DXC Fruition
Travis Perkins builds on ITSM foundations to create enterprise service management

Client name: Travis Perkins

Location: Northampton, UK

Industry: Retail

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Challenge
- Improve integration and efficiency across the business
- Spur innovation and multi-channel support
- Replace legacy systems to achieve wider, deeper capabilities

Solution
- Retain legacy system components that still added value
- Adopt an agile, collaborative approach to new development
- Focus on cloud-based technologies

Results
- 20% reduction in reported IT incidents
- Faster root-cause analysis and incident resolution
- Self-service portals for multiple business functions

Travis Perkins plc is one of the UK's leading distributors of materials to the building and construction and home improvement markets.

The Travis Perkins Group operates more than 20 businesses from approximately 2,000 sites and employs over 30,000 people across the UK. With a proud heritage that can be traced back over 200 years, the Group's employees are continuing that tradition by working with their customers to build better together.

As an FTSE 100 company boasting revenue of £5 billion, Travis Perkins has helped in the delivery of major building and infrastructure projects including Heathrow Terminal 5 and the Shard. In addition to Travis Perkins itself, its 20+ industry-leading brands include Wickes, Tool Station and Tile Giant, making it the largest supplier of building products to consumers and the trade in the UK.

The company is part-way through the delivery of an ambitious five-year growth strategy. This includes investing in IT to create greater integration and efficiency across the business through innovation and multi-channel transactional support, re-engineering and upgrading legacy systems to provide enhanced infrastructure, and providing a wider and deeper capability based on open source and cloud architecture. Improved service and support play a key part of that, based on the ServiceNow platform.

Investment in IT

In March 2013 Travis Perkins put together a five-year roadmap for IT development that included investments that would more than double the IT budget. Technology is seen to be a key enabler of strategic change at Travis Perkins rather than a support function. CIO Neil Pearce was recently quoted about the impact of making these investments: "We'll have a much more efficient business – one that's able to attract and retain people because we've got a better set of systems and processes. We'll be at a point where we're making use of our digital capabilities to create much better services for our customers."

At an early stage of the five-year plan, tech director Matt Greaves established the Service Development & Change team alongside the Service Delivery team to deliver changes without dropping the ball. With multi-channel sales platforms, a commitment to cloud-based computing and support for trends such as BYOD (bring your own device), IT service management (ITSM) was going to be required to play a significantly enhanced role in future.

The Group's legacy systems were unsuited to the task, based as they were on a "break/fix" approach, and offered no proactive review of trends and issues from a top-down perspective, which meant the team was constantly "fire-fighting."

The initial approach was driven by the principles at work across the IT department: salvage what was possible from legacy systems, adopt an Agile collaborative approach to new development and focus on cloud-based technology. Wendy Collison, project manager for service development, says, "We needed transformational change to support a demanding agenda. With the introduction of a five-year commitment we invested in a new ITSM tool: ServiceNow. With the Group strategy all about cloud and collaborative technology, ServiceNow was the perfect solution."

Vital support

From the start of the ServiceNow implementation in 2014, Travis Perkins turned to DXC Technology and their global ServiceNow practice, DXC Fruition, for support

in configuring and implementing ServiceNow. With only a small in-house team at Travis Perkins IT, DXC Fruition were able to recommend the best-practice approach in implementing ServiceNow and to fill the resource gaps where needed in the early implementation.

Over time, Travis Perkins IT has built up its ServiceNow capabilities, and its in-house team is led by Collison, who says that she still relies on DXC Fruition for "the more complex integration and scripting work, and for their experience of what is possible with ServiceNow, as it's such a powerful tool and the capabilities are expanding all the time."

Collison also praises DXC Fruition's teamwork, observing, "They have really invested in getting to know us over the years, and now they are completely part of the team. Whatever we achieve, we get there together!"

Building on firm foundations

In July 2014, the Service Delivery team launched the first iteration of a self-service website, known as SolveIT. The initial portal was focused entirely on IT support, providing the ability to users to both log IT incidents and track progress, as well as look up information to help fix issues for themselves.

The response to the portal has been, from the outset, extremely positive. As Collison says, "People love the flexibility and transparency; they know when something will be fixed and that it has ended the need for numerous repeat calls asking for updates. This means that the service centre can concentrate on better service, and anticipating problems before they happen, not just keying in what our colleagues ask for and reading the current status from the screen."

SolveIT is now fully accessible to all 30,000 colleagues across the Group, enabling them to make requests for hardware and software, log incidents and request support. Currently 10 percent of incidents and all service requests go through the portal, which Collison says is a good achievement: "Many of our colleagues in the stores or warehouses don't necessarily have access to IT so they don't tend to use the portal, but the take-up and usage rates among colleagues who do have that access has grown substantially and continues to do so."

Over the last year or so, the IT Services team have gone on to implement a second phase designed to stabilise and optimise the services offered to the Travis Perkins business.

This stabilisation phase has focused on moving from a "fix fast" approach to a "fail less" approach. Whereas historically the teams maintained a healthy average speed of answer (ASA) on the desk and kept outstanding incidents to a minimum, the new system did not improve the overall service as the number of incidents wasn't dropping; teams were merely fixing them faster.

The capabilities offered by ServiceNow enabled the teams to conduct effective problem management trend analysis on repeat incidents. This resulted in over a 20 percent reduction in incidents as well as improved availability and customer satisfaction. ServiceNow also allowed the team to link incidents to changes, risks and problems, enabling much faster root-cause analysis, with the impressive improvement on this indicator from 40 percent to 80 percent.

One-stop shop planned

The current focus of the optimisation is to move fully to a services-based organisation based around a service catalogue, detailing all the business services the organisation provides along with associated costs and commitments — something Collison describes as "a bold but achievable plan."

She explains, "The first step was to create a successful product catalogue enabling colleagues to purchase devices from our self-service portal, such as phones, laptops, printers, etc. Moving forward, we aim to create a full-service catalogue where businesses will be able to purchase readily available solutions such as websites, business analytics and customer relationship solutions."

One of the other developments that is underway for the portal is the development of an online branded clothing store for Travis Perkins staff, who will be able to select uniforms, schedule delivery and organise returns if necessary via the automated system.

Also in the pipeline is a plan to work with DXC Fruition to make use of the ITSM and IT operations management (ITOM) toolsets provided by ServiceNow to map all of the Group's services, linking them to fully-discoverable configuration items that will be proactively monitored by the various monitoring tool sets but integrated into a single "pane of glass" or portal, all facilitated by ServiceNow.

Collison continues, "Using the existing incident, problem and change capabilities, our colleagues will be able to view the services Group IT offers, as well as the specific portfolio of services that they have signed up for. They'll also be able to examine cost of services consumed, as well as their performance against our commitments, all via a cloud-hosted and mobility-centric solution."

From ITSM to ESM

In addition to providing IT service management, Travis Perkins has extended its use of ServiceNow to encompass a range of other support functions. HR has been enthusiastic in the development of its own self-service portal, which supports its case management and employee relations work, as well as provides knowledge-sharing facilities.

Other applications include support for logistics functions. For example, ServiceNow has been deployed in the Group's Range Centres that act as warehouses and distribution hubs, allowing all branches to offer next day delivery on any heavy-side product. The Range Centre staff can use the portal to log issues with equipment and request support.

Similarly, issues with the Group's websites are logged and managed using ServiceNow. This is in fact done by an external team who access the ServiceNow platform – just one example of how ServiceNow is heavily integrated with third party applications run by a variety of external suppliers who provide IT services to Travis Perkins. Collison's team can then, in turn, use it to monitor delivery against SLAs and ensure that integration is working as it should. The team is also currently looking at using the ServiceNow orchestration module to help them further in integrating third-party applications.

Over time, the Travis Perkins Group's use of ServiceNow and its work with DXC Fruition has evolved considerably, as it has graduated from ITSM to ESM (Enterprise Services Management). In Collison's view, "We've continued to invest in our use of ServiceNow as part of the Group's commitment to IT as a driver of change, and we can now see that paying off in a significant way."

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