BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Service Level Agreements (SLA)

4 – 8 January 2027
Boston, Massachusetts (USA)



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Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, Service Level Agreements SLAs play a pivotal role in defining the expectations and responsibilities between companies and external service providers. Whether it's for outsourcing partnerships or internal service departments, an SLA serves as a formal, legally binding contract that sets clear expectations regarding service quality, performance, and responsibilities. Understanding the importance of a Service Level Agreement is essential for any professional involved in managing these relationships. This course will provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of how SLAs function and how to leverage them to ensure mutual success in long-term partnerships.

Through this course, participants will learn how to define and measure service performance, align service delivery with corporate goals, and navigate common challenges associated with SLA management. Additionally, the course will highlight the benefits of SLAs in ensuring that both parties, whether contractors or internal service providers, are held accountable to predefined standards.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the basic considerations of outsourcing and why SLAs are crucial in such partnerships.
- Learn about the features, functions, and benefits of SLAs, and how they help in creating clear expectations between service providers and clients.
- Recognize the difference between an SLA and a contract, and when to apply each.
- Develop and define clear service levels to meet organizational needs and goals.
- Understand the process of monitoring contractor performance and relating it to penalties or rewards as per the SLA management process.
- Learn practical tips and techniques for negotiating SLAs and resolving issues that may arise during the life cycle of an SLA.
- Gain insights into how to manage and adapt SLAs effectively during the contracting period to ensure long-term success.



Course Outlines

Day 1: Principles and Functions of Service Level Agreements

- What is an SLA?: An introduction to the definition of Service Level Agreements and their importance.
- The Need to Measure Quality of Performance: Understanding why and how SLAs help in achieving measurable quality.
- SLAs: Contracts or Contract Substitutes?: Exploring the differences between an SLA and a traditional contract.
- Introducing SLAs for Services Bought from Contractors: How to define SLAs for external service providers.

Day 2: Key Elements of a Service Level Agreement

- What Services are Being Measured?: Identifying the services that should be covered under the SLA.
- Typical Quality Measures: Defining key performance indicators KPIs for service delivery.
- SLA Governance Frameworks: Learning how to manage, measure, and report service performance effectively.
- Risk Sharing and SLAs: Exploring how to manage risks and resolve issues.
- Termination of the Agreement: When and how to terminate an SLA, ensuring fair outcomes for both parties.

Day 3: Drafting Your Service Level Agreement

- Drafting Principles: Essential guidelines for creating a legally sound and effective SLA.
- A Model Structure for the SLA: Step-by-step guide on structuring an SLA.
- Essential Elements of a Quality SLA: Understanding the core components needed in every Service Level Agreement.
- Using Appropriate Measurement Language: How to define measurable terms clearly in an SLA.
- SLA Checklists: Practical tools to ensure a comprehensive and actionable SLA.

Day 4: Managing the In-Life SLA

- Review Processes: Establishing regular reviews to ensure the SLA remains relevant and effective.
- Using Escalation to Manage Quality Performance: How to escalate issues and handle underperformance.
- Keeping the SLA Relevant: Adjusting and managing changes during the contract lifecycle.
- Negotiation Techniques: Effective strategies for managing variations and negotiating with service providers.
- Customer Intervention Options: What to do when a contractor is underperforming.



Day 5: Using a Scorecard Approach to SLA Management

- Origins of the Scorecard Approach: Introduction to the SLA scorecard method.
- Aligning the SLA with Corporate Strategy: How to ensure that SLAs support the organization's overarching goals.
- Balancing Stakeholder Needs: Understanding how to balance the needs of both the service provider and the customer.
- Planning and Constructing an SLA Scorecard: Steps to create a performance scorecard for managing SLAs.
- Business Process Quality Improvement: How SLAs contribute to overall business process improvements.

Why Attend this Course: Wins & Losses!

- Master SLA Management: Learn how to define, negotiate, and manage Service Level Agreements that ensure high-quality performance from contractors and internal departments.
- Achieve Strategic Goals: Gain the skills necessary to ensure that SLAs align with corporate objectives, driving long-term success.
- Manage Risks and Performance: Understand how to manage and measure service performance, and know how to relate performance to penalties and rewards.
- Enhance Negotiation Skills: Develop key negotiation techniques for handling difficult situations and creating fair and balanced contracts.
- Real-World Application: Apply theoretical concepts to practical situations through case studies and SLA examples.

Conclusion

This course equips participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to create, negotiate, and manage Service Level Agreements SLAs that drive business performance and long-term partnerships. By mastering the key principles and processes of SLA management, participants will enhance their ability to ensure quality service delivery, manage risks effectively, and align services with strategic business objectives. Whether you are dealing with external contractors or internal service providers, this course will empower you with the expertise needed to maximize the benefits of SLAs.

