

# How to build your own Service Catalog

## 5 Step guide

The document covers the steps to consider before you start to build your own Service Catalog

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## 1.0 Why build a Service Catalog

IT Departments have never before had so many competitors for their role, the likes of outsourcers, insourcers, outsourced services, cloud and a user base who expects more for less and (believes) it is more educated than ever before on what IT can do for them.

The failure of many IT departments to align themselves with the business and not to be positioned as a key enabler in achieving successful outcomes for the organization is evident. As business change continues to accelerate and the reliance on IT services becomes more and more a prerequisite for any business to stay in business the challenges on the IT department keep growing.

For IT to counter against this, there are two goals that need to be satisfied

- IT needs to provide business value to the organization for outcomes it wants to achieve.
- IT must demonstrate its value to the business, in order to be seen by the business as an enabler of desired outcomes.

The simplest way to satisfy both these goals is for the IT department to offer services that are;

- Required by the business.
- Offer value for money (and are perceived by the business as offering value for money).
- Introduce and retire services as the business demands.

The service catalog allows IT to not only showcase to the business the services that IT provides, but to also identify the business process and customer's service that are supported and provided by IT.

**The Service Catalog provides users and customers with the means of understanding what services are available and the can actually use.**

Establishing a successful Service Catalog will greatly enhance the standing of IT in the organization and will position IT as a fundamental resource when considering business strategy.

## 2.0 Which services to include

So you have decided you want to build a Service Catalog, the first question you have to ask is which services to include, there is no one right answer for this, it is really down to considering the following criteria for your organization;

Firstly **define what you mean by service**, in ITIL® a service is defined as;

- 'A service is a means of delivering value to customers by facilitation outcomes that customers want to achieve without the ownership of specific costs and risk's – (ITIL® Service Management Principles – Service Strategy).

From a practical view, you need to **ensure that your service is one that will be understood by its consumers**, this is where you may want to consider the 3 views associated with a service catalog;

- **User** – generally the most common type of service, i.e. request for folder access.
- **Business** – available for a more senior user i.e. email service.
- **Technical** – typically a service that underpins the two above and may technical details which would confuse the other two.

Correctly identified User and Business services will meet the criteria set out in Section one for best positioning IT within the business, it is therefore essential that the services identified for these groups are also easily identified and recognized by them. There's no point in identifying a service as related to a particular group of servers when it can be better described in terms understood by the business e.g.

- **Bad example of a service** – 'serverBKD1234566' with attributes of uptime @99%
- **Good example of a service** – 'Currency exchange service' with attributes of availability between 9.00am and 5:30pm

Also consider the **Impact of the service**; you don't want to boil the ocean, so it's likely that you will only choose those services with most impact with your audience. Generally password resets, new users, leavers, system access, folder access etc. are the ones to consider, however ask your service desk what are the most reported categories of services they see, also ask your users as they may be circumventing the conventional processes for certain services e.g. Blackberry and iPad services may be going undetected through maverick channels.

You may also want to consider for the services you choose what information is available on them before making a final selection, the first tranche of services need to be added quickly so you don't want to get slowed down if it is going to take time to define specific services, this is covered in the next section, so read this before making your final selection.

There's no absolute number of services you need to identify for a successful Service Catalog, some organizations identify perhaps 8-10, some 300-400, it's really down to you, remember you can always add more and quality is a better aim than quantity. As long as you cover sufficient categories you can always include a brief description of the services and a contact address for now and come back to it later, particularly if it's a little used service.

### 3.0 How to define services

So not only have you decided to go ahead with a service catalog, you have also decided which services will be included in the first phase, so now you need to decide how you are going to define the services in terms your audience will understand.

A good place to start with your service definition is to use RACI for each service you identify, the diagram below shows how this can be applied to each service.

|           | Role 1 | Role 2 | Role 3 | Role4 |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Service 1 | AR     | C      | I      | I     |
| Service 2 | A      | R      |        | C     |
| Service 3 | I      | C      | A      | R     |
| Service n | I      | A      | R      | I     |

- **R** = Responsible for
- **A** = Accountable for
- **C** = Consulted about
- **I** = Informed about

Additionally for each service you need to identify who will fulfil the following roles;

- The Service Owner: the role that is accountable for the delivery of a specific IT service;
- The Process Owner: the role that is responsible for ensuring that a process is fit for purpose;

All this information enables you to gain all the stakeholder information required to ensure the service is described/defined in the appropriate way.

You now need to work with your service stakeholders to determine what attributes you want to define against the services. Again there is no one right answer, what is important is what matters to your business. Consider the differences between replacing a faulty PC keyboard in an office and one attached to a life support system in a hospital, it's the same service but clearly the description and detail of the service will need to be different for each scenario.

The following attributes are examples commonly used in Service Catalog

- **General Information:** Service name, Status, Service type, Classification, Description / Service Objective
- **Support Information:** Service owner, Link to OLA, Level 1 support, Level 1 support Hours, Level 2 support, Level 2 support hours
- **Service Levels:** Agreed availability hours, Backup and recovery procedures, charging, Service last reviewed

Other sections may include '**Service Map**' and '**Process Relationship**' which shows how services link to and relate to each other.

## 4.0 How to publish services

So you have decided you want a service catalog, you have identified your key services and worked with the stakeholders to define the services in sufficient detail for your organization to understand and make use of them, so what next?

In order to ensure that the Service Catalog does not get put on a shelf and forgotten, it is important that the following criteria are met;

- The Service Catalog must be easily available and accessible.
- Everyone knows that the service catalog exists and what its purpose is.

Any project that satisfies neither or only one of these criteria will not fulfil its true potential and could fail.

Service Catalog are published in one of three ways as outlined below.

|  | Advantages   | Disadvantages  |
|--|--|--|
| Spread sheet                             | Readily available  | Need to manage version control / changes / distribution  |
| Bespoke application (developed in house) | Can be tailored to organizations requirements  | Application need to be managed by in-house IT and may compete against other projects for resources.<br><br>Application may become very complex as more changes are made to it, making it difficult to manage.  |
| Off the shelf application                | Give immediate 'good experience' to all users<br><br>Can be tailored to organizations requirements<br><br>Easy to manage by the Service Catalog manager, no IT resource required for on-going changes. | None! (Well what do you expect from an off the shelf Service Catalog provider? If you find, any please let us know. Biomni's Front Office Essentials offers all this functionality free – <a href="http://www.biomni.com">www.biomni.com</a> for more information) |

Up to now we have just considered a static service catalog, but as soon as you start to publish services your users will want to consume them, so you may wish to consider how the users will do this.

Choosing an off the shelf package like Biomni’s Front Office Essentials allows you to upgrade to allow requests to be made by users and is covered in the next section.

## 5.0 Request fulfillment automation

So you have published your services to your organization in a service catalog and also created awareness so people are now starting to look at services available, so what next.....

If people are accessing the service catalog to view information on services it’s inevitable that they would also like to request or subscribe to these services, so it’s important that this experience is a good one if you want them to keep coming back.

Additionally if you want to cut the volume of phone calls and service desk agent handling time in your service desk by automating request processes (and every good service desk does) you need to consider what processes can be automated end to end, not just the user entry stage.

Generally Service Requests are implemented in one of three ways as outlined below.

|                           | Advantages  | Disadvantages  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Email                     | Readily available   | May need to be emailed around for approval, details will need to be verified   |
| Online Form (bespoke)     | Can be tailored to organization’s requirements  | Application need to be managed by in-house IT and may compete against other projects for resources.<br><br>Application may become very complex as more changes are made to it, making it difficult to manage.  |
| Off the shelf application | Give immediate ‘good experience’ to all users<br><br>Can be tailored to organization’s requirements<br><br>Easy to manage by the Service Catalog manager, no IT resource required for on-going changes. | None! (Well what do expect from an off the shelf Service Catalog provider, if you find any please let us know. Biomni’s Front Office suite offers all this functionality and more – <a href="http://www.biomni.com">www.biomni.com</a> for more information) |

Key features to look for in your Service Request automation are:

- Easily completed forms which are tailored to the Service Request types.
- Approval/authorization of request against both financial and commodity.
- Easily integrated into other systems at key points in service request process