Brit Insurance is a FTSE 250 general reinsurance underwriter working out of Lloyd’s of London. We specialize in commercial insurance for businesses around the world and we underwrite more than 70 subclasses of business across 80 territories. In 2009, our written premiums amounted to £1.7 billion. Our head office is in Amsterdam, with the majority of the workforce in the UK.

I joined the service management team at Brit Insurance in London almost four years ago to do change and configuration. Over the past 18 months, I’ve taken the lead on the roadmap and product development to promote ServiceNow beyond service desk into a tool that will integrate IT services and other business departments – HR, facilities, and finance – more closely.

Brit Insurance has more than 800 employees in 20 different divisions, and we support offices in Chicago, Tokyo and Houston from our London office. Group Operations, in which IT sit, has around 180 employees, covering everything from our technical processing units to facilities.

We’ve been using ITIL guidelines for more than four years and a lot of the work we’ve been doing with our process and with ServiceNow has followed that framework. Much of our IT staff are ITIL trained. We adopt the bits that work for us and adapt other parts of the ITIL best practices to suit our needs.

Selecting ServiceNow

Brit Insurance started its service management team in 2007 and right away we were writing a lot of process to improve the team’s day-to-day operations. The tool we had at the time, FrontRange, wasn’t supporting our processes, so in 2008 we started a formal process to replace our service management tool. We looked at upgrading Frontrange or replacing with either Remedy, Infra or ServiceNow. Most of us already knew Remedy from previous companies, so we requested demos from FrontRange, Infra, and ServiceNow. ServiceNow stood out for a number of reasons.

- **Look and feel** – We liked the way in which ServiceNow presented ITIL process on the page. Obviously, it was important that other teams in the organization like the tool and buy in to its use, so the more intuitive, the better.
- **Web-focused** – We believed that the Web-focus of ServiceNow would appeal to our developers, who like to experiment with new technologies.
- **Administration** – We found that managing the tool was very straightforward, allowing us to do a lot of the admin and development work ourselves. It removed that reliance on a company coming in and selling consultants on top of the tool. We saw that we could drive the tool as we wanted.

“Ensure that users are engaged from the start, because we in IT would never have thought of some of the ideas that come back from the business units.”

This ServiceNow case study is based on an interview with Lewis Martin, Brit Insurance change manager.
• **Ease of use** – Because ServiceNow seemed so easy to use, we figured we could keep ownership and management of the tool within the service management team, without having to use expensive or time-consuming courses.

• **Openness** – We conducted visits to existing ServiceNow customer sites, most of the time without anybody from ServiceNow in attendance. They would allow us to be in the room alone with the existing customers. We thought that a company that allowed prospects to talk to potential customers in such an open and honest way obviously had nothing to hide, and we learned a lot from these site visits.

• **Managing upgrades** – There are three releases a year, and we liked the fact that we can manage them ourselves, taking what we want, when we want it. We manage the upgrades for our development and office instances live, just checking and ensuring that what’s been delivered works with our implementation.

• **Cost** – The cost over three to five years looked a lot better than that of the competing products. Moreover, we liked the flexibility of the ServiceNow subscription license.

**Deployment and new releases**

We became a customer and were live with incident, change, problem, and some availability management in about three months. Implementation went very smoothly. We employed our own project manager so that individual process owners could focus solely on their own processes during the switch. During the same implementation period, we migrated outstanding incidents and problems and they too came over very smoothly.

I’ve been through a Remedy upgrade, which required a full-time consultant and lots of time. Brit Insurance had performed a FrontRange upgrade, and it was difficult to make the upgrade fit the development work the team had done. During implementation of ServiceNow, we found it very straightforward to develop changes that matched our business process, then test and push them live. The whole process was smoother and simpler, and it allowed us to manage our development cycle.

With three releases a year, there’s always new functionality, and you can choose to take advantage of it or not. The other tools I’ve used oblige you to endure big upgrades to get any additional functionality.

At Brit Insurance, we like to sit down and have a look at the new ServiceNow features to see what works for us. It’s great that the changes are coming, but we don’t always react quickly enough as a company to take advantage of the additional functionality. ServiceNow has certainly driven us to take advantage of that functionality and to implement it across the support teams and eventually into some of the business departments.

In fact, with ServiceNow, we develop to a certain stage and roll out to pilot testers as usual, but when they see how much the tool can do, they want that extra functionality. Our problem has been making sure that we can control the scope of our development. For us, Phase 1 is the development we originally intended, and Phase 2 includes the extra features users request once they’ve seen Phase 1. It’s a good sign – it shows that people use ServiceNow, start to see its benefits, then request this additional functionality. It means that it’s not just a service management team running the tool; people throughout the business are driving it.

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Results
We’ve automated many of our processes. For example, we’re making sure that the right people are informed and included during the change process. People have a visual of what’s going on, how it’s being managed, and how they can have input into it. When we were on a paper-based system, it was very closed and only the people with access to the paper knew what was going on. This is true for our problems, work requests and incidents. It also allows us to provide proper information to management and our CIO can now produce stats and reports on the work that we and the support teams are undertaking day to day.

We’re replacing processes. Our new service catalog has enhanced the interaction between the business and IT, and several business units have asked me what the tool can do for them. We’re already getting requests to see whether ServiceNow can replace paper-based processes like season ticket loan forms, Course request forms and postal services. One business unit asked about using ServiceNow for the claims process they manage.

We’ve been using the reporting function of ServiceNow because it was so much better than what we had before. Now, scheduled reports go out as PDF e-mail attachments to managers. Since implementing service catalog, we have a number of reports that go to board members, HR and facilities because their business services are now supported by ServiceNow.

Recommendations for buyers of ITSM tools
It’s important to make sure that you’ve planned and scoped your deployment with the right people and stakeholders, and to ensure that you’re keeping them engaged all the time. I’ve gone back to some of the stakeholders with a Phase 1 development that’s been 90% complete, and when they see what ServiceNow can do, they start throwing ideas in the hat that they want included before we go live.

So I recommend we try to avoid scope creep, but also that we ensure users are engaged from the start because we in IT would never have thought of some of the ideas coming back from the business units. The tool is so much more valuable when the business users come in with an idea that we implement. It breaks down a big barrier because it’s not just IT doing what IT wants to do. Besides, once people in the business have seen their idea live, they sell it for you.

Make sure there’s plenty of time for testing and running through various scenarios. For instance, through the service catalog, we have automated approval tasks with email notifications and different states of change depending on a previous request.

We’ve learned a lot from speaking to other ServiceNow customers and from ServiceNow arranged site visits. All organizations manage changes and incidents in a slightly different way, and you can learn a lot from peers.

Our execs have been keen to adopt new technologies, so they had no problems with software-as-a-service. When we presented ServiceNow alongside the other candidates, there were the obvious questions about performance and security that we had to address. Our security manager looked into SaaS and was very comfortable with it. We run our instances through a VPN, so we mitigate some of that risk. I believe Brit Insurance is looking at doing more business in the cloud and ServiceNow has supported this argument very well. Our management looked at what the tool could offer, evaluated costs, knew that it met our requirements, then made its decision based on the tool itself.
The IT future at Brit Insurance
Replacing software – I want us to use ServiceNow for much more than service desk incident management, so I’m going to make sure our project managers consider it when they get a requirement for new software. We’re already paying for the licenses and it would be cost-effective to utilize what we already have.

• **Improved workflow** – We’re enhancing our workflows behind change and release management. We’ve already automated approvals for low-impact changes and we want to build in some notification periods and timelines. It’s important for people to plan their changes properly, and the tool allows them to plan changes so affected teams can plan more effectively.

• **Lifecycle management** – We want to put changes under service transition as an umbrella, so we’re going to start managing through ServiceNow the whole lifecycle from inception of a change or request all the way to decommissioning many years later.

• **CMDB** – We’ve been using CMDB more fully for the last few months in risk and impact assessments during change and release work.

“With ServiceNow’s SaaS model, we don’t need to buy, store or maintain any infrastructure at all, and that’s a great relief.”