TransAlta

TransAlta IT becomes a trusted business partner and powers mission-critical operations

Empowers employees with self-service tool

Establishes clear metrics to better manage resources

80% Reduction in number of service outages

Industry: Energy Production
Location: Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Size: 2,300+ employees

TransAlta relies on IT to keep electricity flowing to its customers

TransAlta is committed to providing its customers with the power they need, where and when they need it. The company relies heavily on IT to support mission-critical operations. For example, energy traders need a reliable platform so that electricity continues to flow to TransAlta's customers. TransAlta also needs to ensure that its business services and desktop infrastructure effectively support its day-to-day operations.

TransAlta needs better tools to support more effective problem management

TransAlta's legacy ticketing tool gave IT an extensive set of metrics and reports, but employees found it difficult to use. Because of this, they regularly bypassed the tool, going directly to TransAlta's IT service desk team when they had an issue.

"We couldn't keep track of the work we did for them," explains Jamie Duncalf, IT Operations Manager at TransAlta. "We ended up fixing the same types of incidents again and again because we weren't collecting the data we needed for effective problem management."

The tool also lacked capabilities, such as a service catalog, that the IT team needed as they evolved to become a strategic partner delivering shared services across TransAlta's business.
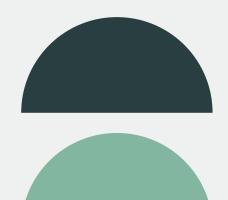
Challenge
Simplify IT engagement to provide visibility and traceability, and enable faster responses to business needs with automation and intelligence

Products
- ServiceNow® IT Service Management
- ServiceNow® IT Operations Management

Solution
ServiceNow transforms the impact, speed, and delivery of IT at TransAlta with greater visibility into operations and a proactive approach to service health

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ServiceNow provides a platform for TransAlta to optimize and measure IT effectiveness

TransAlta chose ServiceNow IT Service Management, built on the Now Platform,® to replace its legacy ticketing system. The results were dramatic.

"We saw an immediate increase in recorded incidents, which meant that our end users were comfortable reporting incidents online," says Jamie. "We finally had a platform to measure our work, so we could begin to understand what the issues were, where we could optimize, and how we could make the most of our service desk resources."

Despite the increase in reported incidents, TransAlta actually needed fewer staff to keep its service desk running smoothly—freeing up resources for other initiatives.

With real-time service visibility through ServiceNow, IT is the first to know

Using ServiceNow IT Operations Management, also built on the Now Platform, TransAlta turned its attention to IT operations. TransAlta relies on ServiceNow IT Operations Management Service Mapping and Event Management to map its key business services and monitor their health, providing real-time visibility into service performance.

Now, if there is an issue with a business service, IT is the first to know. "ServiceNow has given us back control," says Jamie. "Previously, we often only found out about an issue when someone complained—and then it took us three or four hours just to figure out what going on. Now, we're already working on the issue before we hear from our users. There are no more surprises."

Because it can now quickly identify the root cause of issues, TransAlta can also take proactive steps to mitigate further occurrences. As a result, TransAlta has reduced its number of service outages by 80%.

Armed with ServiceNow service maps, TransAlta streamlines its change processes and reduces risk

ServiceNow service maps enhance the way TransAlta manages change. Because the IT team now knows exactly which business services are affected by any given change, they can accurately assess associated business risks. This allows TransAlta to streamline its change approval processes. For example, rather than having everyone attend change advisory board (CAB) meetings, only the required few can review each change.
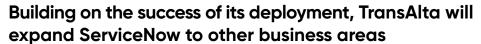
Equally as important, IT can now more easily explain to its business partners how changes will affect the services they use. For example, when TransAlta traders learn that a change is going to impact their ability to place outbound calls during key trading hours, they understand exactly how that change will impact their work.

ServiceNow helps TransAlta optimize IT spending as it moves to a hybrid cloud

As TransAlta transitions to a hybrid cloud infrastructure, it is using service maps to identify specific sections of business services and identify all of the applications and IT components within these sections. "We have an actual shopping list of the infrastructure we need to replace," says Jamie. "We now know how much it costs to run that infrastructure ourselves, and we can get a precise comparison of how much our cloud provider will charge us."

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Building on the success of its deployment, TransAlta will expand ServiceNow to other business areas

With its IT transformation well underway, TransAlta sees even more potential. "ServiceNow is our growth engine in IT," says Jamie. "While we're cutting back in other areas, it is at the top of our investment priorities."

For example, the IT team plans to give departmental executives direct access to Servicenow IT Operations Management dashboards for even further transparency. By providing visibility into business services—as well as cost and usage data—executives will have the information they need to make better business decisions. TransAlta also plans to roll out ServiceNow beyond IT, streamlining the delivery of legal, human resources, facilities, and other services.

"We need to partner with solution providers that can adapt and change at the same pace we need to change," says Nipa Chakravarti, CIO of TransAlta. "We see ServiceNow as being one of those vendors."

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