

IT Service Delivery Manager interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for IT Service Delivery Manager roles often focus on your ability to manage teams, monitor service levels and resolve incidents under pressure. You will likely be asked to demonstrate how you balance client needs with internal constraints and how you drive continuous improvement.

- **Process:** Questions about how you monitor SLAs, manage incident queues or run service reviews.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for past examples of handling difficult clients, team conflict or service failures.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations such as a major outage during peak hours or a vendor failing to meet obligations.
- **Technical:** Questions about your familiarity with ITSM tools like ServiceNow or Jira Service Management and frameworks like ITIL.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about managing stakeholder expectations and communicating service performance.

Typically a phone screen with a recruiter, then a panel interview with the hiring manager and a technical lead. There may be a scenario exercise or a request to walk through a past service improvement project. Some employers include a short presentation on how you would improve service delivery.

1. Walk me through how you monitor SLAs and KPIs across a service delivery team.

Why they ask

To see if you have a systematic approach to performance management and can keep services on track.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: data collection, reporting, review meetings, escalation, and corrective action. Mention specific tools and how you engage the team.

Example answer

"At my last role, I set up a dashboard in ServiceNow that tracked first response, resolution time and customer satisfaction. Every morning I reviewed the previous day's performance with team leads. We held a weekly service review with stakeholders to discuss trends and any breaches. If a KPI slipped, I would work with the team to identify the root cause and put a corrective plan in place. This approach helped us consistently meet our SLA targets and spot issues before they became problems."

2. Tell me about a time you had to turn around a struggling service relationship with a client.

Why they ask

To assess your client management and problem-solving skills when trust has been eroded.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on listening, root cause analysis, and a concrete recovery plan.

Example answer

"I inherited a client account where satisfaction had dropped due to repeated outages and slow response. I met with the client to understand their concerns and apologised for the disruption. I then conducted a root cause analysis of the incidents and found that a legacy system was causing most of the problems. I worked with my team to implement a monitoring tool and a new escalation process."

Within three months, the client's satisfaction scores had recovered, and we retained the contract for another two years."

3. A critical system goes down during peak business hours. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

To see how you prioritise, communicate and stay calm under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: immediate actions, communication, escalation, resolution, and post-incident review.

Example answer

"First, I would ensure the incident response team is activated and that we have a clear incident manager. I would prioritise restoring service, even if it means a temporary workaround. I would communicate with stakeholders early and often, setting expectations on when we will provide the next update. Once the system is back up, I would lead a post-incident review to identify what went wrong and prevent it from happening again. I would also follow up with the business to make sure they are satisfied with our response."

4. How do you approach continuous improvement in an IT service environment?

Why they ask

To test your ability to identify and implement process improvements that add value.

How to structure your answer

Explain your framework: data analysis, root cause, small experiments, and measuring results. Give an example of an improvement you led.

Example answer

"I start by looking at the data: incident trends, SLA breaches, and customer feedback. I then work with the team to identify root causes and brainstorm improvements. We prioritise changes that are low effort and high impact. For example, I noticed that password reset tickets were a large portion of our volume. I introduced a self-service portal, which reduced those tickets noticeably and freed up the team to focus on more complex issues. I always measure the impact to confirm the change was worthwhile."

5. Describe a situation where you had to balance competing demands from a client and your internal team.

Why they ask

To evaluate your stakeholder management and ability to negotiate without damaging relationships.

How to structure your answer

Use a situation-action-outcome structure, highlighting how you gathered facts, communicated transparently, and found a workable compromise.

Example answer

"A client wanted a new feature delivered within a week, but my development team was already at capacity with a critical security patch. I met with the client to explain the trade-offs and the risk of delaying the security work. I then worked with my team to see if we could deliver a partial solution quickly. We agreed to deliver the security patch first and then fast-track the feature the following week. The client appreciated the honesty, and we maintained a strong relationship."

6. What is your experience with ITSM tools like ServiceNow or Jira Service Management?

Why they ask

To gauge your technical proficiency and how you use tools to drive service delivery.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: describe your hands-on use, customisation, reporting, and how you train others. Give specific examples.

Example answer

"I have used ServiceNow extensively for incident, problem and change management. I configured dashboards and reports to track SLAs and KPIs for senior management. I also trained new team members on using the tool effectively. At another role, I introduced Jira Service Management for a smaller team, which improved our workflow and gave us better visibility of requests. I am comfortable learning new tools quickly and can adapt them to fit the organisation's processes."