

## The ITIL Framework in Action

ITIL helps Cisco manage the IT service lifecycle better and align more efficiently with IT and business goals.

Several years back, Cisco IT began seeking how to bolster its focus on operational excellence. As the organization investigated service management best practices, it found that its work paralleled that of the British Office of Government Commerce-developed IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) process framework. Today, Cisco IT has adopted the ITIL framework broadly.

The de facto global standard for IT service management, ITIL provides a set of best practices for managing all phases of the IT service lifecycle, from early development to phase-out and even afterwards. Standardized processes developed using the ITIL framework help ensure that users get the services and support they need. At Cisco, the IT Global Operations group is tasked with managing several of these processes IT-wide.

Physically a set of manuals, ITIL became especially useful to Cisco IT with the release of Version 3 in 2007, says Ian Reddy, an IT manager in the IT Global Operations group. "Version 3 is strategically oriented and prescriptive compared with Version 2, which described processes but not how they connected up," says Reddy. "The new version covers how recommended processes are connected to each other and how to implement them, making ITIL an effective lifecycle approach to IT service management."

ITIL V3 deals with 24 processes. To date Cisco IT has employed ITIL techniques primarily for Incident, Problem, Change, and Configuration Management processes. Service Catalog, Service Portfolio, Service Level Management, and other processes are being implemented.

### Speaking the Same Language

An important objective for IT is that all parties involved in service delivery speak the same language. "ITIL provides a common taxonomy, and taxonomy is tightly coupled to process," says Kevin Smith, an IT manager in the IT Global Operations group at Cisco.

When Smith started working with ITIL, he often used different service management terms than those used by his IT counterparts. By employing a common taxonomy described by ITIL, everyone in the organization has the same understanding of, for example, an "incident" and a "problem" and how to manage each of them to support IT and business goals.

An incident might be a laptop not booting up or an application running improperly. It is something to be corrected quickly or immediately if its impact is mission critical. On the other hand, a problem is the underlying cause of a recurring or related incident. According to the ITIL framework, problem-solving should not stop with short-term fixes to incidents.

In line with best practices, the IT Global Operations group has implemented a standardized problem management process that includes performing root cause analysis for business-impacting incidents, evaluating the likelihood that they will recur, and tracking the long-term fixes required.

“For problem management to be truly effective, it must look at overall service quality rather than service unavailability,” says Kartik Jaggi, an IT manager in the IT Global Operations group at Cisco. “Problem management should be about understanding and correcting service management issues, not just service operations issues.”

During the last three years, the group’s focus on adopting a standardized problem management process and reporting has yielded a significant drop in incidents of approximately 45 percent.

For the full story, visit

[http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoatatwork/trends/tr\\_2008\\_09\\_article010\\_itil\\_framework.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoatatwork/trends/tr_2008_09_article010_itil_framework.html)



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