



**Leverage industry best practices for business
and service level management.**

Overcome challenges to align IT with business objectives

Can your organization meet the rapidly changing needs of your customers, partners and employees? Even as the infrastructure you manage becomes more complex, you're constantly under pressure to find a way to raise the level of the IT service you provide.

But too often, you lack the tools you need to fully understand how your IT organization contributes to business services. Your staff can only monitor and measure the performance of infrastructure and resources. To achieve your business goals, your IT organization should be able to see the big picture and make decisions based on what's most important to the overall business.

As business success relies more on IT services, clear communication between IT and business organizations is critical. If your organization is going to demonstrate the value of your IT services to overall business goals, you need to be able to share information about performance between IT groups and with business managers. But today, many organizations rely on IT-focused data that they have to collect manually. The information is not in a context that the audience can understand, and it takes too long to synthesize.

Because they lack business-focused information about performance, organizations also frequently have great difficulty justifying and feeling confident about their IT investments. Decisions about whether to reinvest or change investments — and how to set IT budgets — are made without short- and long-term information. And without understanding important trends within the organization.



Even after defining IT resources and their relationships, and aligning them based on your business priorities, an organization must maintain and adjust definitions and alignments when it introduces new resources. This challenge can be almost as daunting as the initial definition phase.

Service level management solutions can be important tools for facing challenges like these. But only if you find a vendor that can help you with all aspects of aligning IT with your business objectives.

This buyer's guide can help you as you create a request for proposals and evaluate responses. When you read it, you'll have at your fingertips a number of specific criteria that you can use to evaluate service level management solutions.

Establish and optimize service level management processes

Complete service level management is not something that any organization implements in one step. Instead, you should start in one area, review your existing processes, implement IT best practices in that area and expand when the updated processes are in place. When you do expand, you'll do so with a better understanding of the steps involved and how to best implement them within your organization.



But you don't have to start from scratch. You can leverage the experience and expertise of a leading vendor to help with any step in the service level management process — from establishing a service level management framework, to creating and maintaining a service catalog, to formulating service improvement plans, to evaluating service level performance. A superior vendor has best practices and processes — ones that have been proven in environments similar to yours — that you can implement in your organization.

Look for a solution from a vendor that has proven best practices for establishing — and specific metrics for measuring the performance of — processes across the full breadth of service level management.



The solution should help you:	IBM	Other vendor
Gather customer requirements and facilitate ongoing customer communications:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify both the needs of clearly defined customer communities and specific business policies that express service level requirements of customers. 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurately forecast service levels for established and new services, and manage service priorities. 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage customer satisfaction and success in addressing business requirements by measuring performance against service level agreements (SLAs). 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate and market IT capabilities to customers in ways that help match IT offerings to business needs. 	✓	
Maximize the value the business derives from IT:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage IT infrastructure to support mission-critical business processes. 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handle financial management activities — such as IT cost and revenue accounting — and establish project-based accounting to deliver cost transparency and facilitate business decisions. 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and measure IT service performance to drive business value. 	✓	
Deliver IT services to the business in alignment with service level objectives to help optimize customer satisfaction:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize service and infrastructure availability. 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage infrastructure resources by maintaining and distributing up-to-date configurations. 	✓	

Prioritize IT activities in alignment with business objectives

One goal of service level management is to help your organization consistently act in ways that support your business priorities. To that end, the solution should give your staff information about how specific IT actions impact the business, help you direct IT resources toward the most important business functions and enable you to measure how well IT delivers on business goals.

Your service level management solution should not only deliver timely information that you can act on. It should also facilitate and, where possible, automate common management activities — especially identifying and resolving performance problems. This is an important way that the solution can help you act quickly and maximize the level of service IT delivers to the business.



Communicate service level performance information with business units

To overcome the current challenge of describing IT performance to a variety of business audiences, a service level management solution must enable business leaders to see the impact of IT services on the business services that matter most to them. Relevant information from across the enterprise must be delivered to each executive, formatted in ways that make its meaning clear.

Achieving these goals means delivering customizable dashboards to line-of-business owners — and your IT staff. The dashboards should offer both accurate, real-time information and important trends — plus access to business impact and service level reports. And the dashboards should be able to integrate with other business performance management initiatives to simplify the ability of your executives to view a wide range of relevant data.

A superior service level management solution helps you:	IBM	Other vendor
Understand business services and the ways that IT services support them, from end to end and across host and distributed environments.	✓	
Integrate performance data with business process models to accurately measure the business impact of IT actions.	✓	
Measure trends in service levels and generate real-time status alerts when potential problems arise — before SLA violations occur.	✓	
Import information from external sources through an easy-to-use, standards-based interface.	✓	
Automatically adjust the severity of problems by leveraging percentage-based thresholds.	✓	

Select a service level management solution that enables you to:	IBM	Other vendor
Deliver the right information to the right person by using role-based propagation rules.	✓	
Customize portals through an application programming interface (API).	✓	
Offer — out of the box — an executive dashboard with relevant information in highly useable graphical formats.	✓	
Utilize trouble tickets to enhance bidirectional communication between IT staff and help desk personnel.	✓	
Integrate financial view of service delivery into business and IT dashboards.	✓	
Rapidly communicate the relevant impact of IT service problems to business units through dashboards customized for each business unit.	✓	

Plan both investments and changes that drive business value

In addition to helping your IT staff and executives understand current business conditions and act to optimize them, a service level management solution should help you take a long-term view on IT investments and changes. Effective planning becomes possible when you leverage current and historical performance data. You can act with the needs of your customers and your business in mind. Have confidence that your actions will achieve the valuable outcomes. And predict the impact that changes will have on other business services across the enterprise.

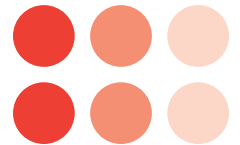
Make sure that the service level management solution you choose helps you:	IBM	Other vendor
Take advantage of patented predictive analytics to obtain a highly accurate view of trends.	✓	
View potential changes — and assess their impact — prior to execution.	✓	
Leverage financial service trends to adjust planning.	✓	
Adopt best practices for planning, deployment and administration of service level management.	✓	
Identify the business impact of any specific change.	✓	
Manage your IT infrastructure end to end — across multiple platforms and heterogeneous applications.	✓	
Visualize data-center resources to better understand current and future needs and performance.	✓	
Adapt dynamically to changes in resources by leveraging automated discovery technology.	✓	

Select a leading vendor

When you're looking for a service level management solution, be sure to consider more than just the features of individual products. You should also be able to rely on a vendor with demonstrated leadership in the area — a vendor who can help you make the most of the solution and tailor it for your environment. Deliver the global resources you need to support your operations. And offer the breadth of products that you need to target your greatest needs now and expand into other areas over time.

The provider of your service level management solution should:

- *Combine its software products to meet your specific requirements and environment.*
- *Create solutions that work throughout heterogeneous environments and across operating platforms and a wide range of ISV applications.*
- *Help you optimize the processes you employ now and in the future, whether they are Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) processes, Control Objectives for Information and related Technology (COBIT) processes, IBM IT Service Management best practices or others.*
- *Deliver a comprehensive portfolio of integrated IT infrastructure management products, solutions and services.*
- *Offer modular components that allow you to maximize the use of your existing IT infrastructure and add new capabilities when they are needed.*
- *Have extraordinary global operations and offer international versions of its products to support the geographic locations where you do business.*



Leverage IBM solutions to help optimize service

When you're ready to leverage worldwide expertise in deploying service level management solutions in a wide variety of industries, look to IBM. IBM combines defined best practices and established metrics with superior technology to offer service level management solutions that can help you deliver on your service level agreements in a highly efficient fashion. By using IBM Tivoli® software, you can prioritize, communicate and plan IT resource decisions based on what matters most to the health of your business.

The following offerings are key contributors to IBM service level management solutions:

- *IBM Tivoli Business Systems Manager enables you to adopt a single, integrated point of management and control of holistic business systems. Use the software to draw information from across your enterprise into graphical views within an executive dashboard. Your staff can then view IT resources in the context of critical business services and prioritize actions based on business impact. Furthermore, by connecting Tivoli Business Systems Manager with IBM Tivoli Change and Configuration Management Database, you can leverage the output from multiple discovery technology sources.*



- *IBM Tivoli Service Level Advisor is a predictive solution for defining, analyzing and reporting on SLAs enterprise wide. You can leverage wizards to rapidly define SLAs. Automate SLA evaluation by enabling alerts for violations. Provide executive level reports to effectively communicate SLA performance to executives across the business. And proactively avoid violations by analyzing trends with a patented algorithm.*
- *IBM Tivoli Decision Support Accounting Workstation for z/OS® gives you the information you need to understand and manage IT costs – and link them to business services. You can use the software to help recuperate costs based on SLA performance, view IT investment information and demonstrate return on IT investments. (Note that the accounting functions of this software work in both distributed and mainframe environments – z/OS is not required.)*
- *IBM Tivoli Monitoring for Transaction Performance is an end-to-end transaction monitoring and management solution. With the software, you can track transactions from an end user's perspective – across systems and throughout your enterprise. Identify performance problems proactively. And automatically isolate the source of response-time problems to help optimize application availability and performance.*

Additionally, IBM service level management solutions integrate with a broad range of IT infrastructure management solutions to give you an even more extensive picture of your business environment — and to help you further optimize business performance. Examples include linking service level management with availability management, workload scheduling and business process management.

IBM service level management solutions help you:

- ✓ Leverage proven best practices and specific metrics to optimize a complete range of service level management processes.
- ✓ Consistently direct IT resources toward your most important business functions, acting quickly in response to changing conditions.
- ✓ Enable business executives and IT staff to see the impact of IT services on business services in customized, highly useable views.
- ✓ Make informed decisions on IT investments and changes to facilitate ongoing service delivery.
- ✓ Draw on the global resources and expertise of an industry leader to meet your service level management challenges now and in the future.



For more information

To learn more about IBM service level management solutions and integrated solutions from IBM, contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit ibm.com/tivoli/solutions/bsm



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