



ITIL: UNLOCKING THE POWER OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Business Day
13 September 2005

Quintica has concluded an agreement with Ster Kinekor for the management of its third party maintenance agreements – and the monitoring of the companies associated with them – covering its head office and 48 cinema complexes throughout SA. In terms of the agreement, Quintica will interact on Ster-Kinekor's behalf with companies providing IT maintenance and support services - ranging from computer hardware infrastructure and software development and support organisations.

Today, more organisations are turning to service management techniques to manage their IT environments in a disciplined way.

Many are using best practice ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) as a starting point, according to Ingo Tuscharde, a director of Quintica, the local representative of Marval Corporation and Marval Service Management (MSM) application based on ITIL.

Tuscharde looks at the evolving role of ITIL in business today.

Originally created by the UK government in response to increased dependency on IT and the need for process standardisation, the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) has evolved from a recommended best practice to a global industry "given" for aligning IT services with business requirements.

ITIL drives business value by helping companies share common terminology and integrated IT service management processes.

The ITIL platform, which has also been adopted as the standard for the provision of IT service management, consists of a series of documents that are used to create a framework for implementing service management techniques.

Essentially, this framework defines how these techniques are applied within an organisation. Being a framework, ITIL is completely customisable for specific application within any type of business that has a reliance on IT infrastructures.

Two areas

The concept of service management is generally divided into two main areas, service support and service delivery. Together, these comprise the disciplines that embrace provision and management of effective IT services.



Service Support

Service support is the practice of those disciplines that enable IT services to be provided effectively. The six service support disciplines are:

- Configuration management
- Incident management
- Problem management
- Change management
- Service/help-desk
- Release management

Service delivery

Service delivery is the management of the IT services themselves, and involves a number of management practices to ensure IT services are provided as agreed. Service delivery consists of five disciplines. These are:

- Service level management
- Capacity management
- Continuity management
- Availability management
- IT financial management

Implementing ITIL

Many service and asset management tool vendors supply applications that support the implementation of ITIL processes, but lack the architecture and training ability to help users act upon the delivery and execution of ITIL tasks. Therefore, before implementing ITIL it is necessary to first assess the organisation and gain a thorough understanding of the management tools that are in place - and how efficiently these assets are maintaining the alignment of IT services with business requirements. Building a strong relationship between IT and business facilitates the development of standard and repeatable management services. To support these services, it is vital to have accurate asset information to help detect, diagnose and resolve infrastructure errors. Based on the above, a number of processes need to be undertaken. These include an orientation and training phase to give all staff members within the organisation an insight into the benefits of service management. Equipped with this knowledge, staff members will be able to play an active, participatory role in the implement of ITIL and service management, and maintain dialogue between various internal groups associated with the implementation. The next step is to design the implementation processes, structure the organisation and establish ownership within the organisation for various projects. The final step is the coaching of project owners in the execution of the processes and skilling them appropriately.

The formula for success

ITIL implementation success is based on the organisation's ability to create a core of skilled, competent people who are capable of taking their company to the next level of maturity in terms of ITIL.



Competency = knowledge + skill + attitude. The knowledge is address by training. The skill is gained by coaching. Attitude is achieved by creating confident people who "know" and "can".

The future

Companies are constantly being asked to do more with less. Reduced budgets and growing demands on IT have forced organisations to find ways to cut costs, increase IT resource productivity, and optimise existing investments. While there are several opportunities to reduce costs, an attractive option is through standardisation of processes.

Companies will increasingly turn to ITIL to provide guidance for their development and increase efficiencies and effectiveness of the service management process.

EDITORIAL CONTACTS

Quintica

Charles Osburn
(011) 575 4320
charles.osburn@quintica.co.za

HMC Seswa Corporate Communication

Christy McMeekin
(011) 704 6618
christy@hmcsewa.co.za