

## MOF ACTION PLAN: Redistributing the Workload

### Problem

You're an IT manager at an organization that recently went through a series of layoffs and you've lost roughly a third of your staff. You're now faced with the problem of how to redistribute the workload to effectively maintain the same quality of work while avoiding critical stoppages.

### Action Plan

Redistributing the workload is essentially a matter of identifying how your organization's needs might have changed and how that affects IT's workload, then reconfiguring responsibilities with an eye toward avoiding conflicts and bridging gaps. Let's break these tasks out and take a closer look at each.



### Review the Workload

If your company's layoff has affected staffing across the board (and even if it hasn't), the IT department needs to perform a full review of its workload. Are there departments whose dependency on IT has been greatly affected? Consider that demand and volume may have changed along with other changes in the organization.

Identify the work that absolutely must happen in order to keep the systems running without incident. Does everything that happens on a daily basis fit into this category? Are there any low-value or outdated tasks that can be removed?

- ⇒ **Automate where possible.** Can any of IT's work be automated? Certain repeatable, low-risk tasks are perfect candidates for automation. In addition to easing staff workload, automation helps reduce the risk of error and ancillary resource costs. For example, automating password resets not only frees up IT staff time, but reduces reliance on the help desk. Where planned work is repetitive, it should be automated whenever possible.
- ⇒ **Consider cloud services.** Does your department offer services that could be managed by a third party over the Internet? If your organization has the financial resources available to make it happen, you can hire a vendor to take over certain tasks. Moving these services to "the cloud" will result in a reduced workload for your now-smaller staff—plus, it will free up both physical and server space in your department and reduce power and cooling costs. For more information about moving to cloud services, download the MOF [Planning for Software-plus-Services Companion Guide](#).

### Reconfigure Responsibilities

When you have completed your review of the workload and made any possible changes involving automation or cloud services, you can begin to shift responsibilities in IT.

#### Align Responsibilities

As you realign responsibilities across IT, consider any work that might need to be added, deleted, or adjusted. Changes in volume might drive reassignments or changes to what you do and how often it's done.

- ⇒ **Map your group's responsibilities.** Who is responsible for each piece of work that needs completion? Who owns each accountability? A visual representation of your workload, or service map, can be a tremendous aid for understanding key dependencies and critical components. Consider color-coding responsibilities, for example, on your organizational chart—this makes it easy to see conflicts and gaps. Finally, follow the Key Principles for Distributing Work (see page 2), and if you're ever confused about who owns a certain responsibility, ask.
- ⇒ **Look for conflicts.** Do certain areas of the organization have similar or overlapping responsibilities? Are groups or individuals confused about exactly who owns a certain task? Avoid giving ownership of multiple accountabilities to a single organizational unit; likewise, avoid spreading ownership of one responsibility over multiple organizations.
- ⇒ **Look for gaps.** Does any set of responsibilities lack an owner? Assign owners as soon as it's practicable to avoid creating gaps.

## Work Distribution Recap

- ✓ Review the workload to confirm whether all tasks are still necessary; adjust for changed volume where needed.
- ✓ Automate tasks where possible.
- ✓ Look into the use of cloud services.
- ✓ Create a visual representation of the workload by using a service map.
- ✓ Ensure there is an owner for each set of tasks with no gaps, and clarify any ownership conflicts.
- ✓ Ensure necessary segregation of duties is preserved—ask compliance officers for advice as needed.
- ✓ Document and publish ownership of tasks.
- ✓ Ensure owners have what they need to complete the tasks, including resources, information, skills, and permissions.
- ✓ Adjust distribution lists and meeting invitations where needed to reflect new task owners.

## Key Principles and Best Practices

**Separate plan-driven and interrupt-driven work.** Plan-driven or proactive work should be predictable in terms of what gets done, how much time is spent getting it done, and when it gets done. However, if that sort of work gets mixed with reactive work, the predictability gets lost.

The repetitive tasks and activities required to maintain an IT service in production are usually considered planned work. An example of such a task might be defragmentation of databases. An example of interrupt-driven work might be handling calls as a customer service representative. This role is driven by events that are outside of the control of the representative. It is worth noting that not all planned work is repetitive. Project work is an example of that.

**Put the right people in the right roles.** Once the role type has defined the work to be done, it makes sense to look for people who have an aptitude and personality type that lend themselves to that sort of work. For example, the Operations Accountability has an Operator Role Type associated with it, with responsibility for work that has predictable results. It makes sense to staff that role type with someone who enjoys standardized, predictable work, and who does well at following instructions.

**Start with ownership.** The owner of a task has the power to ensure that required work gets done, and is ultimately held responsible for whether that occurs.

**Make responsibilities clear to the owner.** The responsible person needs to have a clear understanding of what has to be done.

Be explicit about the new responsibilities both for those doing the work and those who need to interact with the accountability owners.

Be sure everyone has the information and tools necessary to do their new tasks and knows who they now need to interact with.

**Ensure constant coverage in Operations.** Because of the nature and criticality of Operations work, it is important to assign work in a way that ensures constant coverage in that area. If you have enough resources available, it is a good idea to assign resources to Operations first, to Support second, and to Problem Management third.

If you want to learn more about roles, role types, accountabilities, and work distribution, see the MOF 4.0 [Team SMF](#) or download the [Planning for Software-plus-Services Companion Guide](#).

## Learn More

This **real-life IT solution** was brought to you by Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF) 4.0.

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