CEO CFO

Service Management Cloud Consultants providing Implementation, Integration and Training for ServiceNow

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CEOCFO: Ms. Daley, what is the idea behind Acorio?
Ms. Daley: Acorio is a service management cloud consultancy. We are a professional services firm and we help implement and consult around a very fast growing cloud software called ServiceNow.

CEOCFO: What do you like about ServiceNow and why have you chosen that to be the core of your company?
Ms. Daley: ServiceNow, besides being one of the most active cloud piece of software ever to have been developed in the industry, it is a piece of software the allows companies to work faster and, really, better in every single department. It is a basic, holistic architecture that allows customer service to talk to IT, to allow IT to talk to HR, and it expedites and improves productivity and also can increase the top line. It is a very compelling piece of software for companies.

CEOCFO: Are many companies aware of ServiceNow?
Ms. Daley: Many companies are aware. But, ServiceNow has not necessarily gotten the press that maybe some other cloud software have, like Workday or Salesforce.

There is about close to 40% penetration in the Global 200 already with ServiceNow and they are growing about 30% a quarter. They are a billion dollar plus company. There is an awareness and heavy use of ServiceNow. Typically, once a company starts using ServiceNow in one department like IT, where it is mostly adopted in. In the beginning, companies start enabling their teams to manage tickets from employees. Almost 80% of those companies will then deploy into other departments. It is something that grows very quickly once it is inside a company.

CEOCFO: Might a company turn to you when they are considering an implementation of ServiceNow or more often do they come when they have started it and need help focusing on the best way to make it work?
Ms. Daley: It is both. Acorio is known in the industry as one of the premium partners of ServiceNow. We are a Gold Partner, which is a distinction shared by only about 14 other firms in an ecosystem of 500 or more. They will come to Acorio doing a first time implementation and they want to get it right. They want a heavy emphasis on architecture and process. That is what we bring to bear. We have the most experienced team in the partner ecosystem right now, and one of the highest customer satisfaction scores, so they will come to us for that. Oftentimes, if a company has embarked on a ServiceNow project, but did not have expert advice, they tend to have maybe implemented some things in a way that is not sustainable or easily upgradeable. (ServiceNow is a SaaS cloud piece of software, so things are automatically upgraded.) They will come to us to reassess what they have done and potentially re-architect and even sometimes re-implement if they had not gone down the best way the first time.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a couple examples of, how you unearthed what the real problem was, not necessarily what the organization thought, and how you were able to facilitate the change?*
Ms. Daley: A great example is one of the biggest state's Department of Transportation down in the South. Many times, the Department of Transportation gets requests from consumers who ride their trains or buses. The State or the City may provide and act on requests to improve, plus deal with complaints, lost and found and a bunch of other things their internal employees want.

The DOT started using ServiceNow to manage the flow of all those requests, complaints and feedback to the consumers and the requests and complaints. What happened is: they implemented ServiceNow and did it in a very non-best practice, non-standard way. They were having difficulty upgrading between versions of ServiceNow. And, as with any cloud piece of software, it is required that they upgrade very quickly as new features become available.

We went in there, started analyzing what was wrong and found some concerns on the process side, but also quickly realized how they were using ServiceNow was really not representative of the best practice deployment. Once we analyzed it from an architectural and process perspective, our project team, which is made up of process consultants, engagement managers, technical consultants and architects, came in and recommended a reimplementation. In six months, they were able to be fully re-implemented and then able to add on additional capabilities to help track specific assets in their entire organization.

CEOCFO: *Do you work on an ongoing basis with your clients so that you can help them as updates come in, or is it more typical to fix a problem and perhaps they will come back to you later?*
Ms. Daley: Ee like to think of ourselves as true partners with our clients. We are not jump in and we got that done for you, either it is a first time implementation or fix something and we will see you later. We believe that ServiceNow is already and growing in some other companies, becoming another critical part of the enterprise application strategy backbone of most companies. Our typical engagement, for something around 70% of our customers, is that will go in for a specific need or project, and then we continue to engage with them for the next project, and the next project, etc. …Sometimes even offering a service that about 50% of our clients subscribe to, which is just to be available on call, because the platform is so strategic, to answer questions, give recommendations etc. -- even help with some technical work.

CEOCFO: *Are you able to work with your clients so they consult you before making or implementing ServiceNow update?*
Ms. Daley: One of the challenges and opportunities with the ServiceNow platform (and it is a platform, not just an application) is that you can do so many things in different ways. When an upgrade happens (which, again, is a relatively frequent occurrence), if you did not do things in a very good way or if you customized your platform too much, an upgrade will not happen easily.

We encourage our clients to say: if you are not an expert in the platform of ServiceNow, check in first. Give the team a call, say you are thinking of doing this and we will share with you whether it is best practice or not. Because if you don't follow best practices, you are going to wind up spending more money when that next upgrade comes.

Or, you want to leverage an enhancement that the next release will provide -- which is one of the advantages of buying cloud-based software. You will not be able to leverage it because you have overly-customized. We do encourage that call first before you go crazy.

Our clients really share two archetypes. Either they have decided they want to become experts on the platform inside their company, and in that case, we impart a lot of education and knowledge transfer so they can make those decisions themselves. Then, there is a whole other class of customers that say they are going to lean on us for expertise, and ServiceNow is not a core skill they are going to build up. In that case, we are heavily engaged with them on most decisions moving forward.

CEOCFO: *Are you able to customize, for example, change the name of a field, rather than be locked into preset wording?*
Ms. Daley: ServiceNow will even compete with Salesforce in some areas -- not in the pure Salesforce application area but in the customer's support management. One of the advantages of ServiceNow as a platform versus a pure application is that it does allow you much more customization, specifics and bespoke things that you may want to do for your company through configuration, not actual customization. You can change the field names, you can add fields very easily, you can change in some cases, natural hierarchies, etc. That is one of the challenges of the Salesforce data model itself,

is that it implies a certain model, specifically, one account rep to multiple customers. When that is not how your company works that could be restraining.

ServiceNow provides a bit more flexibility than other tools on that market because it is a platform and built with a more flexible, enhanced mindset rather than just one single application like a Salesforce application.

CEOCFO: *Are particular industries a focus for you?*
Ms. Daley: We have found that any company is really going to benefit from ServiceNow. Our particular focus, given where we started in Boston, was primarily in higher education universities, healthcare and financial services. Even today, with our delivery teams being nationwide and even delivering to multi-nationals, we do about 60% of our work in those verticals.

Once inside a company, often we start in their IT department, but often expand into their Customer Service Department - where we are helping transform customer service with ServiceNow, and then into their HR department. Those are the three primary departments we work with in any company, and, again, we see about 60% of our revenue coming from those three verticals.

CEOCFO: *How are you able to help with compliance and security?*
Ms. Daley: This is a big topic lately, particularly on the IT side. Probably about 80% of our business is coming in, at least in some part, from the technical IT department. In healthcare and financial service, there is heavy regulatory rules of regulation about how changes are going to be made into production technical systems, and how audit trails have to be captured for changes and process.

ServiceNow, and also Acorio specifically, has deep expertise in what those rules and regulations are for healthcare and financial services, as well as the oil gas industry where we are doing a bit of work lately. We're able to provide best practice recommendations. We also have something we call a Boost, which is a pre-configuration of the technology to help within certain industries and certain modules of the platform. Basically, Boosts are best practice configurations that can help with audit, complying, and regulatory issues. That is specialized intellectual property that we provide to our clients.

CEOCFO: *What, if anything, has changed in your approach over time?*
Ms. Daley: We are a relatively new company. We are about four years old with a lot of significant growth in the last two years. I think our approach when we first got started was really this idea that ServiceNow was a technical tool and that what you needed to do was implement and when you are done implementing, you now have a great tool.

I think one of the reasons that we are seen as experts is that we began to recognize that the technology is only one part of the recipe. In fact, you need four components to be successful with something as transformational as becoming a service management oriented company, for which ServiceNow is a great tool. That is certainly technology but also process is really, really big. Organizational change management, the same old people processing technology, and then finally governance. Governing this tool that will sprawl in a good way throughout the company is very difficult. Our approach has really changed to almost equally focus on process technology, organizational change management and governance in the advice that we provide in a project for our clients. Without that, you will not be successful.

CEOCFO: *What are the intangibles you look for in your people?*
Ms. Daley: In a services consulting company, talent is everything. It is the kind of thing that you have to get right when you hire and then continuously train. We like to call our company a learning company. We are a set of people who are very curious. We look for both skills and behaviors. On the behavior side, we look for deep curiosity, because we think that if you are curious about what is behind the door, you are going to do a better job for clients and even the company itself. We also look for someone who is intellectual and will think analytically through a problem whether it is process or technology. We also look for people with high emotional intelligence so they can work with clients in that give and take, collaborative way.

The specific skills we like really depend on the role you are looking. They have to have at least five years' experience in the role they have done and all of them have ServiceNow experience. The exception to that is we have a small Acorio academy, which we hire people just out of school and a very small, subset of our consultants and train them up on ServiceNow over the course of a year. We allow them to work early on with just documentation and testing tasks while they come up to speed.

CEOCFO: *Why choose Acorio?*
Ms. Daley: Choose Acorio if you want the absolute best expertise in technology, process and engagement management on governance. Without a doubt, our clients tell us that they choose us because our projects do not go south. Many projects in the ecosystem go south with ServiceNow because of the complexity and the lack of talent because the software has grown so fast. There are not many people that know how to do things. Come to Acorio if you want to get it right the first time and really realize that ROI, watch it hit very early on.