

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs leverages the Micro Focus® solution to streamline IT Service Management.



Overview

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides health and other services to all retired military service members throughout their lives. The VA's mission is to fulfill President Abraham Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans. The Secretary of the VA, Eric K. Shinseki, advocates three fundamental behaviors across all VA departments: people-centric, results-oriented and forward-looking. To manage the 31 VA facilities and hundreds of programs, Region 4 of the VA relies on an IT organization that supports 65,000 users who submit up to 5000 requests a day. The IT organization is a critical part of the delivery of services to veterans and is committed to continual and cost-effective improvements to its operations.

"We selected the Serena (now part of Micro Focus) solution because it can be easily adapted to the way we deliver services. It is cost-effective and easy to use."

JERRY SICARD
Project Manager

Challenge

Several years ago, the VA was divided in 22 networks, each of which managed a number of medical centers. They all used the same clinical, administrative, and financial applications. But the way they delivered IT services to the medical centers and the ITSM products they used varied significantly. Six years ago, the Secretary of the VA endorsed an initiative to bring uniformity to the 22 different IT service organizations by creating four regional IT zones, each of which could make its own decisions about how to deliver IT services.

As Region 4 planned how to improve service and meet the objectives of standardizing practices and controlling costs, they identified the most urgent problem as the need to close tickets faster by improving methods for tracking and reassigning requests that could potentially sit unaddressed in the wrong queue. The region was guided by these goals:

- Define best practice processes for every part of operations
- Find an ITSM product that allows the team to configure processes to match their needs themselves (rather than adapting processes to the software) and implement these standards across the region
- Deploy measurement and tracking reports to provide complete visibility and facilitate reducing closure rates



At a Glance

■ Industry

Government

■ Location

United States

■ Challenge

Reorganization and restructuring created the need to combine automated and manual escalations and reassignments up and down the organization and to rapidly support process changes.

■ Solution

Use Service Manager as a flexible, cost-effective, easy-to-use solution that deploys rapidly and provides visibility throughout the service management lifecycle.

■ Results

- + Provided a cost-effective and easy-to-use system that is easily adaptable
- + Reduced issue resolution time
- + Offered one tool to fully integrate Help Desk, Service Request, Change Request, Incident Management, and other key services

“With the Serena (now part of Micro Focus) solution, we’ve been able to build a standard set of processes and reports and reduced the time to resolve issues significantly.”

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Project Manager

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The challenges included the need to combine automated and manual escalations and reassignments up and down the organization and to rapidly support process changes as a result of reorganization and restructuring within the VA. It was apparent that the traditional ITSM solutions would not be able to meet their needs. That concern motivated the team to expand the search for an ITSM solution beyond the products they already had in place.

The team was particularly frustrated with the incumbent solution’s automatic assignments, which were difficult to change or override. This rigidity frequently resulted in open tickets sitting abandoned in the wrong queue, and these incorrect assignments were hard to detect.

Solution

After a review of leading ITSM solutions that included BMC Remedy and CA Unicenter, Region 4 VA selected the Micro Focus solution, which offered flexibility, a low overall price point, comprehensive features, ease of use, rapid deployment, and visibility throughout the service management lifecycle. The ability to quickly change processes was a key factor. By selecting Micro Focus’s process-based solution, the VA’s Region 4 benefited as follows:

- One tool to fully integrate Help Desk, Service Request, Change Request, Incident Management, and other key services
- No duplicate data entry
- Changes implemented in minutes or hours, not days or weeks

- Over 50% savings on software licenses compared to BMC Remedy

They also realized significant improvements in transparency and visibility:

- Standard reports that help compare rates of closure of tickets across medical centers
- Complete roll-up reporting—from single site through three levels up to the national office
- Built-in, configurable reporting module that is accessible by any user

Results

With their implementation of the Micro Focus solution, Region 4 has already automated and delivered other IT and business services, including those related to User Access Management, Data Center Space Management, VSAT Requests and Travel Requests. IT staff satisfaction and productivity have increased with the Micro Focus solution thanks to the graphical modeler and easy-to-use forms. Compared to the incumbent products, Mr. Sicard reports that Micro Focus’s solution is “much more organized, and things can be done at the click of a button. It’s all right there and users love it.”

Region 4 is looking forward to launching the next phase of process standardization as they move towards adopting a more holistic approach to IT service management. Says Mr. Sicard about the Micro Focus solution, “It’s got all of the functionality that we would need.”



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