Centralizing Business Services for a Cost-Effective and Simplified Multi-Department Service Management.

ITSM Collaboration eGuide
Why a Single Service Center?

Whether you operate in an insurance company, engineering, public or private institution, service is a reflection of any organization. The quality of these services is essential to ensure internal efficiency and overall performance. Through this quest, technological advances, new organizational trends, and especially the growing business objectives intertwine for continuous improvement, optimizing the delivery of services. These objectives must be met by all departments of the organization, including information technology.

Even today, many companies and institutions find it hard to communicate, work in isolation, hoping to reach together (and separately at times) common goals. The majority of these contexts are not favorable to the internal efficiency and productivity of the work teams. How do we fix this? What realistic ways and methods can be reached by today’s managers to correct the situation? As we will see in this paper, the concept of service is the focus of this communication and the intra organizational efficiency. Indeed, service or service management can indeed be a vector of growth and development of business processes and this for any organization, regardless of its field of activity and its business environment.

For a long time, IT managers attempt (sometimes successfully) to align IT processes with business objectives. For well over ten years now, many authors, bloggers and great ITSM thinkers value this approach clear alignment with corporate targets. Some adopt tools, software, a methodology based on a specific framework or even prefabricated successful models.

A centralized service approach and the adoption of a single service center can be a beneficial change for a business. Breaking silos and fostering internal collaboration, this avenue is part of a series of new modern business practices representing more business needs.

For a supplier of services to improve quality of service (depending on service levels and customer agreements), centralization allows improved overall internal understanding and cost reduction.

Here are some elements to guide you through the introduction of a one-stop service.
Have an Clear Understanding of your Current Processes

1. Start with an Internal Analysis

First, an organization that wants to centralize its services or even to improve some steps from the service delivery process must clearly identify its current process. Process optimization is the application of methods by considering the resources that are involved in strategic, tactical and operational activities of a company. It is essential to have a special consideration for human resources, in order to facilitate any subsequent changes.

Here are some steps that will help you make an effective analysis.

PLANNING PROCESS OPTIMIZATION

At the strategic level, careful planning usually ensures the success of a project. As part of a renewed organization, however small as it may be, strategic thinking should be the basis for any optimization initiative.

When attempting to improve procurement services for example, it is important to understand the objectives, the problems encountered, the restrictions around an implementation project, the approach or methodology to be applied, as well as a time limit to complete the project.

Too often, many managers will tend to quickly apply one or more changes. It is necessary to take a step back and have an overview of the service to get a better analysis.

After understanding the completed elements, the next step is to analyze these processes.
ANALYZING THE PROCESS

At this stage, it is important to understand the processes in question, the tasks and the deliverables associated services. Although there are several optimization methods tested and used, here are some elements to consider to analyze your internal processes and activities:

- Having a good understanding of the risks for the organization
- Understand the business reality and the budgetary context to optimize
- Capture the diversity and sometimes the complexity of processes and business activities
- Knowing the sensitive information
- Be vigilant about the new trends and emerging needs in the middle of the IT environment
- Surrounding yourself with adequate resources
- Understanding the organization, process by process
- Understand why the activities or tasks are effective
- Interpret and develop who are the dedicated resources related to the process
- Control the level of effectiveness of the recommended methods and approaches
- Identify limitations and restrictions on potential change
- Identify under performing activities
- Identify recurring tasks and/or manual tasks
- Identify new ways to operationalize the process
- Diagnose the current context and the processes in place

DEFINING THE OPTIONS AND PRESENT POTENTIAL CHANGES

Once the diagnosis has been set, it’s time to lay down and detail the options available to you.

OPTION 1

OPTION 2

OPTION 3
The identified option can influence the complexity/simplicity of one or more processes. The same optimization choices can equally apply profound changes in the underlying tasks, adding new or eliminating overlapping activities. In all cases, the goal is clear; reduce the loss of time and money, define responsibilities and the effective roles for the organization or to better yet distribute the different impacted tasks.

Workflows to implement, as well as coordination between the different tasks and actors are crucial to the successful process itself. This is why the good use of team collaboration. Breaking down silos and promoting a common movement between departments is the best way to ensure optimal communication in a context of change.

2. Making Teams Collaborate

These roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and made realistic on the business cycle, on managers in place must establish a climate of trust, an environment conducive to optimizing and changing ways.

An IT manager who wishes to apply changes in maintenance services will have not only engage and collaborate with stakeholders in his department (technicians and others), but with the end users. The service provider was once in his bubble, managing and applying different processes without discussing with the clients. In a collaborative environment, the service provider should discuss and implement an environment without doubt or fear.
This transparent communication must be combined with continuous data validation received by stakeholders. The manager in question, whether from the IT department or other, must also be aware of the maximum speed and the direction of this strategy all throughout the year.

Transparency also rhymes with clarity of results; management expects tangible benefits and productivity gains. Gathering valuable information in connection with the optimized processes represents a significant purpose. Following a success, the same purpose and details, as well as the means to get there, must be communicated to relevant colleagues. This transfer of knowledge is a prerequisite for success in any new implementation. Finally, in addition to accountability to your employers, monitoring of the work is needed to ensure postmortem quality.

**SUPPORT FROM COLLABORATING TOOLS**

To optimize their processes, organizations can rely, beyond the methodological and organizational aspects on IT solutions. These may assist the entire chain optimization. The market for IT process optimization solutions bring together multiple and diverse stakeholders. Typically, these solutions:

- **Business Oriented** or business units (human resources or customer relation management);
- **Generalist** that can be applied to any business process;
- **Specialized on specific processes**, for example, to a specific industry or a specific area, such as management services (IT Service Management).

The market associated with these IT solutions moving towards consolidation among solutions and the development of unified platforms dedicated to the process and project management.

The rise of cloud computing and SaaS (Software as a service) increases the integration and interoperability issues: managed processes from existing applications on site (ie “on premise”) must also interact with those managed by applications brought in the cloud to avoid any break in the processing of the treatment chain associated with them.

As part of service management, IT or other, the process of successfully managing such incidents, problems, changes, configurations, service levels, capacity, availability, security is subject to a good planning, a specific analysis, effective collaboration, and the support of appropriate tools.
Collaborating to Better Centralize

True collaboration is important, but it has not always been the case. Despite the predictions of advisory groups on this issue, initiatives are rare. Although there is a clear trend towards the democratization of the collaborative concept, many organizations remain reluctant facing the concept of internal cooperation. Yet, there are as many companies as there are collaborative means. Some are in the Cloud and offer customized visualization or group of tools, while others advocate a more conventional but no less effective approach. That said, the use of service management (ITSM) tools enable greater collaboration within a business by interacting with the end user and the technical resource (service provider).

RELATED BENEFITS TO CENTRALIZED SERVICES

This collaboration can be used to increase the centralization of services within an organization. Moreover, we noted several advantages in centralizing services and management, consolidating and simplifying a set of processes. Here are a few:

- **IMPORTANCE FOR THE COMPANY** - Centralization allows the IT department to focus its efforts around business objectives, prioritizing the business and its users.

- **ONE SOURCE OF INFORMATION** - As mentioned, the only source of information provides enhanced clarity and improved internal execution. Simple and easy to use, this centralized list of services promotes greater self-consumption and popularized the practice to end users.

- **LETS BREAK THE SILOS AND IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS** - These users must continue to talk and talk. They must understand the needs and responsibilities. It’s not up to IT alone to resolve everyone’s problems. This is to establish a common and comprehensive solution for improving communications between departments.

- **EASE OF UNDERSTANDING SERVICES** - The concept of centralization facilitates the understanding of the services, and at any organizational level. Senior management to managers, technical resources to end users, everyone wins by being informed and by being linked to a range of services to a single base.
HOW TO CENTRALIZE?

Although all the contexts are different, here are 4 great elements to prioritize when trying to centralize a range of services.

○ **POSITION** internal collaboration as the primary workhorse

○ **ESTABLISH** a negotiation between stakeholders, building on a professional and transparent environment

○ **USE** an end user oriented common language

○ **CONSULT** all served clienteles

Here's what ITSM practitioners can use to collaborate and centralize the company’s services:

**EXCHANGE AND SHARE TASKS**

Specifically, this interaction can take shape through the exchange of tasks associated with a ticket. Stakeholders can also collaborate by exchanging notes or other types of communications, promoting greater transparency and greater satisfaction to the end user.

**FOLLOW UP ON THE COMPLETION OF SERVICE REQUESTS**

The service provider and the client can also view the status of the request. This kind of feature greatly facilitates the follow up by either side.

**EMPOWERING THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE BASES**

Knowledge bases are an essential tool for internal collaboration. The purpose of the IT Service Management (ITSM) Knowledge Base Management is to ensure that the right information be sent at the right time to the right department and ultimately to the appropriate manager. But the objective did not stop there. This person must have the information to make a better decision in the context of the query. In the end, knowledge management ensures the quality of decision making by making available information related to one or more services. Throughout its service lifecycle, information will also be used to improve the quality of service, reduce costs and increase customer satisfaction.
This life cycle, however, differs from one context to another and different teams are often called upon. This disparity implies the need to have clear internal knowledge about the different services and above all, to support knowledge management with:

- **LANGUAGE AND PROPER TERMS**, including its share of the relevant details for the relevant technical resources
- **IMMEDIATE AVAILABILITY** and easy access to the same resource
- **ACCURATE INFORMATION**, current, relevant, and easy to use
- **SIMPLIFIED INFORMATIONAL CONTEXT** for optimal understanding

Beyond theory, service management and the ITIL® framework present knowledge articles such as facilitators for:

- Fast Incident Resolution
- Problem Management
- Service Requests
- Change Management
- Processes
- Workflows
- Configuration Items (CI)

In fact, knowledge management is related to all service delivery processes. That is why we now speak multiple and dynamic knowledge bases, integrated throughout the service management system. They are found among others related to classic or ticket requests management systems, self-service consumer portals, configuration data service catalogs, and databases (CMDB). Some core elements of an effective knowledge base:

- Forms, tables and fully configurable workflow
- Ability to create user-defined rules for the creation and management of the service lifecycle (eg, reviewing period and updating)
- Trigger escalation process (automation, approvals, recalls)
- Access management based on roles- to an allow access control and precise level of information per connection
- Ability to provide multiple levels of knowledge
- System open to collaboration and knowledge sharing
Establish a Service Catalog

IT departments are constantly busy. Not only are they overwhelmed by the daily transactions with relations to the company’s technology, but there main responsibilities are for managing a large number of support requests from internal employees and managers. To reduce the number of calls sent to the IT department, they now have the opportunity to build a service catalog, detailing their services and allowing users to see the status of their request (through a self-service portal) without having to take the phone and call.

This service management process enhances and simplifies the user experience, while saving significant costs and reducing unproductive efforts within the IT department. A centralized service catalog also proves versatile horizontally; it can indeed be made including all types of business requests, such requests from the finance department or human resources. To justify the establishment of a company service catalog, here are some reasons why the deployment of such a catalog is important.

**WHY DEVELOP A SERVICE CATALOG?**

- Understanding, Clarity and Transparency
- Service Offering Communication
- Assessment and Process Improvement
- Service Management tools

**HOW TO BUILD THE PERFECT CATALOG?**

Firstly, a clear service catalog informs users about the services that are offered, how these services will be executed, and approximately how long it will take. This allows the user to have the correct time and IT to know the proper steps to follow to quickly arrive at an appropriate solution. Technical resources dedicated to the IT department are then distributed quickly and efficiently to solve the different demands, resulting in greater user satisfaction.
Here are some steps to take you toward the optimal service catalog:

**Step 1:** Document the targeted services
**Step 2:** Collect data
**Step 3:** Segmenting and the structuring of services
**Step 4:** Finalizing and sharing of the offered services

**CATEGORIZING AND CATALOG FILTERING**

Innovative IT departments are now focusing their service management practices toward their catalog, the undisputed cornerstone of ITSM. A major problem in current businesses is the lack of customer confidence (internal or external) to the IT department.

This lack is often the result of a division in the technical language and a discordant context between senior management and IT. That said, the service catalog addresses this gap and demonstrate to decision makers in a quantitative business-oriented language, which is offered by the IT department.

Filtering the catalog-tailored offerings, policymakers can also notice the effectiveness of providing personalized services to a particular customer and beyond IT. In addition, through greater transparency of the IT infrastructure department, ITSM processes related to the verbalization of service catalogs allow managers (who are themselves customers and users) to have a better overview of what the IT department can accomplish, while justifying IT projects by directors and CIOs. This better overview lowers the level of skepticism towards the IT department.

**SELF-SERVICE DESK**

The ticket must be able to establish a complete record of information captured and entered by the user, thereby initiating a particular action upon submission of an application, or integrate the web portal in a other IT infrastructure of the company.

That said, in light of the latest trends in the IT service management, the self-service desk must not only be accessible at any time, but must also bridge the gap with the service catalog. The portal becomes a real request shopping cart, where the customer can consume a service derived from the service catalog.

This process reduces the number of service demands and increases the degree of customer satisfaction.
4. **Link the Catalog to a Self-Service Portal**

Nowadays, we promise heaven and earth in terms of speed. A self-service process makes no exception. However, a virtual self-service portal may well be fast without being specific.

Indeed, at the start of the process, the client may file a request via a web portal at any time. But what about the status of this request? Can the customer view and track its real-time queries?

Few tools will allow this interaction, enabling a transparent two-way process. In an ideal situation, the customer may also contact the resource and inform him of the changes or comments. So the notion of immediacy is intimately related to:

- the **TRANSPARENCY** of the process
- the **REAL TIME VIEW** of a request progress
- the **MUTUAL COMMUNICATION** between a resource and the client

**PORTAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The portal should also be simple and effective to use. The categorization of queries and many other parameters enable appropriate resources to meet the needs and expectations of the client. This setting aims to optimize as much integration as the availability of your customer service.

Listening to users and oriented according to their experience, the service desk should be easily integrated into the enterprise’s environment, minimize processing time and provide the user with a personalized treatment. In an ideal self-service portal, documented information should be available in order to spend less time solving frequent, non productive, and repetitive requests.

This will provide universal solutions for solving common problems and enable ressources to focus on difficult queries or management problems.
By allowing users to track requests, the service catalog and web portal not only helps improve user satisfaction, but also to achieve significant cost savings. It also simplifies the customer experience while fostering a friendly approach among users and their interaction with the portal (being fed by the catalog) or IT.

This reality is especially mentioned by users who are less technologically versed. These users can then notice a simplified and transparent support, without spending hours searching for a resource to help or create tedious and complex manual requests. Time is precious for any organization and the concept of self-service must be a facilitating tool at this level.

On the other hand, considering the growing number of remote workers today, the service catalog allows you to send request (with the portal), regardless of time or place, reducing the cost of operations support department. With this productive support, the catalog effectively directs the request with an unmistakable reduction in complaints.

A user who needs any support will actually be able to easily select the option they need on the portal - such as access to a request - and see exactly how long it will take for it to be answered. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) is clear and known to all. This provides a win-win relationship for both sides: the user knows that their request is completed, IT managers know that their technicians are able to complete their work as soon as possible, while the IT department can allocate effort required to work on demand rather than provide constant manual updates on its status.

**WHY PUBLISH?**

To recap, why publish the services? Several reasons can explain the benefits of such a publication.

- Report an incident or make a service request
- Primarily for the consumer customer
- Autonomous research and user satisfaction
- Effectiveness increase and cost reduction
- Reduce the number of calls and incomplete requests
- Advancement of the service delivery process
- Educate users to the right internal processes
- Listening and interacting with users
SUPPORTS AND PLATFORMS

There are several ways to publish the services.

- Excel Document
- Web Portal or Static Web Page
- Data Sheets
- Categorized Portal
- Assisted Mode

5. Establish one-stop-shop Self-Service Portal

The self-service concept, which can be represented by a web portal tailored to different types of customers, is stemming from an effective verbalized filtered service catalog. This personalized portal then allows the publication of catalogs and enables service consumption, providing users with an efficient, transparent and a rapid process of their needs.

Not limited to IT applications, the portal also allows users from any department to access information, forms, and to convey different types of queries, computer or other. “It’s called a simplified multi-departmental service request management. One of the benefits of such management is the flexibility and the personalized experience given to these users.

Thus, this type of ITSM practice meets demands from any departments of the organization, allowing each user to independently consume services that are offered on the web self service portals. Each user will consume based on the reality of the issues specific to the department. For the IT support department, the portal provides the ability to interact with their users, customize support and manage the resolution of problems in real time. Therefore, the centralization of service requests through a single system is synonymous with productivity gains to the extent that it helps reduce troubleshooting time and streamlining the time given by the technicians to requests.

To simplify the employees' work and enhance the user experience, the consolidated service requests needs to be designed to stick to the business processes of each company and their internal organizational reality. This allows the IT department to operate a multi-departmental management for requests and participate in improving the productivity of each team which maintains its autonomy in operations management throughout the queries process.
Looking to reduce costs and improve service quality by centralizing your services?

We have the solution.

About C2 Innovations

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