



How companies can ensure the best license management process

7 properties CIOs can use to identify a good license manager



Failing to record and document software fully or properly puts companies at risk of legal consequences and even expensive relicensing. But running redundant software also incurs high costs to the company that a license manager – if there is one – can easily avoid. In this article, the IT asset and lifecycle management software manufacturer Deskcenter sets out the requirements for a license manager that need to be met to put any company in a strong position.

There may be degree courses in license management now, but there is still no generally accepted job profile for a license manager. So the advice from Christoph Harvey, CEO at Deskcenter AG, is: “Companies need to think long and hard about the criteria they include in the job description. The tasks and job specification need to be defined precisely to ensure that software licenses end up being managed efficiently and in compliance with legal regulations.”

Manage, coordinate, negotiate

License managers do far more than just account for all the software licenses used in the company. As well as keeping a documentary record of current licensing status, they also optimize licensing arrangements and plan for the future. The best license managers do this by consulting departments to determine their needs and recommending the license model with the best fit. They negotiate contracts and pricing when new software is acquired and ensure that license verification

and licensing rules are stored centrally and securely. An integrated Software Asset Management (SAM) tool can help with this. It provides an up-to-date daily overview of all release statuses and all the associated licenses. It also stores all the documentation associated with licensing. The license manager is also responsible for managing the extensive data gathered during software purchasing and consolidation that can be used for licensing.

Good organizational and communication skills

As the list of tasks above shows, the person responsible for a company’s licensing arrangements needs comprehensive knowledge and skills. We list seven essential qualifications for any licensing manager below:



1. IT and software expertise

A business background is a perfect basis for any license manager. But they'll need to have a flair for IT and software too, of course. This should include, in particular, a solid basic knowledge of software installation, inventory and drafting of contracts as well as IT structures and the basics of license management including stationary and mobile devices, server and cloud technologies.

2. Good organizational skills

The person responsible for a company's licensing arrangements needs to juggle multiple tasks. That means managing licenses, billing and access data, researching the right software whilst at the same time verifying that a wide range of manufacturers comply with the licensing regulations. It also involves running parallel meetings at both departmental and management level. A talent for organization is a definite advantage here.

3. Detailed knowledge of internal processes

Acquisition works well if the buyer knows who the end user is, what the task is and what timescales are involved. So a good license manager will have a detailed knowledge of the processes in the company and the tasks of each department. He or she needs to know what software is used for each specific purpose and any areas where special requirements apply. That's essential to ensure that the software purchased will meet requirements and keep company processes running smoothly.

4. Vision and strategic approach

A license manager makes plans and suggestions on areas for optimization based on his or her knowledge of the internal processes. He or she uses knowledge-based systems and analyses to make decisions. It's not only about whether specific applications are actually still needed. Some applications can also be replaced by cheaper ones or shifted to the cloud to save costs. Vision, combined with strategic thinking means qualified license managers can help to optimize software use and boost business operations.



5. Experience of contract management

Ensuring licensing is legally compliant is of course a core task. Although it might sound trivial, it is enormously important for the business. Painful financial penalties can be imposed for violating licensing regulations. So license managers also need to be experienced in contract management. They are also responsible for safeguarding storage devices and license verification at a central location. Professionals use a fireproof cabinet and a digitalstore.

6. Negotiating skills

The objective of any purchase is to achieve the best possible price-performance ratio. The license manager needs business sense to achieve this. A license manager needs to weigh up the costs of software licenses, installation and maintenance as well as the organization of storage devices and license keys. Licenses that appear to be cheapest at first sight are not always the most economical in the long run. So it's good if a license manager brings business acumen and negotiation skills.

7. Good in communication

A license manager communicates daily with a wide range of people and positions at departmental and management level including software providers, so good communication skills are required at every point. More than that, the job also involves acting as a diplomatic mediator between specific departmental needs and overall corporate strategy.

Two jobs in one:

License manager and IT administrator

License management and IT operations have a shared overarching interest in the secure, effective use of applications as part of an integrated IT management policy. As well as management of software licenses, this includes keeping an inventory of all hardware and software as well as software deployment, patch management and Mobile Device Management.

In smaller companies the license manager often covers the IT administrator post as well – and vice versa. That's not ideal, as the hectic nature of day-to-day IT operations necessarily means other issues get put in second, third or even last place. But this approach can still work if the employee is supported and their workload reduced with a SAM solution that automates processes and rules. It also allows information on license metrics, license types and the current software inventory to be provided at the touch of a button and used as the basis for secure management and solid strategic planning.



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