bmc

solution white paper

How to Build a Service Management Hub for Digital Service Innovation

Empower IT and business agility by taking ITSM to the cloud

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the technology-enabled enterprise, business agility depends on IT agility. To adapt in real time to shifting requirements, IT has to spend less time on routine infrastructure management tasks and sharpen its focus on delivering critical business services. By moving to the cloud and creating a service management hub for digital service innovation, IT can get out of the infrastructure business, break down silos, streamline workflow, and create a centralized environment where the business can leverage IT's service delivery knowledge for maximum value.

This paper explores five considerations for building a successful services hub: capabilities, integrations, visibility, the platform, and the partner.

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THE MISSION: ACCELERATE IT TO THE SPEED OF BUSINESS

1. **Capabilities:** Re-engineering IT goes beyond organizational restructuring. An effective hub for digital service innovation must be built on a core of rich ITSM functionality. IT needs tools to identify, capture, and track service delivery trends, analyze the information moving through the central hub, and automate the flow of information among services. Users need simple ways to interact with technology and request services and support. Request management, change management, incident management, and problem management help IT keep services running their best in alignment with the needs of users and the business. Economies of scale, informed with IT and ITIL best practices, eliminate the need to reinvent the wheel and build services from scratch each time.

The ways in which these ITSM capabilities are made available is equally important. To move at the speed of business innovation, IT must deliver a modern, consumerized experience designed to empower users and fit the way people work today. This includes:

Mobile capabilities:	Social collaboration tools:
To help people do anything from ordering equipment to tracking incident resolution from anywhere, on any device—PC, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.	Such as chat or Chatter that make it simple for people to get updates on their requests, collaborate with peers to solve their own problems, compare notes and best practices, and leverage the collective knowledge of the organization.

Self-service:
That feels like a consumer e-commerce experience, with full visibility into options, associated costs, and delivery timeframes, and an interface that lets people complete requests quickly and conveniently.

Powerful, flexible automation is one of the most essential requirements for a service management hub, allowing technology to handle the routing of routine tasks so people can focus on the strategic work of competitive improvements. For example, requests can be routed automatically from step to step, requiring only momentary human intervention along the way to provide the needed approvals. A streamlined experience on the front end is paired with seamless integration and process flows on the back end.

2. **Cross-Functions and Integrations:** A service management hub is about more than just the services it facilitates. The hub itself is powered by an ITSM solution, but much of its key value lies in the way that its spokes—the other data sources and components that power IT and business services—connect into that hub. While housing much information itself, the service management solution also facilitates the connection and flow of other information from distributed sources. In addition to transforming disparate information into a comprehensive service, the hub provides IT visibility into the comprehensive service, making it possible to answer keys questions such as:

- Which information sources and services are connected—and which others should be?
- Where does friction currently exist between services and between groups?
- Where do processes and information fall into black holes due to the lack of connection?

This visibility also enables IT to deliver unique strategic value to the organization. By understanding their own processes better, IT can advise other areas of the organization on how to discover and exploit new opportunities for competitive advantage in a way an external vendor couldn't.

Beyond creating and connecting services today, the service management hub provides a rational way to connect services in the future to meet emerging needs. Organizations often struggle with service delivery because they lack a way to understand where data resides, where it needs to be, and how to facilitate this flow. For example: a service has failed, but the service desk can't directly access the information needed to understand its health and must email a counterpart in monitoring for help. This is one of the many ways fragmented processes slow work, degrade IT performance, and distract skilled professionals from higher-value tasks. Equipped with a more complete, holistic picture of the service environment and automatic access to the information they need, IT can respond more quickly with greater accuracy and support the development of future services.

3. **Visibility:** Information powers understanding and accurate action. Too often, organizations struggle because they lack the visibility to make the right decisions. IT can report on IT-centric metrics such as the number of incidents that have come in or the number of devices they have serviced, but not on things that matter most to the larger organization: how did a particular service slowdown or outage affect the business? Are business processes functioning properly?

A service management hub allows applications to both publish and pull data, information, and processes in response to the invocation of business events within the platform. This helps people see how issues with individual elements of the service impact the services they support throughout the business, instead of viewing items and issues in isolated terms. By visualizing macro trends and understanding the data movement supporting the business, IT can:

- See how services are being used, how healthy they are, and their dependencies with other services
- Know the true cost of each service to understand its financial impact and make informed decisions about whether it merits improvement or further investment
- Gauge service delivery to assess how consistently SLAs are being met, and why
- Identify services that are underutilized and wasting money

This visibility also helps IT identify trends and become proactive in addressing problems rather than just firefighting incidents. ITSM technology provides a comprehensive picture to understand what has happened and predict what will happen. From there, IT can make informed decisions on the future course and speed of service delivery initiatives. IT gains greater visibility in the organization as a strategic function that drives real business value.

4. **Platform:** As discussed earlier, a cloud-based ITSM platform is best able to unlock the full value of a service management hub for digital service innovation. Cloud-based delivery liberates the IT organization from tasks that lie outside its core competency while making it possible to bring the latest capabilities online faster. IT becomes a center for business-centric innovation, not manual tasks and basic maintenance.

In choosing a platform to power the hub, IT should evaluate solutions based on reliability, availability, security, and scalability. Key questions to consider include:

- Is the platform enterprise-ready? Can you trust it to power your business?
- How transparent is the vendor about the availability of the platform by region and time? Does the platform provide ready visibility into performance?
- What security certifications does the vendor have? Can you trust them with your business information?
- Can the platform scale to support your growth?

Given the role of integration for centralizing, standardizing, and connecting the spokes of the hub, out-of the box integrations and powerful APIs are essential. The platform must make it simple to connect seamlessly with the other technologies you rely on, such as monitoring tools and configuration management databases (CMDB) to help you understand and address emerging problems that can impact the business. It should also provide hooks into tools for project and portfolio management and other ancillary functions critical to your business.

The success of a service management hub depends on the ability to quickly personalize the service experience and deploy applications to different areas of the business. This should be possible without complex coding or development practices, which can make basic maintenance and updates a nightmare. The platform should allow easy configuration with minimal or no coding, as well as the ability to maintain personalizations seamlessly when the solution is updated. Beyond the platform itself, the solution should make available an ecosystem of applications for additional business cases. The cloud has made available many new ways of solving problems beyond traditional vendors; can the platform empower you to solve the problems that matter to your organization?

5. **Vendor Partnership:** A strategic initiative like a hub for digital service innovation calls for a vendor with a significant investment in customer success. The cloud is fully mainstream, and vendors no longer compete solely on price—they realize that they have to deliver partner value to compete. As a starting point, your partner should have a team invested in your success, including a dedicated success manager—not just a customer service representative, but someone who's performed similar implementations before. They should understand how to use technology in unique ways to help you create a services hub that powers your business.

Like any cloud project, a service management hub shouldn't take nine months or a year to complete deployment. The vendor should be able to achieve value realization in a matter of weeks—45 days is a reasonable expectation—and be able to offer proof from existing customers that they can hit this target.

Education and knowledge transfer are important considerations as well. Does the vendor have a service methodology that sets you up for ongoing success by preparing and empowering your team to make its own critical design decisions, or do they set up everything themselves, and then leave you to figure things out once they're gone? Once the hub is in place, you'll need to be able to bring people up to speed quickly on its configuration and usage, including new employees who join the organization at a future time. Make sure you understand the availability and cost of the online training resources you'll need.

While the cloud makes it possible to deliver frequent product updates to meet customer needs, not every vendor actually does so. Your vendor discussions should include both the speed of their release cycle and the opportunity for customer influence over their product roadmap. You should expect to gain new capabilities multiple times each year, and it should be easy to interact with the vendor to communicate your evolving needs and have a say in the product's direction over time.

THE SERVICE MANAGEMENT HUB FOR DIGITAL SERVICE INNOVATION IN ACTION

Mitchell International, North America's leading provider of property & casualty claims technology solutions, has implemented a hub for innovation that connects business and IT services and information throughout its organization. As a result:

Network operations and the service desk now share information seamlessly: Monitoring software triggers alerts in the ITSM system, while DevOps can put information into tickets so the latest status of requests and incidents is readily available without the need for email threads. IT can track issues more quickly, and service desk personnel can easily provide customers with status reports and an estimated repair time.

Centralized information makes it easier to identify root causes and correlate multiple incidents with one problem for faster, more efficient resolution: Problems can be routed seamlessly to the right people to fix them, all within the same tool.

Standardized, automated services empower business users with self-service tools: for new employee onboarding, requests for changes, customer invoicing, and many other processes.

Visibility and insight: into unified information across channels help the organization make better decisions.

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SUMMARY

A hub for digital service innovation across internal, external, corporate, and IT services is not only reasonable and achievable, but essential in today's business environment. It's time to shed the baggage of fragmented operations and processes, and embrace new expectations for a modern, innovative service hub that empowers business and IT users. ITSM organizations can play a leadership role in the initiative, offering critical experience and expertise to guide the organization to a streamlined services hub model. The cloud facilitates this transformation by freeing the organization to focus on its core competencies and leave infrastructure management to the cloud provider. Built from the cloud up, Remedyforce liberates you to create a rich services hub that meets current business needs while offering the flexibility and extensibility to evolve at the speed of business.

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