

Wolverhampton City Council Measures Up with VMware Service Manager



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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Customer

Wolverhampton City Council

Industry

Government

Challenges

- Improve the quality and visibility of IT services

Key Solutions

Implement Service Management best practice using ITIL

Benefits

- Faster call resolution
- More efficient use of resources
- Improved service delivery

Wolverhampton City Council

Implement Service Management best practice using ITIL

Wolverhampton City Council provides a wide range of public services, including education and learning, health and social care, housing, transport and environmental services, to an estimated population of 239,100 people. The Authority employs 12,000 staff engaged in over 600 trades and professions, playing an active part in helping to improve the local community. Operationally reliant on increasingly complex technology and systems, the organization has recently adopted a Service Management focus within its Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS) department as part of a drive to improve IT support and customer satisfaction.

ICTS, a department of 90 staff, provides IT services for the whole of Wolverhampton City Council’s workforce, including a sizeable contingent of roaming users, such as social services professionals. More than 200 remote locations including libraries and community centres are also supported. The server and network infrastructure is maintained by 34 Technical Operations staff; and a Service group of 28 run the Service Desk, desktop support and training.

Tasked with improving the quality and visibility of IT services provided to the organization, ICTS elected to implement Service Management best practise using ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) processes. A new head of IT was recruited with a mission to improve services and a programme of ITIL training for all ICTS staff commenced. The Authority also reviewed the market for the most appropriate IT Service Management tools for a new Service Desk solution.

Previously ICTS used a mainframe-based call logging system to log service calls. This system required a significant amount of manual effort to maintain and it was extremely difficult to produce even basic measures such as numbers, categories and length of calls. Compounding the issue, many calls were actually bypassing the Service Desk altogether.

The importance of ITIL best practise

A new system was required that would provide a robust functionality for Incident, Problem and Service Management as well as integrated Change Management. The ability to build a Knowledge Base organically was also key. Wolverhampton City Council issued its requirements specification to a number of suppliers including VMware. It was essential that the selected system fully supported ITIL processes and could be easily implemented without significant customization. After due consideration, VMware’s 100% web-based software, VMware Service Manager, was selected.

According to Nigel Bacon, Technical Operations Manager at Wolverhampton City Council, “Quite simply VMware Service Manager ticked all the right boxes, meeting our requirements and providing best value versus depth of functionality. With this out-of-the-box solution, we could move from reactive call logging to proactive service straight away. We were also able to introduce more effective performance measures, which immediately had a positive impact on service delivery.”

“Our department’s mission is to provide high quality yet cost-effective services to support the Council and we see our relationship with VMware as key to achieving this goal.”

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Automated population of the Configuration Management Database

A significant factor in the Council’s decision was VMware Service Manager’s easy integration with third party applications including Active Directory and SMS. This enabled the Council to use existing user and asset data to populate the Configuration Management Database (CMDB). The Council was also easily able to map fields into VMware Service Manager relating to the organizational structure, service groups, departments and teams. Equally important, with over 4,500 desktops to support, ICTS can now use SMS asset tag data to pull up individual PC or laptop records within VMware Service Manager.

“VMware Service Manager immediately removed the potential headache of having to maintain another separate database – a crucial consideration when you’re dealing with thousands of users and desktops,” explains Bacon. “We were able to rapidly populate the CMDB, something that we previously feared would prove time-consuming and problematic to achieve.”

Closing more calls, faster

Following several formal training sessions and workshops with VMware, implementation went very smoothly, with users commenting favourably on the quality of documentation provided with the product.

The frontline Service Desk – a team of six – deals with around 700 calls per week. Calls are now logged systematically in VMware Service Manager with any member of the ICTS department able to log an Incident or Service Request, improving visibility of the volume and type of issues being handled.

Around 30% of calls are now resolved by the frontline Service Desk with the remainder escalated to second or third line support, then tracked through to closure within VMware Service Manager. The VMware Service Manager system also enables issues relating to third party suppliers such as BT and Telewest to be seamlessly tracked. Since implementing VMware Service Manager, half of all calls are now resolved in less than one hour, and 80% of all calls are closed within one day.

Bacon comments, “Just a few weeks after implementing VMware Service Manager, the improvement in resolution times was striking. Before VMware Service Manager we would typically have 250 calls outstanding at the end of the week. This figure has been cut by 70%, due in part to our ability to measure performance and identify training issues much more efficiently thanks to the monitoring and reporting tools within VMware Service Manager.”

“The VMware Service Manager system is helping us to be much more proactive. It can automatically highlight the types of calls logged and we can create forums to assign particular types of calls to virtual teams across departmental boundaries. This is a key factor in helping us to resolve certain issues faster.”

Integrated processes improve efficiency

ICTS is also using VMware Service Manager’s integrated Change Management to record and track service requests, previously handled via a separate database. VMware Service Manager provides easy-to-implement templates for standard tasks such as installing new users, while automated workflow is being used to streamline change and authorization processes.

The department has also started to closely monitor performance levels in preparation for the launch of formal Service Level Agreements during 2007. Integration with Microsoft Exchange will be used to improve communications with customers and send automatic email alerts to managers when Service Levels are in danger of being breached.

ICTS is also planning to launch a branded Customer Portal and Knowledge Base next spring.

“Although a Customer Portal wasn’t initially a high priority for us, VMware Service Manager demonstrated the dramatic impact self-service could have on customer satisfaction and productivity. It was a good example of how powerful and flexible the VMware Service Manager system can be”, comments Bacon.

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