KINETIC DATA

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Schneider Electric Delivers Smarter Request Management for Employee Services

Customer:

Schneider Electric

Project Goals:

- Improve employee satisfaction with its global IT organization by making it faster and easier to get problems fixed;
- Shift service requests from phone calls to the Web; and
- Reduce internal service delivery costs.

Enabling Technology:

Kinetic Request portal and Kinetic Task automation engine

Results:

- On track for $1.4 million in annual savings by shifting incident reports from phone to Web.
- Cut portal load time in half.
- Pared down request submission time up to 80 percent.
- Reduced the number of operation support tickets by 54 percent for the ITSM admin team.

Project Background:

Schneider Electric is a global organization whose motto is to "make the most of the energy." The company provides a wide range of business and residential energy products and services, from industrial and home automation and control devices to energy distribution, heating and cooling, solar power, and cybersecurity.

The company is focused on building smarter cities, factories, and homes through innovation and collaboration. This requires an internal culture of innovation and collaboration among its more than 140,000 employees in 134 countries. With this in mind, in 2010, Schneider began looking for ways to replace its complex, inflexible and costly legacy service request management (SRM) system.

Avoiding a "Rip and Replace" Approach

After evaluating various request management system options, Schneider chose Kinetic Data enterprise request management (ERM) software for its new service request front end. The software—Kinetic Request portal and Kinetic Task workflow automation engine—would leverage Schneider's in-place IT service management (ITSM) system and provide a simpler and more flexible user interface with a lower-cost, server-based pricing model.

By 2013, Schneider had evolved, restructured and outgrown the design of its 2010 system. In addition, the company was looking for ways to improve the employee experience and, according to John Conroy, director of user life cycle, "The portal was too slow, the terminology was all 'IT speak,' it was difficult to navigate and it didn't work on mobile devices."

The company wanted to evolve its portal to be faster, simpler, and more attractive in order to motivate employees to use the Web instead of calling the service desk for their requests and problems. In addition, they needed more advanced search capabilities within the site. As Conroy pointed out, "When users have technology problems, they are already frustrated. We want them to be able to submit a ticket quickly and easily."

To ensure the end product would meet the needs of Schneider and its employees in each country and department, Kinetic Data assisted with in-depth analysis using focus groups. According to Conroy, "Kinetic Data really understands the technology, and they work hard to understand the business and its problems. They also share ideas and experience from previous projects to help customers avoid going down the wrong path."

Based on the focus group feedback, Schneider worked with Kinetic Data to update and revamp the system to make it faster, mobile friendly, and "smart"—i.e.,to display information and options specific to each employee's department, role, and location. This initiative leveraged new technology for Schneider, as it was the first project to use responsive design, allowing access to the request portal from any browser or device.

The Metrics of Project Success

The goal of improving employee satisfaction is off to a great start because of the system's increased speed, ease of use and responsive design.

Fast, intuitive and personalized, the new system is one employees want to use. On day one of the launch, with no training, employees around the world responded on Schneider's internal chat system with messages like "magnificent design," "bravo," and "this is excellent!" As Conroy explained, "It's a perfect fit. This was a key project to prove the technology, and having the ability to customize the look and feel is really a game changer."

Redesigning the portal interface not only makes it faster and easier for employees to use, but it also provides financial benefits. Industry data shows that the average cost of a phone call to IT support is $15, while the typical cost of a Web ticket is just $5.

Within six months, Schneider saw 45 percent of tickets submitted through its Web portal versus the phone. With a goal of having 62 percent of incidents and request submitted online by the end of 2015, the company expects to realize more than $1.4 million in cost avoidance.

In addition, Schneider saw its portal load time cut by 50 percent, with 95 percent of visits now loading within three seconds—and it pared down request submission time by up to 80 percent.

In the previous version of the service catalog, it took users a minimum of five clicks to navigate to (what they hoped was) the correct service item, which often wasn't the case. Now, users can navigate to the correct service item in just three clicks—or leverage the improved search mechanism and find an item with one click. Saving just a few clicks on each request translates into a 40–80 percent time savings across the organization.

A final benefit of the new design has been a 54 percent reduction in operation tickets routed to the ITSM system admin team, saving 260 labor hours per year in that group. Team members can now spend more time on new projects and other high-value activities rather than on support work.

Looking Forward

The success of the project has led Schneider to explore other ways to benefit from Kinetic Data technology. Plans are already in place to translate the site into French, German, and Chinese, and the company is extending the site to allow business users to submit application changes as well as problems and requests.

Schneider is building a mobile approval application using the Kinetic Work Order API, enabling managers to approve not only IT-related items, but also expense reports and other types of requests. "We're working to leverage ERM technology to manage facilities, HR and copy center requests. With its technology and workflow task engine, Kinetic Data is a perfect fit to handle those types of request systems," said Conroy. "And we have a team currently scanning the global landscape to see what the other possibilities are."

In addition, the global IT organization's desktop team is launching a project that uses the request system's responsive design technology to submit requests via a mobile device from outside the Schneider network. "Once completed, we'll promote this globally. That's where we expect to see additional productivity gains and cost savings," notes Conroy.

About Kinetic Data

Kinetic Data has helped hundreds of Fortune 500 and government customers—including General Mills, Avon, Intel, 3M and the U.S. Department of Transportation—implement enterprise request management (ERM), an integrated system with a centralized request portal for automating request management. Kinetic Data was named "Innovator of the Year" in 2009 by enterprise software users, and it also has been recognized with awards for its superior customer service and support. The company serves customers from its headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., offices in Sydney, Australia, and through a network of reseller partners. For more information, visit www.kineticdata.com.