Reimagine how you want your work processes to flow

What's in this Success Playbook

ServiceNow® implementations shouldn't be a matter of "lifting and shifting" existing work processes into your instance. Instead, look at your implementation as an opportunity to analyze and improve how work gets done in your organization so you can realize your vision and objectives for transformation.

You can modify your processes—the series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular outcome—by optimizing the process, getting rid of waste, and adding automation. Sometimes, you can even eliminate processes to achieve business objectives.

Without a systematic approach, you can risk making processes overly confusing and complex, which could limit your organization's adoption of ServiceNow. Continual process improvement with a focus on automation improves the organization's ability to build processes in ServiceNow that develop agility and responsiveness.

Key takeaways

The most important things to know

- Redesigning work processes entails more than selecting and using a process framework. These frameworks sometimes miss that you must bring a lot of people on the journey. Work toward building a culture of using processes not as an end in themselves, but to make work better for people.

- Consider ServiceNow out-of-the-box (OOTB) processes as a method to accelerate change and maintain a straightforward upgrade path.

The payoff of getting this right

When you build a culture of continuous process improvement—one that liberates everyone in the organization to reimagine how work gets done—you not only increase process efficiency and effectiveness, but you create a culture in which everyone is a stakeholder in building better, simpler work experiences.

What you need to get started
Leadership support

Identify your executive sponsor, business process owners, and other subject matter experts (SMEs) to help capture and review your current business processes.
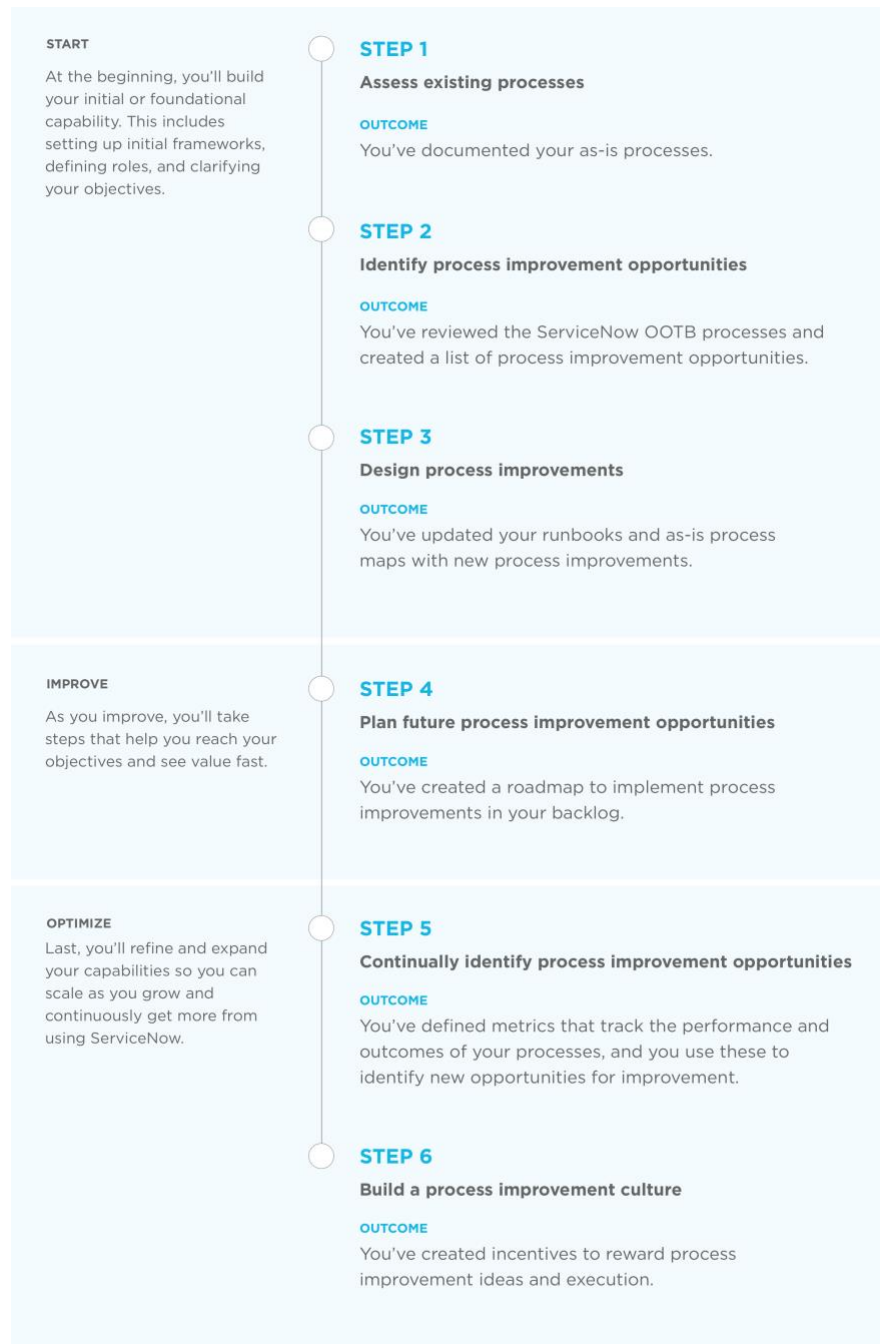
Stakeholders

Identify key process users who actually engage with the processes to ensure that you have a first-hand account of what's working and what could be improved.

When you should start this activity

- Start reviewing your business processes when you begin evaluating ServiceNow as your solution of choice. While you're capturing requirements for your initial implementation, start thinking about how you can use standard ServiceNow processes that support your business needs.

- Before you start process redesign, establish roles for governance, especially for your executive steering board.

Playbook overview

ServiceNow recommends completing the six steps listed in this table to reimagine your ServiceNow processes.

START

At the beginning, you'll build your initial or foundational capability. This includes setting up initial frameworks, defining roles, and clarifying your objectives.

STEP 1

Assess existing processes

OUTCOME

You've documented your as-is processes.

STEP 2

Identify process improvement opportunities

OUTCOME

You've reviewed the ServiceNow OOTB processes and created a list of process improvement opportunities.

STEP 3

Design process improvements

OUTCOME

You've updated your runbooks and as-is process maps with new process improvements.

IMPROVE

As you improve, you'll take steps that help you reach your objectives and see value fast.

STEP 4

Plan future process improvement opportunities

OUTCOME

You've created a roadmap to implement process improvements in your backlog.

OPTIMIZE

Last, you'll refine and expand your capabilities so you can scale as you grow and continuously get more from using ServiceNow.

STEP 5

Continually identify process improvement opportunities

OUTCOME

You've defined metrics that track the performance and outcomes of your processes, and you use these to identify new opportunities for improvement.

STEP 6

Build a process improvement culture

OUTCOME

You've created incentives to reward process improvement ideas and execution.

If you haven't documented and reviewed your business processes with your stakeholders, start with Step 1.

If you currently have a process improvement practice in place, you may want to start with Steps 4 and 5 to improve how you're evolving your ServiceNow work processes.

Step 1 – Assess your existing processes

KEY INSIGHTS

- You can't overestimate the importance of first-hand experience in documenting current processes.

- The point is not to create the perfect as-is document—it's to get all parties in the same room to get consensus on what's currently happening.

- Certification in frameworks like ITIL and Six Sigma shouldn't be the sole criterion for identifying process owners. The best process owners are skilled in influence and collaboration, so they can promote (rather than police) a companywide culture of process improvement.

Before you deploy processes in ServiceNow, take time to document and review your current processes—the roles, steps, and interactions with other processes—that support your desired business outcomes. As part of this, define ownership and oversight to make sure your organization follows and adopts the processes, and that the processes are optimized and continually improved so you can realize business value.

If processes haven't been formally documented at your organization, it's worth investing in process mapping before you deploy processes in ServiceNow. The exercise of meeting and discussing processes can be as valuable as building process maps, because it brings stakeholders together to understand how work is currently performed. Start by mapping only those processes that will be implemented during your initial ServiceNow deployment.

To assess your existing processes, you need to take six action steps:

1. **Ensure clear ownership for core processes.**

   Assign process owners—the people responsible for the definition and oversight of a process—for processes managed in ServiceNow. Process owners should not only be SMEs in their assigned processes, but they should positively influence, communicate, and collaborate with delivery teams

2. **Define process ownership responsibilities and authorities.**

   Define the scope of the process owner's responsibilities, which includes:

   – Process development, documentation, and improvement

   – Ensuring resources are in place to support process delivery

   – Process team training

   – Coordination with other process owners to align goals and objectives

   – Understanding the business objectives of the processes they manage

   You'll also need to identify where process owner responsibilities overlap with existing roles and verify that these overlaps won't cause confusion.

3. **Communicate the process owner responsibilities to senior leaders to build support for process improvement goals.**

   Meet with senior executives to educate them on the importance of process ownership and to gain their support. Schedule monthly one-on-one meetings between process owners and the appropriate senior executives within their function so they can vet their process improvement ideas and earn leadership support. Include process owners in all major review and budget meetings associated with their assigned processes—and if they aren't already, process discussions should be a regular part of senior leadership meetings.

4. **Map how specific processes chain together to support the business outcome you want to support with ServiceNow.**

   No process should be considered a standalone. Before you build process maps, start with the vision of your ServiceNow implementation and define end-to-end processes—called value streams—that contribute to those outcomes. Don't forget to include processes that support planning, building, transitioning, delivering, and supporting those outcomes. Figure 1 shows an example.

VALUE STREAMS	Strategy to portfolio	Requirement to deploy	Request to fulfill	Detect to correct
	Demand	Agile	Catalogue	Event
	Relationship	Test	Subscription	Incident
	Portfolio	Defect	Knowledge	Problem
		Project		Change
	Plan	**Build**	**Deliver**	**Run**
		Value streams define an end-to-end set of processes required to deliver an outcome in response to demand (e.g., requirement to deploy).		Processes can be mapped (in terms of steps and handoffs) to identify improvement opportunities in realizing value stream outcomes.

Figure 1: Value stream mapping for IT

5. **Work with process owner(s) to build as-is process maps.**

   After you visualize your value stream, document the end-to-end process you plan to implement in ServiceNow *as it currently exists* and note the outcome you expect to see at the end of the process. Make sure you include any process inputs, outputs, and intersection points with other existing processes. Then, list all the roles involved in the process and record any handoffs between both roles and systems involved. Use visual diagrams to depict how the process works as well as to gain consensus during process documentation meetings.

6. **Run a process review exercise with process owners and the teams responsible for each process to define where value is increased or lost in your as-is state.**

   Hold workshops with your process owners to define how teams currently understand and practice the process, including the known issues, potential redundancies, and definitions of terms. Look for ways to consolidate and streamline handoffs between teams, individuals, and systems to remove unnecessary bottlenecks. Looks for instances when data is collected but is either never used or isn't needed for the process to work. Document which process steps have consistently long cycle times and the reasons for them. To maintain process quality, look for steps that don't consistently adhere to standards.

EXPERT TIP

As you define process ownership, ask yourself three questions:

- Does my organization follow a process framework of any kind (like ITIL)?
- If yes, how aware and/or educated is the broader organization about the processes in this framework?
- If awareness and/or education is low, do I need to provide some sort of baseline education before I can meaningfully assign process ownership?

Customer insights

Customer experience points to two insights you should keep in mind as you assess your existing processes.

INSIGHT 1:

Consensus matters more than documentation

Organizations can become paralyzed in the pursuit of creating the perfect depiction of the as-is process. While accuracy is important, consensus among stakeholders—process owners, requesters, fulfillers, and consumers—is a more valuable outcome of the mapping process. Losing sight of this insight can lead to low-value discussions about semantics, exceptions that don't materially affect the outcome, and delays that eat away at potential time savings later.

When people get in a conference room and discuss a process, they're limited by the inevitable abstractions and inconsistencies that arise. They might overlook important physical requirements, or they may not truly understand the scope of a process. In short, being disconnected from the process inhibits the design team's ability to empathize with the process stakeholders, which can short-change the process improvement design.

Best practice – Agree to stop the baseline review process once you reach consensus

To avoid an overly long baseline review, obtain consensus that you've adequately captured the as-is process.

- **Gather existing process documentation –** Even if this documentation is outdated, it can provide context on how the current process evolved over time.

- **Conduct interviews with stakeholders –** This is a great opportunity to get all stakeholders (at least one per role) together in a room and have an active discussion of the current steps and handoffs.

- **Document and map the process –** You should include all:

  - Process inputs

  - Steps from when the process starts to where it ends

  - Expected outcomes from the process

  - Roles involved in the process

  - Handoffs between roles, systems, and other processes

  - Performance metrics used to assess performance

- **Conduct a baseline process review workshop –** The purpose of the workshop is to gain consensus that the process has been captured accurately. This is the time to identify inconsistencies or gaps in how different teams or team members understand the process. This step is critical not only to avoid unnecessarily long review cycles, but also to ensure that potential improvements are based on an agreed-to process map. Request sign-off from stakeholders that the process map accurately reflects the current process.

- **Conduct a process analysis workshop –** Conduct a second workshop to review the approved process maps, looking for redundancy, waste, or gaps. Answer these questions:

  - Where can we consolidate and streamline handoffs between teams, individuals, and systems?

    o Review handoffs to identify points where handoffs are creating unnecessary bottlenecks in existing process.

  - Where are we collecting unnecessary data?

    o Identify where forms and requirements collect data that isn't used or needed for the process to work.

  - Where are we seeing the longest cycle times? Why?

    o Identify process steps with consistently long cycles times and diagnose why.

  - Where do we have gaps in standards adherence?

    o Document process steps that don't consistently adhere to standards.

The answers to these questions will form the basis for the specific improvement opportunities that you'll develop in Step 2.

Best Practice – Perform a formal design walk for each process you're looking to redesign

Your process owners and stakeholders should consider a Gemba walk, or formal design walk, to gain valuable insights into the process you're designing *at the place the work is done*. It's a collaborative approach that offers employees the chance to provide details about what they do and why during a process.

The Gemba walk can be done either to gather as-is process information or during the design phase to flesh out requirements.

The key steps of a Gemba walk are:

- **Prepare the team –** Talk about the walk ahead of time with team members to set expectations.

- **Have a plan –** Have a list of questions prepared that focus on the actions, roles, timing, and dependencies of the process.

- **Follow the value stream –** Look for transitions between departments, processes, or people.

- **Always focus on the process, not people –** This shouldn't be an employee evaluation.

- **Document your observations –** Write down observations in real time. You can even use ServiceNow Continual Improvement Management.

- **Ask questions –** Who? What? Where? When? Why? How long?

- **Don't suggest changes during the walk –** Keep the focus on observation, not action.

- **Walk in teams –** While not necessary, consider bringing a leader from another area for a fresh point of view.

- **Mix up the schedule –** Different times of day might reveal different design considerations.

- **Follow up with employees –** Always have a review of the observations made during the walk.

- **Return to the Gemba –** If you make changes, take another walk to observe them in action.

INSIGHT 2:

Make sure your process owners understand the strategy and can navigate the organization

Don't make certification in frameworks like ITIL and Six Sigma the sole criterion for identifying potential process owners. These certifications are certainly beneficial when it comes to managing the review and documentation activities, but they're not the only skill set required.

> "Formal attempts to explain [process management] result in glazed eyes. So, it's difficult just to get process management as a concept to be understood by the people that need to participate in the process."
>
> **– A ServiceNow customer**

The best process owners are skilled in influence, collaboration, and organizational navigation so they can promote a companywide culture of process improvement and not just police or inform. Process owners need to be adept at navigating their organizations to identify stakeholders and get them involved in process improvement.

Best practice – Build clarity between your as-is processes and your strategic business objectives for ServiceNow

Executive sponsorship is key to successful process improvement. Process owners should be well-versed in your desired business objectives for the ServiceNow program, and they should be able to connect those objectives to gaps or issues revealed by your as-is process mapping. When

capturing as-is processes, process owners need to build a clear, unified point of view and consensus on how your current state is impeding your ability to realize business objectives.

What to do next

Now that you've captured as-is processes and you have clear ownership, make sure you spread the word about the importance of process ownership and frameworks throughout your organization. Emphasize that process ownership isn't only about efficiency—it's critical to meeting business objectives and achieving value.

Revisit process ownership periodically, especially as you expand ServiceNow into new process areas. For example, you might need to look for any overlaps or gaps that occur if you're implementing a new shared services organization. Update your documentation of the roles and responsibilities (for example, through a RACI chart) if any changes are required.

Step 2 – Identify process improvement opportunities

KEY INSIGHTS

- When creating to-be processes, consider how they align with business objectives, dependencies with other processes, and adoption.

- Even if OOTB ServiceNow processes aren't a 100% match to your desired to-be processes, you may get to your next level of maturity faster by going OOTB.

When you've documented which processes contribute to delivering your ServiceNow objectives and mapped how they currently work, it's time to map how you want these processes to work in ServiceNow. After that, you can assemble a wish list of process improvement opportunities to implement, starting with quick wins that resolve immediate pain points.

It's a good idea to define to-be process maps even if you intend to implement OOTB ServiceNow processes (as we recommend). This mapping exercise provides an opportunity for your team to understand why changes are being made to existing processes as you move to ServiceNow, which will help them accept any new OOTB ServiceNow processes that you choose to implement.

To identify process improvement opportunities, you need to take three action steps:

1. **Work with process owner(s) to build to-be process maps that document how you want work to flow after implementing ServiceNow.**

   Keeping your <u>desired outcomes</u> from Step 1 in mind, create new to-be process maps that depict how you would ideally want work to flow through the process, including details on:

   - How you should redefine the process steps

   - How and where you should modify or eliminate handoffs

   - Which steps you need to improve (like making it faster, more reliable, easier to navigate, etc.), and how (automation, step removal, improved forms, etc.)

   - How you should fix as-is process standards and adherence gaps

2. **Compare as-is and to-be process maps to identify where you want and/or need to make improvements to processes during and after ServiceNow implementation.**

   Start by reviewing your as-is process maps and findings from the process review exercise in Step 1. Then, compare your as-is and to-be process maps and document how they're different (and by how much). List the fixes and improvements needed to bring each process from the current as-is state to your ideal to-be end state.

3. **Prioritize process improvement opportunities based on their ability to create the most value with the least cost and risk.**

   You'll need to review the list of potential process fixes and improvement opportunities from action step 2 above. Select quick-win process improvements that you can make before or during ServiceNow implementation, prioritizing improvement opportunities that:

- Are simple to implement, involving only a single process or process step

- Are low risk changes that don't impact mission critical processes that damage business outcomes if they're disrupted (such as changing processes that support accounting systems during the end of the fiscal quarter)

- Involve few roles in handoffs or process decisions, avoiding processes or process steps with complicated handoff procedures or decisions managed by senior leaders or governance boards

- Create immediate efficiencies for users, such as simple automation improvements like password resets

- Deliver highly visible improvements that are simple to measure and can be used as "success stories"

Customer insights

Customer experience points to two insights you should keep in mind as you identify process improvement opportunities.

INSIGHT 1:

Take the time to document your ideal process end state

ServiceNow includes many robust OOTB processes as part of its solutions. Customers who adopt these OOTB processes can achieve faster time to value because they require less time to configure than customized processes.

To save time, customers sometimes think they can skip process mapping if they plan to adopt OOTB ServiceNow processes. But if you skip this review, you'll lose the benefits of getting stakeholders to agree on your baseline and ideal end state. You may lose the opportunity to gain critical buy-in from stakeholders, especially process users and consumers, during the workshops described in Step 1.

That said, make sure you don't lose momentum by delaying process improvement identification because you're waiting for perfect as-is and to-be process maps.

Best practice – Document to-be processes

Document to-be processes, even if you plan to adopt ServiceNow processes OOTB as an opportunity to build a consensus starting point. The as-is process workshops from Step 1 provide excellent opportunities to gather all process stakeholders together to bring clarity and consensus to your current business processes.

Also take the time to define to-be process maps even if you intend to implement OOTB ServiceNow processes. This mapping exercise provides an opportunity for your team to understand why changes are being made to existing processes as you move to ServiceNow, which will help them accept any new OOTB ServiceNow processes that you chose to implement.

The maps also highlight where key process roles might be left absent from the ServiceNow OOTB processes, requiring further analysis on the impact of the change.

Best Practice – Find quick wins by clarifying roles and identifying slow process steps

During the as-is process analysis workshop, process owners often identify ambiguities around which roles perform certain tasks in the process. Your to-be process maps can find immediate value often by focusing on eliminating unnecessary or bottleneck roles, unnecessary handoffs between roles, or addressing the slowest steps in a process, typically through automation. If you have limited resources for a full process review, a focus just on role clarity and the slowest steps typically delivers outsized returns.

INSIGHT 2:

Focus your process improvement opportunities on making work better

There's no end to the number of process frameworks. Your organization may subscribe to one or perhaps many. These frameworks sometimes miss that you have to bring a lot of people along on the journey. The key is developing a culture that reimagines how *work*—not just a process—works better.

When you don't consider process improvements in the larger context of how they make work better, you run the risk losing executive sponsorship and stakeholder support. When you focus on processes for their own sake, you risk "process fatigue," because many of these initiatives rely on jargon, abstract maturity frameworks, and *process adherence* rather than on *process improvement*.

Best practice – Don't create to-be processes in a vacuum

Ask how proposed changes deliver on business objectives and improve workflow for process users. The two questions you should always ask about process improvement are:

- Does it improve your ability to reach your desired business outcomes?
- Does it make sense from the standpoint of your process users?

You can use simple tabletop exercises (or even a pilot showing the ServiceNow capability, using historical or test data) to walk through your proposed to-be process so you can identify whether it truly delivers improvement. Also try to understand the dependencies inherent in your to-be process and the extent of organizational change needed to make it work effectively.

Individual processes rarely operate independently; most interact in some way with other processes. You must understand how the output of one process becomes the input for another, such as how the close of an incident can feed the problem management process. You should document:

- Any common tasks between processes
- Whether a task in one process is dependent on the start or completion of another process

Realize that these improvements represent change, and people can be resistant to change. In your to-be process mapping, learn what you'll need to communicate proposed process improvements effectively, especially to those roles that will feel the greatest impact. Include key influencers—"process champions"—early on the as-is and to-be workshops. They'll be valuable in leading conversations with other stakeholders, especially to those in the same roles.

What to do next

By completing this step, you have a list of prioritized process improvement opportunities gleaned from the gap between your as-is and to-be processes. You should be able to compile a short list of improvement opportunities that represent quick wins, and work with your executive sponsor to build them as projects into your implementation roadmap.

Now that you have your list of improvement opportunities, it's time to design how you'll implement them. First consider how standard ServiceNow functionality can address your planned improvements or whether you need to configure ServiceNow capabilities further.

Step 3 – Design process improvements

KEY INSIGHTS

- Make sure you do a formal design walk for each solution design.
- Consider adopting OOTB ServiceNow processes if they cover a majority of high-priority use cases.

Once process improvement opportunities are identified and selected, it's time to design the selected improvements. Now Platform® owners and their teams are well positioned to orchestrate and support this process improvement design, but they'll have to rely on process owners' expertise to reimagine how work processes can flow better and deliver more value.

To design your process improvements, you need to take two action steps:

1. **Work with process owners to decide whether OOTB ServiceNow processes will deliver the process improvements you want (meaning you can simply drop your existing processes and adopt OOTB), or if you will require configurations to OOTB.**

   Compare your to-be process maps with ServiceNow OOTB process maps to determine if they would form a solid basis for your key value streams. If the OOTB process adequately supports the value stream and the objectives established in Step 1, or if the OOTB process will deliver some (or all) of the process improvement opportunities identified in Step 2, then you should consider dropping your existing process and adopting the OOTB process. If neither of these is the case, you'll likely need to make configuration changes to OOTB during initial implementation.

2. **Connect the platform team with process owners and other stakeholders to design how to modify and configure the OOTB ServiceNow processes to deliver needed process improvements.**

   Where you need configuration, assign process improvement design responsibilities to the process owner, ServiceNow admins, and developers in your organization. Schedule meetings between process owners, ServiceNow administrators, and IT automation SMEs to design process improvements via automation, especially in IT processes like incident, change, and configuration management.

In both cases, update your process runbooks and process maps to depict the new, post-improvement process states. Make sure to meet with your executive sponsor, governance functions, and other senior leadership to communicate the proposed improvements. After doing so, gather feedback to inform final decisions on which designs to implement.

Also, make sure you're working within your demand management process to ensure that resources are assigned for any configurations and the proper demand outputs (like projects, enhancements, defects, and changes) are created.

Customer insights

Customer experience points to two key insights you should keep in mind as you design your process improvements.

INSIGHT 1:
Provide training to process owners on ServiceNow functionality

Customers opting to use OOTB ServiceNow processes face challenges if the core team doesn't fully understand ServiceNow capabilities. Process owners may not take full advantage of ServiceNow applications, resulting either in inefficiencies from missed functionality or in unnecessary custom development that's actually included in ServiceNow OOTB.

Best practice – The ServiceNow platform team should double down on training process owners and their teams on OOTB ServiceNow functionality

Provide training for process owners and teams at two key times:

- **During to-be process mapping –** So you can make sure that current ServiceNow capabilities are built into your to-be process maps, schedule demos with process owners and teams to walk through ServiceNow OOTB capabilities in the appropriate applications, as well as in the Now Platform.

- **Prior to upgrading ServiceNow –** Work with your ServiceNow account teams to understand new capabilities in upcoming releases and map those capabilities to your current work processes. Then, schedule demos with your process owners and teams.

INSIGHT 2:
Keep tight governance around configurations

If planned process improvements require configuration (or even customization), you'll need effective coordination and governance to ensure that the value delivered by your proposed configuration is greater than its cost. This is especially relevant if the configuration will cause implementation delays due to resource availability or other risks, unnecessary custom development, or unclear technical requirements.

Best practice – Work with your demand management and governance teams to make sure your planned configurations deliver value

Your demand management and governance teams should be key partners as you proceed through the design phase.

Work with demand management to inform them of the scope of work for process improvement opportunities that require configuration. Demand managers can assist with gathering critical information to estimate the size of the project needed to complete the improvements. They also have tools to assess the potential risks for a project, such as technical, compliance, or operational risk. Perhaps most importantly, they're plugged into the resource management function to ensure that your process improvement resource needs are factored into resource availability forecasts.

Governance teams will assist in making sure that your planned configurations are in line with the organization's roadmap for ServiceNow and policies and standards for development.

EXPERT TIP
Try to limit configuration and customization where possible to avoid complexity. When you do implement configurations or customizations, be sure to <u>assess how those configurations and customizations can potentially increase complexity and technical debt</u>.

What to do next

You now have a solid foundation to turn your process improvement opportunities into actionable designs. You've also created a backlog of process improvements that will form the basis of a roadmap for future implementation.

Step 4 – Plan future process improvement opportunities

KEY INSIGHT

- After you implement quick wins, prioritize your process improvement steps through a business value lens.

Baseline process improvement steps are all about defining process ownership, collecting a sense of your existing processes and how you ideally want them to work, and getting some quick wins under your belt before or during ServiceNow implementation. Most likely, you also identified many other process improvement opportunities that you couldn't implement as initial quick wins.

After implementation, you should work with process owners to develop a phased roadmap that charts your plans for implementing additional process improvements over time. This roadmapping—which may include making better use of ServiceNow capabilities, taking advantage of new ServiceNow capabilities, or developing new configurations—will start to promote continuous process improvement and foster a process improvement mindset in your organization.

To plan future process improvements, take two action steps:

1. **Work with process owners to develop a phased roadmap for further process improvement after your initial ServiceNow implementation.**

   Plan a sequence of process improvements that will capture all identified process improvement opportunities over time, typically over two to three years. Schedule periodic audits at least twice each year to assess progress against process improvement goals. After each audit and after every ServiceNow upgrade, update your process improvement roadmap to identify where new capabilities surface new process improvement opportunities or address opportunities in your backlog or roadmap. Also, update your roadmap periodically (every six or 12 months) to reflect any changes in organization, leadership, vision, mission, business values, etc.

2. **Prioritize process improvement plans in your roadmap based on how much business value they will deliver or support, prioritizing process improvements that increase speed and stability.**

   As you build out your backlog of process improvements, you'll need to determine the sequence of process improvement plans in your roadmap and work with process owners to select processes that should be prioritized for additional improvement. Start by identifying those processes that are currently most time consuming or that have the largest number of manual steps or handoffs. If the time to improve the process exceeds the time saved over the course of a year, consider dropping or de-prioritizing this improvement plan from your roadmap. Assess the potential risks associated with changing each process and prioritize process improvements with relatively low risks. Prioritize process improvements where you get the most benefit at minimal cost, which doesn't have to be calculated to the dollar.

Customer insights

Customer experience points to a key insight you should keep in mind as you plan future process improvements.

Prioritize your roadmap based on the business value the process changes will enable

Once you implement your first process improvements, you'll find new opportunities to make changes. Resist the temptation to slot those newly found opportunities ahead of those on your backlog—the opportunities identified in your initial workshops but deferred until after the first implementation phase.

You'll want to give your initial changes a chance to take hold, measuring the effectiveness of those changes for a period of time—around one or two quarters. Make sure any new opportunities build toward the to-be processes that you designed in Step 2.

Best practice – Prioritize your roadmap based on the business value the process changes will enable

You've built your list of process improvements, but now you need to decide what to implement first. Look for the improvements that connect best to business value as your top priorities.

One tool that you can use to prioritize improvements consistently is the prioritization matrix, which is a useful tool that helps prioritize a diverse list of items (that is, your list of potential process improvements) into an order of importance. It's based on a list of assessment criteria that your team agrees on, and you also agree on the relative importance of the criteria. The criteria should also be easy to measure objectively.

To help develop your list of criteria, you can ask:

- Will the process improvement improve efficiency or effectiveness permanently?

- Will it improve customer satisfaction?

- What is the cost for implementing the improvement?

- How easy is it to do?

- How much time it will take?

- Are there any potential problems or risks that can arise in the future?

- Are there any potential regulatory or safety issues that need to be considered?

Let's take a look at the second action step in this section and use that to create a short list of assessment criteria:

- Time savings

- Low risk

- Cost effective (savings versus cost to implement)

- Reduces handoffs

As a team, you then rate each of the assessment criteria by relative importance. You can do this using a point or "coin" system—each member gets 100 points to distribute based on the relative importance of each of the four assessment criteria. The result might look like the example in Table 1.

Criteria/name	Chris	Andy	Pat	Total points	Relative weight
Time savings	25	10	15	50	1
Low risk	15	50	20	85	1.7
Cost effective	45	30	40	115	2.3
Reduces handoffs	15	10	25	50	1
	100	100	100		

Table 1: Assessment criteria weighting

Here, we see that the team considers cost effectiveness to be more than twice as important as either time savings or reducing handoffs.

Next, take your list of potential improvements and rank them according to each of your criteria. If you have 10 potential improvements, rank them from 1–10. Then, multiply the rank score for each criterion by its relative weight to generate its weighted score. Finally, sort each improvement candidate by the weighted score, and that's your order of prioritization.

EXPERT TIP
Understand that process changes may have conflicting results. For example, you can remove a person from a process to improve the speed of the process, but that removal could cause instability if the person served a vital function.

What to do next

Now that you have a roadmap of planned process improvements, you'll have a backlog of identified improvements to consider for future development. You've also established a method to prioritize process improvements that you identify in the future.

Make sure that you communicate your roadmap to process stakeholders so they can prepare for upcoming changes, especially when your roadmap changes. You'll now want to establish a regular cadence to identify and evaluate process opportunities, moving to a continuous improvement process.

Step 5 – Develop a system to continually identify process improvement opportunities

KEY INSIGHT

- Stay focused on how process improvement creates business value.

An initial wave of process improvement successes can create enthusiasm, but don't start optimizing processes without considering what the changes provide process users. It's easy to lose sight of the fact that process improvements can come with diminishing marginal returns: The cost of additional process improvement should be explicitly evaluated against the additional business value it delivers, whether that's in terms of cost savings, faster speed to market, or improved quality of service for employees and customers.

Part of building a process improvement mindset involves maturing how process improvement opportunities are selected and pursued based on the business value they can create.

To develop a continual process improvement system, take four action steps:

1. **Measure and monitor process effectiveness on an ongoing basis**.

    Ask each process owner to identify two to three measures of success that can reliably gauge process effectiveness. Vet these with your executive sponsor, governance boards, or another senior leader. Consider whether the metrics measure how effectively each process meets the expectations and needs of the organization, whether it's in terms of speed, quality, risk reduction, or another outcome.

2. **Consolidate and create process reporting.**

    Track and report all metrics at least bi-weekly (aspire to build a live dashboard, potentially using ServiceNow Performance Analytics). Coordinate meetings between process owners and governance authorities to identify what reporting is currently being done (if any), who the reports go to, and what decisions are based on the reports. Tailor your reports to the audiences that use them and retire any reports that are no longer accessed. Most importantly, ensure that your process owners can articulate the three focus areas for existing and new process reporting:

    - Intended outcomes of the process (An example from HR: "all onboarding employees receive their laptop on day one")
    - A sense of how to diagnose process shortfalls
    - A list of predictive indicators of process success or failure

3. **Measure process owners on continuous process improvement efforts.**

    The Now Platform owner should meet with process owners at least monthly to brainstorm new process improvement opportunities and to set goals for continual process improvement. Set goals to make sure that stakeholders aware of the process, how it's delivering value, and how the process has been improved over time. You should also measure process adoption, with a focus on your process users' (such as service desk agents') adoption and awareness.

4. **Prioritize process improvement investments based on creating business value**.

You need to make sure your process owners have a clear focus on the business objectives you're trying to achieve by improving processes in ServiceNow. This might include asking them to explicitly define, in their to-be maps, how their process will support a business objective like "eliminating service outages through an improved detect-to-correct capability." This definition should include business value–oriented metrics selected by process owners.

Customer insights

Customer experience points to two key insights you should keep in mind as you develop a system to continually identify process improvement.

INSIGHT 1:
Make trade-offs based on what you're optimizing for, such as speed, risk, and output

Process improvements almost always involve trade-offs among competing factors. An improvement that increases process speed may introduce a higher risk of defects. You may eliminate a worker or role from a process, but that may introduce unnecessary risk if that person served a unique purpose in the process.

You must identify and measure these trade-offs when you evaluate new improvement opportunities. Each process improvement methodology has techniques and tools to capture these trade-offs. Due to an increasing pressure to increase velocity, many customers use methodologies that favor small, incremental changes that can be reviewed and tested quickly.

Best practice – Use Lean IT methodologies support continuous process improvement

Lean IT is a philosophy and approach that stresses elimination of waste or work that doesn't add value by focusing on continuous improvement to streamline operations. It's customer-centric and stresses the concept of eliminating any activity that fails to add value to the creation or delivery of a product or service.

Though lean got its start in the manufacturing sector, lean techniques have been applied to IT process improvement. The primary focus of lean IT is the elimination of waste—that is, getting rid of anything that inhibits value.

Lean IT identifies eight forms of waste, which are sometimes organized by the acronym DOWNTIME:

- **Defect –** Mistakes, bugs, errors, or rework
- **Overproduction –** When too much is made too early; where production exceeds demand
- **Waiting**
- **Non-value processing –** Excessive or unnecessary work that generates little or no value
- **Transport –** Unnecessarily moving work, materials, or information during production or development
- **Inventory –** The result of overproduction or other work that is half done, such as half-finished incidents or changes
- **Motion –** From an IT perspective, this often relates to too many clicks in an application

- **Employee knowledge unused –** The result of tribal knowledge that isn't put into production

INSIGHT 2:

Make sure you're measuring process outcomes, not just process efficiency

As we noted above, you must measure the effect of your improvements. Many organizations focus too heavily on process efficiency metrics, measuring the process itself and not the impact on the desired business outcomes the process is meant to enable.

Best practice – Schedule a recurring meeting to discover if process improvements are having the right impact

Schedule a recurring meeting—starting with once per quarter—with the ServiceNow platform team, process owners, and process consumers to discuss whether process improvements are actually making a difference in the *outputs* of the process. Your process consumers are the keys to this conversation because they receive process outputs.

Process outputs that are delivered correctly—with the right quality, timeliness, and quantity— lead to positive process outcomes, such as increased customer satisfaction, improved environment, and motivated staff.

EXPERT TIP

ServiceNow has added Continual Improvement Management (CIM) in its London release. Use CIM to request improvement opportunities, implement phases, and tasks to meet performance goals, track progress, and measure success. CIM improvement initiatives can be created from several ServiceNow applications, including Demand Management, Incident Management, and Problem Management. Additionally, a CIM improvement initiative or task can create these records:

- Demand
- Project
- Change
- Knowledge
- Agile Development

What to do next

You've now put continuous process improvement in place, focused on both business outcomes and process performance. You've established metrics for measuring process improvement and ideally report them in a ServiceNow dashboard.

Now that you have continuous improvement in place, you should develop an organizationwide culture of process improvement, starting with senior leadership down to individual contributors.

Step 6 – Build a process improvement culture

KEY INSIGHT

- A culture of process improvement must extend well beyond the process owner role.

Process improvement is not just the responsibility of process owners and governance teams. Senior leaders should lead the development of a culture of process that includes staff at all levels who are invested in continual process improvement.

A process-oriented culture doesn't need to be bureaucratic and rigid. Instead, it's a recognition that any process can be improved and changed, and it vests teams with the incentives and authority to do so.

Ultimately, you need to avoid creating an environment that's characterized by jargon and exclusive (rather than inclusive) control of processes. The goal is to create a culture of making work better. So, you should simplify to make work better, not just to improve processes. For this, you'll need strong executive-level messaging and direction.

To build a process improvement culture, take three action steps:

1. **Foster an organizational and cultural focus on process to support business outcomes.**

   Meet with senior leaders to promote a "culture of process," where continual process improvement is viewed as an intrinsic part of the organization's culture and/or value system. Discuss how to incentivize and reward proactive identification of process improvement opportunities, especially those involving automation. Provide senior leaders with success stories and metrics that they can discuss during leadership and all-hands meetings to make teams aware of the importance of continuous process improvement.

2. **Make continuous process improvement an organizational mandate.**

   To foster an environment of openness, your ServiceNow platform team should meet with process owners to discuss potential ideas for process improvement sourced from outside of the immediate team. Additionally, you should require process owners to spend time with *all* stakeholders of their process, to encourage insight from across the organization on how processes can be changed and improved. This is especially true of process users and process consumers who can share firsthand experience on what is and isn't working in the process.

3. **Integrate process improvement activities with organizational governance.**

   Schedule quarterly meetings between process owners and the ServiceNow governance team to discuss how process needs and improvement plans relate to governance policies and decisions.

Customer insights

Customer experience points to a key insight you should keep in mind as you build a process improvement culture.

INSIGHT:

Encourage process improvement beyond the process owner role

Work with those closest to the processes themselves—like your service desk agents—to enable and encourage them to be active participants in the improvement process. If you don't, you'll struggle with adoption by that very group of contributors, resulting in degraded process performance.

Best practice – Make process improvement central to senior leaders' communication

Culture starts at the top. To build a culture of process improvement, senior leaders need to demonstrate and articulate the business value of continuous process improvement. Arm senior leaders with messaging that:

- Communicates quick wins, not just in terms of improved process efficiency, but in improved business outcomes
- Conveys—and makes transparent—metrics for process reporting and process improvement.
- Highlights new process improvement ideas generated from front-line staff

Best practice – Highlight examples of the process improvement culture you want to build

Senior leaders should back up messaging with examples of a process improvement culture in action. This may include:

- Empowering process owners to enact changes at a local level to address immediate issues
- Ensuring that all process improvement ideas submitted by front-line staff—even those that aren't implemented—receive a timely and visible response from process owners and senior leaders
- Including ideation for process improvement in performance objectives for front-line staff

You should also arm process users with the right education about ServiceNow capabilities, whether as a part of your initial implementation or as you approach upgrades, to spark additional insight into process improvement opportunities.

Best practice – Measure the success of improvements that process owners and teams identify, measure, and document

Start with these metrics focused on creating new process ideas:

- The number of process improvement ideas generated
- The number of process improvements executed
- The percentage of process improvement ideas involving automation

Set goals with each process owner and incentivize process owners and teams in less official ways. Here are some ideas:

- Highlight top process owner(s) in your executive communication on a quarterly basis

- Host a process hackathon to generate ideas, and then reward the winner

- Maintain a process team dashboard in ServiceNow Performance Analytics, highlighting top performers

What to do next

You've created a path to building a culture of process improvement. While this is an ongoing effort, continue to work with senior management to communicate the value of process improvement and share successes with them. Also incorporate other stakeholders into your improvement initiatives, encouraging them to share ideas, especially on automation opportunities.

The takeaway

Redesigning work processes entails more than selecting and using a process framework. These frameworks sometimes miss that you must bring a lot of people on the process improvement journey, from your process users to senior leaders and governance teams.

Most importantly, continue to focus on the business value derived from process improvement to avoid having process for process's sake and promote a culture of continuous process improvement.

Finally, consider adopting ServiceNow OOTB processes as a method to accelerate change from your as-is state.

What should I convey to my team?

When reimagining your work processes, consider three things:

- How the changes align to business objectives

- Dependencies within and between processes

- How you'll foster adoption of the processes – The people aspects of process design need to come first!

What does good, better, best look like for this activity?

Good – You've reviewed your as-is processes, referring to ServiceNow OOTB processes as starting points, and have implemented your high-priority process improvements.

Better – You've established a roadmap for future process improvements based on your backlog and prioritize them based on the business value they'll create.

Best – You've established a continuous process to identify and prioritize new process improvement opportunities and have established incentives to promote process improvements.

For access to actionable insights on this topic, review our Customer Success Center resources.

If you have any questions on this topic or you would like to be a contributor to future ServiceNow best practice content, please contact us at best.practices@servicenow.com.

Appendix

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

To determine if you're performing the actions in this Success Playbook effectively, measure the following top KPIs:

- *# process improvement ideas generated (per quarter)* – This metric indicates how well the organization is identifying process improvement opportunities.

- *# process improvements executed (per quarter)* – This metric helps determine the organization's effectiveness in implementing improvements.

- *% of processes/process steps automated* – This metric provides insight into the efficiency gained by automating processes.

Stakeholder management

Use this table to identify which stakeholders need to be held responsible/accountable and the stakeholders that need to keep consulted/informed.

Responsible/accountable stakeholders

- Process owners
- Process managers
- Now Platform owners
- ServiceNow governance team lead

KEY MESSAGING

- Report on process improvement ideas.
- Develop as-is and to-be process mapping.
- Report on process efficiency and effectiveness.

Consulted/informed stakeholders

- CIO
- Business leadership
- Service owners
- CISO
- Audit
- ServiceNow governance committees
- Business stakeholders*
- Vendor representatives*
- Development teams
- Business engagement teams
- Partners

KEY MESSAGING

- Submit new process improvement ideas.
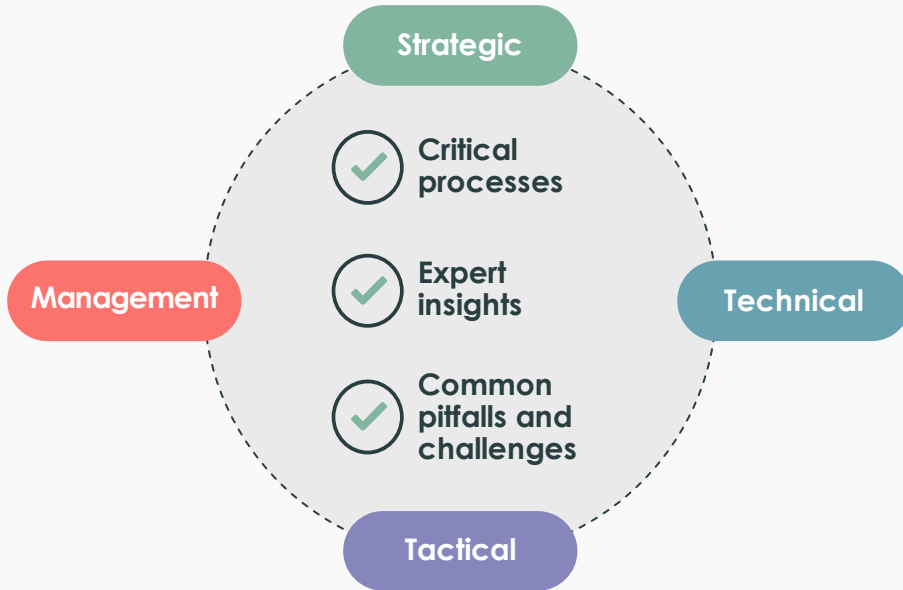- Review process reporting.

*informed only

Related resources

- Success Checklist – Reimagine how you want work processes to flow
- Process design guides

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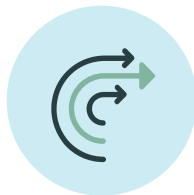Based on **thousands of successful implementations** across the globe

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