AT YOUR SERVICE

The Official Magazine of the IT Service Management Forum (itSMF® International)

Inside:
* Getting the balance right for successful change
* Run IT as a Business
* The ‘New’ Service Desk
Balanced Diversity

A Portfolio Approach to Organizational Change

By Karen Ferris

How a Framework Changed my Year!

Earlier this year I was scanning the internet for information on sustainability, driven by my interest in using IT Service Management (ITSM) to improve the sustainability of IT.

During that search, I stumbled across a body of research that was going to change the rest of my year. The research had produced a framework that would enable organizational change to be successfully embedded into an organization.

In 2010, the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS), a Canadian non-profit that produces authoritative resources on important sustainability issues, commissioned research to determine how organizations can embed sustainability into the organizational culture.

As I examined the research results I soon realised that what I was reading had far reaching implications for any of us trying to lead change. Although the focus of the research was on embedding sustainability into organizational culture, the results clearly showed that the findings could be related to embedding any type of change into an organization including ITSM.

The challenge faced by most leaders of change is not so much about making a change in the first place, but making it stick. The successful change is one that becomes part of the culture of the organization. That is, ‘the way in which we do things around here’.

As I examined the research results I soon realised that what I was reading had far reaching implications for any of us trying to lead change. Although the focus of the research was on embedding sustainability into organizational culture, the results clearly showed that the findings could be related to embedding any type of change into an organization including ITSM.

The research team identified 59 distinct informal and formal practices that either deliver on the promise of organizational sustainability further along the path to change (innovation). The practices are arranged into groups of related practices and grouped them in a way that they anticipate would be meaningful to businesses.

The framework provides that range of practices.

The fundamental difference between this approach and other change models is that it advocates a balanced approach. The practices are arranged into groups of informal and formal practices that either deliver on current commitments (fulfilment) or move the organization further along the path to change (innovation).

The key is to select a balance of practices from each group in order to successfully embed the change into the organization. Just as we should select a balance of foods from each of the four food groups for a healthy life, it is the same approach for healthy change i.e. one that becomes part of the DNA of the organization.

The research was a large-scale systematic review of both academic and practitioner resources related to embedding sustainability into organizational culture. The research team led by Dr. Stephanie Bertels identified 13,756 academic and practitioner articles and reports related to the topic.

A detailed review then narrowed this down to the most relevant 179 to be included in the systematic review.

The extensive analysis of these sources revealed a multitude of ways that organizations can work to embed sustainability into organizational culture. In the end the research team identified 59 distinct practices and grouped them in a way that they anticipated would be meaningful to businesses.

The research is entitled, “Embedding Sustainability in Organizational Culture” and can be accessed at http://www.nbs.net/knowledge/culture/systematic-review-organizational-culture/.

On discovery of this research I contacted NBS to request permission to reference the material in a white paper which I was keen to write as I knew I had uncovered something that was going to transform the way we look at introducing changes related to ITSM into our organizations.

Having been kindly given their permission, I had to soon return to ask whether that permission would be transferable to a book. The white paper had evolved into far more than intended as my excitement about seeing the fruits of our labours in print over the past couple of months has been very satisfying.

Congratulations goes out to Peter Brooks, the winner of the 2011 International Whitepaper competition. Peter received an iPad for his efforts, the winner of the 2011 International Whitepaper competition.
the research application to IT Service Management continued to grow.

NBS put me in touch with Dr. Stephanie Bertels to whom I am eternally grateful for her willingness to allow me to use the research within the book that I spent the rest of this year writing.

The book entitled "Balanced Diversity – A Portfolio Approach to Organizational Change" describes in detail how the framework was constructed and how each practice within the framework can be applied to ITSM.

**THE FRAMEWORK**

The framework that was the outcome of the NBS research contains 59 practices for embedding change into organizational culture.

The framework is structured in such a way that allows practices to be selected from four quadrants. The key is for the selection to be balanced across all four quadrants.

This provides a portfolio approach to organizational change. The portfolio will include both formal and informal practices that deliver on current change commitments and also move the organization further along the path to future change initiatives.

It is this diverse yet balanced set of practices that will enable change to be successfully embedded into the organizational culture and become "the way in which we do things around here".

The 59 practices identified by the research are grouped into 20 categories across the four quadrants as shown in Figure 1.

The quadrant that depicts informal practices aimed at fulfillment is called "fostering commitment".

Practices in this quadrant aim to build and reinforce the importance of the change for the organization and to support and encourage those who are making efforts to embed the change.

The quadrant that depicts formal practices aimed at fulfillment is called "clarifying expectations".

Practices in this quadrant aim to integrate the practices in this quadrant into the organizational culture and become "the way in which we do things".

The quadrant that depicts informal practices aimed at innovation is called "building momentum for change".

The quadrant that depicts informal practices aimed at innovation is called "building momentum for change".

The practices in this quadrant aim to support a culture of change innovation by developing the new ideas needed to bring the organization closer to its long-term goals. These practices inspire and reassure employees so that they can experiment, try new things, and build on each other's ideas.

The quadrant that depicts the formal practices aimed at innovation is called "instilling capacity for change".

Practices in this quadrant aim to create structures or supports that will form a foundation for future changes in the organization.

**A PORTFOLIO APPROACH**

Leaders of change should draw practices from all four quadrants of the framework in the effort to embed a change within the organization. It is a balanced approach, using a wide and diverse range of practices that will achieve successful organizational change.

Those working to embed change into the organization need a portfolio of practices at their disposal. The portfolio of practices creates a balanced diversity to ensure successful change.

The approach can be used for strategic, tactical and operational change. It can be used for small, medium and large changes of varying complexity and priority.

There are a number of ways in which the framework can be used. The framework can be used to assess a current change initiative and perform a gap analysis or it can be used for planning the approach to future change initiatives.

**Current Change Initiatives - Gap Assessment**

It can be used to provide a baseline and gap assessment of your current change initiatives.

Scan across the four quadrants of the framework and determine to what extent you make use of a particular practice within each quadrant. For each practice determine those that you don't use at all, those that you use but infrequently and those that you employ heavily.

What you are looking for is a balance across all four quadrants. It doesn't have to be a perfect balance but you want to eliminate heavy use of one quadrant over another.

Of the practices that you don't currently use, identify those that you could employ to bring about a balanced approach. For those practices you currently employ, determine whether to increase or decrease the usage of that practice to bring about a balance. You may decide to eliminate the use of a practice you currently employ in order to use the resources allocated to that practice elsewhere.

**Future Change Initiatives - Planning**

The framework can be used to plan new change initiatives and ensure that there will be a balanced approach.

With a particular change initiative in mind, scan across the four quadrants and select a diversified sub-set of practices that are best suited to your organization and/or team for implementing and embedding this change into the organization.

Ensure that you select practices from each of the four quadrants.

The key is to have a balance across the framework to give you a portfolio approach. Make sure you are not expending too much energy on the practices in one quadrant at the expense of those in another.

The number and type of practices you choose will depend on the resources and capabilities you have available to employ those practices. Don't choose more practices than you are capable of employing effectively.

Consideration needs to be given to the capabilities e.g. skills and experience, as well as the resources e.g. people, time, finances etc. that will be needed to effectively employ the chosen practices. This should include use of both internally available and externally available capabilities and resources.

The number and type of practices may also be driven by the nature of the change being planned.
For example, a strategic change that is going to have widespread impact across the entire organization may warrant a larger number of practices than for an operational or tactical change. An operational change that is limited to a small group of people may only need one practice from each quadrant of the framework to effectively embed the change.

**EXAMPLES BY QUADRANT**

In the book, each of the 59 practices contained within the framework and their application to ITSM are described in detail.

In this article, as an introduction to the framework, I have selected one practice from each quadrant that I have described the practice and its application to ITSM.

Note: These practices have only been selected as examples and are not indicative of ones that should be selected for your change initiatives in your organization.

**Fostering Commitment – Signal – Invest in the Community**

The category of ‘Signal’ consists of practices that serve to identify the change(s) as a priority for the organization. An organization’s actions send strong messages regarding its position on the change(s) to its employees. This category of practices includes actions or gestures that serve to communicate the importance of the change(s) to employees in informal ways.

The practice – Invest in the Community – involves the organization contributing to the community and encouraging and enabling employees to do the same.

It includes:

- Permitting employees to take time off to attend special interest groups, local interest groups etc.
- Permitting employees to take time off to help organize industry related events
- Supporting industry and community bodies

Organizations can build commitment to change(s) by demonstrating investment in the community or industry. Supporting industry or community bodies (related to the area of change) through allocation of resources or allowing employees to take time off to be involved send a clear message of commitment.

**Application to ITSM**

For ITSM this practice is about allowing employees to attend local interest groups and special interest groups related to ITSM. The ITSMF (IT service management Forum) has chapters worldwide that run annual conferences as well as seminars and user group forums for those involved in ITSM.

Employees should be encouraged to become members of forums such as ITSMF and to get involved with organising events etc. Organisations should provide company time and resources for employees to engage in these activities.

Organizations can also sponsor ITSM industry events and send a clear message of commitment and support.

Organizations can also demonstrate their commitment to ITSM by sharing information such as presentations from industry experts outside the organization through social media channels.

**Clarifying Expectations – Assign – Create New Roles**

Practices in the category of ‘Assign’ involve allocating responsibility for the change to new or existing roles within the organization, including roles at the most senior levels. This may include the creation of new roles within organizations to address new responsibilities, including managing compliance to the change, dealing with stakeholders (including employees) tracking and reporting on progress, and leading change innovation.

Organizations can both create new roles and hold senior leaders and board members accountable for the change deliverables. By assigning responsibility for the change to specific roles at senior levels, the organization signals that the change is a priority.

The practice – Create New Roles - is concerned with expanding existing roles or developing new roles within the organization to capture essential responsibilities relating to the change. It includes:

- Assigning full-time personnel to lead the change programme(s)
- Creating new roles to deliver on the change agenda
- Creating a department with prime responsibility for the change (e.g. sustainability office, change management office, health and safety office, service management office)
- Expanding or upgrading existing roles to incorporate the change
- Giving these roles direct exposure to senior leadership
- Ensuring these roles do not operate in isolation, but collaborate and integrate with the rest of the organization (e.g. through cross-functional teams).

The creation of specific roles in relation to the area of change has a legitimising effect within the organization. Failure to create roles and assign responsibility will stand in the way of effective implementation of change programmes.

**Application to ITSM**

Assigning responsibility for the area of the change to roles within the organization, and prioritising the importance of those roles, demonstrates management commitment to the change to employees and other stakeholders.

**Application to ITSM:**

There are a number of key roles within ITSM that should be created and assigned to individuals within the organization to ensure the successful implementation of ITSM changes.

These include the process owner, service owner and continual service improvement manager.

Consideration should also be given to the establishment of the service management office (SMO) consisting of the roles of process owners, service owners and the CSI manager. The establishment of a SMO that reports directly to senior level management demonstrates the organizations commitment to ITSM and the changes that it brings to the organization.

The SMO is the ultimate point of accountability for ITSM across the entire service life-cycle and drives the design, implementation, management and ongoing improvement of service management processes in support of delivered business services.

Bringing together the ‘accountable’ roles such as process owners and service owners facilitates the establishment of effective and efficient process interfaces and integration. It provides a central point of contact and conduit for communication across the organization. The existence of a SMO makes it easier to apply common approaches to the design, implementation, management and ongoing improvement of processes and services.

The SMO should establish a network of ITSM champions across the organization both within IT and in the business and at all levels including senior management level. The SMO can ensure that a common and consistent message is delivered so that there is a good understanding across the organization of ITSM and the role it has to play.

**Building Momentum for Change – Raise Awareness - Trigger**

This category of ‘Raise Awareness’ looks at techniques used to encourage or convince individuals of the importance of the change for the organization or the need to take transformative action.

The practice – Trigger – is about creating events that help set things in motion and disrupt the status quo. It includes:

- Disrupting people’s patterns by pointing to the negative implications of current behaviours
Experiential learning can generate an understanding of the need for change by creating that "a-ha" moment when everything suddenly makes sense.

The practices in this category of 'Learn' focus on creating processes and mechanisms to gather knowledge or skills related to the area of change.

This often chaotic due to a lack of policy, processes and procedures. There is little collaboration and communication between the various roles and this often results in the organization moving backwards instead of forwards. Customer satisfaction is down and the organization is losing money.

As the game progresses, the participants experience how process improvements that span the organization can help achieve performance targets and corporate profitability.

The first round is often chaotic due to a lack of policy, processes and procedures. There is little collaboration and communication between the various roles and this often results in the organization moving backwards instead of forwards. Customer satisfaction is down and the organization is losing money.

By the final round, a high level of maturity has been reached and the organization is in a far better situation than it was at the end of the first round.

The participants are now able to take away the lessons learnt from the simulation and apply them back in the workplace. There will be an understanding of the impact of their role and activities on the achievement of the organizational goals and objective as well as the ITSM goals and objectives.

There will be a far better understanding of the implications of desired behaviour and the implications of undesired behaviour.

Instilling Capacity for Change – Learn - Scan

The practices in this category of ‘Learn’ focus on creating processes and mechanisms to gather knowledge or skills related to the area of change.

The practice – Scan – makes use of systems or processes to perceive and recognize external information. It involves:

- Attending industry conferences
- Joining a user group where members share information and best practices
- Observing competitors’ activity
- Scanning multiple sources habitually
- Developing many diverse internal and external knowledge and opportunity networks
- Researching stakeholder needs and values
- Scanning for changes in legislation and upcoming regulatory requirements
- Using focus groups and surveys to garner customer and employee opinions
- Subscribing to newsletters and periodicals
- Joining online discussion forums
- Scanning social media channels for information e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc.

In a rapidly changing environment, organizations must be constantly and proactively looking for opportunities and threats. Scanning entails continually looking out for opportunities. Scanning also involves researching all available sources for the latest information and expert opinions and having a finger on the pulse of a changing landscape.

Organizations should encourage employees to keep themselves up to date by accessing online information, reading books, talking with experts to identify ways in which the organization can change.

Successful champions scan their environment, collecting information from industry conferences, consultants and competitors.

Habitually searching for new information needs to become culturally embedded in the organization so that it moves from being an individual capability to an organizational one.

The organization can routinely ask its stakeholders their opinions about its values and planned activities, which then allows it to adjust and adapt if required.

Leading organizations balance their internal and external focus. They build and maintain extensive links beyond their sector or industry to keep up to date with the latest practices and new developments.

Application to ITSM:

There is a wealth of sources available to ITSM professionals to identify opportunities and threats, and to keep abreast of developments in the ITSM industry.

The key is to make the search for information a habitual one.

Sources include (but are not limited to):

- User forums such as itSMF – their websites (all chapters), conferences, seminars, webinars, local interest groups and special interest groups
- Industry publication such as the itSMF publication At Your Service as well as bulletins and newsletters published by local chapters of itSMF
- Websites and publications of competitors and other organizations
- Websites and publications from ITSM professional bodies such as consultancy and training organizations
- Industry analysts, and research and advisory organizations such as Gartner, Forrester, Ovum and IDC
- Groups on social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook – search for groups using keywords such as ITSM and ITIL
- Social media channels such as Twitter
- itSMF podcasts
- Technology news press at a local, national and international level
- ITSM books such as those published in the itSMF library.

Organizations should encourage employees to scan these and other sources regularly and share information that is uncovered. Organizations need to provide employees with the time to scan and read on a regular basis as well as the tools to enable the sharing of information across the organization. Use collaboration tools such as SharePoint, Box, Google sites/docs, Alfresco etc.

Changes and additions to websites, groups, blogs etc. as well as new issues of publications can be notified by RSS [really simple syndication] feeds or email alerts so that updates are not missed.

CONCLUSION

The framework can be used for all types of changes – strategic, tactical, and operational – and of all size and complexity.

It should be used as part of a PDCA cycle for continual service improvement.

Change leaders need to ensure that the selection of practices from each quadrant provides a balanced yet diverse portfolio. The framework should become an integral part of any change leader’s toolkit and referenced on a regular basis.

The aim of this article was to introduce the framework resulting from the NBS research and provide examples of how the practices within the framework can be applied to ITSM. This introduction has only provided 4 examples from the 59 available practices described in the book.

If the article has been of interest, I encourage you to take a look at the original research at www.nbs.net.

For further guidance on the application of the framework to ITSM, grab a copy of the book available from your local ITSM bookstore or from TSO at http://www.tsoshop.co.uk.

Karen Ferris is a Director at Macanta Consulting and can be contacted at karen.ferris@macanta.com.au.
Are you benefitting from all the latest ITIL guidance?

ITIL 2011 editions are available now

The most widely accepted approach to ITSM has been updated in order to keep up with emerging trends. ITIL users, who include HSBC, IBM and Disney, benefit from reduced costs, improved services, customer satisfaction and productivity.

Easier to read and understand, ITIL 2011 incorporates more practical guidance and examples and includes the latest thinking on:
- Best practices and international standards
- Business relationship management
- Design co-ordination
- Sourcing services from multiple providers (multi-vendor sourcing)
- Continual service improvement registers

Order the Lifecycle Suite which includes ITIL Service Strategy, ITIL Service Design, ITIL Service Transition, ITIL Service Operation and ITIL Continual Service Improvement.

*Buying this suite rather than individual titles offers a saving of nearly 30%*

TO ORDER
Visit www.best-management-practice.com/ITSMF
Call +44 (0)870 243 0123

HARD COPY
9780113313235 £299.00

SINGLE USER PDF
9780113313242 £299.00 (£358.80 inc. VAT)

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION – INDIVIDUAL ACCESS
7003158 £265.00 (£318.00 inc. VAT)

Also available as a cost-effective multi-user licence – please call to find out more or email digital@ts.co.uk

SAVE 30%*

---

Running IT Like a Business:
A Case for the Application Services Library (ASL)

By Derek Madej

Executive Summary

In today’s uncertain economic times, it becomes necessary for executives and decision-makers to take a look at their current information technology departments, and their respective budgets. Historically, IT departments have generally been given free-rein, exploding in recent years to become ‘budget-busting’ entities. However, a growing disconnect between the value-added impact of IT departments and the size of their current budgets has created the need to open up a discussion regarding streamlining the IT process and creating value-added impact upon a business. In short, to stay competitive, companies must run IT like a business within business, and not simply a ‘behind-the-scenes’ back end operation. This article makes the case for running IT like a business, and utilizing the Application Services Library (ASL) in facilitating the changing IT paradigm.

The following bullets summarize the key findings regarding the Application Services Library.

In brief, the ASL was developed in the late 90s in Europe, and has since become a public domain standard to describe process within Application Management.

The Application Services Library is entirely based on the professional practice of application development and its management functions. It delivers practical working knowledge with ready to use templates.

The ASL has already been implemented in several large European companies, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

As an open-source system, the ASL is constantly being innovated upon and uses the concept of “crowd-sourcing” to continually reinvent and refine the product.

The ASL can coexist with existing ITIL, ISO, and other frameworks, and therefore can be implemented in any company regardless of their current state and maturity of other process developments.

As an added-value proposition, the ASL standard provides cost-control, quality control, productivity enhancement, ease of adjustment, and sustainable competitive advantage to any business that utilizes an IT offering.

Introduction

We live during times of great change; a time when the technological evolution is unfolding with an unparalleled pace just in front of our eyes. What was reserved for ‘techies’ and ‘geeks’ just a couple of years ago is now in the hands of the consumer. What was affordable just a few is now a social norm. With the arrival of new services and products: cloud, social networks, electronic coupons, portable devices, communication media, etc., this modern society does not seem to be able to envision their lives without some form of technology. And of course, everyone expects these products and services to work seamlessly and any temporary glitch is simply intolerable. Moreover, this enormous demand and unstoppable desire to own ‘the latest and greatest’ leads now to never before seen price drops as more and more competing businesses enter this lucrative consumer market.

“To be or not to be” in the future for almost every business depends on its ability to constantly innovate, to excel in quality, and to keep the prices down. With many front-end technology products and services placed directly into the hands of the customer, which is referred to now as PEFO: Front End of the Front Office.
business and IT organizations have no other way than to create a sustainable business relationship that at the end will bring in new customers and create new markets. And frequently, IT departments have longer to stay in the back seat as cost centers. Even with the advancement of the most sophisticated solutions, IT organizations cannot stay in a position of just delivering them; they must now get directly engaged in the business itself. These days most competitors have access to and possession of almost all new technologies and services which no longer guarantee them a competitive advantage. Staying ahead of the competition by constantly innovating, aggressive pricing, and never ending efforts to delight its own customers is now the new norm and the only way of survival. The companies that will be able to ‘talk business’ and manage all their internal relationships as such will emerge as new leaders and winners of the competition race. Running IT like a business (2) is now becoming a reality and will generate new venues for companies to gain a new competitive advantage.

Connecting the dots...

The role of application management is so important in the IT organization (4). However, the fulfillment of most of these requirements cannot be successfully realized in the live customer environment alone, but has to be addressed in the early stages of the application life cycle as well. The unfortunate proof for this statement is that approximately 40% of service downtime is caused by application-related failures and this number is even higher for new developments (4). On one hand, a broken part or failure over or piece of infrastructure can usually be replaced shortly after its failure. On the other hand, if the application software fails due to a programming bug, it is barely ever possible to fix it ‘on the fly’ as the faulty application must be first analyzed, trouble-shot, perhaps partially re-designed, then re-coded, re-tested, and re-deployed into process, which is not only a mouthful, but takes a significant amount of time. And of course it is very costly and even worse may potentially lead to huge losses in revenue.

It is still a somewhat surprising fact that today fewer than 5 percent of organizations have established the role of the application manager (4). Despite the fact that this role and its responsibilities have been very well articulated and formalized by Gartner (4) and have been a subject of many other research and professional writings, there is still not much attention being paid to what it means to run IT like a business (2). Still, IT organizations on average seem to be too busy keeping the ‘lights on’ in their operations and at the same time developing in-house applications instead of shifting their efforts to managing application systems. This is perhaps why the most common roles amongst the software applications positions are: the Application Development and Application Testing. Most of the supporting functions of applications are being done in an ad-hoc manner by often taking developers away from their development tasks. This does not resonate well with their business organizations as it cripples their efforts. Consequently, business teams demand that IT departments enable business transformations more actively and help to introduce a new set of innovative products to allow for growth and expansion. At the same time, the ‘footprint’ of IT operations does not seem to shrink as the application management is not being ‘business’ managed during their entire life cycle. Seeing very busy ‘firefighting’ IT staff to fix the poor quality of their information systems is a very common picture of today’s IT shops. At the same time, most IT budgets are staying flat as businesses are now not as clear what organizations demand more control for IT spending and expect stable quality of its services in order to be able to invest more in product innovation. For IT departments, simply being busy and reactive to business needs no longer equates to a value-added proposition. Managing its own IT costs, quality levels, and becoming a business within business is now a new way for many IT departments to thrive and to prosper.

Market Trends

Running IT like a business means to improve cost, performance, manageability, and speed of innovation of application systems across their entire life cycle. This is why the role of an application manager is so important in the IT organization (4). However, the fulfillment of most of these requirements cannot be successfully realized in the live customer environment alone, but has to be addressed in the early stages of the application life cycle as well. The unfortunate proof for this statement is that approximately 40% of service downtime is caused by application-related failures and this number is even higher for new developments (4). On one hand, a broken part or failure over or piece of infrastructure can usually be replaced shortly after its failure. On the other hand, if the application software fails due to a programming bug, it is barely ever possible to fix it ‘on the fly’ as the faulty application must be first analyzed, trouble-shot, perhaps partially re-designed, then re-coded, re-tested, and re-deployed into process, which is not only a mouthful, but takes a significant amount of time. And of course it is very costly and even worse may potentially lead to huge losses in revenue.

Industry frameworks

Amongst the best practices for managing the service management and application management lifecycles, the industry has been dominated by two international frameworks: ITIL and ASL.

When version 3 of ITIL Service Practices was released by OGC in May 2007, it has brought a new comprehensive approach to the entire service lifecycle. It is important to understand that prior to this version, there were mostly focused mostly on the infrastructure and the ways to manage its complexity and provision. With the arrival of this new version of ITIL, the practice of Application Management was for the first time officially formalized into the service lifecycle (5). However, the major attention for application management was mainly limited to the service operation phases leaving out the rest of application activities to a more traditional application development.

The origins of ASL came from some of the biggest IT private providers in Europe. Since the beginning, this framework was entirely rooted into the application management practice. In 2001, these private practices were the management of the ASL framework and library to the public organization called: ASL Foundation (3). Since the creation of the foundation, this framework has become a public domain and as such is being continuously enhanced by many organizations around the world, whether private or public, regardless of their size and type of industry, and country of origins. The best practices of this framework have been already implement- 

Benefits

It is entirely based on the professional practice of application development and its management functions. It delivers practical working knowledge with ready to use template documents.

It has been implemented amongst many companies and is being continuously improved thanks to its public domain knowledge status. In short: it works!

It clearly explains and teaches application managers what to do and how to best do their jobs as it ‘speaks’
the lifecycle of applications systems that support business processes in terms of:  
- Technology advancements.  
- Customer environment strategy.  
- Customer organizational strategy.  
  
This in turn enables the increased speed to market of business initiatives.  

Competitive advantage – ensures IT runs like a business. By doing this, IT will become a credible business partner to their own business organization. This in turn enables the competitive advantage of the company’s strategy.

Final thoughts

The objective of this article was to attract attention and generate some traction to the ASL and to increase its popularity. A lot of companies can start benefiting from this public domain framework that is well positioned to answer a very tough question: “How to run IT like a business?”

Today, some US companies are starting to look at, whether due to cost pressures or process enhancement initiatives, this venue because they experience challenges in finding a proven method of managing costs and maintaining predictable quality levels. In the world of constant mergers, acquisitions, globalization, and growing outsourcing, it is no longer a prudent business practice for IT departments to expect great results from running unprepared and without having a sound business plan.

Becoming a business within business is no longer a distant future for the IT. The future is now and it can be assured by utilizing the best business practices from the Application Services Library (ASL).

Value to business

The ASL framework, along with its best practices, provides direct support to all of the most common business objectives and thus presents value to businesses in terms of:

Cost - ensures that costs are visible (transparent) and controllable. This in turn enables business to make effective financial decisions.

Quality – ensures that quality is properly defined, measured, controlled, and managed in:
- Application operations,  
- Application functionality,  
- Service processes,  
- Services delivered.

This in turn minimizes interruptions to business operations in terms of predictability and reliability.

Productivity – ensures the performance and functionality of business operations, which naturally enables revenue generation and enhancement.

Agility – ensures that a strategic perspective is taken upon the future of the provision of information and like voice support, through to simple outsourcing of desktop support. All businesses, based on their IT budget, have a clear expectation of service performance. This is delivered using monitoring tools, management tools and the service desk tool.

The performance reporting of IT service against SLA depends greatly on:

Configuration and integration of the monitoring tool, discovery tool and the service desk tool.

Configuration of the service desk tool to accommodate expected SLA parameters. The challenge here lies not in what is configured but in how the tool clock performs i.e. starts and stops under various scenarios known/unknown to business, such as the customer.

SLA method of definition of performance in terms of severity vs tool configuration of SLA severity.

Utilization of the service desk tool by the technical support team during the lifecycle of the call to alter the real performance parameters. The selection of severity and/or impact probability in the tool which leads to severity selection can be debated as the SLA performance parameters are at times subjective.

Improvement will only follow from measurement. We need to know that we are using the right formula, right tool and most importantly right configuration for these tools. Some of these challenges are described below.

Method

The types of verifications that can be done are:  

- Tool configuration audit – Check done to verify the configuration of the tool to meet the desired SLA. Typical findings are as indicated in the table below.

- Transactional audit – Checks being done on a sample size of previous transactions.

- Transactional inspection - Checks being done on a sample size of present transactions

A transactional audit/transactional inspection should be carried out after the tool configuration audit is completed and the corrective actions of the tool configuration audit have been implemented and delivery has stabilized. The method of transactional audit/inspection is basically the same, the difference being only in verifying real-time data vs past data. Typical findings are as indicated in the table follow-

### Works Cited

The checking parameters for the tickets, its method of inspection and frequency are generally not defined for internal audits. Thus, with a low sample size and non-defined parameter, internal audits do not produce consistent results. A consistent quality check can be done by regular transactional or ticketing inspections/audits against a defined Inspection Plan.

Typically observed deviations

Sample deviations in configuration and integration of the monitoring tool, discovery tool and the service desk tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration Environment</th>
<th>Prevalent Configurations/ deviations</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mapping of response time to polling interval of monitoring tool</td>
<td>The polling interval for network devices and servers are at 10 to 15 min whereas response time for Sev 1 is just 15 or 30 min. The situation is compounded in shared service where the actual problem is cost of bandwidth</td>
<td>The time delay in occurrence of failure and its detection is not accounted in the response time. The delay time may even be equal to response time. This is a service delivery design issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of interfacing between monitoring tool and service desk tool e.g. email trigger</td>
<td>Mail delivery delay due to queue especially if there different mail services</td>
<td>Email delivery time delay will not figure in the response time. This at times compounds with the previous situation, i.e. delay in detection and delay in transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling of discovery tool to capture configurations during change management</td>
<td>Generally “system state back up” is taken once a week, before a major change. The discovery tool is also scheduled for once a week (relevant for servers as well as critical WAN routers)</td>
<td>In that week if two changes are done then the rollback point is not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typically observed deviations

Sample deviations in configuration of the service desk tool to meet SLA parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration Environment</th>
<th>Prevalent Configurations/ deviations</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of Response time. The definition is not explicitly explained in SLA. The difference in “acknowledgment of receipt” vs “commencement of work” requires clarity</td>
<td>The change to call status for e.g. “assigned” is taken as end time to calculation of response time</td>
<td>Incorrect reporting of response time and therefore SLA is not violated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA clock – The clock starts and stops depending on call status. The call status types and their correlations are generally configured during transition stage, but its mis-utilization can be verified in transactional inspection/audit</td>
<td>Selection of a call status where the clock stops. Compounded with certain selections where a mail alert is not triggered to the end user, e.g. selection of status “under observation”</td>
<td>Incorrect reporting of resolution time and therefore SLA is not violated.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The polling interval for network devices and servers are at 10 to 15 min whereas response time for Sev 1 is just 15 or 30 min. The situation is compounded in shared service where the actual problem is cost of bandwidth.

The time delay in occurrence of failure and its detection is not accounted in the response time. The delay time may even be equal to response time. This is a service delivery design issue.

Email delivery time delay will not figure in the response time. This at times compounds with the previous situation, i.e. delay in detection and delay in transmission.

In that week if two changes are done then the rollback point is not available.

The change to call status for e.g. “assigned” is taken as end time to calculation of response time.

Selection of a call status where the clock stops. Compounded with certain selections where a mail alert is not triggered to the end user, e.g. selection of status “under observation”.

Selection of call status after any “hold status” where the “resolution due date time” is not advanced.

Use of certain call type e.g. modify where the clock resets. The start time and stop time remains same but the SLA period start time for calculation is from this call status.

SLA definition of performance, in terms of severity vs tool configuration of SLA severity

The severity definition of most SLA is with business impact. Generally statements such as “more than 75% business impacted” are considered Severity 1. The corresponding correlation to tool is left to the service provider and it finally depends on the interpretation of the Service Desk individual to interpret this. The co-relation of such statements to critical assets is seen missing. The gravity further increases when parent/child relationships of assets are not configured and the service desk individual is not fully trained.

Delivery (Conduct of Audit/Inspection)

The size transactional inspection team will generally depend on the frequency and the number of checks/tests and on the volumes of tickets/calls. This will generally be dependent on the sampling plan. It has been observed that around 30 to 40 tickets can be inspected/audited by an engineer per shift.

The success of the delivery will depend on:
• Training of the team members.
• Design and utilization of a daily transactional audit/inspection report format.
• Collection of data and its interpretation.
• Correct design of an inspection plan.
• The Inspection Plan – A suggested “extract of inspection plan” is appended below. This will be customized for accounts depending on SLA/delivery commitments.

Benefit

The benefits of such verifications will help business as well as the service provider. Some of these are:

Business -
• Ensuring delivery as per the SLA and also with respect to bonus/penalty conditions
• Improved IT service delivery which will improve total IT availability and therefore productivity

• Safeguarding from probable legal litigations of critical non-availability/data loss.

IT Service -
• Identifying potential errors/issues for corrective action to improve IT service delivery
• Safeguarding from financial and legal litigation with the customer
• Improving image as a trusted IT service provider.

Conclusion

Results of transactional audits are showing substantial improvement opportunities. The increasing dependence of business on IT Service will mandate improvement in quality of service. These approaches will go a long way towards ensuring this improvement. Statistical analysis of data from such reports will give IT service providers opportunities to improve, enabling sustained delivery with a competitive edge.

About the Author

Having more than 24 years of experience, including 11 years of consulting, training & process auditing for Management Systems, Shaktibrata Bose is a Lead Assessor for ISO 9001, ISO 20000-1, BS 7799 & BS 25999. He has helped many organizations to define processes for ISO 9001, ISO 27001, ISO 20000-1, CMMI, SOX, DPA, Automotive SPICE. He has conducted certification audits and trainings on behalf of certification bodies. One of the early consultants for BS 15000 having successfully completed it for a managed IT service provider in 2004, he subsequently designed and assisted for Integrated Certification of IT Standards - ISO 9001, BS 15000 & BS 7799. He was also responsible for built of a data centre as per Tier III norms for Novells India Infotech Ltd where he was the Head of Information Security & Quality. A pilot project for Ticket auditing was successfully conducted to validate this aspect of delivery for a period of three person months for clients of a major Managed IT Service provider. He can be contacted at boses@corequalityconsultants.com
Managing Your CPD Requirement

S. D. Van Hove, Ed.D., FSMCM and Patricia Page

Every priSM® credential holder must maintain their credential via ongoing professional development – either through verifiable practitioner activities, professional contributions or ongoing education via Service Management-based training. For some, this requirement has been a roadblock for entering the priSM program; specifically their itSMF Chapter has infrequent events or their location doesn’t allow consistent participation in professional Service Management events. There is a solution! Have you heard about BrightTALK™?

The priSM scheme recognizes these common difficulties and is working with BrightTALK, the online event specialists for professionals. BrightTALK has dedicated channels that cater to the Service Management professional: the IT Service Management channel (with an upcoming, at the time of writing this article, all-day summit entitled “Service Catalog Summit”) and the itSMF USA Channel. There are over 350 45-minute presentations that can be viewed when it suits your schedule. You can look out for the banner on the ITSM channels to confirm the webinar is CPD approved.

Other ITSM summits that have occurred include:

- Problem & Incident Management Summit
- ITIL Version 3 Summit
- Managing Cloud Services Summit

Review all on-demand ITSM events here:
http://www.brighttalk.com/r/GbP

These live and on-demand webinars are each worth one CPD and each is easily verifiable. All you need to do is capture each webinar – either live or on-demand – by title and date. The Professional Development committees will verify attendance when you submit your CPD activities via statistics held by BrightTALK.

BrightTALK requires a one-time online registration with an email address. The webinars are available at no cost to the viewer.

For another method of gaining CPDs, as an expert you can present on BrightTALK for even more CPDs! BrightTALK offers regular summits and would be able to review your presentation if you would like to speak. Do you have Service Management topic that you are passionate about and a vendor-neutral presentation? Contact Suzanne Van Hove (suzanne.van.hove@itsmf.org) for more information on priSM and Patricia Page (ppage@brighttalk.com) to be considered as a presenter for an upcoming BrightTALK™ webinar.

www.theprisminstitute.org
**IPM – An ITSM Procedural Model for the New Service Desk**

Todd Bridgeman

**Introduction**

IT Service Management is a discipline that continues to gain support, understanding and commitment throughout the IT community, mostly due to the popularity of ITIL, ISO20000, COBIT, LEAN and other structured frameworks and all for good reason.

Naturally we are drawn towards a ‘Managed and Measured’ approach and away from an ad-hoc, ‘wing it’ style of operation. We just can’t do that anymore.

The IT Department needs to be held accountable for its role in the business, especially considering the ever increasing budgets required for IT, so why not be guided by an established, universally acknowledged framework like ITIL?

But ITIL doesn’t work…on its own. Unless there is a strong ‘procedural’ layer sitting underneath the Process (ITIL) layer, the ITIL processes end up being idealistic and generalised, represented by documents filed away in desk drawers.

The disconnect is that there is no framework to guide the ground level activity required to support the processes and this makes data inconsistent and unreliable, produces ad-hoc responses to incidents, emergencies and changes, and ignores a lack of understanding about the health of a Service.

A question emerges: “Ok, I can see where the goals are but how do I get the ball close enough to score?”.

Kicking backwards, sideways, short kicks etc. may eventually get to the goal but along the way you’ve lost efficiency and more importantly the opportunity for staff to understand that every activity undertaken needs to contribute to a forward step in the value chain. That’s the procedural layer – the layer most operational staff spend most time in, and yet care not to develop as strongly as the ITIL processes they underpin.

The ITSM Procedural Model is applicable to any IT Operational team as, like ITIL, it is a framework that can be adapted, manipulated, drawn down from to best suit the needs. In particular it is useful to Service Desk, which is the focus of this article.

**Service Desk**

By function, Service Desks are required to be ‘jacks of all trades’ – generalists who are required to have some knowledge about all things IT, and yet there is always untapped capability for specialisation within the Service Desk where the skills exist, but the ability to utilise them is removed because certain tasks are inevitably considered to be part of another group’s domain.

Most often the Service Desk’s ability to resolve more complex issues is limited due to either time constraints or Risk Management. Time is a constraint imposed by volume. Even ‘Urgency’ is not such an imposition on time if the volume is low.

Where volumes are high, time management is a critical success factor because of limited resources (staff) available and in those cases Service Desk does not have time to invest in researching or performing more complex solutions. Risk Management in this context is a function of resolver groups or ‘technical owners’ not being confident to allow Service Desk ‘generalists’ to perform tasks that have the potential to break a service if not done right. Yet Service Desk normally has access to Active Directory structures, and access permissions to key infrastructure services that can cause monumental interruptions if undisplaced work is performed. The risk identified is not always proportionate and logical.

That paradigm needs to shift so that more tasks can be performed by the frontline where the turnaround time is quicker and cheaper. Risk need not be an issue – documentation, training and discipline is all that is required. Service Desks have immense capability to add value but they have a ‘street cred’ problem.

As seen from the ‘Entry Point’ into IT, the bottom rung of the ladder, the juniors, the ‘green horns’, Service Desk needs to begin demonstrating to the IT Organisation that there is an enormous opportunity to tip the scale somewhat so that instead of being responsive (to Resolver groups, and technical specialists), they are responded to. We don’t seem to realise that the people who spend more time talking to end users may be the best to tell us something about how the users would like us to improve. They hear first hand about the nature of Incidents and how they impact end users. They often perform laborious and routine time-wasting, repetitive tasks, so perhaps they are best able to suggest corrective action and continuous improvement initiatives.

It starts with elevating the maturity of the Service Desk and to do that we need a model that gains control of, and unleashes the potential of a well-managed procedural layer. This allows a change of focus from ‘Phone answering and ticket logging’ to Service Management, Business Analysis, Customer Relationship Management, Vendor Management, Coordination, Reporting and Organisational Change. All of which involve Service Desk and therefore can be enhanced by Service Desk.

**The ITSM Procedural Model – Plate Spinning**

Service Desks are expert plate spinners. At any one time they need to uphold and protect SLAs, prioritise and escalate Incidents and Requests, liaise with customers, vendors, Resolver groups and Management, provide reporting, and perform general trouble shooting for ALL services provided. All the while taking on new Services. “We’ll get the Service Desk to do that…” That organisation, discipline and sharpness every work hour of every day.

It is stressful and challenging but not always rewarding as it could be because it is often without structure – and that can make it seem meaningless.

There are five elements to the IPM. Like plate spinning, each element needs to receive attention for the overall effort to succeed. They can however spin at different rates – one element can be more mature, more widely implemented and utilised than another, but each need to be spinning to some degree to remain in the game. As a plate slows to a wobble, it can however spin, each element needs to receive attention for the overall effort to succeed. They can however spin at different rates – one element can be more mature, more widely implemented and utilised than another, but each need to be spinning to some degree to remain in the game. As a plate slows to a wobble, it must be attended to and re-tweaked as it contributes to the overall aim. The IPM doesn’t seek to diminish the fundamentals of the ITIL processes, but is intended to provide a practical procedural approach to the activity that ultimately underpins ITIL processes.

This is designed to help with the ‘How to do’ that is inferred by ITIL’s ‘What to do’. The five elements are now explored.

**Ticket Management (Plate 1)**

Ticket Management is a critical component of maintaining and managing IT operations and is particularly relevant to the Service Desk function as it is at the core of the Service Desk purpose and mission. It covers aspects such as quality, accuracy, assignment and escalation across the ticket lifecycle.

Ticket Management, more importantly, is the base level activity that produces data used to help understand IT in the business, the affect of customer behaviour changes, the influence of Change Management, the effectiveness of Problem Management and the overall customer experience. What is IT if it’s not about the customer experience?

The term ‘Ticket’ is used to describe a recorded event or contact from a customer within the Service management tool, as distinct from a ‘Call’ which is reserved to describe ‘Phone Calls’.

Ticket Management is effectively the procedure that oversees the interface between the customer and the IT organisation via the chosen toolset. It is a day-to-day activity that is primarily operated by Service Desk Officers (SDOs) and is overseen by the Team Leader, but involves all participants in IT support operations.

This article assumes that a suitable, goal-aligning ITSM Toolset has been selected and installed and the appropriate training given to those who are required to use it.

**Critical Success factors for effective Ticket Management**

**a. All Tickets are logged.**

This often works against human nature to an extent because of the routine and repetitive nature of the activity. “Who will notice if I don’t log this one?”

The answer to that question is eventually – You the SDO. The benefits of logging all customer contacts and all relevant alerts (as defined by Incident Management) are clear:

- Accurate representation of office activities
- Accurate representation of volumes/workloads
- Accurately maintained
- Authorisations and event triggers are observed.
Only logging the contacts or events that individually deem ‘important’ will completely undermine the work effort of the individual, the team, the department.

This will also provide a skewed view of the ability of the IT Department to effectively support the goals of the business, as well as the necessity to do Capacity and Availability planning, to predict staff shortfalls, rob the IT Department of the opportunity to improve service delivery and improve the knowledge base etc.

An extension of this principle is that all contacts with the customers, and any action taken to progress the issue to resolution must also be recorded succinctly in the ticket, so as to reduce the dependence on individual knowledge of the situation and create agility within the team.

Undocumented customer activity will expose a basic failure in mission, and Service Desk cannot suffer the credibility loss.

There is always a temptation for Service Desk and, perhaps more so, Field Support staff to ‘not bother’ logging the ticket or forgetting to log the ticket after work is done. Introduce a policy: ‘No work is authorised to commence unless there is a Ticket in the system’ This can be used as an explanation to customers who ‘walk up’ to field staff and request service rather than call the Service Desk.

Every ticket counts.

The system ‘owns’ the ticket, and all staff need to buy into this.

b. Define and uphold a standard.

Regardless of the tool, no matter how intuitive the GUI in the ticket logging tool appears – the fields presented by the tool need to be defined in the context of your business, the way you have interpreted them and all staff need to buy into this.

The types of information NOT to include, practices not to do...

Developing and protecting a Data Capture Standard is a quick and effective way to establish consistency. This can be as simple as producing a list of each field that is presented by the tool, and a definition or explanation as to what you want it to be used for. The effort expended here to avoid assumptions and misinterpretations is an easy economical decision.

The standard should also include a specification that all activity is recorded, including all contacts to and from the customer. A ticket in the Service Management tool should be considered an itemised Invoice, where payment could be expected upon closure. Not documenting what was done to resolve the issue is like being told by your mechanic that your car has been ‘fixed’ and that you owe $2000, without knowing what you’ve been charged for.

Once a standard is set, Service Providers or Resolvers groups will quickly gain familiarity on how to read an assigned ticket, what is really meant by the data entered into the field and how believable the information is now that they are seeing a consistent interpretation of the ticket fields. It will also make trend identification much easier, which leads to effective inputs into Problem Management (for example), which in turn is aimed at reducing the volume of tickets raised.

It also provides a basis for measuring Ticket Quality – a much criticised element of the Service Desk game. If all fields in an Incident Ticket are completed in accordance with a standard, we can measure and even chart the quality of Ticket Management over time and demonstrate improvements. This is a huge defence against generic attitudes and perceptions, and one that can be used to regain the street cred. If you can show that quality is good and improving – wave it like a flag in front of non-believers.

Similarly for Reporting, if Data Capture is consistent, then there will be integrity in the data reported. Without a standard, and checks against the standard, there is limited consistency and therefore limited integrity. As decisions are based on information, how confident can we be on making the right decision?

c. Define the Blood flows.

Assignment and Escalation of tickets is a key responsibility of the Service Desk. Incident Management (of which Service Desk is a major participant, often the owner) explains that after capture, classification, categorisation and troubleshooting, the Incident or Request needs to be passed to an appropriate group for resolution, if resolution was not achievable at Service Desk.

Firstly, clarification between the two, although the principle applies to both:

- Ticket Assignment: Passing a ticket to an individual within the group/team
- Ticket Escalation: Passing a ticket to a group/team with a different responsibility.

Guidelines need to be established here to, again, provide consistency. Resolver groups need to be comfortable with the type of tickets they receive and the level of solving already attempted as described within the ticket. Tickets that are delivered to the wrong group create rework – a cardinal sin in IT Service Operations.

But it’s also about efficiency. It may be decided that all tickets of type x will first be assigned to a ‘holding bay’ where they will be assessed for workload balancing and effective delegation. This is valid depending on the situation, and as long as the practice is communicated, executed and periodically reviewed, the Service Desk (and any other operational group) will have a functioning circulatory system. Tickets that are bounced around, or held on to or escalated using a ‘stab in the dark’ method create stagnant build-ups and clogs in the blood flow.

Analysis of ticket assignments and escalations is also crucial to ensure that the right OLA or SLA has been engaged. Furthermore the higher the number of assignments and escalations, the higher the cost and the longer it takes to deliver the service to the customer. Escalations must be periodically reviewed and discussed with the receiving group for accuracy and necessity.

- Accuracy: Was the right resolver group or vendor selected?
- Necessity: Does the Service Desk have the skill, access or a Work Instruction that would enable them to execute the ticket?

d. There is always a Business Driver

Business drivers associated with every activity need to be identified and understood.

Example: A Service Desk Officer was asked to transfer emails manually from the Service Desk Inbox into the Service Management toolkit. The response...

"Why should I just log the emails, rather than try to resolve each one as I go?"

This question has some merit – after all, incident management encourages us to perform some kind of triage upon first contact. But in some cases (and in this example) there were specific business drivers to consider that called for specific action:

a. A significant cause of customer dissatisfaction was the delay that customers felt between sending an email and receiving a response. This is because the Service Desk team were looking at the emails in chronological order and doing all they could to resolve each one. That meant that some took hours to process – and this added extra time before the other emails were even acknowledged, which lead them to feel that their emails were either not received at all or were being ignored.

b. Service Level Agreements. There was no business requirement (as defined in SLAs) to process email requests on the spot or to any timeframe. The resolution targets allowed for far more time than was indicated by the urgent chronological processing of emails by staff.

In this example the greater win was to log the emails into the toolset so that a ticket reference can be given automatically and instantly to the customers who have emailed the Service Desk.

This let them know that their request or issue had been received, and it provided them with a reference for future contact if necessary. It also provided a record of emails by staff.

In addition it avoided any ‘undocumented solutioning’ from working solely off emails, and then logging a ticket with only a summary after the task was done (because all tickets are logged).

Understanding the business driver will assist in setting up good work practices. The alternative is to go ahead and do what we ‘think’ is a good idea...

e. Establish Ownership.

The Service Desk is the owner of the ticket that has been logged regardless of which operational group now has the responsibility of actioning or resolving the ticket. Interacting with the customer is a Service Desk responsibility so they need to be given the right to seek an update on any ticket from an ownership and a customer champion stance, and to hierarchical-ly escalate if sufficient progress is not shown.

Baseline Management (Plate 2)

The focus of most ‘instructional’ and ‘checklist’ style documentation produced in IT Operations, particularly that forwarded to Service Desks for action, tends to be a list of steps to follow. This has some merit as it creates a standard, some consistency etc. but it only...
‘Baselines’ are documented checklists or Knowledge Articles that outline the most effective way a resolution was achieved the last time it was performed.

By referring to them as Baselines it implies that we intend to move on from the current baseline to some other state or some other higher ground, and it insists on involvement and consultation by the person using the document.

In that context the ‘Baseline’ becomes more of a historical record. “This was the best way we successfully managed to get it done, the last time it was required.”

This focus suggests clearly that the documented instruction or Knowledge Article is fluid.

Everytime a baseline is referenced, an opportunity to improve arises, and that improvement should be aimed towards commoditising, automating and eventually engineering the task out of the business.

A baseline written is good. A baseline decommissioned is better.

Remove the Variance

Creating a baseline means we have described the single way we have decided to perform a task until it can be improved. That means we have decided not to reinvent wheels – or come up without our own version of an acceptable solution – but rather improve the wheel we have. If that means a complete rewrite with a completely different solution – fantastic, but it is always done with maintaining a single baseline in mind and therefore the original is decommissioned.

Where there is no baseline, no matter how intuitive or simple the task, there is inconsistent delivery of Service and that leads to a poor perception of quality from the consumers of the service.

‘Quality’ has been described as the ‘removal of variance’. If you remove the variance you have quality that can be measured – even if it’s bad. With variance rife throughout the operation you cannot measure quality and therefore you cannot address it in a corrective manner effectively.

A culture change may be required here, as validating baselines is not normally the way IT people like to resolve issues – they prefer to investigate and use their own solution and problem solving skills. But what is the business driver? Customer and end user perception of quality needs to win here. If a service is requested by a customer multiple times, and each time they receive something different, the perception of quality is low.

An example of this is a soft drink vending machine, the purchaser is expecting the same size, shape, look and taste each time they use it. Commoditised IT Services are no different. There are other avenues to involve and engage the active, creative and investigative minds of staff.

Another challenge: “If I document everything I know, I’ll be out of a job”. Wrong, in fact the reverse is true. Unless you are documenting all you know, you are becoming too expensive because of the risk you are introducing. The business cannot take a hit because you and your knowledge are holidaying in Hawaii.

Baselines are used to consistently reproduce a task at an agreed standard, within agreed timeframes that meets or exceeds customer’s expectations, but don’t wait for perfection before it is documented. A document that describes 60% of what it really needs to be, is 60% of a wheel that does not have to be reinvented.

Creating and maintaining Baselines is the biggest asset that can be created for, and provided to, an Organisation in return for the money it pays the Service Desk or IT Department. It represents an invaluable asset in knowledge and can function as the operational manual for the entire IT shop.

Critical Success factors for effective Base-line Management

1. Reliable and Repeatable.

Baselines are most effective for those tasks that are identified as reliable and repeatable, meaning that the trigger, the process and the output are known and within our control. They can be effective for ANY activity that is reliable and repeatable no matter how simple the task may seem.

For operational responses where the trigger and outcomes are unique and specialised, there is a diminished usefulness for baselining the activity that was carried out to resolve the issue because it cannot be validated on next use as the situation will invariably be different.

Other points about the creation of Baselines:

• Anyone can write a baseline
• Baselines should be templated into an acceptable look and feel. Checklist style works well.
• The baseline needs to be validated by an owner first, and then whenever used.
• Once process per baseline don’t nest activities.

2. Validate – don’t ‘Follow’

If a Baseline is a record of the best way it was done, the last time it was done then those who are using the baseline to resolve a task need to Validate it. Validating a documented baseline is the process of asking:

• Do we still need to do this?
• Do I agree that ALL of these steps are necessary?
• Has anything changed that makes this baseline invalid?
• Is it repeatable, clear and concise?
• Can I automate this via scripting etc?
• Can I engineer this out?
• And ‘Did I get the intended result as described in the document’?

‘Following the Procedure’ ignores such questions, and this makes achieving that higher ground take all the longer. Baselines should be reviewed frequently and importantly have an Owner.

3. Measure your Baselines

The volume of complete, current and validated baselines in use can tell a lot about the impact that the Service Desk and other operational groups have on IT Service Delivery and Support.

Good questions to ask:

• How many new Baselines are being created each month?
• How many are being decommissioned each month?
• How many validated documents do we have?
• Which Services are the baselines related to?
• Which Services are under baseline?

‘Volume, Range and Reach’ is a concept that can be used to explain the impact that IT operation has on the business and goes some way to explain the cost effectiveness of the operation:

• Volume is the number of end users supported and the tickets they generate
• Range is the number of Services provided as per the Service Catalogue
• Reach is the diversity and complexity of the activities undertaken to deliver each Service

The baselines represent the Reach. It adds a third dimension to any comparison with a potential competing IT Department or outsourced model where typically only Volume and Range are looked into.

If you can explain Volume, Range AND Reach then you have a more complete picture.
Owner) to determine if there are any changes required and also to advise support groups of their level of effective execution of the baselines. The result of this simple but powerful analysis is:

- A current, validated list of Baselines used to operationally support the service which ensures improved quality of Service.
- Trends identified that will impact resource utilisation and potentially Service Levels.
- Happy Service Owner, with growing confidence in the IT department.
- End to end relationship formation between Service Owner, Service Desk and Subject matter experts – all different parts of the value chain.
- Happy Service Desk staff member - they have their own area of ownership and accountability.

Functional Accountabilities involve the same principles but look at a Function rather than a service. eg. User Provisioning tasks can include:

- Account Creation
- Account Moves/Changes
- Software Deployment
- Access Management

In these cases the Function is the focus rather than the Service (although this will depend on the structure of the Service Catalogue) but the same questions and ownership can be applied.

The SDO Accountable must gain and maintain a thorough understanding of the operational goals, activities, inputs, outputs and inter-relationships of their areas of accountability. They become the primary point of contact for decisions related to changes or improvements to the operational processes associated with their Service Accountabilities (in the Service Desk scope) and they do so for the benefit of the team, and the team for them.

It is important that ownership is given to Service Desk staff (and not only to Leaders/Managers) so as to:

- Provide true ownership over quality.
- Allow speciality in an otherwise very general field.
- Develop an understanding and focus on the Business, rather than IT.
- Develop Business Analysis and relationship skills.
- Empower Service Desk and allow them to influence.

By doing so we can reduce the ‘jack of all trades’ generalist approach by including nominated specialists that seek to get a deeper understanding and influence over Services for the benefit of the team overall.

As the time to perform this activity is time away from Ops, a summary of the activity undertaken should be recorded by the accountable person to demonstrate the value of such time, as the impact of such efforts may be more long term and therefore take time to be evidenced and realised.

When supported by Management, Service or Functional Accountabilities can be the most powerful agent for success.

**Coordination (Plate 4)**

*You can’t Manage what you can’t control.*

*You can’t Control what you can’t Measure.*

*You can’t Measure what you can’t Define.*

The above is a popular mantra applicable across industries that represents a simple truth.

Decisions are made according to the information that is available, and that information is comprised of collected data. ‘Gut feel’ and intuition are valuable and worthy inputs to a decision process but when it comes down to it; the hard evidence is what speaks loudest.

For that reason, and obviously for reasons of meeting SLAs, however should not be the only reason for measurement. Over and above any formal performance arrangement, the Service Desk needs to be aware of their own KPIs, KGLs and Critical Success Factors so as to be proactive and responsive to changing business activity and unplanned events.

**Daily measurement**

It is important to record operational activity daily and reflect upon the previous 24 hour activity so that resources can be coordinated correctly in response.

That means:

- Volumes – did we see a spike yesterday? Are we seeing more than normal?
- Reliability - Did we escalate more or less than usual yesterday?
- Supportability - What was the Incident Count yesterday? Are we to expect it again today?
- Resources - How well did our resource allocation handle the volumes yesterday?

Daily measurement of these factors, which may not directly relate to SLA targets but do relate to Service Desk ability to provide continuing support, allows us to coordinate a measured response. It gives us the dashboard we need to change focus, reassign resources, raise alarms, prepare for what’s coming.

This is where Key Goal Indicators (KGI) assist.

- At what point will we be at risk of not achieving targets?
- At what point will we identify that Problem Management is not working in a particular area?

The targets for such metrics are debatable also. Volumes and percentages are easy to count and calculate but how do you add ‘Complexity’ into the mix. E.g. If five completed tasks are recorded by one staff member and another has recorded 50 completed tasks, the obvious conclusion may be incorrect.

Recording ‘Time Spent’ is one way of adding the complexity element into the mix. How much time is being spent on each ticket and what is the average. Outsourced Service Desks are generally well versed in accounting for their time but it’s not so common for internal Service Desks. The principle should be the same however.

As mentioned before, a Ticket is an itemised invoice. It’s also an opportunity to identify those tasks that take longer than others to complete. Time should be included in all history updates of all tickets.

SLAs, however should not be the only reason for measurement. Over and above any formal performance arrangement, the Service Desk needs to be aware of their own KPIs, KGLs and Critical Success Factors so as to be proactive and responsive to changing business activity and unplanned events.

**Assurance (Plate 5)**

Walk the talk. As mentioned in the introduction, without a strong Procedural model, the Process layer can end up in the bottom drawer. We end up saying ‘Yes we believe in ITIL and we have implemented ITIL processes’ and whilst the operation may be compliant, there is limited value being returned.

The Procedural Model can go the same way unless we keep the plates spinning. The last plate is Assurance which is making sure we are doing what we say we are doing.

- We have defined our Ticket Management proce-
Is it easier to remain fit or to get fit?

to stray from the intended destination and recovery is
the model and the expected outcomes.
as it requires an indepth and proximate knowledge of
for this activity to occur. It’s a function similar to formal
ments?
 better. Why not empower them to drive improve-
and therefore they get to hear about what’s working,
IT Department to the business. They actually speak
ment, improvement and consumption of IT Services?
in the end to end delivery, measurement, manage-
ity tasks? Are we seeing any positive outcomes? Is
Our internal knowledge and understanding of our
We have a procedural model – Is it healthy? Are all
Like the other elements, time needs to be set aside
for the activity to occur. It’s a function similar to formal
Quality Assurance in that we need to review the ac-
tivity and the degree of adherence we have to our own
directional, and then make any modifications that
can enable faster plate spinning at no extra cost.
Assurance tasks include:
• An audit of the other four elements to gauge
whether they are being utilised and where any
improvements need to be made.
• Identify areas where coaching, training or disci-
plinary action is required.
• Reviewing the Technology used to support these
principles and its effectiveness.
• Review the value gained from performing such
activities against the opportunity cost of other tasks.
• Reporting on and selling the improvements that
have been implemented (and gain that ‘street cred’).
This requires a Senior or Team Leader to perform
as it requires an indepth and proximate knowledge of
the model and the expected outcomes.
If assurance tasks are not performed, the ship starts
to stray from the intended destination and recovery is
a far more expensive task than regular maintenance.
Is it easier to remain fit or to get fit?

Summary

Does it not make sense to involve the Service Desk
in the end to end delivery, measurement, manage-
ment, improvement and consumption of IT Services?
They are IT professionals who represent the entire
IT Department to the business. They actually speak
with the consumers of the Services being delivered,
and therefore they get to hear about what’s working,
what’s failing, what’s annoying and what could be
better. Why not empower them to drive improve-
ments?
And don’t fall back to the old “they are too young
and inexperienced” chestnut – that is what staff develop-
ment is about.

Apart from becoming more effective, more knowl-
deledgeable and ultimately more capable as a Service
Desk there are additional benefits to be gained from
building a strong Procedural Model.

Staff Motivation

Service Desks often have a high turnover of staff,
due to a number of factors including the relentless
nature of incoming issues and ‘complaints; to a lack
of technical challenge; to the ‘street cred’ and gener-
al perception that Service Desk staff are just juniors
learning the ropes.

The IPM model expands the scope of Service Desk
and greatly increases the capability of individuals,
allowing them to gain experience and knowledge that
preparing them for far more than the standard transi-
tion from Service Desk to Field Support, to Wintel, to
networks, etc.
As end to end Service Management is the focus
in theory and practice these days, starting the ball rolling
at Service Desk is the key to a faster paradigm shift in
the traditionally technically focused IT professional.

Need Leaders?

Service Desk is also a very good breeding ground
for Leaders, not just Managers. To be a good leader,
among other important traits, a wide understanding
of cause and effect within the operation and how to
develop a corrective response is extremely valuable.
On a small scale this is what the IPM is promoting even
if it is subliminal. Using a model such as this, Service
Desk staff gain an earlier appreciation for all aspects
of Service Management, and at an early stage they can
smash the typical perceptions.

This model should be seen as a long term approach
to initiating and transitioning an upward step change
in operational maturity. It’s not about Technology, and
never was, but we are now able to see that Service-
desk and delivery and management thereof, takes
much more than just technical skill. It takes skills that
are innately possessed by all, and as long as the desire
to uncover them and grow them is there, they can be
utilised with positive effect.

There will be wins across the way but also need to
be prepared to work towards long term fitness. It costs
nothing in terms of infrastructure or technology, but
adds value where the potential always has been, but
due to the persistent narrow view of Service Desk
capability, it lies undiscovered.

Challenges:

Staff headcount continually bears downward
pressure from Service Desk. In 2009 Gartner stated
that the Service Desk accounts for around 4% of the
overall IT budget. Staff Salary accounts for 86% of
that so Service Desk costs are mostly people related
and a small piece of the overall budget.

Managers are usually satisfied when they can see
people answering phones or logging tickets but tend
to be unsure when there are people having discus-
sons or doing research in non-operational roles in a
Service Desk.

“Non-operational? Then we don’t need them...”.

Given the meagre salary of the SDO, it should be
relatively easy to convince Managers of the value of
these non-operational tasks, but that is invariably not
the case. Be prepared to fight the good fight. If you
are able to deploy them, you’ll find that the activities
described in this article are the first to go when it gets
busy at the Service Desk. Flexing in that regard is ok
but as soon as possible, get back to spinning those
plates that are starting to wobble.

Time is all it takes to make significant step change
in quality and maturity and all it takes is a Service
Desk average salary. Small price to pay for a Business
Analyst, Service Manager, Quality Assurance and
Continual Service improvement all rolled into one. If
we unleash the Service Desk we can gain exponential
benefits all the way down the value chain.

Don’ts:

• Don’t just write and implement an Incident
management process, strengthen its chance of suc-
cess by defining the procedures that underpin it and
make it work.

• Don’t rely on tribal or expert knowledge. Baseline
your reliable and repeatable tasks to remove the
variance and establish quality that can be improved,
automated and engineered out.

• Don’t leave operational drivers for the Subject
Matter Experts (technical) or even the Service
owners to determine. Service Desk is a significant
part of that delivery-of-value chain so it has as much
right to influence the way services are delivered and
managed as any.

• Don’t guess or rely on gut feel. Know the answer by
defining and measuring and investigating. And do it
daily.

• Don’t let the plates fall off. Keep them spinning and
the Service Desk will become a driver rather than a
trailer.

• Then Measure. Measure all you can and then let go
of the metrics that are constant and incontrol.

• Constantly restate, reiterate and re-coach all staff
about the model. Repeatition works.

• Publicise and present your findings and your wins.
Start getting the street cred back.

• Highlight waste and cost inefficiencies in an effort
to bring escalated tasks back to Service Desk; these
become hard to argue against if there is money to
be saved.

• Be prepared for lethargy, apathy and ‘can’t be-
bothered-ness’ as the easier road will be continually
tempting staff, particularly those who just want to
build or ‘fix things’. Have the discipline and convic-
tion to persist.

www.kineticit.com.au
Todd Bridgeman
Kinetic IT
Are You a HERO or a WIMP?

Paul Wilkinson

Are you a HERO or a WIMP when it comes to dealing with ABC?

Unfortunately there are too many WIMPs in IT! There I have said it. Let the hate (e)mails come, let the vultures tweet (or squawk), let the (two)faced book graffiti wall messages appear, the linked-in become linked-out as people shun my network and let the outside of his trousers and generally go around showing off by leaping tall buildings in a single bound and stopping runaway trains. I am not suggesting this type of hero behavior or unusual dress sense.

What am I suggesting? First I suppose it would help if I clarified these two titles, and then give some characteristics to help you decide which category YOU fall into. Of course everybody will score themselves as Hero. In that case somebody please explain to me why still the majority of ITSM improvement initiatives are struggling with lack of buy-in, resistance and lack of results.

**HERO:** Help Ensure Responsibility & Ownership for addressing ABC

**WIMP:** Why? Isn’t MY Problem! Remember: ABC is the number 1 success or fail factor in ITSM improvement initiatives. ABC is like an Iceberg, much of it is hidden yet it is capable of causing enormous damage to your improvement initiative, or more importantly to your business!

The latest OGC ‘Planning to implement service management’ book confirms it ‘...The most common reason for the breakdown of Service management initiatives is failure to recognize the importance of Organizational culture...’ The book goes on to give advice for dealing with it, and suggest the ABC of ICT publication as good guidance, but the WIMPS don’t care, they don’t read the ‘Planning to implement’ book because it doesn’t help them pass their ITIL certificate, so why SHOULD they to read it! Since my previous blogs I have now asked at conferences more than 3000 people (90% or so who admitted to ‘doing ITIL’) how many have read any ‘Planning to Implement Service Management’ book (V2 or V3) still less than 3% of hands go up! Is it any wonder improvement initiatives continue to flounder.

The results of our world-wide survey into the top ten types of resistance to ITSM improvement initiatives clearly shows the enormity of this hidden Iceberg. (with thanks to the iSMF for the USA LIG events and input).

The reason I say there are more WIMPS is the fact that ‘Not my responsibility’ still scores as the world-wide number three ABC worst practice card chosen in the ‘Customer focused’ surveys. It seems that nobody wants to take ownership or assume responsibility for stopping the runaway train of a failing ITSM improvement initiative.

**Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>HERO</strong></th>
<th><strong>WIMP</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take OWNERSHIP for doing something to make ABC visible in YOUR organization</td>
<td>Let ABC worst practices happen and play the victim waiting to be rescued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make change happen **</td>
<td>Watch change fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead by example, walk the talk</td>
<td>Follow the herd, talk the walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to confront others</td>
<td>Avoid rocking the boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give open, honest and direct feedback</td>
<td>Moan to anybody that will listen...apart from those who have the power to do something about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay it on the table</td>
<td>Sweep it under the carpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it known</td>
<td>...not me! they shoot the messenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the iceberg visible</td>
<td>Trust there are enough lifeboats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure when people go on a training course they come back and start displaying new behavior</td>
<td>Ensure when people go on a training course they come back with a certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring people together in dialogue to deal with resistance and to create buy-in</td>
<td>Send memos and emails and avoid inviting the ‘difficult’ people to sessions in which they will moan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a way of getting the message across</td>
<td>Find excuses for not trying a different approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the guidance and follow training to understand and deal with ABC</td>
<td>Read the guidance that is required just to get the ITIL Expert certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Will people change? They haven’t done in the last 10 years. ‘Not my responsibility’ seems to be a core competency in the world of ITSM! Somebody please prove me wrong. Submit a case and share your story with the rest of the ITSM community.

**Make Change Happen** This made me think of Commander James Lovell from Apollo 13 who once said to us when we met him to discuss our Apollo 13 simulation ‘There are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wondered what just happened!’ He suggested to us, if IT really is mission critical then it is time that people took personal ownership and accountability to ensure that the processes work.

And just in case you want and come and give me a piece of your mind for calling IT people Wimps, here is my picture.
New and Notable Books

Compiled by Robert Falkowitz


Corbella, Oscar A. Las trampas de la integración: una guía para que la integración de la tecnología y los Servicios TI en el negocio de sus clientes sea una realidad [The tricks of integration: a guide to making the integration of technology and IT services in your customers’ business a reality]. TSO and itSMF Publishing. ISBN 9788817080249, £35.00.


Falkowitz, Robert. IT Tools for the Business when the Business is IT: Selecting and Implementing Service Management Tools. TSO and itSMF Publishing. ISBN 9780117069022, £25.00; also pdf download.


Publishers may communicate information about new books of interest to the IT service management community to: newbooked@itsmf.org.


The second half of the book promotes entirely new histories, case studies and advice. An appendix gathers specific advice from companies that have applied the approach described in the book. Nevertheless, the underlying questions and principles of the book will never go out of date, as long as organizations are competing with each other in an open marketplace. Indeed, the main argument of the book makes so much sense that it appears to be self-evident – a Columbus and the egg type of situation.

The authors have written in extremely simple, easy to understand, non-technical (if somewhat colloquial) language. The type is large and the lines well-spaced – a boon to elderly readers such as the current reviewer.

In this review, we will provide an overview of the basic premises of The Ultimate Question 2.0, describe how to apply that approach to an IT service management context and discuss certain issues and open questions that the book raises.

The discussion starts with the premise that profits, and growth in those profits, are the most important “bottom-line” metrics for a business. However, it illustrates the point that companies may generate profits in the shorter term, only to become very unprofitable or even go out of business in the longer term.

Therefore, it distinguishes between what the authors call “good” profits and “bad” profits. Good profits are those that are derived from satisfied customers and provide a foundation for further growth. Bad profits are the result of abusing the customers, from shameless profiteering, from benefiting from monopoly conditions without creating a “win-win” situation for all stakeholders.

The traditional financial statements of a company have no way to distinguish between good and bad profits. Managers may point to a healthy balance sheet with an excellent bottom line as proof that they must be doing something right. However, if profitability is based on bad profits, the balance sheet or P&L statement will provide no indication that the situation will be short-lived, with inevitable destruction of value in the future.

Reichheld and Markey propose that a way of distinguishing between the good and the bad is to measure the loyalty of the customers. They base this conclusion on the analysis of ten years’ data, showing that the best correlation with long-term growth in profitability is the loyalty and satisfaction of the customers. The key question, however, is how does one measure this loyalty and satisfaction? Further analysis of their data led them to the conclusion that there are three categories of customers, which they call “promoters,” “passives” and “detractors.” They found a very high level of correlation between these customer categories and the answer to the question “would you recommend this company’s products or services to your friends and colleagues?” They established a metric with responses to the question ranging from 0 to 10.
In other words, if a promoter says he or she would recommend a company, it can be proven that he or she does recommend the company, that the company does get new customers as a result, that the promoter retains frequently to be able to add value and tend to pay more and higher value goods and services.

Case studies of various companies in different business sectors, or different sizes and in different geographical regions illustrate the success of the NPS approach. Those companies that have successfully applied NPS agree that they owe their market leadership to making NPS part of the regular, operational management system, on a par with reporting of financial results.

For external IT service providers, the NPS framework is directly applicable to their businesses. In fact, Apple and Rackspace (a managed hosting provider) are two of the star users of this system, whereas a case study demonstrating the concept of bad profits uses AOL (an American ISP) as an example.

The situation is somewhat different for internal IT service providers, be they shared or not. Many – if not most – of these service providers are not driven by external clients but are one to one relationships with their customers. A question of the sort "would you recommend this IT service provider to your colleague" does not make much sense, as the colleagues do not really have much choice in selecting the service provider.

This monopolistic situation does not mean, however, that the NPS framework is not applicable and that its approach could not be adapted to the needs of the internal service provider. In our view, the situation is perfectly comparable to the cases cited in the book concerning companies that fail to develop promoters among their customers, that profit from a monopoly situation to ignore customers and create bad profits. It has become common for organizations to entertain the question of whether all or part of its IT services ought to be sourced with an external service provider. An internal service provider with a low NPS – meaning a lot of detractors and few promoters – is perhaps more likely to fall prey to outsourcing than an organization with loyal, delighted users and customers.

What, therefore, would an internal service provider need to do in order to benefit from the NPS approach? First, the service provider must have a clear idea of what services it provides and to which customers. It should calculate the Net Promoter Score for each service, as well as for the entire organization. As Reichheld and Markey say, imagine a situation where a doctor only knows the average temperature of his or her patients, but cannot know the temperature for each patient individually. Just as financial statements are broken down by service, by geographical entity or by business line, a service provider should analyze customer satisfaction with at least the same level of detail and frequency.

Next, the service provider must define the question to identify which customers are promoters, which are passives and which one detractors. Reichheld and Markey do not discuss how to formulate the question when the service provider is internal to an organization, as they are principally concerned with the external customers of an organization. Perhaps a working group of internal IT service providers could be formed to study this question and determine the best way to phrase such a question.

Reichheld and Markey discuss various techniques to help remove bias in the customer surveys, such as using double-blind techniques. Such techniques are hardly possible for an internal service provider, as it is not possible to hide the identity of either the provider or the customer. Here, too, service providers should try various practices to identify the most effective ones. Use of a third party to conduct surveys is probably a useful technique.

The service provider must analyze the value of its promoters, as opposed to its detractors. Once again, the tools proposed would need to be adapted for this purpose. This adaptation depends on whether a service is considered to be vital to the customer, or if it is an area of possible cost reduction. We are not concerned with the value, but whether, to which extent the user could survive. As we mentioned above, users in an organization are not likely to choose whether to use a service that is part of or supports a core business process. They have no choice. Other types of services, however, such as personnel product or managing parts of an organization, management or various collaboration services, might be optional in nature and therefore more susceptible to being used upon recommendation by a promoter.

What would be the value of a promoter in the case of the service provider that does not operate as a profit center? The Ultimate Question 2.0 does provide a case study of a non-profit organization, showing that the question could be a key driver of change or organizational transformation. A more appropriate driver would be success in performing the defined mission of the organization.

There are many ways, then, to interpret the value of a promoter. For example, when a large number of users are using a service, it should be possible for the service provider to achieve certain economies of scale. Lower per user costs due to investing in developing and maintaining a service directly impact the cost of the business processes being supported, and thereby increase the overall profitability of the business. The costs of supporting users, especially in the areas of training, information provision and incident resolution are influenced by the satisfaction of the user. Reichheld and Markey have found, for example, that promoters are more likely to use self-service tools and are themselves more likely to support other users, whereas detractors have a perverse tendency to insist on using the much more expensive person-to-person type of support (it is perhaps their revenge for having received this poor service).

Even without applying the fundamental NPS approach to an organization, the book remains extremely useful. It is rich with information on how to measure customer satisfaction, the pitfalls of using such surveys and NPS in general and it provides much practical advice from many organizations. Furthermore, the NPS approach is not the sole analysis of how to measure and use customer satisfaction. We may point, for example, to the works of H. Hunt; J.-P. Galan and W. Sabatier; and R. Oliver among others. Indeed, the authors are consultants working for a company that sells services to implement the NPS approach. While they provide case studies of companies earning bad profits, we have no visibility of companies that have attempted to implement NPS but have failed. This is understandable, of course, as it is not in their interest to gain public recognition for their successes, but are loath to have their failures put under public scrutiny. As with virtually all business management publications (and ITSM publications, for that matter!), there is no access to independent verification. The authors are obliged to take on faith that the authors report their results fairly and objectively. Some reading between the lines may be necessary.

According to Reichheld and Markey, there is a strong correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. They extend this common sense to the idea of applying NPS principles to the measurement of employee satisfaction. The principal difference is that you ask the employee if he is happy or would recommend working at the company. This idea can be applied directly to any IT service provider organization.

Frederick (Fred) F. Reichheld is well known for his books on loyalty, including The Loyalty Effect (1996), Loyalty Rules! (2001), True Growth (2006) and the first version of The Ultimate Question (2006). Consultant Reichheld sits on the world’s top 25 consultants, and The Economist called him “the high priest of the loyalty cult.” His co-author of this book, Rob Markey, is a partner at Bain & Company, where Reichheld is a Bain Fellow.

Advertise in “At Your Service” and be seen by IT Service Management professionals in every corner of the globe.

“At Your Service” is delivered electronically through our chapter network to all itsMF members throughout the world.

To find out more about our advertising and publishing sponsorship opportunities, email us (advert@itsmfi.org) for a media kit.

The ISO/IEC 20000 Service Management Handbook

Review by Ivor Macfarlane

Most of us in the industry are aware of ISO/IEC 20000, and why it is valuable. We probably also know – more or less – what it covers and that is has been recently updated.

This year (2011 in case you are late reading this) has seen the culmination of considerable efforts by a large number of people to get the 20000 standard updated, and also create additional parts. What was originally published as a two part standard in 2005 is now five parts and will soon be even more.

If you work in service management then you need to know what the current version covers, how it can be used, what you might need to document and to address the requirements and how 20000 fits with other standards.

Impressively there is now a new book available that does that – and even a little more – in about 50 A5 pages.

This book ‘The ISO/IEC 20000 Service Management Handbook’ has been written by Jenny Dugmore – the driving force behind creating ISO/IEC 20000 a few years ago - and the chair of the ISO group responsible for its progress since then. So, simply put, she knows what she is writing about.

The book is simple and direct, tells you what you need to know and gives some key information both to help you understand what 20000 is and also how to use it and to demonstrate compliance with it.

Of course, the nature of the subject means this is no blockbuster read, it is tightly packed with facts and summaries of the standard’s content and positioning; so you probably do have to want to know what it tells you. But nonetheless, it does that job admirably.

So, if you or your suppliers or customers want to adopt, or require others to conform to, ISO/IEC 20000 then you certainly need to know the things this book explains, then I can recommend it.

The book is published by ConnectSphere and you can get it via their website www.connectsphere.com – or other outlets, the ISBN number is 9781908772008.

What’s On

29 November, 2011
itSMF Italy Annual Conference, Milan, Italy

29 November, 2011
itSMF France Annual Conference, Paris, France

30 November, 2011
itSMF Japan Annual Conference, Tokyo, Japan

6 December, 2011
itSMF Germany Annual Conference, Kassel, Germany

7 December, 2011
itSMF UK Seminar: Service Level Management: Achieving and Maintaining Service Excellence using Service Levels, Duxford, UK

4 March 2012
itSMF Norway Annual Conference, Clarion Hotel, Oslo, Norway

15 March 2012
itSMF Belgium Annual Conference, Antwerp, Belgium
New Releases from the IT Service Management Forum

Wisdom from ITSM Experts from your own community

We are very proud to announce the publication of the first five books in our series of publications aimed at sharing the wisdom of the ITSMF community of Service Management experts.

Our authors bring to you a wealth of knowledge and new ideas aimed at further developing the body of knowledge in Service Management, providing thought leadership for our community.

All ITSMF titles can be purchased through your local chapter and from bookstores specialising in ITSM texts. You will also find all titles listed on Amazon and many of our titles will soon be available in Kindle and iBook versions.

Our books are all reviewed extensively by ITSM experts from around the world, so you can be assured of the value of the texts we produce.

We have a number of titles in the pipeline, due for publication during 2012 and we are actively seeking new authors to share their wisdom with ITSM practitioners globally.

Get involved by contacting our chief editor, at kirstie.magowan@itsmf.org

Getting the right ITSM tool for your business can be a daunting prospect. Our new book - IT Tools for the Business when the Business is IT, by Robert Falkowitz from ITSMF Switzerland, gives practical guidance to ensure that you get the tool that you deserve.

There are a huge volume and variety of toolsets out there, and not all products are created equal. Getting the right fit for your business requires careful planning and consideration of the options that are available. You need to be able to ask the right questions of tool vendors, and understand how to interpret their responses.

Supported with a comprehensive pack of templates used in tool acquisition and implementation projects (optional), this book will ensure that you do get a toolset that suits your needs, budget and culture.

ISBN: 9780117069039

As a global publisher it was very important to ITSMF that we produce original books in languages other than English. Our book, Las trampas de la integración, by Oscar Corbell from ITSMF Spain has given us that opportunity.

Oscar’s book speaks of the perils that can be encountered when embarking on the voyage of implementing ITSM practices into a business.

We expect to translate this book into English and other languages in 2012. The publication of this book is a symbol of our commitment to our chapters to publish in any appropriate language where the market can be proved and the content is available.

We are very grateful to ITSMF Spain for their support in getting this book into print. Las trampas de la integración was launched, very successfully, at the ITSMF Spain Congress in October 2011. We hope it is the first of many non-English books for our collection.

ISBN: 9780117080249

Balanced Diversity - by Karen Ferris from ITSMF Australia - is a ground breaking text giving a completely new approach to embedding organisational change.

The information presented here is revolutionary and we are very excited to have the privilege of publishing this very important book.

Karen presented this framework for the first time at the ITSMF Australia Conference in Perth in August. The room was packed with standing room only and the presentation was the buzz of the conference.

Read Balanced Diversity and find out what everyone was so excited about, this book will change your mindset and help you get those changes to “stick” in your organisation.

If you are involved in Change Management, this is a “must read for you!

ISBN: 9780117080607

Creating and Driving Service Excellence - An Executive’s Guide to IT Service Management. Written for us by Sharon Taylor from ITSMF Canada, this is the book you have been waiting for!

This is the book you can slip under your C Level executive’s door to get them to understand just what ITSM is about and why it is a sensible investment to make.

Able to be read on a commute, this is the book that will get your executive team on the same page!

Find out why our reviewers said that “you ignore the advice in this book at your peril”.

Any successful ITSM project has to have support from the highest levels of the business. This book aims to tell those executives why they MUST support the establishment of ITSM in their business.

Real life examples of the benefits of ITSM will prove the value of ITSM initiatives in any business.

ISBN: 9780117080591

Greening Service Management - The Relationship between Environmental Sustainability and IT Service Management, by Ian Salvage from ITSMF UK with Karen Ferris of ITSMF Australia, gives a very clear introduction to the issues of sustainability and IT Services.

This publication gives clear messages, and very practical guidance, on how your organisation can contribute to the reduction of waste and energy usage by good stewardship of your services.

The benefits of this strategy are not only for the global environment, but also provide clear economic benefits for businesses who take these practices on board.

Read this book to see how you can contribute to reducing the huge impact that IT has on our fragile environment, play your part and benefit your own business at the same time.

ISBN: 9780117068797

Las trampas de la integración

A unicas fuente publicar obras de ITSM y las Buenas Prácticas para la Gestión de los Servicios TI. Un libro como este de esta forma, el libro proporciona las herramientas para que los CIOs comprendan los negocios de la TI y a la vez que los CEOs entiendan a su organización TI. Su lectura y aplicación es altamente extendido a la creación de este libro, generando un resultado de enorme valor. Brinda la posibilidad a CIOs de entender el negocio de la TI, y facilita al máximo la comprensión de los conceptos de ITSM.
Greening Service Management
The Relationship between Environmental Sustainability and IT Service Management
Author: Ian Salvage with Karen Ferris

Some industry commentators have stated that ITIL Version 3 missed an opportunity in not addressing one of today’s biggest challenges - sustainability. This publication addresses that challenge and shows how organisations can use service management to reduce the environmental impact of IT as well as reducing costs at the same time.

Key features include:
• The Role of Governance - how and where does governance play a part in achieving environmental change?
• Where to Start - practical advice on how to make a start on addressing the issues confronted by organisations
• Measuring Environmental Performance - advice on measuring your environmental performance.

ISBN: 9780117068797
Price: £35.00

IT Tools for the Business when the Business is IT
Selecting and Implementing Service Management Tools
Author: Robert Falkowitz

Very little has been written on the practices that should be adopted when selecting and implementing software tools and most of it is from the perspective of the processes that these tools support. This publication will change that.

Key features include:
• The purpose and value of tools – what we can expect from ITSM tools
• Discussion concerning the architecture of IT service management systems
• A section on selecting ITSM tools, and the implementation of them.

ISBN: 9780117069039
Price: £50.00

Buy your copy today!
Visit: www.internationalbestpractice.com
Or call +44 (0) 870 243 0123 quoting ref: EIC