**Security SLA**

What is a Security SLA?

A security service level agreement is a contract between a security provider and its customer. It helps the service provider set expectations to customers.

There are three types of SLA:

1. Customer-based SLA
2. Service Based SLA
3. Multi-level SLA

This document concerns itself with third party vendor level agreements.

For the average insurance agency these will typically be a service-based SLA which includes one identical type of service for all of its customers. Because the service is limited to one unchanging standard, it is more straightforward and convenient for vendors. For example, using a service-based agreement regarding an IT helpdesk would mean that the same service is valid for all end-users that sign the service-based SLA. An example of where this type of SLA would apply is if an agency is working with a third party using the agency management systems API – often an SDK (software developers kit) made available by the agency management vendor to the agency for use by third parties of the agencies choice.

For relationships between two vendors, for example an agency management system and a third party partnering for an additional, optional offering to the agency management systems users, a customer-based SLA would be more common. This is a customized agreement for a single relationship.

A service level agreement is an essential aspect of any IT vendor contract. The vendor SLA details information regarding all contracted services and what's expected of them.

A strong SLA will clearly define:

* Vendor responsibilities
* Customer expectations
* Metrics

Since the SLA is so thorough, neither party can claim ignorance when their end of the bargain isn't upheld. Essentially, a vendor SLA makes sure that both sides of the agreement understand its requirements.

Unless you have an SLA in place, you leave yourself open to inadvertent or deliberate misinterpretation. Being misinterpreted could have a negative impact on the service quality, delivery, pricing, and overall customer experience.

Things to consider when creating an SLA include:

Considering your industry's standards and comparing the level of security services you offer with those standards

* Discussing client expectations
* Considering the security team's capacity to deliver services
* Making the document official with a legal team
* Establishing an escalation procedure
* Measuring, analyzing, and refining the SLA as needed