceNow as we were well aware of their position as the pre-eminent service management tool in the market."

ValueFlow delivers ITIL-compliant ServiceNow project
ServiceNow put Southern Cross Austereo in touch with expert partner ValueFlow to help with the deployment. "We completed some background checking of ValueFlow and the market validated the positive review we had received from ServiceNow," says Haddad.

Southern Cross Austereo formally signed off on the ServiceNow deployment in December 2016. ValueFlow then designed a program of work and the project to deploy core ServiceNow modules and applications—including ServiceNow Incident Management, ServiceNow Problem Management, and ServiceNow Change and Release Management—started in February 2017. The business and its partner later added ServiceNow Orchestration to further automate IT and business processes.

ValueFlow also needed to ensure the systems designed as part of the project supported the ITIL framework.

"To ensure the project met our requirements, we sent the Southern Cross Austereo IT leadership team to ITIL training so they could acquire a practitioner level of understanding," said Haddad. "This would enable them to talk a common language with ValueFlow and work through the customisations to ServiceNow necessary to meet our requirements."

Southern Cross Austereo and ValueFlow completed the initial deployment to specifications on time and within budget.

Business value

Attractively designed portal
The project deliverables included an internal portal that Southern Cross Austereo's designers modified to look like an online shopping cart. This portal allows employees to acquire equipment from a catalogue—once they select an item, the system supporting the portal generates an internal request form and approval workflows to complete the request.

Dashboards facilitating communication
"We also created a number of public dashboards to communicate to the broader community at Southern Cross Austereo the workload the service desk was experiencing," said Haddad. "Employees could also review the incidents and requests they had raised and what stage of the resolution lifecycle they had reached."

The dashboards also improve internal communication and understanding between Southern Cross Austereo employees and the service desk. The dashboards enable employees to view the service desk's daily, weekly, and monthly workloads as well as any major outages reported.

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—Stephen Haddad, Southern Cross Austereo

Internal metrics established

With ServiceNow operational, Southern Cross Austereo's technology team elected to set some internal metrics to govern performance. These metrics included percentage of incidents resolved at the first call to the service desk rather than being diverted to second- or third-level support; how many incidents raised are acknowledged by the service desk team within 20 minutes; and how quickly the incidents are resolved.

Southern Cross Austereo has adopted a three-stage approach to realising the transformation enabled by ServiceNow. "We have 64 locations around the country, so we undertook a large roadshow to all major metropolitan markets and several regional markets to explain this approach," says Haddad.

"The first stage involved encouraging our technology team members to apply a sandpit approach and play with the software to see what it could do. The second was effectively to relax some of our performance requirements for our service desk and second-level support team members as they learned how to use the system to resolve tickets. The third was to employ a highly experienced service delivery manager."

Metrics established and initial performance measured

The business is already seeing a clear improvement in performance and an acknowledgement of and focus on the metrics established. "For example, for first call resolution and time to resolve, we are reaching those targets 90% percent of the time," Haddad says.

"We also now have access to data that can tell us if there is an area where we cannot consistently resolve an incident or problem on the first call. This enables us to consider what we need to do around service desk training and education, or adding new skills, to make an improvement. That is the advantage that ServiceNow provides¾it gives you the insights to make the adjustments to improve service levels."

Southern Cross Austereo's use of ServiceNow is extending well beyond IT service management. The business has migrated from the internal software used to undertake job request and workflow for its digital design team to a project portal that acts as a front end "skin" to a ServiceNow® Marketing Services Management solution.

"There are a number of other areas we are considering ServiceNow for—particularly in some of our regional markets—but we need to walk before we can run," says Haddad.

Deploying ServiceNow with the assistance of ValueFlow has enabled Southern Cross Austereo to enact its plan to rebrand its technology function. "We've successfully rebranded from the old school, industrial term 'ICT' to the Technology Services Department," said Haddad. "We're effectively telling the business that we're now taking a service oriented approach and we've already received feedback from our executive that the technology team is more engaged and helpful. Furthermore, a survey of employees is showing positive sentiment to touchpoints such as the attractively designed portal." With ServiceNow, Southern Cross Austereo is at the start of what Haddad describes as a "genuine transformation."

"ServiceNow is providing the building blocks that enable the technology team to ultimately become a broker of internal and external technology services that we present to the business to help it achieve its objectives. We're on the way to becoming the partner of choice for our business," concludes Haddad.

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