

## Fusion Briefing Note on Service Request Management

Consumers are already familiar with the experience of buying online – ease of use, convenience, regular status updates and its straight through processing. As a result, these same consumers are now demanding the same experience internally within their business. For IT management, providing an online request management / service catalogs looks like a sure winner – the offer of standard and repeatable requests, offered centrally and resulting in more efficiency and better quality for both end users and IT alike.

Request Management and service catalogs are certainly hot topics. At the recent ITSF Fusion event in the US, the topic was twice as popular as the much hyped CMDBs. So why the slow adoption and what are the criteria for success?

In Fusion's experience the slow adoption is not due to software and consultancy fees, it is all about changing internal processes, which can be difficult to manage and easy to get wrong. Roles need refining (e.g. who can request, who should approve and who must fulfil) and all the process activities and changes need to be embedded in the product / solution. Paradoxically, this challenge presents the greatest opportunity, as research indicates that the greatest benefit from IT solutions comes from those that embed process innovation and which can then be easily scaled across the business.

Also this exercise naturally raises questions over why certain services are offered at all and can highlight the true cost of providing those services.

Looking at Fusion customers who have been successful, the following activities emerge:

- **Start with a targeted group, preferably one which is IT literate.** This reduces the risk around internal process change. Also this can be used as a pilot implementation to prove the return on investment for a larger roll-out;
- **Provide a central fulfilment point.** This pulls together disparate start points for different requests which creates a "pull" where users know where to go for multiple request types;
- **Make it very easy to use.** The solution must be capable of use **without** any training, as intuitive as using Amazon;
- **Agree standard Request Models.** Formalise and optimise the activities required to fulfil each request and remove all "blind alleys" and "bottlenecks";
- **Automate approval activities.** Ensure that approval points are automated wherever possible;
- **Provide end to end processing by linking in other systems.** This is critical to success as those fulfilling the requests must be linked in at the back end and users see an up-to-date status on where the request is. More importantly it should only be possible to process requests this way – embed the process in the solution;
- **Provide audit trail reporting.** Experience shows that IT departments are spending significant time keeping compliance officers onside by preparing complex, and often manual, reports. This is becoming a big cost driver in the adoption of Service Request Management;
- **Pilot, prove and then expand capability.** Once the solution is proven, start to roll out the same requests to more and more groups and then start adding new request types;

Demand appears to be highest for those requests centred around **system access**, so this is often a great place to start. Not only is the cost efficiency high, but compliance is critical, essentially the ability to track, archive and report on requests for access to systems from a security, audit and compliance perspective at any time.

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**So what are the pure cost savings?** Return on investment in less than 1 year is possible through:

1. Delivering back office efficiencies; reduced fulfilment timescales for requests through accurate first time information, removing the need to go back and forward to the requester or to field status calls. Significant reductions in the time required to prepare compliance reports. Reduction in the headcount needed to deliver.
2. Decreased the number of calls to the Service Desk: For new standard service requests, EMA have estimated this to be as high as 20% of all Service Desk calls.
3. Requester efficiency: This is a factor but is hard to estimate.

Other benefits are:

- Better service: Improved expectation management and fulfilment success rates – the removal of the “black hole”.
- Better compliance: Accurate and automated audit and reporting capabilities.