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servicenow®



UNLOCKING BUSINESS VALUE WITH
SERVICENOW CSDM:

***BUILDING THE BACKBONE
FOR DIGITAL SERVICES***





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When handled properly, data gathered from each corner of an enterprise performs a spotlight showing the best path forward. However, when handled improperly or inconsistently, data points offer limited or no value – crowding your field of vision, creating unnecessarily blind spots and concealing bridges between systems.

Organisations focusing on data without a proper ‘backbone’ have been found to suffer a substantial corrective action burden. The underlying issue may stem from inadequate governance or a lack of organisation-wide standards. However, the reality is that there are numerous factors that hinder organisations from effectively exchanging data and leveraging it to its fullest potential. Inconsistent data points create big problems and blind spots around every corner.

In this unclear landscape, ServiceNow’s Common Service Data Model (CSDM) acts as a structured and scalable framework that illuminates your entire enterprise’s data. It aligns technical architecture with business value, going well beyond the typical expectations of a data model. In reality however, implementation often means adopting the terminology or framework without fully understanding them or maximising their benefits.

Implementing the CSDM model and ensuring it fills its purpose, requires dedicated attention, planning and maintenance that many organisations underestimate to deliver. They ultimately find themselves taking two steps back during implementation instead of making progress towards enterprise-wide data optimisation, and the consequences of such failure can be significant.

In May 2025, ServiceNow released CSDM 5 – a newly updated and expanded model that introduces new features to solve data management challenges. However, this latest version also comes with increased complexity.



Want the full details of CSDM 5? In May 2025 ServiceNow released a [white paper](#) giving thorough guidance on the latest model.

Within Deloitte, we have the experience and developed innovative accelerators to give implementation guidance, ensuring the results you see are comprehensive and lasting, regardless of the CSDM version you’re trying to adopt. We have successfully assisted numerous organisations across various industries in realising significant benefits. If you find yourself late to the CSDM journey: **You can start at any moment to pursue and effective solution to your data management headaches.**

In the next chapters we dive deeper into the common challenges and provide guidance throughout the process to overcome these.

WHERE DOES CSDM EXCEL?

Challenges organisation will face:

What organisations actually need and is lacking:

How CSDM model can help

M&A Complexity

- | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Mergers and acquisitions often introduce new systems, processes and data models, making it challenging to establish a unified service data model. 🕒 Lack of standardisation leads to delays in consolidating CMDBs and defining common service offerings. 🕒 Outsourcing and vendor management bring complexity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » External partners and managed service providers may operate with differing data models and contractual obligations, complicating integration into a central CMDB/CSDM. » A lack of transparency in outsourced services limits visibility and control of service performance and risk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 A common surface that's scalable and adaptive enough to support the different IT landscapes 🕒 A comprehensive model that can easily adjust to the situation, absorb new requirements and fulfil needs 🕒 Clear guidance on how to navigate through the model and enforce a common language 🕒 Clear insights into the full landscape, to support all supporting processes, such as IT service management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 A common service data model promoting a common language 🕒 A scalable foundation that easily expands and adjusts components and services to accommodate the business 🕒 Concrete use cases that set a standard to kick-start proper usage and support operations 🕒 Tangible results that demonstrate controlled incident and change management |
|--|---|---|

Siloed Organisational Mindset

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|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Silos across IT and the business hinder collaboration and shared ownership. 🕒 Resistance to change legacy systems and workflows delays the adoption of cross-function standards. 🕒 Governance gaps surface in an absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which can cause ambiguity and confusion over data ownership, duplication of effort, data quality issues, and, potentially, uncertainty about accountability when CSDM is implemented. 🕒 Service delivery can be inconsistent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fragmented service definitions and dependencies degrade delivery. » Difficulties in aligning IT services with business capabilities leads to operational inefficiencies and dissatisfied customers. 🕒 Service-level agreement (SLA) management and reporting are challenging. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Measuring and reporting on SLAs is often inaccurate or misleading, especially in a multi-vendor landscape. » Misalignment between service definitions and performance metrics affects service-level accountability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 A clear path for standardisation, to counter a siloed mindset 🕒 Clearly defined roles and responsibilities surrounding service data, with a Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (RACI) matrix to guide decision-making. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 An end-to-end service mindset that fosters collaboration across teams, spanning business applications to infrastructure and enhancing support for business and technical services 🕒 Access to tools and resources that optimise service operations and delivery by using the appropriate offerings and adhering to contractual obligations 🕒 Accurate reporting that enables the effective adjustment of service levels and enhanced delivery performance |
|--|--|--|





CSDM: SHINING A LIGHT


CSDM allows you to fine-tune CMDB and to ensure IT operations, Service Management and Digital Transformation Initiatives are aligned with business needs. A good configuration management database (CMDB) acts as a foundation for your organisation to build upon; a solid data repository of the attributes and representations of configuration items, services, offerings and infrastructure relationships. But a CMDB is only as valuable as the quality of its data – from source to presentation. Here's where

a good configuration management process provides the perfect solution, with guidance and controls to ensure that foundation remains robust.

ServiceNow developed CSDM to be a standardised, unified framework for structuring enterprise-wide data. By defining consistent relationships among business services, applications and infrastructure, CSDM creates a common language and structure across teams, offering:

 **A CMDB architecture, with defined relationships between technical and business layers.**

 **Support for ITIL¹ based service management practices.**

 **Provide accurate service insights to support operations.**

WHAT DOES CSDM ENABLE?

Digital transformation is a strategic priority for modern enterprises, but the complexity of fragmented IT landscapes often stands in the way. To unleash continual progress – rather than a one-time impact – transformation requires a shared model and vocabulary to define and manage services, applications and infrastructure. It also means building an accountability structure that assigns ownership for service data and ensures consistency across domains. And it is ideally based on a common view of services that enables collaboration among IT, the business and operations – plus a framework that doesn't just standardise data, it supports change management and adoption across functions.

Breaking down silos, establishing clear accountability and unifying ways for working are essential to transformation when it comes to data management. Individual domains – like service delivery, finance security and R&D – manage their own data, tools and terminology, and that makes it difficult to get a unified view. What does each service entail? Which system depends on another? Who owns each process?

Here's where CSDM shines:

Enabling organisations to map their IT services to business capabilities, applications and infrastructure in a consistent, scalable and governance-friendly way. It's a framework that's truly capable of propelling companies through digital transformation to continued efficiency and success.

Adopting CSDM isn't just a technical exercise, it's a strategic enabler – of digital transformation, IT governance, service delivery, M&A integration and operational excellence, to name just a few results.

1. Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)

IMPLEMENTING CSDM: OVERCOMING 7 PITFALLS

Although CSDM offers clear strategic value, organisations often underestimate the complexity of putting it into practice. The difficult truth is: Implementing CSDM is not a plug-and-play exercise, but a deep, organisation-wide transformation with plenty of potential pitfalls. It requires structure, clarity, a phased approach, and coordination across people, processes and technology.

Let's walk through of the key reasons we see organisations struggle with implementation:



PITFALL 1: NOT SEEING CSDM FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS.

CSDM IS A FRAMEWORK, NOT A PRODUCT; TRANSLATING IT INTO A WORKING MODEL NECESSITATES INTERPRETATION, TAILORING AND CONSENSUS.

- Different stakeholders may have different interpretations of what 'CSDM-compliant' means.
- Misinterpreting the CSDM means the conceptual model could be translated into incorrect configurations or – worse – require elaborate, custom solutions.
- Success depends on cross-team alignment of definitions (such as, *what makes up a business service?*), so individuals don't register certain elements differently or fail to register something because they don't understand definitions.



PITFALL 2: INADEQUATE TRAINING AND ENABLEMENT.

THIS IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT IN THEORETICAL GUIDANCE THAT'S NOT GROUNDED IN PRACTICAL, ROLE-SPECIFIC, TANGIBLE EXAMPLES OF CMDB AND CSDM.

- Stakeholders often lack a foundational knowledge and shared understanding of CMDB relationships and fundamental concepts, like business services, technical services or ownership roles; alignment is necessary across teams and organisational units.
- Many users also find it difficult to connect CSDM concepts with day-to-day tasks or roles, because provided definitions focus heavily on technical and design elements – not usability and value for teams using them. Without real-life examples, training often remains abstract and fails to engage.



PITFALL 3: IGNORING GOVERNANCE GAPS.

A LACK OF GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS CAN EASILY LEAD TO INCONSISTENCY, DATA DEGRADATION OR DRIFT, AND POOR ADOPTION.

- There can be confusion about who 'owns' services, applications or technical components.
- Responsibilities for data accuracy and model compliance are often unclear.
- Inconsistencies and disagreement arise among IT, service owners and business units over their roles.



PITFALL 4: NOT CONSIDERING CMDB MAINTENANCE.

LIKE SO MANY OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS, THE CSDM MODEL AND RELATED DATA WON'T SHINE WITHOUT ATTENTION TO, AND CARE FOR, THE CMDB.

- Implementing CSDM isn't a one-time effort; it requires continual review and updates embedded in the process and organization.
- New services or changes often bypass the CSDM structure, leading to drift away from the standard.
- Data stewardship and lifecycle management are often neglected after going live.
- Without process enforcement, CSDM loses integrity over time.



PITFALL 5: DOING TOO MUCH, TOO SOON.

THE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL AND END-TO-END-VIEW CSDM IS INHERENTLY DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT.

- Trying to implement the full model at once causes delays or – worse – failure.
- A lack of prioritisation results in poor focus and teams spread too thin.
- Pressure to model every service, app or offering upfront leads to fatigue.



PITFALL 6: STRUGGLING TO SHOW CSDM'S VALUE (BEYOND IT).

THIS CAN LIMIT BUY-IN FROM NON-IT STAKEHOLDERS AND EXECUTIVES.

- Business stakeholders often see CSDM as 'just an IT thing.'
- Benefits like service transparency and operational efficiency just aren't tangible.
- Without visible business outcomes, support and funding may dwindle.
- Storytelling and visualisation – key ingredients to engage executives – are often lacking.



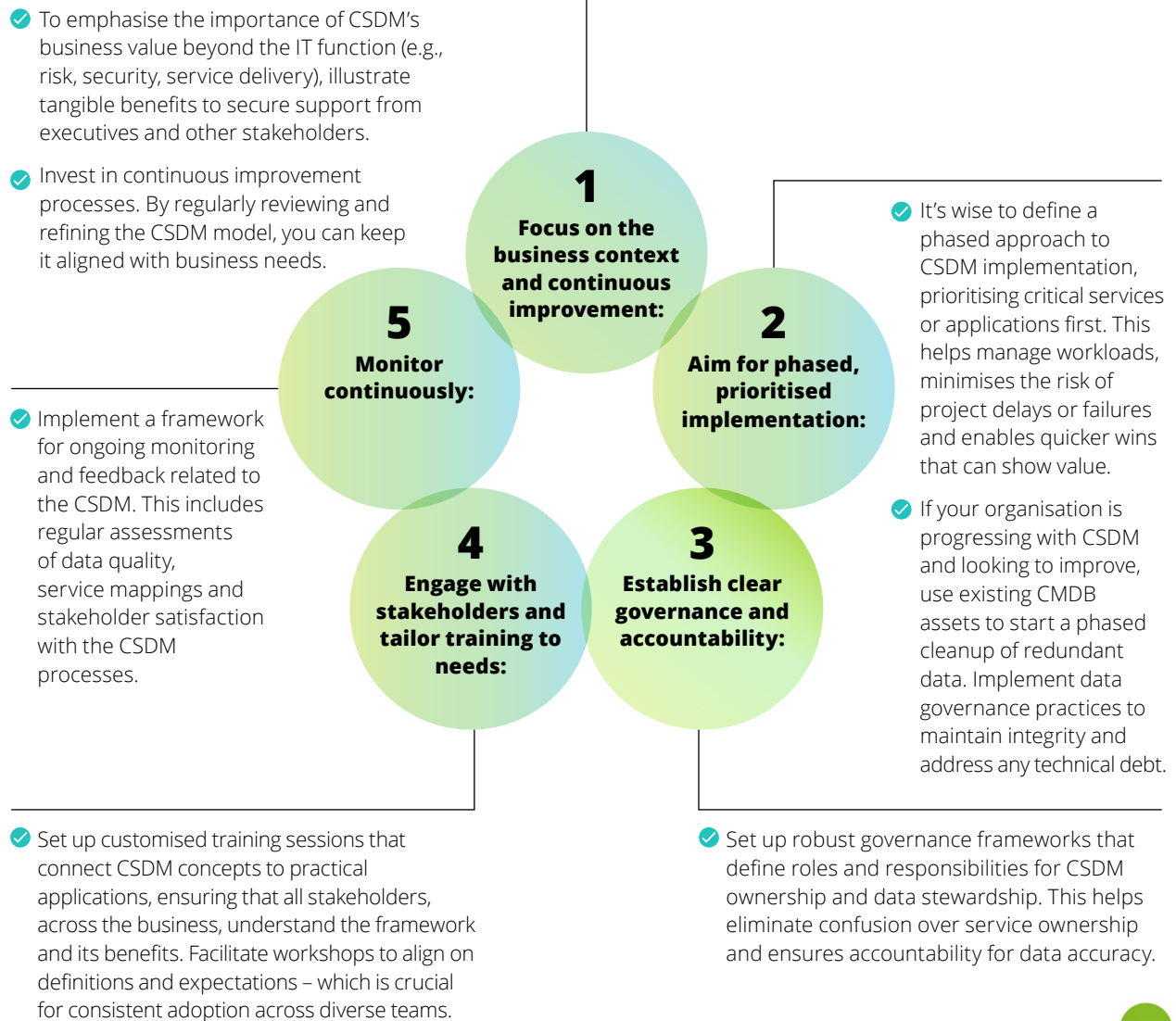
PITFALL 7: NOT BOTHERING TO ADDRESS EXISTING TECHNICAL DEBT AND FRAGMENTED DATA.

SUCH DATA INCONSISTENCY CREATES FRICTION WHEN TRYING TO APPLY CLEAN CSDM STRUCTURES.

- Existing CMDBs often contain years of unmanaged or duplicated data.
- Historical workarounds (like improper use of fields or classes) block CSDM alignment.
- Cleaning up data can eat up time and labour.
- Refactoring can disrupt services or upset teams that are used to certain structures.

CORRECTIVE VISION: MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES

To successfully realise the value of CSDM, organisations need more than configuration support. They need industry insights, cross-functional expertise, structured governance and tools that accelerate delivery – along with a healthy dose of planning. To sidestep the pitfalls:



ServiceNow Filling the Gaps

Gartner research* estimates that by 2028, organisations that fail to effectively integrate infrastructure systems will have productivity losses of 30%. Consider that about 90% of organisations rely on external providers for ServiceNow solution decisions, implementations and support. These are companies **mitigating skills gaps and aiming to squeeze maximum value from their investment** in the platform. Gartner cited results from ServiceNow partners, which saw a **95% reduction in emails to the service desk through automation and efficiency gains** across IT service management, hardware asset management and CSDM projects. Going it alone and watching productivity slip isn't the only option.

* Gartner report: Market Guide for ServiceNow Consulting, Implementation and Managed Services

DELOITTE'S SUPPORTING ROLE

Talent gaps, complex licensing models, budget constraints and poor organisational change management are standing in the way of many enterprises scaling up; Everest Group research² has shown that 52% are also being held back by a lack of product knowledge.

Our knowledge and experience with CSDM is deep and multilayered, which means we can match the model to the business needs and provide tangible solutions to easily implement and maintain it.



Our **industry knowledge** and **cross-function expertise** lets us 'connect the dots'...

- We combine deep industry-specific knowledge with broad cross-functional insight to tailor CSDM to your organisational context.
- Being familiar with your business model, customer expectations, and risk management and security protocols, we'll ensure service definitions are meaningful and relevant.
- Our multidisciplinary (T-shaped) professionals bridge IT and business, blending expertise in architecture, service management and business transformation.



across the full implementation lifecycle, we have a **proven approach**...

- Our methodology is grounded in real-world experience across multiple industries and clients.
- Our teams have hands-on experience in all phases of the journey: from initial design and stakeholder alignment to data modelling and long-term governance.
- CSDM isn't treated as just a technical exercise; we integrate business context, data strategy and service ownership from Day 1.
- We embed strong change and project management practices to keep momentum, manage resistance and ensure adoption.
- With a track record of successful CSDM projects, we recognise common pitfalls early – and, more importantly, how to avoid or mitigate them.
- We bring clarity and direction by focusing on what actually works, based on lessons learnt in complex environments.



we **accelerate delivery** with a **toolkit of assets**.

- We've developed and refined innovative tools, accelerators and templates that enhance quality, reduce effort and help teams focus on what really matters: creating value.
- Our custom-built assets inherently help you deliver results faster and more confidently, from discovery to operationalisation.
- From capability-based service mapping to governance playbooks, we offer ready-to-use enablers that support every step of implementation.
- We apply modern ways of working, including agile methods, design thinking and iterative modelling, to keep delivery fast and flexible.

2. Everest Group - Enterprise Guidebook for ServiceNow Services - Navigating the Specialist.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

For any enterprise struggling to see insights in a dark cloud of unstructured data, CSDM offers clarity. It's the bedrock of a reliable CMDB, it unlocks advanced ServiceNow capabilities, it drives alignment between IT operations and business objectives, and it overcomes those all-too-common pitfalls that so many organisations don't see in the path ahead. Getting CSDM right means less costly rework, better decision-making and a stage set for scalable digital transformation.

But let's not ignore the complexity of moving to CSDM. According to Gartner research³, an average of only 48% of digital initiatives meet or exceed business outcome targets, and CSDM is just as likely to run aground without careful implementation and maintenance. Although adopting the model can seem overwhelming and frustrating at times, Deloitte is on hand with our tried-and-tested approach, to give guidance from the design phase through ongoing governance to implementation and operation.

We blend an astute recognition of industry-specific challenges with experience navigating complex infrastructures and a comprehensive knowledge of CSDM content. This translates to a smooth implementation process characterised by compliance, minimal disruption, mitigation of organisational challenges and lasting value.

Ready to take a structured, expert-led path to CSDM success? Let's build a future-ready data model together, lighting a clear path to operational excellence and realisation of your strategic goals.

3. 2025 Gartner CIO and Technology Executive Survey

CONTACT

CSDM is the backbone of smart service delivery. Structure your data right and resilience will follow.



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The CSDM journey is known to be challenging. With proper guidance and support, we can help make it a success for you.



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CSDM compels organisations to view their business through a new lens, encouraging to make decisions that ultimately lead to transformative benefits.



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CSDM is the key to providing visibility and context in an organization, empowering proactive security in a complex IT landscape



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CSDM transforms chaos into clarity, ensuring that every service is built on a foundation of structured data and insightful analytics.



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CSDM is more than a framework—it's the compass that aligns tech, services, and strategy so everything clicks into place



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Starting with CSDM today saves time for every tomorrow. Crawl now - fly later.



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