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This Service-now.com case study is based on an interview with Chris Terzian, Juniper Networks senior technical lead.

Juniper Networks

Juniper Networks delivers innovative software, silicon and systems that transform the experience and economics of networking. The company serves more than 30,000 customers and partners worldwide, and has generated more than \$3 billion in annual revenue in recent years.

Juniper is the second largest company in the networking world, and the leader in high-performance networking. We have more than 5,000 employees worldwide in 109 offices throughout 47 countries, and just over 500 staff users are in the system with about 10,000 servers and 150 applications in our configuration management database (CMDB).

My team is responsible for designing and implementing applications that nearly all of our employees use, including Service-now.com.

Service desk history

When I joined Juniper, we were using Clarify and it was already out of date, so we started looking at other applications to replace it. The result was a ticketing system for our use based on a tool from a small vendor we had found, plus our own development effort. That was our first experience with incident management before we had become familiar with ITIL.

It worked for us for about a year as we did some innovative things with it, but it wouldn't scale to meet the needs of our growing company, so we explored the big vendors who could offer us a complete package that would really allow us to scale through the years as Juniper grew.

About this time, a new CIO joined the company, expressing a strong preference for HP based on his previous experience, so we geared ourselves up for HP Service Desk 4.5. But then they told us that because of their roadmap for related products, it would make more sense to go straight to version 5.1, so that's the decision we made.

Since we hadn't had an ITIL-compliant application before, we had a lot of preparation work first to discover our processes, and the overall implementation took a long time. Juniper invested heavily in ITIL, building out processes and designing our process flows in advance of going to HP, and we laid a solid foundation for later. Much of it was the planning and process work, but the application itself really wasn't meeting my expectations. It was a fat client and pretty inflexible, so we were limited to what the application could do. Many times we were forced to change our processes to fit the application. I had previously worked with a much more flexible, Web-based application, so I knew there were other approaches out there.

But we were stuck with the HP 5.1 product and at the time it was the latest and greatest. The implementation went well compared to our expectations, and we met our rollout deadline. On

Making waves:

Successfully sold SaaS model internally to execs and engineers, replacing troublesome HP Service Desk implementation

Organization:

Juniper Networks

Business:

Manufacturer of network infrastructure appliances

Headquarters:

Sunnyvale, California, USA

Geographies:

Worldwide

Modern ITSM software:

- Incident
- Problem
- Change
- Service request
- Service catalog
- CMDB

Implementation timeline:

One month



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the first day the system stayed up and ran from morning till late afternoon. I declared victory and jumped happily into my car to go home. Then I got a call on the freeway that the system had crashed. That began a year of terror.

I was on the phone with HP support at least once a day and often multiple times a day to try to resolve the issues that kept popping up. That year is now a blur to me because of the combination of support calls, technicians coming onsite, even HP developers coming onsite to help us code workarounds for the problems we were having. The application just would not stay up. So, because of the tool's instability in that year of absolute chaos, we had to look again and reevaluate all the ITSM vendors and the players in the market, and that's when we encountered Service-now.com.

Selection process

We considered all the legacy vendors. We looked at BMC, EMC, and even HP again because they offered us their latest version at no cost due to the last fiasco. Then, an HP implementation vendor suggested we also look at Service-now.com. We asked one of the Gartner analysts about Service-now.com and they told us they were an up-and-coming player that warranted a good look.

We had a somewhat formal requirements document that we had created over the years and had augmented as we discovered new requirements and figured out what we wanted to do. It was an extensive document listing all of our ITSM needs. SaaS was not a requirement at all.

We sent out requests for proposals (RFPs) to all these companies, asking for a sandbox in which to play with their applications. They all provided one, but early on it was obvious to me with my application background that Service-now.com beat all of the others for ease of use and flexibility. I wanted a Web-based tool I could jump right into, but one that had a lot of depth.

My main concern with Service-now.com was the SaaS model, because I was completely unfamiliar with it in a service desk product. We had always bought and hosted our own service desk applications, paid for the licensing, and owned them end to end, so the SaaS model worried me. I was skeptical of it because I thought, “If we go the SaaS route, how much control will I really have? Am I going to have access to the application? Can I make changes on the fly? Am I going to be stuck with this inflexible product where I have to call the vendor for every little thing I need to do?” I wasn't sure what the model entailed, whereas if I own the product, I can go over to the box, I can change whatever I want, and I feel I have a lot more control.

But once I actually used the application and played with it, it was a different story completely. It took me back a couple of years to before the HP rollout. I was excited about the tool that we were building ourselves. It reminded me of what we were trying to do way back then, except that Service-now.com had actually done it, introduced all kinds of modules, supported ITIL, added incredible functionality and made the entire tool Web-based. All of that greatly outweighed my concerns about the SaaS model.

“This is like us”

Then we had to sell it internally, to the execs and engineers. People expressed concerns about security, and we knew we could easily address those fears with encryption and VPNs we set up. But there were other, less tangible fears about the viability of Service-now.com as a company, how long they had been around, and whether they would still be around. Those were strong arguments. Nobody worries about huge companies like HP; you figure they're not going anywhere.

As I heard more of these arguments, Service-now.com began to remind me of Juniper Networks back in the days when we were coming out with innovative products and always going up against the behemoth of Cisco. Our prospects had to make a similar decision: Do we go with this small, nimble player with the new kind of device, or do we go with the guys who have been around, just because they've been around? Our early customers had made that leap of faith with us, and I saw Service-now.com as that same kind of company, coming out with a great, new product that was different from everything else on the market. I saw their stability, and I saw that this was going to be something that everyone would want.

So, I didn't share their fear. I was the one arguing with the other folks, saying, “This is like us. Juniper is to Cisco as Service-now.com is to HP.” There were one or two executives in particular who were concerned with the size of the company at that time, but it has become much more clear, in my opinion, that the market is shifting this way, and that Service-now.com is going to be the big player.

Then there were the engineers. Every time we ever rolled out an application, whether a simple ticketing system or HP Service Desk, our engineers were always the toughest group to appease. They don't want to run Windows and avoid it like the plague. They would rather use Linux, Unix or anything they can get that isn't Windows-based. They're the ones who run Firefox and Mozilla and every browser under the sun other than Internet Explorer. They didn't like any help desk application we'd ever had, because they always had to run some kind of hack to get it to work properly, or they couldn't submit a ticket.

It was important for us to get their support, and we involved them early in the process to play with our Service-now.com sandbox and tell us what they thought.

It was the first time in recorded Juniper history that our engineers were actually excited about a product. They saw it from a more technical aspect and were greatly impressed by the Web 2.0 capabilities, the Web-based model, and the fact that it actually worked in their various browsers. It was a complete 180-degree turn and an indicator of how the tool would go over within Juniper Networks.

Benefits of going with Service-now.com

We were sold once we had compared cost, capability, the potential speed of implementation, ease of use and, most of all, flexibility.

It was for us to be able to tailor the tool to our processes instead of tailoring our processes to the tool, which is what we had had to do repeatedly in the past. We've customized Service-now.com a great deal since implementation. Our incident process was probably the most complex and had taken years to build. We did change many of our processes, but mostly we customized the tool to fit our way of working. The customization work also helped demonstrate that the tool would be flexible when we wanted to add more modules in the future.

Another benefit was that we didn't need to buy any hardware to support this. That took a lot of the pressure off our infrastructure group to provide and support hardware. Not to mention the money we saved.

From the time we set up the sandbox to the time we started our implementation, working with Service-now.com was truly a nice change. We had all the support in the world to start out. It felt like a true partnership, as opposed to a vendor who thinks, "We'll sell you something and then you're really on your own, and if you want help you've got to pay for it."

The response time of the application has been good. Some folks wondered whether a hosted application would be slower, but we have people using it worldwide with no performance complaints. We have staff members in India, Europe, Asia and other countries accessing the tool. I think it's really a lot more efficient being Web-based, and the performance is good compared to a fat-client application.

Service-now.com in production

The first thing we tackled was incident management, then problem management shortly thereafter. As is true of many companies, Juniper's processes are rather immature. We've been around since the late 1990s, so naturally we've gone from a small-business mentality to thinking like a large business, and we've tried to change our processes along the way as well.

Service-now.com really helps in that we don't have to buy these new modules as we go. We've had them available to us since

the outset. There was never a rush to buy everything upfront, because everything comes with the platform.

So our plan has been to roll out incident management, conduct some training, accustom users to these ITIL concepts and really lay the foundation for the future so that we can implement problem management, change management and service request. Then beef up our configuration management database (CMDB) using Service-now.com Discovery.

We want to change from everything being an incident to distinguishing between incidents and service requests, so that we can reduce the quantity of incidents by using problem management the way it should be used.

We have several other business groups who want to also use Service-now.com. For example, HR has abandoned its PeopleSoft application and wants to use Service-now.com for HR incidents.

"You will sleep better"

Service-now.com has stayed up for us, it's been stable, and we've made calls for support only when we've had a pressing need. Judging from my own experience, you will sleep better. I certainly do.