



Problem Management

Goals

Problem Management is to support within the support organization:

- (Mainly) Incident Management
- Availability Management

Preconditions

Incident Management has been implemented including SLAs that specify the expected periods for reactions and solutions.

Ideally Availability Management does already exist or it will be implemented in parallel.

My principles

I prefer the classical well proven procedure, in detail:

1. You tell me your goals and the circumstances (budget, resources, schedule, etc.)
 2. I analyze together with you the current situation ...
 3. ... and compare the result with your goals.
 4. On that base I am able to recommend the best roadmap to success.
 5. You decide and we commit together the next actions.
6. And of course I am going to support you in the phase of implementation.

Tasks

- Problem Control (looking for causes for incidents with unknown causes)
- Error Control (looking for workarounds / solutions)



For the introduction phase of Problem Management I recommend to use a little bit modified process to avoid Problem Management to become a blocking point for Incident Management.

A tool for tracking problems and know errors including solutions is quite helpful. – I have developed and implemented a regarding module on the base of AR System from Remedy/BMC.

In the pro-active part Problem Management analyses the frequency of incidents. In order to SLAs and costs the Problem Manager has to recommend, the incident will be fought by workarounds against the impact or by RfCs (Request for Change) against the cause.

The continuous analysis is mainly based on:

- Incident Report
- Monitoring Report
- Observations by support staff

Problem Management assists the Availability Management to implement and to expand Monitoring to avoid impacts before the user gets aware of that.

Example: Monitoring of toner volume in a printer enables the support staff to refill early enough that the user will never be hindered by lacking toner.

In that context it is necessary to specify (and test) pre-authorized procedures when automatic alerts indicate anomalies. Of course the executing support roles have to be bound by SLAs/OLAs.

Results

Problem Management is a quite effective method to relieve Incident Management:

- Analysis for incidents/problems with unknown reasons
- Development of workarounds/solutions to accelerate the solution of existing incidents
- Avoiding the impact of disturbances by Monitoring and by pre-authorized procedures
- Avoiding incidents by creating RfCs to remove the causes.

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