INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This entry concerns a live application in which the principles of communities of practice have been used to supplement the delivery of a critical business process. The company concerned is a multinational pharmaceutical organization with annual sales in the order of £20bn and a workforce of 100,000 employees worldwide.

One of the more critical IT services provided is that which defends the organisation’s computer systems against attack by malicious software (commonly called computer viruses). This service draws significant direct and indirect resources to provide an acceptable level of defence for the organization. The service manages the provision of this defence from the gathering of intelligence concerning latest threats through deployment of protective measures to reporting of metrics showing service performance and adequacy of defences.

SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The service is delivered through a retained team who provides the core service management capabilities. This is supplemented by a number of nonretained people who provide some aspect of the wider service. These can be categorized as follows:

1. **Local Representation:** Provide service capabilities locally such as training, reporting, remediation, and incident management.

2. **Other Services:** Make a contribution to the Malicious Software Service. For example, server operations provide infrastructure that hosts deployment and reporting; personal computer operations provide deployment of updates driven by the malicious code service.

3. **Business Representation:** Provide conduit between business and service.

The core and extended service fora are summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Size and Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Team</td>
<td>Provide core functions of the service</td>
<td>Employees dedicated to fulfilling core service functions</td>
<td>Formal, 8 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Service Group</td>
<td>Provide elements that make up end to end service</td>
<td>Disparate, approx. 500 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Board</td>
<td>Provide direct resources Approve strategy</td>
<td>Line management</td>
<td>Formal, 15 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Group/ Customer Board</td>
<td>Deliver a specified service improvement within agreed time scales and cost</td>
<td>Community of Practice, 15 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Teams</td>
<td>Derive benefit from the service Ultimately sustain resource for the service</td>
<td>Formal, varies but typically 5 to 10 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal, approx. 100,000 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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