

Building Out Enterprise Service Management

Texas Woman's University built out its service management capabilities to incorporate all aspects of IT and six other departments.

The technology staff at Texas Woman's University (TWU) in Denton, TX, was faced with a dilemma in 2012. Their legacy service management solution was lagging behind and didn't include project management. "We needed a solution for project management (PPM)," says Heather E. Davis, manager of IT training and development at TWU, the largest primarily women's public university in the U.S. "We wanted to find a solution that included IT service management (ITSM) as well."

TWU is a state-funded, public institution. TWU Technology, the full name for the tech department, had reorganized in 2012 to functionally align within an IT Service Management (ITSM) framework.

So TWU Technology began its search for service management software by evaluating its options in a competitive bidding process. "We considered a number of factors," says Elizabeth Precht, manager, application development, TWU Technology, "including cost, ease of use, and services."

TWU Technology eventually decided on TeamDynamix (TDX), cloud-based work management software designed to give service organizations at colleges and universities the ability to align, work together, and simplify their work management processes. As TWU Technology discovered in its evaluation, TDX provides an integrated ITSM platform to extend beyond IT to support facilities,

admission, marketing, and HR. This one platform can expand and interact with PPM and resource management to meet both current and future university needs.

Once TWU Technology decided on TDX, it formed a committee to steer ITSM implementation decisions. The Business Applications development team built the project. "At bi-weekly meetings," says Precht, "we reviewed progress and assigned tasks."

By 2017, the teams had built out Enterprise Service Management (ESM) to more than six departments. And they did so essentially on their own. They had only 35-40 hours of consulting from TDX. "We deployed Project Portfolio Management (PPM) in 2014," says Davis, "our Knowledge Centered Support (KCS) in March 2016, and ITSM in December 2016."

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How did the group accomplish the build-out with so little consulting? "One of our team members had researched the product to such an extent," says Davis, "we were able to create the applications for each department without having a dependency on the host company. This platform does not require scripting or coding to bring up each new application.



The fact that we had an in-house subject matter expert (SME) helped us manage our own timelines.” Technology projects in higher education shift priorities continuously, so TWU needed the flexibility with its implementation timeline to effectively manage resources.

The technical configuration of the product itself was not difficult, says Davis, even though there were myriad details to consider throughout the process. Some of the questions the team addressed included:

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— Lena McLain, sr. applications developer at TWU Technology

- How will business processes flex to work with the ESM?
- Who will approve and which approvals are required?
- What is a realistic timeline, including go-live date?
- How much of the ITIL framework will be used?

“We decided to go live after the end of the fall semester, before the winter break, when the Service Desk workload is less intense,” says Davis. “In our experience, moving from an ITSM-only product to an ESM required us to refine our business processes. Decision-makers were critical to the configuration.”

SINGLE PLATFORM APPROACH

From the outset, the committee decided it needed ITSM and PPM on one platform. The TDX platform is a single

integrated platform that combines Service Management with Project Portfolio Management. “One benefit of a centralized solution,” says Lena McLain, sr. applications developer at TWU Technology, “is it provides a holistic picture. With the ability to tie service usage to project and support requests, we are better able to manage prioritization and workload.”

Davis adds that with one platform, TWU Technology is better able to provide

stronger support for students, faculty, and staff. Enterprise Service Management provides service management to an entire institution with all departments operating on one platform. This approach has many benefits, including increased efficiency and better resource allocation. “ESM helps us align with the university’s strategic plan and goals, while maintaining excellent service through the ITIL framework in ITSM,” says Davis.

Knowledge-centered support (KCS) encompasses a methodology and set of industry best practices for capturing, structuring, and re-using information in a knowledge base. This component of ESM has been a strong benefit at TWU. “By implementing a service catalog and knowledge base before configuring ITSM, we were able to provide improved service by making information available to the university community 24/7, while

saving the Service Desk agents’ time,” Davis says. “They can quickly provide links to knowledge base articles for common requests.”

According to Precht, there are a number of other advantages and benefits with TDX. “For our diverse needs at TWU—we have a large commuter population and three campuses—having software like TeamDynamix is important because it meets the unique needs of our student population.”

Some of the other factors that figured into TWU Technology’s decision to go with TDX, says Precht, were name recognition from peers using the product, the overall ease of purchase through a pre-existing state contract, and the opportunity for other departments at the university to use the platform. The biggest reason for purchasing was “the ability to have incident management and project management all in one solution,” she says.

Davis, Precht, and McLain all agree educational technology professionals should consider all solutions prior to making a purchase. “Many companies have similar products, but each offers different strengths,” says Davis.

“An all-encompassing enterprise solution would benefit any higher education institution looking to streamline resources for managing incidents, requests, and projects,” she says. “However, it’s important to identify decision-makers prior to implementation. Leadership is required to move the implementation forward.”

TeamDynamix