Leeds City Council

» Remedy OnDemand delivers comprehensive ITSM functionality plus the cost savings and efficiency of a subscription-based model

BENEFITS OF BMC REMEDY ONDEMAND FOR LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

» Comprehensive functionality without large capital outlays and long implementation cycles

» Remedy via the cloud is the same from work, home or on the road, ensuring high productivity

» Increasing adoption of BMC Service Request Management automates service requests, reducing the burden on the service desk staff

» Patching occurs automatically, with minimum of effort on the part of the IT staff

GEOGRAPHY
United Kingdom

INDUSTRY
Government

SOLUTIONS
BMC Remedy OnDemand

With a population of nearly 800,000, Leeds is the third largest and one of the fastest growing cities in the United Kingdom. The local economy is robust, and excellent road, rail and air links make the city a gateway for tourists and business people visiting the region.

Providing services for residents, businesses and visitors is the job of the Leeds City Council, which is one of the largest employers in the region and provides a full range of statutory local authority services, including education, housing and social services, waste collection and disposal, and environmental health. Information technology is critical to delivering these services in an efficient, effective manner. Around 12,000 Council employees rely on computer systems to be productive, and it's the job of the IT staff, made up of approximately 230 ICT staff (and another 200 who work for the five departments supporting specific systems) to keep those systems running smoothly.

For eight years, the Council has used BMC Remedy IT service management (ITSM) solutions from BMC Software to handle such processes as incident, problem and change management. The IT staff has upgraded and customized those solutions over the years. Most recently, the staff replaced its on-premise solution with BMC Remedy OnDemand to take advantage of BMC Remedy in a software-as-a-service (SaaS) model. This move has delivered considerable benefits to IT, to Council employees and to the public that the Council serves.

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CHOOSING SAAS

Two years ago, Leeds City Council reviewed its ITSM strategy and determined it was time to update both its processes and the software on which those processes were running. It was clear that an upgrade of the on-premise solution would be a big undertaking because the staff had customized the software considerably to allow it to meet IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards. Two important goals of the upgrade were, first, to leverage out-of-the-box processes and functionality as much as possible to realign to the ITIL standards and, second, to minimize costs and deliver a speedy implementation.

"As a tax-payer funded enterprise, we have to be keenly aware of how much we spend," said Mark Harrison, Senior Strategic Services Officer at Leeds City Council. "Basically, the bottom line is that money was a major factor in our decision to look at cloud solutions. Remedy OnDemand was the ideal fit. It allowed us to make a clean start with our processes and it offered us significant savings in terms of licensing, infrastructure costs and staff time required for managing internal systems." With Remedy OnDemand, the Council has all the functionality of its on-premise BMC Remedy solution with the advantages of cloud-based delivery and subscription pricing.

CLOUD BENEFITS

Remedy OnDemand is delivering on the promise of cloud computing at Leeds City Council. With the move to SaaS, IT was able to decommission several servers, which reduced maintenance costs and power consumption and freed up not only data center

space but also staff time required to manage and maintain those servers. Additionally, patching occurs automatically now. In the past, rolling out a patch typically took three to five days of testing in both development and QA environments plus the time involved for the actual go-live. According to Harrison, moving the patch into production often required downtime, so the task had to be scheduled on a weekend, which also meant overtime pay. With Remedy OnDemand, patches and updates occur with minimal effort on the part of the IT staff. "We no longer have to worry about it," Harrison noted. "BMC manages everything for us and we get a notification ahead of time that the patch will go in. It's quite a big bonus for us."

HELPING THE SERVICE DESK

For the service desk, the transition to an OnDemand version of Remedy was straightforward because agents were already familiar with how incident and problem management work within BMC Remedy. The staff of 12 receives approximately 350 calls a day, handling a broad range of issues from password resets and file restores to infrastructure and application issues.

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> SENIOR STRATEGIC SERVICES OFFICER

Continuing to use Remedy via an OnDemand solution gives the staff an efficient way to log incidents and ensure rapid resolution. Data is captured for review and analysis, enabling the staff to pinpoint and fix recurring problems to improve overall service delivery. For example, recently agents received a few calls early in the morning related to

accessing the virtual private network (VPN). "We have a number of employees — for example, social services people — who work remotely." Harrison explained. "They rely on the VPN to access case information. They are often dealing with vulnerable members of the community. Children in foster care, the elderly. If they can't access case notes for a client, they may not be able to respond quickly to meet that client's needs. Our ability to be proactive in identifying the VPN outage meant we had the service restored before most of those employees were starting to work, so they were able to access the services and data they needed."

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MANAGING CHANGE

Because of the size of the infrastructure and the critical nature of many of the services provided by IT, maintaining rigorous control over the change process is essential. "We have massive dependencies across the environment, and making a change to a system without proper planning and authorization could disrupt services and make it hard for Council employees to get their jobs done," Harrison noted. As part of the move to Remedy OnDemand, and it being more aligned to ITIL processes, we were able to use out-of-the-box processes, rather than customizing as before

"Combined with a move to using Work Orders, we're doing a better job now of handling emergency and expedited changes," Harrison added. "And major changes — for example, changes to our website that's available to the public — continue to go through our CAB [change approval board] where we discuss all the possible impacts with clearer visibility than previously."

AUTOMATING SERVICE REQUESTS

Although the Council was using Remedy Service Request Management (SRM) prior to implementing Remedy OnDemand, IT had not fully exploited these capabilities and only about five percent of requests were submitted automatically. Since moving to Remedy OnDemand, the IT staff has been promoting the submission of incident tickets and service requests through the SRM portal and has actually mandated that requests for the purchase of new hardware and software be funneled through that channel.

Today, approximately 20 percent of requests come in through Service Request Management, and the benefits are significant. Instead of spending up to 20 minutes on the phone with an agent providing information about a request, employees go online and fill out a short, standardized form. The request is then routed automatically to the correct group for fulfillment.

"We're probably saving at least 10 minutes per request by using this automated approach," Harrison said. "We've eliminated the back and forth that used to go on between the requester and the service desk. And now we have more accurate information because the requester enters the details directly on the form. So, if someone is requesting access to a network folder, he can copy and paste the path into the form instead of reading it on the phone to the service desk who work in a noisy environment and can mishear things."

The staff has increased the number of items available through the service request catalog from 120 to 150, and interest in using this capability is rising. The staff have also revamped online forms to make them easier to use and have enhanced navigation and search. Their efforts are paying off: Adoption is increasing and various groups are asking for the ability to use Service Request Management for an increasing number of request and incident types.

CUSTOMER'S FINAL WORDS

"Cloud has been getting a lot of attention these days, and we were looking at ways to try it out and see what it could do for us," Harrison concluded. "Remedy OnDemand was our first cloud solution within ICT. It has helped us experience firsthand what the cloud can offer, and that has helped us in defining our cloud strategy."

ABOUT LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

Situated in the middle of the United Kingdom, with a diverse population of 751,500, Leeds is the third largest and one of the fastest growing, greenest cities in the UK. The city's thriving economy boasts strengths in financial services, legal, manufacturing, health and retail. Leeds has excellent road, rail and air links, providing a gateway for tourist and business visitors to the region. Trinity Leeds, the £350 million retail development reinforces Leeds as one of the finest shopping destinations in the UK. The recently opened First Direct Arena provides Leeds with one of the finest city centre concert arena in the UK. The city also known for its top-quality educational institutions as well as cultural and sporting venues.

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