

Oklahoma City uses VMware Service Manager to streamline and improve its ITIL Service Management

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– David Grothe, Business Systems Manager, Oklahoma City

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Customer

Oklahoma City

Industry

Local Government

Challenges

- Better visibility of the IT infrastructure
- More efficient use of IT resources
- Increased customer satisfaction

Key Solutions

Implement ITIL best practice using VMware Service Manager

Benefits

- Closer alignment between IT and the wider organization
- Effective use of resources
- Improved service delivery

Oklahoma City

Implement ITIL best practice using VMware Service Manager

Oklahoma City is the capital and largest city of Oklahoma. Founded during the land rush of 1889, today's Oklahoma City is a thriving metropolis with a population of 506,000 and spans an area of 621 square miles.

Oklahoma City provides a wide range of citizen services, from housing and trash collection through to emergency ambulance and fire services and policing, with public safety accounting for 55% of the City's General Fund budget. Within the operational structure, the Information and Technology Department - a group of around ninety staff - is tasked with supporting and maintaining all aspects of the City's IT infrastructure, including desktops, networks, servers and application support along with telecommunications and GIS systems.

Within excess of 2,300 desktops plus over 800 laptops in the field to support, the IT Department was reliant on a basic database for asset tracking. Furthermore, Incident Management fell to different teams across the group on a roster basis, yet there was no centralized system to log, monitor and report on calls.

According to David Grothe, Business Systems Manager for Oklahoma City, “It had reached the stage where we clearly needed a much more sophisticated system - one that would allow us to manage Incidents across a wide range of desktops and laptops and a diverse group of users. We also needed to proactively support the City's operations rather than just react to calls.”

Selecting an ITIL-ready solution

Recognizing the need to improve both service desk efficiency and visibility of the IT infrastructure, the department made the decision to implement a comprehensive IT Service Management solution based upon IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practice. A detailed review of the market, encompassing fifteen vendors ensued. In due course, VMware Service Manager was selected from a shortlist of four.

Grothe explains, “First and foremost, VMware Service Manager was 100% web-based; ensuring a fast and easy implementation. Equally important, it fully supports ITIL processes at an enhanced level, future-proofing the solution.”

“With VMware Service Manager, we received the call center solution we desperately required straightaway, with the ability to introduce request and Change Management shortly afterwards. We could also add further VMware modules at our convenience without any integration issues. Key considerations for us were the Customer Portal, Knowledge Base and impressive Service Level Management functionality.”

Easy integration of asset and user data

From start to finish, the initial Service Desk implementation took just one month. Using VMware's out-of-the-box connectors, the department was easily able to populate and maintain VMware Service Manager's Configuration Management Database (CMDB) with user and asset data already stored within Active Directory and SMS.

Prior to implementing VMware Service Manager, the IT department had no system capable of tracking any assets other than desktops. Now applications, servers and printers, radios issued to individual users, as well as the laptops mounted in police cars and fire vehicles can be easily tracked within VMware Service Manager's CMDB. The CMDB also provides visibility of the relationship between users, workgroups, assets and services.

Improved Service Desk efficiency

Typically analysts on frontline duty handle around 900 Incidents per month. A large volume of calls relate to the organization's Enterprise Resource Planning system as well as to account issues, such as virus cleaning and, more recently, to the implementation of a new 800 megahertz radio system. The system has been fitted into every police car, ambulance and fire engine; and key employees, from police officers to parks employees, rely on it to carry out their work.

The loss of a radio in a fire or the inability to communicate with colleagues can have a critical impact on both productivity and safety. Significantly the new VMware Service Manager system provides customized asset and request screens, which enable priorities to be established instantly. There has also been a marked increase in efficiency, with three out of five Incidents closed within four hours, and four out of five within 24 hours.

Grothe comments, "We started off simply logging calls in VMware Service Manager, but swiftly moved into proactive Service Desk mode: analysts respond to calls, track calls through to closure, put exception reports in place, and monitor time spent resolving certain types of calls. Using VMware's flexible Service Level Management capabilities we have been able to set targets for handling Incidents, Problems and service requests according to call type and user - in fact, it's been surprisingly easy to build policies around the system."

Active performance management

Team members are now able to review performance statistics and analyze the reasons for any breaches in service. Reporting within VMware Service Manager has also dramatically increased visibility of the department's activities, enabling customers to see what Incidents have occurred within their own departments and what costs have been incurred. As a next step, the IT Department is planning to introduce formal Service Level Agreements in 2007.

"Now we can show people exactly what the department is doing by printing a customized report," comments Grothe, "This has helped us to build roles and responsibilities between the IT Department and Managers in all the other departments we support. We can now set goals for what items we are going to support, the level at which they will be supported, response times and the cost of that support."

Communication with individual users has greatly improved as well. VMware Service Manager's email integration allows automatic updates to be sent to customers, informing them of where their request or problem is on the job list and how long it will be until the call is resolved. It has also become much easier to garner feedback from customers and benchmark customer satisfaction using automated customer surveys within VMware Service Manager.

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“The VMware Service Manager project has been excellent throughout and VMware personnel have been extremely responsive to our needs,” states Grothe.

“Prior to VMware Service Manager there was no way to even track calls or monitor our workload let alone to adjust our activities to better support the City’s operational goals. Using VMware Service Manager has turned the whole thing around for us, enabling us to use resources much more efficiently, report meaningfully on our activities and communicate seamlessly with our customer base.”

