BEST PRACTICE

# The Service Catalog

## A Practitioner Guide

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# THE SERVICE CATALOG
# - A PRACTITIONER GUIDE

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## A Practitioner Guide

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# Colophon

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# Foreword

I was pleased to be asked to provide a foreword to this book. The book aims to provide an understanding on the types of services that can (or often, should) exist and how they all fit together from the customer, business and IT perspective. The book is admirably vendor and framework neutral and references ITIL, MOF, ISO/IEC 20000-1:2005 and USMBOK throughout to put services and the service catalog in the context of more than one framework, hopefully providing as broad a scope as possible.

The service catalog, as with the service portfolio concept, has come to mean many things, the content of them largely being determined by the perspective of the individual or organization offering opinion. Thus the organization purchasing a catalog product and indeed the unfortunate user of that product might well find that their own expectations are somewhat different as to the capabilities of the product.

Putting aside the vagaries of what a “product” should actually provide, the purpose of a catalog (or portfolio) is often not fully determined prior to acquiring software support. Further it is common to discover that products have been purchased for the IT domain assuming use by the business without ever consulting the business about content.

For example, the whole issue of what could/should be in a catalog is a strategic study and involves governance, management and security issues. Is the intention to have a catalog of lines of business? If so, what are the risks to the business, has anyone considered identity and access rights, segregation of duty issues and the possibility of fraud or embezzlement?

What about including applications? Which ones, and again, just what are the implications for the business if users can obtain applications in the catalog? What about “IT services” which are often incorrectly defined as being business services (for example on-boarding new employees). Depending on who you work for and who pays the bills, the “IT service” might well be IT being told to get fifty people ready for work on Monday morning. IT may wish to push that work back to a super-user working in the business area, but not everyone will see that as being an IT service then.

What about password resetting? IT service or just something that would be expected by today’s “IT savvy” business customer? Well, here again it depends on who is paying the bills and what the budget holder is expecting for the money. It also of course has identity and access considerations.

This foreword is not intended to rewrite Mark’s book; it is just to preface your expectations about the service catalog, its (possible) place in society and the implications -and vagaries-of its use. As with all innovations, frameworks, initiatives and projects, there are benefits and risks. As with all of these things, the complexities and the cause and effect of situations are often overlooked until later, when as usual, something has happened that was not foreseen in the rush to embrace the latest and greatest.

This is a good book. Take the time to understand the issues and if you do decide to start collecting for your catalog you will have a better chance of doing it well.

Brian Johnson
Hon. Lifetime vice president itSMF and author/contributor to ITIL and other life changing good practices.

# Acknowledgements

We like to thank the team of experts involved in the production of this publication.

First of all we like to thank **author** Mark O'Loughlin for gathering best practice on the service catalog, using his own extensive knowledge and experience, existing literature and information from peers. We sincerely thank Mark for his enthusiasm and persistence, and his willingness to listen to the reviewers and seriously consider their issues. This has enabled us to develop a true *best practice* on the service catalog.

**Review team**

We also wish to thank the international team of experts who have reviewed the manuscript. They provided the author and editors with encouragement, criticism and useful ideas, to ensure that the book reflects the very best practice. Their expert help has been invaluable.

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Together, they produced approximately 750 issues, which were all taken in account by the editors and author Mark O'Loughlin, improving the manuscript to align with all the expert opinions on what this book should contain. With a final sign-off, all reviewers confirmed that the issues were processed to their satisfaction.

## On the author

Mark O'Loughlin (IT Alliance Group) is an experienced consultant and specialist in IT service management (ITSM) frameworks, IT governance and various standards. Mark played a pivotal role in the first ISO/IEC 20000 certification to be awarded to an organization in Ireland as an architect, process manager and systems integration expert. He has achieved the ITIL Expert, Managers, Foundation and various practitioner certifications, is actively involved in his local itSMF chapter and is the editor of the chapter's newsletter. Mark also writes about service management frameworks such as ITIL, MOF, COBIT, ISO-20000 and FITS and on the topic of ITSM. He authored a "best practice" guidance about the service catalog and service portfolio which has been published in *IT Service Management, Global Best Practices - Part One*.

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# Introduction

Organizations today are struggling to identify what services they provide (or rely on) to enable business objectives and outcomes. Organizations have found it difficult to understand the different types of services that exist and fail to record this information in a useful and meaningful way.

This book aims to provide practical advice and information that will help organizations to understand how to design and develop a service catalog and to understand the role that the service catalog performs within the service portfolio. To this end, the book will explore the fundamentals of what constitutes a service in the hope of addressing the age old question "what is a service"?

The information contained in this book is intended for those who are about to begin their journey of designing and developing services and service catalogs or for those who have begun but would like assurances that they are on the right track. For those that are mature in their processes they may like to use this as a comparison for their implementation of services and service catalogs. Either way, read on.

Focus will be placed on arming the reader with information and knowledge that will help with:

- understanding what a service catalog is and what it is not
- understanding what the service portfolio is
- providing enough understanding to aid in the basic design of each element of the service catalog
- describing the different types of services within an organization
- showing how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together via the service portfolio pyramid

It is also evident that the service catalog requires ongoing investment, development, ownership and management backing to ensure that it:

- is valid
- is kept up to date
- is scalable
- remains relevant
- provides benefit to users
- adapts to changes in user and business needs and requirements
- is fit for purpose and fit for use
- provides value to the organization and customers
- facilitates doing business in a cost effective manner
- aids organizations in reaching new markets and new customers
- provides value for money and can demonstrate not only Return on Investment (ROI) but also Value on Investment (VOI)

Due to the nature of what is expected and required of certain elements of the service catalog, they may require specialist application software to be fully deployed and utilized. Such software can be custom-made or off-the-shelf. However the focus of this book will be geared towards providing guidance aimed at how to develop a structure for the service catalog and its various elements, independent of the platforms or applications that are available. This is pivotal when looking to setup and implement a service catalog.

It should be noted that from the start this book references a number of different service types. To just keep the discussion limited to IT services is inadequate. If IT is to earn its place in the organization and be recognized as a key business enabler IT needs to stop talking just about IT services and instead talk about the value that is provided to the business by enabling business and customer services that facilitate outcomes that the organization wants to achieve. This is a fundamental change in thinking and practice but in order for organizations to make the change they need to have relevant information that helps them understand the concepts and turn them into reality.

Some of the concepts and guidance provided in this book will be different to the current thinking and understanding of some readers. This book provides the opportunity to challenge existing thinking and presents the opportunity to embrace an explorative understanding of the realm of the service catalog.

In summary, this book can provide a catalyst to achieve a harmonized understanding of services and how they fit into the world of organizations, businesses, suppliers, vendors, and, last but not least, the users and customers.

## How to use this book

This book is part of a series of practitioner books that deal with the core elements of IT service management (ITSM). Appendix A provides the basic concepts for IT service management, and is the common philosophy for all books in this series. It is important that anyone - who is not fully aware of the differences between processes and functions - reads this Appendix to avoid conceptual errors in the embedding of service catalog management in their organization.

ITIL and IT service management are most often related to process-based approaches, and service catalog management can follow that approach. Although service catalog management has its own distinct process in ITIL, traditionally it may have been placed as an element of what is often perceived as “the service level management process”, which actually is a group of processes:

- contracting and implementing new or adapted IT services
- reporting and evaluating contracted IT services
- managing the service catalog

In this context, service catalog management delivers the foundation that is required for the other two main elements of service level management, as well as for the daily interaction between the provider and the users of the IT services.

# Structure of the book

This book is structured into seven chapters.

The first two chapters offer the basics for the book. Chapter 1 describes the context of the service catalog and chapter 2 explains the basic principles followed in this book, and the terms used.

Chapter 3 focuses on the question “what is a service catalog?” and discusses the various forms of the service catalog.

Chapter 4 and 5 focus on the “how” question: how to create a service catalog and how to develop the different service catalog types.

Once you have created the service catalog, it has to be managed. Chapter 6 shows what is required to manage the service catalog.

Chapter 7 looks at technology considerations for service catalog.

The author closes the book with a final thought.

The remaining chapters are appendices and contain useful information:
- Appendix A provides the basic concepts for IT service management, and is the common philosophy for all books in the Best Practice series.
- Appendix B provides a simple, everyday example of where customer, business and IT services can be found.
- Appendix C lists the acronyms used.
- Appendix D provides details about the frameworks and standards referenced throughout this book.
- Appendix E provides an example of the content that should exist within a service level agreement.