

Armed and Extremely Dangerous

The service catalogue is more than just a tool

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ABSTRACT

Despite the well-used phrase 'a fool with a tool is still a fool' there are still many service catalogue initiatives that start and end with the selection of technology. These initiatives are doomed for failure. Armed with technology alone will be extremely dangerous to the success of your service catalogue. This paper discusses how to implement a successful service catalogue with technology selection a crucial component but one of many critical success factors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
2	Defining the Service Catalogue	4
2.1	What the Service Catalogue Is Not.....	6
2.2	What the Service Catalogue Is.....	6
3	Where to Start	8
4	Approach	9
4.1	Define the Objective	9
4.2	Gather Requirements.....	9
4.3	Project Management	10
4.4	Ownership	10
4.5	Communications	10
4.6	Top-down Approach	11
5	The Static Service Catalogue	11
5.1	Define the service offerings	11
5.1.1	<i>Service Catalogue Types.....</i>	<i>12</i>
5.1.2	<i>Data Capture.....</i>	<i>13</i>
5.1.3	<i>Change Management.....</i>	<i>13</i>
5.1.4	<i>Marketing and Communication.....</i>	<i>14</i>
6	The Actionable Service Catalogue	14
7	Technology Requirements	16
8	Conclusion.....	16
9	Bibliography.....	17

1 INTRODUCTION

'Armed and Extremely Dangerous'.

Is this the title of a 1973 hit record or a description of those folks who believe that purchasing a tool will provide them with a successful service catalogue solution?

Well it's both! But the aim of this white paper is to address the latter. Despite the over-used phrase 'a fool with a tool is still a fool' there are still those that embark on service management initiatives including the service catalogue and look to technology to provide them with the total solution.

These are the people that armed with technology alone will be extremely dangerous to the success of your service catalogue initiative.

Sure, technology has a part to play in most service management initiatives and can be a critical component but it is only one of the critical success factors.

I recently delivered a seminar on service catalogues where I discussed all of the activities that need to take place in order for the service catalogue to be a success. One of the attendees returned to his workplace equipped with all the knowledge needed to participate in a successful project.

Back at work, he participated in a teleconference that had been convened to discuss the implementation of a service catalogue within his organisation. He began to ask pertinent questions such as the purpose of the catalogue, scope and objectives, supporting processes etc. only to be told that his questions were not relevant as all that was needed was the purchase of technology.

Unfortunately for him, his management team are armed and extremely dangerous in believing that a successful service catalogue starts and ends with the technology. Unfortunately for many others, this is not an uncommon occurrence.

I am sure that at some time you will have heard your industry colleagues and peers describe how their recent service management initiative had not been a success and as a result they were looking at new technology! I hear these conversations all the time whilst consulting, delivering training or attending conferences and seminars.

In these conversations there is no consideration given to the fact that the processes may not have been well defined, that there was a lack of buy-in to the change, there was poor communication, that the scope was not clear and there was no overall alignment with organisational strategy. The blame for the failure of the service management initiative is laid squarely on the technology and of course the vendor who sold the technology to the organisation in the first place.

The organisation wheels in the next vendor to provide them with the replacement technology that is now expected to fix the previously failed endeavours. I must add at this point that I know of many technology vendors (including the one that has commissioned this white paper) who go to great lengths to explain to their customers that their technology is only part of the solution and yet this sound advice still falls on deaf ears.

And so the cycle starts again. In a few years time, with no significant success in any service management initiatives including a service catalogue, the technology is again held to blame and another replacement sought. It's Groundhog Day in service management!

This paper will explore what you need to do to build a successful service catalogue and get the return on investment from the technology that you will need to support your initiative.

2 DEFINING THE SERVICE CATALOGUE

Before describing the steps needed to build a successful service catalogue, it is important that there is a common understanding of what is meant by a 'service catalogue'. It is also important that this is widely understood across the organisation that is embarking on the creation of a service catalogue.

If there is not a common understanding, there will be different expectations of the outcome from the initiative.

ITIL® defines the service catalogue as follows.

The service catalogue is a database or structured document with information about all live services, including those available for deployment. The service catalogue is the only part of the service portfolio published to customers and is used to support the sale and delivery of IT services. The service catalogue includes information about deliverables, prices, contact points, ordering and request processes. (OGC, 2011)

USMBOK™ has the following description:

A service catalog defined in terms understood by its intended (customer) audience, used to market and advertise the current service and proposed offerings to specifically targeted communities, acting as the basis for negotiating service guarantees and a configured service offering. (Clayton, 2010)

There are some key words and statements in these definitions that clarify what the service catalogue is.

First, it is 'structured'. The catalogues that you use in your personal life have a structure. There are categories of products and services so that you can easily find what you are looking for. Categories are often broken down into sub-categories that help you narrow your search for the desired catalogue entry. For example, if you go to amazon.com and select the category of 'books' you will be presented with subcategories of books, kindle books, children's books, audiobooks, textbooks and magazines.

The same structure applies to the service catalogue.

The catalogue provides information on the 'live' or current services and those available for deployment. All the services that are currently available to your customers (whether already deployed or not) should be included in the catalogue. The catalogue can also contain those services that will become available on a particular date. Just as you may be able to read about the latest album from your favourite artist on amazon.com prior to its release date, the service catalogue can also contain information about services that are scheduled to become available.

It will be an organisational decision as to when products and services become visible to customers within the service catalogue. Some organisations may only wish to include services that can currently be provided i.e. live services. Some may include current services and those for which a 'live' date is known e.g. all development and

testing has been completed and deployment dates have been agreed. Other organisations may wish to advertise services that are currently under development. These services may not have a concrete date by which they will be available but their inclusion in the catalogue serves as an advertisement for the work that is being undertaken by the service provider on behalf of the customer.

Careful consideration needs to be given to when products and services become visible to customers. There are pros and cons to be weighed up. Advertising products or services under development may be good marketing but what happens if a decision is made to cease development due to competing priorities or changes in funding? These products or services now have to be removed from the catalogue and if this happens on a regular basis, it does not send a good message to the customer. It could look like the service provider doesn't know what products or services the customer wants.

On the other hand, inclusion of products and services in the catalogue that are being considered and/or developed could also send the message that the service provider is continually trying to deliver additional value to the customer. It could promote the service provider as innovative and forward thinking.

Take time to determine at what point you include products and services in the catalogue that are visible to the customer.

Both of the cited definitions refer to the 'customer' and USMBOK says that the catalogue should be defined in 'terms understood by its intended customer audience'. Although this may seem obvious it is often an area not given sufficient attention when creating a service catalogue.

All too often service catalogues are created in the language of the service provider and not that of the customer. They contain technical jargon and acronyms that have no meaning to the customer. I cannot stress enough the need to involve the customer throughout the service catalogue initiative not only to ensure that the requirements are gathered but to also ensure that the catalogue can be understood. The structure e.g. categories within the catalogue should be intuitive and the language used should be that of the customer. It should be clear, concise and without ambiguity.

The 'information' contained within the service catalogue will vary from one organisation to another. The information provided should allow the customer to make an informed decision whether to use a product or service. Once again, it is important to work with the customer to determine what information they want and/or need to access in regards to the products and services on offer.

Think about the sort of questions you would ask when presented with a service offering in a catalogue.

- What is the product or service?
- Why do I need it?
- What are the benefits?
- What will it cost me?
- How do I get it?
- When will I get it?
- Who do I contact for more information?
- Are there any prerequisites in order to use this product or service?
- What else should I consider buying or ordering along with this product or service?
- What support will I get with the product or service?

- How do I obtain support?
- What are the terms and conditions in regards to the product or service?
- What are my responsibilities and what are those of the service provider?

This is the type of information that should be included in the service catalogue.

The service catalogue will provide the foundation for formal service level management and a starting point from which to negotiate service level targets with the customer. Once operational, the service catalogue will allow you to measure end-to-end delivery of service from which service level targets can be established. These targets can then be used as the basis for service level negotiations. This is a far better starting point than a blank piece of paper, which is often where many service level negotiations start! The service catalogue will also allow ongoing delivery of service to be measured against agreed targets and action taken where targets are not being met or potential breach of targets anticipated.

2.1 What the Service Catalogue Is Not

The service catalogue is NOT just a list of services. This is a common mistake made by many organisations. A list of services or a 'static' service catalogue is a milestone in any service catalogue initiative but too often it stops there. Many service catalogue initiatives end with a list of services being posted on the intranet.

A static service catalogue can provide information about services but the customer will be directed elsewhere to obtain the service. The static service catalogue is not 'actionable'. The static service catalogue does not allow interaction between the customer and the service provider. It does not support the ordering and tracking of product or service delivery.

2.2 What the Service Catalogue Is

The service catalogue is comprehensive list of all products and services available to the customer. It may include products and services that will become available at a future date and time.

The catalogue not only includes products and services that have a 'tangible' element such as a laptop or mobile phone but also what I refer to as 'brochure' services. These are professional services such as project management, consultancy and advisory services, audit and risk management services etc. that are available to the customer. They are often the services that go unseen by the customer on a day-to-day basis but nonetheless are value added services that should be core offerings within the service catalogue.

The service catalogue is often thought of as only containing services that are delivered via a 'request fulfilment' process such as hardware or software. These types of services are only a part of the total service catalogue.

The service catalogue contains all the information needed by the customer to make a decision as to whether they should 'buy' a product or service. I use the term 'buy' here loosely as there may be no physical exchange of money taking place. As mentioned earlier, think about your own experience with shopping catalogues. What information do you want to know in order to make an informed decision regarding your purchase?

The catalogue should be business facing and written in the language of the customer. It should be actionable and provide the customer with a 'shopping-cart' experience. The customer should be able to order a product or service, request more information, track the progress of the order, escalate issues arising and so on.

Service level targets can be set for delivery of service against which performance can be monitored. The service catalogue will support financial management and allow for charging and recovery of service costs.

It will support demand management. Demand can be forecast and then monitored against predictions. Demand can also be channelled via the catalogue.

The customer experience will be contextual. Based on who I am, where I am, my role, the products and services I have obtained in the past etc. my service catalogue experience will be different. If the organisation, or a department within the organisation has made a decision, that only employees of a certain rank are allowed to have smartphones, then only employees of this level will see the smartphone as an option within the service catalogue. If I work in the Sydney office or the London office, I will only see products and services applicable to that geographical location.

The ability to contextualise the service catalogue experience is a way in which demand can be channelled. Where there is a desire to increase the demand for certain products and services, they can be made available to a wider audience. Where there is a need to decrease the demand for certain products and services, their visibility can be limited to a pre-defined audience.

Behind each product and service within the catalogue will be an automated fulfilment process. This is an automated workflow of activities that need to take place in order for the product or service to be delivered to the customer. The workflow may involve many parties both internal and external to the organisation. The workflow may be a simple one such as sending a request for more information about a service to the service owner. It may be a complex bundled service such as the on boarding of a new employee which has many component services within it e.g. security access, payroll setup, allocation of a credit card, induction programme, training, provision of a desktop, laptop, mobile phone, etc.

To summarise:

- The service catalogue is a comprehensive list of products and services (including professional or 'brochure' services)
- It contains detailed information about each product and service
- It is business facing
- It is actionable
- It provides the customer with a 'shopping-cart' experience
- It is contextual
- Service level targets can be defined and performance managed
- Service fulfilment can be tracked and monitored
- Services costs can be recovered
- Demand can be forecast, tracked and channelled
- Service fulfilment processes are automated

Now that we have defined what the service catalogue is, and what it is not, we can look at where organisations should start when embarking on the service catalogue journey.

3 WHERE TO START

The first thing that must be agreed by all stakeholders of the service catalogue is the definition of a 'service'.

At first, this may seem like an easy question to answer but my experience and that of my peers proves otherwise.

Service provider groups such as ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) often perceive a 'service' in terms of something they provide e.g. an application or a piece of hardware, and not the end product or service that the customer consumes.

Gaining agreement on the definition of a service will be crucial to the success of the service catalogue initiative.

A good starting place is to ask the customer. Ask the customers what services they believe they get from you as the service provider. Work with the customer to identify the services that underpin their business processes.

The ITIL® definition of a service is:

A means of delivering value to customers by facilitating outcomes customers want to receive without the ownership of specific costs and risks. (OGC, 2011)

In the publication 'The Service Catalog – A Practitioner Guide', Mark O'Loughlin describes a service as follows:

A service is any act or performance that one person can offer to another, that is intangible, produced at the moment of delivery and does not result in the transfer of ownership. Service value and quality is based on customer perception, where satisfaction is based on outcomes and is subjective. (O'Loughlin, 2010)

The key message in these definitions is that the 'service' should deliver an outcome that adds value to the customer. A service has to be defined with the relevant audience in mind otherwise they will not be understood nor considered important.

In the second definition, the service is described as 'intangible' – that is, it cannot be touched, gripped, handled, looked at, smelled, tasted or heard. This is an important concept and helps to shift the mindset of the service provider from one of a product focus to one of a service focus. A product that a customer can purchase may be a laptop but what they are actually purchasing is a service that includes the procurement, configuration, delivery, support, maintenance, connectivity, upgrade, security, backup and recovery etc. of the laptop.

Don't underestimate how long it may take to get a consensus on the definition of a service. This may involve an iterative set of interviews and workshops before agreement is achieved.

It is important to give this exercise the time it deserves as this definition will be a continual reference point as the products and services to be included in the service catalogue are determined.

4 APPROACH

As with any service management initiative, the implementation of a service catalogue should be run as a project. The project management methodology employed should manage project initiation, planning and development, production and execution, monitoring and controlling, and project closure.

I don't intend in this paper to discuss in detail 'how to implement a service catalogue'. There are many publications on this matter. I would rather highlight some of the areas that I believe are often overlooked or not given enough focus and provide some guidance on approaches that will make your service catalogue initiative a successful one.

With regards to publications, I would recommend 'The Service Catalog – A Practitioner Guide' by Mark O'Loughlin which I referenced earlier and also 'Defining IT Success Through the Service Catalog' from Pink Elephant. Both of these books should be available through your local itSMF bookstore or other publication channels such as amazon.com.

4.1 Define the Objective

It is imperative that the objective of the service catalogue initiative is clearly defined and aligned with organisational strategy. If there is no strategic alignment, then you have to ask yourself why you are embarking on this journey in the first place. You have to be able to answer questions such as 'What is the objective of the service catalogue and how will this help achieve the organisational objectives'? 'What business need will the service catalogue meet'?

4.2 Gather Requirements

Determine who all the stakeholders are in the service catalogue. These will include stakeholders across the service provider organisation, the customer base and third party service provider groups. In a series of interviews and workshops, determine the requirements of each stakeholder group.

The customer is a key stakeholder but they are not the only ones and it is critical that all requirements from all stakeholders are determined. Engage the process owners who have accountability for the process areas with which the service catalogue will need to interface and /or integrate. This will include financial management, service level management, change management, supplier management, demand management, business relationship management and service asset and configuration management.

Engage the service owners for services that are likely to be included in the service catalogue and gather their requirements.

Remember that there are multiple audiences for the service catalogue including business management, end-users, suppliers, support personnel, service delivery personal, service provider management, financial management and so on. The requirements of each group have to be established.

4.3 Project Management

Definition of project scope and milestones is important. Scope creep in a service catalogue project can easily happen and this needs to be contained if the project is going to be successful. An example of this is when ICT embarks on the creation of a service catalogue and starts to consider services such as employee on boarding. This 'bundled service' consists of many component services such as the provision of ICT induction and training, network access, laptop and mobile phone etc.

The new employee also needs services from other areas of the organisation e.g. HR for payroll, security for building access, facilities management for office space etc. It can be tempting to want to include the services from all these areas in the service catalogue due to the customer experience that will result. Imagine a manager who having employed a new member of staff can access the service catalogue and with one-click of a button know that all the required services for the new employee will be delivered by the time that the employee commences work!

Whilst this should be an end goal for the service catalogue, and these requirements captured, it is important not to allow the scope to increase out of control. In this example, the scope should be limited to services provided by ICT and once the catalogue contains all of those services, other areas of service provision can be added.

Milestones are not only important to allow project progress to be tracked but also to communicate achievements. As already mentioned, it can take time to get agreement on the definition of a service. Mark this as a milestone and communicate the outcome. The mistake of not defining milestones and communicating achievement of them can leave stakeholders thinking that the project has gone cold and nothing has been achieved.

4.4 Ownership

Make sure that a process owner for the service catalogue is identified and made accountable for the process. Do not leave it until the end of the project to look for someone to own the process. This is too late. The process owner needs to be involved from the onset of the initiative so that there is accountability for the design, build and ongoing management of the catalogue.

Give careful consideration to where the service catalogue sits within the organisation and where the process ownership resides. I have often seen ICT service catalogues buried within the operational areas of ICT and the process owner subsequently struggle to establish interfaces across the entire service lifecycle.

I often point out to organisations that plan to bury the service catalogue in an operational silo, that the service catalogue in ITIL is discussed in detail in the Service Design publication. There must be a reason for that?

4.5 Communications

The value of regular communication is not limited to a service catalogue initiative but I felt it was worthy of note because I have seen so many initiatives fail due to poor communication.

When planning communications remember that one size does not fit all. Just as different stakeholder groups were identified during requirements gathering, those different groups need to be identified in a communication plan. Each different group will have different communication needs and requirements. These will include content, frequency, delivery method, format etc.

A service catalogue project, for a medium to large size organisation, could take anything from six to eighteen months to complete. This could be due to many reasons but most often is due to competing priorities. Your stakeholders are not sitting around just waiting for you to engage them on the service catalogue project. They have other commitments and time constraints. Therefore it may take some time to convene workshops and interviews to gather requirements, agree a service definition, determine service offerings, conduct testing and training etc.

It is therefore important to keep communication flowing on a regular basis so that everyone is aware that the project is still alive and well and that progress is being made. This is also why the identification of milestones is so important.

4.6 Top-down Approach

One of the biggest mistakes made by those trying to establish a service catalogue is to take an inside-out view of services. This is where the service provider tries to determine what services they provide to their customers rather than asking the customer what services they obtain from the service provider.

The creation of the service catalogue should be customer-driven and take a top-down approach. Determine what the business processes are and what services are provided that underpin those processes.

5 THE STATIC SERVICE CATALOGUE

I believe there are two key deliverable stages in the creation of the service catalogue. These are the provision of a static catalogue followed by the creation of the actionable service catalogue.

The creation of the static service catalogue should be a major milestone in the project plan. Reaching this stage means that all of the services have been identified and information regarding each service captured and documented.

This section provides guidance on the creation of the static service catalogue

5.1 Define the service offerings

The first step to be taken is to define the services that are offered.

In the publication 'Defining IT Success Through the Service Catalog' (Rodrigo, Fine, & DuMoulin, 2007) a litmus (acid) test is suggested to checking that your service offerings are correct.

Does it have a customer? Are there terms and conditions established?

If you cannot answer 'yes' to both of those questions, then you may have missed the mark when trying to define your services. Every service should have a customer and the terms and conditions of the service should include the benefits, expected service levels, and an exchange of value for the work performed.

A service should fulfil one or more needs of the customer; support the customer's business objectives and be perceived by the customer as a coherent whole or consumable product.

As mentioned earlier, there is no better place to start than with the customer. Identify all the business areas such as HR, sales and marketing, finance, legal, property, product development, business continuity etc. Engage key stakeholders in each of these areas and identify the business processes that are carried out. Determine what the services are that you provide to enable delivery of those processes.

As you define your service offerings verify them with the customer. Ask whether the customer identifies them as services supporting the achievement of their business objectives. Does the customer perceive them as a coherent whole or consumable product? Continually checking back with the customer will ensure that the service offerings in your service catalogue are truly business facing.

The service catalogue will also need a structure. Services should be categorised into groupings that make sense to the audience of the catalogue. The structure should be intuitive allowing services to be easily located. Each organisation will be different but some common ICT category examples are communication services, personal computing services, business system services, professional services and so on.

5.1.1 Service Catalogue Types

There is a lot of talk in many service catalogue related publications about catalogue 'types'. This includes some of the publications I have referenced in this paper. Service catalogue types that are referred to include product catalogue, supplier catalogue, actionable service catalogue, support services catalogue, wholesale service catalogue, retail service catalogue and so on.

From my perspective, there is no such thing as a catalogue type. There is only one service catalogue and various views of the one service catalogue.

This is a subject worthy of mention because it causes so much confusion for organisations embarking on their service catalogue journey. It often leads to the belief that there is more than one service catalogue that has to be created and then some intricate and complex bridging that has to take place between them.

My message is 'keep it simple'. An end vision may be a service catalogue that contains all of your service offerings and that each of these service offerings is broken down into each of the components that make up that service. This has benefits for impact assessment, service costing etc. but it is not a necessary starting point. This is taking the service catalogue initiative into the realms of service asset and configuration management and I would suggest that this is a separate project to be embarked upon following completion of the service catalogue.

There should be a single service catalogue that contains all of the services that you provide to your customer. You may create different views of the content within the service catalogue e.g. a view of technical services versus professional services, but it is all contained within one catalogue.

5.1.2 Data Capture

Key information about each service offering has to be captured. Once again, talk to the customer and ask them what information they would like or need to know. As discussed earlier, think about the information you would like to know in order to make an informed decision about whether to purchase a product or service.

Create a template and then for each service offering, populate the fields in the template. This could take the form of a document or spreadsheet.

Template fields may include (but not limited to):

- Service name
- Short description
- Long description
- Category or classification
- Fulfilment process
- Service owner
- Service level targets
- Link to service level agreement
- Link to policies
- Support hours
- Cost and charging arrangements
- Maintenance windows
- Backup and recovery details
- Contact details for support, more information, escalation of issue etc.

Once all the data has been captured and verified by the customer and service owners, the static service catalogue can now be made available. Most organisations will host the static service catalogue on their intranet.

5.2 Change Management

It will be important that once the static service catalogue has been populated and made available to the customer that it is subject to change management control. If the service catalogue becomes out of date or contains inaccurate information, people will stop using it and revert to other avenues to gain information about your services.

Your service catalogue initiative will have stalled, if not failed, and recovery will be difficult. It will hard to convince the customer that the service catalogue is the single point of information about the services you provide if they have had a poor experience due to inaccurate content.

The service catalogue owner should be a member of the change advisory board so that they are made aware of any changes to service and can determine the impact on the service catalogue content. Service owners should also be held responsible for ensuring that the information regarding their services in the catalogue is up to date and accurate.

5.3 Marketing and Communication

The creation of the static service catalogue is a major milestone in the initiative. The existence of the static service catalogue as the single source of information regarding the services you provide should be widely communicated. Everyone should be made aware of the location and purpose of the catalogue.

It will be important at this time to manage customer and stakeholder expectations. The creation of the static service catalogue is a major milestone but at this point it is likely that the customer will perceive no 'major' benefit. It will provide a single source of information but the fulfilment process for each service may be just as it was before the creation of the catalogue. The static catalogue will provide little or no opportunity for interaction between the customer and the service provider.

The real benefit will come with the actionable service catalogue. This is where services can be requested, tracked and monitored and interactions between customer and service provider enabled. This is where the customer gets the 'shopping-cart' experience.

The communication should make it clear that the static service catalogue is a stage on the journey to a fully actionable service catalogue and this is where the greatest benefits will be felt.

5.4 From Static to Actionable

It is the actionable service catalogue that requires supporting technology. The service catalogue technology will take the static service catalogue and automate the service fulfilment processes behind each service and allow interaction between customer and service provider.

This is where the selection and acquisition of technology to support an actionable service catalogue becomes a critical success factor but it is the work that has already been done and the subsequent work that will need to take place to define the fulfilment processes that will make the service catalogue a total success.

6 THE ACTIONABLE SERVICE CATALOGUE

The fulfilment process for each service within the service catalogue now has to be defined. I suggest that this is done in two stages. First, define the current fulfilment process i.e. how services are fulfilled today. Second, map out the desired fulfilment process. In some cases these may be very similar and other cases quite different.

For example, if a customer requires project management assistance today they may complete an online form that sends an email to the project management office. A member of the project management office then contacts the customer to discuss requirements.

In the actionable service catalogue, a similar form may be provided and the fulfilment process behind it remains unchanged. The project management office will still receive the information and contact the customer although they may receive it via a task assignment within the service catalogue tool rather than via email.

The revised process flow may include status updates that will be visible to the customer e.g. request sent, receipt acknowledged, customer contacted etc.

A process flow that may be very different in the actionable service catalogue could be the provision of a laptop computer. Today, the service desk may receive the request via an online form or email and then manually create a subsequent set of tasks that are despatched via email to the various service provider groups that could be internal and external to the organisation. In the actionable service catalogue, the process can be automated and the workflow sent directly to the parties that are required to fulfil the request. The tasks can be sequential or concurrent with defined dependencies e.g. one or more tasks have to be completed before the next one can commence. The service desk requirement to coordinate and direct tasks can be removed.

Within the process flows, the points of approval and required authorisations will also need to be identified. Entitlements should also be determined and captured e.g. who is able to request a particular service.

A series of workshops are often the best method of creating the fulfilment process workflows for each service. All key stakeholders should be involved including the customer and service provider groups.

The outputs from the workshops should include a workflow often documented in the form of a swim-lane diagram and a RACI matrix to identify the accountable and responsible parties as well as those consulted and informed during the fulfilment process.

This process may take some time to complete and a number of iterations may need to be undertaken before all the stakeholders agree and sign-off on the outputs.

In the publication, 'The Service Catalog – A Practitioner Guide', Mark O'Loughlin provides a good example of the considerations that may have to be addressed when defining the fulfilment process that will be automated in the service catalogue. This example is a phone order workflow. (O'Loughlin, 2010)

Considerations	Details (Applicable to order phone workflow)
Will anyone be allowed to order a phone?	Yes. If not, entitlement needs to be understood. Who can order the item, and how will this be validated and controlled?
Will there be an approval mechanism?	Yes.
Who can approve the requests?	Line managers as listed in directory services.
How will people approve the request?	An automatic approval work order will be generated and assigned to the appropriate line manager. The work order will be automatically linked to the service request using the API.
What happens if the request is not approved?	The line manager will continue to receive approval notifications every two days until the approval work order is approved or rejected.
How will the user be kept informed?	At defined intervals the service request status will be updated to reflect where the request is within the order process. The status will be visible to the requestor from their personal page within the service catalog. Note: more advanced systems can offer more advanced

	functionality in this area, for example Amazon can track where your order is at any given time.
How does the actual request get processed from start to finish?	As per the process flow.
Identify bottlenecks.	Line managers not approving work orders. Delays in purchasing requisitions being completed in a timely manner.

It is important to note that the “actionable” service catalogue is not just about the purchase of ‘products’ such as phones, laptops, desktops etc. This is often a misconception. The ‘actionable’ service catalogue contains all the services provided by the service provider including professional services such as consultancy or project management. They all become ‘actionable’ via the technology that will be selected to support the service catalogue.

7 TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

A specification of requirements for supporting service catalogue technology should start as early as possible in the initiative. This can take place in parallel with the other activities that have been described in this paper.

For most organisations, the procurement process can take a considerable time and you don't want to end up with a hiatus period between defining all the fulfilment processes and waiting for supporting technology in which to implement the processes. By the time you obtain the technology, the defined processes may be out of date and need revisiting or stakeholders changed and additional workshops have to be scheduled. It is crucial to keep the momentum going.

It is the technology that will bring your service catalogue to life. The vendor will work with you to implement your service fulfilment processes into their technology. Processes will be automated and operational waste removed. Customers will be able to interact with the service provider, track their requests for service and be provided with service targets for delivery. The service provider will be able to streamline delivery, manage demand, track performance against service level targets and provide the customer with an enhanced engagement experience.

8 CONCLUSION

It is my hope that this paper has demonstrated that technology is an important part in the service catalogue journey but that there are many other activities that will need to take place if your service catalogue is to be a successful venture.

When you come across those ‘armed and extremely dangerous’ zealots who insist that all they need to do is purchase technology to provide a total solution, ask them if they are prepared to put their money where their mouth is! If they want a return on investment from the purchase of technology then the groundwork has to take place first.

In eighteen months time, do they want to be asked why the technology they purchased is now being replaced because ‘it doesn't work’? Do they want to be held accountable for another failed technology driven project? Do they want to be labelled as the ‘fool with the tool’?

There is a reason why successful initiatives address all of the four P's – people, process, partners and products. There are no shortcuts to success.

Oh, and for those that are curious, Armed and Extremely Dangerous was a disco hit for the Philadelphia female music vocal trio - First Choice in 1973.

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