

## Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

---

CONF-IRM 2009 Proceedings

International Conference on Information Resources  
Management (CONF-IRM)

---

5-2009

# A Theoretical Model for Developing an IT Service Catalogue

Vimbiso Mazvimavi

Rhodes University, [veemaz@gmail.com](mailto:veemaz@gmail.com)

Robert V. Benyon

Rhodes University, [r.v.benyon@ru.ac.za](mailto:r.v.benyon@ru.ac.za)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/confirm2009>

---

### Recommended Citation

Mazvimavi, Vimbiso and Benyon, Robert V., "A Theoretical Model for Developing an IT Service Catalogue" (2009). *CONF-IRM 2009 Proceedings*. 12.

<http://aisel.aisnet.org/confirm2009/12>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Information Resources Management (CONF-IRM) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in CONF-IRM 2009 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact [elibrary@aisnet.org](mailto:elibrary@aisnet.org).

# 5. A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR DEVELOPING AN IT SERVICE CATALOGUE

Vimbiso Mazvimavi  
Rhodes University  
veemaz@gmail.com

Robert V. Benyon  
Rhodes University  
r.v.benyon@ru.ac.za

## ***Abstract***

In today's volatile, ever-changing Information Technology (IT) environment, IT must adapt the way it views relationships with business units and end users. Users in the organisation also need easy to use methods for understanding available services and making corresponding IT requests. A critical step in this transformation is the use of a service catalogue that defines and manages the relationship between IT and the business it services.

This paper defines service catalogues and explores the multiple views of a service catalogue. The benefits of a service catalogue are identified. Further, the paper explores how IT organisations are currently creating a service catalogue, focusing on the steps and the key success factors necessary for the development of a service catalogue. Common pitfalls that may be encountered and their solutions are also discussed. The paper concludes with a proposed theoretical model that brings together the ideas and issues identified in the related literature.

## ***Keywords***

Service Catalogue, IT Service Management.

## **1. Introduction**

IT is becoming a commodity that must support more applications, devices, connectivity options, and users. Most organisations provide their customers or constituents with a list of their services and products, a convenient way to order them, and terms of their delivery (NewScale, 2007:1). Faced with the continued budget pressures, as well as growing business unit demand for new services and higher service levels, IT organisations are embarking on a fundamental transformation to improve their operations, the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) version 3 prescribes the use of the service catalogue.

The service catalogue is much more than an *a la carte* menu for the business customer. It is also a common misunderstanding that the service catalogue is no more or no less than a marketing brochure for IT and as such is a nice to have option. While the service catalogues may be used for the basis of creating a marketing tool, this is an auxiliary output of the catalogue and certainly not its central purpose (Pink Elephant, 2007:1).

To understand the critical elements of IT success, it is necessary to fully comprehend the nature of the service catalogue. To begin this discussion, the purpose of this section is to define a service catalogue, the value of the service catalogue and to identify the views of a service catalogue that organisations need to consider when developing them.

## 2. Definition of a Service Catalogue

A service catalogue as a menu of IT services (Infra, 2007:1). It is an integrated product that simplifies the administration of and access to IT services (Unicenter, 2008:1). A service catalogue is also a document that is used for reporting to the business or customers the services IT can do or deliver (Gandar, 2006: 6).

	Service Catalogue
<b>Focus</b>	Services
<b>Starting Point</b>	Service Definition
<b>Financial Aspects</b>	Service-based Pricing Models
<b>Data Aspects</b>	Source of Record for the Services that IT Offers
<b>Primary Functions</b>	Services are Published, Agreed, Managed, Requested, Tracked, and Reported
<b>Key ITIL Processes</b>	Business Relationship Management, Service Level Management, and Financial Management
<b>Reporting Aspects</b>	Reporting to the Business on What Services IT Can/Does Deliver
<b>Terminology</b>	Business Language
<b>Usage</b>	Used by Relationship Managers, Service Delivery Managers, Users, and Customers

Figure 1: Aspects of a Service Catalogue (Gandar, 2006: 6)

Services are the focus of a service catalogue (Gandar, 2006: 6). A service catalogue is no longer simply a document listing available services nor is a standalone service request management software solution. Rather, it is a dynamic application tied into IT workflow and service request management (Marquis, 2007:1).

A service catalogue also describes the features, components and charges among other things of the services in the catalogue. It not only serves as a way to document and publish the specific range of available services, it also standardises service deliverables, establishes Service Level Expectations (SLE), and determines the associated costs/market service offerings to users and internal customers (Pink Elephant, 2005:1) and (Marquis, 2007:1).

Pink Elephant (2005:2) and RL Consulting (2003:1) agree that a service catalogue is a means by which IT services can be defined, configured, deployed and governed. It also focuses on

the IT services provided to the organisation which are detailed in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) (RL Consulting, 2003:1).

Service catalogues therefore can be electronically available lists of products and services replacing paper forms and the myriad informal, one-off requests that reduce a service desk's efficiency (Sundberg, 2007a:1). Each service within the catalogue typically includes: a description of the service, timeframes or SLA for fulfilling the service, identifies the person who is entitled to request/view the service, costs (if any) and how to fulfil the service (Marquis, 2007:1).

### 3. Service Catalogue Views

Users and customers of a service catalogue do not know what to expect from IT as they do not understand or have the patience to navigate IT operations to get the service information (Orlov, 2005:4). Depending on the audience and usage, the scope and content of the service catalogue should therefore vary, giving multiple and different constituencies the opportunity to gain from the service catalogue (ITIL and ITSM, 2007:1).

Kennedy (2008:1), Pink Elephant (2005:1) and Flores (2005a:1) all agree that there are three separate roles that exist among the non-IT people, with separate objectives and views of the data presented in the service catalogue. These three roles need to be met by anyone wishing to develop a service catalogue. The three views include the Business Customer, End User and Service Level Manager. The views are illustrated in Figure 2.

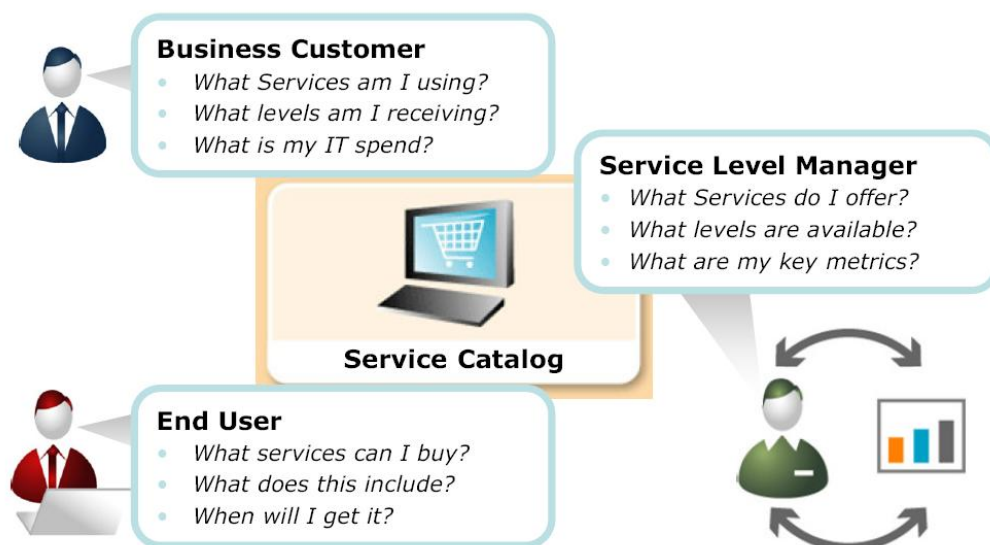


Figure 2: Service Catalogue Views (Pink Elephant, 2007:2)

#### 3.1 Service Level Manager View

As illustrated in Figure 2, the Service Level Manager is concerned about the services being offered, the levels of services available and the key metrics (Pink Elephant, 2007:2). Consequently, the Service Level Manager is dependent upon all the other areas of service delivery providing the necessary support that ensures that the agreed services are provided in a secure, efficient and cost effective manner (Kennedy, 2008:1).

From an IT perspective, the service catalogue for a Service Level Manager is a tool to clearly document the detail technical attributes of service delivery, such as availability, security, IT service continuity among other things. Thus the Service Level Manager can concern him or herself with technical details that the various customer stakeholders do not need to know, and do not want to know (Kennedy, 2008:1). Consequently the service catalogue for a Service Level Manager should contain information that can assist to answer the questions “What services do we offer? What levels are available? What are my key metrics,” (Pink Elephant, 2007:2).

### 3.2 Business Customer View

The Business Customer view of the service catalogue is used by business unit executives to understand how IT’s portfolio of Service Offerings map to business unit needs (Kennedy, 2008:1). As the economic buyer of IT services, executives look for a portfolio view of the service offerings provided by IT at the Budget Planning Level and demand greater transparency and they expect the service portfolio to help them answer questions like, "What does IT do? Why does IT cost so much? Is IT doing a good job?" (Pink Elephant, 2007:2).

An executive-level service portfolio should therefore describe the broad categories of service offerings, with service tier options and cost elements. Examples of services represented in a service portfolio may include application hosting for an ERP system; or email with gold, silver, and bronze service level options (Flores, 2005a:1). Other examples are illustrated in Figure 3.

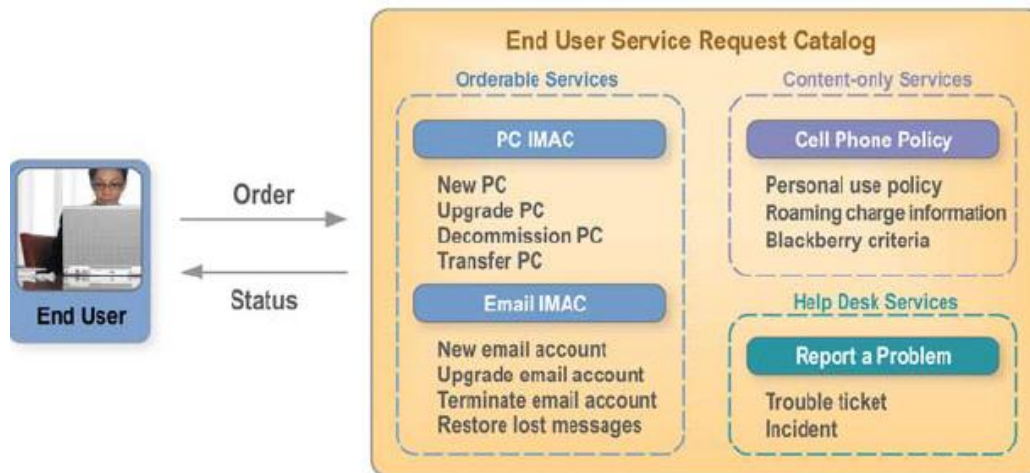


Figure 3: Business Unit/Customer View (Flores, 2005a:1)

### 3.3 End User View

End users need an actionable and easy-to-use service request catalogue that describes the products and services they are entitled to order or request from IT, (Flores, 2005a:1). The End User View of the catalogue presents the user with a set of day to day transactional IT services that support ongoing business operations (Pink Elephant, 2007:2) and (Flores, 2005a:1).

The information that is presented in the catalogue for the user is filtered based on established agreements and role based entitlements (Pink Elephant, 2007:2). The user view of the service catalogue offers a way to standardise service deliverables, establish service level expectations, and market services to end users. The user can quickly browse or search for available services in the catalogue, submit a request, and monitor delivery status thus making it as easy for employees to find and order IT services (Flores, 2005a:1). An example of the end user view is illustrated in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: End User View (Flores, 2005a:1)**

### 3.4 Benefits of Using a Service Catalogue

There are direct benefits to developing and using a service catalogue. These include reduction in pressure on IT staff, improved management of vendors, services, workflow process and relationships.

#### 3.4.1 Lowering Pressure on Department Staff by Standardisation of Services

Without a standard catalogue of request services, each request from the business and customers is treated like a unique deliverable achieving consistent service levels and continuous process improvement is problematic. A service catalogue will standardise the service delivery and so help reduce pressure on the service staff. The work on the department staff will be routine and so the service delivery process, allowing staff to focus on high-value strategic initiatives (Gandar, 2006:3).

#### 3.4.2 Improved Vendor Standardisation

A service catalogue will improve the vendor standardisation. This means that there will be well defined services that will enable more effective service delivery while at the same time lowering the cost of outsourcing (Gandar, 2006:3) and (Flores, 2005b:1).

#### 3.4.3 Better Management of Service Demands and Improved Demand Planning

With the implementation of a service catalogue, there will be an improvement in the internal and external communication (Gandar, 2006:3). Due to the improved communications, Flores, (2005b:1) and Gandar (2006:4) conclude that there will be more visibility of the services offered by the business and so IT will be in a better position to manage the service demands.

#### 3.4.4 Improvements in Process Workflow

The primary purpose of a service catalogue is to communicate how IT can help internal business customers and end users to do their job (NewScale, 2008:1). By mapping IT services more explicitly to business needs, utilizing a service catalogue, IT organisations can better understand how to add more value to the business through improving their process workflows (NewScale, 2008:1).

#### 3.4.5 Process Automation Improvements

As IT streamlines service request and delivery processes by making use of service catalogues through automation improvements, it will start to facilitate new project development and

encourage the additional use of services by marketing projects to targeted internal constituencies. Service catalogue users will see IT as less of an unresponsive cost centre and more of a business enabler (Sundberg, 2007b:4) and (Le Blanc, 2008:1).

#### *3.4.6 Improve the Relationship Management*

Relationship Management solutions allow IT relationship managers to create a tailored portfolio of service offerings for the business unit executive. These offers establish the basis for trust by presenting interactive documents to review, edit and comment on (Le Blanc, 2008:1). The service catalogue is one of the frameworks for the effective operation of Relationship Management and so expected to improve the relationship of IT, the business and its' customers (Flores, 2005b:1).

## **4. Common Pitfalls in the Development of a Service Catalogue**

From the broad range of experiences of developing a service catalogue, clear patterns have emerged, with the same mistakes being made in many of the failures, and many common attributes associated with the successes (Flores, 2005b: 1). This is because many people in IT have a feeling they know what they are doing, yet they do not have full knowledge as to what to do, (Marquis: 2007:1). Thus the purpose of this section is to identify the common pitfalls that many IT companies often find themselves in, and to suggest ways in which to overcome the common pitfalls that are often encountered during the development of the service catalogue.

### **4.1 Assuming Customers Understand What You Are Talking About**

IT people forget their audience capacity and overwhelm the reader with technical detail or use highly technical language to describe the service offering. This is a common mistake and many service catalogue initiatives service levels are based on this metrics (Schailby, 2006:51). It is important to recognize that the business unit customers of IT do not want to review detailed catalogues in IT-speak. This is referred to as to inside-out approach (Flores, 2005b:1).

For example, customers of IT services are too busy to be bothered about whether the e-mail system's SLA is 99.999% or 99.98% up time, or whether the help desk average call wait time is 30 seconds or 60 seconds (NewScale, 2005:2). The common tendency to focus on the underlying technical infrastructure and support activities performed by IT and not on how the service will be interpreted and acted upon by its customers often results in agitated service catalogue readers and should be taken care of (Schailby, 2006:51).

### **4.2 If You Document the Service Catalogue, They Will Come**

Many service catalogue projects stop with publishing a document or posting it on the internet thus the catalogue is not used and does not make an impact to the targeted user(s) (Flores, 2005b:1). At times, organisations perceive the service catalogues as merely a static reference document and not as a framework to accelerate SLM (NewScale, 2005:4). Other times end users could go to the service catalogue to read about IT services, but still need to link with another form or call the help desk to submit a request (Flores, 2005b:1).

### **4.3 Solving World Hunger**

Many service catalogue projects attempt to exhaustively document every service, service option or permutation, with each associated activity, task, configuration item, and workflow, and end up exhausted (Flores, 2005b:1). It is impossible to do so and this can be very



expensive. Symptoms of an organisation attempting to cater for all its services in the service catalogue include the following:

- Service catalogue is in a Microsoft Word or Excel document running hundreds of pages.
- The services that were thought were fully documented and changed before the catalogue was published.
- Months spent coming up with the right category-type-item structure.
- Start by documenting the back-end technologies, assets, and infrastructure which are not customer-focused in the current approach.
- Having flow diagrams that extend hundreds of pages (Schailby, 2006:51).

#### **4. 4 A Service Catalogue is Just a Front-end to the Service Desk**

Often, people fail to implement their service catalogue as they perceive it to be a front-end to the service desk tool (Flores, 2005c:1). At first glance, the help desk may seem like a good place to start, however, the ITIL standards recognise the service desk as the point of contact with customers and it is meant to be a place to address any problems, complaints, or questions and not to request for services (Enterprise Management Associates, 2007:3).

### **5. Overcoming Pitfalls in Developing of a Service Catalogue**

There are mechanisms that can be employed to overcome the pitfalls previously identified. These include the communication, documentation, scope and application of the service catalogue.

#### **5.1 Assume Your Customer Understands what you are talking about**

Be it for commercial service providers or an enterprise services groups (such as IT, Finance, and Communications), it should be known that customers have little patience with trying to figure out the details of complex services (Digital Fuel, 2008:1). The ITIL framework advocates that IT organisations should begin their process improvements initiatives by creating a service catalogue that defines and describes the standard service offerings. It is also up to the service catalogue team to identify the terms customers can easily understand, so they can use them when developing the service catalogue. Alternatively, explain the services and educate consumers (NewScale, 2005:2).

#### **5.2 If You Document the Service Catalogue, they will come.**

The service catalogue should be accessible the moment customers want to or need to think about IT. It is therefore advised that IT should establish a single access point that end users will turn to for all their IT service delivery needs (NewScale, 2005:2).

#### **5.3 Solving World Hunger**

The service catalogue should not exhaustively document everything that is needed; rather, a service catalogue should make sure that it caters for the different user views. Users require a self-service portal into the service catalogue therefore; there should be different kinds of services catalogues defining the services in the service catalogue (RL Consulting, 2003:1) and (Pink Elephant, 2007:2).

#### **5.4 A Service Catalogue is just a Front-end to the Service Desk**

No service-oriented business can run effectively without operational and financial data readily and easily available. It is thus important that the service catalogue serves as a system of record that enables IT service organisations to be managed like a business within a



business. This means that service catalogues should be integrated with existing help desk systems so as to improve accuracy and efficiency, as well as increase the return on investment for systems (Sundberg, 2007a:1). This however does not mean that the service desk should serve as the main interface existing between the customer(s) and the business. Rather it should be a point of contact used to address any problems, complaints, or questions (Flores, 2005b:2).

## **6. Key Success Factors and Steps to Developing a Service Catalogue**

A service catalogue cannot be a technical list of what the IT organization thinks IT does. A service catalogue is an integrated tool that simplifies the administration of and access to IT services. In order to be effective in developing a service catalogue, there are key factors that need to be considered. Before the process of how to develop a service catalogue can be outlined, it is important to understand the key success factors.

### **6.1 Avoid Service Level Agreements**

In order to facilitate rapid service catalogue implementation, IT needs to try to avoid focussing on SLAs as they are often arbitrary. For example, 24 hours to restore a file seems reasonable. IT should rather use SLEs, which are more accurate as they are based on a real-time history of the time required to fulfil specific types of request (Sunberg, 2007:3).

### **6.2 Design Intelligent, Interactive Service Catalogue Forms**

End users do not usually complain that they have to fill out service request, but they do not like having their request returned/rejected, or the service not delivered because the form was not filled out correctly (Flores, 2005:2). Intelligent, interactive service catalogue forms should be designed in order to increase the levels of interaction between the IT and its customers (Flores, 2005:2) and (Sunberg, 2007:3).

### **6.3 Personalise the Service Catalogue**

Rather than presenting a super-set of all possible services and options, Sunberg (2007:3) suggests that the service catalogue should be personalised not only according to the users' view of the service catalogue, but also based on their job function, location, and role so as to make the service catalogue more interactive. Business users should also be provided with an interface that they are familiar and comfortable with (Flores, 2005:2). This involves looking up to the leaders in e-commerce for ideas and also providing the same look and feel (Sunberg, 2007:3).

### **6.4 Service Catalogue should be Interesting**

Educated customers frequently self-regulate their behaviour and so lack the ability to provoke positive emotions (Sunberg, 2007:3). A successful service catalogue has to be interesting and in order to accomplish this; the service catalogue should have the ability to provoke positive emotions such as empathy, understanding, courtesy, credibility and competence (Flores, 2005:2) and (Schaibly, 2006:51).

### **6.5 Keep the Service Catalogue Updated**

Change is inevitable and so it is undesirable to have bottlenecks keeping the service catalogues from being up to date (Sunberg, 2007:3). It is therefore advised by Schaibly (2006:51) that IT needs to provide tools that allow service managers or service owners to maintain the service catalogue so as to make sure that it is up-to-date.

## **6.6 Make Service Catalogues Dynamic and Knowledgeable.**

Valuable service catalogues identify users by their logins and recommend services relevant to their respective roles and project assignments. For example, Amazon.com recommends products to site visitors based on their past buying behaviour. In doing this the service catalogue is being dynamic. In addition, service catalogues should be knowledgeable. This means that the catalogue should provide a variety of information such as real-time request SLE, request status, costs and reporting for service managers (Sunberg, 2007:3).

## **7. Steps to Developing a Service Catalogue**

The development of a service catalogue requires careful consideration. These considerations include defining IT services, project management and technology considerations and communication.

### **7.1 Define IT Services**

IT needs to develop and document a service catalogue that includes defining and qualifying the types of services being provided for all major business systems, similar to an inventory of systems that includes a detailed description of each (Sunberg, 2007:3). IT and business activities should be examined in an effort to document the major IT services in production such as email, Software Application Services (SAP) and internet. Business and IT will be likely to have different names for the same service, therefore defining the IT services ensures that the team will reach a consensus on the services and their names (Marquis, 2002:1), (LeBlanc, 2008:1) and (RL Consulting, 2003:1).

### **7.2 Establish a Service Catalogue Team**

As identified earlier, the service catalogue team should represent various viewpoints from within IT and from the business when establishing the service catalogue (Sunberg, 2007:3). The business perceives things very differently from IT and as the initial move toward Business/IT Alignment the service catalogue should reflect the words and perceptions of the business and users. In order to be able to adequately do this LeBlanc, (2008:1) and Marquis (2002:1) recommend that members from IT at all levels and functions and business unit should be encouraged to form part of the team.

However, the service catalogue team needs to be established before defining the IT services because the service catalogue is to be driven internally within IT and include adequate representation from all stakeholders within each domain to ensure that the documented services are appropriate and valid (Marquis, 2002:1) and (LeBlanc, 2008:1).

### **7.3 Obtain Management Support**

The management team comprises of the general partners who oversee the activities of the venture capital fund therefore IT should obtain management support (Orlov, 2005: 1). The management support should not only be authorisation from IT but also working with management to obtain more service catalogue ideas. This helps to minimise the conflicts that can arise between management and the IT team as the management team would have the chance to be part of the decision making process (Orlov, 2005: 1).

### **7.4 Put in Place the Necessary Technology**

The necessary hardware and software technologies should be put in place to evaluate, monitor, and report on performance and availability of the service catalogue. Off-the-shelf

software and the associated hardware should be considered initially for practical reasons of maintenance, support, and resources requirements (RL Consulting, 2003:1).

### **7.5 The Dry Run: Review Service Catalogue**

A dry run should then be carried out (Marquis, 2002:1) and (LeBlanc, 2008:1). At this stage, the service catalogue is evaluated by the service catalogue team to ensure that its service offerings are defined appropriately and accordingly.

### **7.6 Publish Service Catalogue Once IT Approves**

All authors agree that after the dry run, the service catalogue would be complete and ready to be published. This could be achieved by posting it to the organisation's intranet or the internet. This is done so as to engage the business and demonstrate commitment to meet business needs (Marquis, 2002:1).

### **7.7 Establish Benchmarks and Refine the Service Catalogue**

The service catalogue team will need to improve services. Any service improvement initiative should be iterative in nature and ensuring ongoing improvement activities to enhance communication with the business (RL Consulting, 2003:1). Establishing benchmarks and refining the service catalogue is done so as to monitor and measure the service catalogue progress. This may be done before the service catalogue is published, or after publishing the service catalogue (Le Blanc, 2008:1) and (RL Consulting, 2003:1).

## **8. A Theoretical Model for Developing a Service Catalogue**

Most organizations provide their customers with a list of their services and products, a convenient way to order them, and terms of their delivery. Sophisticated businesses automate their products and services into fulfilment and financial systems. These systems routinely collect a variety of data, which is used to identify service-fulfilment bottlenecks, improve delivery processes, reduce costs and personalize customer experiences (Sundberg, 2007a:1). IT is adopting similar principles by applying service catalogues; however they lack the full knowledge of how to efficiently develop a service catalogue.

Although service catalogues can provide clear benefits across an organisation, many IT firms are taking unnecessarily complex and expensive approaches to their implementation. Taking into consideration the limitations of the current models, the purpose of this paper is to propose a theoretical model that may be used to develop service catalogue by also making use of the combinations of the current models and other previously mentioned literature.

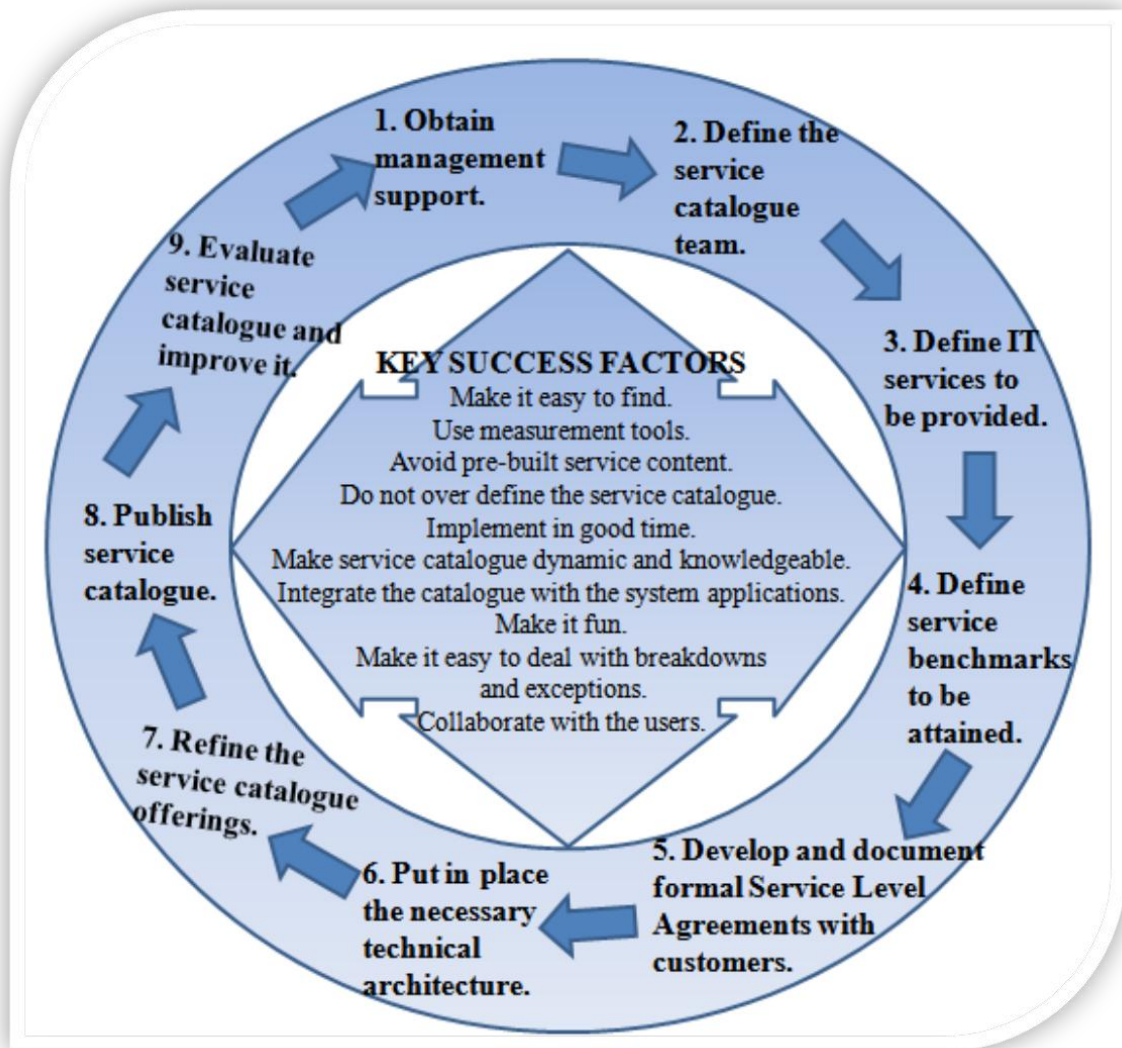


Figure 5: How to Develop a Service Catalogue

## 8.1 Developing a Service Catalogue

There are nine (9) identifiable steps to developing a service catalogue. These cover initial planning activities, providing a platform for services to operate on, benchmarking, documentation, communication and evaluation.

### 8.1.1 Obtain Management Support

It is essential that when developing a service catalogue, management support should be present. The management support that is necessary is not only authorisation from IT but also working with management to obtain more service catalogue ideas (Marquis, 2006:1). The management team often includes general partners who oversee the activities of the venture capital fund (Orlov, 2005: 1). If the support of the people who oversee how the organisation runs is present, it is easier to have the whole organisation assisting in the development of a service catalogue.

### 8.1.2 Establish a Service Catalogue Team

Once the management support has been obtained, a service catalogue team should be established. Service catalogues should be driven internally within IT and include adequate representation from all stakeholders within each domain to ensure that the documented

services are appropriate and valid (LeBlanc, 2008:1). Since the business perceives things differently from IT and as the initial move toward Business/IT Alignment the service catalogue should be able to reflect the perceptions of the business and users. A service catalogue team that has representation from the various areas of the organisation could also help to minimise resistance from other functions of the organisation as their opinions will be included in the development of the service catalogue.

When developing a service catalogue, a service manager will need to be appointed as part of the service catalogue team. The primary role and responsibility of the service manager will be to support Service Level Management enterprise-wide (RL Consulting: 2003:1). It is however not necessary to put in place a service manager in a small organisation.

#### *8.1.3 Define IT Services to be Provided*

IT needs to develop and document a service catalogue that includes defining and qualifying the types of services being provided for all business systems, similar to an inventory of systems that includes a detailed description of each (LeBlanc, 2006:1). It is therefore important to define IT services with the service catalogue team because business and IT are likely to have different names for the same service, and defining the IT services ensures that the service catalogue team reaches a consensus on the services and their names.

#### *8.1.4 Define Service Benchmarks to be Attained*

It is important that the service catalogue team develops and documents the service level goals (Le Blanc, 2006:1). This is because service benchmarks will assist in monitoring and measuring the service catalogue progress. Initial focus should be on the internal services such as the technology level, for performance and availability (RL Consulting, 2003:1). Examples are, network, server response, and up-time. However, over time the objectives should be deepened in breath, scope, and detail dealing with a customer business level focus for transactions and the component areas that comprise it.

#### *8.1.5 Develop and Document Formal Service Level Agreements with Customers*

Once the service benchmarks have been defined, business decision-makers can browse the service offerings and drill into the associated agreements, service components, and financial information to come up with SLA. Very often this is done in order to create a tailored portfolio of service offerings, establish agreements, set pricing and objectives, monitor performance, forecast demand, and track service consumption for each business unit customer (Kennedy, 2008:1).

#### *8.1.6 Put in Place the Necessary Technical Architecture*

One of the major investments required when developing a service catalogue is the technology necessary to support the deployment of the service catalogue. However, often, the necessary technical architecture required to implement the service catalogue is not available. Technical architecture describes the structure and behaviour of the technology infrastructure of an enterprise, solution or system. It covers the client and server nodes of the hardware configuration, the infrastructure applications that run on them, the infrastructure services they offer to applications, the protocols and networks that connect applications and nodes (Wikipedia, 2008:1). It is therefore advised that off-the-shelf solutions be considered initially for practical reasons of maintenance, support, and resources requirements (RL Consulting, 2003:1).

### *8.1.7 Refine the Service Catalogue Offerings*

Marquis (2006:1) proposes that a dry run should be carried out. This is when the service catalogue is reviewed to ensure that it is clear and easy to understand. Le Blanc (2006:1) mentions that the cost, complexity and difficulty of implementing an IT service catalogue varies greatly depending on the details incorporated into the document. Thus refining the service catalogue offering may improve the quality of the service catalogue.

It is therefore necessary to refine the service catalogue offerings as it may result in a change in some old service names, for example email that IT uses may be different than the new name, for example Exchange, thus enhancing the quality of the service catalogue.

### *8.1.8 Publish Catalogue*

After refining the service catalogue, it will be ready to be published. The service catalogue can be posted on the organisation's intranet. This can be seen as an initial method for engaging the business and demonstrating commitment to meet the business needs (Marquis, 2006:1).

### *8.1.9 Evaluate Service Catalogue and Improve It.*

Most companies have not yet created IT service catalogues, let alone implement chargeback to the business for IT services (Le Blanc, 2008:1). Evaluating usefulness of the service catalogue will ensure increased success of the service catalogue and thus a step towards reaching Total Quality Management initiatives.

## **8.2 Key Success Factors to Developing a Service Catalogue**

There are ten (10) factors that contribute to the successful development of a service catalogue. These factors consider access, interpretation, value and implementation of the service catalogue.

### *8.2.1 Make it Easy to Find*

Digital Fuel (2008:1) and NewScale (2005:2) both agree that the service catalogue should be easy to find. It is important that the service catalogue be easy to find that way it is easily accessible. Users get frustrated if it is difficult to find something and often end up getting in touch with the service help desk, thus increasing time wasting on aspects that could be addressed by the service catalogue.

### *8.2.2 Use Measurement Tools*

As mentioned earlier, it should be possible to trace the effectiveness of a service catalogue. Making use of service tools will ensure that it is possible to measure the effectiveness of the service catalogue.

### *8.2.3 Avoid Pre-Built Service Content*

Every organisation is unique and has exclusive requirements. It is therefore of the essence to avoid making use of pre-built service content. Although in some cases there could be service content that is very similar to what is being implemented, there is a possibility that some critical aspects could be absent in the pre-built content hence distorting the content of the service catalogue being implemented.

### *8.2.4 Do Not Over Define the Service Catalogue*

It is important to define the services step by step by applying Service Management Standards. Having tedious information that is often not very useful to everyone using the service

catalogue can cause frustrations among users. It is therefore essential to try and not over define the service catalogue. It is not clear as to how far one should go. It is therefore up to the discretion of the service catalogue team.

#### *8.2.5 Implement in Good Time*

Service catalogues initiatives that start modestly and grow over time and produce measurable cost savings within just a few months. These savings can be reinvested in the service catalogue, making it essentially self-funding very quickly (NewScale, 2005:2). It is thus the key to be able to implement the service catalogue in good time.

#### *8.2.6 Make Service Catalogue Dynamic and Knowledgeable*

Change is inevitable and bottlenecks have to be avoided. Having well-defined workflows for change processes can assist in making the service catalogue dynamic and so managing the content in a service catalogue (Digital Fuel, 2008:1). It is therefore crucial to make the service catalogue easy to update. This can be achieved by providing tools that allow service managers or service owners to keep the services fresh.

#### *8.2.7 Integrate the Catalogue with the System Applications*

No one system application can exist in isolation. The service catalogues should be integrated with the myriad of different back-end systems in the company, such as the company directory, enterprise portal, help desk system, procurement system, asset database, and configuration management database (CMDB) (NewScale, 2005:2). Applications need to be integrated so as to be able to make it easy to manage changes and keep the service catalogue updated.

#### *8.2.8 Make it Fun*

In order to engage all the stakeholders in the process, there needs to be an element of fun. A service catalogue should be interesting and provoke positive emotions. What could potentially be a time consuming and boring process needs to keep all stakeholders fully involved and participating. Mechanisms to improve the fun elements of this process are important.

#### *8.2.9 Make it Easy to Deal with Breakdowns and Exceptions*

The service catalogue should be able to allow for exception requests, regardless of how good it is. No matter how complete the service catalogue is, or how thorough order forms are, they can not account for everything users may request. It is therefore key success to ensure that the service catalogue allows the user to be able to deal with break downs and exceptions.

#### *8.2.10 Collaborate with all Stakeholders*

Stakeholders like to feel like they are part of the overall project and that their opinions matter in decision making. It is therefore important to be able to collaborate with all stakeholders when developing a service catalogue. An example of how this can be achieved is by designing intelligent, interactive forms that use look-ups and pick lists, with integration into existing systems to minimize entry errors and user frustration.

## **9. Conclusion**

Doing anything according to best practice guidelines is always difficult because it may show all the interesting places that may not be relevant to one's situation. It should be noted that there are a variety of steps that are necessary when developing a service catalogue. It is up to the service catalogue team to identify the measures what they are willing to undergo in order



to establish an effective service catalogue. Depending on the experience that a team has, not all the steps will be necessary when developing a service catalogue as it may have been able to establish a service catalogue expertise baseline.

With that in mind, many IT organizations are starting small on service catalogue projects and increasing the scope of the service catalogue. These organisations realize that they do not need hundreds of services to build a useful catalogue (NewScale, 2006:8).

## ***References***

- Digital Fuel (2008). Publish and promote your services the easy way. [Online] Available at: <http://www.digitalfuel.com/applications/serviceflow-catalog.php> Digital Fuel, [Accessed 20 April 2008].
- Flores, R.F. (2005a). IT Service Catalog - Know Your Audience. [Online] Available at: <http://www.itsmwatch.com/itil/article.php/3566551> Itsmwatch. [Accessed 20 February 2008].
- Flores, R.F. (2005b). IT Service Catalog The Common Pitfalls. [Online] Available at: <http://www.itsmwatch.com/itil/article.php/3547731> Itsmwatch. [Accessed 22 February 2008].
- Flores, R.F. (2005c). IT Service Catalog - rebuilding trust between IT and the business. [Online] Available at: <http://articles.techrepublic.com.com/5100-10878-5991683.html> Tech Republic. [Accessed 20 February 2008].
- Flores, R.F. (2005d). How to Produce an Actionable IT Service Catalog. [Online] Available at: <http://www.itsmwatch.com/itil/article.php/3520901> Itsmwatch. [Accessed 20 February 2008].
- Gandar, M. (2006). The Service Catalogue and the CMDB: Front Office and Back Office IT July pp. 1-11.
- Kennedy, M. (2008). Service Catalog – Definition [Online] Available at: <http://www.servicecatalogs.com/WikiHome/Articles/Article17> Service Catalog Community . [Accessed 22 March 2008].
- Le Blanc, K. (2008). ITIL & ITSM Knowledge Base: Ready to Create Your IT Service Catalog? [Online] Available at: <http://www.itilworx.com/articles/itw.052505.htm> ITILworx [Accessed 25 February 2008].
- Marquis, H (2006). IT Service Catalog in 5 Steps. DITY Newsletter 2:13, 29 March.
- NEWSCALE (2005). How to Produce an Actionable IT Service Catalog, newScale, February 2005 pp.1-5.
- NEWSCALE (2006). 10 best practices for the service request catalog. NewScale October 2006 pp. 1-13.
- NEWSCALE (2008). Service Catalog Foundation [Online]. Available at: [http://www.newscale.com/products/service\\_catalogfoundation.html](http://www.newscale.com/products/service_catalogfoundation.html) newScale [Accessed 20 February 2008].
- Orlov, L. M. (2005). The Marketing of IT: A Core Element of Improving IT's Business Value, Forrester Research, 23 August pp. 1.
- PINK ELEPHANT (2005). The Three Qualities & Customers of the IT Service Catalog. Pink Elephant, April, pp.1-3.
- PINK ELEPHANT (2007). What's the big deal about a Service Catalog? Pink Elephant, November, pp1-3.
- RL CONSULTING (2003). How to Develop a Service Catalog within Service Level Management, IT Service Management Newsletter, 4 April 2003, pp. 1-3.

Schaibly, S. (2006). The IT Services Catalog. *Network World*, 23(3), pp. 51-51.

Sundberg, J. (2007a). Leveraging Service Catalogs throughout the Enterprise. [Online] Available at: <http://www.kineticdata.com/press/news-articles/leveraging-service-catalogs-throughout-the-enterprise.html>, **Minnesota**: Kinetic Data. [Accessed 22 February 2008].

Sundberg, J. (2007b). Service Catalog Trends, Using Service Catalog to run IT as a Business (not “like” a business). Kinetic Data, pp. 1-8.

WIKIPEDIA (2008). Technical Architecture Available at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical\\_architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_architecture), Wikimedia Foundation [Accessed 1 September 2008].