

Mind the Gap

Integrating ServiceNow and iServer365



Introduction

When faced with the challenges of business transformation, you need all of your key systems working in harmony. Basically, if you want to make business-changing decisions, you want the best information from your best sources.

Connecting iServer365 to your ServiceNow instance enables data to flow between your business transformation platform and your IT Services Management platform, iServer365's API enables users to access operational, IT-centric data available from ServiceNow.

Orbus customers have been benefiting from ServiceNow integrations for over a year now. And the results can be startling - especially when outcomes are shared with stakeholders beyond IT. So it is worth looking at some of the benefits and lessons learned from their experience.



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What types of integrations are there?

Integration, put simply, enables applications and systems that were purchased separately to work together. Most importantly, it will enable this to happen automatically.

ServiceNow Connect is the iServer365 integration module that syncs data and schedules automatic updates between iServer365 and the ServiceNow platform.

One of the most important features of ServiceNow Connect is that it includes support for customized metamodels within both ServiceNow and iServer365, as well as multiple import profiles.

The screenshot displays the ServiceNow Connect configuration interface. At the top, the ServiceNow logo is visible. Below it, the 'Import Settings' section contains two input fields: 'ServiceNow Source Table' with the value 'Business Application' and 'iServer365 Object Type' with the value 'Application'. The 'Field Mappings' section below shows two rows of mappings. Row 1 maps 'Status' from ServiceNow to 'Lifecycle Status' in iServer365 via an 'Attribute' mapping type. Row 2 maps 'Category' from ServiceNow to 'Application Category' in iServer365 via a 'Relationship' mapping type.

	ServiceNow Field	Mapping Type	iServer365 Field
1	Status	Attribute	Lifecycle Status
2	Category	Relationship	Application Category

PRE-DEFINED VS FLEXIBLE

Mappings ensure you visualize and leverage ServiceNow data in your enterprise architecture models, standards, and application portfolio assessments. There are two types of mapping to consider: predefined and flexible.

Pre-defined mappings use best-practice out-of-the-box integrations using ServiceNow's common service data model (CSDM). They cover business applications, software models and services. It is a great way to get started quickly. But usually customers have customized their ServiceNow implementation so a more nuanced and bespoke mapping is typically required.

This flexible mappings enables particular ServiceNow instances to be mapped into iServer365 and vice-versa. It enables configurable import and export with field mapping between any concepts in ServiceNow (for example table records, fields, CI relationships) and any iServer365 object and relationship type.

Keeping your iServer365 repository updated and accurate is a significant undertaking. Automating this process eliminates the chances of human error and ensures that your data is accurate. This leads to application and process rationalization, better technology investment, cloud migration, and more.

iServer365 users have the ability to import any IT component from ServiceNow into the iServer365 Suite, and the bi-directional option means that application records with business metadata can be exported effortlessly to ServiceNow.

If we have a closer look at an APM example, you would typically map ServiceNow Business Applications data and iServer365 Repository APM data based on a pre-defined integration.



We can then look at how applications relate to capabilities and technology and servers to link the business context to the associated infrastructure. This enables you to drill into application detail if you really need it. And it works in both directions - table/objects and CI relationships.

How do you do it?

All iServer365 integrations feature in the Solutions Hub - a self-serve store/catalog. Within this catalog you can find integration solutions, reports, assessment toolkits and collaboration links to SharePoint and Teams.

You can choose from a range of options covering pre-defined best-practice and flexible mappings.

How you approach these integration options is the same no matter which option you choose. You select which mapping you want to use and are then presented with a specific page where you can view use cases, solution description and activate and run the solution.



What's the best approach?

One of the major benefits of ServiceNow Connect is its ability to offer architects more control over their integrations. What has to be avoided is an inflexible integration that is difficult to change.

You don't want to make your life harder when it ought to be getting easier instead.

Based on our experience, here are three best practice steps that should set you on the right path before you choose your options.

01

UNDERSTAND AND DEFINE YOUR SCOPE

One of your first steps is the "so what" question. Always focus on what mappings will get you the quick wins to show immediate value and gain buy-in to the process.

Make sure you understand and define the scope of data interchange (object types, attributes, relationships) - this will pay dividends later in the process.

02

DEFINE WHERE DATA IS MASTERED

When it comes to understanding how your application inventory is being managed for example - defining the system that is mastering the information and the system that will be receiving regular updates is important. Define the right directionality and identify which fields are being updated from where - is it import/export or a mix of sourcing of data.

03

FOCUS ON VALUE ADD INFORMATION IN TARGET SYSTEM THAT CAN BE MAINTAINED AUTOMATICALLY

This has two benefits. You will be able demonstrate value early to your stakeholders and reduce the overhead of maintaining the information. Operational performance data at a low level may not be so important for strategic planning for example. Once you have defined this information need, you can then look at establishing categorization, identifying owners, costs and lifecycle. You can then import that information to automate and keep systems in sync to have a common view across systems.

What are the pitfalls?

App integrations are a necessary and rewarding challenge in our interconnected world. There are few pitfalls that, with a bit of planning and awareness, can be avoided and make this process so much easier.



Too much detail when mapping from ServiceNow to iServer365

Granular-level configuration items are usually not needed in an EA repository. Ensure the data is appropriate for the system involved. It is a common mistake to map too much granular CI data from ServiceNow to iServer365. It is worth remembering that the iServer365 repository is not a CMDB.



Not Engaging early with ServiceNow specialists

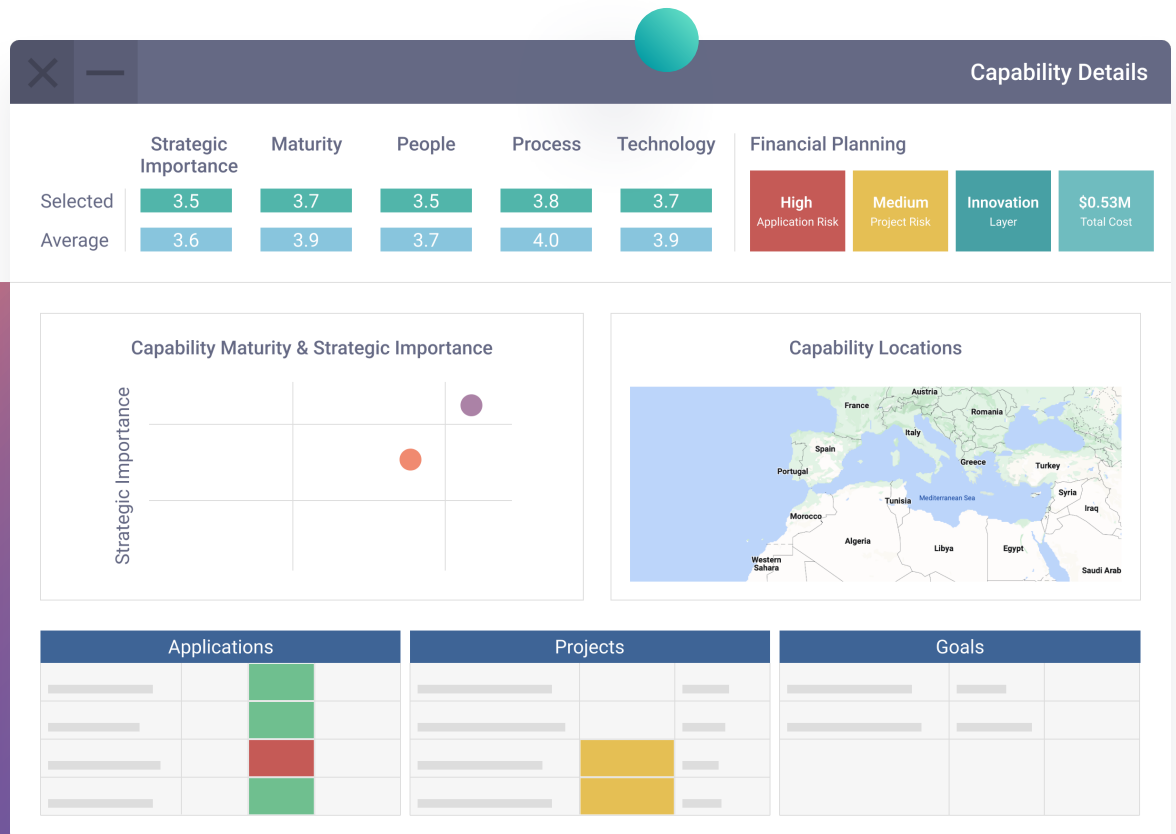
When it comes to the efforts involved in setting up an integration, engage with the IT operations, IT Service Management teams and ServiceNow Admins as soon as possible. Share your value proposition so you are on the same page and ensure you are speaking to the right data experts. This will help get the mappings right and ensure you have access to the data you need. Integration is a team effort.

What are the potential outcomes?

On a practical level, implementing an integration between iServer365 and ServiceNow will save a great deal of time (and money). It will reduce errors and eliminate data duplicates.

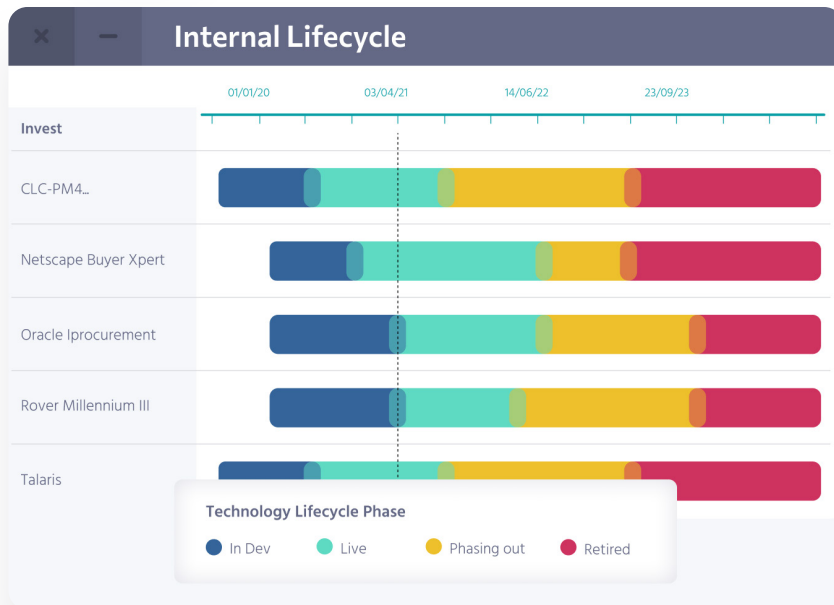
With a good integration you will begin to see far greater business insight and smarter business decisions. You'll now be basing your future state on accurate, current data.

You will begin to leverage the data in new ways - giving you unexpected and potentially lucrative insights. Suddenly dependencies and potential savings will become more obvious and most importantly easier to communicate within the business.



What does it mean to the business?

Integration will bring benefits from C-level right through to IT Operations teams.



- For IT operations, the ServiceNow integration offers increased business context concerning IT services, allowing for the development of better-informed technology roadmaps.
- For executives, it will lead to better control over investments and cost savings across the IT portfolios.

To summarize it will enhance:



Agility



Efficiency



Certainty



Governance

Where do you start?

Integration will play a major role in transforming your organization. When it comes to meeting such demands, recognising the need for greater automation is vital.

Ideally, you will start with small, measurably successful projects, and then scale and optimize for other processes and in other parts of your organization as you get more buy-in. You will be pleased to learn that access to integrations is part of your existing iServer365 license so why not get in touch, speak to us about our experience and best practice and let's get started.



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to see iServer365
in action.



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