



“Deploying ServiceNow has streamlined the way we manage human resources requests within the University, and provided us with a platform to deliver further efficiencies in future.”

—Lisa McGahey, Manager, HR Systems & Information Management at James Cook University



Highlights

University ramps up IT services satisfaction and streamlines HR request management with ServiceNow.

Organisation

James Cook University

Business

Education

Headquarters

Cairns and Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Geographies

Northern Australia, Singapore

Solutions

- ServiceNow Incident Management
- ServiceNow Change and Release Management
- ServiceNow Service Catalogue
- ServiceNow HR Service Management

Implementation timeline

Initial implementation completed within 6-8 weeks

James Cook University Discovers Efficiencies with IT Service Management

Founded in 1970, James Cook University operates campuses in Cairns and Townsville in northern Queensland, Australia, as well as in Singapore. The University has extended its presence to Mount Isa in regional Queensland, Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, and Mackay in north Queensland, and operates a campus in Brisbane via educational services provider Russo Higher Education. The University's courses range from the arts and creative media to law, medicine, and veterinary science.

Existing tool unable to support expanding requirements

By 2010, James Cook University's information technology service management requirements were outstripping the functionality of its existing tool. The University had already had to heavily customise the tool to meet its needs and had undertaken additional work when upgrading to bring these customisations into newer versions. Furthermore, the tool was not cloud-based and did not provide a high-quality experience on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

The existing tool also did not enable the IT function to properly track incident requests. This meant management could not measure the volume of work being processed by the university's helpdesk or referred to relevant teams for resolution, and how quickly those incidents and problems were resolved.

A scalable, full-featured, cloud-based service management solution

The University was keen to move to a single service management tool that was scalable, full-featured, and cloud-based, and operated across the institution. “A lot of teams and functions within James Cook University were using Outlook tasks and other systems to manage service requests,” said Julie Land, Head, IT Service and Support, James Cook University. “So I engaged with stakeholders in our finance, human resources, and estate office (facilities management) to see what services could be more efficiently managed through a new tool.”

James Cook University completed a market review that found most tools were immature in using the benchmark ITIL service management framework to manage environments. However, ServiceNow was aligned closely with ITIL, and could be implemented with minimal customisation. “I liked the way we could virtually use ServiceNow out of the box, and that our team could use its existing skillsets to leverage the tool to meet our service management needs,” said Land. “From my perspective, ServiceNow allowed me to report in detail to senior management on our performance against key performance indicators. If we were failing to meet any of these indicators, ServiceNow could help me

“From my perspective, ServiceNow allowed me to report in detail to senior management on our performance against key performance indicators. If we were failing to meet any of these indicators, ServiceNow could help me understand the reasons why, so I could undertake remedial actions such as ordering training or improving processes.”

— Julie Land, IT Service and Support,
James Cook University

understand the reasons why, so I could undertake remedial actions such as ordering training or improving processes.”

Then the University set up a working party comprising of team members from IT, student services, and other functions that would be using the service management tool. The working party met with a partner selected to undertake the implementation—UXC Keystone (now Fruition Partners)—to match the University’s requirements to what ServiceNow provided out-of-the-box, and determine where changes would be required. “For instance, we decided not to deploy the service catalogue functionality straight away because several of our functions needed to do more work to understand their workflows,” said Land. “So we decided just to go with a standard service request view.”

Partner and PRINCE2 ensure smooth ServiceNow implementation

UXC Keystone and James Cook University applied the PRINCE2 project management methodology to ensure the deployment ran smoothly. After initially rolling out ServiceNow to the information technology function, the institution has now extended the system to the human resources and finance teams. For IT, the software has been extended from incident management and service requests to change management. “We’re now in the second year of our second agreement with ServiceNow, so we’ve been with them for five years in total,” said Land.

Business value

An end-to-end, holistic view

“For our finance function,” Land continued. “We’ve used ServiceNow to create role-based dashboards for upper management to understand our position. For IT, we have been able to showcase the success of the function to them in terms of responding to service requests or incidents within our service level agreements. We can now tie together all the activities related to incidents, problems, and changes and provide a holistic view of IT services.”

Metrics

This broad view has enabled James Cook University to improve the performance of its IT function in responding to requests. In 2015, an IT services satisfaction survey conducted across Universities in Australia and New Zealand saw James Cook University rise from twenty-second, before deploying ServiceNow, to fourth. “Now, when someone sends in a request or reports an incident, they can track its status and receive updates through an automatic notification system,” said Land. “They can also feed back to us their experience using the ServiceNow survey tool, which improves the level of engagement between information technology and the people it serves.”

Cutting out the HR clutter

For the human resources team at James Cook University, ServiceNow was an opportunity to replace its existing email-based approach to incoming requests. Historically, all HR requests were handled via email and processed manually by the team of 20. In this high-transaction environment, requests stacked up quickly and the team had no way of tracking progress or prioritising incoming mail.

However, the team was able to route virtually all requests through ServiceNow, giving HR managers a new level of insight into operations. Managers are now able to pinpoint problem areas faster and more efficiently. For example, if they see University employees consistently struggling to understand an adjustment to benefits, they can create materials that explain the change more clearly.

Not only does this lower the volume of emails managed by the human resource team, but it increases University employee satisfaction by reducing the need to proactively seek an answer, or to wade through the intranet to find the relevant information. For those requests that do require HR intervention, ServiceNow enables all University employees to connect directly with the team using a single portal.

The system has enabled the team to save on average one in five minutes per request, translating to sizeable productivity gains for the twenty-strong team servicing about 2,000 employees across the University.

Further improvements are likely as HR managers can also monitor requests that exceed accepted timeframes for resolution, and refine processes accordingly. The granular reporting capabilities provided by ServiceNow can

also give managers a clearer view of internal resource allocation and budget performance, enabling them to make more informed decisions. “Deploying ServiceNow has streamlined the way we manage human resources requests within the University, and provided us with a platform to deliver further efficiencies in future,” said Lisa McGahey, Manager, HR Systems and Information Management, James Cook University.

The new system has greatly improved perception of the HR function within the university and enabled the team to build a reputation as a trusted resource. The team can also prioritise requests properly, enabling team members to focus on strategic objectives such as increasing employee satisfaction.