Service Level Management – A Process, Not A Document!

Developing and implementing a Service Level Management (SLM) process - to include Operating Level Agreements (OLAs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) - can be among the most challenging, time-intensive tasks that you will undertake. But, if you do it right the effort will be very worthwhile.

One of the biggest mistakes many IT organizations make is to place too much focus on the SLA document and not enough on the SLM process. It’s important to manage the entire and ongoing SLM process, including measuring, reporting, reviewing and taking corrective action. To achieve success, continued attention must be given to the SLM process long after SLAs and OLAs are signed and filed safely away in a drawer.

Remember, Service Level Management is not a document; it is a process.

The SLM Process

- Defining the process
- Executing the process
- Controlling the process
A Few Key SLM Terms

Service Catalog

- A document which describes the services provided and/or brokered to customers by the IS/IT division. This catalog forms the basis for an understanding of all services offered, their form, fit, functionality, features, components, charges, etc.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

- A formal signed agreement between a customer and a service provider (IT) in which service provision (responsibilities) is described and achievable targets are stipulated and bounded.

Operational Level Agreements (OLAs)

- A formal signed agreement(s) which defines internal support requirements between the IT support organization sub-groups. OLAs are required to ensure that SLA and UC (Underpinning Contracts) targets can be achieved.

Underpinning Contracts (UCs)

- A formal signed agreement(s) which defines external support requirements between the IT support organization and external vendors and channel partners. UCs are required to ensure both OLA and SLA targets can be achieved.

Service Level Requirements (SLRs)

- A document which describes the service demands and specifications gathered from direct consultation with the customer which when defined and delivered meets the customer’s business process productivity needs.

SLM Implementation: A 12 Step Approach

SLM is the process of planning, coordinating, drafting, agreeing, monitoring and reporting on SLAs, and the ongoing reviewing of service achievements to ensure the required and cost justifiable service quality is maintained or where necessary improved. All activities are necessary in order to achieve successful outcomes.

To ensure success, the following is a recommended approach:

1. Promote and entrench a business, quality and service culture
   - Conduct awareness campaigns; deliver education and training programs
   - Promote a quality management, continuous improvement philosophy
   - Implement the Deming PDCA Cycle of Quality: Plan, Do, Check, Act

2. Identify services and customers
   - Gather and document information; Which services are currently provided and to whom? What service should be provided and to whom?

3. Identify current contracts and agreements
   - Examine the SLAs, OLAs and UCs that are currently in place, and determine maturity level of related processes; What is overall effectiveness?
4. Define current IT capabilities
   • Complete assessment of
     ➢ People (skills, knowledge and culture)
     ➢ Processes (maturity level of each of the ten ITIL service support and
       service delivery processes)
     ➢ Technology (determine whether tools are compatible with processes)

5. Produce a Service Catalog
   • Identify all products and services that will be offered as the standard
   • Summarize characteristics (hours, availability, functionality, charges)
   • Identify which customers will receive which service, and which groups support each
     product and service

6. Define and Document Process
   • Identify major business processes
   • Identify facilitating IT services
   • Map IT systems to IT services
   • Map IT components to IT systems (Configuration Management)

7. Prepare SLAs/OLAs and include
   • Description of service
   • Service hours; Service availability
   • Support levels
   • Performance \ Functionality
   • Charges (if applicable)
   • Contingency; Backup and Recovery
   • Growth; Restrictions
   • Printing facilities
   • Training
   • Report Distribution
   • Amendments / Supplements
   • Expiry Date
   • Signatories
   • Date of next review; Date of previous amendments

8. Implement Pilot SLA, OLA
   • Define reporting and reviewing procedures
   • Test, validate, assess and fine tune process

9. Establish and formalize roles
   • Get commitment for resource requirements (e.g. Service Level Manager, Account
     Managers, Client Relationship Managers)
   • Appoint necessary roles

10. Publicize the existence of SLAs, OLAs
    • Send out formal communication with full explanation of scope, roles, reporting and
      reviewing process

11. Rollout remaining SLAs, OLAs
    • Complete implementation with any modifications/fine tuning identified from pilot
12. Analyze, Report, Review

- Conduct regular and ongoing service reviews between IT departments, and between IT and customers
- Define meeting schedule: How often? Who will attend?
- Define reporting schedule: How often? Who will receive? Who will assess? Who is accountable for actions?
- Implement reporting, reviewing and analysis process; Assign accountability for continuous improvement

Summary

SLM acts as a guide for establishing good, sound business relationships. But before you can establish and maintain an effective SLM process, your organization must commit to a culture that promotes a business mindset, service orientation and continuous improvement. This is a key critical success factor.

One of the most important aspects of SLM is the benefit derived from the ongoing analysis and review of service delivery, and the communication between IT groups, and IT and its customers.

Want To Learn More?

1. Get a demo of ATLAS – Pink’s new ITIL portal.

Think of it as your own “Pink consultant-in-a-box”. Implementing ITIL just got easier because now you can have online access to all you need to know - implementation plans, process maps, checklists and how-to’s, sample forms and templates, access to our ITIL expert consultants, and much more.

Get a demo of ATLAS. Sign up for a webcast. Click here for more information: http://www.pinkelephant.com/direct.asp?direct=atlas&id=pl52na1

2. Attend Pink Elephant’s ITIL Implementation Road Map, August 10-12 in Scottsdale.

The program features major sessions about how to implement Service Level Management, and includes sample templates for SLAs, OLAs and Service Catalogs. And, also includes many more sessions about how to plan and organize the implementation of ITIL. All sessions are delivered by Pink’s highly knowledgeable executive consultants.

http://www.pinkelephant.com/pinkevents.asp?confid=rm5&id=pl52na1

3. Attend Pink Elephant’s ITIL Case Studies Symposium, August 21-23 in San Francisco.

The majority of sessions are case study presentations delivered by CIO’s, IT directors, managers, and process owners who have successfully implemented ITIL best practices.