

Stand up a ServiceNow Center of Excellence and Innovation

Frequently asked questions

Definition

What's the difference between a Center of Excellence and Innovation (CoEI) and a platform team? Between a CoEI and governance, or an operating model?

A ServiceNow platform team typically is needed for support and management of the Now Platform. A Center of Excellence and Innovation can include these functions, but also includes capabilities for strategy, delivery of new ServiceNow functionality, and innovation capture.

A Center of Excellence and Innovation is an organizational model – a definition of how you should organize roles to scale the value you get from ServiceNow. An operating model describes how work gets done on ServiceNow, from demand intake to delivery of value. Governance defines the “rules of the road” for your operating model, including who has the authority to make decisions. You should have clear definitions of all three of these to ensure your success.

What value does a Center of Excellence and Innovation offer, above and beyond my current team structure?

A Center of Excellence and Innovation removes the organizational seams that can inhibit you from moving from “strategy” to rapid delivery of digital workflows and experiences. It helps to change your engagement posture with business partners from a purely transactional relationship to one in which you’re collaborating with them to discover and capture new innovation opportunities. Successful CoEIs are able to unlock ServiceNow’s strategic potential as an enterprise, rather than purely IT, platform for transformation.

Why “Innovation”? Why not just call it a Center of Excellence?

The strategic value that ServiceNow can bring is in unlocking new opportunities and experiences across business lines, especially as more digital workflows (like employee onboarding) cross traditional department boundaries. That's why it's critical to have an innovation as part of this structure – your mission and resources should focus on discovering new business opportunities, not just getting better at the ones you've already implemented.

Process / Implementation

When is the right time to introduce a Center of Excellence and Innovation?

Ideally, you want to stand up your CoEI before you go live with implementation. This prepares you to take on the volume of enterprise demand you're likely to get once business partners get a taste of the capabilities that ServiceNow can bring to workflow automation and experience.

That said, if you're already past go-live, you can introduce your CoEI at any time, assuming you have a clear vision and roadmap and strong executive sponsorship.

How many people do I need to stand up a Center of Excellence and Innovation?

This really comes down to the size and complexity of your internal customer base and the number of ServiceNow capabilities you manage. Remember that size is not as important as function: the point of your CoEI should be to bring strategy, business engagement and delivery, support, and innovation activities into one function.

How do I fund a Center of Excellence and Innovation?

We recommend having sufficient line-item funding in your sponsor's budget to set up baseline teams/capabilities in your CoEI (for example, ensuring you have leaders in place for strategy, business engagement and delivery, platform architecture and support, and innovation). You can subsequently fund additional headcount with project-based funding as you begin to take on more enterprise demands.

What's the relationship between the Center of Excellence and Innovation and business lines?

We recommend having a role or team dedicated to business engagement and delivery, ideally led by your development lead. The role of this function is to translate business demand into new capabilities and support the rollout of those capabilities with training and organizational change management.

Related resources

How can ServiceNow help?

Start by watching our [short overview video](#) to get smart fast (the description includes links to additional resources). In addition to our [Center of Excellence and Innovation resources](#) on the Customer Success Center, ServiceNow's Customer Outcomes group has deep experience in helping customers design and implement a CoEI. Contact your Account Executive for more information.