Problem Management Process

A disciplined approach to solving issues

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1. Overview

Problem Management provides a disciplined approach to solving issues. The goal is to minimize the business impact of service disruptions and prevent future disruptions. Problem Management helps IT investigate the root cause of an incident through structured problem analysis, then document solutions and workarounds in the knowledge base. These actions are documented and published for internal and external review.

2. Problem Management Goals

The goal of Problem Management is to minimize the adverse impact of changes, incidents, and problems on day-to-day operations by reducing the incidence of errors within the IT infrastructure. Problem management seeks to get to the root causes of incidents and unsuccessful changes and then initiates actions to avert similar problems in the future.

The development of a mature Problem Management process is regarded as a vital requirement for an effective business and efficient change management process.

To achieve the goals of the problem management process, the System Control Team (SCT) will:

- Develop and implement a single and repeatable Problem-Management best practice process.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities required to execute the activities of Problem Management.
- Identify the key policies that support the Problem Management process.
- Standardize a methodology for performing Root Cause Analysis (RCA) within DTI.

3. Scope

The Problem-Management process has both reactive and proactive aspects. The reactive aspect is concerned with solving problems in response to one or more incidents or unsuccessful changes where the underlying cause is unknown. Proactive Problem Management is concerned with identifying and solving before incidents and unsuccessful changes occur.

A problem is defined as an unknown or as-yet unsolved underlying cause of one or more incidents or unsuccessful changes. The System Control Team will make a decision as to whether to create a problem record in the IT ServiceNow tool for any of the following:

- Any Severity 1 incident
- A request from Senior Management
- A customer request except in cases where the SCT team believes that they can appropriately anser the request outside of the formal problem process.
- A request from the Service Desk after review and approval from the Lead Support Specialist.

4. Inputs

The following inputs can be used to fuel the Problem Ticket and the RCA process

- Incident tickets
- Change tickets
- Log files
- Vendor input
- Customer input

5. Outputs

The following are products (outputs) of the Problem Process:

- Formal RCA report
- Customer-facing RCA document (CES)
- Knowledge Base

6. Process Flow

Problem requests will be handled as follows:

- All problem requests will be reviewed by the Problem Manager (PM)
- The PM will initiate a Problem Management Ticket
- The PM will schedule and conduct an RCA.
- The PM will create and distribute an RCA report. http://extranet.dti.state.de.us/information/dtie_information_deal.shtml
- The PM will attach the RCA report is attached to the ServiceNow problem ticket
- The PM will follow up on tasks assigned in the problem ticket

7. Terms and Acronyms

- CAB—Change Advisory Board
- CI—Configuration Item
- CM – Change Manager/Management
- CMDB—Configuration Management Database
- ITIL—Information Technology Infrastructure Library
- KB—Knowledge Base
- PM – Problem Manager
- RCA—Root-Cause Analysis
- SCT—System Control Team