



## Saudi Agency Improves Service Reliability with Centralized Service Desk

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Industry:** Government—Postal services

### Customer Profile

Government-owned Saudi Post is the official postal service for Saudi Arabia. Established in 1961, the organization employs more than 10,000 and owns the postal service brand Wasel.

### Business Situation

To support the goals of next-generation postal services, the Saudi Post IT department wanted to build on existing IT management practices, and improve service reliability through more timely and efficient IT incident response.

### Solution

Saudi Post embarked on a two-year service improvement program that combined best practices from the Microsoft® Operations Framework and Microsoft Services offerings to address critical areas of the IT service life cycle and to centralize the Service Desk.

### Benefits

- Integrated, consistent IT service
- Incident resolution rate up from 23 percent to 60 percent
- Boost in customer satisfaction
- Reduced operating costs

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Dr. Usamah M. Altaf, CIO, Saudi Post

Saudi Post depends on technology for the effectiveness and efficiency of its high-quality and modern postal services. Thus, the IT department saw itself as a reliable service provider that met customers' needs at or above expected service levels. When Saudi Post unveiled a blueprint for next-generation postal services, IT management realized the need to balance a technology improvement strategy with an examination of processes, people, and the IT service life cycle to be able to effectively support business processes and to provide reliable IT services. An IT Service Management Assessment recommended a two-year Service Improvement Program to make overall improvements and determined that a centralized IT Service Desk would be key to providing more reliable and available IT service. Now, the Saudi Post Service Desk provides consistent, timely service that customers appreciate.

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Eng. Majed Al Esmail, IT General Manager, Saudi Post



## Situation

Since its establishment in 1961, Saudi Post has been the organization solely responsible for the provision of postal services for every individual, private, and public organization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Technological innovation is a guiding tenet at Saudi Post. As one of the top government-owned technology pioneers in Saudi Arabia, Saudi Post provides an exceptional range of high-quality postal services, such as private resident mail delivery through the brand Wasel. Other electronic services include:

- My Post Online, through which customers can access Post Today, E-Bills, and Post Address Validation, and request package pick-up.
- Post Today, which customers can use to check the contents of their P.O. box or Wasel box for various kinds of mail.
- Saudi Locator on the Saudi Post portal and Locator NAV, a navigation system based on postal addresses.
- Automated Postal Services, such as Point of Sale and Postal Kiosk.
- Postal Mobile Services.
- Ability track and trace various kinds of mail.
- Postage Calculator.

The support and delivery of the high-quality and modern postal services offered by Saudi Post rely on many technologies operating behind the scenes. Thus, the Saudi Post IT department envisioned itself as a reliable service provider that met or exceeded customer needs. When Saudi Post unveiled its blueprint for next-generation postal services, IT management embarked on an IT service improvement plan to help Saudi Post realize its overall vision of technologically advanced postal services. IT management also realized that a technology improvement strategy needed to be balanced by assessments

of processes, people, and the IT service life cycle to be able to support advanced technologies effectively and to provide reliable services. One goal of the IT department was to centralize the IT Service Desk to manage requests and incidents more effectively and efficiently.

## Solution

The journey began in May 2008, when Microsoft® Services Premier Operations Consulting conducted an IT Service Management Assessment (SMA) that covered Saudi Post’s most critical service and process areas, including the IT service life cycle, the effectiveness of the IT organization’s structure and operations processes. The result of the assessment was a two-year Service Improvement Program (SIP) roadmap for improving service management practices and shifting IT deliverables to be more focused on services. The SIP roadmap consisted of several integrated Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) projects to help Saudi Post align IT goals with the goals of the program. These projects included:

- Improving the Service Desk
- Establishing a Network Operations Center
- Developing processes for change, configuration, and release management
- Developing an update and patch management process
- Improving a solutions delivery management methodology
- Creating a service catalog
- Creating service level management messaging

Saudi Post chose the Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF) as the set of best practices to adopt and adapt because MOF is simple, relevant,

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Mohammed Swyena, Service Desk and NOC Director, Saudi Post

practical, and concise. In July 2008, Saudi Post began work on the projects described in the SIP. Mr. Abdullah M. Qashish, Systems & Applications Director at Saudi Post, led the SIP.

#### **Introduction to MOF**

The first activity of the program was to introduce the Microsoft Operations Framework to employees in the IT department. This paved the way for IT personnel to learn about the concept of IT Service Management and why the improvement plan was needed. A combination of the MOF 4.0 Foundations workshop and the Managing Change, Configuration, and Risk Advanced workshop were provided in four sessions to several groups based on the planned project needs. “McKinley Airport” simulations supported the sessions by delivering ITSM concepts and providing real-life scenarios. The classes were enjoyable while helping people see in practice how processes could be improved and repeatable.

#### **Service Desk Improvement**

Before the adoption of MOF, the Service Desk was seen as having limited value. The SMA came up with a number of improvement areas related to service desk structure across Saudi Post. Using MOF 4.0 guidance, specifically Customer Service and Problem Management Service Management Functions (SMFs) in the Operate phase, and the Team SMF in the Manage layer, Saudi Post started to address the key components of its IT Service Desk offering. The project phases covered:

- **Service Desk Architecture and Structure**—using the Virtual Service Desk structure, the existing Service Desk was reviewed and improved to act as a single, centralized Service Desk.

- **Service Desk Map**—the entire service was analyzed to identify all required hardware and software needed to build the Service Desk service.
- **Service Desk Virtual Team**—a virtual team was created to ensure that the Saudi Post Service Desk could operate as a service, and that management would be accountable and have shared responsibility.
- **Coding Tables**—all priority and escalation tables were properly defined and embedded in Saudi Post’s existing Service Desk tool.
- **Process Improvement**—to create a clear distinction between request fulfillment and incident resolution, repeatable procedures were defined and created during the Incident Management process.
- **Technical and Management Escalation**—schedules were created based on incidents or request priorities.
- **Response and Resolution Targets**—to ensure a higher quality of service and to increase customer satisfaction, specific response and resolution targets were established. Saudi Post established a light version of a Problem Management process to deal with complex problems and to approach the incidents database proactively to analyze, prioritize, and research outcomes to prevent recurring failures and to provide permanent solutions.
- **Operating Level Agreements (OLAs)**—because the Service Desk team is represented by more than just the first-line team, which includes the Network Operations Center (NOC) and all other Saudi Post IT departments, the appropriate OLAs were established to better understand dependencies and to ensure cross-department team

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- cooperation to manage high-priority calls.
- **Measurement**—Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were used to establish baselines and measure progress toward incident response, incident resolution, and customer satisfaction targets.
  - **Reporting**—Reports and dashboards were created to provide updates on status and performance.
  - **Service Level Agreements (SLAs)**—SLAs were established to set a common understanding about the services, priorities, responsibilities, guarantees, and warranties between the IT department and other departments at Saudi Post.

*“MOF helped us create a Service Desk structure that defines a request, an incident, and a real problem; has an architecture that is easy to follow; defines an escalation process; and achieves our targets,”* says Dr. Usamah M. Altaf, Chief Information Officer at Saudi Post.

Finally, the Response and Resolution, Escalation, and SLA processes, along with an awareness program, were delivered and implemented in Saudi Post’s existing Service Desk tool. Says Engineer Majed Al Esmail, IT General Manager at Saudi Post. *“We were able to use our existing tools and our existing resources to implement MOF—this was a primary benefit.”*

### Benefits

The MOF SIP program has made a positive impact on Service Desk services at Saudi Post. This includes the higher reliability and availability of IT services that support Saudi Post business processes and cost reduction due to

streamlined operations and more efficient staff utilization.

*“It is the moment of truth when we see the IT Service Management practices applied at Saudi Post in reality. MOF has helped us establish a true Service Desk center and a professional Data Center,”* says Mohammed Swyena, Service Desk and NOC Director at Saudi Post.

### Integrated and Consistent Service

With a centralized Service Desk, Saudi Post is better able to manage IT incidents throughout the service life cycle. *“When we made the decision to implement SIP, we envisioned a highly available, more reliable, and service-oriented environment. That vision has now become reality,”* says Qashish.

### Improved Incident Resolution Rate

The IT service awareness program has helped IT personnel better understand concepts and practices of IT service delivery. Since the new service desk processes were implemented, this awareness has helped improve call resolution rates from 23 percent to 60 percent.

### Boost in Customer Satisfaction

Similarly, the centralization of the Service Desk and the adoption of a services-centric approach to IT operations have improved response and resolution times. Customers report that they are happy with the improved level of service, and the IT department is receiving fewer customer complaints than before.

### Reduced Operating Costs

IT operations now perform more effectively because the department can handle a heavier workload and duplicate tasks have been eliminated. This

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[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

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[www.sp.com.sa](http://www.sp.com.sa)

streamlined process has significantly reduced expenditures.

### Increased Productivity

IT management can now measure the work level of their staff using the MOF Team and Operations Service Management Functions, Operations Management Portal, and the Service Desk tool. This has led to more efficient staff utilization and a 25 percent increase in productivity. *"MOF helped us solve incidents faster by avoiding delays caused by responsibility clarity issues,"* says Saleh D. AlAnzi, Service Desk Manager at Saudi Post.

Finally, established KPIs help drive continual service improvement throughout the organization.

*"It's all about process improvement enabled by existing tools,"* concludes Khalid Hakim, Senior IT Operations Consultant at Microsoft.

## Microsoft Operations Framework

Microsoft Operations Framework (MOF) 4.0 provides relevant, practical, and accessible guidance for today's IT pros. MOF strives to seamlessly blend business and IT goals while establishing and implementing reliable, cost-effective IT services.

For more information about the Microsoft Operations Framework, go to:  
[www.microsoft.com/mof](http://www.microsoft.com/mof)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Operations Framework
  - Operate Phase (with Management Review)
  - Deliver Phase (with Management Review)
  - Team SMF
  - Change and Configuration SMF
  - Business/IT Alignment SMF
  - Reliability SMF
- Microsoft Services
  - Service Management Assessment (SMA)
  - Software Update Management (SUM)
  - Roles and Knowledge Management (RKM)
  - Service Level Management (SLM)
  - Service Mapping (SMAP)