

# Vendor certification: Another reason to leverage ITIL™ in your service desk



If you haven't yet adopted ITIL™ in your service desk and are looking for more incentive, here's one more reason you shouldn't put it off any longer.

Over the past few years, you've probably heard about all kinds of benefits MSPs gain by aligning their service desk operations with ITIL™. That includes improved operational efficiency, optimized service levels that fuel better market traction, and the list does go on.

ITIL really does give MSPs the framework to perform all the services they need. It can function as the basis for establishing sound, repeatable standard operating procedures. Plus, adopting ITIL can be a great selling point for your business. Many customers out there lack standardized ways of handling change management, for example. Coming in to these companies with solid ITIL-based change controls can be a huge advantage in sales efforts.

That said, there's one other reason you can add to the list, and this may be one of the more powerful, tangible, and near-term justifications. Today, many of the major IT vendors, such as Cisco, demand ITIL-aligned service desks as part of their certification audits. For a host of reasons, MSP leaders often want to gain these certifications, but before they can do so, auditors will come in to verify the MSP's people, processes, and technologies.

Quite simply, auditors, and the vendors they serve, want to make sure a new MSP didn't just put a couple people in front of a monitor and call it a network operations center (NOC). Before a vendor is going to want to give an MSP their stamp of approval, they want to see that there are sound, effective, and documented operational processes in place, and ITIL is at the core of this. Vendors want to see service providers have ITIL-compliant NOC processes, that they have the tools and processes to deliver such services as ticketing, change management, and others in a meaningful, ITIL-based way.

ITIL has become the de facto standard in our industry, and the fact that the big vendors have standardized on these approaches only further underscores that fact. For Cisco, master certifications in such areas as communications, security, managed services, and more all require an ITIL-based ticketing process. They also require that you have people on staff that have ITIL foundation certifications.

Gaining higher level certification by the big technology vendors can be a huge benefit to the MSP. For example, it can boost sales and marketing efforts. These certifications build a significant amount of validity among prospects. Often these certifications include listing in partner portals and directories in addition to referrals, which can yield a significant number of new opportunities. These programs can also include product discounts, rebates, and other financial incentives.

Using limited ticketing solutions and paying lip service to ITIL may enable you to get past a vendor certification—if the auditor is lenient and you catch him or her on a good day. But why chance it when the upside of leveraging ITIL-aligned platforms and processes can be so great?