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Making Waves

One of the fastest growing companies in automotive finance

Organization

Santander Consumer USA

Business

Finance

Headquarters

Dallas, TX, USA

Geographies

USA

Modern ITSM Software

Incident

Problem

Change

Release

Project

Asset

Service catalog

Service request

Implementation Timeline

Two and a half months

Santander Consumer USA - New Economy Demands Increased IT Service Speed and Consistent Quality

Santander Consumer USA Inc. is one of the fastest-growing companies in the automotive finance sector. With a \$4.9 billion non-prime portfolio originated from a pool of more than 14,000 dealer partners throughout North America, they are a leading provider of finance programs that cover the entire non-prime spectrum. The company began originating loans in 1997, and is headquartered in Dallas. They are owned by Banco Santander (NYSE: STD), a leading global bank with a market capitalization of \$115 billion and 66 million customers.

Santander Consumer USA has about 20 people providing incident, change, release and project management for the 1400 person company. Kimberly Rogers, Santander Consumer USA IT service delivery and IT change manager, joined Santander about 1 ½ years ago from a division of PNC Bank. Although she was new to Santander, she had accumulated almost two decades of experience in change management and software lifecycle delivery services.

Fast Pace and Cultural Hurdles

Santander had recognized the value of ITIL best practice adoption but nobody really owned ITIL at the company. Kimberly set out to change this from day one. She was able to immediately recognize a few areas in which Santander could improve its IT services and change management.

The team decided to spend time and money on ITIL training and at the end of 2008 and now about 75 percent of Santander service desk personnel and application support engineers are ITIL certified. Kimberly continues to provide continual ITIL training and process feedback to the organization.

Kimberly came from a very large and slow moving financial services company. The change management processes she used at both companies were similar but the pace at which things moved was night and day. The economy also added a sense of urgency to business at Santander.

A smaller, more nimble company combined with an economy that requires efficiencies to survive created a challenge for Kimberly to work faster while keeping IT service quality and precision. She needed solid process and a nimble tool to keep up with the organization and culture.

Looking back over the last year, the biggest challenge was overcoming habits and to get people to change the way they think and work.

More Efficient Business and IT Delivery

Like any organization, the Santander IT team was used to doing things a certain way. When the group decided to improve its incident, problem and change management processes, they knew their day-to-day work lives would have to change.

Santander struggled with efficient process but had a goal to deliver rapid restoration of normal service operation and to minimize change impact on business operations. However, incidents weren't correctly tied to problems and changes and vice versa. Incomplete processes and tool shortcomings made it difficult for Santander to determine incident root cause and to track changes through their lifecycle.

The change management process and related projects were hosted in Project Server or in Word documents on Sharepoint.

ServiceNow became the central point for all software releases, from hot fixes to full service packs. Once the team defines the project and business approvers are added, the rest of the process is automated per ITIL best practices.

Santander wanted to integrate project management with release management. Software releases and related deliverables are now tracked as a project in ServiceNow. They can now tie change to releases and vice versa. These projects are all looped back to the change management process within one ticket.

Santander is able to now quickly create incidents and move them through problem and change if necessary, and on to resolution. Duplicate data was eliminated. Once they've identified the incident root cause, it is quickly moved to a problem. Information related to the incident follows the ticket from one module to the next based on Santander's processes.

With incident root cause permanently eliminated from their infrastructure, they saw a significant reduction in problems. Through coordinated change management processes, Kimberly and team more efficiently achieve problem resolution.

Today, every step in the ITIL change process is automated, from the creation of the change record, change acceptance, email notifications, etc.

Business approvers never have to log into the system to be kept abreast of the change progress. Incident, problem and change management is now all integrated. Manual rekeying of data has gone away.

Moving an incident through problem and change is now like clockwork. New technology and better process has allowed Santander to move at the rapid pace of the business. A combination of better process and technology led to significant efficiencies. Santander has reduced incident, problem and change creation time by 80 percent.

Kimberly said, "What used to take a service desk pro ten minutes now takes two minutes. When applied to an average volume of 1200 incidents per day and about 270 changes per month, this increased efficiency really adds up."

Perhaps more importantly, Santander was able to reduce total reoccurring incidents through improved processes. Incident tracking is greatly improved and reporting has never been more efficient. Also, incident duration was reduced through efficient problem management leading to a reduction of change-related incidents.

Cost Management

Santander has also revamped its service catalog which will extend beyond just IT services and include line of business services including new-hire on boarding. The Santander human resources group can now use the service catalog to provision employee security, computing resources and mobile device services. Also, the catalog will deliver IT service charge backs for more accountable cost management.

Santander also revamped their IT asset management project to gain better control and insight into the IT landscape and associated costs. They track every asset they have in ServiceNow. The ease of use of the tool allowed them to avoid the hiring of an extra database developer for the project.

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Santander also saved money on their IT service management tool. Kimberly added, "We faced a significant upgrade of our previous tool which would have cost well over six figures to reimplement.

Instead of spending about \$256,000 to get the old tool out of version lock, we decided to spend \$33,000 to implement ServiceNow."

This decision is also paying dividends in terms of rapid tool innovation from the vendor and ease of use for Santander. Kimberly will determine a way to better improve process and within hours the tool can be customized and the feature to support the process will be in production. Tool upgrades we don't break or lose customizations.

Because of the auto-updating nature of modern software as a service, Santander never has to worry about a tool upgrade again. Kimberly said they get a phone call from ServiceNow alerting them to an upgrade about three times per year. The team reviews the ServiceNow release on their development platform and then turns it on within hours to their production environment.

Speed and Efficiency Realized

Santander's commitment to business speed and efficiency has been effectively mirrored through the IT organization. Dedication to ITIL best practices, people who were willing to change and technology that enabled processes combined to deliver rapid IT service and consistent IT quality for Santander Consumer USA.

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