

# Better Service Management



Microsoft's System Center Service Manager is helping Avanade Information Technology Services achieve superior service management quickly, and derive greater value from the entire System Center platform.

### Support When They Need It

Like many IT professionals, Avanade's Kristin Shulik rarely has a slow day. When not pushing patches out to servers or managing incidents, she and her team of Global Helpdesk support resources field an average of 2,000 requests each month coming in from 10,000 professionals working in 25 countries where Avanade does business. Not surprisingly, the Avanade IT service team relies heavily on its service management solution to ensure that Avanade professionals get the IT support they need when they need it.

"The previous third-party incident management solution we had was troublesome, expensive and less than flexible," Shulik explains as she discusses Avanade's priorities. "It took a long time for our developers to make even small maintenance changes. The program did not inter-operate with other solutions. Whenever upgrades required for warranty compliance were done, we had to merge our customizations into the upgraded product... a very expensive proposition. To make matters worse, the vendor was unable to save our customizations, which forced us to cancel the final upgrade."

The Avanade team knew it needed a replacement, and Avanade's priorities for a new service management solution were clear. The new tool would have to:

- **Increase Productivity:** Avanade wanted end users to self-resolve 50 percent of issues by giving them access to a self-service portal with a robust knowledge base. This would also increase productivity of the helpdesk by eliminating manual entry of incidents, saving hours per day that could be better spent on more strategic tasks.

- **Extend Existing Value:** Extend the value and capabilities of Avanade's existing platforms by fully integrating with Avanade's other IT operations systems.
- **Raise Transparency:** Track IT assets and relationships among assets in one reconciled Configuration Management database that would answer the question, "How useful, resilient and valuable are the IT services we offer?"
- **Cut Costs:** Establish a stable and low-cost platform for robust Incident, Change and Problem management.
- **Enhance Adaptability:** When upgrades become available, Avanade needed to be able to move them into production quickly and painlessly, so that IT professionals have access to new features faster.

### System Center Service Manager

Was such a solution available? For most organizations, unfortunately not. But Avanade is accustomed to exploring new technologies even before they become widely available, which led it in 2009 to investigate the beta version of System Center Service Manager (SCSM), a new Microsoft product. "SCSM appeared to meet our requirements," Shulik recalls, "but we did not really know how well it would perform until we implemented it." So Avanade decided to put SCSM to the test.

"With Microsoft System Center Service Manager, we will have a single pane of glass for viewing of the health of our entire infrastructure."

*Kristin Shulik*  
*Product Manager,*  
*IT Management Services*  
*Avanade*

Microsoft's System Center Service Manager (SCSM) provides built-in processes based on industry best practices for incident and problem resolution, change control, and asset lifecycle management. Through its configuration management database (CMDB) and process integration, Service Manager automatically connects knowledge and information from System Center Operations Manager, System Center Configuration Manager, and Active Directory Domain Services.

### **Technology-Forward Thinking**

Avanade joined the Microsoft System Center Service Manager Technology Adoption Program, and a team of four began working on the implementation. Avanade was the first Microsoft partner to go live with SCSM in November 2009. The fact that Avanade was an early adopter of SCSM paid valuable dividends, in immediate improvements to Avanade's service management and in Avanade's proficiency with the solution itself.

"Avanade was the first Microsoft Systems Integration partner to go live with SCSM, and one of the largest companies to go live with SCSM to date," notes Chris Miller, Avanade's Chief Information Officer. "Thanks to our close working relationship with Microsoft and world-class skills in the System Center product family, we were able to provide feedback directly to Microsoft's development team on our experience with the beta release."

The early implementation also turned Avanade professionals into expert SCSM resources, ready to help when the time came to support Avanade clients with their SCSM implementation programs. Avanade's ability to work as a technology-forward enterprise on the leading edge of new technologies

exposed the team to new approaches sooner, and gave Avanade a head-start on developing superior implementation methods.

### **Working Better Together**

"We were able to implement and deploy Service Manager and our incident management processes with minimal issues," Shulik reports. "Despite the fact that no one on our four-person team was 100 percent-dedicated to this project, we still managed a speedy deployment."

With easy-to-use installment wizards, Avanade implemented connectors to Active Directory Domain Services, System Center Operations Manager 2007, and System Center Configuration Manager 2007 SP2, to pull in detailed information on servers, virtual machines and printers. Integration between SCSM and Service Center Operations Manager expedites tasks: clicking on an alert in SCOM lets the team auto-generate an incident in SCSM.

Like a good team player, SCSM makes other components such as System Center Operations Manager and Configuration Manager more effective, adding significant value to the solution as a whole. "We had implemented Operations Manager and Configuration Manager previously," explains Shulik, "and when we added SCSM, we were suddenly able to see everything that was happening very clearly." Highly customizable, SCSM can be configured to support an organization's specific service model requirements. At the same time, many Avanade clients use the arrival of SCSM as an opportunity to re-assess and begin to transform their current service management capabilities.

"Service Manager begins to give us an end-to-end picture of service health, which will reduce our total number of incidents and our 'cost-to-serve' in the long run. We can build a more detailed CMDB that is updated in real time with current configuration data from System Center Configuration Manager and System Center Operations Manager. With better intelligence about our infrastructure, we can do a better job of planning for hardware replacements, software upgrades and other enhancements to our infrastructure."

*Dave Muhich*

*Operations Architect  
Avanade*

Among the operational benefits SCSM is delivering to Avanade are:

- **Self-Service:** End users can now resolve more of their own issues faster, thanks to the SCSM Self-Service Portal.
- **Savings:** Avanade support staff members no longer have to manually enter incident details, a data-entry time savings of several hours per day.
- **Speed:** The Avanade ITS team can make and deploy changes to production systems in hours instead of weeks by using System Center Service Manager management packs.
- **Visibility:** System Center Service Manager is helping Avanade gain an end-to-end view of its IT services, with greater visibility into root causes of problems.

Avanade is organized along service streams, but also employs Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF) and custom processes in a hybrid environment. Fully aligned with Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) standards, SCSM's introduction to a mature ITIL-based operation can be a point-and-click implementation. Regardless of the environment encountered or the methodology employed, Service Manager is flexible enough to fit in.

### About Avanade Information Technology Services (ITS)

The Avanade ITS organization includes hundreds of technology specialists working to support the information technology needs of the global Avanade workforce of more than 10,000 professionals worldwide. Avanade ITS supports a total of five data centers and more than 40 development centers, and regularly confers with Avanade customers on our information technology experiences and insights.



#### About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. For more information, visit [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com).

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