

SLAAs

THE FOUNDATION
FOR STRONGER
CUSTOMER
RELATIONSHIPS



ConnectWise®

ConnectWise.com

Introduction:

Your service level agreement (SLA) sets the tone for your relationship with a new client by outlining your responsibilities, your client's responsibilities, and the terms and timelines you will both work under. **When you're clear on expectations, you'll be able to measure and manage the user experience in a meaningful way** and position yourself as a trusted advisor. The better your agreement, the more you and your clients benefit.



1 Why Do I Need an SLA?

SLAs deliver clear advantages to you and your customers.

By implementing SLAs, you can specify exactly what is (and is not) covered, document roles and responsibilities of both parties, and define service prerequisites that set you up for success. When done well, an SLA delivers peace of mind to your customers, who can refer to agreed-upon deliverables, see clearly defined terms of service, and access specific instructions for support and escalation.





2 Where Do I Start?

Your SLA doesn't have to be a challenge. Start with a few simple Dos & Don'ts to get you on your way.

Dos

- **Do develop a framework**—like ITIL—to help you map out your SLA and maximize your efficiency. Rely on automated workflows, where possible, to help you save time and deliver faster service.
- **Do identify specifically** what is and is not covered to avoid confusion on both sides. Make sure important things like your availability and contact information are clearly defined.
- **Do monitor compliance** by measuring your progress against SLA goals. Rely on reporting to help you keep customers aware of how you're meeting and exceeding your SLA promises.
- **Do automate reporting.** Providing real-time performance to customers through automated reporting provides full transparency into the real status of the agreed upon metrics.

Don'ts

- **Don't treat it as a solution** to customer-reported issues. Address concerns immediately, so your customers feel heard, and then revisit the SLA if necessary.
- **Don't make it one-sided.** Your SLA needs to work for you and your customer, so make sure it is equally beneficial.
- **Don't let issues fester.** Define thresholds to alert you to issues before they impact your SLA, and communicate performance expectations down to your sales and marketing teams to keep everyone on the same page.

"If used correctly, the Service Level Agreement can be your most effective sales tool and the ultimate source of your profit and protection." - CompTIA¹

3 What Should an SLA Include?

Your SLA agreement documents the common agreement between you and your customers and makes sure you both have a clear and concise definition of services, responsibilities, timelines, and guarantees.

The following sections are a great foundation for your SLA, and should be included along with clear explanation:

- Definition of Service
- Fees and Payment Schedule
- Taxes
- Coverage Hours
- Exclusions
- Performance Measurement
- Incident Management Process and Response Time
- Limitation of Liability
- Service Requirements
- Covered Equipment and/or Services
- Minimum Standards
- Confidentiality
- Security

Since your SLA is a legal document, you also want to make sure a qualified legal professional who understands the industry and any relevant verticals or regulatory considerations reviews it.





“It costs approximately six times more to attract a new client than to retain an old one.” -CompTIA³

4 Is it Time to Refresh my SLA?

Things change in every relationship, and your relationship with your customer is no different. On a pre-established, regular schedule, you should meet with your customer to revisit your SLA and make sure it is still meeting the needs of both parties. If it isn't, you might need to refresh.

Here are 5 reasons why it might be time to refresh your SLA:

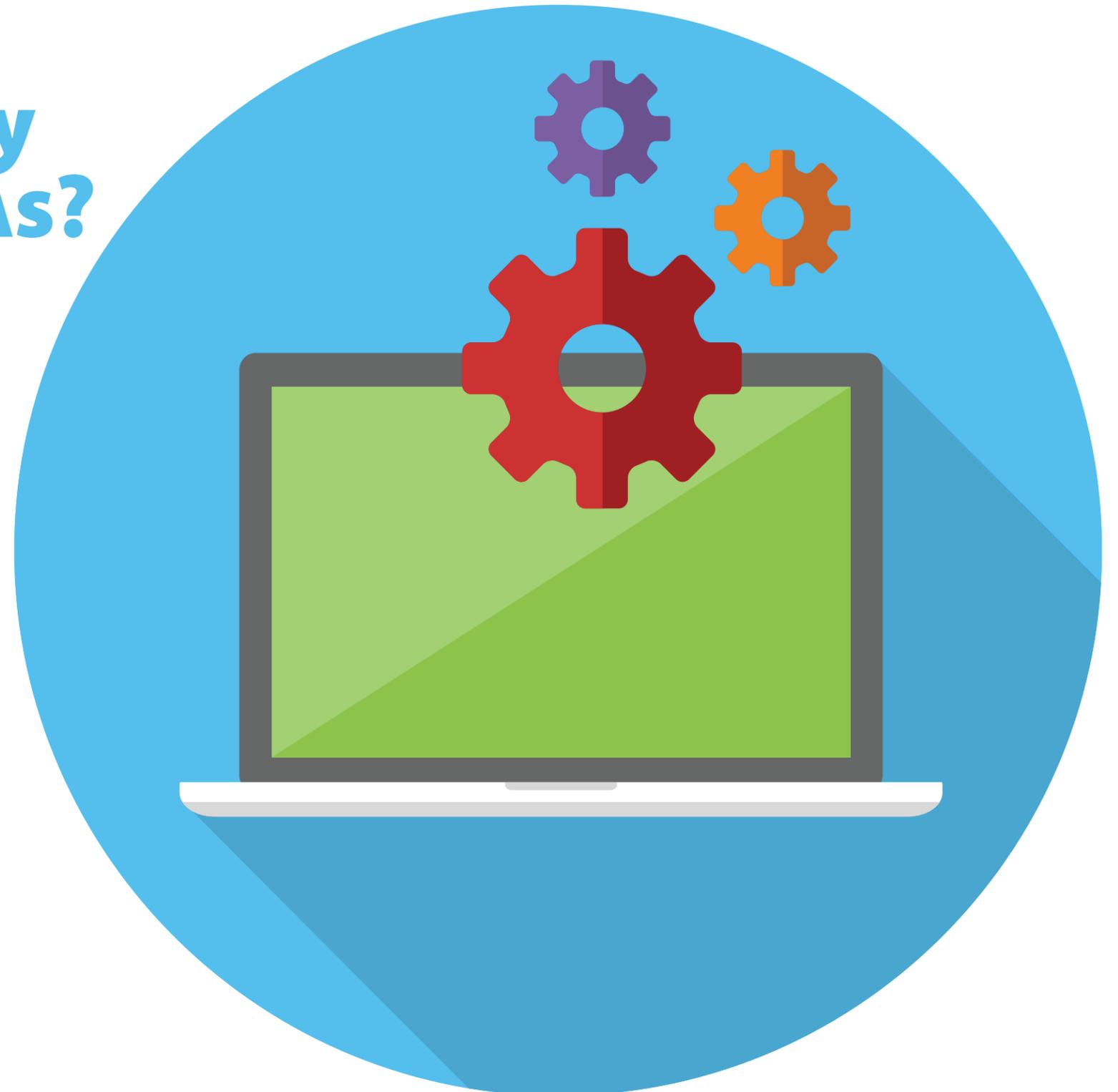
- 1. You're offering a new service.** Don't set yourself up for failure by allowing new services—with new requirements—to be governed by an old SLA.
- 2. Your team is struggling to meet timelines.** If you can't meet current SLA expectations, especially if it's because you're constantly delivering higher quality work, it's time to renegotiate.
- 3. It's confusing.** If you're constantly getting questions about a particular section of your SLA, rewrite it for clarity.
- 4. It isn't keeping up.** Technology changes fast, and sometimes your SLAs might not reflect the change. Use revision time to update your standards and stay competitive.
- 5. Disputes are on the rise.** If you're losing customers to SLA-related disputes, especially at a higher rate than the industry average, it's time to make some changes.

5 What is the best way to keep track of SLAs?

You can rely on a solution like ConnectWise Manage to track service delivery expectations that you have set with your customer. Up the ante with an RMM tool like ConnectWise Automate, which gives you the advantage of repairing systems before your clients are aware there are issues. Many partners can charge a premium for a quicker response time. SLAs can help you decide which ticket to take care of first, so you can ensure that you respond within the parameters you have contracted for.

ConnectWise has more than 30 years of experience defining and adhering to industry best practices to improve company performance. They are embedded in the design of new systems and functionality as a way to ensure that clients receive the maximum value from partnering with ConnectWise. ConnectWise Manage implements best practices in many ways including through establishing efficient workflows, creating effective SLAs, and developing service ticket management processes.

That way, you can use the features in ConnectWise Manage to keep your customers happy.



Conclusion

Your customers have to know that you put them first. A well-crafted, service-centered SLA helps make that happen by defining what your customer can fairly expect, and how you plan to deliver that service.

“90% of customers who are satisfied with their provider will recommend them to their peers.” - CompTIA²

Rely on ConnectWise Manage and Automate to help you track what goes into your SLAs—service, costs, equipment, etc.—so that you can measure profitability and efficiency. When everything funnels through an integrated system like the ConnectWise Manage, billing and management, by user or site, is simple. Service boards and reporting allow you to provide your customers with specific information on how you’re meeting your goals.

¹“Service Level Agreements for Managed Services” CompTIA, March 2010

^{2, 3}“Customer Satisfaction Equals Success!” CompTIA, November 2011



[Want to Learn More About ConnectWise?](#)



Keep Track of Your Agreements »

Keep your business in good standing by maintaining, tracking, and delivering on your agreements. ConnectWise Manage gives you the power to streamline your operations and shape your professional relationship, which means happier clients and a more consistent revenue stream. With the power to track time accurately, keep track of renewals, and know when agreements are running out, you'll be running more efficiently and keeping your good name in good standing. ConnectWise Manage allows you to automatically prioritize, track, and report essential information to keep your agreements in top shape, with customizable and flexible options that make it simple to meet your customers' needs.



Solve IT Problems at the Speed of Business »

Boost the effectiveness of your IT teams with a flexible remote monitoring and management solution. ConnectWise Automate provides greater visibility in your clients' IT networks and delivers the tools you need to automate your IT services. With Automate, you can perform any IT support or management task remotely, efficiently, and non-intrusively.

About ConnectWise

ConnectWise transforms how technology solution providers successfully build, manage, and grow their businesses. Offering a comprehensive set of award-winning solutions that deliver a seamless, simple user experience, ConnectWise gives its partners the ability to increase productivity, efficiency, and profitability.

Just as importantly, ConnectWise's relentless commitment to innovation and unparalleled passion for partner success assure its partners have comprehensive business support through every step of their journey. Today, more than 120,000 users in over 50 countries take advantage of the competitive edge that comes from ConnectWise solutions and its powerful network of ideas and experts. For more information, visit www.ConnectWise.com or call 800-671-6898.

