Getting Started Right with Service Management

With the right framework, enterprises of almost any size – small to large – can implement effective functional Service Management organizations. The framework described in this article enabled a successful implementation at a large financial services company. As a result, the company has realized important benefits. In addition to cutting operational costs, it increased efficiency and effectiveness by shifting the model from having separate support functions for each line of business to relying on well-integrated functional groups and promotes shared knowledge management processes and tools. This approach fosters consistency and enhances the quality of the transition of assets to production. In addition, it improves mean time to repair (MTTR) production.

This article describes the role of a quality Service Management organization, the structure that needs to be put in place, and the related enterprise-level process integration needs.

Common Service Management Model

Service Management groups most commonly are structured around incident, problem, change, and release and deployment management, as shown in Figure 1. A key to success that many organizations overlook is the need to address the people, processes, and tools required to integrate and operate the Service Management group effectively.
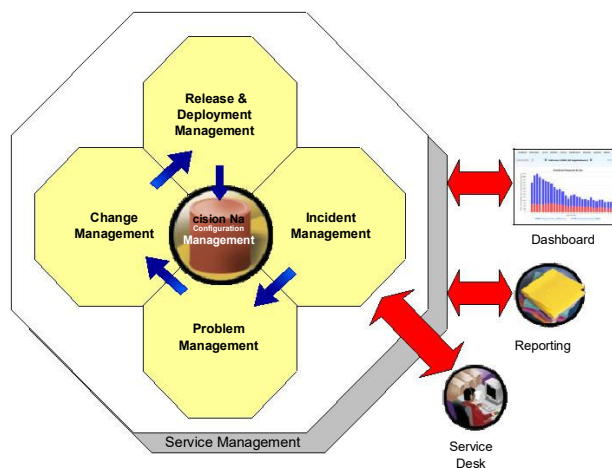

Figure 1: Common Service Management Model

Standing up a support group without integrated processes and clear ownership and hand-offs can lead to its failure. For example, the support model can be aligned by business function. This model typically works for small organizations. As the organization grow and more systems transition to Service Management group for support, overall performance around support will likely decline.

Functional Service Management

Be sure to do your homework before implementing a Service Management model within your organization. To implement a well-integrated enterprise-level Service Management organization, you need to have background information around the following points:

✓ **Knowing vs. Understanding Your Customer**

Knowing your customers is important; understanding your customers is equally important. To understand the value proposition, you must understand your customers and their needs. Without knowing who the customers are, it becomes impossible to do this.

✓ **Your Customer's Needs**

Make sure to create services based on your customer's current and future needs. Communicate upfront what services are offered and the cost associated with those services. It is important to make sure service level agreements (SLAs) around those services are built in as part of the service delivery process.

✓ **What Services You Are Able to Provide**

Be innovative when it comes to implementing new services for your customer. Develop high-value services to successfully build your customer base. If you are providing support services in the cloud, it becomes more important to consider reusable, high-value services that can serve multiple customers.

✓ **Value of the Services Provided**

The services that you provide should benefit the customer and improve process and efficiency.

✓ **Impact on the Enterprise**

Make sure to automate end-to-end service delivery strategy along with support service which can make a positive impact on the enterprise as it drives new changes in a rapid market. At the end, it comes down to how you are reducing the total cost of ownership.

Service Value

Customers will evaluate the performance of the services that you provide based on the value and quality of the services that the Service Management division offers. The success of a Service Management division is based on how well it is integrated within the enterprise and supports the business by providing services that the customer wants and needs. You can provide consistent support services to your customers only when standard processes, policies and procedures are well defined with clear hand-offs between groups. Figure 2 shows some of the common high-level services that IT organizations provide. If you focus on IT services first to make sure the support foundation is strong, everything else will fall in place.

Figure 2: Core IT Service

It is critical to communicate your service management mission and vision to your enterprise. If the goal is to provide help desk, end-user computing or application-related support, the message needs to be clear about the services that will be delivered to the enterprise that support your mission and vision. *The key is how the Service Management group will add value to the organization. If you are not demonstrating the value, the future of the department is at risk.* The value for your organization might be based on how enterprise-wide support services have saved time and customer frustration around issues and how the those values have created new opportunities by reducing cost and time to market new business opportunities. Perceived value can be calculated based on the following formula:

$$Value = \frac{Quality \times Service}{Cost \times Time}$$

As a service provider, service management play a critical role when it comes to keeping all there users informed around the health of the IT systems that they support. Make sure that right information is available at the right time. When it comes to providing services to customers, the value of the services also depends on how many people are dependent on your service. In the telecom industry, for instance, the value is based on the usage of the communication network and the number of interactions between people in the same network. This shows how much customers rely on a given service. The value of a service based on its network usage can be calculated as follows:

$$Value = N \times (N - 1)$$

(N = Number of users using a given service)

Framework for Service Management

Once you have a clear understanding of the services that are going to be offered to customers, the next step is to create an effective support model within the organization. The goal is to make sure that all areas within Service Management will work together to form a cohesive and consistent operating model focused on improving the overall service around support.

The framework should be developed with one goal: for Service Management to provide all levels of support, from facilities management to 24x7 application support, including incident, problem, and change/release management, to business continuity management. Based on support SLAs, a 24x7 operation center function should be created to provide extended service desk support after business hours. Figure 3 shows the high-level model of the framework that was adopted and implemented successfully at a large financial services organization.
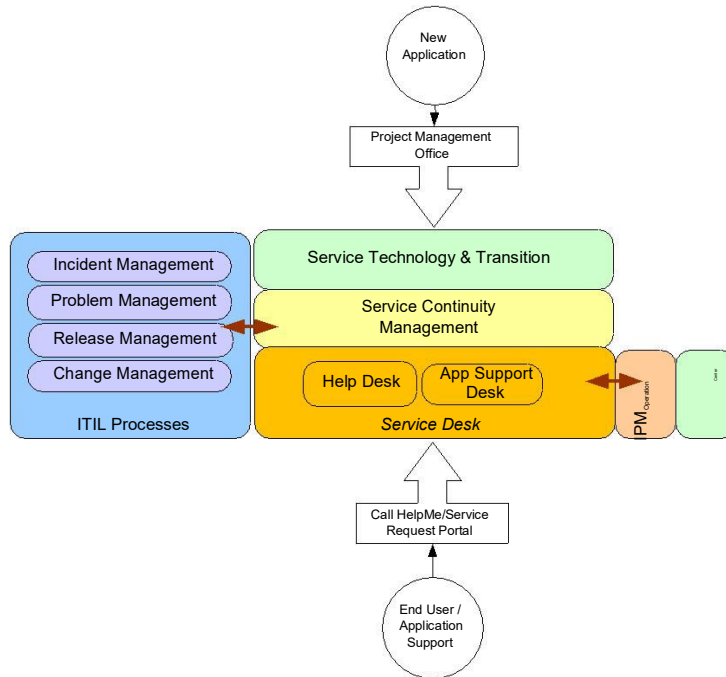
Figure 3: Service Desk Model

In this model, all transitions of enterprise assets move through the service transition process and service desk handled all customer support function as depicted above. The service desk needs to be well integrated to handle incident/problem management (IPMO) along with providing 24x7 support through the operation center. Make sure you set a communication protocol in place so that customers are kept informed on critical issues and their status.

This model was derived from the ITIL framework and was customized to ensure that the support organization was in a position to improve operational efficiency by incorporating standards and focusing on customer satisfaction, reducing operational support costs, and improving how issues and risks were addressed. Figure 4 below shows a high-level view of all IT standards, enterprise policies and procedures that should be considered as part of your transition requirement.
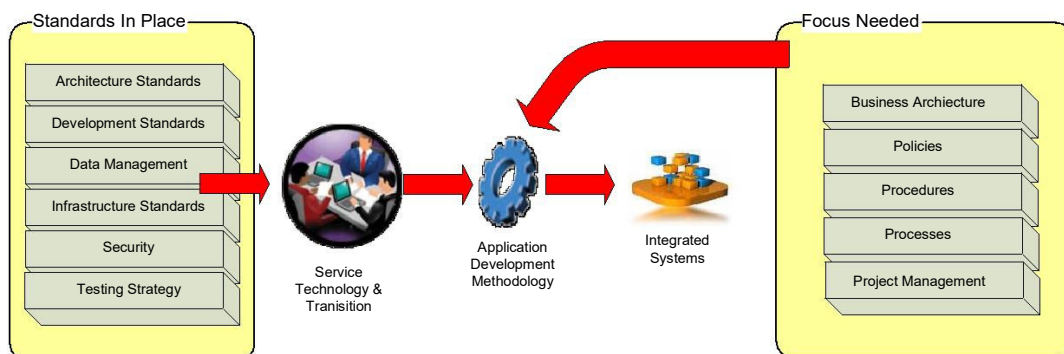

Figure 4: Enterprise Standards

It is important to define operational requirements based on enterprise standards and guidelines along with business and IT operational controls that are required to create a stable, reliable system that can be supported by the service desk. If an organization has invested to create standards, guidelines and operational controls to improve service quality, then you can measure service quality after those standards, guidelines and controls are used. Next, you have to address how those standards, guidelines and operational controls are incorporated into your adopted development methodology, such as SDLC or Agile. In this model, as you can see in Figure 3, all projects move through the service transition group and service quality checks are performed on all projects (Figure 4) before they are transitioned to the service desk. Also, it is important for proper change and release management processes to be in place to make sure Service Management has a full view into what type of changes are getting released and what new information needs to be transitioned to the service desk.
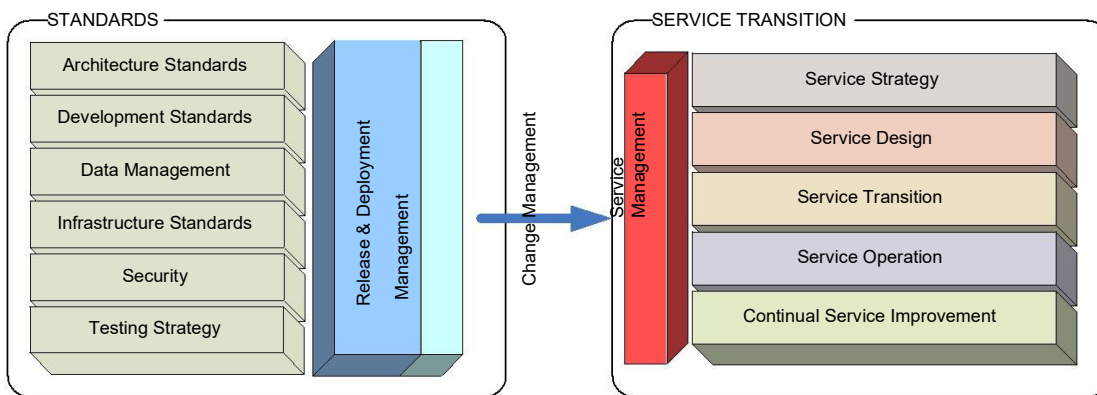

STANDARDS

- Architecture Standards
- Development Standards
- Data Management
- Infrastructure Standards
- Security
- Testing Strategy

Release & Deployment Management

Change Management

SERVICE TRANSITION

Service Management

- Service Strategy
- Service Design
- Service Transition
- Service Operation
- Continual Service Improvement

Figure 5: Change and Release Management

Service Transition Role Is Critical

The service transition team needs to review and ensure that, in each phase of the project, there is clear communication around what operational requirements need to be incorporated so that they can transition those projects to the service desk smoothly. Here are the key high-level tasks that should be part of service transition group.

➢ *Incorporate service transition design solution*
  o   Design the automation needs around support.
  o Eliminate manual processes to support a given system.
  o Design a knowledge management strategy.
  o Define governance around tracking assets and its relationship in CMDB.
  o Discovery of assets and asset management design – CMDB
  o Incorporate operational requirement based on the standards supported by the enterprise
  o Incorporate release and deployment automation design and support

➢ *Conduct   Operational   Readiness   Assessment*   o
Engage early in the project.
  o Review solution architecture / environment design and assess impact to software configuration management, processes, controls and automation.
  o Identify training needs around products that will transition to the service desk.
  o Ensure that operational standards and controls are enforced.
  o   Review solution architecture.

- o Ensure automated capabilities around performance, availability and capacity are in place and monitored
- o Understand the need to build and maintain support processes and tools.
- o Ensure security access and password management including automation is in place.
- o Confirm that disaster recovery standards and requirement are enforced and all recovery-time objectives for critical systems along with disaster-recovery documentations are in place.
- o Review service management operational standards and requirements
- o Review performance, availability and capacity requirements
- o Ensure operational handbook are delivered as part asset transition effort
- o Ensure security management procedures around segregation of duty are tested
- o Enable tool to address unauthorized changes once an asset is in production
- o Transition all knowledge articles to knowledge management tool for support needs

Additional Consideration

It is critical to integrate service management processes and tools so that the real-time health of the managed assets can be communicated to customers. A centralized dashboard to show real time metric and performance can really add value to your customer.

A high-level view of the process integration is shown below in Figure 6. There are many tools in the market place to enable this process.
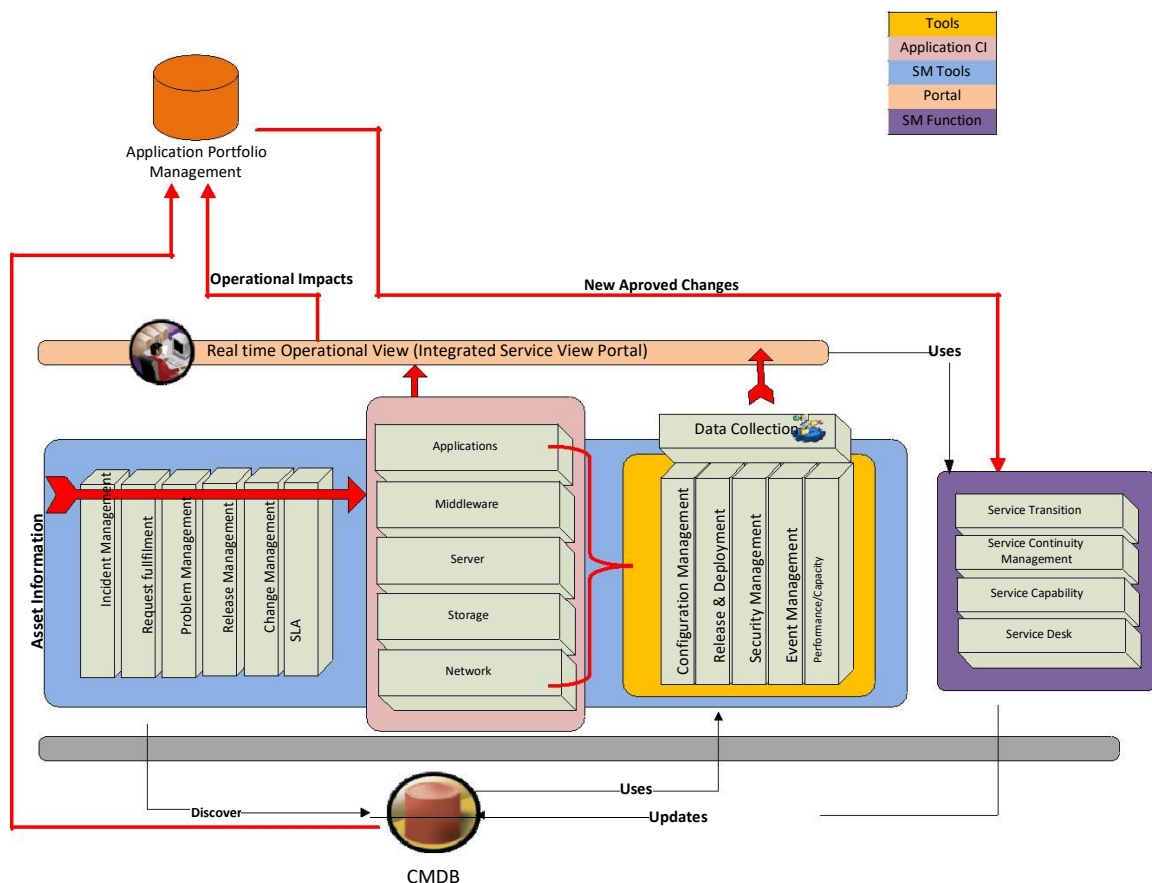

Figure 6: Process Integration

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