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## **Best Practices** *in Service Desk Migration*

Strategy

Learning Lessons from Electronic Voting Controversies

Strategy

*Actions Speak Louder Than Words:* Substantiating Claims  
of Successful ITIL<sup>®</sup> Implementation

ITIL<sup>®</sup>

Pervasive Support Takes IT Service to the Next Level

Technology

# ACTIONS SPEAK **LOUDER** THAN WORDS:

Substantiating Claims of  
***Successful ITIL® Implementation***

*by Brian McAllister*

***Does compliance with ITIL® best practices truly enhance end user support?***

***Does it produce efficiencies that reduce costs?***

**Based on the experience of L-3 Government Services, Inc. (GSI)  
the answer to both questions is a resounding “YES!”**

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### What Makes ITIL Implementation Worthwhile?

Organizations spend significant time and money to achieve an ITIL compliant user-support operation. Achievement of a high maturity level for ITIL compliance is often celebrated as a significant accomplishment. The most important advantage of implementing ITIL is not just the adoption of best practices themselves; it's the significant, verifiable, measurable benefits that ITIL best practices produce.

### Why Choose ITIL?

L-3 GSI provides full desktop life-cycle support services for the desktop systems of one of the largest county governments in the United States. The service-level based contract involves the support of 8,000 systems, 10,000 users, 44 departments, and 471 locations spread across an area of 497 square miles. The diverse and dispersed nature of the client base drives the need for formalized support processes that must be executed with the utmost efficiency. The adoption of the ITIL

framework was driven by the desire to utilize universal, proven methods that would serve as the launch pad for improving operations.

### HDI® and ITIL, a Mutually Supportive Relationship

The HDI Support Center Certification (SCC) program provided a foundation upon which to establish an ITIL compliant framework. HDI's SCC methodology served as a cornerstone upon which L-3 GSI constructed an effective service desk, one that has consistently exceeded the client's service-level requirements. As a result, the L-3 GSI service desk was awarded HDI premiere status. Furthermore, the ITIL implementation process was facilitated by the overlapping nature of the HDI SCC and ITIL compliance requirements. In the spring of 2006, L-3 GSI service desk operations were evaluated as being at ITIL Maturity Level 5 by an external auditing company that routinely performs ITIL assessments for the Department of Defense.

## What Were the Results of Implementing ITIL?

As a result of the ITIL implementation, first-call resolution has risen dramatically, resulting in enhanced user productivity and enhanced client satisfaction. Subsequently, the deskside service team has been reduced by more than 60 percent, offering substantial cost savings to L-3 GSI and the clients. Additionally, by linking together the entire array of customer service tools, L-3 GSI has been able to provide its service desk agents with an exceptionally efficient means for resolving customer issues. Lastly, by tightly integrating the continuous improvement process into a custom service desk training program, L-3 GSI has developed a curriculum that is directly influenced by recurrent issues that surface during normal operations. This method of instruction trains service desk agents to recognize these potential issues and avoid them, improving their ability to offer excellent customer support.

ITIL states that the goal of Incident Management is *“to restore normal service operation as quickly as possible and minimize the adverse impact on business operations, thus ensuring that the best possible levels of service quality and availability are maintained.”* This definition serves as the driving principal behind L-3 GSI support operations.

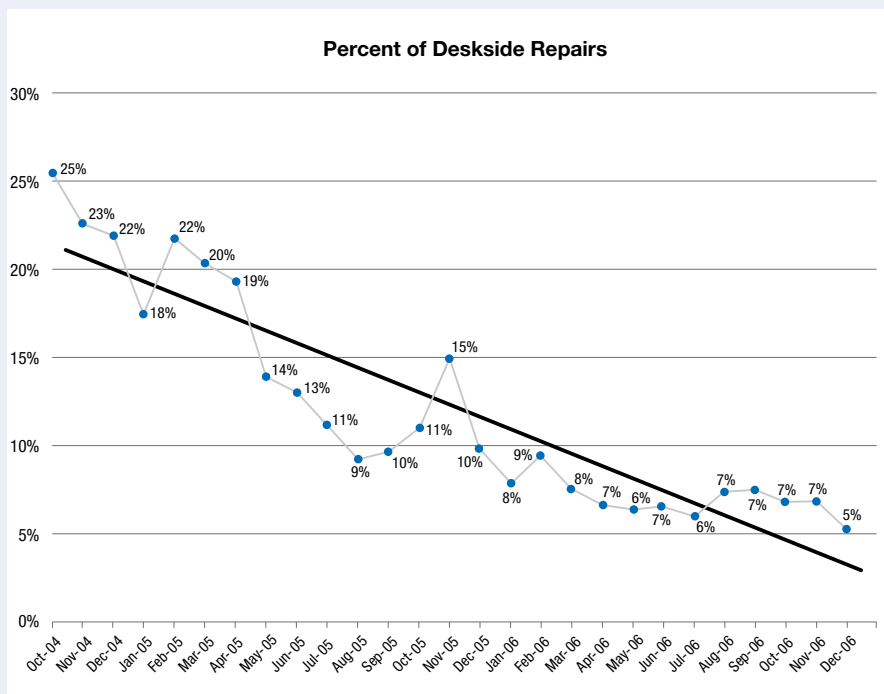
## Driving Up First-call Resolution

During the past twelve months, first-call resolution has consistently exceeded 96 percent. By resolving such a high percentage of issues during initial calls, L-3 GSI has greatly reduced end user downtime and significantly enhanced the productivity of county personnel. In compliance with ITIL best practices, quality control points are integrated into service desk operations. Tickets are checked in real-time at pre-designated points to ensure the appropriate, timely resolution or routing of calls, the completeness of ticket data, and ticket accuracy. This process produces accurate performance

data that is continuously analyzed and leveraged to improve first call resolution. Although quality errors occur in less than 2 percent of the service desk calls, those that do occur are caught within minutes of the agent escalating a call. These errors are immediately corrected and then tagged by the quality improvement process for further analysis.

## Reducing Requirements for Deskside Service

As it takes less time and fewer calls to resolve incidents at the service desk than it does to troubleshoot them with deskside service, user down-time has markedly decreased. Over the last two years, this has resulted in a 60 percent reduction of deskside support personnel. This illustrates the efficiency of the service desk in solving problems without the need to dispatch deskside service personnel. Given the large area of service coverage and the increasing volume of users, this reduction in field service staff is a remarkable accomplishment that has driven down costs.



**ITIL helps reduce the workload:** As service request calls have increased, the deskside service workload has decreased. In February of 2004, 1,627 service calls were sent to the service desk. By December of 2006, the number of calls had risen to 2,740, a 68 percent increase. The deskside workload, however, which was measured as 22 percent of the total service desk workload in February of 2005, decreased to 7 percent in December of 2006 and is still continuing to fall.

## Linking Multiple Tools with Quality Control Measures

ITIL has provided management with an awareness of the benefits that are derived from the integration of service desk tools into a creative single interface. The knowledge database, ticketing system, troubleshooting templates, configuration management database, and other customer service tools have been linked together to ensure that agents and technicians have the resources they need to provide exceptional customer support. These resources are fully integrated into the quality control process. Quality controls measure all aspects of IT services; the metrics they generate are used constantly to improve L-3 GSI's service delivery and service support. ITIL was the framework in which these controls were created. While customer service tools and quality control points are important assets for service desk personnel, the training they receive is what enables them to respond to the needs of the client so effectively.



**Measuring performance in real-time:** This screenshot is taken from a large display monitor that is mounted in the L-3 GSI Service Desk Operations Center. The information is updated in real-time from the Automated Call Director (ACD) and the ticketing system. It displays performance information, providing managers with instant visibility of average seconds to answer, first call resolution, and other statistics.

## Technical and Client-based Training

New service desk agents must complete a rigorous training program that develops their knowledge of the tools, techniques, and technical knowledge necessary to perform essential job functions and it also provides them with a sound understanding of the client's specific procedures and protocol for conducting service operations. Upon completing training, agents must pass a computer-based certification test before they are allowed to answer service calls unassisted. Continuing training requirements, which are integrated into the quality-control process, ensure that service desk agents are constantly improving their ability to serve the client. Agent performance levels, as measured by the quality process, service-level metrics, and customer satisfaction are exceptionally high from their first day of answering calls unassisted.

## Adapting to Change

As training is an important aspect of the ITIL service continuity and quality assurance process, it also remains a critical component of Change Management and client satisfaction. As the client adds-to and modifies operational protocol, the full Change Management process, as mandated by ITIL, reviews changes against the training program. In response to these changes, alterations to the curriculum are made based upon the results of an impact analysis. The ITIL framework also facilitates agent and technician cross-training. The documentation, as required by ITIL, specifies the procedure necessary to perform each service desk role; this allows management to assign temporary job functions easily to its personnel in response to unanticipated staffing requirements.

The ITIL framework has enabled scalability and repeatability, as well. When L-3 GSI launches operations for a new client, the latest ITIL documentation and processes, knowledge, and procedures are available to immediately establish best practices, reduce risk, and contain cost.

Although the users may not be aware that L-3 GSI is Maturity Level 5 ITIL-compliant, they are taking notice of the results. Customer satisfaction consistently exceeds a 4.8 rating on a 5-point scale, as measured by three different survey vehicles. The outstanding performance of this L-3 GSI service desk was recognized in 2006 with an award from the Public Technology Institute.

## Performance, the Ultimate Objective

The implementation of the ITIL framework and HDI certification process has enabled a level of performance that has exceeded the client's expectations. The entire team is driven by the need to adopt the most efficient methods of service delivery, and subsequently, the L-3 GSI service desk operation is currently in the process of ISO 20000 certification. These processes have been implemented in order to provide exemplary support for the client; ITIL and HDI SCC have become, and remain, the fundamental building blocks of a successful service desk. The proof is in the results.



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