



Flexible and Lightweight: Samanage IT Service Desk Notifications Keep AC Transit on Track

Industry

Government

ITSM Challenges

- Little to no notifications when tickets were assigned to technicians or users.
- A lack of visibility into the workload of technicians.
- Cumbersome searches led to inputting more information than they would get out of the solution.

Outcome

A/C Transit found that by incorporating Samanage into their IT organization the time to resolution for tickets dropped dramatically from tickets being open an average of 19 days, to with Samanage just a little over one day.

Background

AC Transit is the public bus system running from San Francisco to Oakland, California. The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District is the third largest public bus system in California, serving 13 cities since 1960.

The information technology department at AC Transit includes 32 employees, with seven staff members dedicated to the help desk. Each ticket submitted is initiated in the help desk and transferred to other teams throughout the IT department as needed.

Challenges

For years, Darrell Takara, project manager at AC Transit, and his team were using FrontRange ITSM for their service desk needs. Not only were they hosting their own servers, the system was consistently proving to be cumbersome. "Sometimes we only needed two pieces of information, but we'd have to put in 15," said Takara. "ITSM wanted to capture everything in case you might need it, but we'd have to keep filling out the mandatory fields in the forms. It wouldn't let us move forward without something in each field." While AC Transit was using ITSM, the system began implementing ITIL v2 principles, causing problems for Takara and his team. They were unable to streamline the escalation and transfer of tickets with the new principles in place. "Teams outside of the Help Desk would receive the ticket, but could not figure out how to use the assignments because it was a complicated ticket management system," said Takara. "Teams were unable to track their workload because there wasn't an easy way to look at assignments. People just didn't want to use the

system anymore." Another issue the Help Desk team was running into was that they weren't receiving any notifications when a ticket was assigned to a new user. Tickets were getting stuck once they left the Help Desk and the teams that were assigned the tickets had to continuously check their queue. "Tickets weren't getting closed," said Takara. "We would end up with 200 open tickets and after a reminder from me, 150 tickets would be closed out at the same time." Eventually the buildup of tickets made the team feel like there was just a lot of junk in the queue and it was increasingly difficult to see what each team member needed to complete. Reporting was also difficult in that all Takara and his team could do was count how many times a technician contacted someone, not how quickly. Only about 10 percent of the information that was captured in ITSM was utilized by the team and they felt that they were spending too much time putting information into the system to get a limited amount out of it.

Solution

"We were way beyond the end of life with ITSM," said Takara. "We decided to look for a new solution that off the-

shelf would be fairly lightweight." Takara and his team began the search for a new solution, looking at ZenDesk, FreshService, BMC Remedy, and Samanage. The most important features they were looking for in their new solution were:

- Ability to clone and attach tickets to assets or other tickets
- Ability to create templates within the service catalog
- Ability to track metrics easily
- Any features beyond those would be a bonus. It was critical that their new solution have the best usability and efficiency for the staff.

"The Samanage team just let the product speak for itself," said Takara. "Beyond being customer-friendly, Samanage was clearly the most convenient for my staff and how they would use it. It fit best in making our job easier." Takara found that Samanage was a lot more flexible than its competitors, especially the

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Project Manager

fact that they could respond to a ticket with an email. Notifications and comments are tracked right in the ticket and the help desk can reassign tickets remotely from mobile. They would also save time since they no longer had to search through the application or constantly fill in mandatory fields. "Right away we went from four steps to one step," said Takara.

Benefits

With Samanage, Takara and his team can now track more metrics and pull the information they need with ease. "We used to have to manually count the time a ticket was open, and now it's just a click away," said Takara. "We can track first contact and first response which we could never do before." The internal adoption of Samanage at AC Transit went very well. "It has been phenomenal. Not only has the help desk found Samanage to fit their workflow better, other departments come back and tell us how much they love it," said Takara. One of the biggest changes AC Transit has seen with Samanage is that the solution is very proactive and reminds the team to complete admin work which was something that was previously overlooked. The help desk and other IT teams no longer have to open tickets and move around in them, they can now click the drop down and hit close. "The amount of time a ticket was open previously was 19 days, and now with Samanage it's 1.5 days," said Takara.

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