



QualityClouds

Why Out of the Box Matters for Your ServiceNow Instance



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Although ServiceNow recommends committing to out-of-the-box functionality, many businesses need to modify their instances. But the more you modify out-of-the-box settings, the more problems you risk creating, and the more time and money you'll need to spend fixing those problems.

You can avoid these headaches by reverting your ServiceNow instance to out of the box. In this white paper, we'll walk you through:

- What 'out of the box' means in ServiceNow
- 6 reasons to stay out of the box
- How to measure your out-of-the-box deviation

What does 'out of the box' mean in ServiceNow?

Out of the box isn't equivalent to using factory settings, but what does it mean in practice?

Most businesses will need to make some changes to a clean ServiceNow instance. But staying out of the box means making sure you're taking full advantage of ServiceNow's default functionality and only making changes or adding features when absolutely necessary.

Out of the box with ServiceNow allows you to meet your organization's unique business needs while maintaining your ability to upgrade easily and painlessly.

There are two main ways to make changes in ServiceNow:

Configuration

Use the default platform functionality to make changes without affecting any code.

Customization

Use code to modify core functionality.

29%

of the average instance
is customized with code

To keep your ServiceNow out of the box, use 'clicks not code' whenever possible. When you have to customize, adhere to best practices, such as using scoped applications for any modifications to code. This will allow you to make changes without creating future problems, or too much technical debt, in your platform.

6 reasons to stay out of the box

Over-customized platforms are more difficult to maintain and to scale, and can cause massive performance issues. But by keeping your ServiceNow instance to out of the box, and using best practices when making any code changes, you'll enjoy these 6 benefits:

1. Shorten upgrade cycles

The more you deviate from out of the box, the more challenging and time-consuming it can be to complete upgrades. Any modifications affected by the newer release will require review and testing to make sure they don't break, which can lead to upgrade cycles requiring months of dedicated effort.

2. Access new features

If upgrading becomes such a headache that you delay it, or if it takes months to complete, you'll limit your ability to take advantage of new platform features. You might also be tempted to deviate even more from out-of-the-box settings by adding functionality with customization that a later version of ServiceNow would offer as standard.

3. Stay supported

ServiceNow supports both its current release and the one prior, and offers two major releases a year. This means that to access its technical support, as well as security patches, you need to upgrade at least once a year. Keeping your instance out of the box makes this annual process much less painful.

4. Reduce maintenance costs

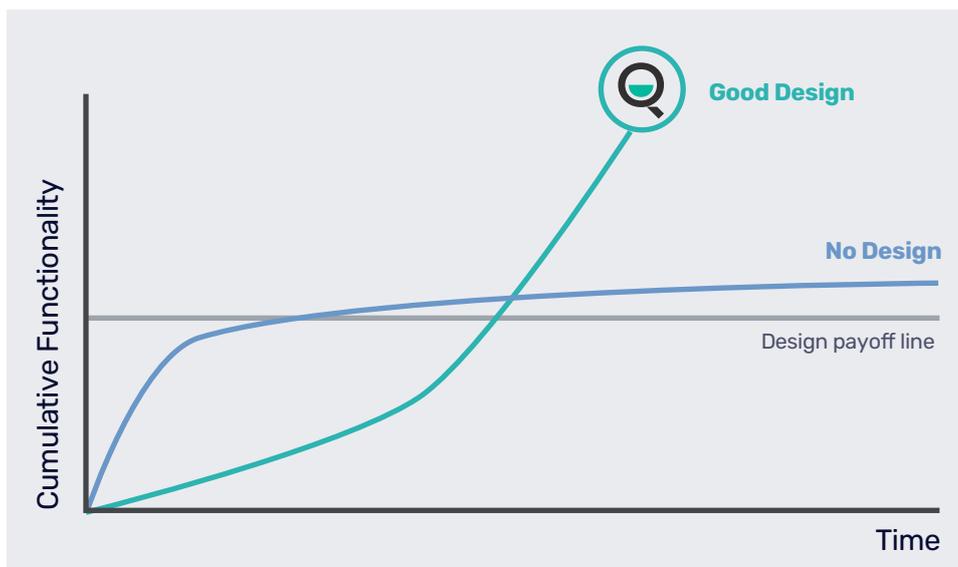
Maintenance can account for up to 67% of costs in software development projects, dwarfing the costs of initial development and deployment. Because code is harder to maintain than clicks, any customization you do increases your maintenance time and costs.

5. Increase stability

Using code instead of clicks to make changes to ServiceNow risks unexpected side effects and damages the stability of your platform, potentially causing problems for your end users.

6. Reduce unnecessary technical debt

While all code comes with some technical debt, too much can hurt performance or security, as well as slow down development. Sometimes, technical debt accumulates unnecessarily when customization is used to tackle problems that ServiceNow's base functionality could solve.



How to measure your out-of-the-box deviation

While you probably have a rough idea of how much of a problem your customizations are creating in your instance, it's important to measure how far you've deviated from out of the box before making a plan to tackle it.

Going through this process allows you to identify areas where you've deviated and where you want to move back to out of the box. It also allows you to create a list of modifications you want to prioritize as you revert to out of the box.

Here are 3 ways to get a detailed understanding of what's in your instance:

Review skipped records

ServiceNow allows you to review the skipped records from your last upgrade, if you've done one. This will give you an initial indication of your out-of-the-box deviation and remind you of the pain you went through in dealing with these deviations in the last upgrade.

Unfortunately, ServiceNow only highlights modifications that are impacted by the upgrade and doesn't identify all out-of-the-box deviation that you may want to revert. For example, it won't highlight code in the global scope or deviation from best practices such as ITIL standards.

Manually review code

Manual design and code reviews by your architects and senior people can identify problem areas and out-of-the-box deviations. But this process is monotonous and time-consuming, and it's challenging to catch those customizations that haven't caused issues in the past but may still do so in the future.

Use automated tools

Automated tools can show you how and where you've deviated from out of the box more accurately and faster than a manual approach.

ServiceNow has introduced an automated option in their Upgrade Center. This identifies the out-of-the-box modifications that future upgrades will impact, but as with reviewing skipped records, it doesn't identify all out-of-the-box deviation.

What an ideal automated solution looks like

An ideal automated solution to measuring your deviation from out of the box includes:

- a list of modified out-of-the-box elements to give you an overview of your instance
- a list of all the new code and configuration elements added into an existing process
- trends over time so you can see the results of your out-of-the-box efforts
- which modified out-of-the-box elements will be affected in future upgrades
- a breakdown of modified out-of-the-box elements by developer, configuration type and application
- checks to prevent modifications to out-of-the-box elements in real time at their source

Above all, the ideal automated solution gives you the information and metrics you need to develop a plan for reverting back to out of the box.

Get control of your ServiceNow instance

While platform owners need to be able to adapt ServiceNow to their business, sticking with out of the box and using best practices for any necessary customizations will save you time and money, allow for easier upgrades, and enable you to benefit from ServiceNow's latest features.

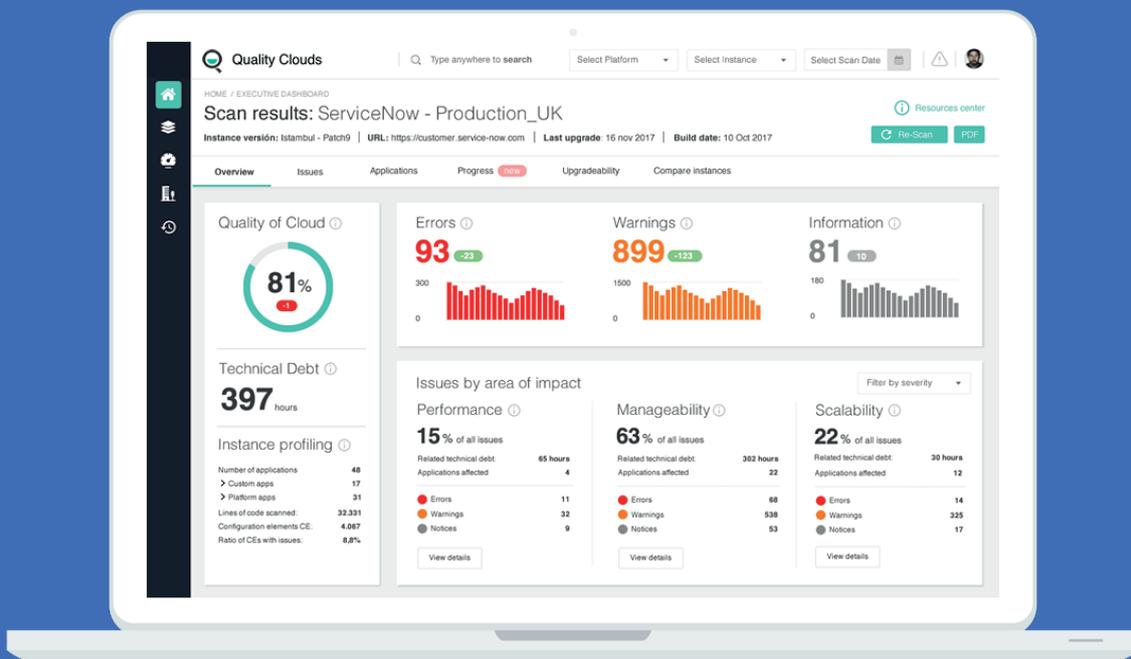
The first step is understanding how far out of the box your instance is and how these modifications are affecting upgrades and performance.

Quality Clouds can help you get the visibility and control you need. Book a meeting today to discuss how Quality Clouds can help you measure your out-of-the-box deviation and revert back to out of the box.

[Book your demo now!](#)

About Quality Clouds

Quality Clouds is the leading SaaS configuration analysis software. Focused on making SaaS easier to manage and cheaper to run, Quality Clouds lets companies automate their development processes and have full transparency over their cloud investments. Currently solutions are offered for ServiceNow, Salesforce and Office 365.



To find out more about how we can help, get in touch at info@qualityclouds.com