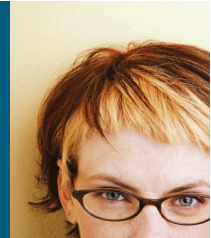


Success story

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Vanderbilt Embraces Organized Change to Realize Significant Improvements in Availability and Service Delivery



Vanderbilt University Medical Center (Vanderbilt) recognized a need to revamp IT processes to improve service delivery to the business. Vanderbilt realized the importance of finding a partner that could combine technology and process while being respectful of the organization's culture. Vanderbilt engaged Pepperweed Consulting for both infrastructure and service management projects. Pepperweed's approach and guidance smoothed resistance to change across the IT organization enabling Vanderbilt to adopt organization change and processes that drove significant improvements in availability and service delivery.

During its 127-year history, Vanderbilt has built a reputation as a leader in medical education, research and patient care. Their innovative patient care and physician and nurse education derives from a constant emphasis on discovery and the promulgation of new knowledge. As a result, Vanderbilt is routinely recognized as one of the nation's best hospitals by US News and World Report, Solucent, and the Conference Board.

As a leading medical center, infrastructure availability was a core IT and business priority for effective patient care. Executives at Vanderbilt knew that to continue to maintain acceptable service levels, existing IT processes needed to be evaluated and proactive solutions developed.

With Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards emerging as the preeminent focus for effective IT Service Management (ITSM), Vanderbilt recognized the importance of transforming its environment to embrace the best practices for aligning IT services with business requirements. The key question became how to get there effectively.

"Availability of systems and serving our customer base with quality IT became

two key areas of focus for us," said Nancy Proctor, CIO, Vanderbilt University Hospital and Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. "With the complexity of our systems and patient care being the end result, we recognized the need for a well thought-out plan to coordinate changes and ensure adoption across our diverse IT organization."

Committed to quality

To promote Vanderbilt's IT alignment goals, Mike Harris, Assistant Director Vanderbilt University Medical Center, met with representatives from Pepperweed Consulting and engaged in preliminary discussions about the medical center's challenges. "After speaking with Pepperweed, we became interested in the company's capabilities. We knew what we wanted to achieve, but weren't certain about the path to take. We felt that Pepperweed could help us figure it out."

"Everyone at Vanderbilt is committed to quality," said Jeff Kimble, Director of Network Computing Services for Vanderbilt Informatics Center. "But our reality was that we had a very decentralized approach to technology. Part of our strategic plan was to realign our IT organization under one umbrella and eliminate redundancy."



Vanderbilt chose to engage Pepperweed for its expertise in ITIL and ITSM. For Kimble, it was important to first determine the right processes and then use this information to select the appropriate tools. He wanted a partner that could understand that thinking and provide the right guidance and expertise.

Proctor also points to the importance of being cognizant of culture. "In addition to technology and integration expertise, we needed a partner that could take on our cultural transformation as well. Our IT teams needed to understand the rationale behind embracing a new way of doing business and how critical it was to improving service to the organization."

Infrastructure to support service delivery

For Pepperweed, infrastructure held the key to success in service process change.

"When Vanderbilt first started discussion with us, they were focused on the need for a service management initiative," noted Theresa Collins, Senior ITSM Consultant at Pepperweed. "But there was definitely foundational work on the infrastructure side that we had to address before even considering service management."

Pepperweed provided Vanderbilt with infrastructure and process management services, which included: change management, configuration management, incident management, problem management, service level management, and availability management. On the infrastructure side, Pepperweed focused on

automated, proactive monitoring that included real time monitoring tools and business continuity. For the network and critical applications, Pepperweed targeted uptime, performance, capacity, availability, and application performance.

Culture is key

Pepperweed emphasized the importance of learning about and understanding Vanderbilt's IT culture. In Collins' view, knowing the culture helped to define the process restructuring approach.

"We definitely stressed baby steps," said Collins. "The team at Vanderbilt was very open about the possibility of resistance to change, so we focused on delivering results in manageable chunks. We approached every process change with a pilot and proof of concept so we could determine what was working and what wasn't. From there, we were able to showcase quick wins and successes, which went a long way in securing buy in from the diverse constituents in Vanderbilt's IT organization."

Because Vanderbilt was asking its IT staff to take on this project in addition to regular tasks, the organization chose a matrix approach to implementing change. "We took Pepperweed's guidance, and then created workshops across all of the groups in Informatics," said Kimble. "We had core groups develop each process and then provided people across the organization with the opportunity to come on board during the saturation stage. With this structure, everyone in the IT organization had a stake in the change."

Embracing change

When Pepperweed began working with Vanderbilt, the team interacted with three key people - the executive sponsor, the sponsor, and the project manager. After 18 months of progressive change, Pepperweed hosted an event for 78 people from Vanderbilt's IT organization.

"The move from three people supporting what were doing to 78 was a monumental achievement for this project," said Andrew Brümmer, Director of Process Management at Pepperweed. "We were facilitating positive change, breaking down barriers, and showing the value of service management. Our greatest accomplishment, outside of project-mandated metrics, was the fact that people across the IT organization were recognizing the positive impact of the project and were embracing it."

Quantifiable improvements

A year in to the project, Pepperweed gathered ROI metrics to track status and help Vanderbilt budget accurately for the upcoming fiscal year. All measurement showed positive results. Therefore, Vanderbilt was able to show the impact of a consolidated view of IT processes - improved business support and service delivery.

Change management provides an excellent case in point. Because Vanderbilt's business rests on critical response, effective change management reduced unplanned or emergency changes. With an immediate reduction in unnecessary or unplanned changes, Vanderbilt achieved greater stability and a better quality of service in medical care.



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“With our change management initiative, we got more involved in the process,” said Kimble. “There was a definite spike in gathering changes, and people were communicating across the organization. It became ingrained that to make a change, you had to submit it and get approval. This led to a huge reduction in our downtime.”

Incident management is another area that realized drastic improvement. With Pepperweed’s process guidance, incident management processes went from being reactive, where IT was only alerted to problems via end-user reports; to proactive where IT is able to discover issues and correct them, preventing end-user implications.

Realizing Business Value

The changes facilitated by Pepperweed helped Vanderbilt’s Informatics Group showcase the business value of IT. With an integrated, well thought out service management plan, Vanderbilt improved systems availability, incorporated proactive planning, and promoted collaboration.

“We are now able to profess the concept of IT service management confidently to the business,” noted Proctor. “Our infrastructure and service management processes make up our work engine to provide 24/7 services. But more importantly, our IT staff is now more aware of what it means to make system changes. We have the documented, positive results to prove the value of our efforts.”

And IT’s excitement over the changes and benefits is growing every day. “Getting a project like this one off of the ground is the hardest part,” said Kimble. “We certainly felt the growing pains. But now, people are seeing the benefits - it’s not making jobs more complicated, it’s making them more efficient. We are at the threshold where more and more people want to participate in the initiative and it’s beginning to take on a life of its own.”



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Challenge

- Achieve high levels of infrastructure availability to keep pace with medical center service delivery demands.
- Balance the complexity of systems with the urgency of patient care
- How to best take advantage of ITIL process changes in a diverse IT organization

Solutions

- Target infrastructure changes as a foundation for service management initiatives
- Focus on process management services including change management, configuration management, incident management, problem management, service level management, and availability management
- Ensure buy in from diverse constituents in the IT organization by presenting changes as pilots and proof of concepts

Results

- Buy in across the organization for process change
- Greater stability and a better quality of service in medical care
- Improved systems availability, incorporated proactive planning, and promoted collaboration
- Reduced downtime through more effective and streamlined change management
- Transformed incident management from reactive to proactive

To learn more, visit
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