



Plains Midstream in numbers

8,200
KM of pipeline

750
tanker trailers

4,800
railcars

28m+
storage barrels

Plains Midstream Canada transforms Information Services and improves customer satisfaction with *assyst*

Established in 2001, Plains Midstream Canada (PMC) owns, operates, acquires and develops a diversified portfolio of complementary midstream energy assets.

As an industry leading transportation and midstream provider, PMC specializes in transportation, storage, processing and marketing solutions for crude oil, natural gas and natural gas liquids (NGLs).

PMC is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, with employees in Canada and the United States. The Canadian facilities are located in four provinces, while PMC conducts business in eight provinces. The U.S. facilities are located in 14 states, while conducting business in 45 states.

The Challenge

In late 2012, Plains Midstream Canada's Information Services (IS) set two specific goals: to effectively and efficiently deliver IT support to the company's end users, and to track the performance of the IS organization in delivering services. PMC IS department engaged Forrester Research to conduct an assessment of their service desk and customer support model. A series of interviews with IS and corporate employees revealed that effective and efficient delivery had been lagging. They were challenged with managing corporate growth, low response and resolution rates, reactive troubleshooting, service interruptions, poor communication and a low overall perception of IS.

Service Desk and IS Transformation Project

Having set a vision to become the 'IT vendor of choice' throughout all of PMC, the IS team developed a highly iterative, 2.5 year roadmap. Goals included delivery of improved customer service, tracking, reporting, visibility, accountability, good processes and support governance. The project began small and built credibility at each stage before moving to the next process and higher maturity level of an existing process.

Here's an overview of the transformational phases:

1 Phase 1 - Tool selection and incident management. With their previous IT Service Management (ITSM) solution coming to end of life, PMC chose to implement *assyst* by Axios Systems. The old solution was poorly implemented with a lack of service desk processes, no ownership of those processes, and lack of governance. For these reasons, PMC effectively went back to the basics from an IT perspective. They started by implementing incident management and establishing a single point of contact with traditional cradle-to-grave ownership.

2 Phase 2 - Change and release management. The next phase allowed PMC to get more control over their environment and infrastructure through the introduction of robust change and release management processes. At this point the project started impacting not only IS but the wider business, including colleagues who were involved in change approvals and testing phases.

3 Phase 3 - Customer portal. With new processes starting to affect users, a customer-facing portal was put in place. The portal allowed all colleagues to use online self-service features to request services from IS (new employee access/setup, how to's, tip & tricks) and to track the status of their open incidents and requests with IS.

4 Phase 4 - Asset and configuration management. Still in its infancy, PMC now use the *assyst* CMDB to track incidents and changes against configuration items, as well as for inventory reporting (hardware and software), to control and standardize the environment and to plan projects/refreshes/upgrades for the purposes of budgeting and resourcing.

5 Phase 5 - Project evaluation and CSI. The team reviewed the project so far and produced a new roadmap, reviewing how to get more out of *assyst* by adding more functionality and maturing their current processes. The roadmap also makes everything they currently have more robust.

It was important to evaluate progress and monitor incremental improvements throughout each phase, looking at success achieved and what needed to be done next to maintain forward momentum.

Pivotal to this was monitoring the culture of the business as it matured – both from a customer perspective as well as an IS perspective.

Impressively, these improvements were accomplished during a period of significant change throughout the IS Dept and PMC as a whole. From a resourcing standpoint, the IS department went from 45 to 150 workers in less than three years.

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Results

Through the Service Desk and IS Transformation Project and the implementation of *assyst*, PMC has already achieved a number of goals, including improved communication with other areas of the business, an increase in end user satisfaction, and greater efficiencies due to implementation of best practice across incident and change management processes.

The *assyst* CMDB has also been instrumental in giving PMC the ability to not only manage its assets but also control and standardize the IT environment.

“We didn’t just want to change IS, we wanted to transform it. With changes, we would have only fixed the past, with transforming, we created a better future.”

*With *assyst*, the CMDB allows us to review software license usage, hardware lifecycles and plan for upgrades and refreshes as well as report on asset related incidents.”*

Corrine Siba, Manager, IS Operations at Plains Midstream Canada

