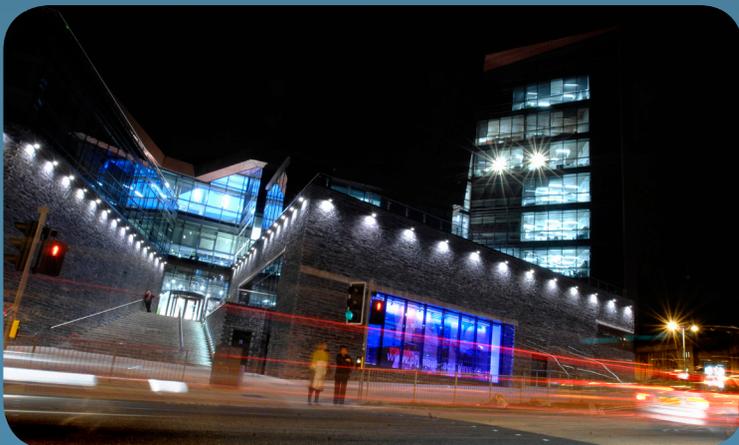


Plymouth University

First Class Honours for Plymouth University with Sunrise Software IT Service Management.

Plymouth is one of the UK's leading modern universities, ranked in the top four institutions under the age of 50 in the country and 37th internationally by Times Higher Education.



Photograph by Lloyd Russell, Plymouth University





Founded in 1862 as a school of navigation and now the 15th largest university in the UK, Plymouth is one of the leading modern universities, ranked in the top four institutions under the age of 50 in the country and 37th internationally by Times Higher Education. It has won numerous accolades in respect of its teaching and research and has one of the highest number of National Teaching Fellows of any UK university (20 National Teaching Fellowships in Higher Education since 2000). Its 27,000 students, which include those at its partner colleges across the South West, are enrolled on courses from farming to fine art, business to biology, and design to dentistry.

The University plays a key role within the South West economy and through its £100 million network of support facilities and services, is growing and supporting hundreds of businesses across the region and beyond.



Moving away from the 'data bucket' approach

In spring 2014, Plymouth University set the ambitious task to overhaul its IT Service Management (ITSM) solution to drive greater efficiencies and gain deeper visibility into its IT services. Despite having a 10-year old legacy solution, the IT team found themselves faced with the challenge of a lack of data to enable them to run services effectively and understand what improvements were required. Working within a tight implementation timeframe, Alice Trethewey, Service Improvement Manager at Plymouth University, and her team sought an ITSM solution to enable them to implement changes to the way they handled incident and change requests.

Alice says: "With the university improving the technology and processes that underpin our service offerings, it became clear our incumbent solution was not fit for purpose. We didn't have the capabilities to categorise the data coming in or split it into types of incidents or change

requests. We had also taken small steps to implement some Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes but needed a more fundamental change to make the improvements we wanted."

It was at this point that the university took the contract out to tender with a clear remit. It was looking to implement an ITSM toolset and take the university to a place where it could start splitting out, categorising and prioritising work. This would help identify where attention was required to improve the quality of service and speed of query resolution.

"We wanted a system, with no data conversion, to provide us with a Configuration Management Database (CMDB), and the ability to split incident requests and changes out from each other rather than having a big bucket of jobs to sift through. It needed to be pre-built and have the ITSM templates ready to go," explains Alice.

Measuring success

The Sunrise team got to work and, with the system going live in May 2014, met the deadline set by the university. The key usages of the ITSM solution are Incident, Problem and Change Management. One requirement was that it was easily configurable, an element that Plymouth has taken advantage of and invested in, through the development of in-house report writing and having an in-house expert to configure the solution.

Core to the deployment was the CMDB so the team could reap the benefits of the data provided to track and report on which services are affected by incidents. This feeds into the strategic decision process on where the university should focus its priorities for upgrades of systems and equipment. For example, if the AV equipment is repeatedly failing to work in a lecture hall, this will affect the teaching received by the students. With Sunrise ITSM in place the university can now evidence how many calls are raised by certain lecture halls and action appropriately. This may be through providing better usage instructions, more internal training or assigning a member of the IT team to the room at the beginning of the lecture because they know the equipment has a higher rate of failures.

Alice explains: "We are able to clearly evidence the need for investment because we can show how many calls have come in and where we should invest money so student learning is not negatively impacted. Moreover, because we log, categorise and prioritise each query, we can measure the demand on services more accurately and pull data to identify trends so we can pre-plan for any increase or decrease in services."



The university also measures itself against a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and benchmark themselves against other organisations, both in Higher Education and on a more local level such as government or NHS services.

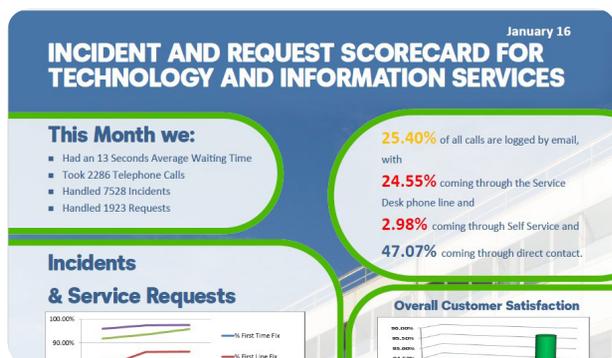
Within a 12 month period, Plymouth University has seen tangible benefits from Sunrise ITSM. Alongside the improvements and alignment to market quality standards, the team also saw a 10% reduction in reactive staff numbers and 19 man hours a week saved in converting updates from customers into internal actions.

Alice says: "Speed of resolution of queries is important. We have improved our First Time Fix time by 9.33% by targeting where training and skills can be improved and First Line Fix has increased by 5.42%. Additionally, by implementing priority Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and managing the work to these SLA's, there has been dramatic improvement in the average time to fix of 88% for P1 Incidents and 45% for P2 incidents. This would have been difficult to achieve and identify without the Sunrise ITSM toolset."

Meeting best practice guidelines

As a part of the ITSM offering, Plymouth took advantage of the ITIL training capabilities on offer, especially when coaching people outside of the core IT team such as library staff.

"Whilst we are reinforcing the message internally about using industry best practices, it helped that we could say that we have an IT system in place that does all of this for you," Alice says. "We put the team through the ITIL foundation course and allocated process managers, in which the majority have completed the second level of lifecycle training."



Going beyond the original deployment

Initially the solution was deployed for the IT team; however, once the benefits of the solution became evident, Alice looked to see which other departments could utilise the

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toolset. Alice comments: "The University is structured so we have one team based in the core IT department that predominately supports staff and then the front of house library services and staff that support students. From here we have been able to expand the platform out."

The platform is now used for a number of applications including by the Campus Security team who use it for reactive incident logging, such as a fire alarm or assault, and to log and track lost property including the ability to provide a full audit trail if the items are disposed of; a Self-Service facility for staff; and the building of a supply management service for the team to log their own cases in a system that is integrated with contracts and third party services. Moreover, if one of the university's team has an idea, they are able to develop a solution to meet the need. This has recently included the ability for the campus operations team to track and manage 6,000 physical keys to doors and cupboards within the university.

Alice adds: "We have the ability to customise the platform for different areas of the university and have removed the need for a multitude of platforms from multiple providers. It has become a well used toolset within the university with further plans to roll it out into other teams.

"The deployment wasn't without challenges but in Sunrise we found a solution that works for us. In a day and age where everything seems to be moving to the cloud, we wanted to retain an element of control. In Higher Education there needs to be flexibility and the capability to change something quickly to keep up with student demands. We didn't want to be constrained by a software supplier that doesn't let you make changes when we need to. Sunrise gave us this freedom."

Gary Bayliss, Head of Service Management at Plymouth University, concludes: "Over and above the relatively simple introduction of the solution into our organisation, Sunrise has allowed Plymouth University to quickly adapt our service delivery models to whatever requirements or demands the business makes of us. Sunrise has been the foundation on which we have been able to quickly define, design and deliver new support models and services aligned with ITIL methodology."

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Sunrise Software has 20 years' experience implementing service management software that enables organisations to support both internal and external customers. The software is designed to meet industry best practice and is easily configurable to meet individual organisations' specific needs.

The software is browser based, making it easy and intuitive to use. It comes in several versions suitable for Customer Service

Departments that are speaking to external customers, IT departments providing technical and support services to the business, and other departments such as facilities management and HR/Payroll that are providing services to staff and managing third party suppliers. The software is available on-premise or as a Software as a Service/ Cloud solution and is used by numerous high profile organisations including Anglian Water, the NHS, University of Greenwich, Muller Dairy and many more.

Sunrise Software
50 Barwell Business Park
Leatherhead Road, Chessington
Surrey KT9 2NY, United Kingdom
www.sunrisesoftware.com

T +44 (0) 20 8391 9000
F +44 (0) 20 8391 0404
E enquiries@sunrisesoftware.com
T Follow us on Twitter – @SunriseSoftware
F Find us on Facebook – sunrisesoftwareuk

