

Beyond the noise

Why operational clarity is a prerequisite for platform ROI, sustainable automation and agentic AI-readiness



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Why digital investments fall short



While some IT leaders are implementing technology successfully to reduce costs, modernize operations, and accelerate automation and AI, others are failing to realize the full value of their investment. It's not uncommon for enterprise platforms like ServiceNow to be considerably underused, with many features simply idling away in the background.

Beyond the immediate implications like wasted resources and missed opportunities, this has the potential to create a bigger impact down the track. For example, initiatives around AI will stall, not because of a lack of technology but because the operational foundation isn't ready.

Why this is happening, and where does the breakdown occur?

The answer to this question lies in a deeper, less visible challenge: a lack of operational clarity. Disconnected workflows, misconfigured systems, low platform adoption and poor data visibility have created fragmentation at scale. And it's in this fragmentation that value is lost.

Successful transformation and value realization begin only when organizations have clarity.

Before pursuing another tool, platform or AI project, technology leaders must understand how their operations function today, where inefficiencies exist, how systems connect (or, in some cases, don't) and, as a result, what gaps they have.

“To understand why digital investments so often fall short, we need to begin at the heart of the issue: operational clarity, the prerequisite for platform ROI, sustainable automation and agentic AI-readiness.”

The operational clarity gap

Whether it's in response to macroeconomic factors such as mounting cost pressures or regulatory scrutiny, or simply ambitious digital and AI agendas on their own part, organizations in Asia Pacific are moving quickly. Unfortunately, the foundations they rely on aren't.

But it's not for a lack of trying. Despite years of investment in platforms, tools and services, a consistent pattern persists: leaders still lack a clear view of what's happening inside their operations. What are their teams doing? Where are requests going? How are issues resolved? Which processes deliver value?

The result? Duplicated effort, inconsistent service quality, rising operational costs and poor platform ROI.

What is operational clarity?

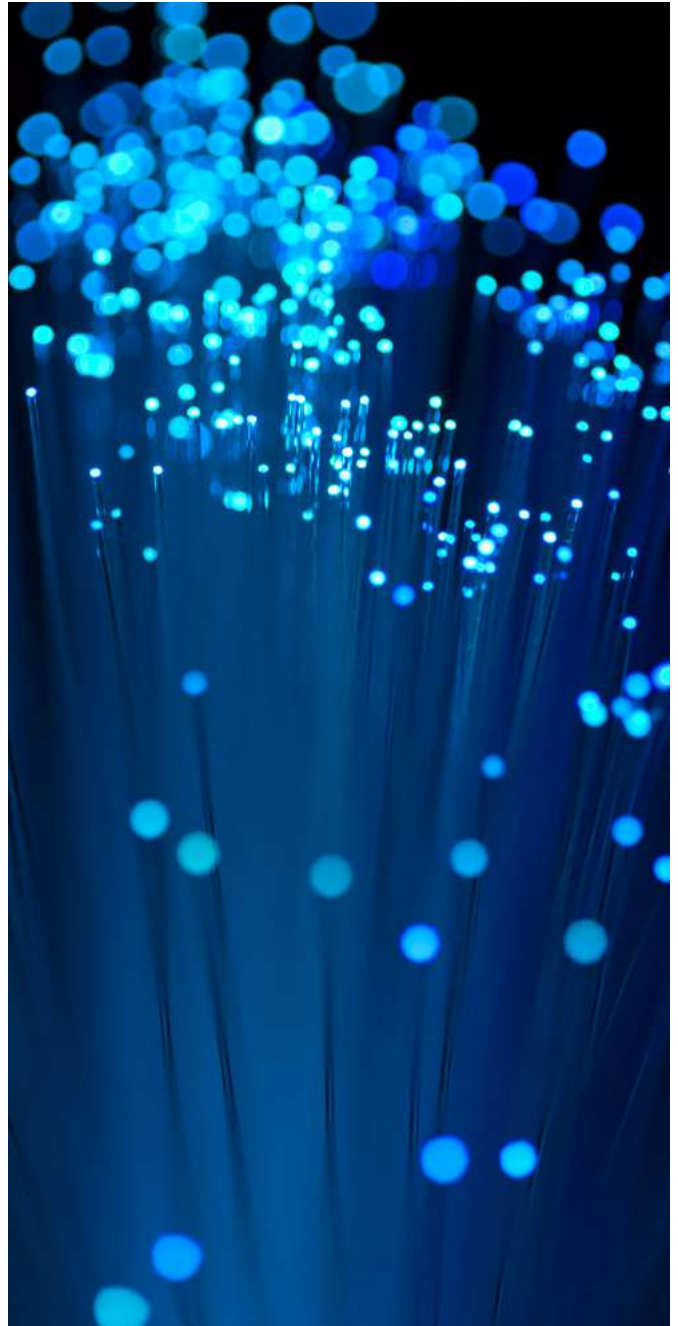
If you can see, measure and align how service delivery functions across departments, tools and outcomes, then you have operational clarity.

More deeply, it's about:

- How well workflows are performing across your business units
- Where friction, delay or waste is silently compounding
- Which business activities are aligned to strategic priorities and which are just legacy noise

If you can connect the dots between platforms, teams and accountability structures, then you can act with context rather than intuition.

Attaining operational clarity then becomes a competitive advantage, a capability that changes how organizations operate. Issues can be triaged and resolved more quickly, as teams have a shared view of what's happening. Furthermore, leaders can make decisions with greater speed and confidence, enabled by real-time, trusted data rather than outdated assumptions.



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Without operational clarity, technology investments create an illusion of progress while critical gaps go unaddressed.”

As workflows become more structured and visible, automation becomes easier to scale; not just in IT, but across HR, finance and operations. And when data is connected, consistent and governed, AI becomes a real, actionable asset.

Ultimately, operational clarity creates the conditions for speed, intelligence and measurable impact.

Without clarity, complexity rules

Unfortunately, in the absence of clarity, many organizations are faced with complexity because platforms are rolled out, one after another, to solve problem after problem — some ITSM here, an HR workflow there, maybe an ERP upgrade in parallel.

When there's no shared visibility of how the enterprise is actually operating, what begins as a series of point solutions becomes a patchwork of loosely connected systems.

This causes configuration debt and siloed workflows. In the meantime, teams desperately develop workarounds just to retain any slight hint of visibility.

This is where transformation falters.

Operating in this type of environment means automation projects will likely fail to scale, AI pilots won't access the right data and operational performance will be judged by lagging indicators rather than whether the right outcomes are being delivered.

The consequences of complexity aren't just limited to back-end challenges and inefficiencies — they're also felt directly by people.

For employees, a lack of clarity means disjointed tools, duplicated effort, slow approvals and process fatigue. It creates frustration and disengagement, as more time is spent working around systems than with them. For customers, complexity means longer resolution times, inconsistent service experiences or dropped handoffs between departments. This results in less frustration, clearer ownership and more time spent on meaningful work, all of which point to better engagement and productivity.

Clarity as an enabler of value

Just as poor visibility can stall progress, the right kind of clarity can unlock it. Operational clarity is a powerful enabler of action that impacts several areas of the business.



Service operations

Service teams can identify and eliminate bottlenecks faster, reduce ticket backlogs and improve end-to-end performance. This makes service delivery more consistent, measurable and, importantly, predictive.



Employee experience

Employees benefit too. They gain structured workflows and better visibility of the systems they rely on every day. This results in less frustration, clearer ownership and more time spent on meaningful work, all of which point to better engagement and productivity.



Customer experience

For customers, the benefits are just as real. Faster issue resolution and greater consistency across channels translate into higher satisfaction and trust. When internal operations are aligned and transparent, external experiences become smoother, faster and more responsive.

“Operational clarity is the bridge. It empowers employees with the visibility and simplicity they need to work smarter, while delivering the responsiveness and consistency customers expect from your organization.”

The hidden cost of platform underuse

One of the clearest signs of poor operational clarity is platform underuse. The technology may be in place, but without alignment, its potential goes untapped.

With platforms like ServiceNow, for example, only tactical IT service needs might see the light of day. These platforms are rarely scaled to their full cross-functional potential. This means critical capabilities such as automation, AI-readiness or service integration remain dormant.

Siloed implementations, misconfigured configuration management databases (CMDBs), disconnected workflows and poor governance all contribute to a growing gap between what's possible and what's being delivered. As a result, data quality suffers, and value quietly leaks from the system.

This leakage often ripples outwards. It shows up in duplicated processes and service teams forced into manual workarounds that delay resolution and obscure accountability. It then goes on to frustrate employees and customers with slow response times, poor issue triage and reactive service models.

Internally, stakeholders begin to lose trust in the platform's ability to deliver meaningful outcomes. Externally, customers and other users experience fragmented journeys that result in longer wait times, miscommunications, and unresolved issues that erode satisfaction and loyalty. And if these issues aren't addressed, they will continue to erode the very outcomes the platform was intended to support.

So, while there are obvious technical and financial costs to underused technology, there are operational and reputational costs, too.



Case study: Novavax

Novavax, an American biotechnology company, sought to accommodate rapid growth and improve operational efficiencies by evolving its IT service management (ITSM) capabilities, by maturing its nascent ServiceNow ITSM platform through a partnership with NTT DATA. With an upgraded ServiceNow platform — including a new common service data model (CSDM), configuration management database (CMDB), employee service portal, and hardware and software asset management — Novavax now has the foundation for a comprehensive, scalable ITSM solution.

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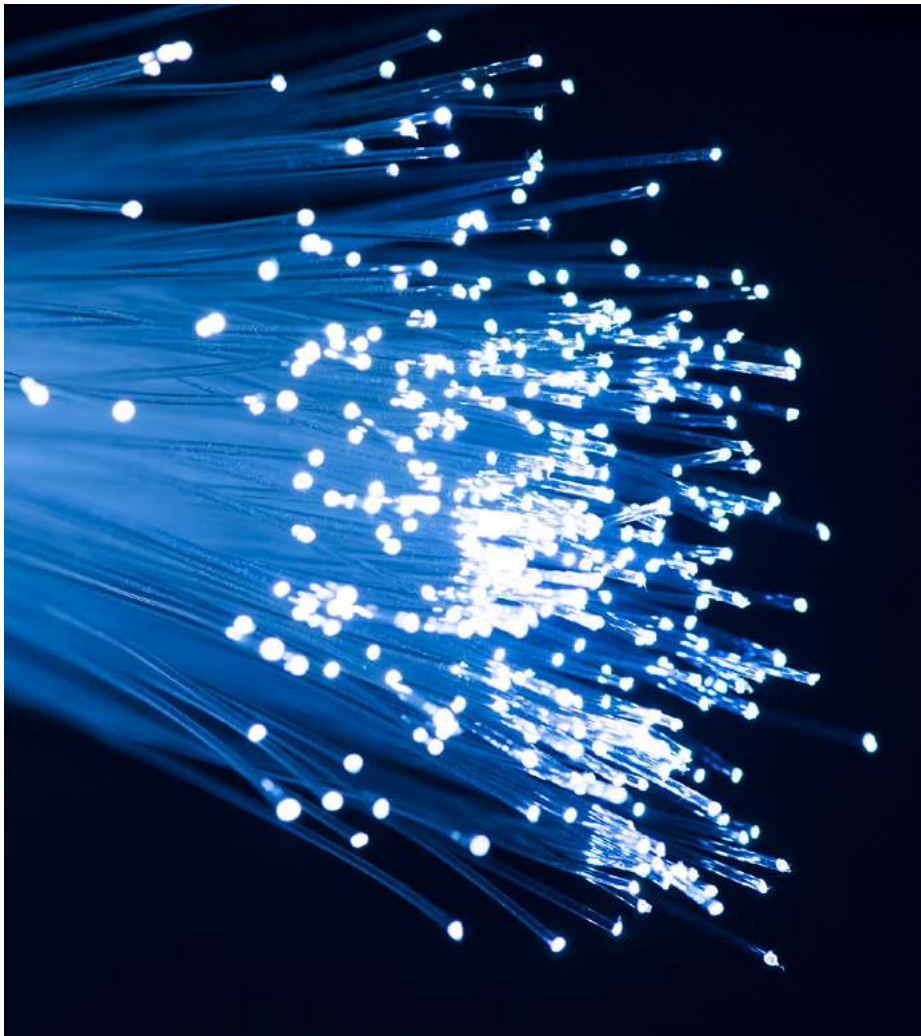
We knew that expanding our use of ServiceNow was the key to transforming our IT services delivery, but we needed an experienced partner to come in, design the solution and guide us through our implementation journey.”

Gwen January

Vice President, Global IT Shared Services, Novavax

Establishing the right architecture for AI

Nowhere is the cost of platform underuse more apparent than in the race to scale AI. Boards are asking for it. Vendors are promising it. Teams are experimenting with it. Yet for all the momentum, are we witnessing an early disconnect between AI ambition and AI impact?



Beneath the surface, many organizations run on fragmented processes, misaligned data models and service workflows held together by workarounds. In that environment, even the most advanced AI can only go so far.

The reality is that AI is only as effective as the architecture it sits on. Without clean, connected data and orchestrated workflows, AI won't accelerate decision-making, it will simply amplify the noise.

This is where agentic AI becomes critical. Unlike traditional analytics or generative outputs, agentic AI is designed to act: triaging tickets, resolving issues and optimizing tasks autonomously. But for that to work, the underlying platform must be stable, standardized and strategically aligned.

Until that foundation is in place, AI will stall rather than scale — piloted in silos, detached from the realities of operations and unlikely to deliver the transformation leaders are hoping for.

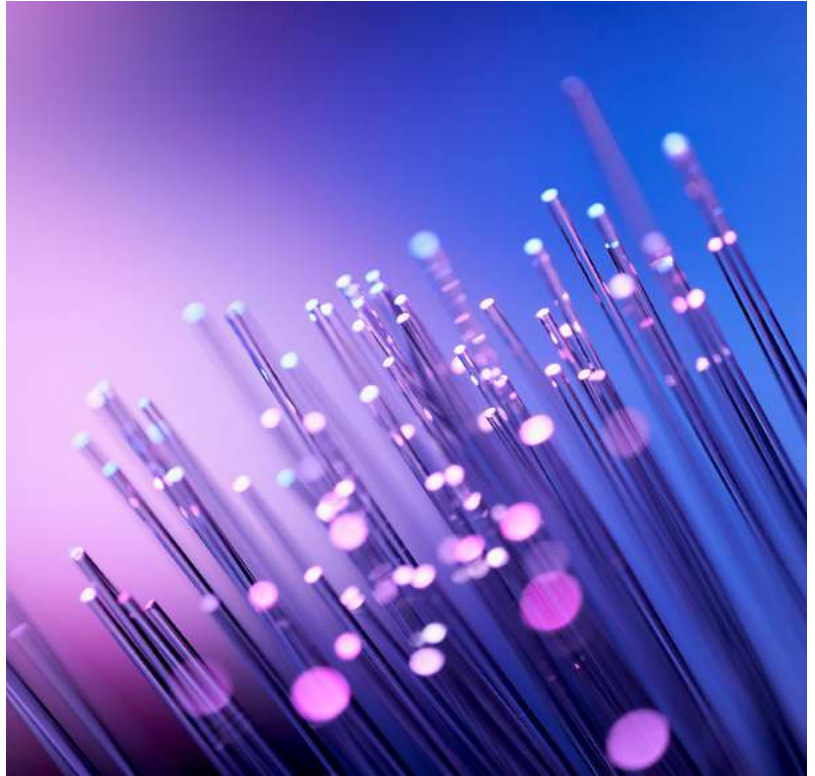
Building a foundation for value, clarity and intelligence

So, what does it take to get this right?

While no one-size-fits-all solution exists, organizations that work with experienced partners who understand both the technical depth of platforms and the realities of business operations tend to progress faster and more confidently — especially when that expertise is grounded in real use, not just implementation theory.

It's tempting to think the next big technology will deliver transformation. But often, tools are not the issue. It's what we don't always see under the surface. The misalignments, the inefficiencies, the missed signals — these are the things that slow real progress.

If you can achieve greater clarity, you're laying the foundation for operational resilience, innovation and enterprise-wide transformation. It's what turns digital ambition into measurable, sustained impact.



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