“Like most companies, we first implemented ServiceNow as an IT Service Management tool for the usual applications like incident, problem and change. But we and our business users started recognizing that you can extend it into a workload management tool across a lot of different groups beyond IT.”

This ServiceNow case study is based on an interview with Stacey Fournier-Thibodaux, General Manager, Global Service Management for C.H. Robinson.

**Beyond IT Management to Logistics Transformation**

How does the right IT Service Management (ITSM) suite help you go beyond IT to run your entire business better? C.H. Robinson found out when they implemented ServiceNow. Four years after the initial implementation, C.H. Robinson has built a workload management system based on the ServiceNow platform that replaces multiple email threads and spreadsheets, and allows users to be more effective and efficient. As a result, business users can quantify and report on their work, and the company can make better decisions based on better information.

Founded in 1905, C.H. Robinson is one of the world’s largest third-party logistics (3PL) providers, with more than 10,500 employees and gross revenues of more than $11 billion. The company provides freight transportation and logistics, outsource solutions, produce sourcing and information services. Their worldwide offices in North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia serve more than 42,000 customers.

**Building a tool on the ServiceNow Platform**

Initially, C.H. Robinson planned to consolidate a variety of IT tools that covered service request, incident, problem, change and knowledge management by switching to ServiceNow as a single system of record for IT.

But the company’s Solutions Engineers and Process Analysts saw that the ServiceNow allowed development well beyond basic IT management, so they customized their implementation of ServiceNow to expand “myQ”, C.H. Robinson’s internal branding of ServiceNow, into their own business service management tool.

Customized myQ applications help streamline work inside IT and outside, in business areas like Human Resources and Public Relations. myQ has also paved the way to new applications on the front lines of C.H. Robinson’s revenue generation – its consulting practice.

**Helping the business people make more money**

C.H. Robinson’s 450 IT staff spend much of their time talking to business people outside IT and developing custom applications according to branch office needs. Of the entrepreneurs she works with outside IT, Stacey Fournier-Thibodaux, General Manager, Global Service Management, says, “I want to help them implement their ideas, streamline their work, become more efficient and help the company make more money.”
With ServiceNow and myQ, she can achieve those goals. Fournier-Thibodaux and her team design applications that replace common business tools that often form the basis for business processes including:

- **Email inboxes** – Often, teams create a group mailbox to handle requests coming in from their branch network, then task multiple team members to service them. New requests constantly stream in, and it becomes difficult to see who is working on which request, if they’ve been fulfilled, and the type and quantity of those requests.

- **Distribution lists** – These are often used for virtual teams such as a group of “superusers” or cross-team resources. It is unclear who on the team should fulfill incoming requests, whether someone has addressed them at all or what the quantity or type of requests received are.

- **Spreadsheets** – In the short run, Excel’s row-and-column format helps organize tasks. But to ensure the integrity of a file over time, users need an easy way to figure out who has the most recent version of the spreadsheet. It is also nearly impossible to keep track of bulk requests and the most recent steps on any open items.

Companywide, these processes have moved into myQ for about 25 non-IT teams. Says Fournier-Thibodaux, “Our non-IT users – the ones in the branches who are making the money – need to be able find everything, from the knowledge base to shared service groups that pop up around the company who are here to help but are hard to find. By using myQ to help these shared resources become more accessible by our branches, we can make the lives of the people making the money easier. Our job is to help them find who and what they need more efficiently.”

**How to manage workloads beyond IT**

From IT service management to business productivity, C.H. Robinson has taken myQ and ServiceNow far past traditional IT and on to workload management. Groups across the enterprise can interact with one another through one system of record.

About 20,000 non-IT actions go through the system per month, representing a wide assortment of projects, engagements and ordinary tickets.

“Like most companies,” says Fournier-Thibodaux, “we first implemented ServiceNow as an IT service management tool for the usual applications like incident, problem and change. But we and our business users started recognizing that you can extend it into a workload management tool across a lot of different groups beyond IT.”

For example, we have an internal consulting group who assists the branches with large customer implementations, from initial request through proposal. When the group asked IT to create a custom application in myQ, IT designed an engagement management system that tracks each consultant’s time and generates reports showing the cost per engagement in internal resources.

Similarly, Human Resources used a shared mailbox for open benefits enrollment questions, and a new myQ app helps HR manage their workload during regular spikes in volume by creating tickets from the email. As a result, HR has concretely demonstrated the volume of their work and justified additional headcount.
“You are a business and you have customers.”
“Most groups don’t see themselves as a business,” says Fournier-Thibodaux. “But if you have a user base that depends on you for services, then you are a business and you have customers.

myQ and ServiceNow are instrumental in translating this ideal into business value that upper management can recognize. According to Fournier-Thibodaux’s IT team, reporting is one of the biggest advantages to myQ and ServiceNow. “Reports let them show upper management how much they’re doing, how well they’re doing it and where they have opportunities for improvement. And our execs are saying, ‘I’ve got teams that are demonstrating their worth in a way I haven’t seen before.’”

**Big savings from automation**

C.H. Robinson is also investing in automation of repeatable requests and estimates that automating portions of request fulfillment has saved IT alone about 2,000 hours of work per year, the equivalent of almost one employee. Since go-live, about 600 automated requests per month pass through the system. Also, in the Public Relations group, a program for matching charitable donations was taking up nearly 70 percent of one employee’s time, until IT used myQ and ServiceNow to automate all of the manual steps involved.

Fournier-Thibodaux uses words like “powerful” and “empowering” to describe myQ and ServiceNow. She says, “These tools position us to be a team that can help the people I call the ‘underserved of companies.’ People in HR or Marketing have a job to do, but they’re not selling transportation solutions, which is what our proprietary applications handle. Nevertheless, we build apps in myQ and ServiceNow that can help them do their work more effectively and make the overall business run better. Now it’s hard to see what business groups would do if they didn’t have these apps.”

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