Connecting the critical dots

How global business services drive enterprise-wide efficiencies
The growth of global business services

Expectations have never been higher for enterprises to boost competitive advantage and maintain agility. To achieve these goals, organizations must continually improve operational efficiencies while transforming employee and customer experiences. Changing working models after the global pandemic have further catalyzed the need to provide employees with standardized, seamless, and quality services no matter where or how they choose to work.

If you’re like other leading enterprises, your organization is embracing global business services (GBS) to drive service delivery efficiencies. You’ve come to understand that while each line of business may have different transformation priorities, they also have shared goals across the organization that they can combine forces on—or at least align.

Agree on common outcomes and experience to confirm capability needs for transformation priorities
GBS brings together these traditionally separate, siloed internal operational service functions into a single corporate support organization. When working together, multi-functional teams (IT, HR, finance, procurement, customer service, operations, etc.) can reach across departments at unparalleled speed to provide better service experiences. GBS organizational models deliver greater value to the business with measurable impact and cost reduction.

Other qualities GBS-focused organizations share include:

- Supporting all regions within an organization
- Consolidating to fewer locations
- Having the autonomy to decide how to deliver services
- Greater accountability for and adherence to service levels

A recent survey of companies across 45 countries demonstrated clear GBS payoffs: 88% of GBS organizations achieved cost reduction objectives, 78% achieved standardization and process efficiency goals, while 63% achieved business value objectives.

Global business services (GBS) can be defined as an organizational model designed to deliver end to end enterprise services within a single function that would otherwise be resolved within departmental shared services centers (e.g. IT, HR, finance, etc.). The goal of GBS is to reduce operational costs, drive efficiencies, and improve service delivery quality while transforming employee interactions across enterprise services.
The need for an agile, foundational GBS model

Your organization may already have taken the GBS leap by identifying the need to provide consistent services to meet the needs of employees and customers. There may also be the understanding that different departments must share priorities and align horizontally—not vertically—across the enterprise. But, this is just the beginning of your GBS transformation journey.

To translate GBS from a concept to reality, next you need to develop an agile, foundational GBS model that will address the individual needs of your organization. Your GBS model could simply be introducing cooperation among business services, perhaps with common forums to share learning and a loose global leadership structure. At the other end of the spectrum, another organization could adopt a model with a common leadership reporting directly to the CEO and governance structure tied to overall organizational objectives.

No one way to kick off GBS transformation

Just as each organization needs to select the GBS model that is right for them, it’s important to note that there’s also no single method to launch transformation with a GBS model. No matter if it’s a customer service initiative, an IT resolution, or an employee workflow focus, a fully integrated, foundational GBS model can impact every department by standardizing processes, decreasing redundancies, and improving communication and adaptability as the organization grows.
Requiring flexibility in GBS transformation

Despite GBS journeys being unique for every organization, one standard truth is businesses are always evolving, so GBS transformation is an on-going approach to back-office improvement. It’s vital to continually mature and standardize your foundational GBS model. At the same time, you need to keep in mind:

- The impact of change management on the people within affected departments
- How they’re organized
- How they serve business colleagues
- The new processes and technology in the mix

So how do you implement, scale, and mature your GBS model?
Lessons learned from IT service management modernization

One strategy is to draw on your success modernizing IT service management (ITSM) and then extend those lessons learned to develop a successful agile, foundational GBS model.

If you recall your path to modernizing ITSM, there were surely pain points as you improved IT procedures and then implemented an agile, digital ITSM solution. New questions and concerns bubbled up just as old problems were solved, but addressing these issues ultimately led to growth, cost savings, and frictionless IT service delivery.

Adopting a digital foundation

Take a similar approach to GBS transformation by adopting a foundational digital platform to drive the efficiency and collaboration needed to connect end-to-end business process flows and scale enterprise services. With the platform, organizations can leverage data, incorporate predictive insights and analytics, and enable shared visibility across service requests and multiple business functions.

This strong digital foundation will empower your global services organization to provide better service experiences for employees and customers while gaining economies of scale. Global services teams will also be able to automate cross-departmental experiences with purpose-built workflows and enterprise case management across IT, HR, legal, workplace and procurement. With multi-department workflows on a single platform, departmental priorities and service functions are better aligned on organizational priorities. The right platform also ensures the highest level of return on your investment in terms of productivity and financial gains.
How to engage with stakeholders to champion GBS

GBS organizations are complex, and for a foundational GBS model to succeed, you also need to identify which stakeholders within your organization might be looking at GBS opportunities—and engage with them. Without this support from business partners who agree to work together with you, a GBS organization has little chance of success.

The reality is that many will not know that GBS exists, or there might already be initiatives in-flight across the enterprise that—due to a lack of communication and awareness—are not viewed as officially “GBS.” For example, the CFO might be looking for process-based efficiencies and cost reductions from process reengineering and the introduction of more automation. The Chief Digital Officer might have back-office transformation on their digital transformation agenda to support both new products and services and the improved customer engagement mechanisms of the front-office. The CHRO might be focused on employee experience improvement related to staff recruitment and retention.

Collaboration is key

It’s critical to work with these stakeholders who are the mostly likely to understand GBS transformation and the expected payoffs. Together, you can:

- Determine what projects are in process that could be consolidated under the GBS umbrella
- Identify which GBS projects could be initiated with the best chance of success
- Champion the adoption of a digital foundation for GBS to drive efficiencies and collaboration to connect end-to-end business process flows and scale enterprise services
Understand the driving force behind implementing a GBS model

At the heart of successful transformation with a GBS model, all stakeholders need to comprehend the driving forces facilitating GBS transformation and what your organization is trying to achieve culturally and operationally. Is it:

- A cost saving endeavor to reduce redundancies and secondary movement among your multiple service departments?
- Intended to improve communication between multiple departments while encouraging actual progress and production?
- Designed to provide a unified employee experience to deflect common questions across the enterprise?
- Directed at gaining better analytics across the enterprise?

The following are just a few examples of businesses achieving resounding success and efficiencies after implementing a foundational GBS model.
Real-world GBS payoffs

**General Mills**
A 150-year-old U.S.-centric company transformed itself into a modern global enterprise.

Unified over 38,000 employees worldwide
As the company became more global General Mills employees had needs that weren’t being met.

“Through our HR transformation, we’ve been able to standardize 40 core processes around the world. No matter where you sit in the organization, no matter what country you’re in, no matter how big your team is, you have the same experience.”

Jacqueline Williams-Roll, Chief Human Resources Officer, General Mills

**Siemens**
Siemens established a single service integration platform to eliminate silos and remove the complexity of its multi-supplier network.

98% automation of IT operations transactions

“We have redefined the way we work with our suppliers, driving the quality of service up, while bringing down our costs. We are extending rich automation capabilities to our providers, enabling them to remove manual fulfillment and driving a win-win situation.”

Dr. Matthias Egelhaaf, Program Director, Siemens

**Equinor**
To power its vision and drive value, the global business services team set out to modernize service delivery.

320+ Services delivered across 285 departments globally

“I firmly believe that business support services should maximize the potential and productivity of end users and create business value for the organization. We needed to move away from a very fragmented system to create an enterprise service management strategy that intrinsically brought together all our services in a complementary way, for maximum impact and efficiency.”

Unni Torflåt Østbø, Head of Corporate Service Management, Equinor

**Unilever**
Unilever built a custom platform that gives employees a connected, end-to-end support experience through a single platform with omni-channel presence instead of having to navigate more than 15 siloed functional help desks.

~47% of time reduced that employees spend performing day-to-day transactional support activities

“We have a single place to go for employees but equally a single platform that gives us the data and the visibility across the whole employee journey, so we can shift from reactive to proactive and work on continuous improvement of employee experiences.”

Tom Dewaele, Global Head of Employee Experience
Identifying new business priorities and goals

Over time, GBS transformation priorities and goals will shift based on market factors. For example, your current focus may be on enabling a remote workforce due to the move to hybrid work models, but in the future your teams may want to use the GBS model to improve service and consistency across departments. Clearly, your GBS model will continue to be an important aspect of how you are able to scale and deploy new services and changes with consistency, speed, and quality.
Evolving and improving your GBS model

To accommodate changing GBS transformation scope and objectives, it’s imperative to continually nurture and improve your GBS model. As your organization expands and your GBS transformation journey continues, your GBS model must be positioned to adapt and:

- Easily integrate with your existing systems, while connecting departmental silos in an effort to drive end-to-end processes at scale.
- Unify employee experience and power seamless self-service and a single request experience.
- Provide shared visibility across all enterprise cases with a real-time view into service trends and operational performance.
- Continuously learn across departments while driving agility by extending workflows across the organization and tailoring the associated content experience.

Enabling GBS transformation success

Organizations successfully maturing their GBS transformation often share two enablers who help keep things on the right track.

1. **Strong GBS leader**: This leader reports to CEO, while global heads of HR, facilities etc., report into this person. The GBS leader provides a strong mandate to reduce costs, simplify, and improve employee experience.

2. **Strong deliverer who owns demand and manages the foundational digital platform roadmap**: The platform addresses and takes up demand and processes to implement, and the deliverer takes the innovation back to stakeholder.

"A strong GBS leader and deliverer helped a global healthcare company cut time in half to implement a foundational digital platform to support their successful GBS transformation journey."
Conclusion

Today, business is ever evolving. Organizations like yours face pressure to maximize competitive advantage while remaining agile in the face of market forces. One strategic answer is to embrace GBS to drive enterprise-wide efficiencies, improve service delivery, and transform employee and customer experiences—while simultaneously delivering greater value to the business with measurable impact and cost reduction.
Work should be easier.

Want to learn more about how to drive efficiencies with a foundational GBS model?

Explore the GBS on Now podcast recap here

Read the GBS on Now white paper here

About ServiceNow
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