

Dimension Data Manage Centre Portal for Support, Premium, Managed & Enterprise Services

Industry sector
Technology

Client company
Dimension Data

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Executive summary

The project for Manage Centre commenced in late 2014 to support Dimension Data's plans to expand its services into clients' data centres. Dimension Data recognised that to be competitive, it required a new client portal. Its existing portal provided clients with a complex, technical interface based on ticketing data and physical infrastructure records. With the advent of cloud solutions and digitalisation, clients' expectations are evolving: as organisations move from being technology managers to technology consumers, their focus has shifted to business outcomes – they care less about how well their servers are running, or that SAP is slow – they need to know:

Are their business operations running optimally?

Are they maximising revenue while minimising risk?

They want to view IT from a business perspective and they need information about the status and health of their digital environment at any time – available at their fingertips.

The Manage Centre project targeted this market shift, using design as a mechanism to modernise our services.

(163 words)



↑ 307%

Growth in data centre services clients.

Exceeding targets of 150% by 157%.



↑ 515%

Growth in service revenue in 14 months into a saturated market.

Exceeding 350% target by 165% of growth in service revenue in only 14 months in a saturated market.

Project overview

The Manage Centre portal improves client loyalty by modernising our core services and targets new client acquisition by both enriching and simplifying clients' service experience.

A modern web portal was identified as critical to supporting Dimension Data's strategic objective to transform itself from a technology-centric to a client-centric service provider, in early 2014. As organisations begin to re-focus their IT investments into digitalisation, Dimension Data required a client interface which would modernise its core support services to retain clients. The portal also needed to support new service offerings in premium, managed, and enterprise services – where the focus would be on visualising the business outcomes of technology.

The initial project targeted the creation of a minimum viable product (MVP) to support the launch of support and premium services for data centre technologies.

The objectives of the Manage Centre project were:

- / A new client portal for support and premium services in the data centre to increase revenues by 300%
- / Flexible enough to expand into other service offerings
- / Provide clients with a window into the health and performance of their technology from both a technical and business perspective and increase client engagement by 150%
- / Offer a consistent look and feel across the content, for data sourced from multiple management systems
- / Adopt best UX practices to create client relevance, simplify daily tasks, provide consistent UI for data sourced from multiple systems and reduce user incidents (or queries) by 50%

(324 words)



“Our ability to take our maintenance base and extend into support (Uptime) and then also further differentiate into where we optimise for our clients (premium services) is so clear. We wrap that great value into an unbelievable client user interface. Our new Manage Centre is amazing and we have a real winner in the market.”

*Brett Dawson, CEO 2004-2016,
Dimension Data*



Dimension Data engaged Prospect for the user experience design of the portal interface, and UXC Keystone to develop the portal application.



↑ **579%**

Increase in client online engagement (old portal versus Manage Centre), **exceeding targets of 150% by 429%.**

Market overview

Dimension Data is a global service provider with annual revenues of USD 7.5 billion and offerings in support services, premium services, managed services, enterprise services, cloud services, and consulting and professional services. Its core support and premium services are responsible for generating approximately USD 1 billion per annum in revenue.

Main competitors

In 2014, Dimension Data implemented a strategy to expand its service offerings for data centre technologies. The data centre services market is a saturated one; Gartner forecasts growth from 2014-2019 of 2.2% CAGR. To expand its market share in the data centre, Dimension Data competes against:

/ Global enterprise services providers



/ Global cloud service providers



/ A range of local managed services providers in every region across the world

To gain market share, Dimension Data needed a portal that could help differentiate its approach to support and premium services in the data centre.

Market context

With the growth of cloud services, most companies now consume data centre technologies from various sources:

/ On-premise – where server, storage, and networking technologies are maintained in-house in data centre facilities

/ Hosted – where server, storage, and networking technologies are housed in third-party facilities

/ Cloud – using infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS), a mixture of virtual server, storage and networking; and software-as-a-service (SaaS), where infrastructure is abstracted and organisations consume only at an application layer

This creates the following challenges for CIOs:

/ How do you keep track of which technology delivery models are supporting each business function in your organisation?

/ When a business process is not performing as expected, how do you identify which technology element across a hybrid environment of on-premise, hosted, and cloud-based technologies is the cause of the business impact?

Typically, each service provider provides its clients with a portal for their service. The client must consult each source of information to identify the root cause. There are management tools in the market which companies can use to build 'business service maps' to relate each technology element to the business function they support e.g. BMC. Compuware, Dynatrace. However, the entry price for such tools is typically USD 300,000 plus the cost and effort to implement and manage them.

Dimension Data's portal would be a feature within its service offerings and therefore needed to be cost-competitive.

Target audience

To be competitive in the market, Manage Centre needed to support Dimension Data's support and premium services for data centre technologies, where Dimension Data may be supporting and operating a client's data centre technology environment, which in turn may be a hybrid mix of on-premise, hosted, and cloud-based platforms. The portal was targeted at:

/ Clients seeking higher value from their services, instead of a traditional 'break-fix' support

/ Clients seeking greater insight into how they consume data centre technologies and how to optimise their consumption

/ Clients struggling to identify the business outcomes derived from their technology, and the impact of the technology health on their business operations

/ Dimension Data's salesforce – to assist them in articulating our data centre services to clients (505 words)



Portal solution

Description

Until the development of Manage Centre, Dimension Data provided clients with a technical service desk portal built on service-now.com.

Manage Centre is designed as a browser-based portal for use on tablets, laptops, and PCs. The key to Manage Centre is its ability to visualise current performance and highlight areas requiring a user's attention, through information design.

The target user personas for Manage Centre are:

/ Operations staff – to request work, track issues, and analyse key performance indicators

/ IT management – to view the overall health and performance of systems and drill-down to the underlying technology information

/ CxO, business unit management – view quick snapshot of the health and performance of key business functions and the business processes that support them

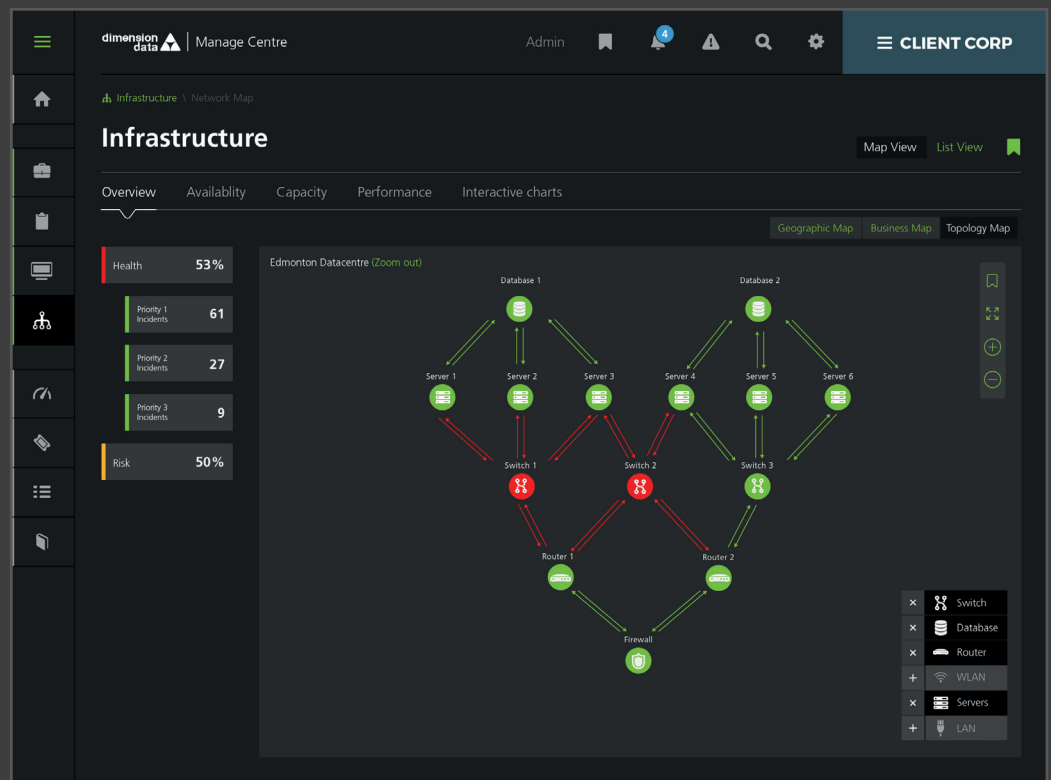


“Manage Centre was designed as a window into our clients’ technology environments. But it has equally become a window into the way we design, develop, and deliver services as a company. It has shifted our focus from technology-centric to client-centric design and has directly influenced the way we develop new services. We now see more relevant solutions being developed in a significantly reduced time to market as we apply our learnings from the Manage Centre project.”

Sean Greaves, Service Design Director,
Manage Centre Portal

Initial release features included:

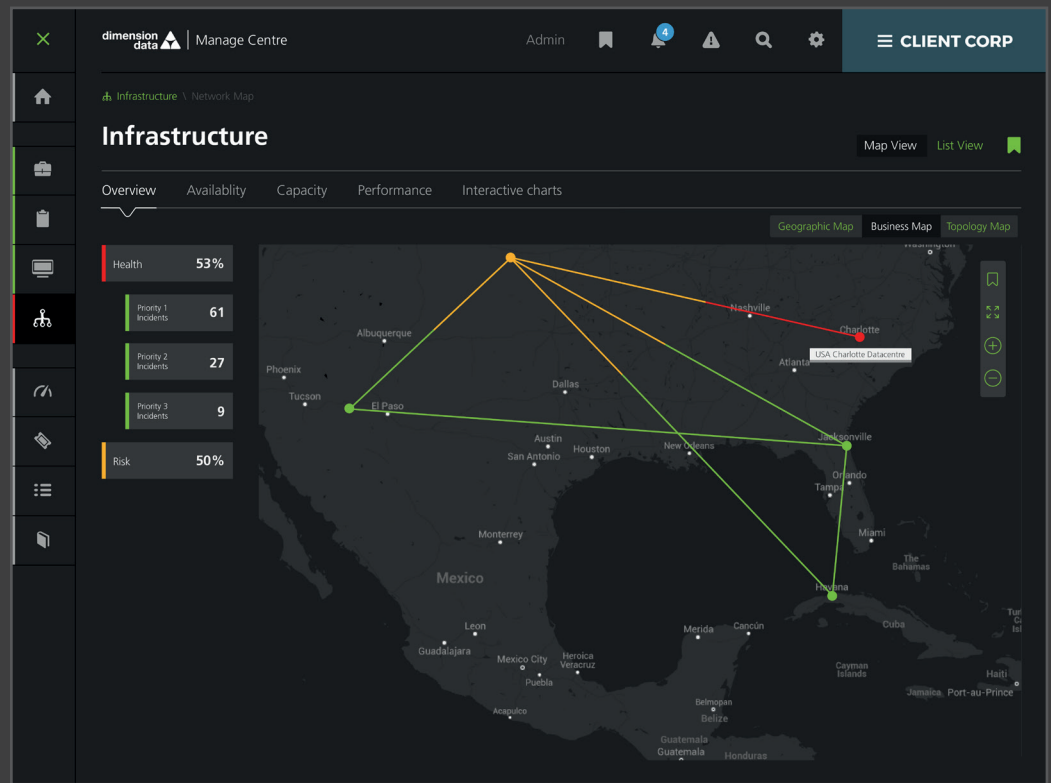
Four 'traffic lights' provide a snapshot of the current health of the client's IT environment from an infrastructure, IT systems, business process, and business function perspective



Traffic light signposting
navigation to alert users to
action priority issues quickly
and intuitively

Business service maps

The relationship between infrastructure supporting IT systems, which are used by business processes to deliver business functions, are visualised in business service maps. These allow to trace the root cause of an issue which may be impacting business



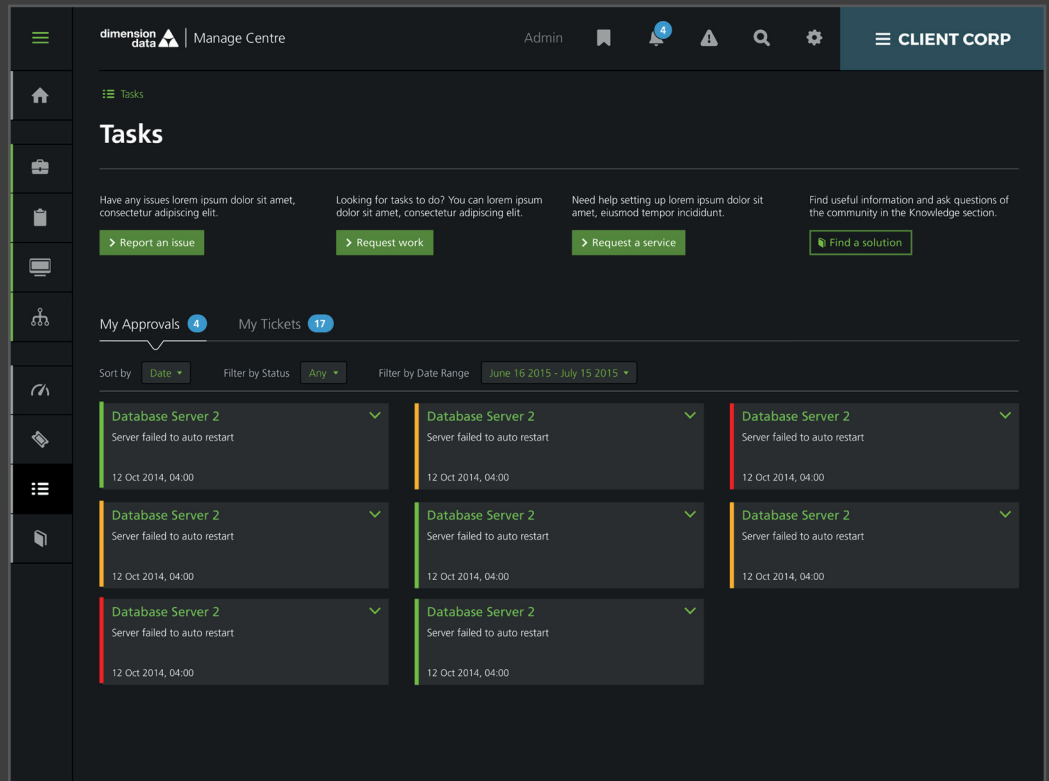
Interactive charts

Run real-time and historical trend reports for the health and performance of their technology



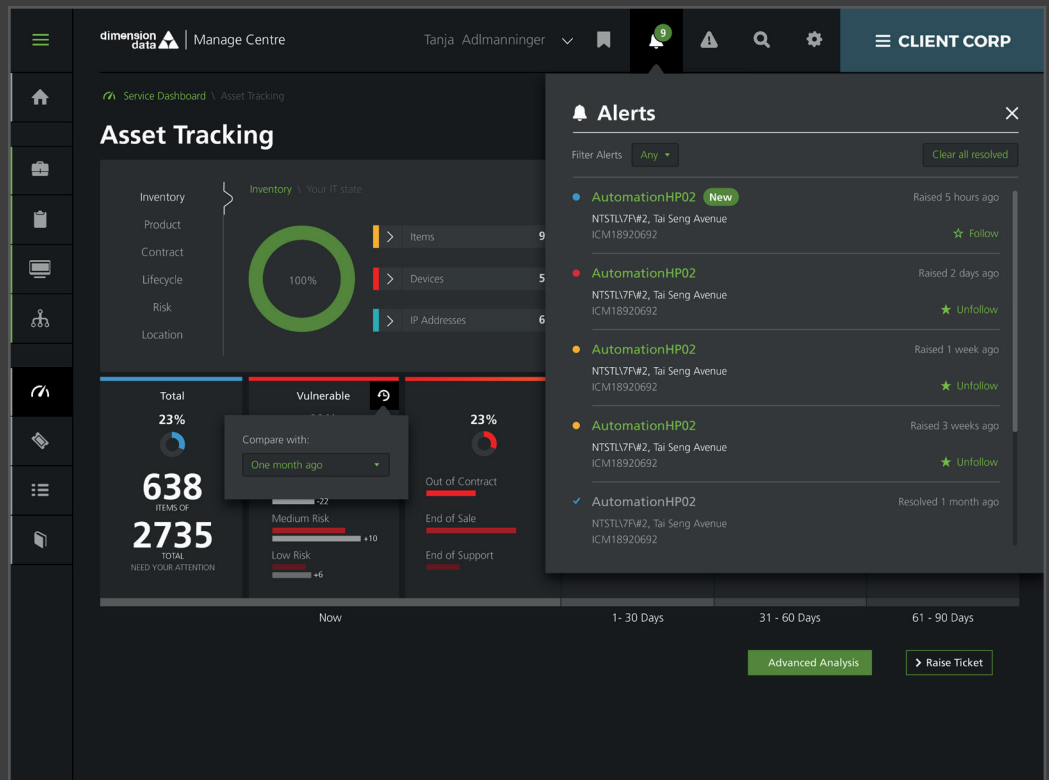
Tasks and tickets:

Report issues, request new work, or review all existing issues and work

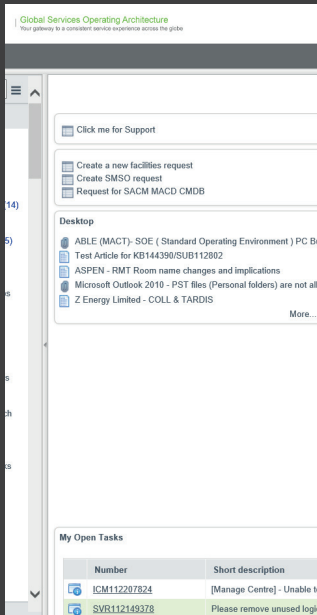


Universal features:

Receive alerts and notifications across the portal, bookmark any view for quick reference and perform key word searches



Agile implementation



Original platform



Co-creation workshops

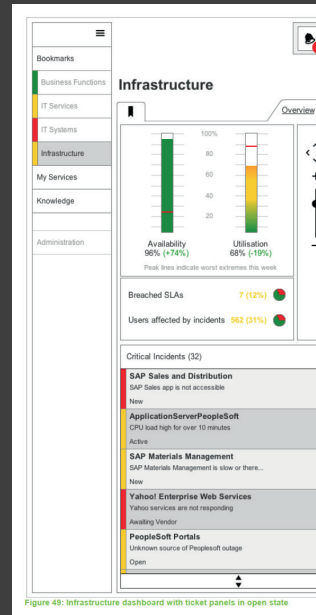
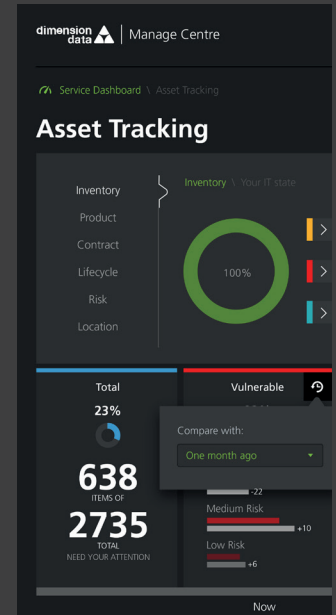


Figure 49: Infrastructure dashboard with ticket panels in open state

Architecture



Prototypes & user testing

Dimension Data engaged two partners:

/ Prospect – conceive and design the User Experience

/ UXC Keystone – develop the portal application and interfaces

This was Dimension Data's first attempt to follow a UX design methodology and apply a more agile approach.

The process incorporated:

/ Co-creation workshops with international project stakeholders including sales, IT managers, business unit managers, business analysts, and application owners to collaboratively create personas, concept maps, user scenarios, design principles, and KPIs

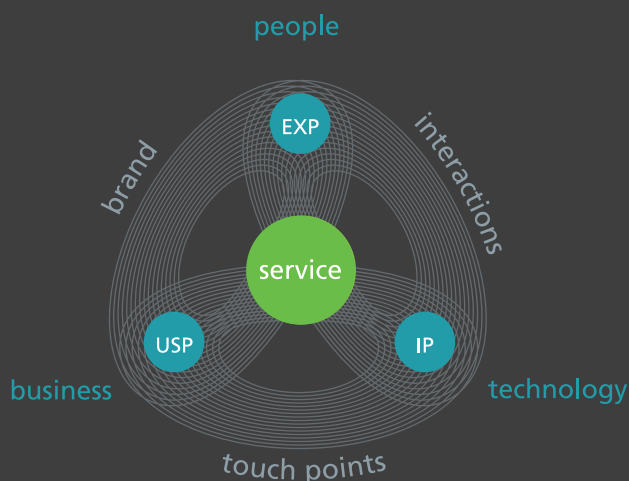
/ Direct interviews with clients and internal stakeholders to understand the type of information that was important to them, and the type of experience they desired for consuming technical information

/ Wireframes, rapid prototyping, user interface design and build documentation to incorporate UX design as an integral part of the development process

/ Global user testing to validate client and stakeholder success and a MVP roadmap

/ A four week proof-of-concept build to test feasibility

(500 words)



Summary of results

Manage Centre was launched in April 2015 and has delivered on its initial objectives:

/ It's been deployed to all new data centre services clients globally.

/ The design has been flexible enough to be included in Dimension Data's other support services, premium services, and managed services which commenced deployment to clients in April 2016.

/ For existing clients, Manage Centre has assisted in re-positioning client perceptions of Dimension Data from being a 'technology expert' to a 'business partner'.

Manage Centre has also changed internal perceptions, bringing a greater focus on applying usability and client experience to other software and service development projects.



↑ **579%**

Increase in client online engagement
(old portal versus Manage Centre)



**3 hrs to 20 mins
adoption**

The average time for a user to become familiar with portal features is one 20-minute demonstration (compared to a three-hour training session for the old portal)



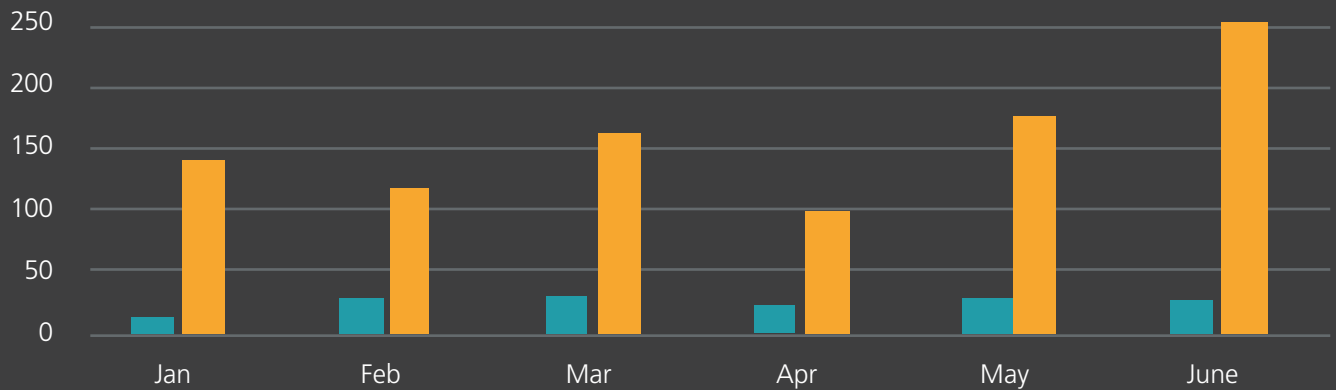
**9 mths to 12 wks
deployment**

The average time to develop a new solution in Dimension Data is nine months. By following a UX approach, the Manage Centre UI was developed, tested, and deployed to the first client in 12 weeks



"Today's clients want service capabilities that are more relevant to the business problems they face every day. They're seeking a new class of personalised service offerings focused on outcomes. To address this market shift, we need to modernise our service offers with value propositions and focus on driving technology adoption and consumption, together with analytics and insight capabilities that help clients to optimise their environments. Manage Centre is one of the core service design capabilities underpinning our next-generation of services, and with which we're actively targeting this market opportunity. Now being deployed into our entire client base, with a capability roadmap to introduce enhanced capabilities to assist our clients optimise their IT operational environment, Manage Centre has rapidly become one of the fundamental toolsets within our services portfolio."

John Andrews. Group Services Principal Product Portfolio Director, Dimension Data



Increase in user engagement of the portal, number of users (Old portal versus new portal)

■ Old portal (2015) ■ Manage centre (2016)



↑ **307%**

Growth in clients.

Exceeding targets of 150% by 157% in only 14 months.



↑ **515%**

Growth in service revenue in 14 months

into a saturated market. Exceeding 350% target by 165% of growth in service revenue in only 14 months in a saturated market



12,000

Views of business service maps, previous unavailable



458

Average monthly users, up from 23

2,550

Reports generated, previous unavailable



Flexibility

To now expand deployment to support and premium services for network clients



5%

(Unit cost per client) compared to the starting price for equivalent business map software packages



8 to 1

8 separate management systems pulled into 1 consistent experience



2.8

95% drop in user queries / incidents per month (80 incidents per month for the old portal)



"We like it much more than the existing portal... the existing portal seemed to be aligned to internal Dimension Data's processes; Manage Centre takes us in the right direction....we love the real-time information and business focus..."

IT Executive, A USA State Legislature

Other influencing factors

There have been additional influencing factors on the project:

/ The UX design methodology applied to developing Manage Centre is now being adopted across Dimension Data in other critical business projects.

/ By making information more readily available, Dimension Data has identified data quality issues in its business operations – which has spawned new projects to standardise and enforce data quality to improve client experience through the portal.

/ Internal users for the portal have emerged, as it has been found to simplify analysing client performance in our operations.

/ Manage Centre has provided the sales force with a ‘face’ to our services, helping them to demonstrate the value we can bring to our clients.

The major influencing factor has been the emergence of digitalisation as a key business driver across all industries and the need to provide ever more sophisticated analytics to clients.

During the past eight months, user feedback has driven the ongoing design and development of Manage Centre – and the focus area for enhancements has been in the expansion of reporting functionality, empowered with analytics, and provided through dynamic visualisation.

Sources

“IT Spending Forecast, 4Q15 Update: What Will Make Headlines in 2016?”, Gartner, 7th March, 2016

Recommended retail prices, BSM software packages

Data Centre Sales – salesforce.com statistics

Average development project timelines, Dimension Data Programme Management Office

Comparison of user audit logs for old portal (service-now.com) versus Manage Centre

Google Analytics, Manage Centre portal

Incident ticket volumes, Dimension Data service management tool

Client feedback

Conclusion

The Manage Centre project achieved the core objectives it targeted, as well as influencing the organisation in new areas not originally intended.

/ By establishing clear objectives and detailed business requirements, combined with a UX design methodology, Dimension Data was able to validate and define a portal which would meet the immediate needs of the targeted client base and be flexible enough to expand into wider service offerings.

/ The design approach for Manage Centre and subsequent success of the portal has generated a cultural shift within Dimension Data. Other development projects, including the corporate UI design project, have adopted similar UX design methodologies. Service design based on market perception is evolving into client-led service design.

While the vision for the portal helped to establish a longer-term roadmap, changes in digitalisation, big data, and analytics have been recognised and adopted into the roadmap to ensure Manage Centre continues to evolve to meet clients’ expectations.