Embedding security, safety, and trust in IT services

ServiceNow is the only solution that enables both automation and central configuration across the group.

Kenshin Kitano, Group Manager, Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2, Tokyo Gas i NET Corp.

Modernizing and automating technology service operations

Tokyo Gas i NET is the system integrator for the Tokyo Gas Group. It’s responsible for supporting IT services and operations across the whole enterprise. “Security, safety, and trust are the core values at the heart of the Tokyo Gas Group. Our role is to ensure these values are embedded in IT operations and services,” says Takashi Yamakawa, Managing Executive at Tokyo Gas i NET.

Industry:
Technology and Utilities

Location:
Tokyo, Japan

People:
798 employees (April 1, 2023)

Products:
• IT Service Management
• IT Operations Management
In April 2022, the Tokyo Gas Group shifted to a holding-type group structure with business departments divided into subsidiaries and in-house companies. Each of these is now responsible for its own business development and profitability.

The way Tokyo Gas i NET provides IT services to the Group companies has also changed under this initiative. As Yamakawa explains, “We’re not just getting more orders for system development, maintenance, and operations from across the Group, our services now need to be tailored for the unique needs of each subsidiary and in-house company. Meanwhile, we’re seeing higher volumes of urgent requests.”

To address this rising demand, Tokyo Gas i NET decided to look for a new solution to help it modernize and automate its technology service operations to create further efficiencies in IT productivity and deliver effective and compelling service experiences for its service users.

“As well as improving IT operational efficiency, I’m very excited about the opportunities for future innovation with ServiceNow.”

Takashi Yamakawa, Managing Director, Tokyo Gas i NET Corp.

Evaluating scalability and breadth for IT operations

Tokyo Gas i NET realized it needed a solution to visualize system configuration across the entire Group.

“Each company within the group used different systems. Maintenance and management were previously carried out individually for each department and system, which was inefficient,” says Kenshin Kitano, Group Manager of the Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2. “We needed a way to bring configuration information from all operating systems, middleware, and databases into one place and get central visibility.”

The team also wanted to streamline how it processed IT inquiries and requests as part of its automation and modernization initiative.

Yoshiaki Miwa, Manager of the Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2, explains, “Inquiries all came in by phone, which delayed response times. That risked disrupting business continuity and user productivity, so we needed a better solution.”
Running a proof of concept with junior engineers

In 2020, Tokyo Gas i NET implemented ServiceNow IT Service Management (ITSM) and ServiceNow IT Operations Management (ITOM). After running a proof of concept (PoC) with junior engineers, the company started building a full-scale service infrastructure in July 2021, keeping as much of the deployment in-house as possible. “Being involved in the implementation helped us to gain more knowledge and experience about the development, operation, and benefits of cloud systems in a real-world setting,” recalls Shumpei Ishihara, a PoC participant from the Infrastructure Service Group of Digital Promotion Department 2.

Developing in-house skills to create long-term value

To create long-term value, the Tokyo Gas Group didn’t rely solely on the skills of its system integrator, but it also developed in-house skills across group companies. “Keeping systems running smoothly is vital for supporting the Tokyo Gas Group’s values of security, safety, and trust. Previously, Tokyo Gas i NET was responsible for maintaining and managing systems for the entire group,” Yamakawa explains. “As we share information and capabilities with group companies, we can now shift our focus to help them use the power of technology to create new value, promoting insourcing to help refine those digital skills.”

The engineers started full-scale development to build a system to respond quickly and efficiently to IT-related queries and requests, helping increase employee satisfaction. “It’s possible to create value using ServiceNow ITSM and ServiceNow ITOM; we decided to start small and focus on addressing one pain point at a time. It was easy to implement these solutions,” recalls Ishihara.

In the future, we’d like to use ServiceNow to manage and maintain apps for each subsidiary and Group company.

Kenshin Kitano, Group Manager, Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2, Tokyo Gas i NET Corp.

Inquiries can now be handled through the portal, reducing the workload of telephone support staff.

Yoshiaki Miwa, Section Manager, Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2, Tokyo Gas i NET Corp.
Launching a digital portal with Knowledge Base articles
The team developed an internal portal on ServiceNow ITSM. Queries that were processed over the phone could now be managed digitally. The portal also has a Knowledge Base articles page, giving employees a choice between logging a ticket and waiting for a response or checking whether their query has already been answered in one of the articles and fixing it themselves. This self-service feature is expected to reduce the overall volume of cases in future.

“The number of telephone inquiries has decreased considerably since we launched the portal, reducing the workload of our telephone support staff,” says Miwa. “A lot of younger employees are reluctant to ask questions over the phone, so the portal removes a barrier that was preventing them from getting support.”

Reducing response times from five days to 10 minutes
If staff can’t find the answer to their query in Knowledge Base articles page, they still don’t need to wait long for a response. Cases are automatically routed to the most relevant person via a ServiceNow workflow so they can respond quickly.

Previously, phone operators had to manually assign tasks to the relevant colleague based on topic. Automating this process has significantly improved efficiency from the moment an inquiry is submitted through to receiving a response. This includes requests related to applications, which can be routed straight to the application owner.

“In some cases, it takes just 10 minutes to process a query that used to take five business days,” says Miwa. “Service has significantly improved and employees across the group can experience the power of digitization first-hand.”

As the company grows their usage of the solution, Miwa reveals, “We’re gradually expanding the scope that ServiceNow can handle over the next three years. The aim is to have 80% of current inquiries digitized and handled in ServiceNow by the end of the 2023 fiscal year.”

And as Yamakawa concludes, “Tokyo Gas i NET is a company known for making ‘firsts’ a reality – it’s even in our slogan. I’m very excited about the opportunities that ServiceNow makes possible. As well as improving operational efficiency, we plan to develop innovative new services and projects with ServiceNow.”

PoC
verifying ServiceNow as the platform of choice

Insourcing
building knowledge and expertise

It’s possible to create value using ServiceNow ITSM and ServiceNow ITOM; we knew they would be effective in responding quickly to IT-related queries.

Shumpei Ishihara, Infrastructure Service Group, Digital Promotion Department 2, Tokyo Gas i NET Corp.