

IT Service Automation Enables Canada to Ensure a Safe Blood Supply



Canadian Blood Services

Profile:

Manages a safe, secure, and cost-effective blood system.

Location:

Ottawa, Canada

Industry:

Healthcare

Website:

www.blood.ca

Solutions:

- Ivanti® Service Manager
- Ivanti Incident Management, Service Request, Self Service, Service Catalog, Problem Management, Change Management, Release Management, Service Level Management, and Survey

Benefits to Canadian Blood Services:

- Reduced outages in environment by 70%
- Achieved a change success rate of 95%
- Reduced call volumes by 50%
- Can create new virtual machines for the specific environment in hours, not weeks

When illness or trauma strikes, a person’s life may depend on ready access to a blood transfusion. Across Canada, patients rely on Canadian Blood Services to manage a safe, secure, and cost-effective blood system. It also operates a stem cell and marrow network, cord blood bank, and national patient registries for organ donation and transplantation.

IT at the Speed of Life

“Four years ago, we had an issue,” recalls Steve Aiston, Senior Program Manager for IT at Canadian Blood Services. “Many of our IT service processes were not achieving the results we needed or we lacked an appropriate process.” When it comes to people, process, and technology, Aiston says, “we knew we had good people but we were missing sufficient IT service management automation, and we needed new and better processes.”

Many IT processes were manual, being managed through databases, spreadsheets, and paper. “We were a paper-driven organization,” says Aiston. “That creates a tremendous constraint when you deal at the speed of IT.”

IT service automation was key to delivering quality IT services more efficiently. “We needed a system that delivered information about operations quickly to the right people to allow them to make informed decisions and communicate with the people who need to execute the work,” he says.

The IT team set out to find an enterprise-class service management platform. Beyond robust support for ITIL® principles, IT wanted a solution with strong workflow and self-service capabilities to increase efficiency. As a point of qualification, the chosen solution needed to be able to automate a critical intake process for SAP: streamlining the coordination of the initial request, validating the roles, coordinating the training, and creating the account access. “It was a complex process, and that was our high-water mark,” says Aiston.

A Solid Foundation

After a formal RFP, Canadian Blood Services chose Ivanti Service Manager and deployed it in the cloud. “We want to be experts in using an IT service management system, but running the system is best handled by the industry experts that designed it,” says Aiston.

Canadian Blood Services has taken a measured rollout of its IT service management system, beginning with Incident Management, Service Request, Self Service, Service Catalog, Problem Management, and then building on that foundation with Change Management, Release Management, Survey, and Service Level Management.

“We have progressively enabled IT service management automation and new processes in a bottom-to-top approach,” says Aiston. “Service Manager allowed us to entrench each forward step in our operation procedures and build on each process to become a more mature IT shop and a much more effective service provider to the business.”

Cultivating Success

The results are impressive. Ralph Michaelis, CIO of Canadian Blood Services, says, “Ivanti and our IT Service Management program at Canadian Blood Services has had a significant impact on IT operations. Our service management implementation is providing us the visibility, data, and agility we need to transform the business of IT.” As an example, with ITIL processes supported by the Service Manager platform, Canadian Blood Services reduced its outage rate by 70%. Its change success rate improved from around 75% to 95%.

“Service Manager’s strength is its well-thought-out, ITIL-based configuration,” says Aiston. Each IT team has its own specialty, but increasingly IT services rely on integrated technologies. “Service Manager provides the ability to reintegrate service support even though it may span different teams, each providing a different component of a particular service,” he says.

IT created or improved dozens of processes with Service Manager. The server request process is one example. It’s a highly-controlled process that requires coordination between multiple teams and multiple validation checks. In the past, the routing of requests to create a server virtual machine took two weeks to complete. Now, with an automated service request workflow, request handling is completed in

about two hours. “Multiply that type of improvement by dozens of processes, and you can understand how much improvement we’ve undergone,” says Aiston.

With the power of ITIL processes and systems evident in day-to-day operations, the adoption of Service Manager has been swift. “Uptake has been very good,” says Aiston. “With new automation and optimized processes available, it’s obvious to folks that the new way is faster, more efficient, and less of a struggle.”

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Steve Aiston, Senior Program Manager, IT

Self Service Drives Efficiency

Empowering employees to use self service has cut service-desk call volumes in half, and moved a third of intake to the web. The shift was organic. “The ease with which our business took to the web as a means of request submission is a testament to Service Manager,” says Aiston.

Keith Colwell, Director of Client Delivery, says, “Improving our IT services processes has allowed us to relieve the pressure on the service desk. We were being hit with a large number of outages and incidents due to our ineffective processes. The changes allowed the service desk to provide better service to users as well as being able to redirect funding into other strategic areas of our business like our Web and mobile programs, which brings in more donors. There’s a definite link between improving our IT operations and satisfying the mission of the organization. We were also able to give more clarity and flexibility to the analysts on the desk that allowed working from home on the online requests, as well as being able to complement our strategy of building their ITIL skill set.”

Better Visibility into IT Operations

Ivanti Service Manager improved visibility into operational metrics, so IT can better align its resources with the organization’s priorities. In the past, IT directors requested reporting from a separate business-intelligence platform.

Now, they can immediately see the information that matters most. “With the dashboards in Service Manager, the directors have unprecedented, real-time visibility into operations,” says Aiston. “It’s been a big win.”

Continuous Service Improvement

IT continues to drive service quality. IT is advancing the change management process by creating a data model that enhances the architectural information in the CMDB to provide visibility from individual components all the way through to the business service.

“There’s going to be a transformation in IT when people understand that this information is available to them as part of the change process,” he says. That information will free up IT experts who provide insight into potential issues during changes today. “We’ll back off our reliance on people and rely on technical information and the histories of our infrastructure items to know which ones are serving us well and which ones aren’t,” says Aiston.

Another current focus is service level management, which allows IT to set expectations for service requests. “It ties us to the business more tightly, and we can see whether we are meeting those targets,” he says.

“That’s why Service Manager was the right system for us. Service Manager has a good understanding of the inherent operations and doesn’t have a lot of clutter around ITIL. It was just the right amount.”

Steve Aiston, Program Manager, IT

Deep Expertise and a Strong Partnership

Aiston and his team lead the ITIL transformation at Canadian Blood Services, and also have relied on Kifinti for expert guidance. Aiston and his team did the heavy lifting of design and deployment. “We wanted to build up our own strength and understanding of Service Manager and handle the day-to-day work ourselves, and then bring in Kifinti for the more complex work,” says Aiston.

“What’s amazing is the continual service improvement that Canadian Blood Services has embarked on and how it has taken full advantage of its investment in Service Manager,” says Paul Kelsey, service consultant at Kifinti. “Canadian Blood Services is in the top tier of ITSM maturity.”

Just the Right Amount of Process

Aiston has learned that when it comes to ITIL, you need just the right amount. “There’s a tendency to skim the surface with ITIL, which isn’t very effective – or people go to the other extreme and go whole-hog,” says Aiston. “When ITIL implementations get in trouble, it’s often because they lost track of ITIL’s operational value and they do things strictly for what looks like good ITIL reasons.

“When that happens, people lose interest in the process,” he continues. “The returns diminish when you overburden a process with information. People stop being able to make the right decisions at the right time.

“That’s why Service Manager was the right system for us,” Aiston concludes. “Service Manager has a good understanding of the inherent operations and doesn’t have a lot of clutter around ITIL. It was just the right amount.”

About Kifinti

Kifinti, which means “How are you?” in Maltese, is focused entirely on helping deliver more effective service through the implementation of best practices focused around service, asset, endpoint, and identity management. Our expertise is helping organizations transform the organizational processes and is based on adopting industry best practices like ITIL, COBIT, and ISO 9000, implementing technology solutions to support those processes. Our consultants, our methodology, our team, and our strategy have all been chosen in support of this.



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