

## Article

# The Service Catalogue (Part 1):

## Why have one? (Can you afford not to have one?)



Submitted by:  
Neil Walker  
Principal Consultant

Office: +44 (0) 333 202 1018  
Email: [neil.walker@foxit.com](mailto:neil.walker@foxit.com)

---

**Head Office**

Sentinel House  
Ancells Business Park, Harvest  
Crescent, Fleet, Hants. GU51 2UZ

**Registered Address**

Fox IT SM Limited  
1 Vincent Square  
London SW1P 2PN

Tel :+44 (0) 333 202 1018  
Fax :+44 (0) 1252 240033  
Email:sales@foxit.com

Company Registration Number 7390255  
Company VAT Number GB 156 4959 68

## Introduction

No longer can IT organisations be considered as just supporting the infrastructure by which enterprises provide their business services. **IT must be recognised as ‘the basis of the business’ and therefore must be run like a business.** Those that fail to understand this concept risk being overlooked or replaced within organisation design structures.

As with any business it is important to understand your market, your customers, the services required and their cost. This article promotes the benefits of the service catalogue as the vehicle for this understanding, to bridge the business-IT gap, strengthen relationships and demonstrate value. It doesn't take the traditional ITIL®<sup>1</sup> route but rather looks at the IT service catalogue's relevance in the changing environment of growing technology awareness, increased self-support and rapid rate of change.

## The intelligent user

Society as a whole has acquired ever increasing confidence interacting with technology both in the language and terminology used, and at a practical level. Despite claims by some individuals to be technophobes, it would be hard to find anyone who does not have at least some knowledge of the concepts and applications available. This growing level of understanding is generated by the multi-level infiltration of technology into our daily lives.

Gone are the days when IT held a similar level of bewilderment as the legal or medical professions!

Together with this increased awareness and confidence comes a high expectation of technology in the workplace, including improved quality and service, additional functionality, lower cost and better support for business initiatives. Without a complete and shared view of the IT estate and understanding where the critical value lies, it is difficult (if not impossible) for IT to provide an agile response to these demands and to make decisions on where best to deploy resources.

## Key questions

Now is the time for IT to look in the mirror and perform some searching self-analysis.

- Does our (IT) organisation deliver what our customers need?
- What is special about our (IT) organisation?
- Why should our customers choose our services?
- Can we demonstrate the value we deliver?
- Do our customers appreciate the value delivered?

Regardless of the actual response, many IT organisations struggle to even answer these questions. Are you one of them?

There is nothing that an IT organisation provides its business customers that they cannot buy from someone else. Therefore, to exist, the status quo is no longer an option. The service catalogue helps to provide positive answers to the questions and transparency and visibility into the services and value delivered by IT.

## Four good reasons for a service catalogue

1. **Relationship building.** Deploying a service catalogue can build trust between IT and the business. It can deliver a clear, intuitive way for business customers to understand and request the services provided by IT. In essence, it clearly defines what services are available from the IT organisation and aligns those services with the business goals and needs.
2. **Business value through IT efficiency.** A primary purpose of a service catalogue is to document IT services and establish the foundation for other service management

---

<sup>1</sup> ©ITIL is a registered trademark of AXELOS Limited

components. It helps IT translate service offerings into supporting product and infrastructure requirements including:

- Providing an interface into the Configuration Management System (CMS) – or helps to start to define it
  - Providing a basis for business impact analysis
  - Improving credibility with the business
  - Simplifying service level agreements (SLAs) by including many generic services leaving the SLA to include business specific services. Using a service catalogue in this way means that SLAs do not have to be repetitive with the inclusion of the same text in each SLA of a similar type, as the SLA could refer out to a repository, such as a service catalogue.
3. **Cost control.** Internal IT catalogues that list services and products available to the organisation can be the best method of achieving cost transparency and reinforcing IT as a 'business within a business'.

Effective governance of operational spend is vital because it represents the majority of the IT budget. With operational spend, the emphasis is on availability, reliability, and running IT operations at the lowest reasonable cost. By creating a catalogue of IT services against which costs can be accrued, and which can be managed through SLAs then improved visibility into the true costs of providing the services can be achieved. This in turn helps alignment with business processes, and can demonstrate true value of service or even form the basis of chargeback to business units.

4. **Service decision making.** Services that are offered as commodity services are best subcontracted to the lowest bidder, allowing focus on IT services that are true value-add and provide competitive advantage. Similarly, services that can be self-sourced by users with little IT value-add can result in decisions to opt out of service provision. The services that are best provided in-house stay that way and become your area of focus.

Regardless of who or how services are fulfilled it is important for IT to have a view of the entire range of services whilst maintaining the relationship with the business executives and end users. Remember, if you give up ownership of the relationship with your customer, then you also give up the ability to demonstrate and drive business value.

## Summary

The service catalogue is the bond between IT and the business. It is a key mechanism in cultural change, the foundation of customer relationship and a pivotal tool for organising effort.

Fundamental requirements for service catalogue success include running IT like a business within a business and thinking like a vendor and competing for the business of your end users. This will likely require making some fundamental changes to the way you design, market, price, and deliver IT services to your IT savvy customers. Service offerings need to be customer-centric and business-value focused.

The service catalogue also unlocks the value of your other IT service management (ITSM) processes. It is only once the services are defined and the service levels set (where possible) that all of the other processes know what is required of them, and how to prioritise activities, deliverables and resources.

The service catalogue is the hub around which the IT and business should revolve.

## Neil Walker

*Principal Consultant at Fox IT*



## About Fox IT

Fox IT<sup>2</sup> has been a leading Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) and governance business for over 30 years. We provide a range of practical and effective consultancy solutions designed to create agile, proactive, responsive IT organisations providing excellent IT services in alignment with our clients' goals to support and drive continuous business innovation. We achieve this by empowering your people with best practice training, developing and implementing the right operational processes and using properly configured and integrated tools to enable IT Services transformation.

To discuss how we can assist you in transforming your IT services or in obtaining ISO/IEC 20000 certification please call us now on +44 (0) 333 202 1018.

Please come and join in the latest ITSM conversations on our social media pages:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/FoxIT.ITSM](http://www.facebook.com/FoxIT.ITSM)

Twitter: [@FoxIT\\_ITSM](https://twitter.com/FoxIT_ITSM)

LinkedIn Company Page: [www.linkedin.com/company/fox-it](http://www.linkedin.com/company/fox-it)

LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Fox-IT-ITSM-Today-7456241/about>

---

<sup>2</sup> Fox IT ® is a registered trademark of Fox IT SM Limited