

How Workato Powers the Dev Team behind the Most Comprehensive Vehicle History Database in North America

by Kristine Colosimo - Thursday, August 30, 2018

<https://www.workato.com/the-connector/carfax-devops-jira/>

CARFAX is an American company that specializes in vehicle data and is a unit of [IHS Markit](#) (NASDAQ: INFO). Best known for their Vehicle History Reports, CARFAX has the most comprehensive vehicle history database available in North America, receiving information from more than 100,000 data sources including every U.S. and Canadian provincial motor vehicle agency plus many auto auctions, fire and police departments, collision repair facilities, fleet management and rental agencies, and more. The company also provides crucial data to auto insurance companies, banks, and law enforcement.

As a web-based company, CARFAX depends on its in-house development team to create, update, and patch its products. That means good DevOps and efficiently managing the development lifecycle is crucial to the company. Like any development team, CARFAX uses several different cloud apps for project management, incident resolution, and change management. Nathan Underwood, an automation engineer at CARFAX, knew he needed a way to streamline the development team's resolution workflows in order to run a truly agile, customer-focused business.

Solution:

- Automatically move ServiceNow incidents to the appropriate developer's Jira board when an incident is created or assigned in ServiceNow
- Submit change requests in ServiceNow with the click of a button in Jira
- Enjoy better tracking of change requests from creation to deployment

Results:

- Have more time to work on new projects and products, with Workato running **over 9,000 automated workflows per month** for CARFAX
- Create new integrations and automations **8x faster** with **savings upwards of \$20,000 in the first few months per use case**
- Maintain integrations and automations in **1/6th of the time** custom code would take to make adjustments
- CARFAX developers have submitted 396 change requests in six months. With time savings of about 10 minutes per request for this singular Workato automation, developers are **saving 132 hours annually** on change requests alone

The Need to Integrate and Automate Jira and ServiceNow for Better DevOps

The developers at CARFAX primarily rely on two apps: [Jira](#) for project management and [ServiceNow](#) for incident resolution and ticketing. While each app did a great job performing its specific duties, the team's workflow required that the two apps work together. Trying to work with both apps without automation created several bottlenecks in the development process.

The first DevOps issue Underwood wanted to address was the fact that moving incidents from ServiceNow to the appropriate developer's Jira project board was complicated and took too much extra work. Underwood explains that the disconnect between Jira and ServiceNow also made change management—the process of updating or changing interdependent systems—much more complicated.

“While doing their normal work, our developers generally have their Jira project board or the story itself open,” he says. “They fulfill the requirements for the story and write whatever code needs to be written or update what needs to be updated.”

But every change needs to be approved before it is actually deployed. Underwood says this often put a snag in the process: “When it came time for the change request, the devs would have to leave Jira, go into ServiceNow, input that change request, explain what they've done and what's changing, and then wait for approval. Once it's approved, they would then go into the version control system and request a merge of their work with the main branch and kick off the scripts that actually deploy that new code out to the production servers.”

All that context-switching prevented the team from being as agile as possible. “We wanted to improve the experience by removing all those extra steps and making it easy for the dev team to work and commit those changes after getting approval all from one place,” Underwood continues.

Looking for a Powerful All-In-One Solution Instead of Custom Code

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Initially, the CARFAX team considered creating a hard-coded integration between Jira and ServiceNow. But that solution quickly proved too burdensome. “While we could take the time to develop a native integration between the two apps, it would've taken us a lot more time than it did with Workato,” says Underwood. “Maintaining that integration would also take up more of our time. Since we have a limited amount of resources, we decided that an integration platform would be a better way to go.”

Underwood recounts trying several integration vendors at first. None of the other options, however, were robust or agile enough to address CARFAX's DevOps need for both integration and automation. “Some of our need was to synchronize data, but we also wanted to help move the [change management] process along through automation,” Underwood recalls.

The team eventually selected [Workato](#) due to its ability to handle a wide variety of use cases. “Workato was the only platform that could address both integration and automation,” he continues. “We did our proof of concept for the change request process, and we were able to basically go from having Jira and ServiceNow not talking at all, to having data flowing back and forth the way we wanted it—all within just

a couple of hours.”

“Our main goal with Workato, ServiceNow, and Jira has been to make it easier for our development teams to work through the incident management process and through the change management process without having to switch around from one tool to another. They can do their work within their Jira projects and we can get data going back and forth between Jira and ServiceNow, which allows us to better measure what they're doing.”

DevOps: Real-time ServiceNow Incident Alerts in Jira

Workato integrations and automations are called recipes. The first recipes that Underwood's team created keep Jira and ServiceNow aligned. Whenever there is a problem that requires help from the development team, Workato alerts the correct engineer in Jira in real-time.

“When a ServiceNow incident is created or assigned to one of the dev teams that works out of Jira, it triggers a Workato recipe that automatically creates an issue on their Jira project,” Underwood explains.

This eliminates the need for engineers to log into ServiceNow, see what incidents have been assigned to them, and manually move them into Jira for project tracking. Now they know when an incident has been assigned to them in real-time and never need to leave Jira.

Related: [A guide on automating incident management](#)

DevOps: Automating Change Management Workflows

Using Workato, Underwood's team is also building a series of Jira-ServiceNow integrations that will streamline the change management process.

“When a customer-facing application or an application with a wide array of dependencies needs maintenance, we require a change request. When a change request is needed, a developer will do the work required to complete that story on their Jira project board,” he explains. But instead of manually inputting the request into ServiceNow, the developer can now kick off the approval process directly from Jira.

“When the developer gets to the point in a story where they would need to leave and log into ServiceNow, they can simply click a button in Jira, and Workato will create that change request in ServiceNow for them.”

The automated Change Request in ServiceNow: Workato creates a Change Request inside of ServiceNow from JIRA.

“The change request process kicks off from there, and the information that the developer needs is shuttled back to Jira, and then the information that we need from them for the change request gets sent to ServiceNow, and it follows the normal approval process,” says Underwood. “Developers can keep track of everything in one place, instead of just having to remember that a story on their Jira board corresponds with a specific change request in ServiceNow.” This is more efficient, reduces errors, and saves time.

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Reclaiming Developer Time and Enabling An Agile Team

Underwood credits the solution with helping the company's developers address a key issue: creating new products while still effectively supporting older ones. "Our dev teams are very focused on building and developing new things," he explains. "It's easy to forget about all the work they do to support things that have already been done! So the more time that we can save them to put towards new projects and new work, the better."

The dev team's ability to wisely manage their workload directly affects the business as a whole, so efficient DevOps are crucial: "We're an agile shop, so there aren't many layers between the developers and the end users. They seek to update products very quickly to address emerging needs; they work closely with our customers to do that. So any time they can reclaim to put towards new things is very valuable to them and to the business itself."

"Updating a recipe on Workato will take 1/6th of the time that a custom-built integration would require."

"We estimate that each process we automate would take us 200 hours of development time and an additional 40 hours of testing to integrate JIRA and ServiceNow without Workato," says Underwood. "Workato is 8 times faster."

There is also the consideration of future updates and changes to their JIRA/ServiceNow instances, which would almost certainly result in the maintenance of a custom-built integration had they not used Workato. "Updating a recipe on Workato will take 1/6th of the time that a custom-built integration would require. We've actually already had a major release update to our ServiceNow instances since going live with the Incident use-case and there was no maintenance or update work required on the Workato recipes," Underwood continued.

Assuming a savings of 200 hours of development per use-case and a cost of \$100/hour, Underwood estimates that they've yielded \$20,000 of employee time savings per use case for the initial development and testing. And that's just the beginning!

Need to Streamline your DevOps? [See How Intelligent Automation Can Help >](#)