



**PS Principles™**

**ENTERPRISE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

***PROGRAM POLICY***

(ECP007 v001)

Drafted	
Board Reviewed	
Board Approved	
Activated	

## Document History

Version	Purpose	Author(s)	Board Approvers	Activated
001	Initial baseline for the requirements for conformance to PS Principles Enterprise Certification Program	Shane Anastasi	Shane Anastasi Don Conine Craig Broadbent	

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Program Overview

The PS Principles' Enterprise Certification Program (ECP) is a privately ran program that attempts to set a benchmark for the operational rigor of professional services providers in the field of technology services. The standards are set by the PS Principles Certification Review Board in conjunction with the feedback received from service providers and buyers within the technology services industry. The standards focus on how a service provider hires their staff, governs their projects and works with their customers to identify ways to achieve positive project outcomes. It must be understood that the certifications focus on acquiring evidence from a service provider that it maintains operational processes that the Certification Review Board deems important in achieving a high rate of success for project outcomes.

The ECP is not a program that measures a service providers rate of success on projects as such a measure will vary wildly between a service provider, the buyer and an independent third-party even when looking at the same set of project outcomes. Although, the goal of the ECP program is to increase the rate of project success we cannot commit to the program ever leading to the guarantee that any future project with any service provider (certified by PS Principles or not) can be successful.

## 1.2 ECP Policy Document

This document defines the policies that govern the operation of the PS Principles Enterprise Certification Program developed and operated by PS Principles. These policies define what can be certified, what it means to be certified, and the process for achieving and maintaining certification. These policies also define the obligations of the Service Provider undergoing certification.

Conformance is to the applicable PS Principles specification(s) as interpreted by the Certification Authority from time to time, and any supporting evidence required as demonstration of conformance. This document is intended primarily for Service Providers who would like to have a service certified however it may also be used by the general public to understand the extent to which certification is earned by any participating Service Provider.

This policy – in conjunction with the applicable Conformance Requirements, the Certification Agreement between PS Principles and service provider being certified (“Certified Service Provider”) – constitutes the complete set of requirements and obligations for achieving certification within the Enterprise Certification Program. The ECP is a voluntary program but is required for Service Providers who wish to use the PS Principles Enterprise Certification Logo.

There are 4 components of the PS Principles Enterprise Certification.

- 1 Mandatory Requirements that all certified Service Providers must meet
- 2 Any one or more of the following 3 Disciplines, each with their own separate set of requirements
  - 2.1 Consultant Hiring and Development, being the process by which a company identifies talent in the market and then develops their appropriate skills over time.
  - 2.2 Project Governance, being the process by which a company governs projects and attempts guide its customers to an acceptable project outcome

2.3 Trusted Advisor, being a catchall for the processes and procedures focused on adding value to the customer's experience with that Service Provider outside of the first two disciplines.

A certified Service Provider must satisfy component 1 in order to qualify for the certification program and then satisfy at least one of 2.1, 2.2 or 2.3 in order to receive certification for that specific component.

### **1.3 What does Certification Mean?**

The PS Principles Enterprise Certification Program is the certification of standard operating procedures. In the context of the ECP, "certification" means that PS Principles has reviewed evidence from a certified Service Provider that validates their current adherence to the Conformance Requirements for each discipline in which they are certified.

However, operational procedures that deal with human interaction are prone to variation in results, and as such, the certification is not a guarantee of project success for either the Service Provider or the buyer. Furthermore, the buyer, who is not a certified entity in the context of receiving Service Provider services, plays a critical role in the eventual outcome of the projects being delivered by the Service Provider. While the certification aims to validate that Service Providers have mechanisms for proactively reacting to buyer behavior, it is impossible for us to develop a certification that predicts the severity of the impact that buyer behavior can have on a project's success.

### **1.4 PS Principles' Certification Review Board**

The PS Principles' Certification Review Board is the sole creator and adjudicator of the ECP. It contains founding board members, all of whom have more than 20-years of experience in the industry. In conjunction with professional services service providers and buyers of such services, the board members have defined the Conformance Requirements that set the bar for this certification. This bar is reviewed yearly and when necessary will be changed in order to provide a better level of service to either the Certified Service Provider or the buyer.

The goal of the Certification Review Board is to make the certification hard enough that it is seen as valuable to the buyer while also not making it impossible for service providers to achieve.

The goal of the Certification Review Board is that the Conformance Requirements represent an above average dedication by the Certified Service Providers to a level of operational excellence that, in theory and in the board member's experience, should lead to a high rate of successful outcomes on technology projects.

### **1.5 The Conformance Requirements**

The goal of the Certification Review Board is to maintain a set of Conformance Requirements that represent an above average dedication by a professional services firm or team to operational best practices in the following areas of consultant hiring and development, the governance and performance of project related services and the ongoing success of the buyer. The Conformance Requirements are publicly available such that buyers can understand and appreciate the level of investment being made by a Certified Service Provider. The conformance Requirements can be downloaded from [www.psprinciples.com/ecpdocs](http://www.psprinciples.com/ecpdocs) and is titled "ECP002 - PS Principles ECP Conformance Requirements" along with appropriate version information.

We strongly suggest that any buyer looking to work with a Certified Service Provider download and make themselves aware of these requirements.

While we cannot guarantee a project's success, we do believe that these requirements are worth setting and that service providers who are able to deliver to them deserve recognition for making the investment meeting such a high standard.

## **1.6 Goals and Proposed Value of Certification**

PS Principles aimed to bring conformity and a reduction of risk to an industry that at present has very little. The goal despite the challenges, is to provide a certification that buyers will recognize as the right approach to helping them determine which Service Providers take a very serious commitment to the delivery of a quality service.

Our goal is to demonstrate that certain providers think deeply about how they can build their organization in a way that improves their chances of delivering successful projects. By setting the certification we believe the Service Provider benefits by improving its operational level of efficiency and the customer benefits from the rigor the certification demands from the Service Provider.

Ultimately, the Service Provider is responsible for the service it delivers, and the customer is responsible for how it describes its requirements and how it engages with the Service Provider throughout the project. PS Principles will amend continue to amend the certification as the buying community identifies further areas in which it would like its Service Providers to manage their operational procedures.

## **1.7 Who and Which Projects are being Certified**

Inside of any product or services organization there can be many hundreds of people delivering different kinds of professional services to buyers. The PS Principles ECP is awarded specifically to a cohort of consultants within a Service Provider's team. Furthermore, the projects to which the certification applies are specified in the Service Provider's certification as their "Eligible Projects". This means that not every project delivered by a Service Provider will conform with the Conformance Requirements.

The PS Principles ECP provides a description of which projects are under the governance of the operational procedures that were certified. This statement is made by the Service Provider at the time of registration for certification and the information provided by the Service Provider during the certification process is warranted by the Service Provider to have come from those types of eligible projects.

Buyers of the Service Provider's services must validate with the Service Provider that the services being received by them fall under the banner of an eligible project.

## **1.8 Overview of Conformance Requirements**

The Conformance Requirements is the only source for the definition of a Service Provider's compliance. While we recommend that any buyer considering using a PS Principles ECP Service Provider acquaint themselves in

detail with the conformance Requirements, the following is a summary of the areas of specifications contained within it:

- **Mandatory Requirements**
  - A repeatable estimation process to demonstrate that the price generated by the Service Provider is based on inputs collected from the buyer
  - A series of Statement of Work best practices defined by PS Principles to ensure clarity of responsibilities during the project
  - That a minimum number of their consultants have had access to the PS Principles PSP101 Consulting Fundamentals course material
  - An agreement to track specific project success metrics which shall be reported on throughout the duration of the certification period. While not for public distribution, PS Principles and the Service Provider agree to share such information in order to have an open discussion about the state of the Service Provider's success rate.
- **Consultant Development Discipline**
  - **Consultant Hiring:** The Service Provider agrees or has been proven to use a hiring technique that attempts to identify candidates as being aligned with the consulting profession. By this, the Service Provider is hoping to make the distinction between developers wanting to write code and consultants wanting to work with customers. This approach is not flawless, but we believe it can greatly assist in the percentage of people within the Service Provider who take their role as a consultant as a long-term career.
  - **Recognition alignment:** The Service Provider agrees to provide or has already provided a system of recognition within the team that reinforces the principles taught in the PSP101 consulting fundamentals course mentioned in the Mandatory Requirements section above. This approach aims to embed the idea of good consulting principles into the culture of the Service Provider's team.
  - **Manager Review Template:** The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a template for manager reviews. The value of which is to standardize manager-employee conversations such that important items are discussed regularly.
  - **Skills Tracking:** The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a skills tracking tool in order to assess the ongoing development of its consultants.
  - **Collective Wisdom Access:** The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a tool to make internal knowledge available to the consultants.
- **Project Governance Discipline**
  - **Standard Implementation Process:** The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a standard methodology for the delivery of its services. PS Principles does not validate the legitimacy of each Service Provider's methodology as they are specific to so many industries for which PS Principles has no knowledge. It is important that buyers request information about a Service Provider's methodology to validate its value.
  - **Proactive Project Health Reviews (PPHR):** The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a process that attempts to determine a project's health. PS Principles has developed a procedure that Service Providers use as the basis for this

process and while internal and not a precise measure, may help a service provider proactively escalate a project before it gets into trouble.

- Project Stage Budgets: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a staged budget control approach to project funding. What this means is that the Service Provider will by default have a statement of work that recommends the use of not allowing a project to exceed its current stage funding. This suggestion may however be negotiated out by the buyer and hence may not always be in the final agreement between the Service Provider and the buyer. PS Principles recommends that buyers consider this option carefully and agree to include it whenever applicable. We believe it helps ensure that the costs of every stage of a project do not exceed their budget unless the parties have come to an agreement on how to handle that overage.
- Executive Stakeholder Management Process: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a process that monitors and attempts to enforce the use of stakeholder management meetings. It has been shown in the industry to improve the chances of a project's success by making sure that both the Service Provider and the buyer actively participate in these meetings and give active guidance to the project team.
- Trusted Advisor Discipline
  - Customer Orientation: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of orientation materials to help buyers prepare for the project. We believe that introducing the entire project process to the buyer in advance and providing an overview and foundation of information helps the parties stay aligned during the project.
  - Actionable Customer Feedback: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a system to collect and act upon customer feedback. We believe this is important for the ongoing development of the Service Provider's service and gives customers confidence that feedback will be taken seriously and where appropriate, acted upon.
  - Customer Project Portal: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of a customer project portal to share information with buyers during the project.
  - Adoption Best Practices: The Service Provider commits to or has provided evidence that they have maintained the use of materials that identify the most effective strategies for ongoing user adoption of the solution the project is implementing. While the timing for this document can be debated, we recommend that buyers ask for this document at project kickoff so that it can potentially inform decisions being made during the project's delivery.

To receive certification in a discipline, the Service Provider must satisfy all components of the Mandatory Requirements and all of the elements of at least one of the Disciplines.

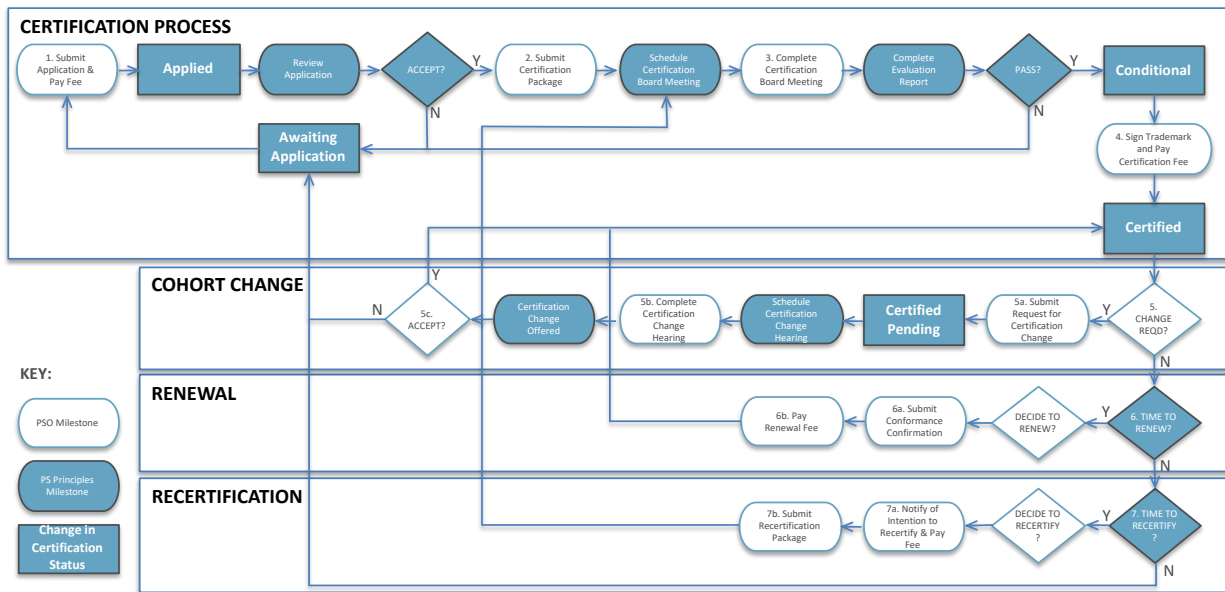
In evaluating an entire organization and its project history, PS Principles is restricted to reviewing Evaluation Projects submitted by the Certified Service Provider. Within this submission of "Evaluation Projects" PS Principles looks to determine if the compliance to the Conformance Requirements exists.

## 2. The Enterprise Certification Program Process (ECP)

### 2.1 Overview

The ECP process is agreed in advance with the Service Provider and is explained in the diagram Figure 2.1 below. The goal of the process is to ensure that there is a clear statement as to which parts of the Service Provider’s service is governed by the procedures being certified and should there be any significant change to that governance that it is handled quickly and in an open way such that buyers understand the impacts of the change.

Figure 2.1.1 Certification Workflow



### 2.2 Receiving Certification

#### Step 1: Application

To receive certification a Service Provider must first apply to be accepted as eligible for certification. This process requires an in-person discussion between PS Principles and the Service Provider to provide a high-level determination if both parties feel as though the Service Provider has enough operational control to sit for certification. This step is not a part of the certification itself but is merely a gate to make sure that the Service Provider has read the conformance Requirements, understands them, and believes that if they were to collect the information about their operational procedures that they would satisfy the Conformance Requirements.

#### Step 2: Certification Review Board

The Service Provider will submit its data to PS Principles prior to the Certification Review Board. The data requested is aimed at validating that the Service Provider satisfies one of the two following conditions:

1. Has an operational procedure in place but as yet does not have a full year of evidence to prove compliance (fit only for an initial certification review)
2. Has enough data to demonstrate compliance to the Conformance Requirements.



### Step 3: Evaluation

After completing the Certification Review Board, PS Principles creates an evaluation report that provides one of the three adjudications:

1. Pass: The Service Provider has presented materials that appear to meet with or surpass the Conformance Requirements (Certification Status is now “Certified”)
2. Conditional Pass: The Service Provider presented materials that appear to meet with or surpass most of the Conformance Requirements. In which case, PS Principles provides guidance on how the remaining items should be addressed and if evidence can be provided within a 30-day period that the flaw has been conceptually corrected, then a pass is awarded. At this stage a Conditional Pass becomes a Pass. (Certification Status is now “Pending Review”).
3. Not Passed: The Service Provider presented materials that not appear to meet with or surpass the conformance Requirements. At this stage, the Service Provider may elect to re-attempt the certification at a point no less than 60-days in the future. (Certification Status is now “Not Certified”).

## 2.3 Certification Status

For ease of use, PS Principles will make available a number of details about the Service Provider as a part of the certification program. These details will be made available online through a certification status check webpage.

The status check will allow the general public to query the name and/or certification number of a company and PS Principles will provide the following information.

- PSP Enterprise Certification No.
- Company Name
- Company Headquarters Location
- Certification Scope
- Certification Status (being one of Not Certified, Pending Review, Certified)
- Disciplines for which the Company is currently Certified
- Certified Since – Earliest Date of contiguous certification of a status being either Certified or Pending Review

While the status of “Certified” and “Not Certified” are self-explanatory, the “Pending Review” status will be used whenever there has been a change in the Service Provider’s status that requires adjustment by PS Principles and/or the Service Provider. In all cases, “Pending Review” status should be investigated further by the buyer directly with Service Provider.

It will be important for buyers to validate that the Service Provider for whom they are working is providing them with a team that is under the Cohort Description provided on the status check. To assist with that we provide the Service Provider with a certificate that clearly states the Cohort Description and the Eligible Projects to make identification as easy as possible.

## **2.4 Certification Period**

Each approved certification is for 2-years, with a 1-year renewal point. The 1-year renewal point requires that the Service Provider verify that the operating procedures of the organization have not significantly changed since the last certification review.

No more than 30-day period will be granted for a Service Provider not re-certified by the expiration of its certification. The status for a Service Provider during this period will be “Pending Review”

Each Service Provider must then complete another Certification Review Board to re-certify for the all certifications disciplines in which it would like to continue.

## 3. Certification Warranties

### 3.1 PS Principles' ECP Warranties

PS Principles warrants that it has completed an evaluation of the information provided by the Service Provider and that it has fairly assessed that information to determine a reasonable decision without bias, coercion or bribery.

PS PRINCIPLES CANNOT WARRANT AND MAKES NO CLAIMS THAT ANY OR ALL PROJECTS DELIVERED BY A CERTIFIED SERVICE PROVIDER WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AND BUYERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE ROLE THEY AND MANY OTHER ELEMENTS OUTSIDE OF ALL PARTIES CONTROL MIGHT PLAY IN THE FINAL OUTCOME OF A PROJECT WHEN CONSIDERING USING A CERTIFIED SERVICE PROVIDER.

### 3.2 Certified Service Provider Warranties

Certified Service Providers warrant that the information it has provided to PS Principles is accurate and that it will continue to make all reasonable efforts to adhere to the Conformance Requirements and keep PS Principles up to date with any changes that impact that compliance. At such a point in time the Certified Service Provider's Certification status will be set to "Pending Review" until the matter can be resolved. If it cannot be resolved then it will be set to "Not Certified".

CERTIFIED SERVICE PROVIDERS DOES NOT AND CANNOT WARRANT THAT ALL PROJECTS IT DELIVERS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS OWN BUSINESS OR THE BUSINESS OF THE PAYING CUSTOMER.

### 3.3 Customer Involvement

PS Principles strongly urges buyers to work with any service provider (whether a part of the PS Principles Enterprise Certification Program or not) to understand the level of engagement required from the buyer during any professional services endeavor. We cannot overstate the degree to which the buyer's level of quality and participation will have on the outcome of projects. A core tenet of PS Principles is that all parties in the project success equation must understand their roles and deliver to them for a project to be successful on all accounts.

## 4. Problem Reporting & Investigations

### 4.1 Suspected Service Provider Non-Conformance

PS Principles wishes to hear from buyers who believe that PS Principles Service Provider is not in full compliance with the Conformance Requirements. Such notifications can be made to [noncompliance@psprinciples.com](mailto:noncompliance@psprinciples.com)

### 4.2 Participation in Non-Conformance Investigation

Upon making such a notification, PS Principles requests that buyers making non-conformance complaints to ensure that they have familiarized themselves with the Conformance Requirements and that they be prepared to assist PS Principles in articulating what has been witnessed by the buyer so that an informed investigation can take place.

### 4.3 Non-Conformance Investigations

A Non-Conformance Investigation will be opened within 15-days of a Non-Conformance Complaint being made. In that time, buyer will meet with PS Principles and help define the claim in such a manner that a preliminary hearing can be held between the buyer, the Certified Service Provider and PS Principles. The buyer may opt to not attend any hearings as a part of this process and need only engage if they feel that doing so will help the clarity and result of the investigation.

After the preliminary hearing, PS Principles will decide if the claim made against the Certified Service Provider warrants a Non-Conformance Investigation. If so, the Certified Service Provider's status will be placed into "Pending Review" and within a 30-day period, PS Principles will make a declaration as to its findings and a decision as to what shall happen as a result of the investigation.

Certain information about those actions may be covered under the proprietary or confidential agreement between PS Principles and the Service Provider, which means that other than the publicly available Certification Status Check information, PS Principles is unlikely to be able to provide the buyer who made the complaint any more information.

PS Principles' decision on the matter will be final. However, it is important to understand that the jurisdiction of any PS Principles decision is limited to whether or not a Certified Service Provider can continue to call itself a Certified Service Provider under the Conformance Requirements of the ECP.

Any decision made by PS Principles has no bearing on the agreements between the buyer and the Certified Service Provider and as such means that any decision for or against any party as an outcome of the investigation is not a statement of expected outcome in a court of lawyer and has no bearing on the liability or fault of any party with respect to the agreements in place between those parties.

### 4.4 Non-Conformance Investigation Confidentiality and Lifespan

It is a potential outcome of a Non-conformance Investigation that a Service Provider's Certification Status will be changed to "Not Certified". In such an occasion, PS Principles will not make public that the status has been changed, nor will it make public why the status was changed. Such information will remain confidential

between PS Principles and the Certified Service Provider. PS Principles may take the step to bar a Certified Service Provider from re-attempting to attain Certified Service Provider status for a period of up to 2-years however, again, such a decision cannot be made public nor will it be accessible as a part of the Certified Service Provider Certification Status Check.

## 5. Non-Disclosure Policy

### 5.1 Non-Disclosure

Because of the sensitive nature of the operational material to which PS Principles is granted access by the Certified Service Provider, all material other than those available through the Certification Status Check are considered confidential and may not be passed or accessed by anyone other than PS Principles and the Certified Service Provider without the written permission of the Certified Service Provider.

### 5.2 “Level”, “Depth” or “Degree” of Certification

PS Principles will not provide any additional information about a Certified Service Provider other than that outlined in this policy. There are no “degrees”, “depths” or “levels” of the ECP other than those publicly made available in accordance with this policy.

Likewise, PS Principles cannot provide rankings of Certified Service Providers nor can it provide guidance on the selection of one Certified Service Provider over another. PS Principles sole purpose is to set and certify the benchmark to which it determines under the advisement of those who participate in the program.

## 6. Further Information

### 6.1 Certification Status Inquiry

A Certification Status Inquiry can be made at PS Principles online website at [www.psprinciples.com](http://www.psprinciples.com) or simply by sending an email containing the inquiry to [ecp@psprinciples.com](mailto:ecp@psprinciples.com)

### 6.2 Further Inquiries

If there is a desire to acquire more information than is provided in this policy document, please contact PS Principles at [info@psprinciples.com](mailto:info@psprinciples.com) or by calling 650 731 001.

### 6.3 Suggestions for Program Improvement

The PS Principles Enterprise Certification Program is attempting to tackle an incredibly difficult problem. We know that no matter what we do, there will be elements of our program that can be improved and that others will have ideas for improvement that might be of value to both Service Providers and buyers within this program. To offer your suggestions please send them directly to [suggestionbox@psprinciples.com](mailto:suggestionbox@psprinciples.com).

### 6.4 Nominations for Advisory Board Seats or Certification Board Members

The PS Principles Certification Review Board and the Customer Advisory Board are fully assigned. However, as the program expands, we expect that additional members will be needed for both boards and if you have interest or you know of someone that might suit this role then please send those names through to us at [boardnominations@psprinciples.com](mailto:boardnominations@psprinciples.com) making sure that you specify which board the nomination is for. As the need arises we will reach out to those nominated to interview them for applicability.

## 6.5 Other Programs

PS Principles is dedicated to elevating the success of projects which means that there must be quality programs across all elements of the project delivery process. As such PS Principles provides the following list of programs.

- Service Provider Programs
  - Manager Preparation Training for the Seven Principles of Professional Services
  - PS Principles Rapid Alignment Workshop
  - Professional Services Management Readiness Training
  - Professional Services Selling Training
  - Professional Services Statement of Work Best Practices Sessions
- Consultant Programs
  - PSP101 Consulting Fundamentals Training
  - PSPCC Certificate Program
  - PS Principles Consulting Discussion Groups
- Customers
  - Customer Project Readiness Training
  - Customer Project Governance Training
  - Customer Project Governance Assistance
  - Customer Project Rescue Services