

White Paper



An Integrated Approach

to Improve Order Fallout Management in Telecom Organizations

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Abstract

Communications Service Providers (CSPs) must fulfill orders on time and provide efficient and cost-effective customer service. In addition, they need robust order handling systems to ensure competitiveness. Infosys' experts propose an integrated approach to help CSPs address the challenges of order fallout management.

A structured methodology to resolve fallout issues reduces customer churn, enhances satisfaction and improves the customer experience. Appropriate check points, control mechanisms and efficient processes incorporated into the system help minimize order failures.

Typical Framework

A robust order management system is imperative for successful provisioning of services. An efficient order fallout management system ensures that order failures are detected and corrected early for prompt provisioning of customer service. An order fallout occurs due to non-scalable systems, incomplete processes or inconsistent data. Fallouts result in customer churn, degradation of service offerings and a diminished customer experience. Order fallout management is a complex system involving multiple components. Figure 1 depicts a typical framework for order fallout management.

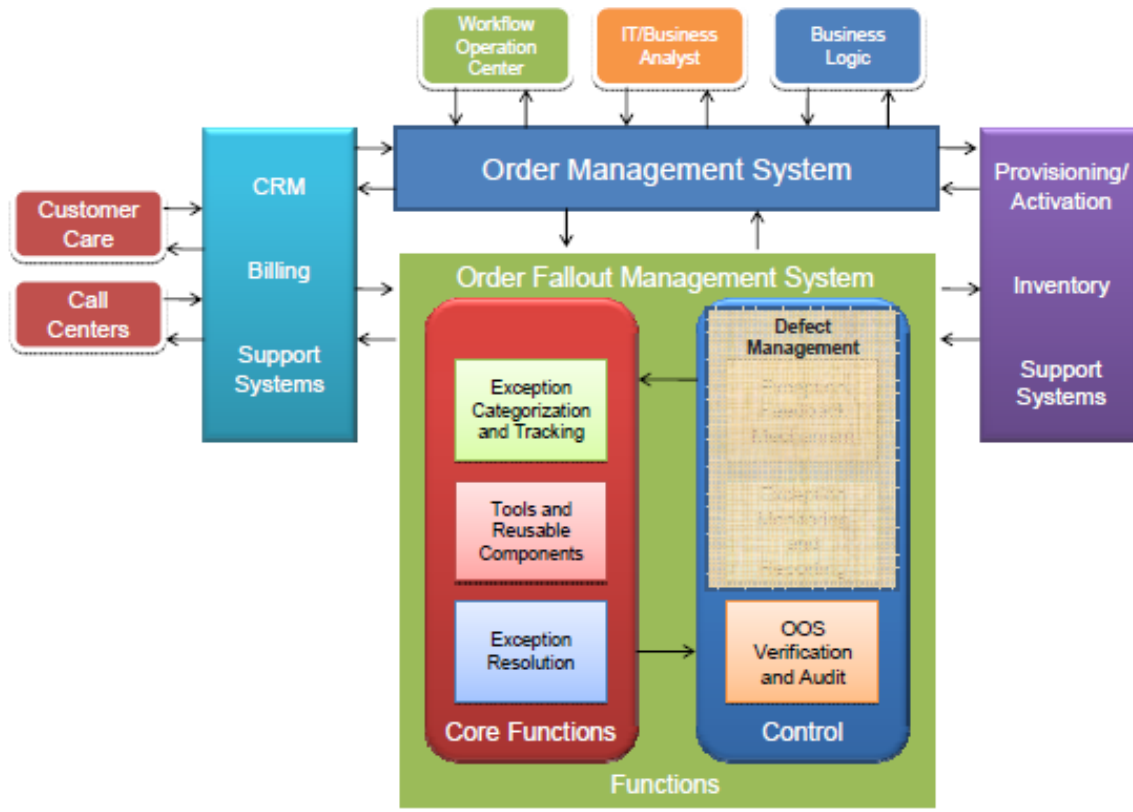


Figure 1: Framework for order fallout management

Integrated Approach to Order Fallout Management

CSPs can adopt various methods to improve their order fallout management process. We suggest an integrated view to resolve issues in order fallout.

We apply different views to address the issues in order fallout management since stakeholders have diverse perspectives to resolve fallout issues. For instance, the senior management may focus on increased cash flow at minimal cost while Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) need a reliable system to provide efficient customer service, irrespective of cost.

A consolidated view enables CSPs to develop effective solutions for issues related to order fallout. We propose five perspectives/ views that must be considered before implementing a new order fallout management system or modifying an existing system:

- Process view
- System view
- People view
- Data view
- Cost view

The implementation steps for each view depend on the type, scale and range of services that an organization offers its customers. The steps must be evaluated and analyzed in terms of the investment involved vis-à-vis benefits anticipated. The scope of implementation of the views is at the discretion of the CSP.

We propose a standard process, as shown in Figure 2, to define solutions to issues across the five views.

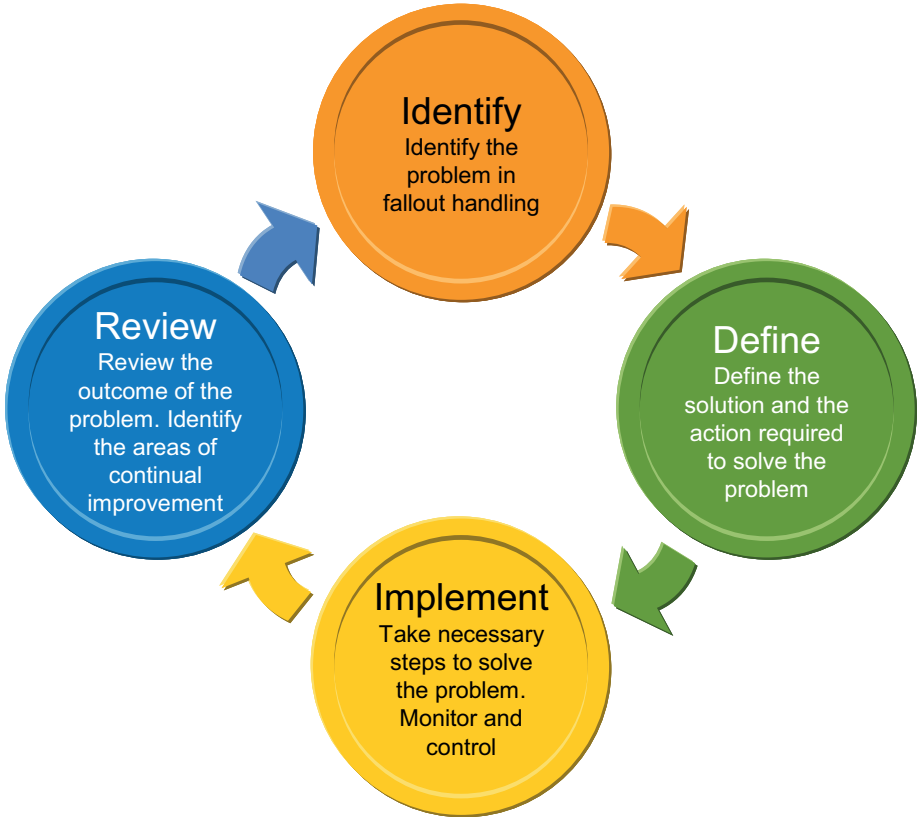


Figure 2: The standard process across views

CSPs must align the implementation steps for each view with their short and long-term goals, while remaining focused on increasing the customer base and enhancing the customer experience.

The mechanism for implementation of the views is illustrated in Figure 3.

An Integrated Order Management System

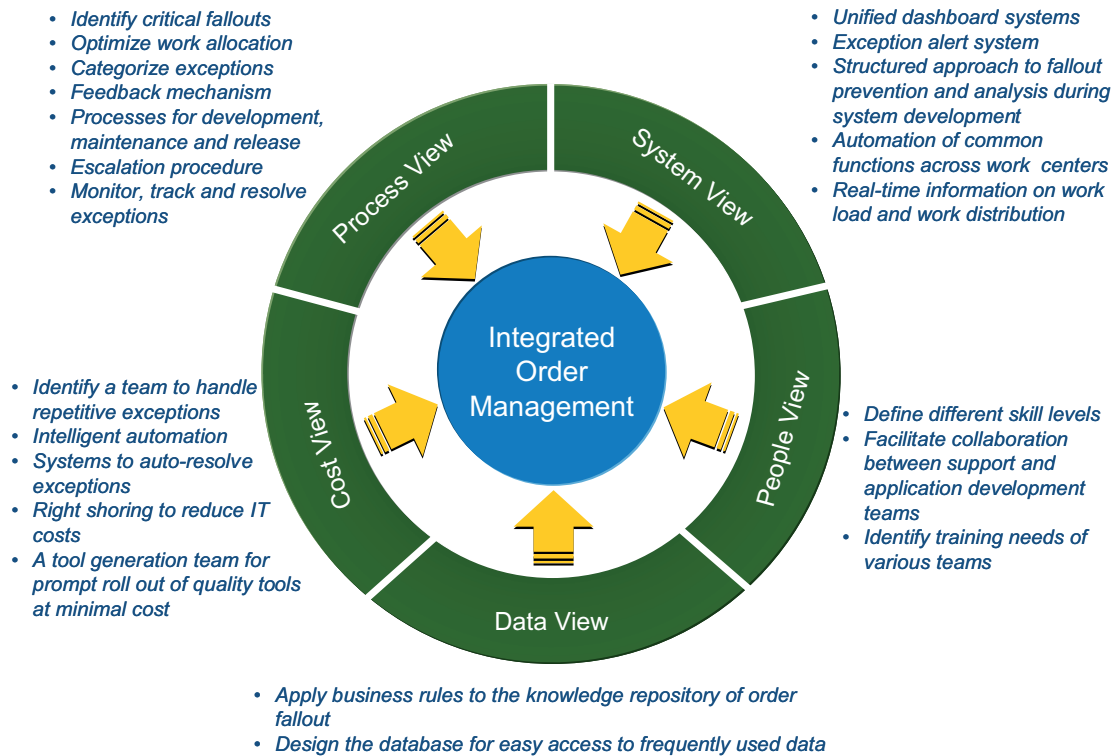


Figure 3: Implementation mechanism

Process View

The process view focuses on the processes to be applied to different types of fallout. A comparison with existing processes or a new process helps resolve issues more efficiently. CSPs must identify, define and review the processes to resolve order fallout issues. The processes must include:

- Proper methods to identify criticality of fallouts, i.e., orders requiring immediate resolution versus orders that are due at a later date. Processes must be defined for stringent monitoring, tracking and resolution of exceptions.
- Well-defined methods to allocate work across different regions and types of order fallout. Proper definition of work centers enables allocation of work to the work center with the right skills and knowledge to handle the issue.
- Efficient communication methods such as chat queues and bridges to enable interaction between various teams to promptly resolve common issues and reduce communication overheads
- Work centers with the ability to manually orders in triage situations
- Efficient feedback mechanisms to solicit feedback from various stakeholders including CSRs
- Processes for the product management team to incorporate literature on new product bundle offers into the system
- Processes for development, maintenance, deployment, and release management
- Escalation procedures for various scenarios

People View

The people view equips the fallout management team with the right set of skills and equipment to handle order fallouts efficiently. It encompasses all people aspects, including how teams must be aligned along knowledge proficiency, aspirations and limitations, to utilize their strengths in the fallout handling process.

The people view point can be gained by -

- Setting up integrated teams to enable the support team to collaborate with the application development team for prompt and accurate exception management
- Defining different levels of skills in order fallout to rectify orders depending on the complexity of exceptions. It optimizes work assignment to Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to avoid cherry-picking by specialists.
- Identifying and deploying training mechanisms to create knowledge-enabled CSRs for increased customer satisfaction and efficient order entry. It also reduces inconsistent order entries in the system.
- Identifying the training needs of all stakeholders

Cost View

Adopting the cost view requires enhanced focus since it affects the overall profitability and success of an organization.

A fallout management system must be implemented at a reasonable/ optimal cost. The tangible and intangible benefits must be considered while comparing the cost options of an implementation. For example, a particular order fallout improvement strategy may not be cost-effective but may yield long-term benefits to the organization. Management of order fallout is more expensive in the later stages of the order flow cycle.

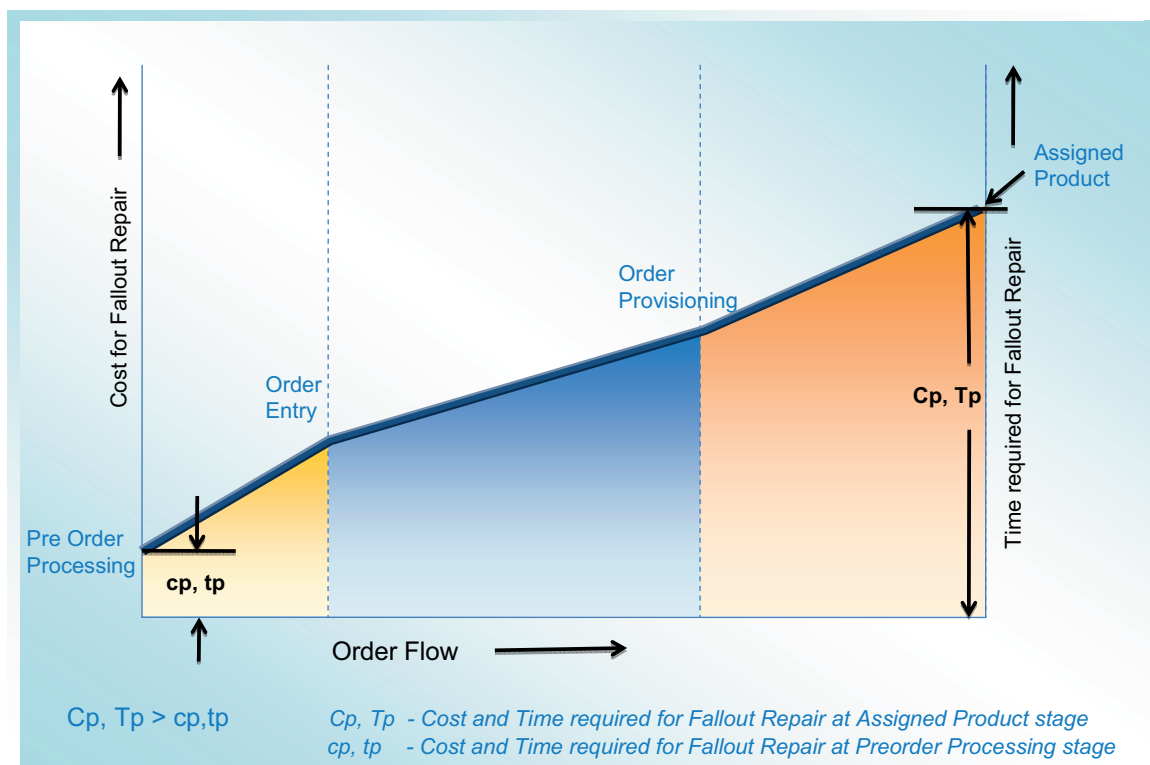


Figure 4: Cost of fallout repair

Implementation steps for the cost view:

- Opt for right shoring to reduce the IT cost of fallout management
- Identify and train Tier 1 and Tier 2 teams to handle repetitive order exceptions. The teams can comprise resources with a lower skill set to minimize costs.
- Identify an expert team for tool generation to roll out quality tools promptly and reduce the cost of order fallouts. Rules-based tools may be used when it is known that a bug will exist until the next release. Tools help detect, diagnose and resolve system, application and data issues promptly.

System View

The system view helps build a mature system that can address the technical demands and the complex application landscape of IT organizations. It enables improvements in the overall order management system to enhance the order flow-through rate. The system view facilitates enhancements, technology upgrades and automation of processes, and improves reporting for better decision making.

The system view enables -

- Unified dashboard systems – Tier 1 through Tier 4 teams for customer service must have a unified view of applications to reduce Average Handling time (AHT) and promptly resolve issues.
- Intelligent automated systems – An intelligent system can automatically resolve repetitive exceptions. It can take fallouts from a provisioning system, automatically correct errors, and resubmit the order to the provisioning system for flow-through, eliminating the need for manual intervention. Infosys' automated processes helped a CSP improve order processing and save US\$ 3 million in a year. Figure 5 depicts the monetary savings and the corresponding success rate achieved by the CSP in 10 months from automation.

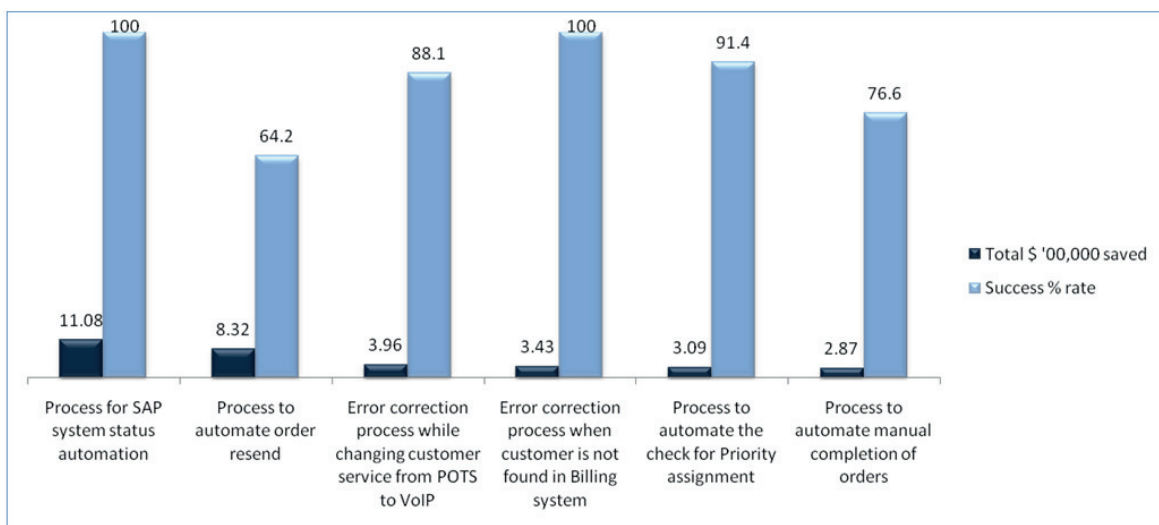


Figure 5: Benefits realized from automated processes

- Rules-based engine – A sophisticated rules-based engine enables the system to address order fallout.
- Exception alert system – Flow maps across distributed applications can be leveraged to alert various stakeholders with pre-defined Service Level Agreements (SLAs) about the occurrence of an order fallout. An audit log captures the alert message and the contextual information, and transfers it to a workspace where business analysts and developers collaborate with the support team to resolve the exception.
- Structured approach – Preventive design and analysis of fallout can be achieved during system development with a structured approach.
- Prioritization – Automation of common functions across work centers provides real-time information on work load and work distribution. It enables managers to prioritize work queues.

Data View

The data view accesses how data is present in various systems and how it can be organized to minimize complexity and issues. It identifies and eliminates redundant data across locations to ensure intelligent gathering of data by various systems. Since a majority of issues arise from inconsistent data, the best methods must be incorporated for data extraction and validation during the design of a new, an upgrade and while interfacing applications.

Advantages of the data view:

- When release cycles are long, intelligent systems can be set up to apply business rules to the knowledge repository of order fallout and resolve exceptions automatically. It enables Tier 1 and Tier 2 teams to resolve order fallouts promptly and reduces AHT for order fallouts.
- Applications can share data efficiently when a common data structure is used to store and access data. In addition, the database can be structured to ensure that frequently used data is readily available.
- The success of an order management system depends on the efficient flow and processing of information/ data. Data must be consistent across systems for optimal use of information. It also ensures compatibility of data.

Key Benefits

A structured fallout management system using the five views realizes several benefits:

- Enhances the customer experience through prompt service delivery and repair. A leading telecom company in the United States improved flow-through rate by 6% in eight months.
- Enables early detection of the root cause of an issue even in distributed, interconnected applications that execute over heterogeneous systems located in different places and owned by different groups
- Provides timely and cost-effective services to customers. A US-based CSP achieved 2% increase in average on-time delivery, resulting in 71% on-time service delivery over six months.
- Reduces operational expenditure
- Addresses the gaps that contribute to fulfillment and assurance order fallout
- Drives revenue by accelerating order completion and reducing outage times

Conclusion

It may be difficult to achieve zero percent order fallout in a complex and competitive IT and business environment. However, an integrated approach helps companies better handle order fallouts, which is the prime cause of revenue leakage in order provisioning.

Our view-based approach enables companies to take reasonable measures to rationalize expenditure and eliminate inefficiencies from their order fallout management system. Significantly, it provides better visibility and control to help CSPs reduce order fallout.

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