ServiceNow Custom Applications Case Study (Finance Department)

Customer Overview

The customer is a large Financial Services organisation headquartered in the heart of London's financial district working with hundreds of other organisations daily. With an internal staff base of thousands, a large portfolio of different service offerings and growing customer engagement, the organisation were in a period of restructuring the Corporate Finance function to ensure a best in breed service delivery capability for internal and external stakeholders, focused on process, people and platforms.

The Challenge

The finance department had no visibility on whether they were delivering a good quality service in a timely manner to its internal stakeholders and external partners. The team were struggling to even confirm which deliverables were overdue or no longer necessary. In some cases, status reports were often two weeks (or more) out of date when presented.

The business recognised these challenges were the result of organic process growth and acquired companies being bolted onto the department instead of onboarding into a standardised service delivery model. Additionally, they recognised the need to move from unstructured email communication channels to a standardise workflow based approach which would introduce simple, intuitive processes that would only be easily accessible to the business users.

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The CFO started with key personnel changes, including a new Head of Finance Operations, who recognised the challenges and encouraged the wider organisation to share their pains. This meant that the wider transformation programme team could shape the phased priorities to address areas with the biggest impact first.

Some of the most common issues included:

- Lack of operational reporting to understand current service health, and no visibility of such information available to the management team. This included no agreed KPIs for department performance to ensure a consistent view of performance over an extended time period.

- Requests logged via email would disappear for weeks, months and in some cases, even years.

- Lack of understanding of the history of certain requests due to multiple case workers over an extended period.

- Complicated ways of working that required undocumented variations depending on the service area involved, making it virtually impossible to leverage support staff across business areas.

- No ability to see historical requests to provide a platform to learn how to address repeat requests quicker.

The Solution

Unifii and the customer worked from the initial sales engagement to ensure we had a shared vision for the client's end state.

We started out small. We took a limited scope business process, billing, that was notoriously painful and had led to the finance department having to regularly include adjustments on financial statements due to contract changes not being captured or actioned in a timely manner.

This initial use case provided an opportunity to showcase the value of a well-documented process by the business stakeholders and a clean, simple, and effective workflow-based process built using ServiceNow. This initial pilot project was also used to build the foundations of a strategic extensible finance platform.

The core deliverables of the pilot project included:

- A finance portal that acted as a focal point for non-finance users and inter-team finance users to raise Service Requests. The portal was designed for the target state and parred back initially to ensure it did not suffer the challenges of organic growth.

- A fully configured business process with supporting reference data and sequential and parallel task execution, to ensure tasks were being picked up by the right team only when their prerequisites had been fulfilled.

- A range of powerful dashboards to provide individuals, teams, and management the transparency to see where requests were being held up or what the persons'/ teams' priorities were for the day (oldest tickets/highest priority requests/recently reassigned etc,).

These initial concepts were then expanded out in four subsequent phases to onboard additional capabilities. These additional process sets now include:

- Central purchasing – delivering a mechanism to route purchasing requests to the right purchasing solution depending on the nature of the request, the cost-centre and the requestor. This results in either a purchasing card request being raised or being redirected to the company procurement tool for complex procurements.

- Accounts Payable – providing a one stop shop for all accounts payable enquiries by removing multiple legacy finance mailboxes and enhancing the previous processes with additional supporting knowledge to educate the finance community.

- Finance Systems - providing a single engagement point for access and support to the finance system and enable business users to quickly and effortlessly request access, as well as having appropriate approval workflows to ensure the relevant authorisation is given. In addition to this, the new system provides a place for business users to check the status of incidents and requests, thereby reducing the number of interactions being handled by the business support teams each day. This can also be integrated with other ServiceNow processes and workflows to raise tickets for technical teams and make back-end changes to the system.

- Master Data Management – replacing legacy mailboxes with a streamlined capability to ensure data changes are made in a timely manner and have sufficient visibility before being authorised. This enables a geographically distributed team to seamlessly align tasks and ensure seamless follow the sun support is available.

The Benefits

- A significantly enhanced user experience through the provision of upfront knowledge as well as guiding users to the next best action in relation to the finance service they have selected.

- A fit-for-purpose approvals process and automated decisioning for areas such as 'purchasing card payment' requests.

- Complete removal of archaic manual processes (query emails and tracking spreadsheets).

- Reduction of re-work as all information is now captured in once place.

- Improvement to visibility of information on the status of processing requests, now accessible to the management team.

- Improvement of operational efficiency and reduction of cycle times.

- Reinforced support for organisational change.

- Provided operational teams with transparency on business processes.

- Enhanced risk and controls through ability to track and monitor all purchasing requests.

This project is a prime example of the Unifii team's expertise in enabling large organisations to realise as much value as possible from their ServiceNow investment. Prior to our help, the business had little to no visibility on the quality of the service they were delivering; they now have in place a seamless, efficient workflow including a significant improvement in visibility of key information, all in one platform.

Case studies which refer to organisations within the financial sector often include sensitive information regarding previous internal setups or partnerships. Due to the nature of the above material in this case study, the client in question has been left anonymous.