

PeerPaper™ Report 2023

5 Pitfalls in ServiceNow Implementation and How to Avoid Them

Based on Real User Experiences
with CDW ServiceNow Solutions



Contents

- Page 1. **Introduction**
- Page 2. **Pitfall #1 - Focusing on Customization Instead of Configuration**
- Page 4. **Pitfall #2 - Lack of Engagement in the Process by Key Stakeholders**
- Page 6. **Pitfall #3 - Rushed or Incomplete Requirements Gathering**
- Page 9. **Pitfall #4 - Inadequate Organizational Change Management Necessary for Adoption**
- Page 10. **Pitfall #5 - Absence of an Ongoing Support or Continuous Improvement Plan**
- Page 12. **Implementation Advice from Kevin Griggs, Sr. Manager, CDW ServiceNow as a Service**
- Page 13. **Conclusion**

Introduction

Successfully implementing ServiceNow may involve avoiding a number of pitfalls. This PeerPaper reviews five common pitfalls:

- Focusing on customization instead of configuration;
- A lack of engagement in the process by key stakeholders;
- Rushed or incomplete requirements gathering;
- Inadequate organizational change management necessary for adoption;
- Absence of an ongoing support plan and lack of support resources.

According to PeerSpot members, CDW ServiceNow Solutions offers support and related mitigation of each of these challenges.

Pitfall #1 – Focusing on Customization Instead of Configuration

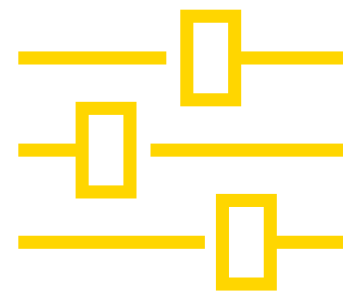
ServiceNow offers extensive customization capabilities. For some customers, they are of great value. However, for a smooth, rapid implementation, it is a best practice to focus on configuration, rather than customization. You may be tempted to ask if ServiceNow can perform a particular task, but what may be a better question is “should it?” ServiceNow can do many things and as odd as it may sound, that can become a slippery slope.

As a Project Manager at a transportation company with over 10,000 employees explained, “If you stick to out-of-the-box, it’s simple. If you [move away from the out-of-the-box configurations](#), the initial implementation can get complex and take a while. Anything that you go out past that out-of-box functionality, you can really hurt yourself.”

“[Its out-of-box reporting is quite balanced](#),” said a Senior Business Systems Analyst - Enterprise Methodology and Process Program Manager at Judicial Council of California.

“We didn’t require much customization when we deployed it. We did some customization, but we tried to stay out-of-the-box as much as possible to make things easier for us. It has been working really great out-of-the-box.”

A Senior Consultant for Project Management & Transition at a tech services company with more than 500 employees shared, “[Stay within the standard](#). This is the same advice as with SAP: try to stay in the standard and avoid customizing too heavily. And, keep things simple. In large companies, this is not always emphasized as they tend to think complicated.” The Head of ITSM and Service Availability at Aon Corporation concurred, saying, “My advice is to [use as much of the out-of-the-box functionality as possible](#).”



**Configure vs
Customize**

CDW ServiceNow Solutions helps to keep customers focused on standard configuration, according to a Sr. Software Engineer at a healthcare company with over 1,000 employees. He said, “They have a very high level of expertise. They manage their support based on our needs and focus on [specific modules within the platform](#). This makes it quite flexible for us. They are able to pull out specific resources, if needed, in order to deliver work to us.”

Avoiding getting distracted by customization is partly a matter of process. A Global Tech Executive at an insurance company with over 10,000 employees found this to be the case when CDW helped his team [achieve a re-baselining project](#). They were taking two legacy ServiceNow instances and combining them into a single “vanilla” platform. He said, “Before implementing anything, CDW sat down with us to learn about our current state and desired business outcomes. The results we achieved from our ServiceNow implementation are stronger than they would have been if CDW hadn’t taken the time to understand our goals.”

This customer further commented that CDW [seems to grasp the business concepts well](#). He said, “They don’t need a lot of translation and they tend to respond well when an error has been determined. They don’t debate and say, ‘It’s my way or the highway.’ They are responsive and work well with the business and our engineering leadership.”

A focus on configuration versus customization also needs to be forward looking, taking upcoming features into account. The upgrade path is easier when there is less customization. An IT Manager at a healthcare company with over 1,000 employees spoke to this need when he said, “They [CDW] do a good job of helping us with governance, supporting the system, telling us of new features that are coming out on the system, and developing solutions on top of ServiceNow... [They demo new features and functions](#), then make suggestions and guide us where to go with the platform.”

As these comments show, CDW ServiceNow Solutions provides customers with a strong basis for configuring ServiceNow effectively out-of-the-box, without the distractions of excessive customization.



Fernando G.

Sr. Software Engineer at a healthcare company with 1,001-5,000 employees



“They have a very high level of expertise. They manage their support based on our needs and focus on specific modules within the platform. This makes it quite flexible for us.”

[Read review »](#)

Pitfall #2 – Lack of Engagement in the Process by Key Stakeholders

A ServiceNow implementation is more about people and process than the technology. A successful ServiceNow implementation requires early and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders. While the same could be said for almost any IT project, with ServiceNow, the need is critical. ServiceNow may touch multiple areas within an organization and affect the work processes of many people in different roles.

If the implementation does not reflect the needs of these varied stakeholders, the results will be sub-optimal. That is, if key stakeholders do not actively participate and meet deadlines, the timeline extends, implementation quality decreases, and costs will rise. To avoid these negative outcomes, CDW suggests thinking about stakeholder engagement in terms of what it calls the “3 A’s.” These are:

- Availability of key decisionmakers to participate in development and approval of the project
- Active Participation of stakeholders
- Accountability



Engage Key Stakeholders

It’s best to resist the urge to designate a delegate for requirements gathering and change management planning. As CDW has seen, key stakeholders may designate a delegate and re-engage during UAT testing—but will then be unhappy with the results. The best practice is to secure a commitment for the 3 A’s early in the process. This approach must include getting approvals and process buy-in from people who are accountable for the outcome of the implementation.

As a Director of IT at a local government agency noted, “I would advise potential new users to make sure that in that user community, end-users are involved in the implementation from beginning to end and [make sure that the end-users fully understand](#) the features and capabilities of the tool before it is implemented across an organization. Their involvement is key to a successful implementation and very important.”

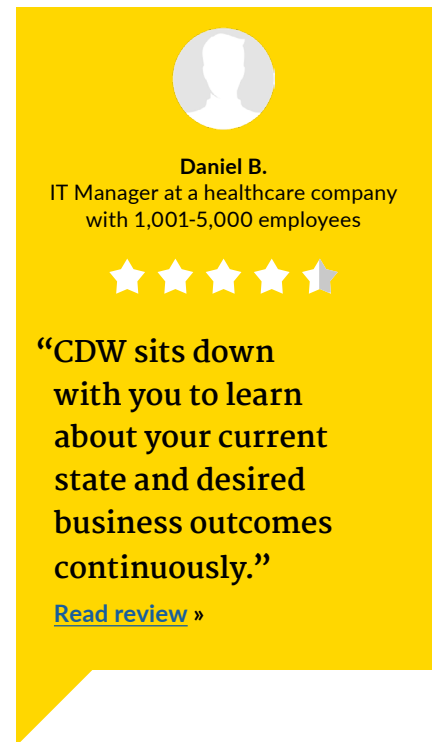
CDW ServiceNow Solutions leads the process of engaging with key stakeholders, as the healthcare company IT Manager related. He said, "[CDW sits down with you to learn about your current state](#) and desired business outcomes continuously." CDW configured his company's CMDB [Configuration Management Database] and PPM [Project Portfolio Management] solution. "They worked a lot with HR during that implementation."


The healthcare company Sr. Software Engineer similarly commented that their ServiceNow implementation included sessions that covered such questions as "What was your current state?" and "[Who were our key players?](#)" as well as factors like work ingestion, processes, and issue escalation.

He said, "The outcome was great. They also came back when we were moving and going from another MSP (KPMG) to CDW ServiceNow Solutions. The entire transition went smoothly. Overall, our key stakeholders were very pleased because there was no disruption in support."

Engagement should mean a thoughtful, respectful back and forth between customer and service provider. In this customer's experience, this might mean occasional pushback and sentiments like "this might not be the right time," or "there may be a better solution." He remarked, "We expect this level of expertise from them. We do not want them to be just note or order takers. We want them to present us with challenges, when needed or applicable, on the ways things might be accomplished."

"[Even if they have to course correct, they do it quickly,](#)" said the healthcare company IT Manager. "That is all I can really ask for. I have been very happy with them. They exceeded my expectations. The amount of rigor that they have brought to our processes is one area. The technical talent that they have has been good, especially their tech leads, and their account managers who really oversee the overall day-to-day of the relationship."




Daniel B.
IT Manager at a healthcare company
with 1,001-5,000 employees

★★★★★

“CDW sits down with you to learn about your current state and desired business outcomes continuously.”

[Read review »](#)

Pitfall #3 – Rushed or Incomplete Requirements Gathering

A ServiceNow implementation can run into trouble if the participants rush the requirements process or fail to be thorough. The individuals that define what success looks like need to stay engaged in the requirements gathering process. At this stage, it is important to take the time to understand applicable ServiceNow offerings. The CDW solutions architect and business process consultant will explain how ServiceNow works out-of-the box and guide the gathering of good requirements to ensure that the customer can achieve their desired business goals.

The old adage “measure twice, cut once” comes to mind. Being deliberate and intentional in requirements gathering will yield a better outcome. It is also advisable to keep long term goals in mind so that decisions made earlier in the journey do not negatively affect a future state further down the line.

“Using ServiceNow has forced conversations around the whole IT domain, on how we can manage the IT assets through their life cycles,” said a Lead Program Manager (Enterprise Architecture) at an insurance company with more than 5,000 employees. “This starts with [identifying the need and introducing it](#), developing it, and deploying it, to then eventually making decisions to remove the asset from the operation.”



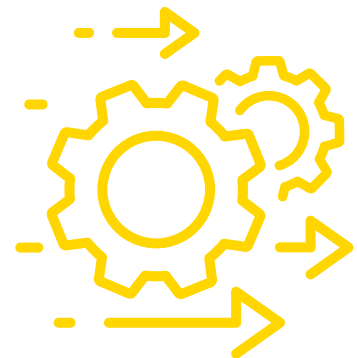
Daniel B.

IT Manager at a healthcare company with 1,001-5,000 employees



“They [CDW] do a good job of helping us with governance, supporting the system, telling us of new features that are coming out on the system, and developing solutions on top of ServiceNow.”

[Read review »](#)



Gather Detailed Requirements

A Director of Professional Services at a small tech services company advised ServiceNow customers to [“Really know what the objective of the implementation is:](#) what they’re trying to fix and what problem they’re trying to solve. They have to be very conscious of these things because if they are not, the solution may not be a good fit.” An Infrastructure Team Lead at an energy/utilities company with more than 5,000 employees similarly remarked, “My advice to others is to make sure they understand what they are going to use ServiceNow for, which is important.”

The requirements process should identify integrations with other tools. An Information Security & Compliance Specialist at a financial services firm with over 1,000 employees spoke to this issue when he said, “There are integrations we can do that requires outside people to help us expand, such as business continuity and other areas. [It can be complicated to expand the solution.](#)”

The healthcare company IT Manager revealed that his organization has 10 ServiceNow integrations, which [CDW maintains for them.](#) He said, “They are familiar with all of those, and CDW ServiceNow Solutions’ expertise is high when it comes to this. They have done a good job with the [requirements gathering](#) as well as guiding us. CDW provided insights and hands-on experience of ServiceNow that led us to be able to get the value more quickly, which is probably the biggest thing.”



Fernando G.

Sr. Software Engineer at a healthcare company with 1,001-5,000 employees



“They worked and partnered with us to figure out what we wanted to do in terms of prioritization, so we could ramp up work and have expertise in the tool.

They are helping us to understand the best practices on our requests to correctly accommodate certain enhancements and the delivery of work from our development team or their administrators.”

[Read review »](#)

“I would assess and value CDW Service Now as high in terms of their expertise [when it comes to our organization’s full stack of technologies](#) and how they integrate with ServiceNow,” said the healthcare company Sr. Software Engineer. In his view, CDW is well versed in how systems like HRSD and external systems talk together and the requirements needed to achieve success with, in his words, “how different ServiceNow stacks need to communicate with our organization.” This situation is an example of how CDW leverages its experience and knowledge of ServiceNow to help customers gather—and then implement—the requirements necessary for a successful ServiceNow deployment.

In some cases, requirements gathering relates to software development for ServiceNow. In this context, the healthcare company Sr. Software Engineer said, “We also brought them [CDW] in to apply scrum and agile methodologies. [They worked and partnered with us](#) to figure out what we wanted to do in terms of prioritization, so we could ramp up work and have expertise in the tool.”

The healthcare company IT Manager had this to say: “CDW ServiceNow Solutions provided us with multiple proposals. With the CMDB, for instance, it was a four-phase approach. [We have done two or three of those phases as of now.](#)” CDW offered to break the work into what this customer called “digestible chunks.” The customer could choose when and if it wanted to do the remaining phases. CDW is available to engage with the customer when the customer is ready.

“[Implement it capability by capability,](#)” suggested a Lead Program Manager (Enterprise Architecture) at an insurance company with more than 5,000 employees. “This will allow you to see the big picture of what you’re going to get at the end of it. You can’t do a big bang approach on this. Rather, you have to be very deliberate in how you implement it.”



Global Tech Executive
at a insurance company with
10,001+ employees



“It’s hard to retain and find people with the right skill sets. CDW ServiceNow Solutions provided us with capacity quickly. They are generally of high caliber and have enabled us to quickly meet our goals.”

[Read review »](#)

Pitfall #4 – Inadequate Organizational Change Management Necessary for Adoption

Adopting or updating a major tool like ServiceNow necessarily creates an organizational change management process. This is about helping people change the way they work, as well as how they are organized and function as a team. A new ServiceNow instance might result in new processes and rules for people to follow, which may in turn cause resistance. Project leaders must communicate about changes and the benefits they bring.

Training is also essential for success in such a change management situation. To this point, a Practice Manager at YASH Technologies, a tech services company with more than 5,000 employees, said, “Those wanting to automate all of your internal functional departments under one system platform, I would advise before implementing this solution to [train and educate your teams](#) on the use of these types of solutions first. This will allow for an easier transition.”

CDW is available to work through organizational change management challenges with its ServiceNow Solutions customers. For the healthcare company Sr. Software Engineer, CDW helped by setting up the right priorities for the entire organization, “helping us to understand the best practices on our requests to [correctly accommodate certain enhancements](#) and the delivery of work from our development team or their administrators.”



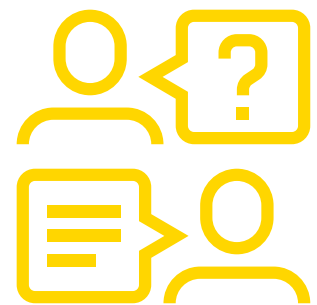
**Prioritize
Organizational
Change Management**

Pitfall #5 – Absence of an Ongoing Support or Continuous Improvement Plan

Implementing ServiceNow is never a “one and done” proposition. The “day two” considerations should not be overlooked. To ensure long-term success, there should be an ongoing support plan, backed by support resources with the right staffing and skill sets. A continuous improvement plan, aligned to your road map, should be created for implementation of enhancements that will drive additional value on an ongoing basis. As a Lead Cybersecurity Analyst at a tech services company with over 10,000 employees put it, “Its setup is tough. [It takes a lot of knowledge and a lot of experience.](#)” To address this need, a Director Delivery and ServiceNow Practice Lead at a small software company said, “[Using an experienced services firm is best](#) - especially if implementing the product for the first time.”

CDW ServiceNow Solutions offers a variety of support options from an on-call technical expert to a turn-key support model. According to the insurance company’s Global Tech Executive, “[It’s hard to retain and find people with the right skill sets.](#) CDW ServiceNow Solutions provided us with capacity quickly. They are generally of high caliber and have enabled us to quickly meet our goals.”

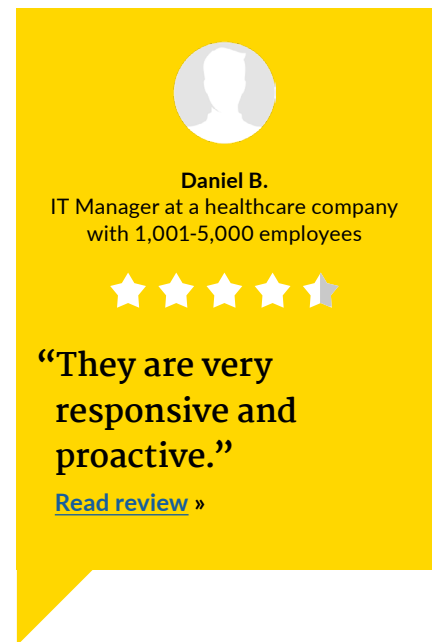
For the healthcare company Sr. Software Engineer, the fact that [CDW works in a similar time zone](#) to his organization was a major positive factor in their support relationship. He said, “We don’t have issues like we have had with suppliers or vendors where part of their staff is overseas, e.g., India has an 11-to-11.5-hour time difference that delays work. Because of this, CDW’s delivery and throughput are much better than we had before.”



Plan for Ongoing Support and Improvement

“The [CDW] customer support is good. I would rate them as a nine out of 10,” said the healthcare company IT Manager. “[They are very responsive and proactive.](#)” This customer felt that CDW had a positive impact on their ServiceNow implementation, along with benefits to the broader business. He explained, “We have much quicker ticket resolution times now. We have happier customers who take the time to talk to each of the module owners.”

Having the right support resources deployed can make a big difference in how well a ServiceNow implementation functions on an ongoing basis. As these PeerSpot members attest, CDW delivers the level of support they need to make ServiceNow work for their customers.



A yellow speech bubble-shaped review card. At the top is a grey silhouette of a person's head and shoulders. Below it, the name "Daniel B." is written in bold. Underneath the name is the text "IT Manager at a healthcare company with 1,001-5,000 employees". Below this is a row of five white stars, with the fifth star being smaller and dimmer. The main quote "They are very responsive and proactive." is written in bold. At the bottom is a blue link "Read review »" with a right-pointing arrow.

Daniel B.
IT Manager at a healthcare company
with 1,001-5,000 employees

★★★★★

“They are very responsive and proactive.”

[Read review »](#)

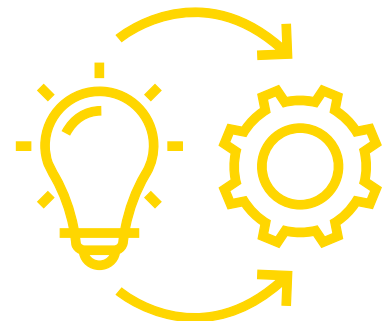
Implementation Advice from Kevin Griggs, Sr. Manager, CDW ServiceNow as a Service

As an Elite ServiceNow Partner, we have seen a lot of implementations. When you go to implement ServiceNow in your organization, we cannot suggest to you strongly enough that you both listen to your implementation partner and hold that partner accountable for a quality implementation that will stand the test of time. If that partner does not challenge you to start your configuration of the system based on the “out-of-the-box” configuration as a starting point, get a new partner. If that partner does not have a quality management plan to ensure that the system meets your business needs and complies with best practices, get a new partner.

Consider making the execution of a ServiceNow or third-party “Health Scan” of your ServiceNow instance a key delivery milestone, and if your partner resists ... get a new partner. The ServiceNow partner community is broad and diverse. Ensure that you are selecting a partner who knows ServiceNow, but also has your broader interests at heart.

Meanwhile, your internal team may try to rush you. They may encourage you to recreate the old system in ServiceNow... resist these pressures. Take the time to do it right; it will pay off with easier upgrades. You will get a system that aligns more to the way work flows through ServiceNow, and you will recognize more of the benefits of a world class platform.

When it comes to your implementation partner relationship, ensure that they come to the table focused on the quality of your implementation. For the best long-term success, ensure that you implement your new processes by configuring ServiceNow based on its “out-of-the-box” configuration, not based on your old tool.



**Select an
Implementation
Partner Focused on
Achieving Your Goals**

Conclusion

ServiceNow implementation does not have to be difficult. For each of the five implementation pitfalls identified in this paper, CDW ServiceNow Solutions can provide support, along with the application of best practices, to ensure a successful implementation. CDW focuses its ServiceNow customers on configuration, rather than customization. CDW's process encourages and facilitates engagement with key stakeholders, as well as thorough requirements gathering. With CDW ServiceNow Solutions, customers gain the ability to adequately plan for the inevitable organizational change management cycles and ongoing support needs that arise with a ServiceNow implementation. By partnering with CDW ServiceNow Solutions, customers can move quickly and directly to using ServiceNow to realize their business objectives.

About PeerSpot

PeerSpot is the authority on enterprise technology buying intelligence. As the world's fastest growing review platform designed exclusively for enterprise technology, with over 3.5 million enterprise technology visitors, PeerSpot enables 97 of the Fortune 100 companies in making technology buying decisions. Technology vendors understand the importance of peer reviews and encourage their customers to be part of our community. PeerSpot helps vendors capture and leverage the authentic product feedback in the most comprehensive way, to help buyers when conducting research or making purchase decisions, as well as helping vendors use their voice of customer insights in other educational ways throughout their business.

www.peerspot.com

PeerSpot does not endorse or recommend any products or services. The views and opinions of reviewers quoted in this document, PeerSpot websites, and PeerSpot materials do not reflect the opinions of PeerSpot.

About CDW ServiceNow Solutions

CDW ServiceNow Solutions is an Elite ServiceNow partner with more than 10 years of experience in helping organizations implement and expand ServiceNow. CDW is recognized in the 2022 Gartner Market Guide for ServiceNow Consulting and was given the Global Elite Partner of the Year Award by ServiceNow in 2021. In addition to optimizing the value of the platform and adjacent technologies, CDW creates ServiceNow solutions that focus on the "People" and "Process" side of streamlining operations and accelerating digital transformation. For more information about CDW, please visit www.CDW.com.