



Application Management – Keeping Applications Aligned with ever Changing Business Needs

Introduction

During an application lifetime, new business needs arise on a regular basis. To deal with these new requirements, it is desirable to put in place a solid application management process. This implies a structured approach for the implementation of new business needs with a minimal impact on the existing operation of the business.

The art of Application Management

Now why do business needs change that often? Agreements with related market parties change; compliance is needed with new regulations; end users have new or changed requirements to optimize their daily work; companies expand; ...

This emphasizes the need to set up a reliable application management framework.

Best practices to set up such a framework have been collected by the ASL (Application Services Library) standard; which is sometimes called "ITIL for application management".

ASL distinguishes 6 clusters of processes:

- *Maintenance* consists of Incident, Availability, Continuity, Capacity and Configuration management. Its main goal is to keep applications up and running, to manage incidents and to stimulate pro-activity within these maintenance processes.
- *Enhancement / Renovation* uses Impact Analysis, Design, Realization, Testing and Implementation to provide short term business-IT alignment.
- *Change Management* and *Software Control and Distribution* connect the maintenance and enhancement processes.
- *Management Processes* are made up of Planning and Control, Cost Management, Quality Management (Internal Quality) and Service Level Management (External Quality).
- *Organization Cycle Management* focuses on the long term strategy for ICT service delivery.
- *Application Cycle Management* includes ICT Portfolio and Lifecycle Management and determines a long term strategy for all applications in the organization.

Key success factors in application management are:

- A clear process description including definition of owners, inputs and outputs for every step in the process;
- Communication of the full process description to everyone who is involved in order to make sure everyone knows its responsibilities and is aware of the broader process context;
- Regularly informing all involved parties on the approval of and planning for changes to the application.

Conclusion

As business requirements change during an application lifetime, it is necessary to be able to lean on a solid application management framework which provides short and long term strategies for application management. ASL meets these needs by providing a standard in application management built upon best practices.

References

ASL - framework for application management - <http://www.aslfoundation.org/>