



Why You Shouldn't Be Afraid of Replacing Your Legacy ITSM Suite

servicenow®

“The two support systems we were using were ten and twenty years old. We were losing sight of incidents, and without effective processes we were relying on a ‘hero culture’ to fix problems, but this was too expensive to maintain as the business grew.”

—Simon Skelton, Partnership IT Service Improvement Manager at John Lewis

Introduction

Many IT organizations continue to struggle with outdated IT Service Management (ITSM) suites. These legacy systems are incredibly rigid and difficult to configure—they need an army of programmers and administrators, and they still can’t keep up with business demands. Often, they are an unwieldy collection of poorly integrated products rather than an efficient unified solution. Business users abandon them because the user experience is so embarrassingly poor. And, the costs are astronomical—upgrades are overwhelmingly painful, on-premises maintenance costs are sky high, and there’s a never-ending stream of expensive customizations and integrations.

Fortunately, there’s a better way. Modern cloud-based ITSM platforms are built for IT and business agility. There’s no requirement to write reams of code for simple changes—graphical configuration tools make it easy to roll out new services, processes, and user interfaces. Everything works seamlessly together—no more bolted-on products, just an end-to-end platform. The user experience is intuitive and efficient, rivaling consumer services such as Amazon and Uber. And, these cloud-based platforms drive down costs—you don’t need an army of programmers, maintenance is provided as part of the service, costs are predictable, and upgrades take as little as hours.

So, why hasn’t everyone abandoned their legacy ITSM suites? If migrating to a modern, cloud-based ITSM platform has so many benefits, why do IT organizations continue to squander budgets on outdated technology that prevents them from innovating and delivering positive business outcomes?

The answer is fear—and it’s perfectly understandable.

If you’ve already spent huge amounts of time and money rolling out your legacy ITSM platform, you may be gun shy—and have a lot of questions. Why will this time be any different? Will you have to redo all of that work? How long will it take and how much will it cost? What’s the risk? And, what does it mean to move to the cloud?

Overcoming the Fear of ITSM Migration

Let’s start with the worst case. What would happen if you had to rebuild everything from scratch by yourself—exactly replicating every piece of functionality in your existing legacy ITSM system? Would you end up spending the same amount of time and money all over again—just to get back to where you started?

No you wouldn’t—and here’s why.

First, you already know the processes, business logic, user interfaces and integrations you have today. It’s not a matter of designing these—they only need to be re-implemented. Perhaps your existing system isn’t fully documented, but the documentation effort is still far less than starting with a blank piece of paper.

Second, modern ITSM platforms make implementation easy. After all, that’s one of the key reasons you want to migrate. In most cases, you can achieve 90% or more of what you want using graphical configuration tools. For example, drag-and-drop workflow designers allow you to build processes in as little as hours—complete with approvals, notifications and complex underlying business logic. You can design completely new forms—including adding new database fields—without having to write a single line of code. And, integration is simple as well—everything is exposed through Web services and can be tied back directly into your process workflows.

ServiceNow customers have successfully migrated from their legacy ITSM systems in as few as 3 months.

Third, you don't have to worry about the cost and time of getting your new ITSM platform up and running. Because you are using a cloud-based service, there is no need to procure hardware or install software. And, you'll have instant access to a highly available and secure platform from day one – robust security and geographic redundancy should be standard with an ITSM cloud solution, not something you have to provide by yourself.

An Opportunity to Do Things Better

When you migrate to a modern ITSM platform, you have an opportunity to do things better. Don't just duplicate your existing legacy system—and all of its inefficiencies. Instead, spend a few days taking a fresh look at your key existing processes. Do they still make sense, or are they a result of a long and obscure history that's no longer relevant? You'll probably want to keep some of your processes as is. However, you'll likely find that many processes exist simply because “things have always been done that way.”

Modern ITSM platforms come with many built-in ITIL processes that you can use and adapt—rather than having to reinvent the wheel. By adopting built-in processes wherever possible, you'll dramatically accelerate your migration and reduce costs. And, where you do retain custom processes, try to rationalize and simplify them—they'll work better and you'll lower your migration effort even further.

Choose the Right Partner

When you migrate to a modern, cloud-based ITSM platform, you don't have to do it all by yourself. By working with the right partners, you can benefit from their experience.

First of all, choose a software partner with a long track record of successful ITSM migrations. Make sure that their ITSM platform ticks all of the boxes in terms of capabilities. Look for easy configuration using graphical tools, flexible process support, extensive integration capabilities, and intuitive user interfaces. Also, find a platform that offers comprehensive mobile device support, as well as capabilities such as collaboration that help teams get more done through easy, intuitive sharing.

Then, select a services partner with extensive experience with your chosen platform. Again, a proven track record is critical. Also, consider how well the service partner aligns with your business needs. For example, do you need a boutique partner with local presence, or a large global partner that can help you in multiple countries? And, do they have knowledge of your industry, and can they handle the level of complexity that you need? In many cases, the solution vendor may have their own professional services expertise with comprehensive product knowledge and seamless access to their entire organization should you need it. Yet, in the event you need additional support, make sure that they have a robust partner ecosystem ready to support your needs.

Here is an [example](#) of a broad set of partners, each with unique skills and experience.

Follow Best Practices for Legacy Migration

By adopting best practices, you can make your ITSM migration both quick and painless. Remember, many companies have already successfully replaced their legacy ITSM suites with modern, agile ITSM platforms. By learning from these migrations, you can both accelerate and de-risk your own migration.

The following best practices are based on many years of experience across hundreds of companies. By following these straightforward, structured practices, you can create a clear and simple path to a fast, successful migration.

1 Prepare

First, lay the groundwork for your ITSM migration. By planning up front, you'll avoid the pitfalls of a "fire, ready, aim" approach. Set the stage for success by:

- Fully documenting the most important parts of your existing legacy ITSM solution, including system components, process workflows, customizations, integrations and so on.
- Identifying your core project team. Make sure that you engage all of the key stakeholders—not just IT staff. Include business users, as well as executives. As a minimum, your project team should include a project sponsor, project manager, process owner(s), security representative, integration owners and system administrators. This will help you achieve and maintain widespread internal buy-in, making it easier to collaborate, share information, and get feedback throughout the migration process.
- Getting key meetings and workshops on to the calendar for the Discovery phase that follows.

2 Discovery

In this phase, you'll dig deep into your existing challenges and determine what you want out of your new ITSM platform. To identify what you want to achieve—and what you want to do differently with your processes—start by asking your team a few questions:

- What are the real challenges with our current system?
- Where can we eliminate inefficiencies?
- Are our current processes scalable and sustainable?
- How can we reengineer our processes to be more lean and agile?
- What are our governance and compliance needs?
- What new insights do we need to drive the business forward and make better decisions?

Keep your initial system as simple as possible, while building a foundation that will scale as business demands grow.

As you continue to ask questions, you'll start to zero in on your desired outcomes. Keep on asking until you have all the answers you need. This will help you to better understand your current ITSM gaps—and what you need to do to improve service management within your organization. For example:

- If business users bypass your existing web interface because it is hard to use, you may want to focus on rapidly deploying a new web portal where they can easily report incidents and request IT services.
- If it's unclear who is responsible for fulfilling individual service requests, consider automatically routing requests to the right person or team based on factors such as the type of request and the location of the requester.
- If you find it difficult to measure and improve specific service delivery processes, focus on how those processes need to be instrumented and the reports you need to manage them effectively.

Once you feel that your questions have been answered and you have identified your desired outcomes, hold a Business Process and Requirements Gathering Workshop. Include your core project team, your executive sponsors, and key business stakeholders at various levels across your organization. During the workshop, work together to rethink your processes and agree what a successful implementation will look like. The last thing you want to do is to blindly configure your new ITSM platform using your old business processes. Make sure to establish goals and success criteria. Items you should focus on in the workshop include:

- Identifying current process successes, as well as failures and areas for improvement.
- Identifying critical processes that you need to maintain.
- Identifying process controls—such as approvals—and the roles responsible for these.
- Identifying key existing operational metrics and KPIs, as well as new metrics that you need.
- Addressing current process gaps by modifying and enhancing process flows.
- Developing recommendations for further process improvements.
- Ensuring that processes are scalable and can be continually improved based on feedback.
- Prioritizing process flows, identifying what you need now and what can wait.
- Identifying functional requirements in the form of user stories.

3 Implement

As you move into implementation, make simplicity your daily mantra. Start by deciding whether you want to take a gradual or “big bang” approach. For example, if you have a few big-impact items that will drive an immediate return on investment, then it often makes sense to focus on these first. Then, you can follow-up in future phases with other incremental enhancements. This way, you'll keep your initial system as simple as possible, while building a foundation that will scale as business demands grow.

Tap into Community-Based Support

To help you drive adoption of your new ITSM platform, we have created a ServiceNow [Champion Enablement Center](#)—a community driven, go-live communications center that provides the resources and education critical to a successful ITSM implementation.

Use Built-In Capabilities Wherever Possible

We've already talked about how using built-in capabilities can dramatically accelerate time to value and simplify your ITSM migration. Highly customized solutions based on your existing processes can be extremely complex to implement, maintain and administer. From a best practices standpoint, implement as many built-in processes as possible. You can adapt these processes, but the closer you stayed to the built-in process, the less time, effort and expense you'll spend on customization. This pays off big in the long run—making it easier to scale over time, and dramatically reducing maintenance and overall lifetime costs.

One key way of figuring out if you can use a built-in process is to look at the key process inputs and outputs. If these closely match your existing process—even if the process looks very different internally—then this is a good candidate. If there are significant differences in the inputs and outputs, ask yourself whether these are crucial—or whether you can align with the built-in process by reengineering your existing approach.

Finally, if you do need to create customized processes, keep them as simple as possible. Again, this will reduce your implementation costs, as well as your long-term cost of ownership. Critically examine these custom processes and eliminate any unnecessary complexity. For example, is that extra approval really necessary when no one has ever said “no”?

Stay Agile and Inclusive

It's a huge mistake to implement everything, and then find out what your stakeholders think after the fact. Instead, take an iterative and incremental approach using agile techniques. Involve your internal customers—including process owners and end-users—making sure that you validate each requirement as you implement and test it. This creates a tight feedback loop, allowing you to incorporate new knowledge and emerging requirements. Involving your customers is the first critical step in having them adopt your new platform and processes.

4 Operate and Transform

Just implementing your new ITSM platform isn't enough. You need to roll it out successfully to the business and your users—and you need to commit to deliver ongoing improvements.

User Training and Adoption

By involving key business stakeholders during the discovery and implementation phases, you have already laid the initial groundwork for user adoption. However, to engage the broader user community, you need to put in place a strong user education program. This should include detailed hands-on training, but it has to go beyond that. You need to explain the benefits of the new approach—and what these mean for your users. By doing this, you will drive user acceptance and adoption. You will also reduce the number of support tickets you get when you roll out your new ITSM platform, since users are already acquainted and comfortable with the system.

Keep Up the Momentum

Remember—your job doesn't stop at the initial implementation. To keep the positive momentum going, step back and ask yourself “What's next? What can be done with our new system to make our business even more successful?” Now is the time to look at your success metrics—and to making necessary changes to achieve them. If you chose a gradual implementation approach, then you'll also want to use these success metrics to justify investing in your next phase.

“We came up with our Active Directory single sign-on development and rolled out ServiceNow to 70,000 users at once. It was amazing how easily we could customize and adjust the processes for incident, problem and change management to our business needs.”

—Fernando Gordo, manager of support tools for global IT at Flextronics

Let's Recap

With a modern, cloud-based ITSM platform, you have the opportunity to transform the way you deliver IT services. By replacing your legacy ITSM suite, you will engage your end users more effectively, automate business processes more quickly than ever before, and dramatically reduce your costs. Above all, you'll be able to tackle new challenges and deliver increased business value, secure the knowledge that you have in a platform that enables innovation.

Migrating to a modern ITSM platform isn't difficult. These platforms are specifically designed to make implementation easy, and they have the flexibility needed to adapt quickly and seamlessly to your specific needs. By leveraging built-in ITIL processes, optimizing your existing workflows, following best practices, and leveraging the capabilities of experienced partners, you can start to reap the benefits of your new ITSM platform in as little as months.

Successful ITSM Migration in Action: Flextronics

Flextronics is a provider of electronics manufacturing services (EMS) with facilities in 30 countries on four continents. In the aftermath of a large acquisition, Flextronics found itself with two main IT systems in place and many individual tools at over 200 sites worldwide. As a result, the IT team was experiencing difficulty tracking service level agreements (SLAs) for all the various tools and services and lacked a single point of contact for service requests.

Flextronics needed to standardize IT. As the team evaluated the market, they were pleased with the usability, short implementation time, and ease of development for ServiceNow. Moreover, because the Flextronics CIO had already moved human resources management software to the cloud, the enterprise IT cloud from ServiceNow would blend nicely with the mix of business functions being transformed.

Flextronics IT embarked on a six-month implementation of ServiceNow that included incident, problem, change, and knowledge management plus service catalog and request fulfillment. After six months, they had a consolidated IT system of record for providing support to the entire organization. ServiceNow's built-in functionality allowed a successful go-live to approximately 70,000 users all at once. “We wanted to roll this out quickly and then continue improving and adding functionality once it was in place,” says Fernando Gordo, Flextronics's manager of support tools for global IT. “It was a big win to get our users onto a single system of record in less time than we spent struggling with the previous product.”

[Read the full case study](#) to find out how Flextronics saved money and increased business value through increased automation, streamlined asset management, and an improved user interface.