ITSM for Educational Institutes

Introduction

The **Educational Industry** is seeing a major shift in how its users and key players are interacting among themselves and with the institute.

Now more than ever, universities are operating in a competitive market where they are trying to attract bright students and best teachers, lecturers and professors, so they must ensure they **provide high quality service**.

More and more educational institutes are providing distance education through their online education portals. Some have even gone ahead to have their courses available to third party platforms such as **MOOCs** (Massive Open Online Course). Students and staff are no longer restricted to using only IT devices provided and managed by the institute as everyone is using their own laptops, tablets and mobile devices.

This has tremendously **increased** the number of users and supported IT systems for these institutions, putting a special strain on the **IT service delivery teams**.

The role of a university IT team is very central to ensure that students, staff, administration and alumni make the most of technology.

With reviews and surveys now staying there forever on the internet, education industry, like all other industries, need to be more customer centric and properly manage all the different IT systems internally and their **integrations** with external systems.

The last decade or two has seen a good adoption of **frameworks** in the corporate sector for supporting **IT systems** making service delivery and management more efficient.

The adoption has been much slower in Educational Institutions.

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However, the educational institutions can quickly catch up by refining their service management approach. This can be achieved by:

1. Defining service delivery goals to better manage user expectations and endeavor to meet them.

2. Define the list of services provided by their IT team and publish them as the Institutions IT Service Catalog

3. Identify an IT Service Management tool that adheres to international standards such ITIL*

4. Develop a good support team for different levels of support that is well trained around systems supported, have good communication skills and are enthusiastic about customer support.

5. Last but not the least, reach out, share and learn from other educational institutes trying to implement ITSM systems

* According to Axelos *"A focus on improving and refining IT Service Management (ITSM) through the adoption and adaption of ITIL® is helping universities across the world meet growing demand from students and staff"*

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Service Catalog and its place in Educational Institutes

Like many other industries, the Educational Industry is beginning to adopt the **Service Delivery** model. Some of the reasons for this shift has been the requirement for reliability, quality of user support and institutional standardizations.

The design and implementation of a good **Service Catalog** is a very important step to bringing services closer to your end users. It's a very important tool to let users know what services are available to them, how much it might cost (if any), improve expectations and helps the university IT team to better align their resources and investments.

A consistent and shared service catalog helps to **standardize** the terms used for requesting services, which also helps in **scaling** the catalog to newer campuses or offices and still maintaining a centralized IT support system.

Service Catalog in Higher Education have to be able to serve a wide range of users from students (New and existing) to faculty (permanent or visiting), administrative staff to executive board, parents to alumni etc. Moreover, the types of services provided might be overhauled or updated from one school year to the other.

The IT Service Catalog is the agreed upon set of IT services at a given point of time. There could be other service Catalogs available e.g., **Housing Service Catalog, Library Service Catalog, Staff HR Services Catalog**, etc.

As we define the different services it is very important to keep the end users point of view in mind. The terms used to define a particular service in any of the catalog should be easily understandable to the end user.

We can choose to define these services under different Service Categories or under an overarching Service Catalog and make it available to the end users.

The next step would be to define the end user groups and map them to the services they should have access to and define roles accordingly in your ITSM system.

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After all the services are defined, mapped and **SLAs** are agreed upon, we should make part or the whole Service Catalog available as request items on the institutes **IT User portal** or the **End User Portal.**

This is particularly beneficial as users are able to receive high quality service at any time of the day or night.

1. This reduces the cost related to Customer service.

2. Increase proactivity from the end user community and they feel more engaged.

3. Improves support agent productivity because of reduction in the number of calls to the helpdesk, less emails and significant lowering of people showing up to the office for ad-hoc requests.

4. End users save time, lowering anxiety and improving overall customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

According to Gartner's prediction, *"By 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationship with the enterprise without interacting with a human."*

The next step would be to include a **Knowledge base** that is available to users through the user portal. This will teach users new skills and provide them tools to solve similar issues in the future.

This knowledge base can be made rich with content with detailed **information, screenshots and how-to videos.**

Having an **ITSM platform** in place together with a Service Catalog will help Educational Institutes improve their Service delivery, better manage technology changes and let them focus more on their core business.

Adopting a **service delivery framework** and following a Continuous Service Improvement process will allow them to improve their services over time and meet end user service expectations.

ServiceTonic is a flexible, powerful and easy-to-use ITSM Solution based on ITIL® best practices for Schools & Educational Universities.

Contact Us

USA
4N 2nd Street, Unit 210
San Jose, CA 95113
T: +1 408 906 8088

Barcelona
Bailén, 71 bis, 6º 1ª
08009 Barcelona - España
T: +34 93 242 03 50

Madrid
Paseo de las Delicias, 30, 2ª
28045 Madrid - España
T: +34 91 112 67 20

www.servicetonic.com | servicetonic@servicetonic.com