ITIL and Data Center Migration

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Introduction
Data Center Migrations are among the most complex projects for the business environment. The planning activities for migrations are among the most critical of the requirements. The migration teams involved need to have a primary focus for developing the migration project plan as their first priority. Attention to preparedness of the ITIL services management, which will be supporting the migration execution, often times falls to the sidelines with much less priority focus.

Problem Statement
By not including an ITIL evaluation of the customer’s key process controls (problem, change & configuration management) as an integral part of the migration planning activities, the risk to the business becomes an unknown for assurance of sufficient process controls for migration support. For the successful delivery of the migration project, the unknowns around process controls needs to be reviewed, identified and addressed as part of the planning activity expectations for the effective management and execution of the migration move events.

Previous Options
If the customer does not deem the ITIL process evaluation as a vital part of the migration activities, the data center migration team would typically assume the task of reviewing the key customer process controls by default as a needed requirement of the overall migration planning. If the key process controls strengths are thought to be in question, create a workaround for temporary process control plans by obtaining as much information as possible during the project planning and data gathering activities with the customer.
Altus ITIL Solutions
Altus offers ITIL systems management consulting solutions as stand-alone consulting service offerings as well as coupled with data center migration offerings:

- The stand-alone ITIL systems management offering can support any of the 20 processes in the ITIL services lifecycle for assessment, design and implementation.

- The ITIL systems management offering coupled with data center migration offering has primary focus on the three key system management process areas of change, problem and configuration management. Additional process areas can be supported per request.
Altus ITIL Solutions Benefits

Including an ITIL process evaluation as a dedicated task activity in the data center migration project ensures the key process controls of problem, change & configuration management will be reviewed and validated for sufficient ability to support the migration project by a certified ITIL consultant. The Altus ITIL consultant is a service management professional certified in ITIL process controls with extensive field experience across industries with data center operations systems management and migrations of various types.

Also, having the ITIL process consultant manage the migration process controls support tasks is to eliminate several risks that can be introduced to the migration execution if performed by the migration team architects and PM’s:

- Additional time and activity spent supporting process control planning with the customers as opposed to primary focus on core migration project planning activities
- Process control research activity being performed as a sideline event lacking trained and experienced ITIL knowledge
- Data gathering primarily done during migration planning sessions causing both tasks to possibly suffer time constraints
- Risks of having gaps in the temporary process control plans where unknown gaps may be discovered during a move event

Another benefit from the Altus ITIL consultant evaluation is the sharing of best practice knowledge and guidance with the customer operations support teams during the evaluation activities to help them understand possible gaps and improve process and procedures within the three core system management processes.

In summary, including an ITIL process evaluation as an integral part of the data center migration project is beneficial for these key reasons:

- A data center migration is driven by business initiative and must meet stringent business objectives
- Bringing the workload back online fast with minimal disruption to day-to-day activities.
- Minimize risk to maintaining service levels during the relocation planning and implementation.
- Avoiding downtime that can cost thousands of dollars a minute.
- Performing the due diligence for the key process controls to sustain the data center migration activities
- Knowledge sharing in support of continuous improvement across the service management environment as applicable
Implementation
The data center migration ITIL review will include baseline activities for evaluation of these three key system process controls to maintaining service levels:

- **Change Control process**
  - Is the existing customer change control process documented and disciplined to effectively manage changes and end user communications?
  - Does the existing customer change control process automatically link into the customer configuration information (CI database) for updates to all IT changes?

- **Problem Management process**
  - Is the existing customer problem management process documented and disciplined to effectively manage problems and end user communications?
  - Can the data center migration team effectively manage the data center migration problem situations utilize the existing customer problem ticket system?

- **Configuration Management process**
  - Does the existing customer configuration information support changes to both physical and logical IT assets that will be associated with the data center migration?
  - Can the customer configuration information (CI database) be used as a ‘document of integrity’ for system data representation for the data center migration?

The outcome of systems controls evaluation determines if additional control processes or procedures are needed to warranty the data center migration:

- Should this evaluation determine insufficient ability within the customer’s existing process controls for migration support in any of the three process areas mentioned, the ITIL consultant will work with the customer teams and the migration team to design, document and implement a sufficient workaround process (or temporary process) to ensure the successful delivery of the migration move events.
  - This may be a temporary augmentation to these customer processes and/or procedures
  - Or, a temporary replacement process or procedure developed to be used by the data center migration team and the associated customers with possible vendor representatives participating in the migration activities.
- In either case, these will be temporary process controls used for the data center migration activities only.
- These temporary process controls developed for the migration project will be owned and removed by the Altus team upon the close of migration project.

- The ITIL consultant will monitor the workaround process control plan throughout the phases of the migration move events to refine and/or adjust process controls as needed. This monitor activity is needed due to the unknowns that are typically associated with any type migration activity and is seen as part of the overall migration project contingency planning activities.

Summary

The Altus ITIL solution coupled with data center migration will allow the migration architects and technical project managers to focus specifically on the migration project planning and delivery readiness, which is a much better use of their time and skills. The Altus ITIL consultant works with the data center migration team and the customer migration teams in performing the key process evaluations and creating the process support plans for a custom fit of the migration move event requirements. Also, over the course of the migration activities, the Altus ITIL consultant has the professional training and years of field experience in the ITIL process controls arena, supporting data center migrations and other IT system management projects, to share valuable tips and provide best practice guidance to the customer with respect to their continuing review of the their process controls to identify and address service management deficiencies.