Case Study: Realizing Efficiencies Through SaaS-based IT Service Management

News.co.uk

SUMMARY

Catalyst

SaaS-deployed IT service management (ITSM) technologies have continued to increase in popularity. While much consideration is often made to the initial cost efficiencies associated with SaaS solutions, this News UK case study outlines in detail the potential for SaaS to contribute to the improvement of other efficiencies, such as response times, first-line resolution rates, and customer satisfaction levels, to name only a few.

Ovum view

Key drivers in the decision for organizations to adopt new ITSM technology can be widespread, but common feedback gained through Ovum's research and conversations with enterprise clients indicates that automation capability and a desire to move to a cloud-based architecture are key considerations for many decision-makers. Realizing some of the tangible resource savings that such functionality can help in delivering requires IT departments to have a clear understanding of how technology capabilities will improve current operations and help IT departments to realize value.

An identified and notable strength of the solution News UK adopted, BMC Remedyforce, is that of the solution's extensibility. Because it is built on the Force.com platform it enables BMC Software to both proactively and reactively exploit innovative capabilities in response to customer demands and BMC's own development. BMC Remedyforce offers many integrations with applications such as Bomgar (remote support) and Cloud Coach (project and portfolio management), and while some potential

customers may not find immediate value in such integrations, adopting a solution that offers this extensibility is desirable in light of the ever increasing rate of technology change.

Issues that News UK experienced in the early stages of the solution's deployment highlight the importance of building strong relationships with partners that are aiding the implementation process. The common interest of such a partnership should be the customer's objective. Consistent communication and collaboration over what is to be achieved is therefore vital.

Key messages

- Developing a clear understanding of the adopted technologies' capabilities is vital in managing stakeholder expectations.
- Automating a bad process will not make it better. If a process is to be automated, it must be well-defined and repeatable.
- Cost, scalability, and ease of administration were key factors in the decision-making process of moving to SaaS-based ITSM technology.
- Developing an ongoing customer and supplier relationship that has the customer's objectives as the common interest is essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENTERPRISES

Key lessons learnt

When effectively utilized, ITSM technology can be a critical component in ensuring that IT departments act as a strategic business partner. Key to ensuring that any new ITSM technology is implemented and utilized effectively are the partnerships that a customer, vendor, and third-party delivery partner (where required) establish. Independent of how a technology is deployed, or of the functionality and capability a solution may offer, should such a partnership based on the partners' common interests not exist, then expectations and desired utilization goals may not be met.

News UK experienced the importance of developing a strong partnership with implementation partners. During the project, News UK identified that the third-party delivery partner initially aiding with the implementation lacked the resources to maintain pace with the company's needs and expectations. While such a revelation may risk jeopardizing such a large-scale project, News UK cites the formation of a strong direct partnership with BMC as being pivotal in the company's delivery of the project and ultimately leveraging value from the adoption of BMC Remedyforce. Such a partnership allows customers to exploit functionality that can help in overcoming current and future challenges, while also offering a vendor perspective regarding how the capability could be improved or exploited more effectively by other customers.

Another factor identified by News UK as being essential to successful adoption and utilization of SaaS-based ITSM technology is that of developing knowledge and a clear understanding of the product's capabilities from the outset and then relating how the capabilities can help the business realize value. The self-service capability offered by BMC Remedyforce is a good example of this. The functionality not only helped improve the service experience for supported users, but also helped the IT

department scale back on expensive support resources. Not having this universal understanding can lead to confusion over what was initially promised (from a capability perspective) compared to what was eventually delivered.

SOLUTION SELECTION

Background

News UK is part of News Corp, a global media and information services company that delivers journalism via web-based platforms and publications including The Sunday Times and The Sun. In June 2011 News UK began the procurement process for a new ITSM solution. The company's motivations for selecting a new ITSM technology included the need to reduce costs by moving to a SaaS-based solution and a desire to adopt a tool that offered greater levels of functionality when compared to the one currently being used. BMC Remedyforce was selected by News UK in June 2011 after a selection process that involved project scoping, formalization of capability requirements, and tool comparisons.

Selection criteria

Before considering any new technology, News UK conducted an assessment of the toolset currently adopted, and in doing so highlighted a number of opportunities that would become essential considerations when selecting new technology. Prior to making a definitive decision about which shortlisted tool would be adopted, actual end users of the system were invited to trial the solutions and provide their feedback. This was a very commendable management decision and one that Ovum believes certainly contributed to developing the cultural acceptance of the new tool.

As a key functionality consideration, News UK had identified technology that could support the automation of defined and repeatable processes. Automation continues to be an area of focus for enterprises exploring how to reduce IT-related expenditure and enable IT departments to work more productively. In the ITSM space, automation of high-level processes or tasks (such as password resets) is becoming increasingly common. The appeal of automation to enterprises is the ability to reduce the resources required to manage common processes or tasks. The appeal to vendors is to offer technology that can help IT departments do more with less, a key requirement for many IT departments when selecting new tools. Ovum believes that ITSM technology automation capabilities are set to further accelerate. As enterprises continue to strive in improving IT efficiencies, vendors will aim to meet these demands through further development of more intelligent automation capabilities.

Self-service functionality was another key consideration for News UK. The previously adopted technology was an ageing and unsupported tool that offered no self-service capabilities. This is another area that technology vendors are continuing to develop in response to the needs of customers in empowering supported users, while also reducing the low-level incident-management and request-fulfillment activities traditionally carried out by the service desk function. News UK recognized that BMC Remedyforce offered good self-service functionality out-of-the-box that post-implementation would allow the organization to realize benefits related to cost reduction and user empowerment.

Cost was also an important factor in News UK choosing to adopt a SaaS-based solution. During the selection process, the company never considered an on-premise tool. Adopting BMC Remedyforce meant that News UK would no longer have to expend resources in managing the internal infrastructure that supported the previously adopted on-premise tool. Apart from the immediate cost savings, News UK also cited the ease and speed of upgrading as being another reason in choosing to consider only a SaaS-deployed tool. The company felt strongly about this because the previously adopted tool was out of date, and through lack of upgrades had become somewhat incapable of helping the organization in overcoming new and complex challenges that it faced.

Before adopting the BMC Remedyforce solution, News UK had chosen Salesforce.com as the company's cloud platform partner. Built on the Force.com platform, BMC Remedyforce is part of the Force.com ecosystem, and this was a key factor in the selection process. BMC Remedyforce has demonstrated capabilities in integrating with other applications available on the Force.com platform and this makes the solution very extensible.

SOLUTION ANALYSIS

Solution deployment

News UK initiated the deployment project for the implementation of BMC Remedyforce in August 2011 and the product was put into production in March 2012. In addition to the internal project manager appointed for driving and delivering the project, the project delivery team also comprised of internal process managers, end users, third-party technical support personnel, and a service manager. Internal process managers where responsible for the design, testing, and sign-off of their respective processes. ITIL is good practice, but the framework only becomes best practice when the theory is practically tailored and applied to an organization. The internal process managers on this project were also empowered to deliver training to end users relative to their particular managed processes.

News UK also selected a number of end users from various areas of the IT department and with various different perspectives to test and sign off on each process and work stream as they were delivered. Such an approach is beneficial, because it helps not only iron out any issues that the development team may have missed or overlooked, but also provides insight into other opportunities not initially considered that could be realized through the use of the tool.

Promoting effective utilization of new technology can be challenging if product champions that are capable of advertising and relating specific use-case benefits to fellow team members do not exist. News UK recognized this and overcame the challenge through empowering the selected end users responsible for testing as subject-matter experts who adopted the role of being a single point of contact for their respective teams during the go-live phase of the project.

As a result of BMC Remedyforce being the first SaaS-based ITSM solution ever adopted by News UK, the company selected and relied on an external project partner to deliver the technical aspects of the project, with internal resources managing the non-technical aspects, such as process and workflow. This was due to internal resources possessing good knowledge and experience in developing IT processes to a mature level. In reality, the internal resources also adopted a solid technical understanding of the tool throughout the course of the project.

The service is accessible via common web browsers, with no internal technical infrastructure requirements or overheads other than a stable Internet connection. Capacity management and change management planning activities were required in order to ensure that any increase in network traffic was not detrimental to existing application performance.

Outcomes

The utilization of an unsupported ITSM toolset brings with it risks, specifically around security, availability, and sustainability in supporting optimal service delivery. In adopting BMC Remedyforce, risks such as these have been significantly reduced through the utilization of a tool that is supported and extensible to the organization's current and future needs.

The technology has also enabled News UK to realize new efficiencies through developed self-service and automation capabilities. With all eyes on cost, IT departments can demonstrate greater levels of business value in demonstrating these efficiencies, and reducing IT resources therefore remains a focus for IT departments. This trend has led to an increased need for ITSM technology to support more advanced automation and self-service functionality. BMC Remedyforce continues to develop capabilities to help customers overcome these challenges.

ITSM technologies are evolving more rapidly than ever before, with many solutions following a consistent upgrade schedule that offers new and improved capabilities, particularly in response to mobile (BYOx) and engagement (social and gamification) trends. ITSM technology that constantly evolves and helps customers realize value from change and disruption can prove to be continually enabling and help IT departments realize sustained value from an investment. News UK has been very impressed with the way in which the BMC Remedyforce solution has evolved, and is equally impressed with the tools roadmap going forward in delivering additional functionality that the organization is confident it will be able to gain further value from.

The adoption of a SaaS ITSM solution has also enabled News UK to realize further benefits as a result of the organization no longer needing to manage the internal infrastructure that supported the previously adopted on-premise solution. IT staff are now able to focus on delivering and supporting services as opposed to expending effort on managing internal infrastructure resources and assets.

APPENDIX

Methodology

- Interview with the service operations manager of News UK, and BMC Remedyforce development staff, who provided insight on the solution, adoption motivations, and overall strategy.
- Various data sources including a questionnaire.
- Primary and secondary research.

Author

Adam Holtby, Research Analyst, Software Solutions

adam.holtby@ovum.com

Ovum Consulting

We hope that this analysis will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Ovum's consulting team may be able to help you. For more information about Ovum's consulting capabilities, please contact us directly at consulting@ovum.com.

Disclaimer