



## GE goes from 80% customized to 80% out of the box

### Aligns and streamlines ITSM processes across divisions and around the world

GE is the world's largest Digital Industrial Company, transforming industry with software-defined machines and solutions that are connected, responsive, and predictive. The company operates in a wide range of market sectors, including aviation, healthcare, power plants, renewable energy, and transportation. Founded in 1892, GE has annual revenues of more than \$110 billion.

GE recognizes that an organization is more than the sum of its parts. That's why it has increasingly integrated its business, creating a model where each division accesses shared technology, markets, structure, and intellect. This extends to its internal IT services, with GE Digital providing productized IT services across GE's entire business. The mission of this group is to simplify and align IT processes, creating the responsiveness, consistency, and agility needed to empower GE's operations around the globe.

ServiceNow is GE's global IT service management (ITSM) platform, with more than 15,000 users providing IT support to GE's 350,000 employees. However, while GE now does this with a single, consistent ServiceNow instance, this was not the case in the past. Several divisions had their own ServiceNow instances, along with their own highly customized ITSM processes.

### Customized ServiceNow instance cost millions a year to maintain

As GE transitioned to a product methodology for delivering IT services, it collapsed these instances into a single instance, and integrated divisional IT staff into one centralized organization. However, while this was the first step on GE's productized IT services journey, it left the company with a major issue.

According to GE Digital's Application Engineering Director Matt Fredericks, "Every division still had its own processes, and all of these were running on ServiceNow. For example, we had 12 change management processes, each with a very different flavor. All of these processes needed feeding and support, which means we ended up making 20,000 code changes over a four-year period. As a result, we were 80% customized and only 20% out of the box. We were spending millions a year with external consultants just to maintain the code."

#### Headquarters

Schenectady, NY

#### Employees

300,000+

#### Geographical reach

Global

#### Industry

Multinational Conglomerate

#### Challenges

The need to simplify and align IT processes needed to empower GE's operations around the globe.

#### Highlights

One single, consistent ServiceNow IT Service Management instance supporting more than 15,000 users

#### Products

ITSM

#### Results

Saving \$7 million dollars a year

## Complexity compromised service delivery

"And, we weren't getting the results we wanted. Take assignment groups as an example. We had over 17,000 assignment groups, which made routing tickets both time-consuming and error-prone. Tickets would bounce around just because of the complexity. And, they would sometimes end up in empty assignment groups, which meant that no one worked on them. In fact, when we looked, we found 6,500 service requests that had been stuck in limbo for years."

April Hubbs, Senior Program Manager at GE, agrees. "Because of the complexity, we had no easy way to make meaningful enhancements to the system. And, we didn't have the metrics to drive improvement. The processes across divisions were so different that there was no common way to measure them, which meant that we couldn't get a global view of how we were performing."

## From 80% customized to 80% out of the box

GE decided that the situation wasn't sustainable. The company decided to adopt a single set of global ITSM processes on a new ServiceNow instance. Fredericks says, "It was a hard decision to make, but we couldn't justify a dozen versions of the same process. If customizing an IT process helps GE to build more jet engines, then we'll do it. If it doesn't, then we need to stick to best practices."

GE started by identifying and empowering authoritative process owners. Working with ServiceNow® Professional Services, these individuals re-engineered their processes, aligning with out-of-the-box ServiceNow capabilities.

"For us, it was a paradigm shift. Instead of customizing the platform to support our processes, we adapted our processes to take advantage of the ServiceNow platform. We completely reversed the equation, going from 80% customized to 80% out of the box," says Hubbs.

## Investing in people

For GE, the ServiceNow refresh was also an opportunity to invest in its people. Because GE wanted to be fully autonomous, it decided to use internal resources to roll out the new platform. According to Hubbs, "That gave our employees the opportunity to learn new skills and build career opportunities. For example, we transformed project managers into developers. In fact, ServiceNow Professional Services trained more than 50 of our people, which was critical to our success. And, we continue to invest—so our people continue to grow."

## Simplification saves \$7 million a year, improves service quality

Using agile methodologies, GE went live with a minimally viable product in just seven months. "It was a major success. Before, we were spending eight figures maintaining our ServiceNow instance. Now, we're saving \$7 million a year. We have far better visibility of our service management processes, and our system is much more nimble and easy to use. And, as we continue to evolve its capabilities, we're adding real value—rather than running to stay in the same place," says Fredericks.

Hubbs echoes the sentiment. "We've dramatically simplified how we deliver IT services. Just look at our service catalog. Before, we had more than 15,000 items. In one case, a single business unit had eight different ways to order a

database. Now, we have just 350 service catalog items. Similarly, we've reduced the number of attributes we keep in the ServiceNow® CMDB by 50%. And, we've cut our assignment groups by more than 60%, so tickets are routed more quickly and accurately. That means we're more efficient, and our business units get better service."

## Leveraging ITSM investment across the business

GE Digital continues to grow the capabilities of its ServiceNow instance to meet the needs of GE business units. According to Fredericks, "Because we now have a consistent, agile service development approach, we can leverage enhancements across business units, rather than making changes for a single division. That maximizes the value we deliver to GE. It also frees up our resources to automate service management processes, so that we can deliver even faster and more economically."



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– Matt Fredericks,  
Application Engineering Director, GE Digital

