xmatters

Service Provider

Sky's the Limit

sky

Always Looking Up

By implementing automation and self-service for end users, Sky proved that even busy teams supporting in-home entertainment services for an entire nation can reduce costs, improve incident response times, and provide an exceptional customer experience.

Highlights

› Dramatically reduced incident response time while reducing costs

› Lowered initial contact time from 45 minutes to 2.5

› Automated escalations and built transparent contact plans to let teams focus on resolution

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Preventing Service Impacts

UK-based Sky (formerly BSkyB) takes operational excellence seriously. Within Technology, the Operations Engineering team strives to prevent any impact to service, but where issues do occur, they've optimized their processes to minimize disruption.

The technology organization, supporting nearly 26,000 Sky employees and 10 million customers, maintains a 'do what it takes' attitude and infuses this dedication and drive into every single project, initiative, and working hour.

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> xMatters synchronizes groups, users, and roles with our ServiceNow instance to simplify the creation of critical rota and device preferences that become make or break for contacting the right people when a critical incident occurs.

ANOOP MALKANI
Enterprise Service Management lead

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Challenges

Still, like virtually every IT organization worldwide, the team at Sky faces increasing pressure in a world where SaaS and hosted applications tempt business users with promises of 'automated self-service.' This means Sky's technology teams need to provide services faster and with higher levels of reliability and efficiency than business owners can obtain externally for themselves.

Solution

As a first step in providing automation and self-service for end-users, the team at Sky implemented ServiceNow for centralization of all technology services into a cloud-based platform. The centralization streamlines day-to-day operations, and on the occasion that something 'goes wrong,' that same streamlining drives fast resolution. With a team of nearly 800 supporting over 1,000 systems of all shapes and sizes, any of over 100 groups might be required as part of a resolution team. According to Anoop Malkani, who leads the Enterprise Service Management team, this could mean that the cycle time from a system alert being generated to a support person being contacted about the incident could take around 45 minutes. Now, with xMatters seamlessly

Our e2e automation from monitoring to ServiceNow to xMatters means that the right person is contacted, via their preferred method, within 2.5 minutes of an alert being generated.

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integrated into ServiceNow's ticketing system, incident tickets are assigned in under three minutes.

According to Malkani, this step-change improvement 'was not that easy to achieve'—(and we concur!). Gotchas include the ability for a solution to provide two-way communication, provide an audit trail of activity (including records of who responded), and allow individuals to state preferred mode of communication and device based on time, date, or type of alert. As explained by Malkani, "xMatters synchronizes groups, users, and roles with our ServiceNow instance to simplify the creation of critical rota and device preferences that become make or break for contacting the right people when a critical incident occurs. Our e2e automation from monitoring to ServiceNow to xMatters means that the right person is contacted, via their preferred method, within 2.5 minutes of an alert being generated."

With a team as busy as the Sky Technology team, incidents can range from small hiccups to Sev 1 issues, impacting business operations directly. By coupling the xMatters integration and monitoring systems, on-call support members are contacted directly almost immediately when an event occurs, ensuring a two-way

response based on on-call schedules, roles, and the systems impacted. Teams can focus on performing resolution tasks without needing to wonder if their message even reached anyone, due to the transparency of the contact plan and automated escalations.

Benefits

"We operate in a rapid-paced 'Dev-Ops' world of continuous development coupled with high expectations from internal customers of being first to market in all that we do," explained Malkani. "xMatters has freed up key resources to work on more value add tasks, by automating the task of looking up who to contact, making the contact, and updating the Incident ticket, so we've dramatically reduced the 'Incident Response Time' whilst reducing costs at the same time."

With well over 10 million households in the UK relying on Sky for in-home entertainment, it's no understatement to say that the teams relying on Sky's Technology organization support the services provided to a large part of an entire nation. Given their commitment to excellence in service and automation, for this organization, the sky has no limits.

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