
SERVICE LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Enterprise IT Management Initiatives

State of Utah

SERVICE LEVEL MANAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, the State of Utah created a new department. The Department of Technology Services (DTS) combined all of the State's IT employees, assets, and contracts into a single organization that was asked to increase the efficiency of IT operations and improve service to other departments. Over 930 employees were part of this transfer. Although DTS was tasked with creating a more efficient operation, State agencies wanted assurance that their service would not be reduced as a result of this massive resource transfer.

In developing a response to the agency concerns, the State CIO, Stephen Fletcher, met personally with each department of State government. An IT Director was assigned to each of the departments and tasked with the personal responsibility of assuring that service would not drop during and following the transition. Each IT Director (who reported directly to the CIO) was charged with developing a service level agreement that identified and measured each of the services that was previously provided to the department. The agreement was signed by each department Director, the IT Director assigned to that department, and the CIO. This agreement then became the basis for determining the minimal level of service that would be provided in the future.

Once the service levels were established it became critical for DTS to track and respond to service requests in a consistent, measurable way. The Department implemented an enterprise help desk function to make this happen. Following an architectural assessment of the various help desk products in use by the State, Remedy Help Desk was selected. Help desk personnel were moved into a single organization. Because of the remote nature of their work, these employees are able to telecommute from their home while maintaining a high level of connectedness to the central organization. Central knowledge management tools allow these Tier One responders to clarify and respond more effectively to user inquiries. Prior to the consolidation, many departments used unstructured processes to respond to service inquiries. Now DTS is able to track all service requests through to completion. An effective, automated escalation process is now in place for the entire State which ensures that high and urgent tickets are acted upon immediately.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS PROBLEM

The Department of Technology Services was created in 2006 from over 26 separate IT organizations spread across State government. The incoming CIO made a commitment to State agencies that their service would not be disrupted or decline as a result of this consolidation. Some of the individual IT units had never used quantitative metrics to

measure the value of their service to the organization. The CIO was faced with the challenge of providing service to all of these disparate and unique operations in a way that met a diverse set of expectations.

Solution Description

As the new department was created, the CIO organized several important initiatives. The CIO and a small team met individually with department heads and key executives in every State agency to understand their expectations for IT service needs. In addition, a more quantitative assessment included identification of all the individual services provided by each of the agency IT business units. All of this data, qualitative and quantitative, was compiled to create a service baseline from which the new IT organization could begin to deliver services. An IT director was assigned to each agency and given primary accountability for ensuring that service expectations were met and tracked to measure progress. Initial SLAs were fairly simple and included a list of the individual services and an agreed upon process for ensuring accountability. Each year, the SLAs have become more sophisticated with improved metrics and tracking capability.

DTS maintains an online repository of all service-related documents and agreements. The agency service level agreement includes:

- Services to be Delivered
- Availability Requirements
- Systems and Applications Affected
- Communication
- Application and Help Desk Support
- On Call Support
- Metrics and Reporting
- Accountability
- Contact Information
- Changes
- Verification and Agreement

The service level agreements have helped ensure that there is a clear understanding of expectations by both parties of the agreement, so that as organizational changes are made, to make the department more efficient, department needs continue to be the focus of the service organization.

Key business products and functions have been identified in each SLA, and the written product descriptions capture the key IT functions necessary to support the key business functions.

In each product description, metrics have been identified for the key business functions to monitor and report if the SLAs are being met. These metrics will be reported to the Executive Director of each agency on a quarterly basis.

In 2007, DTS made the decision to standardize help desk response and support on a single tool, the Remedy help desk solution. This means that support, response, and problem resolution are now consistently measured across the State and the department can more effectively coordinate support resources to demand requirements.

Length of Time in Operation

Initial SLAs were in place for every department on the first day that the Department of Technology Services was consolidated in July 2006. The SLAs for each department have been revised and agreed upon each year, with the current SLAs completed in May 2008.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE OPERATION OF GOVERNMENT

This project involves cooperation between the Department of Technology Services and 23 separate departments of State government. It has established a measurable baseline against which IT services can be measured in the future, and helps ensure a high response rate and accountability for statewide service requests.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT

The State of Utah is a heavy user of IT services. State agencies expect quick response to service issues. The development of Service Level Agreements for every State agency has helped the service provider establish priorities based on business requirements supported by agency leadership and staff, rather than IT personnel.

Service Optimization

The Department of Technology Services is making progress toward optimization of service provisioning. While ensuring that service levels are maintained, the department has now reorganized many services in functional areas, such as desktop support, network management, and solution delivery. Desktop support is now organized regionally rather than by organization, reducing travel time and increasing efficiency, particularly in the rural areas of the State where service support personal previously may have covered a large territory for their agency.