The IT Manager's Guide to Getting Started.

A practical guide to finding a starting point with new and rapidly growing IT Organizations.

Table of Contents

Written By: Bobbye Gene Benson II

Introduction

Understanding your IT team's services is crucial to ensuring that your organization gets the most out of its technology investment. In this e-book, I will outline the steps you can take to better understand your IT Infrastructure team's services and how they support your business. I will not be able to cover every department. Still, the theory I provide here should spark your imagination in specific areas for other departments, such as Database Management, Application Support, and Desktop Support/Engineering.

Scenario 1:

Congratulations, you are the new IT Infrastructure Manager for the team. What should you do first? As the new Infrastructure and Engineering Manager, you have a critical role in ensuring the success of the IT department and even the entire company.

Scenario 2:

You are the longtime manager of an IT Infrastructure team. The business's growth has exploded beyond the small business IT processes you have used for years. You have to bring order and predictability to your department and show a plan for how you intend to grow your organization.

In either scenario, multiple departments depend upon your team for access to revenue-generating business systems and critical network connectivity internally and externally. To be concise and direct, you are responsible for making it happen.

I wrote this book as a primer to get you started in the right direction during a time when you can quickly feel overwhelmed and under a microscope. I have been there, and I made plenty of mistakes. This guide will provide an overview of all the items you need to address and most of the steps you will need to take. If you find that I have missed something and want to ask, "What the Heck?" you can contact me via email, and I will try to answer any questions you have and then update it in this book so the next person won't have to ask. Thank you for reading my book, and good luck.

Bobbye G. Benson II
BGBensonII@Gmail.com

Training videos available at
www.BobbyeBenson.com/videos

Review the IT Department's Documentation

The first step in understanding your IT team's services is to review the documentation they have provided. This may include service level agreements, process manuals, and reports that outline the services they offer and the processes they follow to deliver them. This documentation will provide a good starting point for understanding what your IT team is responsible for and how they provide their services.

a. Obtain a copy of the IT department's service level agreements (SLAs), process manuals, and reports.
b. Review the SLAs to understand the IT team's services, the quality of those services, and the expected response times.
c. Read through the process manuals to understand the steps the IT team follows to provide their services, including incident management, change management, and problem management.
d. Ask for diagrams of Application Infrastructure and Dataflow diagrams. Ensure you have up-to-date IP address Management records and Diagrams of all the external connections to your internal network and the purpose of those connections.
e. Review the reports to understand the IT team's performance, such as the number of service requests received, the time it takes to resolve incidents, and customer satisfaction.

Speak with Your IT Team

The next step is to speak with your IT team directly and then really listen to their responses. This can be done through scheduled meetings or one-on-one discussions. Ask questions about the services they provide, how they support the business, and what their goals are for the future. This will give you a better understanding of their perspective and what they believe is important for the organization.

a. Schedule regular meetings with your IT team to discuss their services and the support they provide to your business.
b. Ask questions about their processes, the tools and resources they use, and the challenges they face in providing their services.
c. Ask about their goals for the future and how they plan to improve their services.
d. Encourage open and honest communication to understand their perspective better.
e. Know what you want to accomplish with the team over any given period and share why you have set a goal, how you want the team to achieve it, and what success will look like at completion.

Understand the IT Team's Customers

Understanding who the IT team's customers are and their needs is also essential. This may include internal customers, such as employees, departments, or business units, and external customers, such as partners, suppliers, or customers. Understanding the needs of

these customers will give you a better idea of the services your IT team should provide to support their needs.

a. Identify the IT team's customers, including internal customers such as employees, departments, or business units, and external customers such as partners, suppliers, or customers.
b. Speak with the customers directly to understand their experiences with the IT team and what they expect from their services. You will need names, contact information, the applications or services your team provides that they depend on, and whom you can contact when you have detected a problem.
c. Ask your team what they think their customer's needs are and the services they provide to meet them. Look for gaps between what they tell you and what the customer expects.
d. Create a consolidated document of both viewpoints to compare the two inputs easier.

Monitor Service Delivery

To better understand your IT team's services, monitoring how they are delivered is crucial. This may include tracking the time it takes to resolve issues, the number of service requests received, and customer satisfaction levels. This information can be used to identify areas where the IT team is excelling and areas where they can improve.

Define and measure success.

a. Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) relevant to your departments, such as uptime, response time, customer satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.
b. Set targets for each KPI and track progress towards achieving them.
c. Track the time it takes for the IT team to resolve work items such as incident/outage tickets, service requests, change tickets for upgrade or repair services, and security incidents.
d. Monitor the number of service requests received and track how many are resolved within the agreed Service Level Objective (SLO).
e. Track customer satisfaction levels through surveys, interviews, or customer feedback.
f. Use this information to identify areas where the IT team is excelling and where they can improve.
g. Review and compare your department's performance to industry benchmarks and best practices.

Evaluate Performance

Finally, it is important to evaluate the performance of your IT team. This may include conducting regular benchmarking reviews of the team's performance against industry standards and comparing their performance to previous periods. This will give you a better understanding of your IT team's performance and where they need to focus their efforts to improve.

Monitor and adjust

a. Continuously monitor performance and adjust strategies as necessary to achieve the desired outcomes.
b. Regularly solicit feedback from your team, customers, and management.
c. Be proactive in identifying and addressing problems before they become significant issues.

Staff Development

There are few things worse than working yourself to the bone, looking for approval and appreciation, and not being recognized or, worse, being given an obligatory thanks for the hard work soundbite from your manager. Great technical employees expect to be developed and crave it to advance their careers. You must work this into your management plan and employee's annual goal process.

Provide training, and support

a. Offer ongoing training and development opportunities for your team to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

b. Provide access to tools and resources to help your team perform their jobs more effectively.
c. Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing within the team.
d. Foster a culture of continuous improvement by recognizing and rewarding excellence.

In conclusion, understanding your IT team's services is critical to ensuring that your organization gets the most out of its technology investment. By following these steps, you can better understand your IT team's services, how they support your business, and what you can do to help them improve. This will allow you to make informed decisions about your technology investments, identify areas for improvement, and provide your IT team with the resources and support they need to deliver high-quality services.