

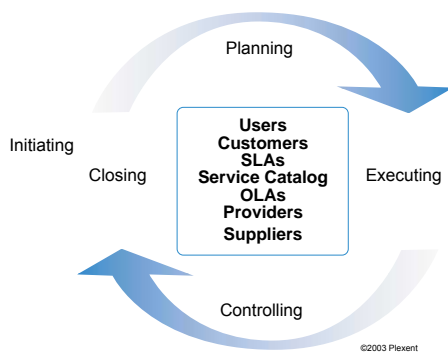
What is Service Level Management?

ITIL defines Service Level Management (SLM) as:

... the processes of planning, co-ordinating, drafting, agreeing, monitoring and reporting on [Service Level Agreements], and the on-going review of service achievements to ensure that the required and cost-justifiable service quality is maintained and gradually improved. SLAs provide the basis for managing the relationship between the provider and the Customer.

Taking this a step farther, SLM is the central function of IT Service Management, providing the bridge between the Service Delivery and Service Support functions. The linkage between Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and underpinning Operational Level Agreements (OLAs) creates a gateway through which Suppliers and Providers interact with Customers and Users. Through this gateway flows services from the Providers and feedback from Users about how those services are received. Understanding that SLM is a dynamic, iterative process, dependent on realistic expectations and agreement by all parties, helps to improve the maturity of this Discipline over time.

SLM's criticality stems from its key role in the IT Service Management lifecycle. This concept of services as a lifecycle is important because it correctly implies an iterative process over time wherein services are initiated, planned, executed, controlled, and eventually closed. This process is reflected in the diagram below.

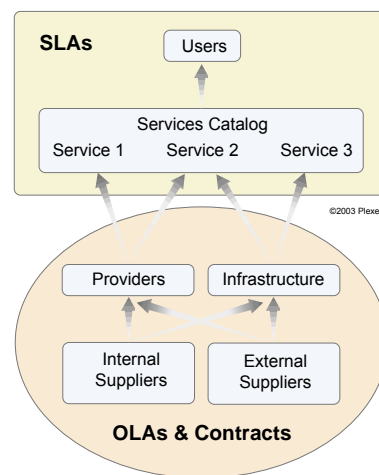


SLM cannot solve every problem and its impact and effectiveness can be severely limited by an organization's own internal barriers. Lack of support from senior management during Initiating will hamper efforts in all subsequent phases. Failure to identify stakeholders during Planning will prevent requirements

from being identified and validated against the business need and ultimately translated into items within the Service Catalog. The list goes on, but Plexent and itDNA can help.

The Plexent Approach

itDNA builds on the Service Management concepts outlined in the ITIL standard and, by leveraging our framework, Plexent can apply ITIL to your organization. If you are just getting started with SLM you may need help with initial planning activities, such as setting up monitoring capabilities or developing OLAs. If you already have a list of services provided by your IT department, Plexent can take you to the next level by creating a Services Catalog and developing SLAs. Depending on your need, this can be simple or involve multiple levels of services arranged in hierarchies, by class. Whatever your SLM maturity, Plexent can take you to the next level by bringing all of the pieces together.



Much more than just a framework, itDNA brings real-world tools and techniques to bear on your concerns. Backed up by itDNA's maturity models and rich, intellectual property, knowledge base, Plexent's project management combines with proven policies and procedures to provide standardized services within the following SLM Elements:

- SLA Development
- SLA Monitoring
- Standards Development
- Standards Monitoring

Once you're up and running, SLM is ready to become a contributing asset of your organization's Service Improvement Program. Here the feedback from users and measurements from your monitoring system provide the input necessary to advance your maturity in this Discipline and improve the quality of services provided. Other benefits of a mature SLM program include:

- Unambiguous, consistent, measurable service
- Enhanced productivity
- Ability to balance services and costs
- Clear, documented requirements
- Verifiable performance
- Improved customer/provider relationship

Service Level Management is an important part of every successful organization. Because functionality is the driving factor, this discipline should not be overlooked just because an organization is small or does not provide a broad range of services. While larger, more complex companies can realize greater benefit from implementing and maturing defined elements, there is also a greater cost and resource commitment to be borne; this may not be appropriate for a small company. To help you decide what is best for your organization, Plexent provides Service Management Assessments. Leveraging the intelligence in our itDNA, we can help you evaluate where you are today, where you would like to take your organization, and the surest path to get there.

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