

ITIL – Incident management: roles and responsibilities

Incident management roles and responsibilities

The following roles are needed for the incident management process.

Incident Manager

An Incident Manager has responsibility for:

- Driving the efficiency and effectiveness of the incident management process
- Producing management information, including KPIs and reports
- Monitoring the effectiveness of incident management and making recommendations for improvement
- Developing and maintaining the incident management system
- Driving, developing, managing and maintaining the major incident process and associated procedures
- Reviewing and auditing the process
- Ensuring that all IT teams follow the incident management process for every incident

In many organisations, the role of the Incident Manager is assigned to the Service Desk Manager. In larger organisations with high volumes, a separate role may be necessary. In either case, it is important that incidents are moved effectively through first, second and third line, as appropriate. It must be understood that incident management is a cross IT organisation process and NOT a service desk process.

First line/service desk

The service desk is the single point of contact for users when there is a service disruption, for service requests, and for some categories of request for change. The service desk provides a point of communication with the users and a point of coordination for several IT groups and processes. To enable the service desk to perform these actions effectively, it is usually separate from the other service operation functions. In some cases, e.g. where detailed technical support is offered to users on the first call, it may be necessary for technical or application management staff to be on the service desk.

Second line/desk side support

Many organisations will choose to have a second line support group, made up of staff with a different skill set to the staff on the service desk, and with additional time to devote to incident diagnosis and resolution, which cannot be achieved at the service desk. They are also able to visit the user if a desk visit is required.

Where a second line group exists, there are often advantages to locating this group close to the service desk (to aid with communications and to ease movement of staff between the groups, both of which may be helpful for training/awareness and during busy periods or staff shortages).

Third line/fourth line

Third line support will be provided by a number of internal technical groups and/or third party suppliers/maintainers. The list will vary from organisation to organisation but it is likely to include:

- Network support
- Voice support
- Server support
- Desktop support
- Application management – it is likely that there may be separate teams for different applications or application types, some of which may be external supplier/maintainers. In many cases, the same team will be responsible for application development, as well as support, and it is, therefore important that resources are prioritised so that support is given adequate prominence
- Database support
- Hardware maintenance engineers
- Environment equipment maintainers/suppliers

Note

Depending upon where an organisation decides to source its support services from, any of the above groups could be internal or external groups. If there is internal support this become third line and then when these are passed to external suppliers, the supplier becomes fourth line support.