By Harris Kern Enterprise Computing Institute

Introduction

Providing the basis for managing relationships between the IT service organization and its customers, service level management deals with how user service requirements are understood and handled. Many benefits can be realized from a well-implemented service level management discipline:

Harmony between the user and the IT organization. The most important benefit is that the IT organization gets an accurate picture of what the users need. This may sound trivial, but the lack of well-implemented service level management disciplines causes most of the rifts between IT and users. A service level agreement (SLA) is a give-and-take relationship between IT and users; users articulate what they need, and IT gains support in getting the resources needed to provide it. Both parties must realize that any requested service may be provided, but none comes free.

Efficiency of IT operations. Another advantage of having an SLA is that IT can allocate just enough resources toward what the users really need. The SLA reminds IT of what really matters to the business, so it does not waste resources providing services that are no longer needed or that are too complex and advanced for users. I have seen many IT organizations spend a fortune on technology products that users don't need, simply to create the illusion that IT is on the cutting edge. However, any admiration from users is short-lived if they do not gain any business advantage from those advanced products or services.

Improved user satisfaction. Users of any computing resource will be satisfied if their perceived satisfaction level is exceeded. With an SLA, IT has an opportunity to set this expectation level realistically. IT now has a better chance to satisfy its users, since satisfaction is no longer arbitrary or subjective.

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Criteria for a service level agreement

Area of Responsibility	Signature	Date
Customer:		
Customer Functional Mgr:		
IT Program Mgr:		
IT ISD Mgr:		
IT Appl. Support:		

Section I: System Availability

Requirements	Description	Specifications
Customer Required Hours of Operation	The hours that the system needs to be operational. This includes online availability for End Users and Batch Processing capabilities.	End User Online hours: 6 am to 11 pm, Monday through Sunday (EST USA) Batch Processing hours: 2 am – 6 am EST Monday through Sunday
System Server Availability	The hours that the system server will be available for processing	The system will be operational consistent with Online and Batch Processing hours as noted above (reference Customer Required Hours of Operation). The system server availability target is 99%. The system will not be available for 2 hours daily (7 days a week) for scheduled backups and HW/SW system maintenance. Other scheduled outages if required will not be measured against system server availability percentage.
System Availability Locations	Sites that the system supports; Locations of workstations	Manufacturing Plant Buildings 100, 200, 300
Network Availability	This refers to the availability of the connectivity from servers to the customer workstation.	Network availability must be consistent with Customer Required Hours of Operation referenced above. Target network availability is 99.9%.

Section II: Problem Management

Services	Description	Specifications
Call Management Process	This is the process for the recording, diagnosis, tracking, and closure of HelpDesk calls. This includes the flow of information, call severity definitions, and call resolution responsibilities. This covers from initial contact by the user to problem closure.	See Attachment A for **problem severity definitions.**
HelpDesk Coverage Hours	The time the HelpDesk will be available to accept calls.	24 hours X 7 days a week.
Call Logging	This is the documentation to capture requests, symptoms, priority, contacts, and relevant information.	
Call Acknowledgment	The time for the HelpDesk to contact the call originator, acknowledging that the call was received.	See Attachment B for **call response times**.
Production Support Team	Production Support provides the next level of support when the HelpDesk cannot resolve the problem or request.	The following groups make up the Production Support Team: • IT ISD provides support for UNIX, DBA, and OSA issues. • IT Applications Support provides support for application-related support problems. • IT Functional Support Team provides assistance for functional and training issues and questions.
Production Support Team Response and Callback	The Response and Callback timeframe is the length of time for Production Support to respond and call back the customer. The callback to the customer may be from the HelpDesk after the Production Support Team responds. Note: The contacts for the Production Support Team must be provided to the HelpDesk.	The Production Support Team provides staffed coverage during the hours of 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday EST USA, except per the division Holiday schedule. For the nonstaffed hours, the response time for Priority 1 Problems is within 2 hours. See Attachment B for **call response times**.
Status Calls	The HelpDesk will provide updates on progress in resolving calls to identified personnel.	See Attachment B for **call response times** for the timing of status calls. See Attachment C for **status call contacts**.
Resolution Target	The target time that it will take to resolve each call depending on priority.	See Attachment B for **call response times**.

Escalation Procedures	The escalation process is a management notification procedure that is invoked when a problem persists after the Problem Resolution Target timeframe is exceeded.	See Attachment D for **escalation contacts**.

Section III: Support Services

Services	Description	Specifications
System Backups	The frequency and timing of SW and Data Backups.	System SW and Data will be backed up daily between the hours of 11pm and 2am and stored offsite.
Capacity Planning	Identification and development of future capacity requirements to meet system business requirements and budgeting cycles.	Capacity planning requirements will be identified and reviewed at least twice annually as part of an overall resource optimization and budgetary planning process.
System Change Management	The process to manage and track system change requests to the servers and applications.	All systems change requests are to be submitted to the HelpDesk. This functions as the control and tracking point for all changes. Change notification request periods are based on the type of change: Major Projects: Two (2) weeks prior to change date. Nonemergency: Five (5) days prior to change date. Emergency Fix: Submitted within 24 hours after the fix has been implemented.
SLA Reporting	Reporting of key metrics to provide server availability and incident tracking.	Reporting will be provided monthly.
SLA Document Management	SLA Change Control Tracking.	Please follow your internal change control process.

Attachment A: Problem Severity Definitions

Description	Definitions
All calls will be classified into the following severity levels: • Priority 1 • Priority 2 • Major • Ordinary • Requests Note 1: Priority 1 Problems will be worked on a 24 X 7 basis until resolved. A Customer contact must be assigned and be available on a 24 X 7 basis to assess alternative solutions and finalize problem resolution verification. Note 2: Priority 2 Problems will be worked during regular local business hours by production support groups.	**Priority 1:** The ability to conduct business or service the customer has stopped. *Examples:* Server down, network down, database down, application down, concurrent mgrs. down. **Priority 2::** Service is seriously degraded but can continue its operation via a workaround or incremental resource for a short period of time before business stops. *Examples:* Extremely slow system performance, a piece of application functionality is down or has a bug. **Major:** Service is lost by a single user or small number of users, affecting significant business functionality. Problems or incidents where a workaround exists or can be developed with a small amount of incremental resources. **Ordinary:** Problem or incident where single users can operate some of the system activities normally, but a definite problem is identified. **Requests:** Any call from single users or site groups that are requesting a new service or some clarification. *Examples:* Requesting a new user logon, a new printer setup, or the meaning of a system message.

Attachment B: Problem Resolution Control table

Severity	Call Ack	Production Support Team Response Onsite/Pager Support	Target Resolution	Status Call
Priority 1	15 min	15 min / 15 min	24 hours	Every 2 hrs
Priority 2	15 min	15 min / 60 min	1 – 2 business days	Every 4 hrs
Major	15 min	15 min / Next business day	5 – 10 business days	Every 4 hrs
Ordinary	15 min	1 day / Next business day	Per agreed-to plan	Upon closure
Service Request	15 min	1 day / Next business day	2 – 5 business days	Upon closure

These times are cumulative for incidents that are routed to the HelpDesk.

Attachment C: Status Call Contacts

Problem Severity	People to Contact
Critical 1	Call Originator: Customer Functional Manager: IT Functional Support: IT Applications Development Manager: IT ISD Manager: IT ISD HelpDesk Manager:
Critical 2	Call Originator: Customer Functional Manager: IT Functional Support: IT Applications Development Manager: IT ISD Manager: IT ISD HelpDesk Manager:
Major	Call Originator: IT Applications Development Manager: IT ISD HelpDesk Manager:
Ordinary	Call Originator IT ISD HelpDesk Manager:

Attachment D: Escalation Contacts

The following people are contacted when the Problem Resolution Targets are exceeded:

Critical Problems

Problem Severity	People to Contact
Customer Management	
IT Senior Management	
Customer	
IT Functional Support	
IT Applications Dev. Mgr.	
IT ISD Manager	
IT ISD HelpDesk Mgr.	

Major Problems

Problem Severity	People to Contact
IT Functional Support	
IT Applications Dev. Mgr.	
IT ISD Manager	
IT ISD HelpDesk Mgr.	

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