

# Focus Group Delivering on Dynamic Growth Ambitions with POPX

The POPX MSP Platform, powered by ServiceNow, plays an integral part of Focus Group's objectives to modernise its operations through advanced Service Management

Focus Group, established in 2003, is one of the UK's leading providers of essential business technology.

With over 25,000 customers and many acquisitions to integrate, Focus Group sought a Service Management platform that could scale with its growth. It needed to harmonise processes across all acquisitions and reduce costs through automated workflows to eradicate manual tasks, avoid unnecessary duplication and cut administration effort. Having increased its headcount significantly by acquiring several new businesses over a short period of time, Focus Group recognised the existing systems and tooling required a common platform and standardised ways of working that could be rolled out across the business.

When choosing to invest in a transformative solution, the company recognised that it had to deliver on three fundamental principles. First, it needed to have the agility to scale at speed to keep up with the pace of change. Second, it had to effectively harmonise and unify operations from newly acquired companies and product categories. Finally, it had to remove unnecessary or duplicate tasks by creating a single seamless backbone across the entire business. After reviewing several solutions, it was decided that ServiceNow would be the right strategic fit that could quickly onboard newly acquired assets and integrate the other internal, cloud and third-party systems. The power of ServiceNow, combined with its flexibility, functionality and scalability made it an ideal match to effectively serve the needs of the business and offer new potential and capability for the future.

Chris Wild, Group operations director said: "My experience of implementing large and complex technology solutions, made me very cautious of using professional services to onboard Focus Group onto ServiceNow. I knew such an approach would require significant effort from a design and business requirements perspective and that it could significantly elongate the process, while taking precious bandwidth away from my team that we didn't have to spare.

What I felt was needed was a partnership model that would come with recommendations and guidance, not just during the planning and onboarding phase but throughout the ownership and running of the platform. I knew such an approach would save us time, effort and money. What I was looking for was an authentic managed service, where the partner would build and run the solution for us. This means they have real skin in the game because they are responsible for making sure everything is running as it should. It also takes pressure away from our people, who can focus on running and growing the business."

The combined improvements applied during the transformation process have resulted in an increase in the average case output of agents in the support team.



**Customer:**  
Focus Group

**Headquarters:**  
Shoreham-by-Sea, UK

**Industry:**  
IT Managed Services,  
Telecoms, Connectivity  
Cybersecurity, Mobile &  
Energy

**Employees:**  
800

- Products:**
- POPX MSP Platform
  - Customer Service Management
  - CMDB
  - IT Service Management
  - Event Management
  - Order Management
  - Customer Portal
  - Service Catalogue

*Focus Group, established in 2003, is one of the UK's leading providers of essential business technology.*

*With its vision of connecting communities and creating opportunities in a place that people love to work, Focus Group delivers innovative technology solutions, so its customers are free to focus all their energy on growing their business.*

Wild continues: "With professional services you rarely get the benefit of sustained knowledge of your business, how your solution was built, how it fits your specific ways of working and a deep appreciation of the technology that can be shared. I envisioned a journey with a long-term partner over the years, with new features and functionality aligned to a roadmap of agreed enhancements that was created with the same people that built the system. Very quickly, after speaking with POPX, I knew their managed service was precisely what I had been looking for, and that they represented the ideological and practical fit that would serve us far beyond the initial go live. One of the key benefits of working with POPX is that it doesn't matter if we lack some of the understanding of exactly what we want, because working in partnership with their ServiceNow specialists will always give us a better answer."

The POPX MSP Platform provides a seamless backbone that operates across the expanded Focus Group business.

*"The integration and harmonisation of all our acquisitions was the driving force behind the need to transform our operating model."*

**Chris Wild**  
Group Operations Director,  
Focus Group

## Order Management has transformed old ways of working with speed, accuracy, transparency and improved customer satisfaction.

Focus Group was looking at several operational enhancements that were brand new to the company and would need to be mapped out from scratch. To do this satisfactorily, they would benefit by working with a partner that could bring recommendations to the table. One example of this was a new Order Management system, which was configured and brought online after the first go-live phase, showing how new enhancements are continually developed and launched onto the platform.

Wild states: "Some of the work ServiceNow does for us replaced legacy systems we had internally, plus those of the acquired companies, as well as redesigning our old ways of working with new standards, best practices and automation. However, in some areas we have been introducing brand new processes with technology to create powerful operating models that didn't exist before, such as Order Management. This was a new endeavour, but something we identified as an opportunity early in the relationship with POPX. Order Management was something we knew would benefit our clients immediately through the power of automation and self-service, resulting in improved efficiency and better use of resources. The improvement in accuracy, speed and visibility means we have seen an overall and marked uptick in customer satisfaction. The system helps us keep track of all orders in one place, making it easier to manage and monitor the status of each one."

Andy Venables, CTO at POPX said: "We believe that Order Management is one of many key ingredients in the digital transformation journey for service providers like Focus Group. It will act as a differentiator against less sophisticated competitors, as it automates the process of receiving, processing and fulfilling orders for the delivery of IT services to customers. Doing this swiftly, efficiently and without error provides a better customer experience. We know, first impressions last, so for new customers buying their first service from a provider, Order Management must be the best it can be. To achieve this, requires a centralised system that is easy to manage and is transparent, always keeping customers informed at every step of the process."

Focus Group embraced the adoption of ServiceNow and worked hard to ensure high levels of employee communication and engagement as well as change management. Close partnership with POPX allowed for the company to re-architect the processes and procedures that define the operating model and adopt best practice ITIL principles wherever possible. This included identifying new roles and responsibilities and workflow design for all the different service lines, ranging from a simple book-to-bill process for a single product, right through to a complex UK wide integrated voice and data solution.

Wild added: "One of the important things we did was to take the time to think about and define the kind of company we want to be, identifying any gaps and creating a plan for how we close them. This analysis proved to be very revealing and allowed us to build a comprehensive list of KPIs that cover everything from operational performance through to customer experience to help us fully understand what it feels like to be a customer. We wanted to know where things were working well and where improvements needed to be made, as well as how supported our agents feel and if they experienced any frustrations with the tools they used. The rich information this garnered helped us understand our operating costs at a more granular level. We quickly identified areas that required attention, such as fragmented local operating models, which we saw a huge opportunity for POPX to make a real difference."

Joanna Johnston, Head of Service Operations at Focus Group Said: "Our agents have already noticed a big difference moving to ServiceNow. We made sure to include a lot of internal preparation to bring them along with the change because we recognise it can be a difficult transition for some. ServiceNow is more interactive than our previous systems which means they have found the transition to be a positive move as they prioritise reliability and stability in their daily tasks."

*Focus Group is now able to expand and accelerate the adoption and rollout of new innovative services in an agile way that helps the business respond quickly to market changes.*

## The POPX MSP Platform has given agents a more positive outlook on delivering value-added services to customers.

Wild explains: "Having visibility of how we perform with live data provides a rich layer of detail where we can hold ourselves accountable against our desired outcomes. Better visibility helps measure operational costs and allows us to apply resources in a more meaningful way. Knowing how much time our agents spend on calls or processing emails, when they could communicate via chat or allow customers to self-serve on a portal helps us identify more effective ways of working. This means we can continually streamline our processes and optimise resources by allocating them to higher value activities."

With one integrated Service Management platform that simplifies the operating model, the company has more capability and can take advantage of a wider range of opportunities available to it. Agent Workspace is used by the team at Focus Group to access one central dashboard, whether they are working remotely or from the office. The combined efforts of streamlined processes, service automation, customer portal, training and improved staff motivation have all helped to increase the average case output of the support team.

Focus Group has created a philosophy and applied it to form a templated and repeatable approach to the way they integrate and harmonise acquisitions. This can now be applied to future acquisitions, making it possible to onboard them quickly onto the MSP Platform so they too can operate in accordance with the company's standards and procedures while controlling costs and improving overall profitability.

Rather than being a reactive company, always at the mercy of voluminous levels of inbound calls, messages and other client requests, the company is now channelling those communications more effectively and able to free resources to proactively drive outbound calling to improve customer experience and satisfaction. Now the team has time to reach out to advise customers when they have identified something before the customer is even aware of it.

Wild concludes: "Transformation of any kind is going to be challenging and ask lots of questions of you and the team around you. Anyone that tells you they can make it easy is probably being economical with the reality of the situation. However, doing hard things despite the fact they are hard and doing them well is important for a business like ours. We went into this process with our eyes open, but success depended on selecting the right partner to work with.

What we didn't want to do is cycle through multiple implementation consultancies over multiple years without making any real progress. This can happen with complex technologies if you are not careful, so I'm pleased we did the necessary due diligence at the beginning of the process and got POPX on board early on. Time is the greatest commodity we can give back to our customers by doing things right, and with POPX I believe we are better placed to do that."

**Martin Ford, CEO at POPX said:** "Working with a successful and growing business, like Focus Group, has been a great experience for our team. We continue to grow together, developing new areas by applying technology that is transformational to Focus Group and their client relationships. We're pleased to see that service automation has enabled them to release resources to create more value, while improving the customer experience."

**Ford continues:** "It's great to see both teams in this partnership come together and collaborate to create innovative new solutions tailored to their needs. For example, Order Management is not something you can purchase off the shelf. It needs a deep understanding of the business and the technology, followed by planning, development, testing and training before it can go live. All the elements have come together from both sides as one extended team to continually innovate and improve Focus Group's operations. I'm confident we'll see lots more enhancements like this as we progress in the months and years to come."

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