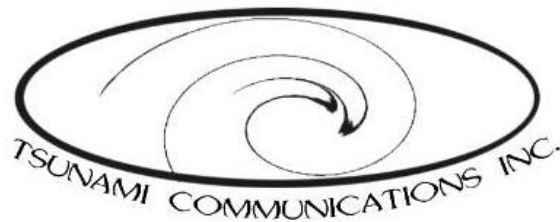


Subtitle on: Service Level & System Monitoring

Recommended Approach for Implementing System Monitoring Tools

Prepared by: Jeff Lee
May 31, 2004

Version 1.1
Last Revised: June 28, 2004



Introduction

System monitoring tools have been available to IT professionals for years, but still have not been taken advantage of by most companies. The complexity of such systems and the high cost of the initial installation have been the major obstacles to their use.

As businesses become more reliant on IT services, system failures are becoming more costly. The ability to detect and correct system problems has become critical in order for businesses to thrive.

One can always imagine the resulting chaos if the systems failed at a bank, hospital or communications centre. What if no one noticed for days that the tape backup hadn't completed on the accounting server, or that the email server had stopped routing mail to the outside world?

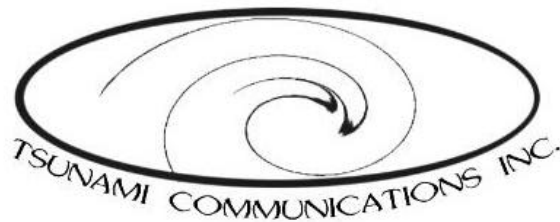
This document is to help guide IT Managers and IT Professionals on how to approach the implementation of system monitoring.

System Management or Service Level Management?

Tsunami believes the goal of IT professionals should be to deliver, monitor, and manage a set of services to its customers. System monitoring is only part of this service delivery. Refer to Appendix A for a diagram of how components of **System Monitoring** (performance, alert and configuration) relate to **System Management** and **Service Level Management**.

IT professionals often confuse System Management with Service Level Management. Purchased tools (MOM, What's Up Gold, CA Unicenter, HP Openview) or Open Source tools (Big Brother, Saint, MRTG), are often expected to deliver **Service Level Management**, when most implementations of these products only deliver **System Monitoring**.

At this time it is also valuable to define the difference between **Monitoring** and **Managing**. **Monitoring** is gathering data on system performance and exceptions, and handling those exceptions and performance trends in an organized, functional manner. **Managing** is the next logical step, where the system administrators can respond by way of an organized, controlled, and functional architecture to the exceptions and performance trends reported by the **Monitoring** system.



Approach

Tsunami believes the first step is to develop a strategy for delivering and monitoring the services an IT professional provides to his clients. We realize this is a huge undertaking, especially when you consider all the components involved.

To make this task manageable, not all the pieces of the methodology need to be worked out in detail initially, nor should they all be implemented at the same time. Focus should be given to areas surrounding system monitoring, which will allow the identification of requirements for the monitoring system. Once the requirements have been defined, existing monitoring capabilities can be evaluated to determine if other monitoring systems would be more suitable.

Tsunami would like you to understand that all IT methodologies follow a similar structure – and that the planning and implementation of a methodology are the keys to delivering successful IT services.

Common Pitfalls

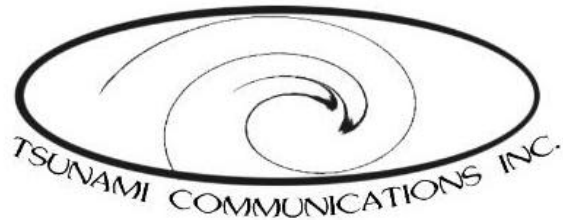
IT professionals are often pressured into quickly installing monitoring tools without developing a strategy or an understanding of the IT services they provide. This usually results in an inefficient monitoring system or worse – an unused one. Reworking an existing infrastructure is usually more expensive than planning for a comprehensive implementation from the outset.

Another common mistake is made when purchasing the system tools. Costs are always an issue. If you can't afford a solution that meets your needs, *a cheaper ineffective solution is not the answer*. Use what you have learned from developing your service delivery strategy and find affordable projects which will work together as your IT needs grow.

Summary

The key to successfully implementing System Monitoring and Service Level Management is planning. The plan should include:

- Developing the strategy for Service Level Management
- Determining the Requirements
- Evaluating the tools available
- Implementing System Monitoring
- Regularly performing maintenance and auditing the effectiveness of the Monitoring and Management tools.

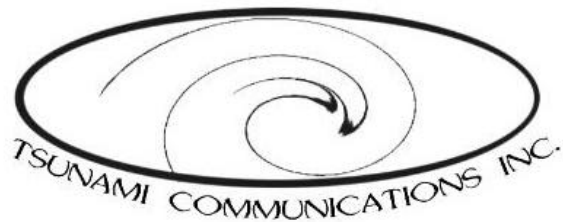


Tsunami hopes you find this information useful and that it will assist you in effectively implementing System Monitoring tools.

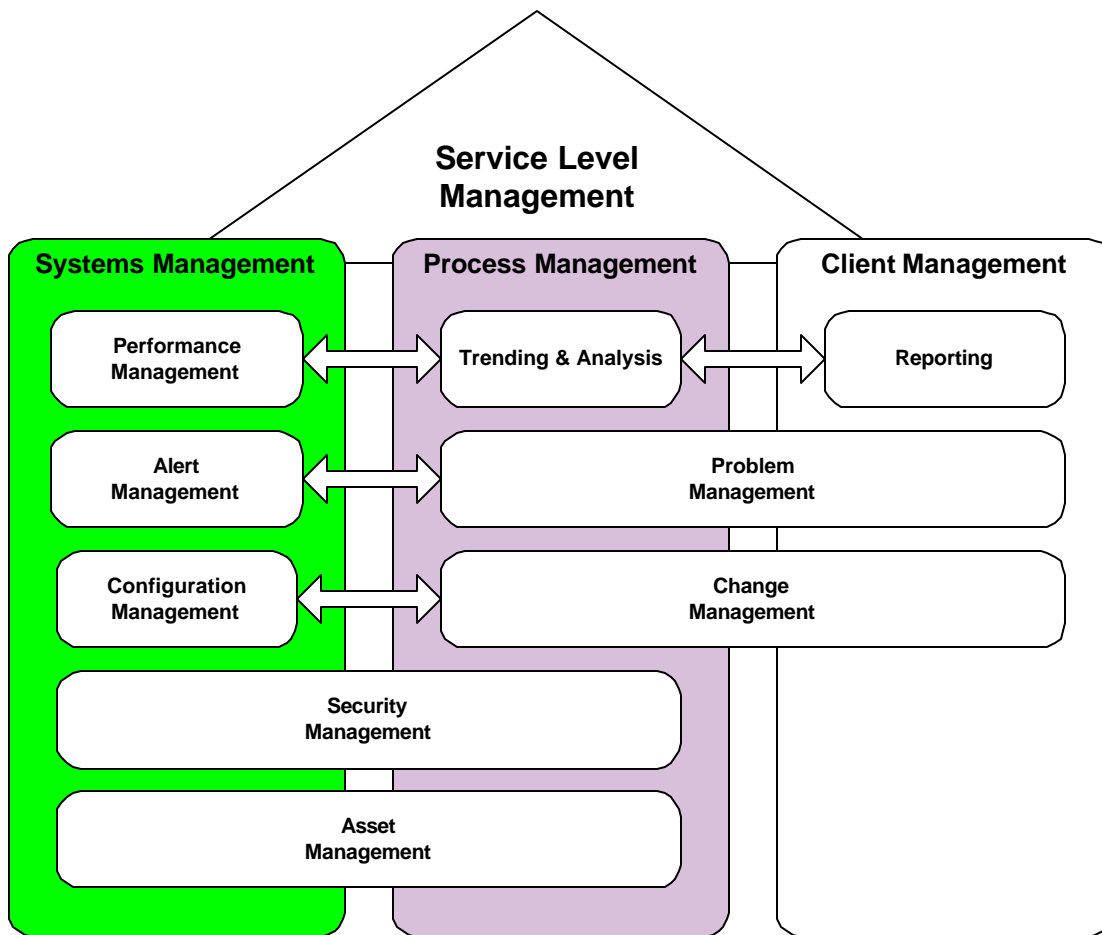
Tsunami has the expertise in documenting Service Level Management strategy, as well as reviewing System Management architecture and implementing System Monitoring tools. Tsunami can work with your team in any capacity, from planning to project lead.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jeff.Lee@tsunami.ca or Craig.Smedley@tsunami.ca.

This document is provided for general information and educational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional advice and services or the maintenance of any systems. In no event will Tsunami Communications Inc. be held liable for any decision made or action taken in reliance upon the information provided through this web site or any published documents.



Appendix A: Service Management Model



This diagram is produced by Tsunami, and is a hybrid of the ITIL and ISO methodologies. Tsunami does not exclusively endorse a particular methodology, but believes the best components of each should be pulled together to meet a client's individual needs. Tsunami would like you to understand that all IT methodologies follow a similar structure – and that the planning and implementation of a methodology are the keys to successfully delivering IT services.

This document is provided for general information and educational purposes only and is not intended to replace professional advice and services or the maintenance of any systems. In no event will Tsunami Communications Inc. be held liable for any decision made or action taken in reliance upon the information provided through this web site or any published documents.