Innovation Meets Service Management:

How ITinvolve blows away the service desk status quo

ITinvolve

People Powered IT™

INTRODUCTION:
ITSM Ripe for Change and Innovation

In 2012, the field of Service Management finds itself at a crossroads. The advent of new technologies such as cloud computing and virtualization in the data center along with new modes of communicating with mobile devices and tablets are transforming the IT infrastructures and operations of most organizations.

These mega trends are, in turn, creating more complex demands on traditional service management tools and processes that often outstrip their capability to manage and cope. As a result, IT professionals continue to take on greater levels of risk as they make daily operational decisions.

Yet, even as the complexity and risks associated with IT operations have increased, conventional Service Management offerings have remained stagnant in their response. In 2010, for example, Gartner analysts abandoned their Magic Quadrant for the IT Service Desk citing a proliferation of offerings from vendors that had become commoditized. In other words, buying one or the other service desk tool didn't really matter too much since they all are pretty much the same and the concept of rating visionaries and leaders did not seem relevant.

In addition, the promise of the configuration management database or CMDB to help manage complexity and define key relationships in IT environments has proven elusive for many organizations. While CMDB's have matured in the past several years, many organizations have become disenchanted with the relatively high cost and time-consuming nature of developing CMDB's and keeping them up-to-date and relevant to their users.

The introduction of social media and "consumerization" of IT, has also added to the challenges of managing IT operations. As one Gartner analyst has noted, collaboration across and among professional teams is now a "must have" management capability in the connected enterprise. However, he points out that IT operations and associated ITSM activities often involve many tasks that are currently not documented. Traditional structured ITSM tools with their hard-coded process logic are not well aligned to, or designed for, increasingly dynamic and "hard-to-characterize" IT work patterns. Just as important, a significant amount of collaboration occurs outside current ITSM offerings where ad hoc discussions are not preserved along with key related artifacts when making changes or resolving problems and incidents.

Thus, the commoditization of Service Management offerings, along with the limitations of many CMDB implementations, and the clear need for better modes of collaboration and communication across IT and business teams, have created a situation where the service management industry is ripe for change. Put simply, ITSM needs new and innovative solutions that help reduce risk and directly address the day-to-day issues which are constantly frustrating IT professionals in the performance of their jobs.

That's why ITinvolve has entered the service management arena with a new Service Management offering in the cloud called ITinvolve Service Manager.

ITinvolve Takes a Revolutionary New Approach to ITSM

In conversations with hundreds of IT professionals from CIO's to system administrators over the past several years, we heard tales of IT teams spending vast amounts of valuable time searching for information that should have been immediately available.

They were frustrated, wasting precious time documenting incidents and changes in tools that provided them little value beyond simply a system of record. And, they spent enormous amounts of time in rigid processes and meetings as collaboration methodologies simply were inefficient.

It was clear to us that if we were going to meet the operational needs of IT professionals, we had to approach the challenge from a totally different perspective than other vendors. One that would take into account the demands on IT today to innovate, transform and optimize IT operations.

This led us to a unique approach in which we designed specific capabilities that would incorporate innovative ways to collaborate and present knowledge; automated methods to transform operations with more timely and insightful analysis; and seamless integration of these improvements with existing tools to optimize IT operations across existing hybrid infrastructures.

Create Innovative Understanding and Communication

Unlike any other service management tool, ITinvolve offers an effective source of federated information, used across teams, to understand the various relationships and dependencies in IT environments.

ITinvolve provides you with a comprehensive and accurate view of your IT environment through the use of IT and social "objects" that store and link knowledge about physical and virtual devices, applications, business services, policies and people. At the same time, ITinvolve has created customizable collaboration channels within and across IT individuals and groups to leverage that understanding.

In contrast to CMDBs, whose primary source of information is via auto-discovered content managed by dedicated teams, we believe a complex IT environment can only be effectively understood by capturing the collective knowledge of the IT professionals managing that environment. Our secret to ensuring users update their information is making sure the benefits of the knowledge to the individual user, and the team, outweigh the input effort required. Therefore we invested heavily in usability analysis, and made certain that each user would receive significant value from our approach even in isolated use cases.

We also concluded that attempting to store all key information in one place like CMDBs was unrealistic and ineffective. Therefore, we built in the capacity for objects to link federated information that is physically located in other tools such as source control or document management products where that key information is already being managed effectively. Thus, if information about a particular policy is managed in a wiki, the relevant portion of the policy is linked to the particular object it governs. When users are managing the particular object governed by the policy, the user is visually reminded of the policy.

Customize Collaboration Channels

ITinvolve facilitates meaningful collaborative sessions among IT individuals and teams by providing an unmatched social publish and subscribe methodology.

This approach focuses on objects in which appropriate IT professionals are automatically informed when new knowledge, policies, changes, incidents, and alerts occur that are associated with objects relevant to them. This in-context collaboration function leverages familiar social media-style formats to ensure all the right people are effectively communicating in the context of an incident, problem, or change without extraneous noise. Output from this collaboration is very easily captured and socialized for consumption by and presentation to additional IT and business users; and ITSM processes such as Incident and Change Management.

Customizable Collaboration Channels formed around incidents, problems, or proposed changes help responders resolve incidents and make decisions quickly and effectively. These channels provide a virtual meeting space where every stakeholder can review related information, including in-context comments from all relevant participants, to help facilitate and streamline decisions. In addition, collective knowledge is captured over time and related to specific objects such that lessons never have to be re-learned.

Instead of attending lengthy physical or phone meetings, ITinvolve enables effective virtual processes whereby users are automatically notified of changes, incidents or alerts that may impact them. Physical meetings become exception based, where only divided opinions need to be discussed.

Transform Operations with Intelligent Analysis and Presentation Delivered Automatically (AKD)

Traditional Service Desk tools are primarily designed for the user to document particular incidents, problems, or changes and track the initiation of an event to its conclusion.

However, we found IT professionals are generally frustrated utilizing these tools since they do not provide intelligent analysis to help resolve incidents or assess potential change impacts. Rather they serve as a system of record for users to document the status of events.

Moving beyond the typical ITSM tool mindset, ITinvolve uses its in-depth understanding of relationships and dependencies to help analyze and automatically present users with key information through what we call Active Knowledge Delivery. ITinvolve thus brings the analysis and knowledge necessary to improve and transform the performance of operational tasks to the right people at the right time, in the context of their specific role or job.

To accomplish this, ITinvolve provides each IT member and IT Teams the unique ability to organize custom views containing the objects and relationships that matter most to them such that changes, incidents, problems, and alerts are brought automatically to their attention. By leveraging these unique views and understanding of relationships in the IT environment, ITinvolve provides real-time impact analysis during change management, incident management, and problem management cycles.

Appropriate stakeholders are automatically alerted to the potential impact of changes and are brought into the discussion, helping them resolve incidents faster, and determine the root cause of problems more quickly. For example, if a user is assessing a change, a visual analysis is presented to the user to see the potential impact of the change based on the user's particular role and realm of responsibility. ITinvolve also provide analysis such that the change owner can see the potential impact on other stakeholders.

By combining intelligent analysis with the service desk tool and utilizing the collaboration capabilities as described above, the IT professional now has the information and input from others at his fingertips. This unique "Active Knowledge Delivery" literally transforms the job of IT professionals, enabling them to address the operational challenges faced every day in a much more efficient, effective and successful manner.

Integrate Your Legacy Service Desk Processes to Optimize Operations

Early in the design process for ITinvolve, we recognized that we could develop a single tool that combines the knowledge of the relationships and dependencies along with the operational aspects of service management necessary to deliver the information users need to do their jobs.

This integrated approach is a significant advance over current attempts by vendors to meld disparate or acquired ITSM tools, since even many tools from the same vender do not always work well together.

Further, because of ITinvolve's open and flexible architecture, for example, IT teams can import and visualize alerts from existing monitoring tools to provide a comprehensive visualization or "maps" of incidents and alerts across the IT environment. This unique visualization capability helps to significantly improve root cause analysis as teams are presented views of automatically correlated incidents and alerts from multiple management tools in context of the upstream and downstream impacts.

Most important, by understanding relationships and dependencies across service management disciplines through one tool, IT team members using ITinvolve are automatically empowered with the knowledge and data needed to do their job more effectively.

Improve Operations, Make Better Decisions, Reduce Risk

The benefit of all these unique attributes combined in ITinvolve makes it possible to streamline IT operational processes as never before, resulting in significant cost savings, improved decision making, and reduced overall risk to the IT environment.

Unlike any other ITSM offering on the market today, ITinvolve Service Manager gives you and your IT staff the right information delivered to you automatically at the right time, in the right place, to the right people who need it to resolve incidents, identify and fix problems, and understand the impact of changes. This translates into a dramatic improvement in your IT service and support performance metrics, including:

- Dramatically reduced risk of "bad" changes. As IT professionals see potential impacts prior to a change, negative consequences can be avoided.
- Higher first-call resolution rates (FCR) since Level 1 and 2 responders have access to information they can see and use to help resolve incidents and problems without escalating to the next level.
- Significantly reduced MTTR since all levels of service from Level 1 through Level 3 are accessing and collaborating from the same online interface, able to see the incident or problem from multiple perspectives based on the same federated data and unstructured information.
- Dramatically reduced re-open rates because you are able to much more effectively address and resolve incidents the first time, and correct problems before they occur again.

To learn more about how you can leverage the unique capabilities of ITinvolve to innovate, transform and integrate your IT operations and optimize your ITSM management to maximize business value, visit the ITinvolve web site at www.itinvolve.com.

Or contact us by email at sales@itinvolve.com

A Thought Leadership White Paper

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