

CASE STUDY

Nuclear-Powered Value Streams, Billion-Dollar Investments

Southern Company

CLIENT PROFILE

Site: www.southerncompany.com

Industry: Gas and Electric Utility
Industry

Headquarters: Atlanta, GA

BUSINESS

Gas and electric utility company operating across several states in the southern United States. Also operates companies developing renewable energy options.

CHALLENGE

Desire to improve the way portfolios are managed, developing a more strategic business approach, improving visibility, and better serving customer needs.

SOLUTION

Shift to a strategic portfolio management approach centered around embedding value into the entire operating lifecycle.

BENEFITS

Improved visibility drives better business decisions, less time spent consolidating data, less rework, and the ability to manage investments from ideation to completion.

Business

Southern Company (Southern) is one of the largest energy providers in the U.S., delivering gas and electricity across multiple states. It is also investing in solar, wind and biomass energy, as well as the first new nuclear power operations in 30 years.

Challenge

Southern had already chosen to organize discretionary work into portfolios, but they were concerned that they were not managing those portfolios as effectively as possible. There remained a lack of visibility into the work being done, which made it harder to support business customers and technology partners.

Their portfolio management approach was supported by an outdated project portfolio management (PPM) software tool that was used primarily as a data store and to generate Excel views for reporting. This process required excessive manual effort to load and validate data, and provided no insights to understand where value was being delivered, nor to support decision making.

Southern was concerned that effort was being wasted on work that was not delivering benefits, and that they did not have insight into where this was happening. They were also seeing unsustainable amounts of rework due to the misalignment between what was needed and what was being delivered.

Solution

Southern committed to a strategic portfolio management approach, while at the same time encouraging employees to become more entrepreneurial using Gartner's entrepreneurial PM model. They also chose to organize around value streams and value stream management (VSM) to embed value into their entire operating model.

It was essential that they choose the right approach, and the right technology solution to support this transformation. Southern has hundreds of projects that are in the billion dollar or higher range, including the construction of new nuclear power facilities.

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SUDANESE SPENCE, DIRECTOR
TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY AND
PROJECT DELIVERY OFFICE

To support these endeavors, they chose ValueOps™ by Broadcom as their single source of truth for all strategic portfolio management and VSM work. At the same time, they empowered their employees to focus on value, be more empowered to drive change, and collaborate on ideas. Southern employees are also customers, so they represent a wonderful opportunity to contribute ideas on how the organization needs to evolve to deliver the most value.

Southern is undertaking an Agile transformation, ensuring that their Agile initiatives are focused on business benefits, and providing an engagement model that optimizes value by allowing different teams to determine whether Agile is the best fit for their needs. This transformation further empowers teams and individuals to work how they want to deliver performance. They are also ensuring that partners, customers, and employees recognize the difference between Agile delivery and an agile mindset—agility is becoming an integral part of how they operate.

Benefits

Sudaneese Spence, Director, Technology Strategy and Project Delivery Office, identifies many different benefits that have been delivered, but says that the biggest benefit is also the simplest. “I think the biggest benefit that we've had thus far is really visibility to the information that we need to make decisions, to be able to support our technology and our business customers.”

With projects the size of those at Southern, improved decision-making drives significant value for customers and the business alike. They have been able to eliminate weeks of annual effort downloading, synthesizing, and validating data manually. Now, everyone has access to the same information with contextualized reporting that eliminates confusion, duplication, and misalignment of work.

When priorities shift, ad hoc reports can be generated immediately to allow business leaders to review options and make the best adjustments for Southern, their customers, and partners. Even things as simple as consistent reporting formats are helping to drive efficiency and effectiveness, improving everything from business cases to financial tracking.

There are more benefits to come. Spence plans to expand their focus on VSM, using the concept to drive technology investments. ValueOps will be a critical part of that process, through strategic roadmaps and delivery management. There will also be a continuation of their Agile journey, and the integration of more solutions with ValueOps to leverage the information and insight that this provides.

For more information, visit our website at: www.broadcom.com