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Building a future we can all trust

Entitlements for Support and Training

Increasing the value of entitlements

Feature Brief

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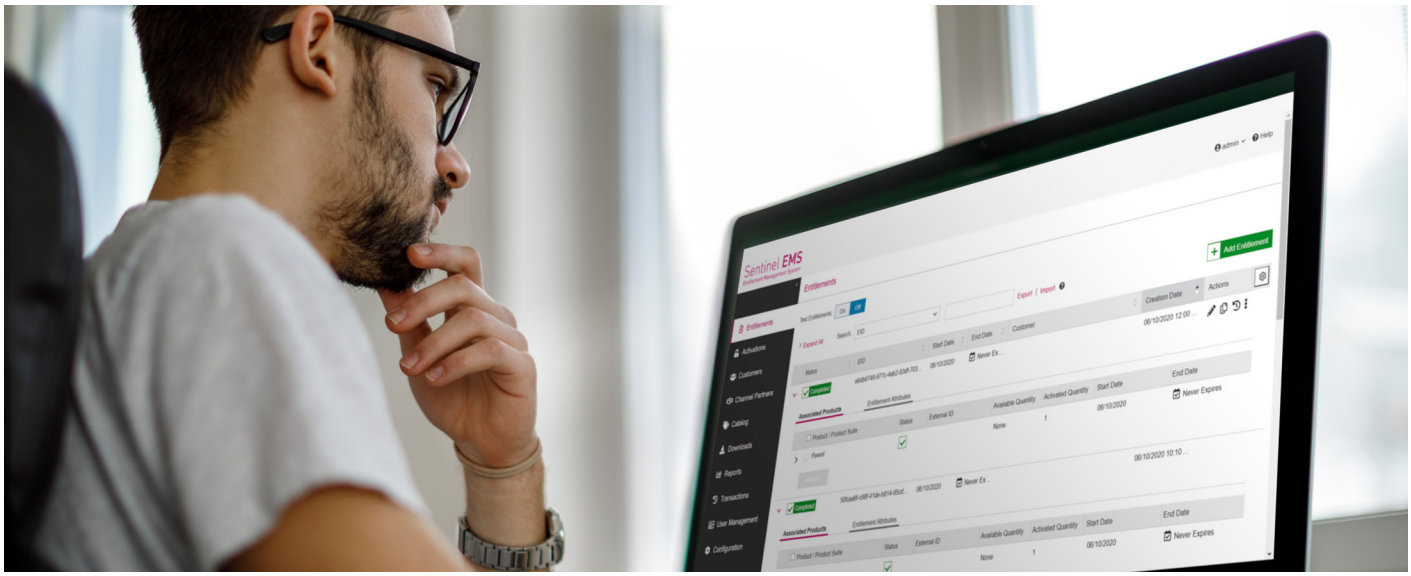
Taking Entitlements Further

Sentinel EMS has long established itself as a versatile and scalable Entitlement Management platform. However, the entitlements produced by Sentinel EMS are not just for software products, but they can also be used to define the terms for non-software offerings such as support maintenance and training bundles.

The purpose of this document is to guide you through some examples of how EMS can be used to manage these service-based offerings alongside more conventional product entitlements.



What are support and training entitlements?

In simplest terms, a support and training entitlement is a non-software entitlement. It is an entitlement that is not bound to any form of license enforcement or activation process, and is used to define a service contract based on duration, quantity, and also any individual sub-components of the contract such as SLA times or RMA period.

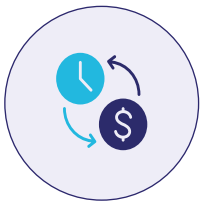
Examples of support and training entitlements

We will look at 4 distinct scenarios were Entitlements for Support and Training delivery value to software and hardware vendors.

Maintenance Contracts

Extended Support Offerings

Training Packages



Professional Services Billable Hours

Maintenance Contracts

The first thing we will look at is how entitlements can be used for product maintenance contracts, where a customer subscribes to additional services related to the type of product support coverage they can receive.

In this example, a vendor offers their products on a standard annual subscription basis.

In addition to the subscription, they also offer tiered product maintenance packages:

- **Bronze Maintenance** provides access to Technical Support
- **Silver Maintenance** provides same as Bronze, plus patch updates
- **Gold Maintenance** provides same as Silver, plus version upgrades

To enable this, the customer would receive 2 entitlements, one for the product and another for the maintenance package they have purchased.

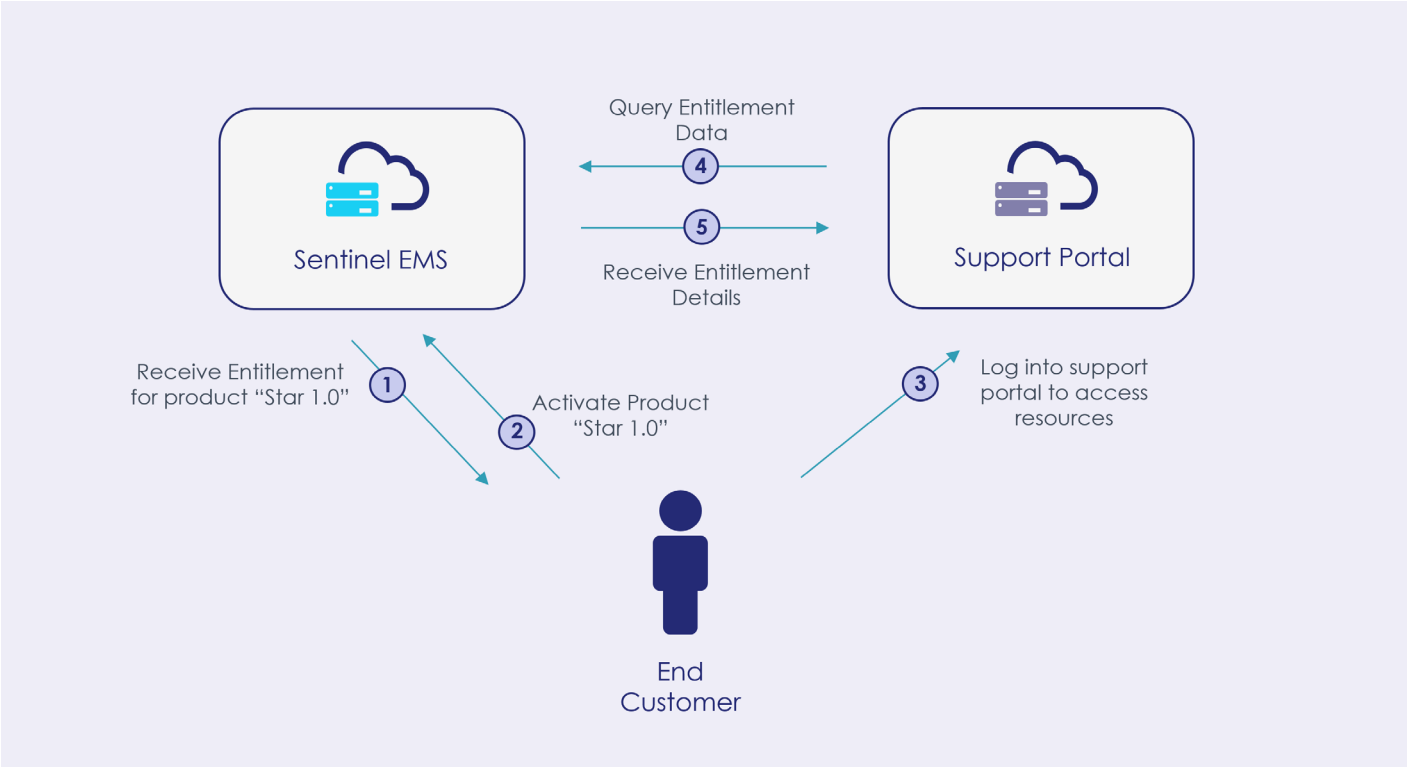
Product License:	**Start 1st February, Expire 31st January**
Silver Maintenance:	**Start 1st February, Expire 31st January**

The entitlement defines the base attributes of the contract such as duration, but it can also leverage additional attributes to define more fine-grained components of the maintenance offering. This very similar to the way a more traditional product entitlement would leverage features:

- Feature: RMA Period - 90 days
- Feature: Escalation Priority - Medium
- Feature: Hours of Coverage - 7x5

Note: This could also be deployed as two separate line items under a single entitlement. Generally, it will keep things simpler to deliver this as two separate entitlements.

The following diagram depicts a sequence of interactions to show how these entitlements could be used in a real-life scenario. In this example, a customer logs into a Support Portal to access support resources such as downloads and online help. They use the same login details that they used to activate the product, which ensures Sentinel EMS can match the customer to their products and their support package. This would allow the support portal to query Sentinel RMS for the entitlement data, and determine which resources this particular customer has access to.



It is assumed in this example that the vendor has an existing support portal in place, and this portal can leverage a web service connector to facilitate communication to Sentinel EMS.

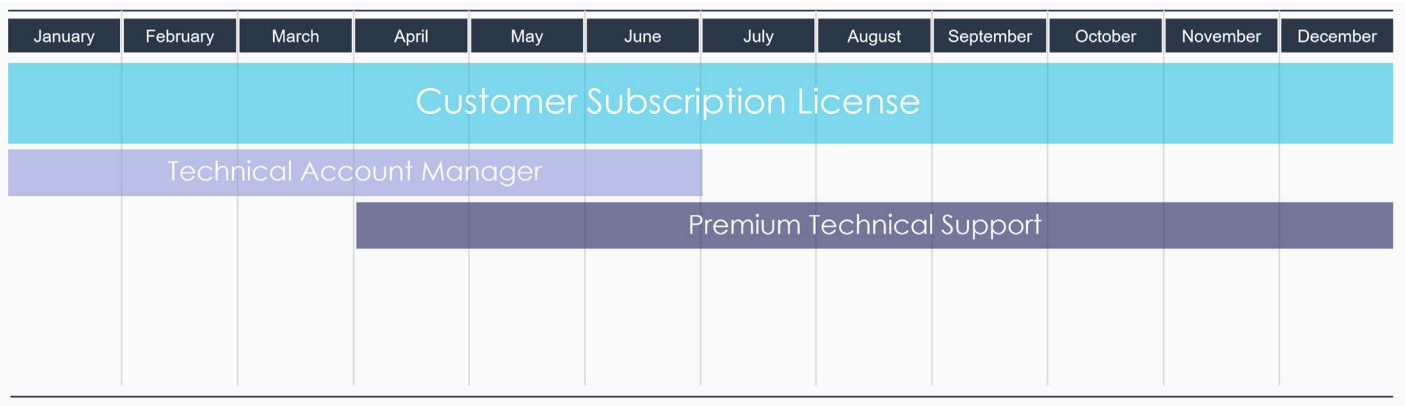
1. As part of an order process, customer receives an entitlement for their training bundle.
2. They log into their corporate training portal and request access to a training module.
3. The training portal will communicate with Sentinel EMS via published REST web services and request that the entitlement is decremented.
4. Provided the entitlement has sufficient quota, EMS decrements the entitlement and confirms back to the training portal (again via web services) that the decrement has been successful.
5. The training portal uses that conformation to grant access to the training module.

As a variation to the above sequence, a support technician could instead replace the support portal. The end customer would interact directly with the technician who in turn would query Sentinel EMS to determine the level of support the customer is entitled to receive. Some vendors will prefer more automation, whereas other will prefer a more hands-on, human touch.

Extended Support Offerings

Now let us look at how different support offerings could be included alongside a conventional product license.

In the below example, the customer has a subscription license which is valid for 1 year. This is their first year as a customer, so they also purchase 6 months of access to a Technical Account Manager (TAM) to help them with initial rollout, onboarding, etc. They also purchase Premium Technical Support to run alongside the product subscription, but since they have access to the TAM, they want the start of this to be delayed by 3 months.



This is where the flexibility with these entitlements starts to become much more apparent, since co-terming of support contracts and license subscriptions is not always the preferred way of doing things. Whilst co-terming is often the more conventional approach, there are valid scenarios where independent terms would be needed and the system supports both options.

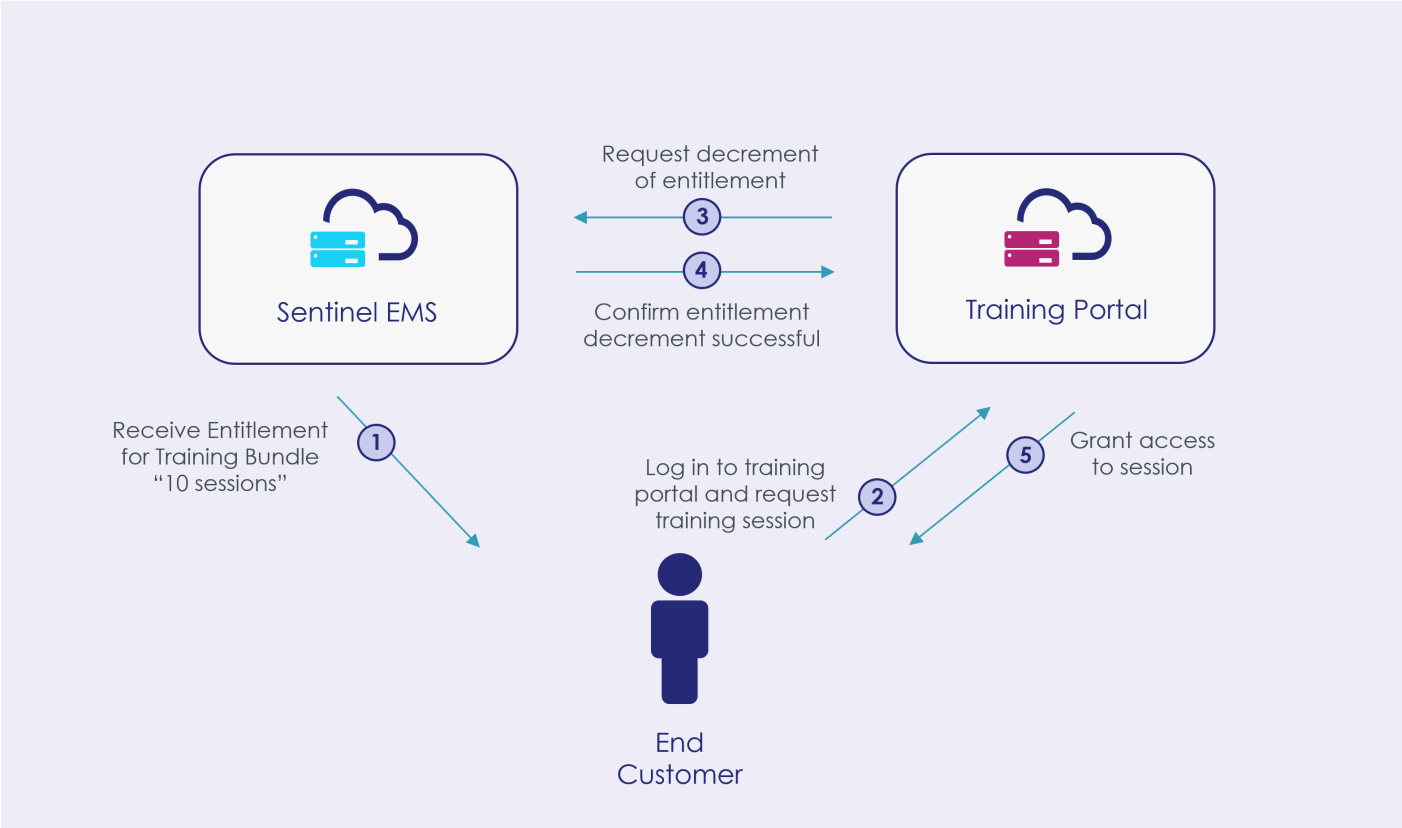
Training Packages

This is a fundamentally different use case since in this example the entitlements are consumable in an incremental manner. Here, the customer purchases a fixed number of training modules that they are free to use as they see fit.

Each time they access a training module their entitlement is decremented and the number of remaining sessions is updated to reflect what the customer has left to use.

In the next diagram, we will look again at the interactions between components in a more typical real-life scenario. Here, the customer would receive an entitlement for the training session, which they could then present to a training portal when they request access to a training session.

As before, the training portal will interact with Sentinel EMS, only this time, the training portal is consuming the entitlement by decrementing the count as training courses are accessed.



It is assumed in this example that the vendor has an existing training portal in place, and this portal can leverage a web service connector to facilitate the communication to Sentinel EMS.

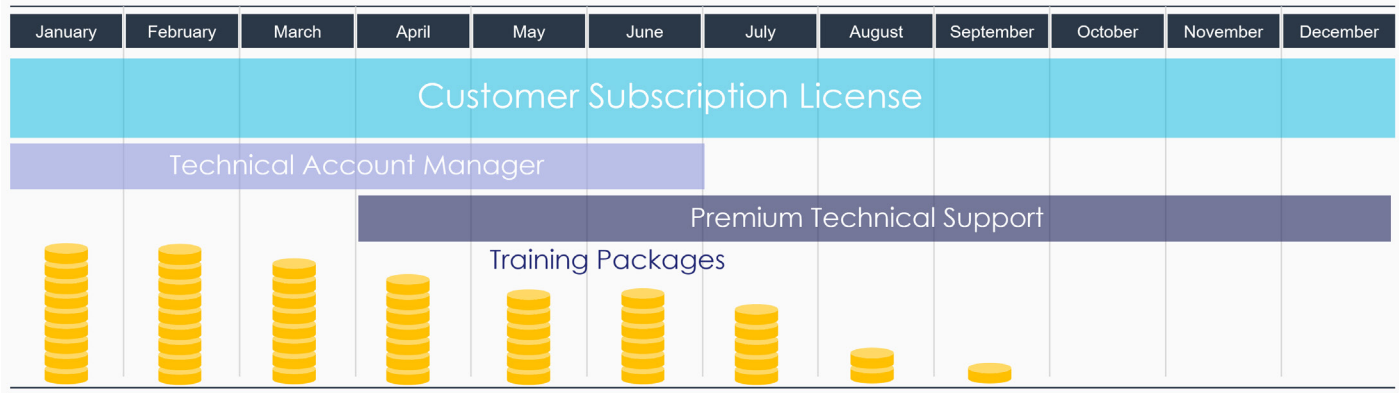
1. As part of an order process, customer receives an entitlement for their training bundle.
2. They log into their corporate training portal and request access to a module.
3. The training portal will communicate with Sentinel EMS via published REST web services and request that the entitlement is decremented.
4. Provided the entitlement has sufficient quota, EMS performs the decrement and confirms back to the training
5. portal (again via web services) that the entitlement has been decremented.The training portal uses that conformation to grant access to the training module.

Professional Services Billable Hours

The last example is very similar to the training example above, only a Professional Services engineer will be working with the customer to mutually agree the number of hours used, and will perform the decrement actions to EMS themselves. But as with any of the cases, both vendor and customer are able to query Sentinel EMS and determine how many hours have been consumed versus how many are left to use.

Bringing it all together

In the last section of this document, we will discuss how the value of this capability becomes even more apparent when these concepts are combined. By leveraging Sentinel EMS for product license entitlements as well as support & training entitlements, both vendors and customers are offered a single pane of glass view for their products and the additional support services related to those products. From a single view, it is possible to see everything related to product licenses alongside support and training entitlements.



In one view, you could see how long a product licenses is still valid for, determine when the access to the technical account manager will run out, know when access to premium support starts, and measure training activity.

We hope that this document helps to show you that software entitlements are not just limited to product licenses, and by incorporating additional support and training services into the same framework, the value of your entitlements can be dramatically increased.

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Contact us

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