



Brian Martin

Network Engineer at Clayton Homes, USA

Brian Martin may consider himself a laidback person, but when it comes to working in IT at Clayton Homes, he upholds standards that are anything but relaxed. Brian has initiated the successful implementation of ITIL best practices with SysAid throughout Clayton Homes, and has since established himself as the “go-to” administrator for all things ITIL.

Vision for Change – and better Change Management

Clayton Homes is the leader of manufactured housing and modular homes in the United States. With over 70 administrators logging in to SysAid daily, the Clayton Homes support team tracks over 5,000 assets and keep historical records for more than 5,000 end-users. Running a ratio of 375 end-users to 1 technician, the Clayton Homes support team faces challenging IT situations on a daily basis. As Brian explains, “Every day brings new challenges, and we used to find ourselves predominantly in reactive mode.”

One particular goal has been finding the best change management solution. “Before the ITIL package, we had no standards for change management,” Brian explains. “We would have emails flying to many distribution lists that eventually got buried in other email. We had no real way to track changes to make sure all went smoothly.” Brian knew that there had to be a better way to implement effective change management. The solution? SysAid ITIL.

ITIL Success with SysAid Certification

With little ITIL experience under his belt, Brian took the initiative to enroll in the SysAid Certification program. With some extra reading on the side, Brian developed a plan for the future of Clayton Homes: operating under ITIL best practices to better control changes, track network elements, predict business impacts and minimize risks.

An IT visionary with a fresh approach to problem solving, Brian has tackled the ITIL frontier with truly impressive determination and resolve. As a result, Clayton Homes is now adopting a standardized procedure for better IT performance. Here’s to building strong foundations inside your IT department with SysAid!

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Tell me about about Clayton Homes.

Since 1934, we have built more than 1.5 million homes and received multiple awards for design and construction. We finance more than 300,000 customers and insure 160,000 families. Clayton Homes has 15,000 employees and operates 425 Retail Home Centers and 35 manufacturing plants.

Before implementing SysAid in Clayton Homes, what was your IT management experience like?

We used other IT tracking software with unfavorable results. Not only did we find SysAid more affordable and easier to use, but SysAid’s support team is by far the best we have seen. The SysAid team provides solutions within hours. SysAid has risen to the occasion every time and it is comforting to know SysAid is there if you need them.

What unique challenges does your IT department face at Clayton Homes?

A ratio of 375 users to 1 technician is challenging, and we have usually found ourselves in reactive mode. Our company runs lean, as most do these days. Request levels can change on a moment’s notice. A lot of moving parts (programmers, software companies, configurations) tie into how quickly we can resolve user issues as well. The biggest challenge is finding the best method of communication for IT-related requests from users that work across the board for all business units. It is a work in progress.

What requirements does the ITIL package fulfill?

The SysAid ITIL Package will definitely help us in the future with change management, and will give us the ability to notify all helpdesks that may see issues directly resulting from a single change. Before the Change Management Module, we relied on the hope that emails would get to the right people, which were then often forgotten. With the Change Management Module, we are able automatically notify all helpdesks when a change occurs.

“ Before SysAid, we hoped that emails would get to the right people, which were often forgotten. SysAid has helped us with change notifications, tracking issues, finding solutions, and keeping a history of changes. ”

How has your experience been with SysAid ITIL?

So far, it has been successful. We are still in the process of putting our network and other information into the CMDB to better help our risk management. Once we are done with this, we will be moving all of our change management processes to SysAid.

Have you benefitted from the SysAid ITIL package?

Absolutely! This package has helped us with change notifications, tracking issues, finding solutions, and keeping a history of changes. These are tools that we never had before.

What motivated you to implement the SysAid ITIL package in Clayton Homes?

Before the ITIL package, we had no standard for change management. We had emails flying to many distribution lists with no real way to track changes and make sure that all goes smoothly. We often had times where our network engineers would make changes, and the help desk would never receive any notification.

Which ITIL Modules have you been using and for which kind of processes?

We just started using the ITIL Change Management Module for two processes: New Hires and Terminations. New Hires begins with our Active Directory administrator who receives our CAF/PAR forms that include detailed information about the new hire. This administrator then transfers the information into a new Change Request Template that is customized for our New Hire Process. After this administrator saves the ticket, it is then escalated to the next administrators for: Network Accounts, Software Licensing/Purchasing, Computer Builder/Helpdesk, Telecom, Operations, and other departments. The Terminations process works the same, but concerns the disabling of accounts.

“ Our implementation of Change Management will focus on standardizing processes for different administrative level of change. One of our main goals is to reduce the amount of high risk changes being done during business hours. ”

What plans do you have for the continued implementation of SysAid ITIL?

Future implementation plans of Change Management will focus on standardizing our processes for different administrative levels of change. This involves Levels 1-4, from the emergency category which requires no authorization from business units, to major system updates which will need to be scheduled at least two weeks in advance, and must receive the proper authorization from businesses units. We are currently gathering information for our CMDB, which we will implement shortly before the final implementation of Change Management is complete. We will then get started with Problem Management to standardize all of our change and problem management processes. One of our main goals is to reduce the amount of high risk changes being done during business hours.

What do you hope to accomplish with the CMDB?

The biggest advantage of the CMDB is combining the ability to predict business impacts within levels of Change Management. This will help us to identify what level a change should fall under, as well as when we should schedule it and who needs to give permission for it to happen. The Relationships tool is also a great feature, as it will help us with the problems we encounter and gives us the ability to identify the exact source of these problems.

What do you like most about working in IT?

I like the fact that every day is unique and challenging. One day, I may have to write a script or a program to fix a problem with some software, and the next, I could be troubleshooting why a user isn't receiving email. IT is always changing, and I love that aspect.



Do you have a SysAid ITIL Success Story of your own?

As the implementation of ITIL best practices gains steam in IT departments throughout the world, your success with SysAid ITIL can educate and inspire! Send us your story at marcom@sysaid.com. We'd love to hear from you!