ChangeGear Helps Energize Florida Power & Light

ℹ ABOUT FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

Florida Power & Light (FP&L) Company is the largest energy company in the U.S. as measured by retail electricity produced and sold. The company serves more than 5.6 million customer accounts supporting more than 12 million residents across Florida with clean, reliable, and affordable electricity.

FP&L operates one of the cleanest power generation fleets in the U.S and in 2021 won the National Reliability Excellence Award, for the sixth time in the last seven years. The company was recognized in 2020 as one of the most trusted U.S. electric utilities by Escalent for the seventh consecutive year.

FP&L is a subsidiary of Juno Beach, Florida-based NextEra Energy, Inc. (NYSE: NEE), a clean energy company. It is widely recognized for its efforts in sustainability, ethics, and diversity. FP&L ranked No. 1 in the electric and gas utilities industry in Fortune's 2020 list of "World's Most Admired Companies." NextEra Energy is also the parent company of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, which, together with its affiliated entities, is the world's largest generator of renewable energy from the wind and sun and a world leader in battery storage.

⚠ THE CHALLENGE

Electric companies need to be stable and reliable—above everything else. They also face challenges associated with managing and securing their geographically dispersed infrastructure. Florida Power & Light (FP&L) Company has thousands of networked devices that serve roughly 5.6 million accounts throughout the state of Florida. Much like the banking and healthcare industries, energy companies like FP&L are highly regulated.

ORGANIZATION

FPL

INDUSTRY

Utilities

SOFTWARE

ChangeGear Modules

- CMBD
- Asset Management
- Flex

BENEFITS

- ✓ Improved risk mitigation
- ✓ Automated workflows and advanced authorizations
- ✓ Improved auditing
- ✓ Enhance reporting

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation Critical Infrastructure Protection (NERC CIP) is a set of requirements designed to secure the assets required for operating North America's bulk electric system. Although NERC CIP provides a solid framework for FP&L to follow, the fact remains that it is extremely difficult to maintain situational awareness of the broad and varying set of configuration items (CI)—components that needs to be managed to deliver an IT service—in a utility company. Manually collected data is often insufficient or out-of-date, which causes a problem that is accentuated by the many types of platforms that enable, control, and monitor their critical infrastructure. Out-of-date and inaccurate inventory and security information often lead to negative NERC CIP audit findings.

Even the most comprehensive documentation and compliance across the full breadth of an organization must be continually updated for new and replaced assets, locations, facilities, and technologies. While dealing with these challenges was daunting, the need for cost-effective risk management also became painfully apparent.

"Getting a device's information collected and properly categorized is critical to success. If you get it wrong and classify everything as 'critical,' then you create a situation where the overhead becomes unmanageable. Our biggest pain point is that we didn't have baselines for groups of devices predicated on their functions. When everything is its own baseline—for 2,000 devices or more—it becomes problematic."

- David Goldstein, Director of Information Technology at NextEra Energy

FP&L was previously using IBM Tivoli Netcool Configuration Manager (ITNCM) to manage the configuration of their network devices. IT was using ITNCM for baseline management. They weren't getting the right deviations. They were only seeing the differences because they were comparing how the device(s) looked before the change (e.g., firmware upgrade, bug fix, full replacement, etc.) —not how they should look now, in accordance with current policies. This created a tremendous amount of risk, from a compliance point of view.

One challenge that FP&L's IT team ran into was trying to persuade senior leaders, many of whom have spent most of their careers in the sector's more predictable former environment, to fully adopt an unfamiliar, new platform. Another challenge the team faced was prioritizing their digital transformation effort over other projects within the organization. For example, a ServiceNow implementation was taking much longer than planned (almost two years) and was tapping into some of the same resources. Under the best conditions and with executives who fully support a digital-transformation agenda, it can take years for an entire company— with thousands of employees, a vast asset base, and extensive regulatory requirements—to embrace a new software application.

THE SOLUTION

ChangeGear proved to be the most flexible and scalable solution. FP&L implemented Service Desk, Asset Management, and CMDB. ChangeGear's CMDB solved for the need to manage disparate devices with a baseline by providing a single database, with approximately 150 device baselines, where devices are more easily grouped and managed based on their function. FP&L realized they needed a better way to group similar assets together and create baselines for each of those groups. David began testing alternative software tools and applications and found that ChangeGear 8 Change Manager for Business Compliance with Tripwire integration would be a better solution.

FP&L was able to leverage ChangeGear's no-code/low-code design and implement nearly all the monitoring and management functions of their enterprise using "out of the box" capabilities. Integrating ChangeGear with Tripwire took advantage of the API functionality, which allows the two platforms to operate seamlessly together. The FP&L management group essentially defined their business need and the professional services team made it happen.

Since NERC CIP requires FP&L to record, track, and justify every one of the hundreds of ports, protocols, and services on their devices and traversing their networks, FP&L expanded their auditing capabilities. Industry auditors list this as one of the biggest challenges they see in the field.

ChangeGear with Tripwire integration now allows authorized requesters to submit whitelisted change elements, while unauthorized requesters and/or elements could be stopped and immediately generate a condition report.

FP&L needed a solution that could handle defects that were not ready to proceed to the next step in the normal workflow. ChangeGear's no-code Flex module proved its value by allowing FP&L to create a customized module to handle risk mitigation. The "Mitigation" module deferred defects that are not ready to move forward in the workflow. At FP&L, defects are time-sensitive and need to be applied within 35 days of being discovered. This rule helps keep everything on track. In the past, FP&L used Microsoft Excel spreadsheets stored on SharePoint to "hold" these defects, but there was no way to pull data for reports to track status. ChangeGear's Flex "Mitigation" module handles these special cases in a more automated fashion, reducing time and effort in dealing with spreadsheets.

THE RESULTS

FPL transformed their approach to managing and securing their digital infrastructure. By replacing older systems, and single point solutions, they created a comprehensive approach to asset and change management to enabled them to more efficiently and effectively meet the stringent needs of the NERC CIP requirements and ultimately deliver on the service and support needs of their employees and customers.

Partnering with Tripwire, enabled the Sunview Professional Services team to customize and integrate ChangeGear to deliver a higher level of functionality around risk mitigation and authorization.

Ask for information on how Serviceaide can meet your business needs.

About Serviceaide

Serviceaide is a leader in modern service management. Serviceaide's vision is to transform service management, across ITSM, ESM, and Customer Service. Serving customers around the world, Serviceaide applies breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and natural language processing to deliver better experiences, provide enhanced self-service and empower service owners. Serviceaide transforms service through digital labor conversations, automation, and knowledge.

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