**7.1 Explain the following ITIL practices in detail, excluding how they fit within the service value chain:**

**(Marking weighting -**

**5.2.5 Incident Management**

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| Incident management can have an enormous impact on customer and user satisfaction, and on how customers and users perceive the service provider.  Every incident should be logged and managed to ensure that it is resolved in a time that meets the expectations of the customer and user.  Target resolution times are agreed, documented, and communicated to ensure that expectations are realistic. Incidents are prioritized based on an agreed classification to ensure that incidents with the highest business impact are resolved first.  Organizations should design their incident management practice to provide appropriate management and resource allocation to different types of incident.  Incidents with a low impact must be managed efficiently to ensure that they do not consume too many resources. Incidents with a larger impact may require more resources and more complex management.  There are usually separate processes for managing major incidents, and for managing information security incidents.  Information about incidents should be stored in incident records in a suitable tool. Ideally, this tool should also provide links to related CIs, changes, problems, known errors, and other knowledge to enable quick and efficient diagnosis and recovery.  Modern IT service management tools can provide automated matching of incidents to other incidents, problems, or known errors, and can even provide intelligent analysis of incident data to generate recommendations for helping with future incidents.  It is important that people working on an incident provide good-quality updates in a timely fashion. These updates should include information about symptoms, business impact, CIs affected, actions completed, and actions planned. Each of these should have a timestamp and information about the people involved, so that the people involved or interested can be kept informed. There may also be a need for good collaboration tools so that people working on an incident can collaborate effectively.  Incidents may be diagnosed and resolved by people in many different groups, depending on the complexity of the issue or the incident type. All of these groups need to understand the incident management process, and how their contribution to this helps to manage the value, outcomes, costs, and risks of the services provided:  • Some incidents will be resolved by the users themselves, using self-help. Use of specific self-help records should be captured for use in measurement and improvement activities.  • Some incidents will be resolved by the service desk.  • More complex incidents will usually be escalated to a support team for resolution. Typically, the routing is based on the incident category, which should help to identify the correct team.  • Incidents can be escalated to suppliers or partners, who offer support for their products and services.  • The most complex incidents, and all major incidents, often require a temporary team to work together to identify the resolution. This team may include representatives of many stakeholders, including the service provider, suppliers, users, etc.  • In some extreme cases, disaster recovery plans may be invoked to resolve an incident. Disaster recovery is described in the service continuity management practice.  Effective incident management often requires a high level of collaboration within and between teams. These teams may include the service desk, technical support, application support, and vendors. Collaboration can facilitate information-sharing and learning, as well as helping to solve the incident more efficiently and effectively.    Third-party products and services that are used as components of a service require support agreements which align the obligations of the supplier with the commitments made by the service provider to customers. Incident management may require frequent interaction with these suppliers, and routine management of this aspect of supplier contracts is often part of the incident management practice. A supplier can also act as a service desk, logging and managing all incidents and escalating them to subject matter experts or other parties as required.  There should be a formal process for logging and managing incidents. This process does not usually include detailed procedures for how to diagnose, investigate, and resolve incidents, but can provide techniques for making investigation and diagnosis more efficient. There may be scripts for collecting information from users during initial contact, and this may lead directly to diagnosis and resolution of simple incidents. Investigation of more complicated incidents often requires knowledge and expertise, rather than procedural steps.  Dealing with incidents is possible in every value chain activity, though the most visible (due to effect on users) are incidents in an operational environment.  Figure 5.20 shows the contribution of incident management to the service value chain, with the practice being applied mainly to the engage, and deliver and support value chain activities. Except for plan, other activities may use information about incidents to help set priorities:  • Improve Incident records are a key input to improvement activities, and are prioritized both in terms of incident frequency and severity.  • Engage Incidents are visible to users, and significant incidents are also visible to customers. Good incident management requires regular communication to understand the issues, set expectations, provide status updates, and agree that the issue has been resolved so the incident can be closed.  • Design and transition Incidents may occur in test environments, as well as during service release and deployment. The practice ensures these incidents are resolved in a timely and controlled manner.  • Obtain/build Incidents may occur in development environments. Incident management practice ensures these incidents are resolved in a timely and controlled manner.  • Deliver and support Incident management makes a significant contribution to support. This value chain activity includes resolving incidents and problems |
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