



## Property IT Team Masters Change Control with Fully-integrated Service Desk

**Customer:** Investa  
**Website:** [www.investa.com](http://www.investa.com)  
**Customer Size:** 100-5,000  
**Country or Region:** Australia  
**Industry:** Property  
**Partner:** Systemology

### Customer Profile

Sydney-based Investa owns and manages office real estate, develops commercial land, and creates funds for property investors. The firm employs 150 staff at its head office, and another 120 at offices in Brisbane and Melbourne.

### Software and Services

- Microsoft System Center 2012 Service Manager
- Microsoft System Center 2012 Virtual Machine Manager

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"System Center Service Manager is a great framework for fast, methodical change management. We have all the workflows we need to take us from testing to user validation. It means we manage system changes far more efficiently."

Nathan Powell, Manager, IT Operations, Investa

IT staff at property firm, Investa, wanted to make their highly-virtualized IT environment easier to manage and support. In 2012, the firm deployed Microsoft System Center 2012, and integrated the service manager tool with the updated operations manager component. Now, service desk staff can see all operational data, so they can keep employees updated. Technical staff use workflows to guide and log system updates. With transparent system dependencies, updates are easier to plan and execute, and employees experience less downtime.

### Business Needs

The three-person infrastructure team at Sydney-based Investa needs to maintain a large number of specialist applications on multiple platforms across different business units. To help do this efficiently, they used a variety of server-management and virtualization technologies. The IT team used Microsoft System Centre configuration and operations tools to manage their application environment, and virtualized employee desktops using Citrix XenDesktop, with VMware Hypervisors.

By late 2011, however, the team found it increasingly difficult to execute IT changes without impacting the firm's 270 employees. "Our existing service desk platform did not meet our business requirement for continuous improvement," says Nathan Powell, Manager, IT Operations, Investa. "It lacked important features such as integration with other systems, change management support, and reporting that differentiated between an IT incident and a service request."

IT staff wanted three new capabilities. First, they wanted an automatic link between their service desk and operations management tools, so service desk staff would know what operations staff were working on, and vice versa.

Second, they wanted an integrated monitoring tool, to avoid continually jumping between hypervisors and operations-management consoles.

Third, staff wanted to improve change management. "Most issues that led to outages for employees were caused by unplanned system changes," says Powell. "If we could see all system interdependencies, we could plan updates more methodically, communicate them effectively, and ensure minimal disruption. Our goal was to move from being reactive, to proactive."

## Solution

At a TechEd conference in late 2011, Powell examined an early-release version of Microsoft System Center 2012. This contained updated versions of the Operations Manager and Configuration Manager tools that Investa already used, as well as two new modules that caught Powell's attention: a service desk tool, called Service Manager; and the Microsoft hypervisor-management tool, Virtual Machine Manager.

To assess the potential for these new modules, Powell consulted Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Systemology. "With help from Systemology, we executed a quick, vanilla deployment," says Powell. "Once this confirmed that Service Manager could do exactly what we wanted, Systemology helped us validate our requirements and build a scope of work."

In early 2012, Investa began an incremental implementation of Microsoft System Center 2012, starting with Service Manager. "Systemology helped us simplify ITIL workflows in Service Manager, so they suited our approvals processes," says Powell. "They also helped us configure a service desk within Service Manager, so that job tickets are routed the way we want, and incidents are logged separately from new service requests."

The deployment included integrating Service Manager with Microsoft System Center 2012 Operations Manager. This allows IT staff to map system interdependencies. As a result, Service Desk staff can access operational information and keep employees updated.

Investa used System Centre 2012 Virtual Machine Manager to manage the virtual machines on which the Service Manager development and test environments were deployed. "We wanted to evaluate Microsoft virtualization technologies, because of the additional annual licensing costs for VMware," says Powell. "Virtual Machine Manager can manage both VMware and Microsoft Hyper-V hypervisors. This means we should easily be able to make the transition to Hyper-V in the future if we want to."

## Benefits

With Microsoft System Center tools, the small Investa IT team can proactively manage a highly demanding virtualized environment. Help desk issues and system changes are easier to control, and IT staff have fewer consoles to monitor.

### Better Employee Service

"IT staff can instantly see what applications and devices are affected by a change, and

which employees that applies to," says Powell. "A service request methodology helps us ensure IT support is proactive, so we can tell employees what's happening before they phone us. We can also see what device an employee is using when they call—and give helpful advice immediately.

"With Service Manager we can also improve self-service, so employees are able to re-set passwords or download browsers themselves. By removing manual change processes we become more like the utility we should be."

### Easier Platform Management

IT staff are now executing system changes more efficiently—without causing disruption. "Service Manager is a great framework for fast, methodical change management," says Powell. "Now we have all the workflows we need, from testing right through to user validation. We can manage system changes more efficiently, and employees experience fewer outages.

"Overall, system management is also easier. We need far fewer consoles to monitor our virtualized platforms, and can deploy more apps in our virtual desktop environment. With fewer things to look at, administration is simpler."

### Greater Transparency, SLA Compliance

With system changes automatically logged through Service Manager, IT staff can ensure their work processes are transparent. "If we needed to meet new IT-management standards, we could demonstrate compliance very quickly," adds Powell. "Being able to tell the difference between an incident and a service request also results in better service level management."