Secret powers and values of PMG – Problem Management Group for IT support

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Challenging for IT services management

In this fast-pacing world the highly integrated network infrastructure and collaboration services can connect the resources seamless to serve business needs better and make life easier. However, as IT technologies advanced and expanding, so does the complexity of services and network infrastructure. This can impose challenging for the Managed Services Providers (MSP) and the IT support organizations within any enterprise corporations.

How to mitigate the ongoing issues with tightened IT resources while same time continues to improve the overall systems performances to meet the customers' expectation can be a dilemma question for C-level execs.

Here is one well-known but seldom-recognized group "PMG – problem management group" defined within ITIL who can help significantly for this dilemma question.

Within IT industry, ITIL is known as standard best practice framework for IT service management that focuses on aligning IT services with the needs of business. ITIL define almost everything in IT service management. Here are 2 clearly-defined term in ITIL:
. Incident – An incident is an unplanned disruption or degradation of service.
. Problem – A problem is a cause of one or more incidents.

Almost every corporation has the IT support team to provide support for the services and network infrastructure. The reality is: except for the planned upgrade/implementation/new release tasks, the vast majority effort of the support team is to work on **incident level**, ie: see the break issue and fix it, aka. Break-fix.

Obviously, there is one big gap observed - barely nobody (or no dedicate group) are actually working on problem level. This gap can dramatically downgrade the services quality that MSP or IT supports group supply.

PMG secret powers

As PMG lead engineers working on the field successfully for last 8 years, we realize these secret powers within the PMG problem management group:

a.) **Reactively conduct the trending of the incidents over the period time to clearly identify the problem pattern**

b.) **Proactively perform big data analysis on the collected historical data (incidents, trap, syslog, databases, dashboard, etc.) to unveil the hidden problems**

c.) **Deep dive analysis for the whole block-chain of services/infrastructure to drill down the underlying root causes**

d.) **Research the industrial best practices and combine with real proven solutions to provide the optimization and improvement solutions for customers.**

MSP without PMG

Let's take a look at the below two typical bad-shape situations that most Managed Service Providers (MSP) or IT support group could be facing before successful PMG group been instated. Both situations could lead to the poor MSP business performance.

1.) Customers complain of non-efficient managed/supported services offer

Numerous customers complained about the piling up TAC tickets in their env. They had concern about the reoccurrence issues without clear root cause identified. IT support engineers were busy updating the tickets to meet the SLA and doing break fix. No free resources actually drilled down the issues for the clear root cause. Certain issues happened again and again. CSMs and C-level execs kept getting escalation calls from unhappy customers.

Bad result1:
Eventually, support engineers were in fire-fighting mode and got burn-out, the unsatisfied customers were leaving, and MSP businesses were affected.

2.) Customers concern of non-value received for the managed services

For certain customers under support, there were quiet or barely minimize TAC tickets been generated over the period time. Support engineers always hand off from the customer's env. simply due to no tickets seen. During the contract term, there were no proactive service improvement proposals or solutions delivered to the customer.

Bad result2:
Eventually, customers had concerns about the poor MSP service quality and claimed no value received for the managed and support services.

MSP with PMG

After PMG been instated and have well-trained senior experienced PMG engineers in place. With proper PMG methodology, now MSP can offer significant improvement of the overall MSP managed and support service quality for the customers.

Respectively, let's look at the up-ward result for the two typical situations MSP encountered.

1.) **Re: customers complain of managed/supported services offer**
With the secret powers (a, c, d) built into PMG engineers, now, PMG trend the piling up TAC tickets and identify the problems with recurring incidents pattern; PMG perform dig deep analysis and unveil the underlying root causes; PMG work with Day2 to incorporate the remediation solutions. No more chronic issues since then. Customer have no more complains about the recurring issues. TAC resources can be free from such chronic incidents.

Good result1:
Per statistical comparison of pre-PMG vs. post-PMG involved, we see nearly 35% drop of total P1/P2 incidents for 3-month period. This can easy translate to the saving of TAC resources.

2.) **Re: Customers concern of non-value received for the managed services**
With the secret powers (b, d) built into PMG engineers, PMG perform proactive deep dive analysis for the customer's env. based on the available collected data.
Most of the time, PMG can identify certain improve factors for customers, like: certain devices or services are missing monitoring and need to be add to monitoring; some foundations components do not conform to best practice, ie: wrong clock, low log buffer, sub-optimal Spanning-tree and need to be adjusted accordingly; some voice traffics not been load balanced properly and worthy to do fine-tune, etc.

Good result2:
Sometimes customers get impressive with the PMG deep dive analysis report and MSP have up-sale opportunity to deliver optimization services (ESR). More business opportunity and higher customer retention rate seen.

PMG's tremendous values

Over the period time, PMG value can be observed in below 6 different categories –

. Mitigate the chronic and mostly complex issues with clear RCA identified
. Save cost to the IT support organization by cutting down recurring incidents
. Extend the service business offer via proactive deep dive analysis

. Offer impressive support service quality which supersedes the average TAC support quality
. Keep customers happy and maintain good customer relationship
. Fewer headaches for the support organization