

# VMware Service Manager lightens the load for Powercor's IT Service Desk



*"Key to the success of our ITIL journey has been our technology partner's unwavering customer focus and commitment to innovation."*

– Keith Betts, IT Services and Security Manager, Powercor

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Customer

Powercor

### Industry

Utility

### Challenges

- Implement ITIL best practice to improve service delivery
- Support business expansion without increasing frontline resources
- Closer business alignment

### Key Solutions

VMware Service Manager for Incident and Problem Management, Change Management, Service Workflow, CMDB, Configuration Management, Service Level Management, Knowledge Management and Service Portal

### Benefits

- Visibility and control of IT infrastructure
- Ability to rehearse Changes to critical systems and safeguard system uptime
- Increased productivity through Service Desk automation and self-service
- First line resolution increased by 20%
- 98% of calls resolved with SLA
- 30% increase in customer satisfaction

## Powercor

VMware Service Manager for Incident and Problem Management, Change Management, Service Workflow, CMDB, Configuration Management, Service Level Management, Knowledge Management and Service Portal

Electricity distributors Citipower and Powercor Australia manage the 'poles and wires' infrastructure that delivers power to residential, commercial and large industrial customers throughout much of the State of Victoria. Although both distributors are 51% owned by Cheung Kong Infrastructure Holdings Ltd (CKI) in partnership with Hongkong Electric Holdings Ltd (HEH), and 49% owned by Spark Infrastructure, each is separately responsible for the quality and reliability of electricity delivered to its customers.

In 2008, the milestone of one million customer connections across the distribution networks was attained with Citipower supplying electricity to more than 300,000 customers within Melbourne city, and Powercor to 663,000 customers in Central and Western Victoria and suburbs of Melbourne.

Based at the company's Melbourne Headquarters is Powercor's IT department of 175 staff. Within this department the IT Service Desk is manned by just 6 frontline analysts responsible for managing internal service support for over 3,500 internal and field-based staff across 14 sites in Australia, as well as 400 staff from the company's recent acquisition of New Zealand-based Northern Gas Network.

The Service Desk's customer base has in fact risen sharply from the 2,000 mark in 2007 to its current level, yet the existing team has comfortably shouldered the increase in demand without requiring additional staff. Keith Betts, IT Services and Security Manager at Powercor, believes this achievement is due in equal measure to the growing maturity of its ITSM processes and its highly automated VMware Service Manager.

### A long and productive relationship

Powercor's IT department was an early adopter of VMware Service Manager technology back in the 1990's, and since the early days has gone through several and, according to Betts, relatively seamless updates to achieve today's robust yet flexible ITSM environment.

A particular landmark in the Service Desk's development was the internal Service Improvement Review launched in 2006, when the department benchmarked its performance against international standards, and subsequently adopted ITIL best practice as the framework for more formalized processes for Incident, Problem, Change, and Availability Management.

*"In our experience, VMware Service Manager technology has always delivered on its promises, and the service we've received is impressive. Not long ago, the company was rated as the top ITSM solution provider in a major Help Desk Association of Australia (HDAA) support industry user survey. That result mirrors our views entirely."*

– Keith Betts, IT Services and Security Manager, Powercor

"Key to the success of our ITIL journey has been our technology partner's unwavering customer focus and commitment to innovation," comments Betts. "We found that a straightforward upgrade to our current version of VMware Service Manager enabled us to rapidly implement the core ITIL processes that underpin our service delivery today. The solution's integrated Service Catalog also supported our drive for closer alignment of services with the business."

### Visibility of the IT infrastructure

With over 300 servers, 1,600 desktop computers, 600 laptops and numerous handheld devices in the field, the Service Improvement Review also highlighted Configuration Management as a key priority. Out-of-the-box connectivity enabled Powercor to swiftly populate the VMware Service Manager Federated CMDB with asset data from its existing Microsoft SMS application. For the first time this gave the Service Desk an accurate picture of the IT infrastructure including dependencies and associated users.

"From a financial standpoint, the new, improved visibility of Configuration Items within the CMDB has proved a significant turning point. We can now easily check and update asset data as a standard part of every service call, and if, for example, someone logs in on a laptop belonging to another user, a flag is raised and we can verify the usage – with obvious benefits from a security point of view," explains Betts.

Since recently upgrading to Microsoft SCCM, the whole Change/Release process has considerably matured and the impact of Change requests can be better assessed. A Change to a regional file server, for instance, which may have previously denied users access to the network at a crucial time of the day, can now be rehearsed and scheduled using VMware Service Manager to ensure a trouble-free implementation.

"Thanks to our new, formalized Change approval processes, and the seamless integration of VMware Service Manager and Microsoft SCCM, we are consistently running at 99.96% Availability," Betts confirms.

Powercor is now undertaking an exhaustive software audit. "There are currently in the region of 4,000 applications in use throughout the organization, and a large proportion of these are being used by only a handful of people," explains Betts. "Going forward we envisage deploying VMware Application Discovery Manager to achieve much greater visibility and control over our software assets."

### Tangible service improvements

The frontline Service Desk has also yielded an impressive return on investment. The introduction of the VMware Service Manager Service Portal has meant that around 30% of all calls are being logged directly by users – a shift that Betts calculates has saved at least 40 analyst hours a week.

Service Desk analysts now use standard automated processes to record Incidents and Problems, with Service Requests being identified and separately classified. Being able to search the integrated VMware Service Manager Knowledge Bank for Known Errors and Knowledge articles has seen the first line resolution rate soar from 55% to 75% in recent times. No mean feat given that the team of 6 processes over 40,000 calls per year.

Simple innovations such as the ability to email open calls directly to second line support have certainly contributed to the all round efficiency of the service. The team is also committed to maintaining an on-going dialog with the business, using the Service Catalog to update services and communicate more effectively with stakeholders. Tellingly, 98% of calls to the Service Desk are now being resolved within Service Level Agreement (SLA), and customer surveys have recorded a 30% increase in satisfaction.

As a result, the streamlined Service Desk has proved itself more than capable of supporting major new industry initiatives like the implementation of 'Smart Meter' infrastructure, a highly efficient way of measuring and managing electricity consumption.

"When the mandatory rollout of electronic meters to around 1.1 million customers began in September 2009, we had to support the handheld technology that the 200 extra field workers use to get their work orders," comments Betts. "The business had confidence that we could carry the extra load, and critically, we knew we had the processes and systems in place to say 'Yes, we can.'"

As well as the major enhancement to software asset management scheduled for 2010, Powercor is also excited about introducing new self-service provisioning capabilities, which can be integrated with SCCM to deliver tangible efficiency gains. Indeed Powercor's Keith Betts believes that VMware Service Manager is set to go from strength to strength.

"In our experience, VMware Service Manager technology has always delivered on its promises, and the service we've received is impressive. Not long ago, the company was rated as the top ITSM solution provider in a major Help Desk Association of Australia (HDAA) support industry user survey. That result mirrors our views entirely."

