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# A 5-Step Process for Defining IT Services

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**Managing IT by service and not technology is the message of ITIL v3. Unfortunately, most IT professionals really struggle with defining IT services. In fact, some 30% of ITSM projects are unable to move forward because of this roadblock. Luckily, there is a solution.**

IT service definition is the first (and most important step) in service management, but it is often left to last. No wonder so many initiatives meet with limited success. If you don't get this fundamental step right, the odds are that your entire ITSM initiative will go down in flames.

The ITIL Service Strategy, Design, Transition and Operation books all revolve on the idea of services. Service Portfolio Management (SPM), Business Service Management (BSM), Service Level Management (SLM) and IT Service Management (ITSM) all require service definitions. However, while all of these books and technology areas use the word "service" and purport to manage IT services, none of them describes the "nuts and bolts" of how to define a service.

In a previous DITY I introduced the concept of SID, the Shared Information and Data Model from the Telemanagement Forum (TMF). ITIL mentions another TMF framework in its Service Strategy book, eTOM. eTOM and SID are partners in solving this most pressing IT service management issue – how to define your services.

## A Model for IT Service Definition

The TMF is an international group of telecommunications carriers and service providers, and SID is the de facto standard for IT service definition. SID combines very nicely with ITIL to offer a layered construct for IT service provisioning based on unambiguous service definitions. SID concepts include *products*, *services*, and *resources*:

- A **product** is what we sell or deliver to customers
- A **service** is an IT activity that supports delivery of the product
- A **resource** is a specific IT system required to implement the IT service

SID defines two types of services: Customer Facing Service (CFS) and Resource Facing Service (RFS). CFSs are used and acquired by a customer. RFSs support CFSs but are not visible to or acquired by a customer – RFSs are used only to build CFSs. Let's look at a real-world example. Imagine that your enterprise is in the building products industry, and your core product is concrete. Your internal users rely on CFS to carry out the business of the enterprise – making, delivering, and selling concrete to end-customers. Consider these business processes further. In this example, a CFS may be telephone service, which your internal users use to receive orders and dispatch trucks. Such a service could include other CFS as well – perhaps voice mail.

A CFS consists of one or more RFSs. RFSs may not be acquired by an internal user except as part of a CFS and users are typically unaware of RFSs. Consider the optional voice mail CFS in our example. This service may not function without routing and storage services relying perhaps upon an RFS of Domain Name Services (DNS). An RFS, such as DNS in our example, consists of shared IT resources. These resources run the gamut of classic ITIL Configuration Items such as

hardware, software, data, documents, people, accommodation, etc.

CFSs include common applications and systems relied on by users across the enterprise to support end-customers of your product. For example, email, ERP, and CRM systems are all CFSs. RFSs include special applications and systems used within IT exclusively (e.g., backup, DHCP). Let's walk through the SID model so you can see how to define your own IT services.

## 5 Steps to Defining an IT Service

**Step 1: Select an Enterprise Product and Identify Supporting Services**
The first step in the process is to select an enterprise product and identify the IT service(s) that support the delivery of this product to end-customers. Your enterprise product is the primary enterprise output, what is sold to customers.

**Step 2: List All Related IT Systems**
The second step is to create a list of all IT systems relating to the support of the enterprise product. These are NOT hardware or software. Rather, they are often major applications that help sell, provision, service, and support your enterprise product. They often combine people, product, and process resources and their name is usually not technical, but rather, functional. Examples include CRM or ERP, or even "email" or "phones."

**Step 3: Mark IT Services as CFS or RFS**
The next step in the process is to identify the services as either CFS or RFS. Remember: enterprise products are composed of and/or supported by CFSs and customers acquire CFSs from IT. In contrast, RFSs are used only inside of IT to build CFSs. Not all IT systems can be classified as CFS or RFS. Some are resources, and some are functional – such as the Help Desk or Service Desk. Use the following rules-of-thumb to help determine whether each IT service is a CFS or an RFS:

- Your IT service is customer facing when the user: (1) is aware of and uses the service directly; and (2) can purchase or acquire the service individually.
- Your IT service is resource facing when the user: (1) is unaware of the service; and (2) is not able to directly acquire the service.

Also note that a CFS can be an RFS, and vice versa, depending on how the consumer of the service gets the service from IT. For example, an "application hosting" service might be a CFS to a customer who just wants hosting and it might be an RFS in a CFS to a web-hosted application provider.

**Step 4: Map RFS to CFS**
The next step is to map RFSs to CFSs. Remember that more than one RFS is typically used to deliver a CFS. Resources create RFSs, and RFSs create the CFS. Think of RFSs as the glue between the resources (e.g., ITIL Configuration Items like hardware, software, people, data and accommodation) and the CFS. Remember that users and customers are generally unaware of an RFS. It is common to have one RFS used by many CFSs. For example, consider the IT systems responsible for database backup or storage. These systems contribute to most other IT services, including other RFSs.

**Step 5: Identify the Resources that Make Up the Resource Facing Services**
Resources are investments made to produce CFSs and RFSs. Examples of resources include radios, servers, towers, networks, call centers, etc. Resources are ITIL Configuration Items. Resources are individual items (hardware, software, people, etc.) that combine as a system. Many RFSs (and by extension CFSs) share resources. Don't be surprised to see the same resources and RFS used several times.

## Next Steps

Using the 5-step process described in this document should give you a head start on defining your own IT services. Instead of arguing about what is and what isn't a service, the SID "rules" will guide your decisions in hours instead of days. Connecting your product offerings to your CFSs has the added benefit of moving your IT organization closer to your

end-customer.

Moving forward, gather all the data you have (and you no doubt have lots) about a CFS – customer names, locations, and so on. Gather the tools you use to manage the RFSs and resources. This information forms the basis for a Configuration Management Database (CMDB) as well – you are capturing the content and context of your infrastructure.

Working hand-in-hand with your users and customers, use your data and service definitions to measure and value your IT services. If you plan to charge for IT services, begin gathering costing information – labor, vendors, and so on. Relate these costs to the services.

This is only the beginning of your ITSM journey – much work lies ahead. But you simply cannot benefit from ITSM or ITIL without first properly defining your IT services.