



University of
Sunderland

Industry

Education

Business Size:

Large

Location:

Sunderland, UK

Customer Since:

2016

Replaced:

Homegrown Processes

Use Case:

ITSM and ITAM

Favorite Feature:

User Friendly

A New Found Pride in Internal Service Management

Background

The BLOC is a full-service health and wellness agency with innovative, effective, and inspiring ways to drive healthy change. With a global network of over 500 staff in the US and across the world, in both key and developing markets, their brand-building strategic and creative thinking covers a diverse range of audiences from HCPs to caregivers, and from patients to payers.

Challenges

With about 1,200 in staff and double that in students, the University of Sunderland serves anywhere from 3,500-4,000 internal customers. That's a variety of users, with a variety of devices, and a variety of IT needs.

Prior to Samanage, they used a local IT company for consulting and implementation. Stephen Dobson, IT Service Delivery Manager at the University of Sunderland, encouraged technicians to take ownership of tickets, yet had no way of tracking tickets once they were submitted. Tickets often sat in the queue without any accountability. When the IT team tried to add a feature to establish ownership of tickets, it disrupted all of the vital information about their assets.

Dobson and his team recognized that they wanted to leverage the power of a service portal, but they lacked the versatility within their solution. Users would need to access the portal with phones, tablets, and different kinds of laptops, but the university needed to pay for new code each time they added portal access to different devices.

"It took a huge amount of time, resource, and expense," said Dobson. "It just was a really clunky piece of software no matter how we installed it. You just felt that after all of the effort, time, and money we've put into this, we should be getting something better back."

During the height of the service issues, the university's IT department began to restructure.

"All of the sales, marketing, HR, admin, and teaching faculties had their own IT management under their own directive," Dobson said. "We had no authority over them. We had to bring everyone together under the same service."

Without the universal adoption of a cloud-based tool to manage their workloads, the university was living in silos where each department handled IT through emails or sticky notes. Dobson was tasked with finding a universal tool for service management and IT asset management to bring the entire university together on one versatile service platform.

"I saw them banging their heads against a brick wall with the previous tool, constantly receiving negative feedback from customers," said Dobson. "It was clear that people really didn't want to use these tools. And, if you give them any excuse not to use it, they'll take it."

"When it fails, it's a bit embarrassing. If IT can't get their own systems right, we'll lose the faith and trust of the organization," said Dobson. ***"The new solution had to be popular with both the customers and the service desk staff."***

Solution

After critical evaluations of solutions and processes at the university, Dobson was determined to find a tool that was simple enough for all users to appreciate, but functionally able to meet all of their needs. They focused on finding:

- A SaaS-based IT service management platform.
- The ability to manage it themselves, not having to wait or pay for anybody else to do development it.
- A solution that people could access from anywhere in the world.
- An ITSM platform that wouldn't lack functionality, yet was as simple as possible for people to use, so that nobody could say it was too complicated or takes too long, or any excuse not to use the system.
- The ability to follow or support ITIL best practices, especially incidents and asset management.

"I started looking, and caught a YouTube video from Samanage," he said. "It looked clean, crisp, and very straightforward."

The decision came down to Samanage and one other solution.

Price, ease of rollout, and user-friendliness were all factors, but the deciding moment came with the relationship.

"When the other company got me on the phone, it was the regional sales person, the Director for Europe, somebody from the partner because you didn't buy it directly from them," said Dobson. "The support was done by a different party, so there were four or five people from different companies all on the phone trying to sell me the product. But, it was quite clear that the Samanage employees knew each other. You could always get people on the phone when you needed to. The whole vibe I got was that Samanage was a much more approachable company."

Benefits

The most immediate benefit was the transition from a chaotic strategy to a smooth implementation with Samanage.

"I can't imagine any implementation of any software to be easier than what we went through with Samanage," said Dobson. "Really, it was such a relief to know that we could do it, and that was exactly what we wanted. We wanted something that we could just use by ourselves. And, Samanage had

already put all the hard work into the code and the back end, so it was just widgets, templates, and forms. That was the way we built it."

Dobson and his team specifically loved the portal, and wanted to drive users there. To promote the transition to the portal within the organization, the team initially chose not to accept emails directly to their accounts. Instead, they referred all tickets to the new Samanage portal.

"We weren't sure how people would react to being told they had to go to the portal for tickets," said Dobson. "But, customers loved it because it was very simple and easy to use. It instantly started getting positive feedback from both customers and technicians."

The customers loved the simplicity and versatility across devices. Within the first few weeks of launching Samanage, the technicians were relieved based on the excellent feedback that the new portal was easier to use, and ensured faster responses to their tickets and requests. The central IT team at the University of Sunderland was now able to quickly and efficiently communicate with their customers.

"Our IT team loves the functionality—the communication, the ability to reply within the tickets, the way you make configuration items," said Dobson. "The guys are excited for the portal upgrades with suggested solutions."

Dobson and his team saw the vision of growing with Samanage, and the importance of selecting a solution that would grow along with their needs.

"It felt that we were joining Samanage on a journey," said Dobson. "I think it wasn't so much as just buying the product, we were buying the product and becoming a partner of Samanage. We were going to develop it as a customer with you guys as the manufacturer/vendor. And, it is working really well."

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