Now on Now: Scaling ITSM to support business growth

How visibility, self-service, and automation saves ServiceNow $1.6 million annually
Introduction

Over the past decade, ServiceNow has become an IT service managment leader, helping thousands of enterprises to modernize the way they deliver IT services. We’re also a rapidly growing company, expanding at 40% a year. That brings unique challenges, including scaling our processes as we move from 1,000 to 7,000 employees. It means changing the way we work.

Our ServiceNow service desk has always used ServiceNow® ITSM to provide high-quality IT services for our employees. Yet, as our growth accelerated, we found that we needed to do more—maturing our processes further and taking full advantage of our Now Platform®.

In this ebook, we look at our own challenges, how we addressed them, and the benefits we’ve realized by using our own ServiceNow solutions. Perhaps you’re facing similar challenges and are wondering what to do about them. We hope this ServiceNow success story will serve as a roadmap and guide you as your organization grows at the speed of business.
Meet Jennifer Sharp

Jennifer Sharp runs the ServiceNow North American service desk. She’s been instrumental in driving our internal ITSM strategy. Jennifer has successfully guided her team through ServiceNow’s explosive growth while maintaining high end-user satisfaction and dramatically increasing service desk efficiency.

Incident backlog was growing

Jennifer remembers when she took over the service desk team. “We were still delivering high-quality services, but we started to see significant challenges. As ServiceNow’s growth accelerated, our incident backlog started to increase. We knew our growth was going to continue, so we had to get to the bottom of the issue.”
Enhancing visibility

Jennifer’s top priority was to get her backlog under control. She needed visibility of what was driving the backlog. “The operational data already existed in ServiceNow. What we needed to do was to analyze that data to find out why the backlog was growing. Before, we didn’t have to do a lot of analysis because our volumes were small; however, given the backlog growth, we had to take a closer look,” she said.

Jennifer used ServiceNow reporting to analyze the data, classifying and tracking all of the team’s work. “Those reports became our bible. We now knew where our work was coming from and how we were handling it. That visibility made all the difference. To take control of growth, you need to see clearly what’s going on.”

Immediate results

The enhanced visibility delivered results immediately. “We found that too many things were being handled as incidents when they should have been classified as service requests. The biggest culprit was employee onboarding. We had hundreds of new employees joining every quarter. The sheer volume of incidents was drowning out everything else. So we decided to move onboarding out of incident and kicked off a program to set up separate onboarding and offboarding processes,” said Jennifer.
Hidden work created disruption

Jennifer recalls that early on hidden work was also a problem. The service desk team prided itself on delivering responsive, personalized service. This meant interrupting work whenever someone needed help with an IT issue. Not only were these ad hoc requests enormously disruptive, but they led to service desk staff forgetting to document the interactions.

“At ServiceNow, everyone knew everyone. People leveraged their relationships and asked for favors. But, in IT support, that model doesn’t scale. When someone walks in or sends an email, it consumes time. And there isn’t an incident or service request to show what happened. That makes it difficult to prove the value you’re providing or to plan for the future,” said Jennifer.

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— Jennifer Sharp
Sr. Manager, IT Service Management and Operations
Self-service is the answer

So Jennifer’s team was dealing with huge numbers of walk-up and email requests. This was disruptive, inefficient, and made it difficult to see everything the team was working on. The answer to this problem: self-service.

Jennifer said, “We had to drive self-service adoption. That way, we could kill two birds with one stone. Self-service dramatically reduces disruptions, so you can work more efficiently. And when a request or incident comes in through a self-service portal, you know it’s being tracked.”

To eliminate unstructured walk-up and email requests, Jennifer took a three-pronged approach.

One: Making self-service even easier

“We were already using the ServiceNow self-service portal, so we had a strong foundation. But we knew we could make things better. For example, we eliminated all forms and added catalog items to create a much improved, one-click experience. These changes dramatically simplified things for end users,” said Jennifer.
Two: Shutting down the IT support email account

This was a radical step, but it delivered major results. Jennifer’s advice: “Communicate the change clearly, and make sure that end-users know how to find the self-service portal. It’s surprising how quickly this drives adoption. In our case, 85% of incidents and requests now come in through self-service, and that’s transformed the way we deliver services.”

Three: Rolling out tech lounges

Jennifer ensures that employees have access to our internal tech lounges—places where employees can walk in and get face-to-face support. “End users still expect to get personal service when they need it. Our tech lounge is a structured way of doing that. Rather than dealing with interruptions, you now have one place for people to go—with fixed hours and dedicated staff who make sure everything is documented.”
What about keeping end users happy?

Did Jennifer’s strategy deliver high levels of customer satisfaction? Yes, it did. Nearly 97% of ServiceNow employees say they are satisfied with IT support, and more than 90% say they are very satisfied. And with self-service, we’re saving $300,000 a year in service desk costs!
Scaling to support growth

Another problem Jennifer identified when she started was scaling what IT did while still providing a great customer experience to the internal ServiceNow customers.

“We were already using ServiceNow ITSM for incident and change, and we had a small service catalog. Up to this point, it had served us very well—but we were only using a fraction of what ServiceNow ITSM could do. We needed to do more to increase efficiency while maintaining service quality,” said Jennifer.

The power of Performance Analytics

Jennifer continued to drive increased visibility, most recently with ServiceNow® Performance Analytics. “With Performance Analytics, we get deep insights into our operational data—where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going. For example, we can see request volumes and trends. That means we can plan and staff for the future. And, we can also analyze incident trends and open up problems to fix high-volume issues.”

The result? Everyone on Jennifer’s team—and beyond—now has the exact information they need to do their jobs more efficiently and accurately. For example, we now use Performance Analytics dashboards to automate our IT service reviews instead of relying on time-consuming PowerPoint decks. And because the dashboards are role based, each reviewer sees the exact information they need.
As Jennifer’s team drove visibility and self-service, they were able to dramatically increase control since they could see and measure all of their work. In fact, Jennifer’s team now has access to more than 100 KPIs (key performance indicators), giving actionable, real-time insights into service desk performance.

We’ve already talked about some examples such as using performance analytics to drive problem management or setting up new onboarding and offboarding processes tied back to the ServiceNow service catalog; however one of the biggest impacts has been in how we manage major incidents.

“If we have a major incident, it can have a major impact on our business. For example, finance and sales need real-time data and system availability. When something goes down, the clock’s ticking. We work closely with the IT infrastructure and applications teams to get things back up and running as fast as possible. By sharing real-time visibility and SLAs across our teams, we fix things much faster. Everyone is singing from the same songbook. In fact, we resolve major incidents 150% faster, and we’ve cut SLA breaches by 58%,” stated Jennifer.

58% REDUCTION IN SLA BREACHES
150% FASTER AT RESOLVING MAJOR INCIDENTS
100+ KPIS PROVIDE REAL-TIME ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS
Visibility and control are the foundations of our own ITSM strategy, but it’s automation that put us into overdrive. ServiceNow drives our ITSM processes, which makes them easy to automate. What do we mean by automation? It’s eliminating manual steps in our processes by having ServiceNow ITSM do the work.

Amjad Shaikh has driven our internal ITSM automation program, working with Jennifer to identify high-volume, easily automated processes. “Automation makes processes much more accurate and repeatable—and it eliminates an enormous amount of manual effort. And there are a huge number of automation opportunities. In our case, we’ve automated 50 processes, saving 8,000 hours a year of effort,” said Amjad.

Jennifer agrees, coming full circle back to onboarding as an example. “Even when we had our onboarding processes defined in ServiceNow, it still took us 90 minutes of work to drive the process. Everything from requesting phones and laptops through to setting up user accounts,” said Jennifer. “Now, we’ve automated that, and it takes us 13 minutes. Typically, we onboard 700 employees every quarter, so automating onboarding alone is saving us about 3,500 hours a year.”
The bottom line

At ServiceNow, our own ITSM strategy saves us $1.6 million a year. And, that’s on top of the benefits we were already getting from our technology. By enhancing visibility, driving self-service, and automating our ITSM processes, we’ve scaled our service desk to support business growth. And we’re continuing to drive velocity.

For example, in 2016 Q1, Jennifer had one support resource for every 140 ServiceNow employees. Fast forward to 2017 Q3, and that ratio is now one resource for every 220 employees, an efficiency increase of 60% in just 18 months! The icing on the cake is that throughout that time, we’ve maintained consistently high customer satisfaction.
About ServiceNow
ServiceNow was started in 2004 with the belief that getting simple stuff done at work can be easy, and getting complex multi-step tasks completed can be painless. From the beginning, ServiceNow envisioned a world where anyone could create powerful workflows to get enterprise work done. Today, ServiceNow is the cloud-based platform that simplifies the way we work. ServiceNow software automates, predicts, digitizes, and optimizes business processes and tasks, across IT, customer service, security, human resources, and more, to create a better experience for your employees and customers while transforming your enterprise. ServiceNow is how work gets done.