



ITIL® Adoption – the Challenges

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Customers often come to us and say “I want to implement Change Management.” The first thing we would ask them is “Why?”

ITIL is a Best Practice standard, which people have heard of and they think it sounds good. But often they haven’t taken time to analyze their own organization’s issues. They don’t really understand why they need ITIL or how it is going to help them; instead, they implement ITIL processes because it looks good on paper. But you can waste a lot of money on implementing ITIL if you don’t understand your own organization’s pain points.

CIOs need to prove they have spent their budget wisely. For example, they may spend 50,000 Euros on implementing ITIL processes. You would hope that at the end of the project, they would see improvements in customer satisfaction, cost saving and reduced incidents. But on many occasions, organizations don’t stand back and think about what the desired outcomes of implementing ITIL will be – they just do it and at the end of the project nothing actually changes.

We think ITIL has to answer for itself. We don’t want its value to be impossible to measure. If you want to do ITIL you must start with analyzing what problems you are facing, what motivates your customers and what you want to achieve.

ITIL is a tool to use, and it is a good one. But goals must be clear from the outset. Think about who is your customer? Is it your CEO? Can he or she give you the direction you need? Or is it your project manager? Should you go together to speak to the boss about what the company needs?

It’s so important to set this direction first. You need to think about who your customer is and what he wants. Goals should be agreed together. That means talking to someone in the organization with senior authority, and making sure they agree with the person who holds the purse strings. For SERVIEW, if we can’t ask these questions and get good answers then we would rather not work with that particular customer. We feel we would be the wrong supplier for them because without answers to those questions we wouldn’t be able to apply the advice and the actions that would benefit the organization.



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Account management can be challenging because customers can race ahead in their decision making and we have to take them two steps backwards to get those fundamental questions answered. This is important because ITIL often changes the organization structure from hierarchical to process-oriented. This can be a difficult transition so it is important that very early on in the project, the management team has thought about how they want the organization to look in the future. In a process oriented culture people take on more responsibility because they are now accountable for the process.

We take some time to explore how we think things will be and how functions are going to work together in the future. For example when an incident occurs, you need to find out why. It might be that you check with the server team, but they report that everything is ok. The database team has a similar story and so do applications, but at the customer business unit, the process isn't working. We need to find the cause of the incident quickly. Therefore we need to appoint one incident manager who has the authority to take appropriate action. He must be competent and have the responsibility to be able to deal with things.

What you don't want to create is a process manager who is just a toothless tiger. When people realize they don't have the authority to change things they become disengaged and more responsibility is laid on team leaders, adding extra pressure for them. Instead we want a situation where the team and management are working in harmony – they need to agree the process and work to a set of common commitments.

Like Kotter advises, you need a guiding coalition and management shall get the agreement of staff before they decide on roles. People should be aware at the beginning that they will be responsible and accountable.

How do you get buy in?

All organizations implementing ITIL will need someone who has an expert understanding of service management. It's ideal if there is a senior IT Manager who can talk on the same level as the CIO. All CIOs have the same problems whichever sector they are working in – they want faster service, higher quality service, cheaper service and the ability to take advantage of the cloud. They need to think about what the critical success factors are for the next few years and what capabilities the organization has.

ITIL can seem daunting but the reality is it is just a box of tools. If you don't make the conversation about ITIL but about service management then you can get a good feeling for which services you should provide, which services you need, and which services you want.

If you talk about ITIL you will find that lots of people fall asleep. Service management talks about issues that everyone can understand - which capabilities do we have, which are the most important services to provide etc. SERVIEW uses entertainment tools such as Listening Books and games to help people understand the concepts of service management in an engaging way. They are instruments to gain understanding and address peoples' emotions. We believe if you can get the emotional commitment then you can get the change you want.

We use a simulation game based on the Apollo 13 mission. The flight was in trouble and the objective of the mission changed from going to the moon to getting the crew back home safely.

The simulation puts participants in the Kennedy space control centre and they are told there's trouble (i.e. an incident) that needs an urgent resolution or the crew will perish. Problems unfold and it is tense; the participants can't find the information they need and things change quickly. After 30 minutes the participants tell us how they are feeling. Everyone is confused; they lack the correct information and are uncertain how to save the lives of the crew. We encourage them to establish a single point of contact – which is a key principle of ITIL. The participants can then see from their own experience why a single point of contact is so important.

We find that when people can see and understand the higher concepts they think about it in a different way and become much more engaged.

How do you know if processes are working?

To make sure that the ITIL processes are working as hoped, we advise that customers keep records at the beginning of the project to demonstrate compliance of steps. Later they can switch to KPIs which are measureable and repeatable. What happens is that – over time - people start working with the processes, not talking about them. At that stage, you can feel that the processes are working because change and incidents are not discussed any more.

When you are driving a car and you reach a stop sign, you don't analyze the sign, you just stop the car. There are rules and you just accept them. ITIL is a box of rules. When someone is not questioning it or thinking about it you know it is working. A word of caution though – it takes years to reach this stage, so organizations need to be patient and keep working at it.

You've trained your people but are they competent?

Staff need to understand the theoretical basics of ITIL. The Foundation exam is the start and strategy and continuous improvement come later. What is important is that people can interpret ITIL in their own environment.

It's easy to tell if your training is good enough because if it is you will have compliance of processes and employee satisfaction. There are always clear signs if people are not following process correctly. For example, in configuration management, if you realize that the integrity of your data in the CMS is not very good, then your change management won't be very good – you will have symptoms that show the process isn't working.



In this case, the organization will need to spend some time understanding why the process isn't working – is it because people don't understand it? Or is it because they don't want to use it? If it's the first scenario then some more training might be in order – if it is the latter, maybe staff need a better understanding as to why the organization has decided to do things this way.

We find that for most organizations there is a percentage of people who support the new way of working, and a percentage who don't.

- Normally there are 10% of people who will think it's a great idea and fully embrace it;
- 40% will think it is good and might help;
- 40% will think it is a good idea but is risky;
- 10% will be against the idea and say they don't want or need it.

All our simulations and games etc focus on the 80% in the middle. If the 10% who don't want it to work are at management level then really for the benefit of the organization and their colleagues they should leave. If they are at employee level then they usually come around once they see their colleagues embracing the new ideas. If they don't do this then we tend to find they also leave the organization, but there is no significant loss in them doing that.

What you are looking for is a positive manager who has the support of the people who work for him or her. It is important to find out which people support the change and which are against it. It is OK for staff to be constructive in their criticism, and it is natural for them to be cautious and nervous about it. Good communications in stakeholder management cannot be over-emphasized.

How do you manage risks in ITIL adoption?

ITIL is very strategic but CEOs can belittle ITIL by thinking it is the process for operational IT. Not having senior support is the biggest risk. Without this commitment there is a huge risk of failure.

The project sponsor must be committed. They will go through deep valleys from an emotional point of view, and need to keep focused on the vision. When the sponsor comes to the first barrier in the project, it's important they really believe what they are doing is right. They must ask themselves: 'What is my vision?' and 'Why am I doing this?'

These questions should be answered periodically, and usually you will get the reassurance that you are doing the right things. There are lots of risks associated with any kind of change programme. The goals of IT organizations change as the needs of customers change, or they may face a merger or other re-structuring programme. The strategic goals for ITIL implementation should not be inflexible - they need to be adjusted every three, four or five months to take into account evolving political or economic situations. Keep talking.

How do you know your service management has improved?

It's quite simple to work out if your service management has improved:-

- The satisfaction rate of customers will increase.
- Try to analyze uncalculated acts against calculated activities – for example when the organization has lots of incidents but can solve them immediately. You may not be able to calculate the benefit of resolving incidents quickly – but you will know it is of huge benefit to the organization.



About SERVIEW

SERVIEW is a training and consulting company which specializes in service management (SM) consultancy for IT organizations. We think

SM is the whole story of best management practice - ITIL and PRINCE2® Risk Management, Programme Management, Portfolio Management all form part of one big management system.
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