



New look Ionix Service Desk proves New Year hit for Federal Hotels

Business profile

Customer

Federal Group

Industry

Leisure

Challenges

- Implement ITIL best practice to provide the following benefits:
 - Reduce rework, increase productivity and reduce costs
 - Establish baselines to measure improvements
 - Improve the communication and information flow
 - Realise the benefits of structured process maturity improvements

Key Solutions

EMC Ionix Service Manager for Incident, Problem, Change Management, CMDB, Configuration Management Automated Workflows, Service Catalog, Service Level Management, Knowledge Management and Service Portal

Benefits

- Out-of-the-box CMDB integration with existing systems
- Easy to configure without customizations.
- Efficiency gains include improved first line resolution rate and Knowledge re-use
- High levels of customer satisfaction

With activities dating back to the 1880's, the Federal Hotels brand is one of the oldest in Australia. In more recent times, the group opened Australia's first legal casino in 1975 at Wrest Point Hobart. Today the Federal Group is an award winning, privately held company, having expanded significantly in the last 35 years with the opening of Country Club Tasmania, creation of the Vantage Hotel Group and Network Gaming, and the evolution of the ground-breaking "Pure Tasmania" tourism properties (www.puretasmania.com.au).

With its origins - and its future - firmly established in tourism, hospitality and entertainment, the Federal Group is one of Australia's most dynamic companies and is Tasmania's largest private sector employer, with more than 2,100 employees.

Delivering fine accommodation and inspiring experiences is core to the Federal brand, and behind the scenes, the company's Technology Services Group (TSG) acts as the internal service provider to its entire range of diverse and expanding businesses. TSG has 38 staff members ranging from Infrastructure and Network Services through to the frontline Service Desk team.

Business growth has seen the expectations placed on TSG fundamentally change. As Brendan Charles, Service Delivery Manager at Federal puts it, "In an organization with fewer than 1,000 employees, a fairly informal IT support set up may work reasonably well. But in recent years, the business has more than doubled in size and the 'who you know' approach to IT support no longer sufficed."

Thoroughly evaluating EMC Ionix

Consequently, in 2007 Federal decided to adopt the ITIL best practice framework and began the search for a new software tool to help ensure a speedy and successful implementation. A project team, which included an independent consultant, was set up to conduct a thorough market evaluation with leading suppliers benchmarked against criteria for Incident, Problem, Change and Service Level Management, CMDB capabilities and Reporting as well as Total Cost of Ownership.

"As the evaluation concluded, it was evident that EMC Ionix Service Manager was the superior solution for our needs in every category," comments Brendan, "Having made our decision, we found that the EMC implementation consultant was excellent, working hand-in-glove with our project team and ITIL process consultant to achieve rapid implementation of the new processes. And, as anticipated, we were easily able to configure the system to our requirements without the need for time-consuming customizations."



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Several months later, training and testing were complete and following its formal launch in January 2008, the new Service Desk and supporting processes got off to a flying start in the New Year.

Successful Service Desk launch

Previously, lack of visibility of the ICT infrastructure had proved a major inhibitor for TSG. However, EMC Ionix Service Manager offered out-of-the-box connectivity with Microsoft SCCM and Active Directory, allowing the CMDB to be instantly populated with selected asset and user data. On-screen information could be readily configured to maximize usability, for instance, giving access for the first time to detailed information and history on Customers, Configuration Items (CI) and planned Changes. Being able to link and search data easily was a significant improvement on the previous solutions.

“At the end of the day, IT is here to serve the business. EMC Ionix made it easy for us to keep our New Year resolutions in this regard in 2008 and throughout 2009, and we are anticipating great things in 2010 as we continue to build our CMDB, ramp up the self-service Portal and formally launch our SLA’s.”

Brendan Charles, Service Delivery Manager , Federal Hotels

TSG is responsible for everything from supporting routine PC and printer service requests and password resets right through to maintaining the uptime of revenue generating systems such as Property Management, Point of Sale, Ticketing etc. These are the lifeblood of the organization and underpin everything from the checkout experience for hotel guests to ticketing for shows, boat trips and restaurant reservations.

“The positive impact of the new CMDB in keeping business critical systems running smoothly cannot be over-emphasized,” maintains Brendan, “For the first time we have a real-time graphical representation of the links between infrastructure, giving us the ability to analyse outages and changes more thoroughly. We are also better able to manage our assets and know what we have and where it is. In my opinion, the CMDB literally earns its keep every day in this respect alone.”

“Everyone in the department uses EMC Ionix to manage the support call lifecycle, and because we now have the ability to classify calls, we can ensure that different services receive the level of priority that reflects their value to the business,” continues Brendan. “The great thing is that every call can now be tracked through to closure with clear ownership and actions assigned.”

As customer confidence has grown, the number of calls logged by the single-point-of-contact Service Desk, manned by a team of 3 frontline analysts, has risen significantly. For less urgent matters, tasks can be scheduled, allowing field engineers to produce tailored worksheets for their next visit to a remote site – an important consideration given the geographically dispersed nature of the hotels and venues within the Group.

Consistently high service levels

According to Brendan, the Ionix Knowledge Base has proved another significant weapon in TSG’s armoury. “Although we didn’t consider it initially, we found that the integrated Ionix Knowledge Bank was very easy to use, and we began, almost organically, to build up a repository of valuable information relating to calls. So now, say there is a call relating to a ticketing system for boat trips on the West Coast, the analyst can instantly see any previous Knowledge Article relating to the same topic, which is obviously very important in getting a quick resolution when you have guests waiting to board.”

“The positive impact of the new CMDB in keeping business critical systems running smoothly cannot be over-emphasized. For the first time we have a real-time graphical representation of the infrastructure with the ability to simulate outages and rehearse Changes. In my opinion, the CMDB literally earns its keep every day in this respect alone.”

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“The Knowledge Bank has certainly helped to counteract our over-dependence on individual ‘experts’, who now don’t have to be available 24x7 or pose such a risk if they subsequently moved on. It has also proved an invaluable tool for inducting new staff.”

Consistency has been a watchword for the new Service Desk according to Brendan, and it has not gone unnoticed. “Our internal customers are certainly happier with the level of service they receive these days. We are now resolving 30+% of calls at first point of contact - up from just 5% beforehand when using alternative solutions and external staffing - which has eased the burden on our specialist second line resources and lowered our average cost of handling calls. Our regular satisfaction survey also shows that 90% of customers now rate the service as ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

Having benchmarked its services against internal targets over the past year or so, TSG is now planning to introduce more formal Service Level Management processes. Reporting within EMC Ionix has allowed management to better understand how the team has been performing, and to begin to set realistic and relevant Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The Ionix Service Workflow and Customer Portal are now being used to automate the new starter process and this tool may in future be expanded to include other transactions, for example allowing staff to purchase ‘retired’ PCs for personal use.

Brendan Charles sums it up, “At the end of the day, IT is here to serve the business. EMC Ionix made it easy for us to keep our New Year resolutions in this regard in 2008 and throughout 2009, and we are anticipating great things in 2010 as we continue to build our CMDB, ramp up the self-service Portal and formally launch our SLA’s.”



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