"Traditionally, requesting a new web browser took a lot of time—the delivery part alone averaged 11 hours. We wanted to simplify the process for the user and in the process, speed up delivery."

This ServiceNow case study is based on an interview with Philip Murray, process manager for Standard Life.

Standard Life

Highlights
Standard Life uses service automation to enable employee self-service with ServiceNow, speeding service and eliminating manual intervention

Business
Financial services

Company Size
9,000 employees

Geographies
UK, Europe, North America, Asia Pacific, Middle East

Challenges
Reliance on manual processes led to time delays in providing services

Several different request systems meant that users often used the wrong systems to place requests, which caused unnecessary delays in provisioning

Results
Standard Life can now deliver requested software to users in 3 minutes, compared to nearly 11 hours previously

Self-service has extended to more IT-based functions within the company so users can, through a portal, find the items they need

A consumer-like service catalog complete with images makes the request process easier and more pleasant to use

From Ordinary to Extraordinary: Breathing New Life into IT

Standard Life, the nearly 190-year-old life savings and investment company, is a very different institution than it was three years ago. After many years successfully transforming the company into the profitable, customer-focused company it is today, it was time to take that transformation further—beyond its brand, customer insight and investment performance to IT.

"We wanted IT to provide the highest possible level of customer service to all areas of the organization," said Philip Murray, process manager for Standard Life.

A fundamental step was providing a system where internal customers could order products and services from an online catalog without human intervention and track the progress of that order through delivery. First, Standard Life would have to overcome multiple IT interfaces and systems and ad hoc and informal workflows.

Using the IT Service Automation Suite from ServiceNow, Standard Life was able to standardize on a single system of record for IT, with a single interface for incidents, problems and changes and unified data enabling streamlined processes for incidents, problems and changes. It also vastly improved generation of metrics and data, and allowed managers to more accurately track Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

Formalizing configuration management by implementing ServiceNow's Configuration Management database (CMDB) was the last building block Standard Life had to tackle before diving head first into self-service. The team first developed a basic configuration database and then steadily added more structure around defining configuration items properly and putting in the proper classes. By upgrading the company's ability to fully understand the dependencies and relationships of specific configuration items to business services, the stage would be set.

Reaching self-service goals with Service Catalog and CMS
With the basics for real transformation in place, the time was right to add the self-service capabilities for employees by creating a single portal with defined workflows for as many service requests as possible. It was critical that the portal was backed by only one system housing data that was the single source of truth to ensure accuracy. With this as the goal, the team was confident that Standard Life would be able to speed service delivery and eliminate manual intervention.

As Standard Life did with the first phase of ServiceNow implementation, it turned to Focus Group Europe for help in defining processes and implementing ServiceNow applications.

Once the project was underway, Murray said "We could have done it on our own but it would have been acceptable. What Focus Group Europe has done by developing a user-friendly, efficient, image-rich system is a game-changer; they really came up with some innovative and unique ways to improve self-service beyond what we could have envisioned."

Focus Group Europe and Standard Life worked together to define the best way to create a service catalog that would emulate a consumer-like online shopping experience. The result should be simple and elegant, they agreed, allowing users to access a simple portal, type a word or phrase into a search box, and get a list of request choices represented by images.

A Consumerized request experience for self-service, complete with images
Standard Life created its IT service portal with ServiceNow's Content Management System (CMS) on the front end. Through this single page, users can access the service catalog, as well as other parts of ServiceNow including the knowledge base. They also can check on the progress of incidents they have raised, log a problem or access the knowledge base. With these capabilities, users remain informed and don't have to constantly request status updates from IT. They also can access information on their own to solve minor problems without resorting to logging incidents, reducing the IT workload.

Focus Group Europe spent time customizing the front end to provide users with a page that fits with Standard Life's brand and color scheme, making it look and feel like part of a typical Standard Life application. It also made extensive use of image-based capabilities available in ServiceNow to help bring the system alive. "It's astonishingly close to the same experience they would get with a consumerized online shopping site," Murray said.

At the same time, Standard Life worked with Focus Group Europe to automate the way requests are processed behind the scenes. A previous system for automating some workflows, gave Standard Life very little oversight—something Murray wanted to correct with the new system. With its network of fixed workflows, all steps in a process are followed the same way every time, from request through approval, validation and delivery.

Murray explains with the simple example of employees who request a new web browser—something that requires approval at Standard Life. "Traditionally, a user requesting a new browser took a lot of time," he said. "We wanted them to be able to simplify the process for the user and in the process, speed up delivery." After obtaining proper approvals, the last step in the workflow for getting a new browser, requires approval from Standard Life's identity management system (IDM). This step has also been integrated. While information for a request formerly had to be entered into a separate IDM system, ServiceNow now automatically routes data to the IDM. This helps reduce the time to delivery and eliminates manual intervention.

The results have been impressive; while it used to take nearly 11 hours to approve and deliver a new browser—from validation through delivery—it now takes just three minutes.

Because self-service for requesting software has gone so well, Standard Life has applied service automation to other access request processes such as integrating with a separate database for access requests that is heavily tied into Active Directory and the mainframe with ServiceNow.

> "[The new self-service portal] is astonishingly close to the same experience they would get with a consumerized online shopping site."

Products
ServiceNow® IT
Service Automation Suite:

ServiceNow® Incident and Problem Management

ServiceNow® Change and Release Management

ServiceNow® Service Catalog

ServiceNow® Configuration Management

Orchestrating transformation

The next step in Standard Life's IT transformation is one that will automate more business processes in the IT department. Once complete, it will allow users to request virtually anything of the IT department, from an IP address or DNS change to a server build. All requests will go through the portal, which will eliminate ad hoc requests and processes. It will also automate and monitor governance around which users are eligible for certain requests and remove access for users who have left the company.

Like all requests, these will go through the portal and backed by the same data as the rest of the ServiceNow-based systems. ServiceNow will then pass those requests to Microsoft Orchestrator, which will either process the request or integrate to relevant systems. The request will then be sent back to ServiceNow with the task complete.

The quest for complete self-service will continue after the orchestration piece is complete. A future project will improve the availability of knowledge information through the portal, for example.

The key to successful transformation, Murray said, is to use the right tool for the right job. It's that kind of thoughtful approach that will keep Standard Life innovating in the future.

> "What Focus Group Europe has done by developing a user-friendly, efficient, image-rich system is a game-changer; they really came up with some innovative and unique ways to improve self-service beyond what we could have envisioned."

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