

A vision, not an SLA

Jim Higham

SLA, OLA, Critical Success Factors or a mix?



Jim Higham

- IT Service Desk Manager since around 2000
- 40 years in IT at Kent
- Made lots of mistakes, got a few things right
- Other peoples ideas are usually better (collaborate!)



University of Kent

- Established 1965 by Royal Charter, 20,000+ students
- 6000+ staff (more like 3500 FTE).
- Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels, Paris, Rome, Athens.



- The UK's European University
- Beautiful 'garden of England' Canterbury main campus.
- Collaborative medical school opening 2020.

Who does my team serve?

- We help students and staff
- They are 'users' rather than ITIL 'customers'
- Their productivity is paramount to University success.
- Limited interaction with applicants (prospective students)
- Students and staff are customers in that we want some to return when they leave.
- Service owners are SLA customers

What really counts

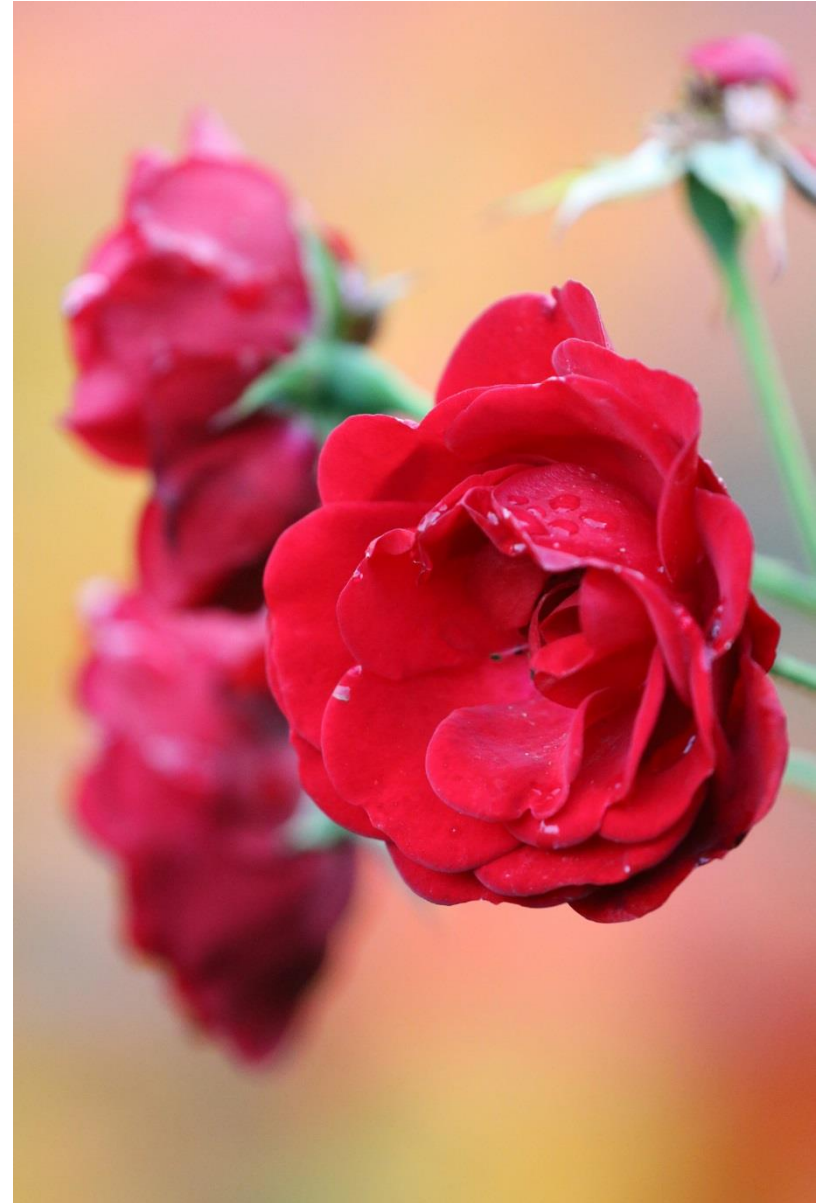
- Enable business to take place
- Remove blockers to business as quickly as possible, or within a customer driven timeframe
- Keep customers happy, so they'll
 - Use us again (to keep productive)
 - Be able to work well after contacting us
 - Be easy to work with
 - Empowered so they do not need to contact us again!
- Impact on business productivity hard to measure
- Customer satisfaction easier to measure
- SLAs have their place (in the background)

A vision, not an SLA

- Customers working productively
- Friendly, helpful, empathic support
- Technical expertise
- Appropriate solutions, enabling business
- Speed of resolution, reducing delay to work
- Going that extra mile creatively
- Anticipate and prevent problems
- Reduce impact when issues arise
- Communicate to reduce impact

Critical Success Factors

- What does success look, feel smell like?
- Drill back – can you measure anything?
- Is there space for a high level SLA?
- What is culture – how do I change/influence it?
 - Know your goals
 - Communicate your goals
 - Repeatedly show examples of goals achieved



Cost of lost productivity

- Noel Bruton might estimate lost business at £50 to £100 per hour, maybe much more.
- Service desk costs less
- Ask a colleague? Sometimes efficient.
- Often cheaper to ask us.
- More reliable, quicker, accurate answers.
- No loss of (possibly expensive) colleague productivity



Self service

- Self-service forms are good for those that like it, and for gathering accurate information.
- KB self-service likewise, however often its much more effective for the business if your agents answer the call – quicker, more accurate, producing a higher return for the business.



Service Desk is not an Island

- We must work with all teams
- We must share a common aim (hard!).



Measurements

- Automated ticket survey, every 10 tickets
- Annual satisfaction surveys, NSS - independent
- I love complaints – they help us improve
- Feedback and complaints mechanisms



Ticket survey

- A great motivator – feed back results weekly
- A good guage
- A useful tool when asking for more staff



Team culture

- CSI – reduce the need for queries.



Start with good services

- Service Desk should be involved with the development of new systems and services
- UX testing
- Excellent services don't need SLAs
- Excellent services don't need customer support!
- More fulfilling to help develop an excellent service than to answer calls about a poor one!



Basic promises

- SLAs useful for high level agreements
- Real users not interested in SLAs
- Just fix it, on my desired timescale!
- Make some promises to show willing.
- We'll get back to you within a day (phone us if its urgent).
- Beat that promise consistently
- Use OLAs – negotiate on the safe side.
- Use OLAs to manage expectations

Useful Consultants

- Richard Webber (ITIL, Prince, ITSM), Southampton.
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/richard-webber-7765a56/>
- Noel Bruton <https://noelbruton.com/>
- Barclay Rae <http://www.barclayrae.com/>
- SDI 😊

Summary

- Know and agree your objectives
- Understand the (business/real) needs of your customers and users.
- Agree Critical Success Factors
- Use SLAs sparingly where they help
- Use OLAs to manage expectation
- Aim to do better than your OLAs & SLAs.
- Help your business achieve its aims rather than slavishly working to irrelevant SLAs.

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Questions and chocolate welcome
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