



Service Management and the Hair Salon

Back when I was delivering ITIL training, I reached a point on the first day, where I wanted the students to clearly understand the differences between Incident, Problem, Known Error and Change. I would provide an IT-based example, and then ask if they had any, so as to reinforce the concepts.

In one class, I had a lady who first apologies that her example was not IT related.

“Great”, I said, as Service Management applies to the provision of all services, not just IT services.

She explained events as they occurred in a Hair Salon that she worked in part-time.

- “One day, a customer returned to their shop complaining that the hair colouring she had done last week was not the colour she asked for. Was this an **Incident**?”
- The manager immediately addressed the issue by arranging a free colouring for the customer. I guess this means the service has been restored?
- A few days later, a second lady came in with the same complaint. We knew that the manager was ok with us offering a free colouring, and heart-felt apologies. We immediately did this, and reported it to the manager. A **second Incident**.
- The manager told us that, should this happen again, give the same colouring offer, and get as much details as possible, in particular, what colour had the lady originally required. Gary, this sounds like what you said was a **Workaround**.
- The manager decided that she had to investigate what was happening. A **Problem** was raised?
- It seems that the customers had asked for the same colour. Important data captured.
- Checking the colouring cream used, it was found to be incorrectly labelled. A mistake by the cream provider. We had our **Root Cause**.
- With the Workaround and Root Cause, we now moved to a **Known Error** state.
- After discussions with the cream provided, they agreed to provide a new batch free of charge. But not without some degree of arguing.
- Finally, the manager decided to **Change** providers. This involved several steps including
 - negotiating a new provider,
 - testing their product,
 - removal of any existing colouring cream that looked suspect,
 - cancelling the existing supplier contract,
 - training staff on any changes required to use the new product.

- All of these steps were approved and overseen by the manager

Gary, is this what you mean by Incident, Problem, Known Error and Change?”

I was so proud. She had the concepts exactly right.

And it clearly showed my point of Service Management in non-IT spaces.

When looking for examples of ITIL practices, you may not think immediately of a hair salon, but ITIL is everywhere!

The same sequence of Incident/Problem/Change applies to every enterprise in every industry.

Stay tune for further examples of ITIL practices in non-IT industries.

And please share your own examples. Service Management goes well beyond the IT world. Let's think where else we can solve service-related headaches.

Get the idea!