

SPRING 2014

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The IT Service Management Forum

serviceTALK

HOW TO AVOID FAILED IT CHANGES

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effective
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management

DevOps and
the innovation
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What does 'good' service
management look like?



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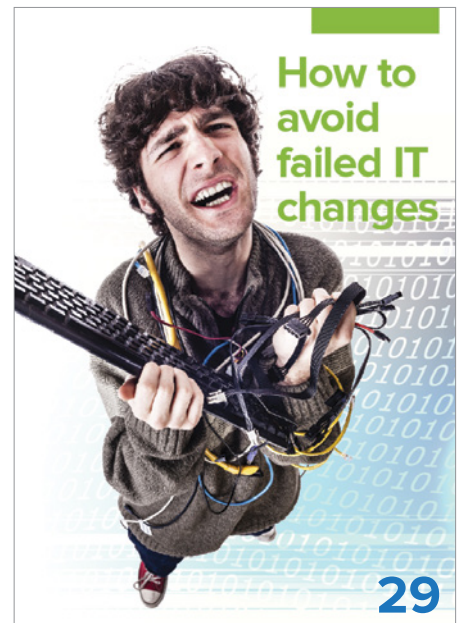


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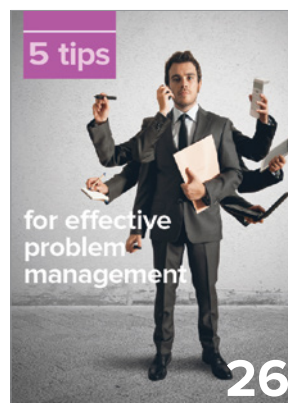
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What experiences do you have to share?

"As the world moves from a browse-and-display model to one of online search and recommendation," said Penguin CEO Tom Weldon in the Guardian recently, "publishers must adapt to capture readers' attention. The challenge isn't digital; it is how do you tell the people about the next great book."

Although Mr Weldon was talking specifically about book publishing, the same is true about anyone attempting to share content with a potential audience in today's online world. We can make information and comment available through the web, email, numerous social media channels, on video, on paper or in person; as long as the reader can easily find what she is looking for, she will consume it in her desired format. The more difficult task, though, is letting people know about content that they are not looking for, catching their attention long enough to realise that they might just benefit from the hints and tips, analysis, research or guidance that you are willing to share.

Just as companies like Apple have made a fortune selling products that the purchaser didn't know he needed until he saw it, or until he saw others using it, there's a great opportunity for our members to share the benefits of their experience and good practice with colleagues who don't even know that such insight is readily available. ITSMF UK is first and foremost a forum to allow service management professionals to share their successes and war stories with their peers; and, as Mike Owen explains in his CEO column, we're aiming to make that process as easy as possible by improving the way that members can communicate with each other and disseminate information.

But communication is only half the challenge. The other half is making sure that we are tapping into the right seams of knowledge, searching for lights under the right bushels. Every reader of ServiceTalk has a story to tell about their particular service management challenges and how they solved them, and if

you are happy to share your experiences we would very much like to hear from you. Just as, in this issue, ITSMF members have described their experiences in identifying the pitfalls of problem management, deploying DevOps, avoiding failed changes, developing ITSM benchmarks or managing IT skills with the help of SFIA, there are numerous other experiences to be shared in articles, papers, conference presentations, regional meetings, or through our various online channels.

If you would like some help in shaping an article or presentation outline, please get in touch. The real value of ITSMF UK is in the knowledge and expertise of its members.

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A lot to look forward to at ITSMF UK...

**Mike Owen
reflects
on his
first eight
weeks as
CEO.**



It's amazing to think it's just two months since I joined ITSMF UK! I'd like to thank everyone - especially the staff team and Management Board - for making me so welcome, and it has been great to meet and talk with so many volunteers and members already.

Since I started at the Forum we've been busy reviewing how we run things, pulling together more tightly and preparing for another financial year. As for many professional groups, budgets have been squeezed and operating conditions have been difficult over recent years; but, although the year ahead will still be challenging, there's a lot to look forward to. Here's a selection:

ITSM14 – our conference and exhibition

This year's conference is on 10th and 11th November and will be held at the Novotel London West in Hammersmith. The staff team and conference committee are busy finalising the programme. ITSM14 is the leading professional event for the IT service management sector and a great networking and learning opportunity for delegates as well as the perfect place for companies to exhibit and meet new clients. There's an attractive range of sponsorship opportunities available: call the office as soon as possible if you are interested. Full details of the two-day programme will be available soon.

Seminars and masterclasses

Over the next 12 months we will be running an extended range of events in our popular Masterclass series, each led by an acknowledged expert in their particular field and providing a great way to keep up-to-date with best practice. Alongside the Masterclasses, there will be five seminars - each event attracting about 50 people and providing a chance to share experiences and issues with a panel of experts and peers. ITSMF UK will also be running an industry tooling event in February in London, a great chance to meet with tool vendors, users and consultants all in one place.

Website

I'm pleased to advise that the Forum will have a new, much better-looking and more fit-for-purpose website from May. It will not only present content in a clearer and more attractive way, but will serve as the hub for news, features and comment about issues and developments in the ITSM sector overall (not just ITSMF news). It will also support

the Forum's various groups and members' online networking much better, hosting an expanded range of professional support resources for members. We will be writing to members with fuller details soon.

Publications

We will be refreshing the look of ServiceTalk and enhancing its coverage of wider professional, technical and management issues and news in the ITSM sector, as well as continuing to update members about the ITSMF UK's news, events and projects. On the ITSMF UK website we will be enhancing the members' library of whitepapers and case studies, and we're working with external partners to improve our online bookstore facilities, with access to the latest publications from across the world.

Member groups and engagement

We'll be doing more to boost member communications and involvement, with an enhanced e-newsletter and improved communication with members' lead contacts. There will be a regular blog from the Chair/CEO, stimulating debate and networking online, and we'll provide additional support for regional and SIG groups. We will also be carrying out a fuller survey of members' views and future needs. After all, it's your forum, so please do contact the office if you would like to get involved in any way. There's always an activity that could use more support!

Marketing and membership growth

ITSMF UK is investing in better marketing to both grow membership and help boost our external profile. Tactics will include a refreshed visual identity, a stronger process for developing membership leads and enquiries, wider use of social media to cover professional issues, enhanced PR, and working more closely with members and other professional groups and experts to promote and advance the ITSM profession. We will particularly seek to target and attract more corporate organisations into membership, fostering a two-way flow of insight and best practice for the greater benefit of the profession.

The Big4 Agenda

As part of a stronger future role for the Forum in advancing and sharing ITSM best practice,

we will continue our focus on the Big4 Agenda issues indicated by members at the end of 2013: Back to Basics (reliability), Skills (capability), Managing Complexity (flexibility) and Agile ITSM (speed). Activities will include collating views and experiences on each issue from across the country, features in our publications, coverage at regional groups, online discussions and Twitterchats (#ITSMBig4), developing new reference resources, and dedicated sessions at ITSM14.

Membership offer

During the year we will be working on a programme to develop and enhance the package of benefits and services available to members, including a simplified and better-value pricing structure which will be rolled out from May. Drawing on feedback from members, a variety of new and improved services will be explored. Priority areas for development include better professional support, improved information services and more online networking. We will provide more professional tools to support ITSM professionals, such as the impressive new self-assessment and benchmarking service, MONITOR, which is available only to Forum members. Above all, we want to increase our value to IT and ITSM leaders to help them manage their teams and IT operations/projects as effectively as possible and increase their value to their organisations.

ITSMF UK's strategic development

During 2014 the Management Board will develop a fresh 2 to 3 year strategic framework for the organisation, making sure it continues to adapt and enhance its value to members and, indeed, serve many more new members. As part of that initiative, the Board will be reviewing ITSMF UK's current organisational and committee structure, office location, and ways of working to make sure we are in the best shape to meet members' needs and secure a solid, sustainable future.

Thank you, as always, to all ITSMF UK members for your ongoing support. Do contact me at any time with any views or issues. I hope to see you soon.

Best wishes

Mike Owen
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New online foundation qualification in ITIL, ISO 20K, OBASHI and COBIT 5

IT Training Zone Ltd have launched a new online training programme, aimed at IT service management professionals. Including foundation courses in ITIL, ISO/IEC 20000, OBASHI and COBIT 5, this programme gives its students a complete overview of the best practices, governance and frameworks for service management. All of the foundation courses are fully accredited and globally recognised and will enhance the CV of anyone working in IT service management.

On completion of all four foundation courses, students will be awarded with the exclusive ITSM Foundations for Professionals Certificate to demonstrate that foundation level training has been completed across a broad spectrum of methodologies. Further information can be found at www.ittrainingzone.com/ffp



Unisys offers a competitive 'Edge' in ITSM

Unisys has renamed and added new capabilities to its cloud-based IT service management solution – now called Edge Service Management.

Edge will enable IT organisations to focus on making employees more productive by better connecting IT services to related business processes. Delivered via an as-a-service model, the Unisys solution uses prebuilt modules, advanced analytics tools and proven methodologies that enable clients to proactively manage both services and the underlying IT infrastructure, rather than simply reacting to service events.

The announcement comes as enterprise IT organisations continue to strive for a streamlined, centralised, cost-efficient way to

deliver personalised support services to their end users. The additions to the Edge solution include:

- A persona-based user interface for service request and catalogue management that enables users to view and initiate services based on their individual roles
- A discovery module that creates service maps and automates identification and updates to IT infrastructure components
- A comprehensive Service Asset and Configuration Management service for management of both data centre- and people-focused IT assets
- A new, dedicated IT Asset Management (ITAM) Advisory Practice with service professionals from the Unisys ITAM practice.

AXELOS announces Global Partner Programme

To support its growing network of accredited partners, AXELOS has announced plans to develop a Global Partner Programme to launch in May 2014. Exclusively designed to serve AXELOS accredited organisations, the programme will give access to a comprehensive range of sales and marketing services.

According to Omar Hadjel, Global Partner Manager, "This is a really exciting time for AXELOS and the Global Best Practice portfolio. We now have a strong commercial platform in the organisation for which we have invested considerable resources. Engaging with partners in this way is a novel

approach and we are introducing a new dimension to our collaboration which will help extend the international reach of the AXELOS products. We want to encourage more people in more countries to see the value of our products and adopt our Global Best Practice frameworks."

To increase the quality and frequency of the touch points with its partners, AXELOS has set up multiple communication channels including regional round table events which are an integral part of the programme and an additional conduit for discussions of a sales and marketing nature.



iomart gains ISO 20000 International Standard for IT Service Management

UK data centre company iomart Group has announced that it has achieved certification under ISO/IEC 20000, the international standard for IT service management.

This means that iomart's Support Services team of network, architecture, design, implementation, installation, operations and support engineers have earned ISO/IEC 20000-1:2011 IT Service Management System certification and formal recognition of the exemplary and reliable support service provided to customers. The ISO/IEC 20000 certification acknowledges that iomart is operating according to industry recognised best practices; is strongly aligned with ITIL; and provides efficient, reliable and consistent customer hosting and cloud services. Neil Johnston, Group Technical Operations Director for iomart, said: "The quality of our service management system is as critical to our business operations as the strength of our data centre infrastructure. Securing ISO 20000 demonstrates our commitment to best practice and to consistently delivering cost-effective, high quality IT solutions for our customers."

SunView Software announces Integration with Bomgar Remote Support

SunView Software, a leading provider of IT service management enterprise software, and Bomgar, a leader in enterprise remote support solutions, have announced an integration between the SunView ChangeGear Service Desk Platform and Bomgar's remote support solution. The integration enables help desk staff to efficiently and quickly resolve end-user problems through initiating secure, remote support and chat sessions from any of the ChangeGear ticketing modules or self-service portal.

The tight integration between Bomgar and ChangeGear provides IT staff and end users with several options to launch a remote support session, say the vendors. With a single click, the end user can initiate a chat

or full remote support session directly within the ChangeGear self-service portal, service catalogue or incident request. A technician-initiated remote support session can be launched directly from any ChangeGear request module or from within the ticket itself. Additionally, technicians can jump directly to a remote system (configuration item) directly from an incident, problem or change request.

The integration also automatically updates ChangeGear tickets with complete details from each Bomgar remote support session, and a full recorded video of the session is available once each session has been completed, providing an audit-ready record of the support transaction.

Center Partners selects FrontRange's HEAT Hybrid ITSM Platform

FrontRange, the Hybrid IT software company, has announced that the cloud-based version of its HEAT Service Management solution has been selected by Center Partners to replace their on-premise predecessor.

A key reason for replacing their legacy application was reportedly the lack of any reporting metrics or robust service management capabilities beyond simple incident ticketing. In contrast, FrontRange's HEAT Service Management provides Center Partners with a fully multi-tenant, easy-to-use SaaS application that serves as a consolidated and centralised service

management platform across their organisation.

"After seeing other ITSM solutions in action, we were impressed with HEAT's ease of use for the everyday user, both inside and outside our organisation," said Scott Prater, Vice President of IT at Center Partners. "We were also influenced by the availability of templates to streamline our business processes. Additionally, we like to manage our applications in-house, so it was instrumental to have the ability to configure HEAT to fit our needs how and when we need it."

SysAid introduces patch management tool in its ITSM platform

SysAid, a leading provider of IT service management (ITSM) solutions, has released version 14.0 of its cloud-based and on-premises ITSM platforms. The release features the new SysAid Patch Management solution, a free database migration for on-premises customers and new capabilities inspired by user input.

In development for over a year, the SysAid Patch Management Software solution makes it easy to keep Windows-based servers and workstations up-to-date with the latest security patches and upgrades. According to the vendor, the ITIL change management process allows IT admins to review, approve, deploy and audit software updates for all Microsoft products as well as popular applications like Adobe Flash, Mozilla Firefox, Java, Skype and many others.

Fully integrated with SysAid's cloud and on-premises platforms, the Patch Management tool can automate the update process for individual assets or groups of assets. IT admins can customise policies by software type, the severity of the patch and many other criteria. The Patch Management tool can even be set to auto-generate an incidence ticket if any error occurs during an update. Overall, the full inventory and audit controls ensure that patch processes are well documented, perform correctly and comply with regulations.



Devoteam becomes ServiceNow EMEA preferred partner

ServiceNow has awarded Devoteam with Preferred Solutions Partner status in recognition of solutions and services provided for four years and 100% annual growth from strategic projects across EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa).

This award positions Devoteam as the major EMEA partner for ServiceNow, the leading SaaS platform. Devoteam is the EMEA leader in ITSM consultancy and integration with 700 ITSM specialists on 100 projects per year, says the vendor.

With 100 trained and certified specialists in ServiceNow, Devoteam can help its 600 corporate clients embrace IT Service Excellence as part of their IT transformation journey.

“Our vision of service aligns with ServiceNow’s aim to provide an intuitive, flexible and innovative solution platform that helps companies achieve their business objectives,” says Roddy MacLennan, Devoteam UK Country Manager. “Combining this with our transformational IT consulting services is bringing enormous improvements in productivity and cost savings.”

The relationship is set to take advantage of the whole corporate service evolution which sees every department in an organisation as a service provider – Facilities, Finance, HR, IT, Legal, Operations, Procurement, Sales.

ManageEngine slashes IT service desk expenses for 60,000+ companies

ManageEngine, the real-time IT management company, has announced that the standard edition of its flagship IT help desk software, ServiceDesk Plus, is now available for free — with no restrictions, regardless of whether software runs in the cloud or on premise. Previously, the ServiceDesk Plus Standard Edition was free for up to five technicians/agents. The move slashes IT help desk expenses for the 60,000+ companies that have already adopted ServiceDesk Plus Standard Edition and invites other companies to do the same by adopting the ManageEngine solution.

With more than 750 help desk solutions available in the market, organisations find it difficult to choose help desk software that meets both their feature and financial needs. If they do find a solution that meets their feature and budget requirements, it often comes with restrictions or limitations based on the number of supported technicians, agents, tickets or users.

In response, ManageEngine becomes the first vendor to offer a fully-functional, IT help desk free of charge, with no restrictions on the number of agents, tickets or end users or on the amount of cloud storage supported. ServiceDesk Plus Standard Edition comes with fully-fledged ITIL incident and knowledge management functionalities, including extensive reporting and dashboard capabilities that cover the full lifecycle of IT help desk tickets.



Cherwell announces new SaaS Offerings

Cherwell Software, a driving force in IT service management software and the youngest company on the Gartner Magic Quadrant for IT Service Support Tools, has announced that its software-as-a-service (SaaS) revenue growth reached more than 200% year over year in 2013. In addition, Cherwell Software has announced the availability of new SaaS hosting technology offerings in the U.S., delivering significant performance improvements that include hourly data backup, as well as monitoring by four different systems every 60 seconds, and 24x7 staffing. With several data centres on three continents and planned expansions in 2014, Cherwell Software continues to advance its SaaS strategy worldwide.

“We believe that Cherwell Software’s SaaS business is currently experiencing hyper-growth, and with our new advanced SaaS technologies, scheduled downtime for

planned upgrades is now practically non-existent,” said Vance Brown, CEO of Cherwell Software. “Cherwell delivers the best cloud solution with the fastest recovery time in the business technology industry—no other service management company offers this level of SaaS performance.”

Cherwell Software has invested significantly in SaaS hosting technologies to deliver high-availability data centres to its customers, this month in the U.S. and coming soon in EMEA. Near real-time failover is now available with a recovery point objective (RPO) of one hour. Failover between data centres is reducing the current recovery time objective (RTO) to less than two hours. In Cherwell Software’s European data centres, disaster recovery is available for customers with a site in Manchester, where RTO will be reduced to four hours and a RPO of one hour.



ITSM14 are you an 'early bird'?

Planning is well underway for the 2014 ITSMF UK Conference and Exhibition. ITSM14 offers the perfect one-stop-shop for service management professionals. As well as four tracks of educational presentations, interactive sessions and case studies, the event includes numerous networking opportunities, an unparalleled service management exhibition featuring over 40 exhibitors, and of course our celebrated ITSM awards dinner. This year we are back at the Novotel London West with an exciting new layout. Our conference team are busy selecting the best sessions from our popular call for speakers, and the full programme will be published in the next issue of ServiceTalk.

Book your place!

ITSM14

**20%
discount**

To take advantage of our 'early bird' 20% discount visit www.itsmf.co.uk

before
the end
of June!

Annual Awards

Nominations are now open for this year's IT Service Management Awards. This is a great opportunity to highlight the achievements of those around you – service management individuals and teams whose skills, commitment and imagination have marked them out for special recognition.

This year's award categories include:

- Service Management Project of the Year
- Service Innovation of the Year
- Service Management Team of the Year
- Submission of the Year
- Trainer of the Year
- Student of the Year (ITIL and ISO/IEC 20000)
- Ashley Hanna Award for Contributor of the Year
- Paul Rappaport Award for Outstanding Contribution to Service Management.

Visit the website for information about eligibility and deadlines, and to download a nomination form.

Congratulations...

...to Ben Clacy and Mark Lillycrop, who successfully completed the Reading Half-Marathon on 2nd March, and to the Global Knowledge Relay Team (pictured) who completed the corresponding Relay Race in record time. All the participants were raising funds for Ashley's Big Challenge and Macmillan Cancer Support. The fund has raised just short of £7000 since it was set up last year; if you would like to contribute, please visit: www.justgiving.com/ashleysbigchallenge



It's a dog's life at the ITSMF UK office!

A new member of staff has been spotted at the ITSMF UK office – one with four legs and a tail. Hesta, a two-year-old black labrador, is in the final stages of training at Guide Dogs (formerly Guide Dogs for the Blind) who have recently set up a regional office next door. When not in harness, the lucky lab is looked after by our Events and Facilities Manager Teresa Corre. "Hesta is a lovely dog," said Teresa, "and it will be sad to have to say good-bye when she completes her training in a few weeks' time. But knowing how much benefit she will bring to her new owner makes it all worthwhile."

Member Referral Rewards Scheme

Don't forget that you could be attending ITSMF UK Masterclasses for free! ITSMF UK members who refer new organisations to ITSMF UK or increase their own organisational membership will be rewarded with Masterclass places.

Existing ITSMF UK members can get rewards in one of two ways:

1. Refer another organisation

- the more members you bring, the greater the rewards. This also applies if you have just joined another organisation that does not yet have ITSMF UK membership. The scheme applies to brand new members, but also to organisations whose membership lapsed more than 6 months ago - just contact us for details.

2. Upgrade your existing organisation

- if your organisation moves from a single individual to a higher level (Enterprise 10 or above), you get rewards!



For more information, contact membership@itsmf.co.uk or phone 0118 918 6500

Forthcoming Events in 2014

Check out the ITSMF UK website for the latest information on forthcoming events.

SEMINARS

Major Incident Management

July, Lords Cricket Ground, London

Service Management in the Cloud

3rd October, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Birmingham

ITSM MASTERCLASSES

Small, interactive practitioner-led events to develop your knowledge and skills.

- 15th April
Knowledge, Problem and C.S.I.
- 13th May
Change Management
- 28th May
Building a Successful Service Catalogue
- 3rd June
Practical IT Skills Management with SFIA
- 17th June
Software Asset Management
- 8th July
Problem Management
- 15th July
SIAM (Service Integration and Management)
- 2nd Sept
Supplier Management
- 24th Sept
Building a Successful Service Catalogue

REGIONALS AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

South West and Wales

23rd April, The Met Office, Exeter

London & South East

5th June, Telefonica, Slough

Scotland

24th June, University of Glasgow

Service Transition SIG

10th July, Glaxo Smith Kline, Brentford

North

17th July, Barclays, Cheshire

New Members

A warm welcome to the following members, who joined us during the first quarter of 2014:

Member company	Main contact
AC Tech	Andrew Coyle
AirTanker Services	Damian Lyons
Allstate NI	John Jenkins
Andrew Shepherd	Andrew Shepherd
Associated British Foods	Adrian Sheward
C Spencer	Paul Furnival
Carpenters Law	Karen Campbell
Coalesce IT	Ronnie Coles
Evolution IT	Alvaro Santamaria
Fen View	Matthew Fursedonne
HSBC	Catherine Webster
Hunter-Cowton	Nigel Hunter-Cowton
Interserve	Tanya Cutts
ISG	Simon Durbin
iSite	Richard Speirs
Iunctus Consulting	Suresh Thangavel
Kingspan Group	Alice Baker
Lockheed Martin IS & GS	Philippa Horton
Lockheed Martin Strategic Systems	Diana McNamee
Joseph McDougall	Joseph McDougall
New Habits	Liz Moor
Phoenix	Matthew Elsey
Razorfish	Norman Driskell
Sumerian	Joanna Bargon
The Automobile Association	Fenella Collins
University of Leicester	Jonathan Morley



Phil Ives

1951 - 2014

ITSMF UK
Chairman,
2005-07

I was fortunate enough to work with Phil Ives at Yellow Pages (subsequently Yell) from 1998 to 2009. Not only was it one of the most enjoyable periods of my working life, but it was also one where I learnt much from his leadership. Phil was an inspirational leader and had a unique ability to focus on the key issues of any situation. He led from the front and practised what he preached. He took and passed the ITIL V2 Manager's Certificate in service management in the 1990s, and encouraged everyone within the IT department to get involved and gain experience and qualification in all areas of service management.

One of the most important prerequisites for successful improvement of service management practices within an organisation is the commitment of senior management. Nobody was more committed and supportive than Phil. Many people were motivated by Phil and 'cut their service management teeth' under him at Yellow Pages. Many subsequently moved on to champion service management activities within other organisations.

Jim Marmion worked with Phil and me at Yell. Jim was Head of IT Customer Support and remembers:

"Phil was a big guy, both in stature and personality. It was very difficult to ignore his presence. I worked with him in his management team for 9 years, and during that time learnt a great deal from him, mainly how to do things the right way and how to do the right things. He built an awesome service management capability at Yell, something which all those of us who have moved on aspire to in our new organisations. In my many years in IT, I have yet to experience its parallel.

My abiding work related memory of Phil will be how he was eager always to get to the point. On one occasion I recall a member of his team was part way through a detailed PowerPoint presentation, which had obviously taken some time to produce. I knew things weren't going well when Phil started tapping his foot loudly, followed shortly by the question "When in your 46 slide deck are you going to get to the point?" Needless to say the meeting moved swiftly on to the next agenda item!

A great boss who didn't suffer fools gladly, a great mentor, always willing to share his experience and knowledge, and a great bloke to share a beer with. RIP Phil, your memory will live on with all those you inspired."

Phil took over the chair of ITSMF UK from 2005 to 2007. During this period he interviewed a young Ben Clacy for a role as Business Development Manager in June 2006. Ben subsequently became the CEO of ITSMF UK from 2010 to 2013 and recalls:

"I clearly remember meeting Phil for the first time at my interview. Whilst it was a daunting process, he put me greatly at ease and helped me to secure my initial role at ITSMF UK. He was a fantastic mix of what people would choose in a leader; tough when he needed to be and clearly unafraid to make big decisions, but also very warm

and personable, happy to sit and chat in the office or over a beer at Conference. The combination of these qualities allowed him to get the best out of people. His presence on the ITSMF UK Board took us to a new level, his calm efficiency helping to move the organisation forward considerably at a difficult time.

Phil was one of the nicest, yet most accomplished, people I met during my time at ITSMF UK. His influence and memory will endure with the many people he inspired."

I have worked for, and assisted many IT organisations, but I have yet to find a more mature IT service provider organisation with a better culture and ethos than Yellow Pages. It was a great place to work and much of that was down to Phil's management style and leadership. I speak not only for myself, Jim and Ben, but also for all those at Yellow Pages / Yell and ITSMF UK, who learnt a lot from Phil and owe him a big debt of gratitude.

He will be sorely missed by all his friends and colleagues. He was a genuine nice guy and an inspiration to us all.

Thanks Phil!

Colin Rudd



ICTTech

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View from the Chair



A recent survey from IDG ("Consumerisation of IT in the Enterprise" <http://goo.gl/Q2MhZJ>) is just one of many indicators of the sheer scale and speed of change that is driving the need for rapid evolution of IT Service Management. As an example, that survey suggests that most organisations are making changes to IT policy and infrastructure as a result of the proliferation of personal devices, and that embracing Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) solutions and other aspects of the consumerisation of IT can deliver significant returns in terms of user satisfaction, user productivity, collaboration, agility and access to critical business information.

Some years ago we as the ITSM community were pushing hard for IT to get closer to 'the business' – we now need to focus IT services and IT Service Management not just at a business level but at an individual consumer level.

All indications are that ITSMF UK members were right to call out Back to Basics, Skills, Managing Complexity and ITSM & Agile as the Big4 Agenda for 2014. Consumerisation of IT could be regarded as an exercise in simplification of IT services from a consumer perspective, but can equally be regarded as a further level of complexity for ITSM to accommodate. In a similar way, the inclusion of Cloud-based services could equally be seen as both simplifying and adding incremental levels of complexity into IT service delivery models.

In addition to the Big4 'Complexity' topic, consumerisation is also introducing some interesting new dimensions to 'Back to Basics'. Downrightnow.com offers a really interesting example of how IT incidents are being detected not from monitoring of IT platforms, or from relying on end users calling an IT Service Desk, but from direct monitoring of multiple external sources including consumer Twitter traffic about current consumer perception of the quality of experience from favourite web services. The use of public and enterprise social

media mechanisms to gain real-time views of customer experience of IT services adds a potentially powerful new facet to Service Desk, Alert and Incident Management.

The results of McKinsey's recent annual survey on business and technology strategy ("IT under pressure", <http://goo.gl/qLZtjl>) strongly support the inclusion of Skills as a Big4 topic. That survey indicates executive-level recognition of the strategic value of IT but also registers concern about the substantial challenge of finding, developing, and retaining IT talent. Our recent Big4 Twitterchat on Skills (<http://goo.gl/55jLr>) attracted some great discussion on this subject, including advice on how SFIA can be used to develop staff by identify skills gaps and moving away from what is often a scattergun approach to people development.

Interestingly, the skills challenge isn't just being driven by advances in growth areas such as consumerisation of enterprise IT, customer experience and Cloud. A Compuware survey of CIOs (<http://goo.gl/k9DCtn>) shows increasing concern in many organisations over a lack of planning to address skills shortages in the mainframe area due to the ongoing retirement of mainframe staff. Skills is absolutely a key Big4 Agenda item for us – expect to see more ITSMF UK activity in this area throughout 2014 and at our ITSM 14 Conference in November. Make sure you have 10th & 11th November in your calendar – that's when Conference returns to London and it is the place for all involved in the field of IT service management to come together, share opinions and experience and do business.

ITSM & Agile is the fourth Big4 topic. The article "Big enterprises need big DevOps" (<http://goo.gl/SYTtVq>) from Andi Mann at CA reflects what I am seeing in many large and highly regulated organisations. There certainly seems to be a consistent recognition of the need to achieve higher levels of collaboration, integration and communication between development and operations, and I am seeing many initiatives in large organisations to achieve this. Some of these initiatives go under some sort of Agile or DevOps banner, others are labelled as Application Management, Service Transition or CSI schemes. The inclusion of ITSM & Agile as a Big4 Agenda item enables us to identify and share practical experience from our members of how real benefits are being achieved in this area.

The field of IT service management continues to become more diverse and multi-faceted, and ITSM is evolving at a rapid pace. As the industry Forum of IT service management, ITSMF is also evolving to ensure our members can be kept at the forefront of ITSM innovation. As you will see from Mike Owen's column, ITSMF UK is progressing on multiple fronts to maximise the value that we as members obtain from our active involvement in the forum. As is always the case, I encourage you to reach out to us if you have views on how we should be evolving, and of course we welcome any offers of assistance or contributions in the form of experience, opinion or your time in support of any of the Forum's initiatives. Feel free to contact me, Mike or any member of the management board and staff; we look forward to speaking with you and, of course, to meet with you at one of our events or at Conference in November.

John Windebank
Chairman, ITSMF UK
john.windebank@itsmf.co.uk



Spotlight on Claire Agutter

ServiceTalk catches up with Claire Agutter – marathon runner, online training pioneer, and recently appointed service development lead on the ITSMF UK Management Board.

Claire, how did you come to join itSMF UK and what qualities and experience do you bring to your role on the Management Board?

I've been involved with ITSMF UK for most of my career. I started out on a service desk and was lucky enough to be working in an organisation that was an ITSMF UK member. As my career has progressed ITSMF UK has given me opportunities to develop myself, including presenting at seminars, attending regional events and joining the publications committee.

I've worked in lots of different areas of service management and now run my own online training company. I hope my service management experience and my commercial experience will mean I add value as a board member.

Times are tough for membership organisations generally. How would you say we can best demonstrate value to potential members?

As an ITSMF UK member, you'll get out as much as you put in. My membership was valuable to me when I didn't have any service management experience because it gave me access to white papers, forums and more experienced members who were very generous when it came to sharing their knowledge with me.

Speaking at events gave me the skills I needed to speak in corporate environments while working as a consultant, and getting involved with publications means I have learnt all about the content production and publishing process – useful for when I wrote an ITIL Foundation handbook.

Social media (like the very popular monthly Twitter chats ITSMF UK hosts) means we can reach more members than ever, as our events don't have to be physical meetings. We're also using our Big 4 Agenda to focus on areas that are relevant to our members.

We're always keen to hear from our members and find out what's important, so if you want to volunteer or suggest something just get in touch.

You have been heavily involved in building up our new programme of ITSM Masterclasses. Why do you think these events are important and how do they differ from other seminars and courses that are available?

The masterclasses have proved to be an extremely popular addition to our events calendar.

Seminars tend to focus on a generic area of service management, with experts presenting on case studies and best practice to a large audience.

Masterclasses are facilitated by an industry expert, examining a specific area of service management (like the service catalogue) in depth. The small group of attendees get chance to prepare information about their own situation beforehand, so the day is really focused on them and the problems that they're experiencing in their own organisation.

Some of the feedback we've had about masterclasses is that they sum up what is best about ITSMF UK – members sharing knowledge and experience with other members.

As well as your work with ITSMF UK, you are a leading member of the training community. Tell us a bit about your work in this area, and the opportunities and challenges presented by the change of leadership in Global Best Practice generally and ITIL in particular.

In 2007 I set up IT Training Zone Ltd, the first company in the UK to offer online ITIL training from Foundation through to Expert.

We've had global success as an organisation, with more and more companies choosing online training for their staff development.

When the Cabinet Office owned ITIL and the other best management practice products, they were very limited in the sales and marketing they were allowed to do as a government department. We're excited to see what AXELOS can do to grow the uptake of ITIL and to support the community.

There are many supporting frameworks and 'new approaches' in the ITIL environment today; what are your views on DevOps, OBASHI, etc. and how do you see them complementing the traditional role of ITIL?

ITIL has been around for 25 years now. That's long enough for some organisations to try it, decide they don't like it, and start looking for something else. In the past few years we've seen other frameworks and methodologies like COBIT, OBASHI etc. become more popular.

Many organisations now want a toolkit approach, taking the best from all the frameworks and methodologies, rather than just being an 'ITIL shop'.

As a company we've grown our portfolio of training to allow people to choose from the best of IT service management including ITIL, COBIT, OBASHI and ISO/IEC 20000. At the moment, ITIL is still the most popular, but many delegates choose to get more than one certification.

What do you do when you're not working?

When I'm not working, I'm usually either at the gym or running. Last year I ran my first marathon which was a really proud achievement for me.

If you were granted one wish for improving service management, what would it be?

If I could have one wish I would vanish some of the politics that comes with service management. If we could do away with the framework wars and focus on customer value, the ITSM world would be a better place.



Warning: MONITOR can be addictive!

ITSMF UK's new self-assessment and benchmarking tool MONITOR is providing a fascinating insight into the health of our members' ITSM functions. Martin McKenna reports on the initial feedback.



In January we started our first ITSM assessments using MONITOR and it all proved to be very exciting. Question sets, created by esteemed subject matter experts from the ITSMF UK membership, were automatically distributed to business and IT managers, IT staff and customers at a variety of organisations and then we waited for the results to come in. I found myself glued to clients' dashboards watching the ITSM profiles start to build within a matter of hours. Much like watching bids come in on e-Bay, it was hard to take your eyes off the screen, maybe not Candy Crush Saga addictive, but addictive nevertheless.

"We've been very impressed with the assessment. I can't believe how quickly we were able to gather information."

Head of Service Delivery

Now we are in mid-March and the benchmark is made up of more than 20,000 answers.

Looking at an individual organisation, the high-level profiles were pretty much in place within 48 hours. Drilling down on the detail behind the high level scores revealed some interesting results and we could watch profiles change as each individual submitted their answers.

This brings me on to the next addictive element of MONITOR, the 'biofilter' with its RAG scoring system. This is where MONITOR scans incoming data for answers that are overly positive, overly negative or suspiciously consistent. To see green flags, red flags and yellow warning triangles start to appear against individuals' names was very revealing. The first instance to catch my eye was someone with no fewer than seven green flags against their name. I guess it wasn't a great surprise to find out this was the Head of ICT. Now one could argue that it is the job of the Head of ICT to be positive, but in this case it looked as if they were going to work in a different place from everybody else!

MONITOR also allows you to see the spread of answers to any one question. In a perfect world everybody would give the same answer

to each question as, after all, the questions are asking you to state what you currently do. In the real world we find that this is definitely not the case. As an example we asked the following question of four different people.

How do you manage mobile devices?

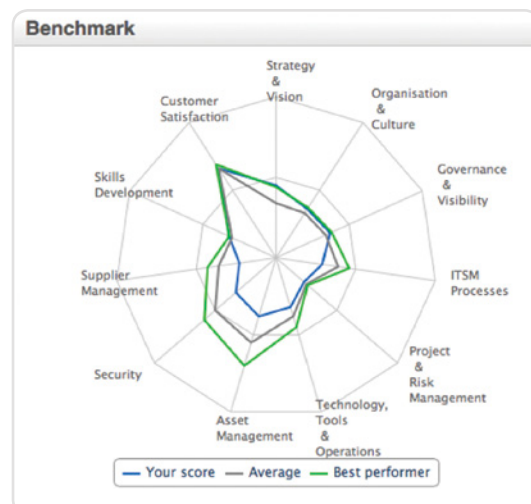
Policies but limited physical control

Mobile device details recorded and controlled in a CMDB

Mobile device details recorded and controlled in a CMDB using a CMS linked to a security tool

Mobile device details recorded and controlled in a CMDB

Policy driven and governed security tool with active mobile device management and geo-fencing



Topic	Score	Flags
Security	90	
Asset Management	91	
ITSM Processes	90	
Organisation & Culture	50	
Skills Development	58	
Supplier Management	69	
Technology, Tools & Operations	73	
Customer Feedback	0	
Customer Satisfaction	77	
Governance & Visibility	45	
Project & Risk Management	37	
Strategy & Vision	34	

Warning: MONITOR can be addictive!

Initially we received an answer from the 'Head of Security' indicating that they were utilising geo-fencing. I would have to say I was very impressed. This is the ability to use a GPS-based security tool on mobile devices to automatically restrict use or enable additional security layers when the device is out of the office. However, by the end of the assessment we had answers in every category. This of course prompted questions and it turns out that geo-fencing was most definitely not in use!

“Monitor automatically highlighted the questions with the widest spread of answers and brought these to our attention. We immediately knew where we needed to focus further investigation.”

Service Delivery Consultant

Sticking with security, another highlight was a question around BYOD:

Would you use your own laptop, smart phone or tablet at work if permitted?

No

Possibly

Definitely

I already do this

Not applicable

This was the response from the Head of IT who deemed the question 'not applicable': "BYOD has been considered but we cannot resolve security implications to satisfy legal obligations."

However, when we asked the customers, guess who was selecting option 4, 'I already do this'... just about every senior executive surveyed!

As well as pick out nuggets from single questions we were also able to spot emerging patterns. The diagram below shows the drill down for Tools, Technology and Operations for one client.



The majority of the columns to the left refer to service desk functionality, self service, knowledge bases, service requests, performance monitoring etc. In this case the client scored low on just about all these topics. As it turns out they had a work stream in place to enhance their service desk functionality, so MONITOR was able to provide the body of evidence to justify this proposed spend. You may also note that there is a peak aligned with software metering; this it turns out was because they had just started a project in this area, showing that investment had resulted in performance improvements.

“The assessment has confirmed a lot of things we thought we knew about and brought up a whole heap of information on things we didn't know about.”

Service Design and Transition Manager

The commentary with answers can also be a valuable source of information:

IT strategy	71	Comment
Is there a defined and well documented IT strategy?		"Current one in the process of being reviewed and updated"
		"I believe there is but I haven't seen it"
		"I'm unaware of an IT Strategy"
		"IM&T Strategy approved/published with governance via various programme board and exec level forums"

Software metering	59	Comment
Are you able to monitor software consumption / utilisation?		"I don't know"
		"This is part of the on going SAM improvement plan"
		"Unknown"
		"I believe Snow monitors usage as well as installations"
		"I have no idea"
		"We have the technology however is still being rolled out to enable full management"

“The commentary was incredibly valuable. We clearly need to engage more people and improve communications”

Head of IT

Reports within MONITOR not only highlight which questions are attracting the most commentary and therefore need to be explored, but also highlight which individuals have the most to say and perhaps should be engaged in Service Improvement Planning. Here are a few examples of 'real' commentary:

- “Historically internal staff resources are never costed. Huge hidden costs and certainly not best practice. For the purposes of cost benefit analysis this is an area that needs to be addressed.”
- “Due to all the changes going on DR testing has fallen by the wayside.”
- “Problem Management was removed last year as a cost cutting measure.”
- “There are a couple of knowledge bases that appear structured from the outside, but, they are essentially a badly managed dumping ground.”
- “I know that there are SLAs in place, but, no one actually manages these or pays any attention to them.”
- “As long as the number of incidents raised and closed is good that is all that counts.”

This is just the tip of the iceberg. MONITOR is turning up information every day and the benchmark is continually growing. Just recently we had 34 people registered on our first MONITOR webex, where we shared some of the information in this article. Why not join us next month (see the ITSMF UK website for further details).

“We were quickly able to get a range of opinions and perspectives across our IT staff and senior business stakeholders in a structured and consistent manner. The analysis this gave us allowed the IT management team to immediately focus on areas for improvement.”

Head of Service Management
Global Entertainment Company



Martin McKenna is project leader for MONITOR and an independent consultant specialising in business improvement, assessment and benchmarking services.

14

SITS

THE SERVICE DESK
& IT SUPPORT SHOW

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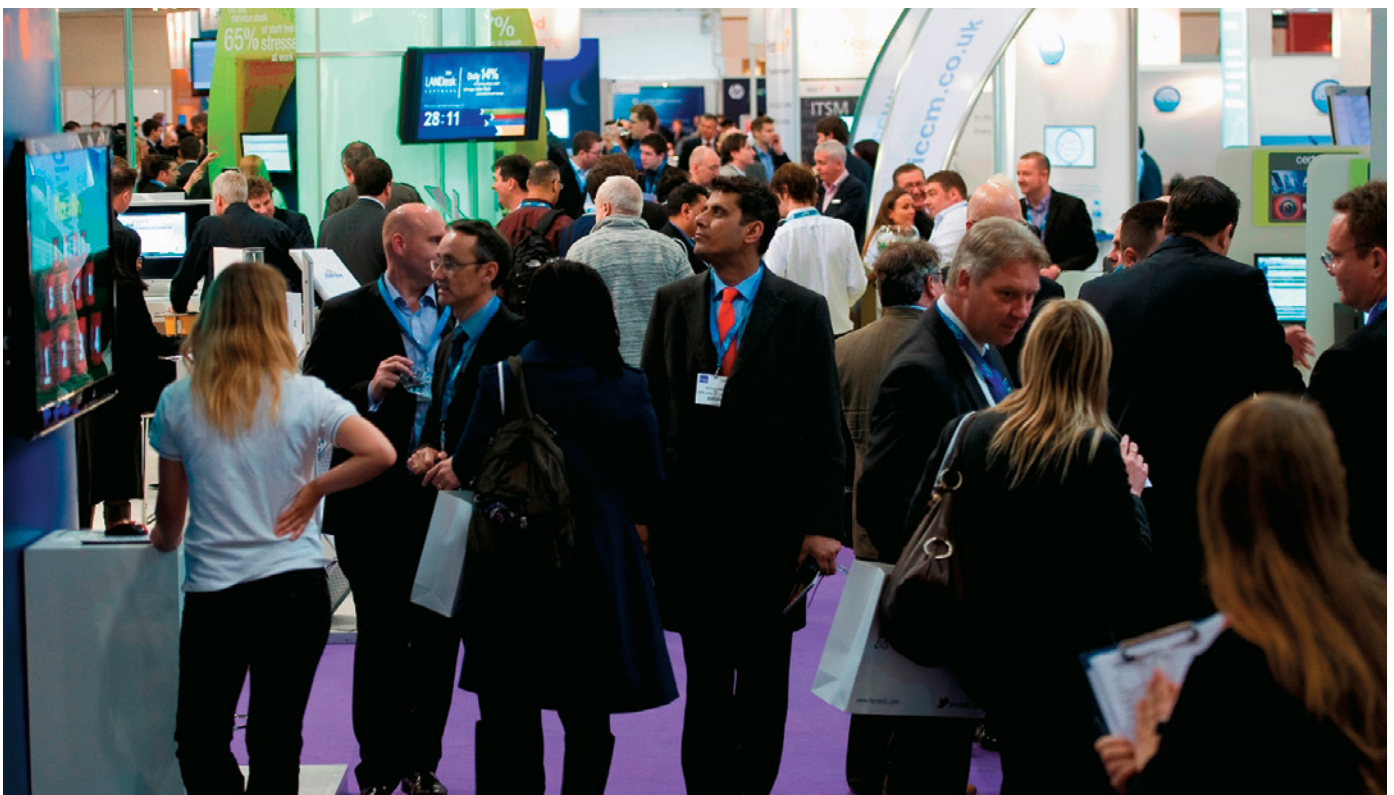
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Long Live the Service Desk!

SITS14 – The Service Desk & IT Support Show – returns to London's Earls Court on 29-30 April. Here we preview some of the highlights.



29-30 APRIL 2014
EARLS COURT, LONDON



Twenty years ago, few UK workers could have foreseen some of the technological advancements that now seem commonplace. Today, computers and portable devices play an essential role in day-to-day business operations for millions (22 million people – around 77% of the UK's total workforce – use IT in their jobs).

In a world where even the most minor of IT faults can lead to serious disruptions and revenue losses, quality IT support professionals and service providers (in-house or external) are an increasingly vital component of any competitive business. Although their job titles may vary (an estimated 422,000 people work in ICT management or IT strategy and planning roles across the UK and a further 65,000 are employed as IT user support technicians) and the industries they serve can be worlds apart – it's impossible to underestimate the combined contributions of IT service

professionals to the UK economy. And SITS14 is their annual go-to event.

Since its launch two decades ago, SITS – The Service Desk & IT Support Show – which celebrates its milestone 20th anniversary this year, has evolved and grown with the industry it serves. From its humble beginnings as the Helpdesk User Group Conference, it then encompassed customer service to become a bona fide exhibition, before becoming the Help Desk & IT Support Show. Its final transformation came in 2007 when 'Help Desk' became 'Service Desk' to reflect the change in the marketplace from reactive 'ticket logging' centres to proactive service centres sitting at the core of the business.

Featuring the ITSM industry's leading specialist vendors, integrators, consultancies and service providers, demonstrating the latest products and services, SITS is the UK's

leading event for IT service management and IT support professionals looking to keep up-to-date with the latest emerging trends and technology. The 2014 event takes place at London's Earls Court on 29-30 April and is free to attend if registering in advance.

New exhibitors for 2014 include SunView Software, Absolute Software, Point to Point, Veraseti, Centrix Software, Seamlessly and USU AG. Atlassian will also be making its show debut this year. They'll be introducing their recently-launched JIRA Service Desk, which integrates directly with JIRA – the issue management software used by more than 22,000 teams worldwide (including Citigroup, eBay, Coca-Cola, Netflix and United Airlines).

Another leading name confirming its presence at the show for the first time is Hewlett-Packard. Set to be a big draw for many SITS visitors, the corporation will be

demonstrating its HP IT Service Management (ITSM) software solution.

It's not just new exhibitors that have been quick to reserve their stands at SITS14. BMC Software UK, Alemba, Bomgar, Axios Systems, LANdesk Software, Cherwell Software, SysAid Technologies, Tools4ever, Global Technology Solutions and xMatters are just a selection of returning exhibitors looking to enjoy a repeat performance of last year's busy aisles.

Enhancing the exhibition will be a comprehensive free education programme, which combines six keynotes, 40 seminars, in-depth roundtable discussions, and essential breakfast briefings. Companies set to share their experiences and IT service strategies include Gocompare.com, Network Rail, News UK, Virgin Media and Oxford Brookes University. Covering everything from transforming an existing service operation to

meaningful metrics, these seminar sessions will inform, inspire and offer real practical advice.

Another avenue for visitors wishing to gain insights and learn from the experiences of others is the show's 'Hot Topic Roundtables'. These informal facilitator-led small group discussions will again be the networking hub of the show. Topics on the agenda include successful self-service, hiring and motivating great IT talent, and measuring metrics.

Gartner returning as featured guest

Following their successful debut at last year's SITS, world-leading IT research company Gartner will return to London's Earls Court to headline an exclusive set of keynotes at SITS14.

The return of Gartner offers visitors an important opportunity to engage with, and gain valuable advice from, the Gartner team.

Laura Venables, group event manager of SITS, is delighted to welcome Gartner back for a second year. Commenting on their continuing collaboration, she says: "Collaborating with Gartner on SITS13 was a fantastic development for the show – which was very positively received by our audience. So we're really excited to be able to build on that success this year and offer even more new, invaluable content for our visitors."

"I know we say it every year – and it's true – but this year's keynote and seminar line-up is looking to be our best yet," adds Venables.

The Gartner programme will include a keynote and panel discussion on each day of the show, with lead analyst Jeffrey Brooks leading the keynotes and chairing the panel discussions.



For further information about SITS14, and to register free in advance, please visit www.servicedeskshow.com and quote priority code SITS175. Attendees also benefit from free access to Infosecurity Europe 2014, Europe's No.1 information security event, co-located at Earls Court.

Visit
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on stand
604!

As the Official Bookshop provider for SITS14, ITSMF UK offers a broad range of service management, project management, IT governance and best practice titles. This year we have some special offers on a wide selection of publications, so why not visit us and snap up a bargain book, ask for a demonstration of our new MONITOR self-assessment tool, or pick up a free copy of ServiceTalk magazine!

SFIA takes off around the world



Over the past twelve months the interest in, and adoption of, the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) has seen tremendous growth. Since its beginnings in the UK, SFIA is now being used in well over 100 countries worldwide, with the most growth in the Australia/New Zealand region, but the USA and many other countries are also starting to see the benefits of such a framework. Here we review the way that SFIA is being adopted across the globe.

For those that have not been introduced to SFIA, the framework is free to use (subject to free usage licence conditions), and was written for and by the industry in a plain language that is easy to understand. It contains the descriptions of 96 professional skills, each of which has a number of different skill levels (up to 7). It also identifies generic levels of responsibility in the areas of Autonomy, Business Skills, Complexity and Influence. For more information, visit the main SFIA website: www.sfia-online.org.

Over the last year or so, it has been extremely rewarding to see a rapid increase in the number of individuals and organisations gaining significant benefit from the use of SFIA. Organisations that did not have a clear idea of the skills they had within their ICT departments now have a firm understanding of those skills; but, more importantly, they recognise the gaps that exist in their skills base and they have a roadmap to help them fill the gaps. The inclusion of skills in the ITSMF UK Big4 Agenda highlights the

importance of frameworks like SFIA, and it's great to see it emerge from being one of the best kept secrets in IT.

Simon Roller, Managing Director of Australian company Adaps Consulting, is also a founding member of the SFIA Alliance. "Most of the organisations we have worked with want to not only understand current skills, but they have recognised having the right people with the right skills in the right roles is integral to the success of projects, and in reducing the cost of recruitment. A common cry is that they don't have enough resources to take on new projects in addition to BAU. SFIA enables the organisation to see who has the skills they need for a particular role or project".

The SFIA Foundation Board have announced that the consultation for Version 6 of the framework will commence early in 2014. This will enable the Board's partners and the framework users to input their requirements into the new version.

SFIA in the UK

A recent example of a SFIA implementation clearly shows how the benefits outweigh the risks in implementing such a framework. In response to a mailing about the SFIA Assessment Service (see side bar, page 23), ITSMF UK received an enquiry from a member organisation in the public sector which had been formed to provide centralised IT services to a group of local authorities, and were looking at a full restructure. To make sure that the service was able to meet current and future demands in a rapidly changing environment, they needed to know what skills and capabilities were present within the team. This included not only technical but also professional and customer service skills.

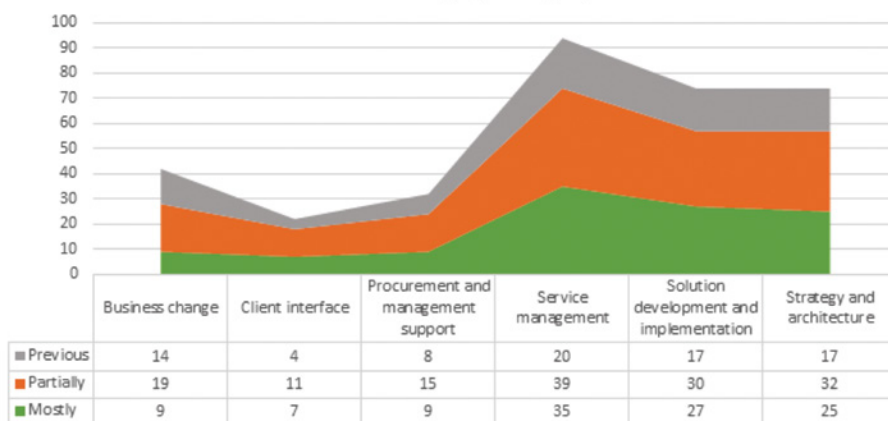
The team is an amalgamation of individuals from various Councils, with each group having different job titles and ways of describing their roles. The changing ICT landscape was driving massive change, and there was no common and clear understanding of the skills of all team members. It was for this reason that they turned to SFIA to have a clear and objective viewpoint of individual and collective skills.

Each member of the team was asked to take a SFIA online self-assessment. The self-assessment leads participants through a number of questions to determine the skills they have, and the level of those skills, and requires somewhere between 15 and 45 minutes for each individual to complete on average. It also takes into consideration skills that match; those that are a partial match; and those which an individual has held earlier in their career but might not be considered current. These still represent a potential opportunity, as people with partial or previous skills can have gaps addressed or brought up-to-date. Individuals with previous skills can often be potential candidates for mentoring or support roles even if their current position does not require the particular skill.

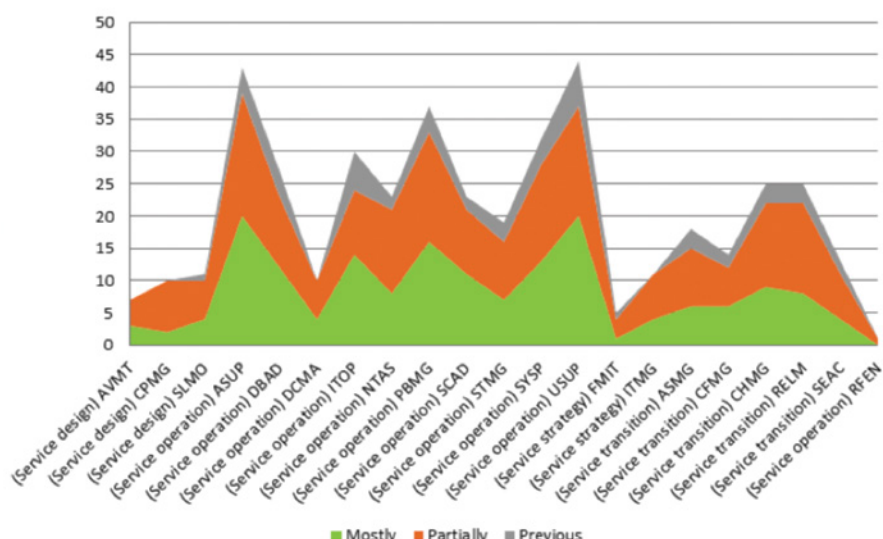
The results showed that there is a significant amount of potentially untapped capability among people who are not currently using previously held skills. It also identified that some SFIA skills are not fully present, however this is only an issue if these skills are required by the organisation. The Assessment results now provide a baseline to identify gaps once the future strategy and requirements are agreed.

As the SFIA Accredited Consultant who led the facilitation of this assessment, when I presented the report to the senior manager, the response was extremely positive. Several challenges were confirmed, but the report gave some solid baseline measures and a clear path of how to address the challenges. There were also several powerful demonstrations of existing skills which were not being adequately utilised, uncovered relevant skills which hadn't been previously identified, and some gaps in skills which could quite easily be filled now that they had been identified.

Skill Summary by Category



Service Management



“I definitely see the power in having some sort of skills matrix, or register, where an organisation can keep track of the skills each individual has...”



This organisation can now move forward with defining roles and responsibilities, and produce SFIA-based role profiles and position descriptions. Using the data provided, they can perform a mapping of requirements to current skills, identify gaps and opportunities, and build Continual Professional Development (CPD) plans for all their staff.

Other UK-based SFIA projects so far in 2014 include a mix of public and private sector organisations. These encompass central and local government, finance, telecommunications, managed service providers, consultancies, education and training providers, apprenticeship schemes, HR and recruitment. It has been announced that SFIA Version 6 will include an alignment with the National Occupational Standards in IT.

SFIA in Australia

SFIA in Australia is growing rapidly, with Queensland and New South Wales governments in particular starting to use and implement the framework across multiple departments. A number of corporates are also using SFIA, from a major bank through to well-known international construction and manufacturing companies.

The following case study shows a unique approach adopted by the Queensland branch of the ITSMF in Australia to help ICT professionals in their region to understand and use SFIA to best advantage.

Significant changes in the global and Australian ICT markets, coupled with changes in state Government, left many organisations eager to find new ways and efficiencies in how they manage IT services. Many organisations are preparing to outsource their IT capability to a potentially global marketplace (and therefore downsize their resources), and there has been a significant impact on the job market for ICT professionals in Queensland.

The ITSMF Queensland Branch Committee recognised an opportunity to harness the benefits of using SFIA to help members understand the skills they had, and work out how they could use this information to

more effectively match themselves to roles and market their skills and capabilities when applying for new jobs.

The decision was made to coordinate a SFIA workshop for their members, and so they looked for assistance from Simon Roller, Managing Director of Adaps Consulting, a SFIA Accredited Partner and member of ITSMF, to deliver something that would be perceived as valuable for individuals.

It was Shan Altmann's role to organise and coordinate the workshop on behalf of ITSMF, using the self-assessment tools discussed earlier. Shan's role within ITSMF Australia is as a member of the State Branch Committee, and she is also an active member of the ITSMF Council of Members.

Since completing the self-assessment and attending the workshop session, Shan has started using SFIA to help plan for future opportunities within her organisation. "Understanding where your particular gaps are in terms of where you are now, and where you want to be, helps you to determine what is needed to build up that capability and move towards your goal". The beauty of SFIA, according to Shan, is that you can "sell yourself in a language that is based on fact rather than persuasion!"

Shan believes that, in an uncertain environment, it is more important than ever for individuals to understand the full extent of their capabilities and value.

"I definitely see the power in having some sort of skills matrix, or register, where an organisation can keep track of the skills each individual has, and therefore understand what the impact is if and when someone leaves a position. This allows the business to make educated decisions on whether that gap needs to be filled, and who may be available to fill it from among the skilled resources they already have".

Using the online SFIA self-assessment tool establishes a real sense of buy-in to the initiative and helps establish positivity and direction from the outset.

"I found the experience to be extremely beneficial", said Shan. "It was important to both go through the online skills self-assessment AND a face-to-face workshop to really understand the power of SFIA, and I look forward to being able to apply this knowledge in the future".

SFIA in New Zealand

New Zealand is also using SFIA, particularly within Government departments. Adaps Consulting has been working with a partner in New Zealand to deliver "Understanding SFIA" training courses to their clients.

The Institute of IT Professionals New Zealand, the equivalent of the UK's BCS, is a SFIA Partner. SFIA content was included at the last ITSMF conference in New Zealand, including presentations and a sponsorship which offered SFIA assessments to delegates free of charge.

SFIA in the USA and Canada

Interest in the USA is showing signs of significant growth now, with a couple of major corporations currently implementing SFIA, and several enquiries for training and assessment from individuals and organisations. Specific signs of growth are:

- ISACA, the owners of COBIT (which specifically references SFIA), are now SFIA Partners and have mapped their CISA and CISM Certifications to SFIA.
- The IEEE Computer Society recently became a SFIA Partner to use SFIA as a key part of its work in defining IT curricula, an IT Competency Model, and an IT Body of Knowledge (ITBoK).
- The SFIA assessment is available to ITSMF USA members through their Affinity Program.
- There are already a couple of SFIA Accredited Consultants actively working on SFIA initiatives in the region. A number of online training courses have been planned for the USA – so watch this space!
- The Canadian Information Processing Society are also SFIA Partners.

SFIA in other locations

There are SFIA Partner organisations in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Germany, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, UK, UAE and USA. In addition to these countries, there are also SFIA Accredited Consultants in Colombia, Egypt, Italy, and Nigeria.

India-based SFIA Partner AKS Consulting Services have produced a mobile app that brings the entire framework to mobile devices and tablets for quick access, and are planning a SFIA Conference in Bangalore.

SFIA training is available globally in online and classroom-based formats, and growing numbers attending SFIA training confirm a growing desire to expand use of SFIA around the world, with many aiming for SFIA Accredited Consultant status. In addition to the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, recent attendees have come from Chile, Columbia, Hong Kong, France, Spain, Dubai, South Africa, Nigeria, Singapore and Denmark.



Matthew Burrows is a SFIA Accredited Consultant and Trainer, Managing Director of BSMimpact (a SFIA Partner), a member of the SFIA Council, and co-founder of the SFIA Alliance. He has been a long-time supporter of SFIA and has been working with the framework for over 10 years.



The SFIA Alliance was created by Adaps Consulting in Australia and BSMimpact in the UK to collaborate and share training materials, tools and other intellectual property relating to SFIA. With different geographic boundaries, the Alliance partners cooperatively work together to spread the word of SFIA across the globe! Full members of the SFIA Alliance must be SFIA Accredited Partners, however Associate Membership is also offered. www.sfia-alliance.org



SFIA assessments from ITSMF UK

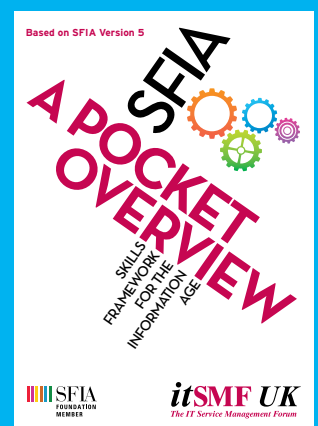
The SFIA skills assessment allows individuals to identify their current relevant skills and the level achieved against these skills, offering an excellent way to focus on Continual Professional Development (CPD) plans, enhance your CV or resume and assess future training and development needs.

The SFIA assessment offers a unique map for your IT-related professional skills. It covers all 96 skills in SFIA V5, allowing you to select the most appropriate ones, assesses the levels achieved for each selected skill, and identifies the generic level of responsibility (Autonomy, Influence, Complexity and Business Skills). Check out the ITSMF UK website for more information – www.itsmf.co.uk.

In addition to this individual assessment, a service is also available for organisations to baseline the current skills of their staff and plan their current or future needs. This is facilitated by a SFIA Accredited Consultant, who will contact you to discuss your requirements. Contact ITSMF UK for more details.

SFIA Pocket Overview

Matthew Burrows, author of this article, has written a handy pocket guide to SFIA. This book includes useful tips based on the author's use of SFIA over more than 10 years, with examples focussed on the IT Service Management industry. This is published by ITSMF UK and can be ordered through the bookshop.



SFIA Training

Training is provided by a number of SFIA Accredited Partners around the globe:

<http://www.sfia-online.org/find-an-expert/training-providers/>

Richard Horton reflects on the real benefits of attending ITSMF UK masterclasses, and on the skills required to be a good facilitator.

There is a hushed silence in the auditorium. Suddenly applause starts as two men walk into the room. There is a ripple of excitement. Here in front of us is Alfred Brendel, possibly the greatest living pianist, ready to deliver a masterclass. What inspirational wisdom will he have to offer? The young student shuffles nervously as he takes his seat at the piano. He has chosen to play a Schubert impromptu and is beginning to regret his choice. No one can play Schubert like Brendel. He prepares to be taken to pieces, takes a deep breath and launches himself at the opening bars.

As a keen pianist, when I first heard about the masterclasses that ITSMF UK was launching, Alfred Brendel was the first person who came to mind. The reality I suspected was a little different, but how different? In my case I found out by putting my name forward to set up and lead a masterclass. This meant I had to grasp what people coming to a masterclass wanted to get out of the day and how I should help to make this happen.

I started by considering what is different about a masterclass, when compared with other ways of gaining knowledge from external sources. My simplified view goes like this:

- You can pay money to go to a seminar and get people talking expertise at you all day. A masterclass isn't that.
- You can pay money to bring a consultant in and look at your specific situation from their expert perspective. A masterclass isn't that.
- You can go to an ITSMF UK regional/SIG and do group work on generic questions. A masterclass isn't that.
- A masterclass combines key elements of these. It takes expertise and applies it to your specific setting. It's only for a short period of time, but it offers the combined expertise of 10 to 15 knowledgeable peers working on your burning issue - so you could think of it as concentrated consultancy, and as such it feels to me to be a good investment.

I've sneaked in one or two things under the covers here. My opening image was of the towering genius, the fount of all knowledge. What I'm now talking about sounds suspiciously like group work. Is that right? Well yes, it is. A masterclass does have a leader, it does have you, and it does have other people. But there is no audience. Everyone who is there is there as a participant. And though you are right to expect that the person leading it will have some expertise to apply, he or she is not the only source of expertise in the room. You'll also have picked up on the size. We're not talking vast crowds here. Limiting the number of people to a maximum of 14 participants means that there is space for

everyone's issues to be voiced, and everyone to contribute.

Hang on a minute - you might be thinking that you could easily fill up several days with things you want to discuss. Maybe, but I did say that it was like 'concentrated consultancy'. There is time for everyone, but the value of the day comes in being focused. If participants come with a clear idea in mind of what they want to discuss then there's more chance it will be addressed. This is where the facilitator comes in. Notice that I say 'facilitator' rather than 'master' here. The challenge for this person is to make sure everyone has a chance to air their issue and to make sure that it is tackled effectively. This does mean applying their expertise... but it's as much facilitation expertise as subject matter expertise.

What I've said reflects how I've approached setting up and running a masterclass. Part of my approach is to do with who I am and how I perceive that I can add most value. Other masterclass facilitators, I expect, will take a slightly different slant, making use of their particular skills. My specialism is change management, an area where most people have issues to address. In other areas that's not necessarily the case.

But there are some common threads – the small number of people enables a group dynamic where everyone is involved, and the subject is specific so you'll be exploring it with people who have a common interest. You can expect Chatham House rules to apply too; everyone is seeking to get the most out of the day and you should feel comfortable being

open about this. Having said that, you don't just learn from solving issues that you bring to the table. You learn from the challenges others are facing as well.

In short masterclasses offer a valuable opportunity. Do consider them! And I'm sure ITSMF UK would be interested to hear from you if there's an area you'd be interested in which isn't currently featured on the programme.

Let's return to where I started. Would Brendel take a young pianist to pieces? He has fearsome musical knowledge and this would be applied. But he himself learnt as a young man from masterclasses. So he knows what it's like to be on the receiving end. Brendel has been known to deliver a masterclass sat in the audience rather than on the stage. It's not about the 'master'. It's about what you take away from the day.



Richard Horton is Service Delivery Manager at the National Institute for Health Research in Leeds and chairman of the ITSMF UK Service Transition SIG.



Virtuoso performer or skilled conductor?

- “Lots of value added by lively questioning/discussion.”
- “Took away a dozen or so ideas to implement in our department.”
- “Great contacts/great ideas to take back.”
- “Useful hints and tips, what to avoid, enablers, blockers and how to overcome them.”
- “Immense value and great networking.”
- “Very informative, interesting to find out how others approach the subject.”



**Some comments
from recent
masterclass
attendees**

Forthcoming masterclasses from ITSMEF UK

Knowledge, Problem and CSI **15th April, Reading**

Whilst the basic ITSM 'engine' of incident and change management provides solid processes for consistency and control, areas such as knowledge management, problem management and continual service improvement are the real game changers that add real value to any service operation. This workshop, facilitated by Barclay Rae, looks at how to approach these areas – underpinned by a business-focused service structure – with practical examples and input on how to get real value out of service management, for IT and its customers.

Change Management **13th May, Reading**

Most organisations have some kind of change process, but what do you need to do to improve it? This masterclass offers the perfect environment to address your change management issues, such as culture; control versus enabling; getting the balance right; change management and the Cloud; and Agile/DevOps. Join this masterclass, facilitated by Service Transition SIG leaders Richard Horton and Vawns Guest, to discuss your particular change management challenges and the issues that you need to solve.

Building a Successful Service Catalogue **28th May, Reading**

This event, our most frequently requested masterclass led by distinguished ITIL author and ITSM consultant Colin Rudd, provides a brief explanation and discussion of the theory and then focuses specifically on the practical aspects of establishing an effective service catalogue. At the end of the event, delegates should be able to design and implement an effective service catalogue for their organisation, recognising the pitfalls to look out for along the way.

Masterclasses are
limited to 14 delegates



Attendance fee - **£395.00 + VAT for members** and
£795.00 + VAT for non-members



BACK TO
BASICS

5 tips for effective problem management

Undertaking effective ITIL-based problem management is essential for any IT organisation that wants to deliver high levels of service availability and consistently high quality IT services.

It is however an unfortunate fact that the great majority of IT organisations fail to realise any noticeable benefits from the time and effort they spend undertaking problem management.

This article provides you with five simple and practical tips to help you to set up and maintain effective problem management.



tip 1: Focus your problem management efforts on finding permanent solutions

Forget about using problem management to find temporary solutions.

If you want problem management to deliver real and tangible value then you must develop a problem management process that focuses on finding permanent solutions.

Only by focusing your problem management activities on permanent solutions will you be able to substantially reduce your volume of incidents. And it is in the reduction in the volume of incidents that the real value of problem management is to be found.

It is important to be clear about the distinction I am making between permanent and temporary solutions:

- A permanent solution is where the underlying cause of the incident(s) has been addressed in such a way as to prevent the incident from occurring again
- A temporary solution is one which is employed to get the user up and running again ('as quickly as possible') but which will not necessarily prevent the incident from re-occurring in the future – e.g. temporarily re-routing a user to a different print queue

Please note I try to avoid using the term 'workaround'. This is because it confuses everybody. It is confusing because it can be applied to both permanent and temporary solutions. Because of this it is best to avoid this term (stick with permanent or temporary solutions – these are terms that everybody can understand).

So, the key to getting real value from problem management is to build a process that concentrates on finding permanent solutions.

Only by doing this will you be able to deliver the value (reduced volume of incidents) that justifies the time, effort and resources involved in the investigation of problems and the subsequent deployment of permanent solutions.

tip 2: Make sure your problem management process delivers real value

Most organisations that are familiar with ITIL undertake some form of problem management. And with very few exceptions they are wasting their time. This is because they have put in place a problem management process that delivers no real (tangible, meaningful and measurable) value.

How do you know if your problem management process is actually delivering value? Well, first of all you need to forget all about the various (irrelevant) metrics that are often mentioned. For example, the time taken to complete a root cause analysis, the number of problems in the backlog, etc. None of these actually indicate, reflect or measure the value of undertaking problem management.

There is in fact only one truly tangible and meaningful measure that your problem management process is delivering value – and this a reduction in the volume of incidents. If this is happening you have a worthwhile problem management process. If this is not the case... well, sorry to be blunt but you are just wasting your time. It is that simple.

You must regularly (every three months?) review your problem management process to check that it is delivering value and that the volume of incidents is falling. If it is not then you need to stop what you are doing and change. Change your process. Make it better – make it effective.

If you want, you can go a stage further and set some specific targets. For example, reduce Priority 1 incidents by 40% within three months (this is a very valid target because it ensures that you are addressing the incidents with the greatest adverse impact), reduce network printing incidents by 60% over six months, etc.

Now I am fully aware that other factors can impact the volume of incidents, and a lot of organisations use this as an excuse for not using incident volumes as a measure of problem management effectiveness. I do accept that many factors can impact the volume of incidents, and in some circumstances even with good problem management in place you might see incident volumes (temporarily) increasing.

But even with all these potential issues the volume of incidents still remains the single most important indication of the effectiveness of your problem management process. Forget everything else: just make sure you are achieving this and, if not, then do something about it!

tip 3: Make your service desk/incident manager your problem manager

Yes – I know. This is something that ITIL advises against. And I know and understand why ITIL advises against this. But I believe that in this case ITIL has got it wrong.

There is in fact a very good reason why your service desk/incident manager should also be your problem manager. But before I go into that I want to be very clear on what the role of problem manager actually involves.

Problem manager is not a technical role, and the problem manager does not undertake problem investigations. Problem investigations (both the root cause analysis

and the solution identification) are undertaken by an appropriate subject matter expert (SME).

The primary responsibilities of the problem manager are in fact administration, co-ordination and facilitation. The specific activities, among other things, include:

- Reviewing requests for problem investigations to see which are justified
- Developing the business case for each problem investigation in order to justify the resources required for that investigation
- Arranging for the appropriate SME resources to be made available and assigned to a relevant problem investigation
- Producing the terms of reference to be followed by each SME undertaking a problem investigation
- Overseeing the investigations undertaken by the SME
- Validating the root cause analysis and the proposed permanent solution
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the deployed permanent solutions.

In the majority of organisations there is rarely the justification for a full-time resource to act as problem manager. Therefore it is often combined with another role. The first, and very important point, is that you must appoint somebody to this role. You will not be able to undertake effective problem management without somebody acting as (an effective!) problem manager.

Now back to the original point. Why do I disagree with ITIL and recommended that you combine the roles of service desk/incident manager and problem manager?

Well the reason is simple. The primary goal of the problem management process is to reduce the volume of incidents (see Tip 2). So you want to ensure that the problems prioritised for investigation are those that will deliver the greatest benefit – i.e. will lead to the biggest reduction in re-occurring incidents (or will eliminate the most 'damaging' incidents). Makes sense so far?

So - who is best placed to decide which problem investigations will deliver the greatest benefit? Who is best placed to decide which problems will justify the resources required for investigation?

It is clear this has to be the person who stands to benefit the most (in the IT organisation) from the reduction in incident volumes, and the person who has the greatest visibility and understanding of current incident trends and volumes.

This is clearly the service desk/incident manager. This is in fact the IT role that has the greatest vested interest in ensuring that you are undertaking effective problem management. And this is why the roles should be undertaken by the same person.

There is no 'conflict' between these roles; there are only shared goals and benefits. So combine the roles - it is the only sensible option.

tip 4: Get on with it – you do not need specialist resources or tools

Some organisations hesitate to put problem management in place because they believe they lack the 'resources' to undertake problem management – i.e. the required people and an integrated incident/problem management system.

This is nonsense. You do not need any special resources in order to undertake effective problem management. You can do it perfectly well with the resources you already have.

People

Unless you are a large third-party IT service provider you do NOT need to set up a dedicated problem management team, full of technical experts to undertake problem investigations. This is in fact completely the wrong thing to do.

The SMEs you allocate to undertake the problem investigations will in fact come from your existing IT departments and teams. The key is to make sure that the time and effort they spend on problem investigations is fully justified. This is a responsibility of the problem manager (see Tip 3). How much time will the SMEs need to allocate to problem investigations? Well, this depends on the nature of and the number of the problems you decide to investigate.

The bottom line is that you can start problem management with the staff you currently have.

One important point to note: please be aware that a significant proportion (the majority?) of problem investigations will be non-technical in nature. The great majority of incidents are caused by failures in process, procedure, human error, etc. Problem investigations are often more about finding out why a procedure failed than why technology failed. So an SME is not necessarily a technical resource.

Toolset

You do not need to spend money on specialist tools/systems for problem management. There is absolutely no need to dynamically link incident records to problem records, and problem management is not dependent on an integrated incident/problem toolset.

And contrary to what is commonly believed, there isn't any real benefit in the service desk being able to access the problem records.

So, to be clear - you do not need any special resources to start undertaking effective problem management. Just get on with it.

tip 5: Don't worry about distinguishing between proactive and reactive problem management

Who cares where problem requests come from?

Does it really matter if they come from undertaking regular trend analysis of incidents, or if they are generated automatically as a result of a Priority 1 incident being logged? No - from the perspective of developing an effective process for the investigation of problems the source of those problems is largely irrelevant.

Many organisations set up overly complicated problem management processes because of the perceived need to have separate procedures for proactive and reactive problem management. But the distinction between proactive and reactive problem management is an unnecessary complication. You do not need two separate set of problem management procedures.

Now it is undeniably important to carefully identify how, when and from where potential problem requests originate, and how they are to be submitted to the problem manager for consideration. For example, who has responsibility for analysing the incident trends, how often should they be analysed, how are they to be analysed, etc.? If a problem request is to be raised after a specific event (e.g. a high-priority network failure), then how is this to happen. All of this should be defined and clearly documented within your problem management process documentation.

But from the point where the problem request is submitted to the problem manager the process for considering the justification for that request, accepting and prioritising the investigation, assigning the resources to the investigation, validating the results of the investigation etc., is the same irrespective of the source of that request.

So avoid the unnecessary complication and ignore the irrelevant distinction between proactive and reactive problem management. Develop a single end-to-end problem management process.



Charles Fraser is a highly experienced freelance ITSM consultant. His areas of specialist expertise include ITIL process maturity / effectiveness assessments, and helping organisations to achieve ISO20000 certification. He can be contacted at Charles.fraser@CharlesFraser.net

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How to avoid failed IT changes

IT changes that fail can result in significant costs in terms of resource time, materials and misused infrastructure; they lead to poor business satisfaction and customer perception and in many instances missed business opportunities. Debarshi Bandyopadhyay and Vikas Singhai consider the reasons for failed changes and suggest proactive and reactive measures to deal with them.

Why do failed changes occur?

In today's online global economy, IT end users demand access to applications 24x7. To cope in this market environment, organisations constantly push boundaries with innovation and cost-effectiveness. IT applications and services are now built on diverse platforms, hosted in different geographies and supported by distributed teams. This complex framework is held together by people, process and technology and, if not managed appropriately, it is these fundamental pillars that contribute to failure in IT changes.

People

People and their interests, organisational boundaries and mind-set are influencing factors for any change. Research shows that individuals leading successful changes get people at all levels deeply involved by

keeping them in the loop, listening to their ideas, and encouraging them to take ownership of their part of the change. This practice is more relevant in today's growing multi-vendor environment. But does it always happen? Unfortunately, the roles and responsibilities of a change initiator, change manager and members of the change advisory board are often not well understood in an outsourced environment. Such factors are immensely important in any change project.

Another often overlooked factor to IT change is culture. This was experienced in a global pharmaceutical company that undertook a large programme to deploy a new user access management solution.



While everything technically seemed to have gone well in the programme itself, the people had to be trained as the final step, and there was a lot of opposition to getting trained in new processes. Substantive change in organisations with entrenched cultures is always difficult. In this particular case senior management had to get directly involved and roll their sleeves up; and without their push, the programme could have been a fiasco.

Process

While not adhering to process is a major contributor to failed changes, there have been many cases where small oversights, ignorance, and sheer immaturity of the process have led to a failed change. The level of standardisation for change management is still a challenge for many IT departments. It need not be simply the change process that causes failures, but the interdependent processes such as those involving security, SLM, availability and capacity management which may be overlooked. Experience also suggests that an inadequate level of requirements capture and the absence of proper testing and user acceptance can result in poorly implemented changes.

A major Australian bank had outsourced the management of its telecom network to a service provider. An additional site had to be added by the bank and a telecom network expansion had to be carried out to the new site. This was a standard change for the bank in line with their growth plans. The telecom service provider had standard operating procedures laid out. Unfortunately the onsite security engineer missed a step resulting in

the site not being ready on the day of launch. Several man days were spent in determining what went wrong.

Similarly, a large cable service provider in North America was redesigning its account renewal business process. While the business process design was approved, the IT services company had to deploy the IT change in production environments. Given the pressure on timelines it was being treated as a critical and emergency deployment. This led to short-circuiting the change advisory board approval. The deployment was done on a business day which was also a day for many account renewals. The deployment resulted in a failure of the production environment and system downtime of six hours.

Technology

Every organisation supports a wide range of configuration items, and their interdependency is key to successful change: in particular, upgrades done in isolation often lead to problems. Hardware provided by various vendors, coupled with changes in algorithms, may not work well with the changes brought in with an application.

Sizing of the environment, not only CPU, memory and disk but also network capacity, is often overlooked, both in terms of bandwidth and latency. As the changes are brought into existing service lines, network capacity needs constant monitoring and upgrading. Architectural misalignment, technology mismatches, and pitfalls of tertiary configuration items not aligning to the technology roadmap also lead to failed

changes.

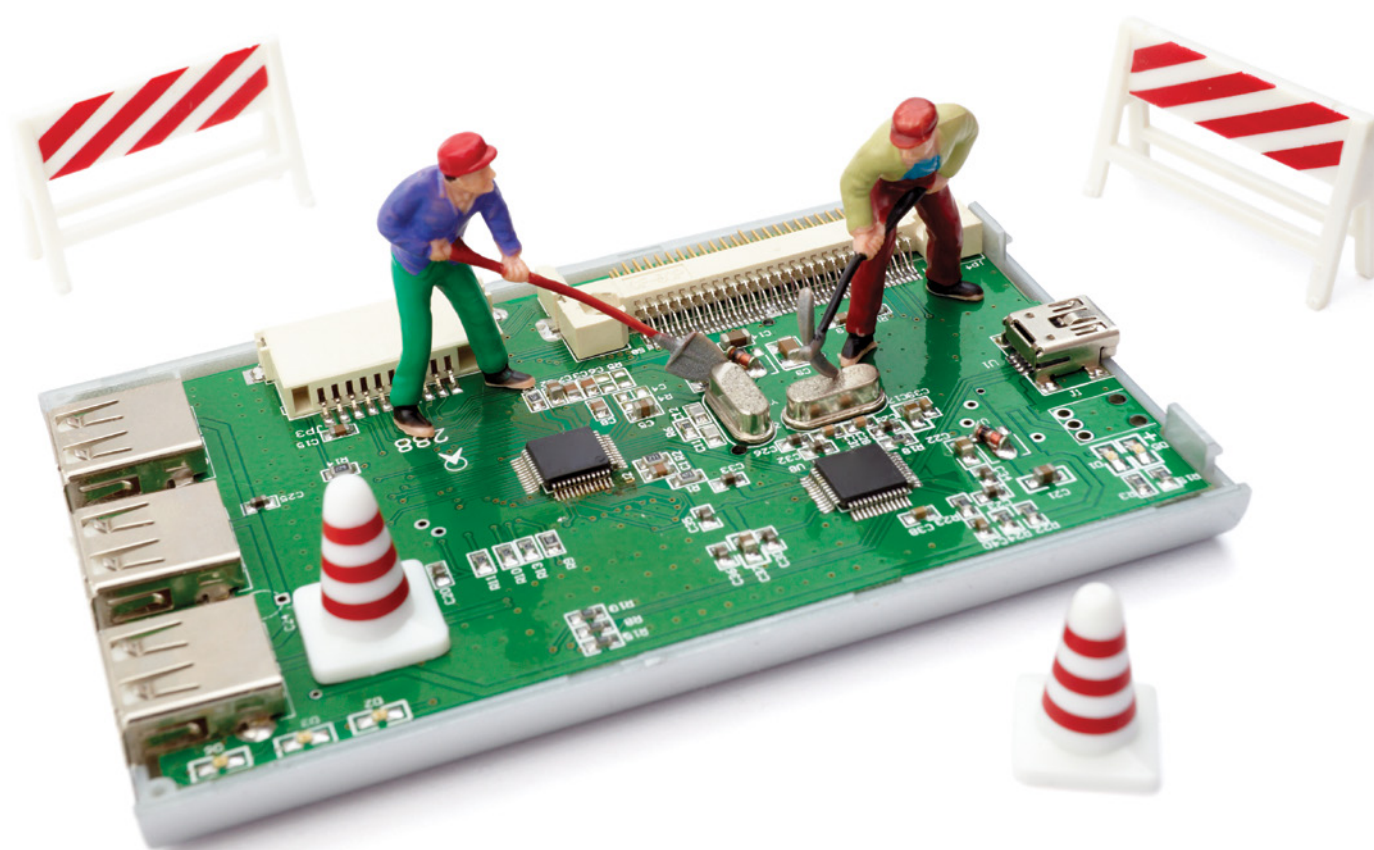
One of UK's biggest telecom services providers had an upgrade performed on its online platform in one of its European operating companies. A standard technical change had to be rolled back within minutes of deployment when it was realised that confidential material had accidentally been published as a result of this change. The main reason for this glitch was put down to incompatible security modules between the new and old platforms.

How do we improve the success rate?

What follows are a number of areas where shortcomings commonly occur within the IT organisations of large corporations. If these are addressed properly, we can substantially improve the success rate of changes.

- 1. Total quality assurance:** A thorough user acceptance testing exercise coupled with end user education and standard operating procedures (SOPs) is important in any major change. SOPs standardise the process and provide step-by-step how-to instructions that enable tasks to be performed in a consistent manner. While documented SOPs and checklists can be very useful, a peer review mechanism can add to the robustness. A release plan should be in place and it should include change deployment guidelines (run book) and rollback procedures.

If the telecom service provider at the Australian bank referred to above had had peer review mechanisms built into their



standard operating procedures, a failed change could have been avoided.

2. Communicate and re-communicate:

To be able to ensure that expectations of various stakeholders remain fulfilled, communicating the change that is going to be deployed upfront helps people to get prepared mentally. Communicate about the change, test it and deploy it: re-communicating that the change has been implemented ensures the right level of stakeholder engagement.

3. Metrics and measurement:

It is important that metrics collection and analysis is performed. A historical analysis based on quarterly, monthly and yearly data may identify patterns in failed changes. The analysis can drill down to technology, business, geo region and various areas such as application, network, and teams. Some of the operational metrics could be:

- Number of failed changes in a month by service line, geography, and business unit
- Number of incidents or problems caused by a failed change
- Failed changes due to incomplete impact analysis, lack of authorisation, or a process not followed.

4. Establish governance and follow it closely:

A governance structure must be set up that takes into account the various roles (e.g. application owner, hardware/network specialist or business owner) that form the change advisory board. This allows the various owners to focus on their respective areas and yet ensure that any change is not affecting the overall operations. This also reduces undesirable side effects to functionality, service levels, performance, capacity and costs since all stakeholders will be involved. Change management must give as much advance information to the service support teams at all levels as possible and arrange for adequate staffing based on the changes being executed.

5. Continuous process improvement:

What worked yesterday may not work tomorrow. The change process needs to go through continuous improvement and be on a quick path to maturity after stress testing. A post implementation review must be undertaken to ensure that the objectives originally set out have been met.

6. Post implementation review:

Some of the best practices of project management – e.g. recording lessons learnt, what worked and what did not work – can also be applied to change management. The RISC model (Review, Investigate, Survey, and Consult) is a great tool for a post implementation review:

- **Review:** Gather statistics on number of failed changes per week, month, year; average downtime due to failed changes; length of time to recover
- **Investigate:** Calculate the cost, e.g. how many incidents were recorded as a result of a failed change, how many SLAs were

breached

- **Survey:** Gather consensus on the most critical services
- **Consult:** Get the experts to review areas for improvement. Identify any issues by brainstorming with business and technical managers. The purpose of such sessions is that the users, customers and various stakeholders are happy with the results and, if not, various shortcomings can be discussed to avoid these in future.

In relation to the above guidelines, the following practices have significantly improved change deployment success rates:

Tip# 1: Classification of change based on complexity: Failed changes are contractually associated with penalties, and classification is important to identify the responsible party in a multi-vendor environment. It is common for large organisations to have a technology partner for base software builds, plus a suite of hardware providers, multiple system integrators and a plethora of external contractors. It is therefore important to establish where the responsibility for a failed change lies. Additionally, the overall process control does not have single ownership and much important time is lost in due diligence of what has caused the change to fail.

Experience from a large telecom provider has highlighted the importance of classifying changes into complex, medium and simple. This organisation was involved in a new million-dollar portal launch, designed to attract new corporate customers. The portal was launched with one trial customer, who dropped off within a month complaining of poor product quality. The launch was not rolled back but there was massive loss of revenue. To fix the problems, additional money had to be invested. Would this be classified as a failed change? The deployment had all the attributes of a failed change, except a rollback. The primary reason for failure was a poor strategy adopted during design. Out of the box implementation and integration were the main focus to achieve a quicker time to market. Intricate workflows were implemented between diverse systems, with minimal customisation. What people forget is that IT systems, unlike LEGO, need to go through the rigours of design, develop, test and deployment in order to be able to deliver reliably.

In the above example, design strategy was a reason for failure. Another way to look at it would be to question the test strategy, as to why a half-baked product was released to market. It's essential to classify changes into complex, medium, and simple, so that the necessary design details and testing phases will not be overlooked in complex changes.

Lessons learnt: Loss of business revenue, organisational reputation and contractual penalties can be averted if a 'complex' change is designed and delivered differently from a 'simple' one.

Tip# 2: Categories of risk based on impact: Risks associated with change should be

categorised as red, amber, or green according to the probability of failure based on experience. If the risk is known, the change manager can try to mitigate it through several measures. The advantage of this approach is that it increases maturity. An organisation can mature its release and deployment planning based on its history of red (high risk/high impact), amber or green (low risk) changes.

Prepare yourself better; some changes will fail

Let us face it, in IT no one can guarantee a winning formula. Failure is bound to happen but when an organisation decides to proactively correct its methodologies, half the battle is won. The time that it takes an organisation to recover from any system downtime or data loss can lead to financial peril or in certain cases cause a business to close its door. You must therefore prepare yourself for failed changes.

Here are some tried and tested ways to ensure that we are better prepared for a failed change:

Simple tracking

All changes, irrespective of risk (red, amber or green), should be tracked through a change management system, assessing the potential impact to related services and configuration items prior to implementation. Industry frameworks suggest a 7-level analysis: identify who raised the change, the reasons for change, expected return, risks involved, resources required, roles and responsibilities, and the relationship of the change with any others.

In short, tracking improves learning. Vital information captured during tracking provides a 'source of truth' that feeds into current and future improvements

Rollback and contingency planning

A rollback option must be planned for changes in all risk categories. A change or release manager must always ask two fundamental questions before scheduling any change: which activities must be conducted:

- prior to deployment?
- in the event of a failure?

Addressing the above questions guarantees a high level of readiness. Including a rollback plan as part of a deployment routine is a great way to prevent service disruption when things do not proceed as planned. The existence of a rollback plan acts as an insurance cover. In the event of a failed change the sooner a back out/rollback is successfully completed, the lower the number of incidents and operational costs.

Contingency planning is required for changes with risk category RED. Changes in other categories have a higher success rate and it might be that the risk/reward balance cannot be achieved if these changes also go through contingency planning. The aim of contingency planning is to minimise the impact of an unforeseeable event and to plan for a business to resume normal operations after Plan A fails. So how can it be done?

How to avoid failed IT changes

- 1. Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment:** Ask yourself what happens when Plan A doesn't go as expected?
- 2. Develop a plan:** Keep the contingency plan simple and ensure it satisfies everyone's needs. Always define success criteria in your plan, i.e. what will you require to return to 'business as usual'?
- 3. Maintain the plan:** Communicate the plan to everyone in the organisation and ensure a RACI is in place as per the activities in the plan. Conduct a periodic audit to ensure the plan continuously satisfies the organisation's business needs.

For example a telecom service provider was rolling out an electronic billing system in Germany. The subscriber base was very high, at over 8 million individuals. The change, if it failed, could have resulted in high volumes of calls to the service desk. It was a red classification change, based on the risk. The change manager ensured that the change was done overnight. Should the new solution fail the contingency plan would kick in to switch back to the original billing solution before sunrise. Approvals from senior management were solicited prior to going live for a switch back.

What does ITIL say?

A small change can also have a large impact. The importance of following

processes, ensuring governance, roles and responsibilities, and technology due diligence is immense even for a small change as long as the change is categorised as red in terms of the impact that its failure may have. We can't leave out steps in the process for a small red change as the change manager needs to be prepared for any potential impact. No matter how much due diligence and close alignment are done through the three pillars of people, process and technology, a roll-back plan must be put in place.

There are many examples where organisations with mature capability models have faltered due to ever-looming deadlines from business. Deadlines from business partners are equally stringent with time to deliver being a cost attribute; however, senior management must understand that a failed change often costs more.

ITIL stresses the importance of having a single repeatable process for the transition of all IT services into the production environment. IT organisations invest in expensive projects, project managers, subject matter experts, suppliers and various consultants, only to reinvent the wheel every time a new project gets off the ground and, worse still, without utilising the real expertise of the people involved. Some of them fail to deliver because the same things are being overlooked every time.

The answer here lies in the model of service introduction. Service introduction stresses the importance of having a roadmap, a source of guidance and advice through the release lifecycle pointing out the potential pitfalls, and most importantly a tightly governed and controlled release process. This is a single place to record everything in a consistent manner and a means to provide up to the minute information on project and programme portfolio so that lessons learnt are not only recorded, but also put into practice.



Debarshi Bandyopadhyay (left) is a Lead Consultant and Vikas Singhai is a Principal Consultant within the Infrastructure Management Services unit of Infosys Limited. They were the finalists representing Infosys-Vodafone jointly in the ITSMF UK Project of the Year award in November 2012. They collectively have over 15 years of experience in managing Change and Service Transition across multiple industries and geographies.



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ITSM AND
AGILE

Supporting the innovation mandate with DevOps

DevOps isn't the answer to every business demand, reflects Rob Stroud, but it might be the best way to keep up with the accelerating rate of change.

Travelling in Norway recently following the chapter conference there, I was undertaking some research for this article. As I searched the relevant web page, which was delivered to me in Norwegian, I was immediately asked if I wanted it translated. Shortly afterwards as I was looking for a hotel, I was immediately shown hotels close to my position. Location services and related technologies – determining from the available information who and precisely where the user is – are now becoming prevalent in all aspects of the online user experience. Indeed, they are at the centre of business solution design in a customer-centric era. It's an era of disruptive technologies and rapidly evolving business models, and what continues to surprise me is the rate of acceleration in technological solutions to deliver business outcomes in ways that IT could not have imagined a couple of years ago.

This acceleration is creating significant issues for many CIOs and senior IT managers. Many have not yet realised their return on investment in existing solutions and are being pressured to accelerate their pace of change faster than ever before. The outcome in many cases is business management who claim that IT cannot react and deliver in a timely manner and then choose to source the technology via another route!

This has led to the rapid adoption of agile development methodologies to meet quickening business change requirements, and many IT organisations are looking to DevOps as the answer to their problems.

DevOps as the name suggests is a merging of Development and Operations. DevOps asserts a philosophy that removes barriers between the development and operations functions, allowing the rate and pace of change to accelerate across the business. The question that I am often asked by 'disbelievers' is whether DevOps is simply a strategy to give development and the business the right to skip the proven change processes and avoid the rigour of operations and its investment in current service and project management best practice.

This could not be further from the truth: DevOps is a business-centric philosophy to deliver business outcomes.

Speaking to the CIO of a large manufacturing organisation at a recent industry conference, he mentioned to me that their DevOps initiative is being led by the operations function, who are looking to accelerate the pace of change through pre-production testing to production, even to the point of automation of change reversal where change doesn't quite deliver the desired results (this depends on

processes being implemented to automatically validate change once in production).

The point is that IT needs to react and challenge current philosophies and framework implementations. DevOps is a philosophy that supports rapid innovation and IT-powered business change but it is not a panacea.

So how do we work with DevOps to accelerate our rate of change and overcome the resistance of the existing culture, and what techniques do we use? I thought that I would share some practical steps leveraged by other organisations to commence the journey:

Create a leadership DevOps advocate

Let's face it, most organisational structures are overly complex, and red tape is often the primary obstacle to success. The first stage in the cultural change is to create a role for a senior executive who has power across the full IT domain to evangelise and sell the organisational benefits of DevOps.

Create the team

DevOps by its very nature is a combination of development and operations. Therefore, DevOps requires a cross-functional team with skillsets reflecting both areas; and to be successful the business must be represented as well.

These individuals should understand DevOps itself, but also be familiar with the processes and technologies that are needed to make the DevOps implementation successful. They must be completely dedicated to the cause and not distracted by other business. As the team progresses, process experts and tool specialists might also be required. The key thing to remember, particularly if you are using consultants, is not to forget the training or skills transfer.

Streamline processes

One of the major outcomes must be the automation of processes across the business. The starting position should logically be demand intake of all levels. More often, the initial focus is within the development organisation, through to QA/test and operations, including back-out in the case of failure. Before rolling out technology, DevOps teams must work on business and IT process improvements to ensure they have identified the challenges that their work could encounter and plan how to eliminate gremlins. Knowledge of existing business processes is a key skill, as is the ability not just to plan and test for success but also to prepare for process failure both for education and triage.

Budget for talent and technology

Although additional headcount, training programmes and technology will be needed to drive DevOps through the organisation, over time the value and automation will change the way teams work and should release headcount back into the pool.

Processes including application delivery, service virtualisation, IT automation and release management integrated directly with your change and management systems with will only be successful with knowledgeable team members taking the reins and leveraging their intellectual knowledge. As a first step you should conduct an internal inventory of tools, identifying the gaps and filling the holes needed to support the DevOps methodology.

Get started with your troublesome applications and services

Rather than starting with a 'big bang' approach I recommend that organisations consider piloting or testing DevOps before committing completely. The best way to prove the value of DevOps is to start with an application and/or business service that has been causing problems across production and creating headaches for developers and operations alike as they attempt to remove defects. This sample service/application should demonstrate the value that DevOps can deliver. Once you have the recipe correct, repeat and repeat and this approach will soon attract attention across the organisation.

DevOps is a philosophy to focus the organisation on outcomes needed to support the velocity of change in an innovative world. It is not an answer to every business demand but when used effectively and correctly it can deliver real business innovation.



Rob Stroud is Vice President, Strategy and Innovation at CA Technologies and President of ISACA. Follow him at @RobertEStroud and share your experiences.



BACK TO
BASICS

What does 'good' service management look like?

Neil Buckley considers whether clear, measurable objectives are sufficient to satisfy our customers.

It's Monday morning. You're sitting in a meeting room discussing the new service management programme that your boss/client wants you to introduce. Everyone enthusiastic about the benefits? Tick. Budget agreed? Tick. Resources in place? Tick.

So far, so good.

But then you ask the inevitable question about what exactly the organisation wants the programme to achieve. At this point, you will almost certainly receive one of three types of responses:

- A "Ummm....."
- B "We want to have good service management in place" OR
- C "We want to achieve Level 3 maturity and ISO/IEC 20000 in 6 months' time".

If the answer is A you might want to clear your desk now. Most likely, however, you will receive B or C as your answer. Now we all know that objectives need to be clear and measureable, so as the consultant or service delivery manager responsible for delivering the programme you'll probably be very unhappy to get B as your answer but pleased to receive answer C. Clearly 'good service management' is vague, whereas 'achieving Level 3 in 6 months' time' may need some negotiation in terms of timescales, but it does give you a clear and definitive target. Surely, the holy grail of objectives.

So here's the thing. Clear, measureable objectives are absolutely essential to the success of any service management programme. But is it everything we need for successful service management? The trouble is, we like answer C. Answer C makes our life easier. We can just go off and do what needs to be done. But are we, as service management professionals, guilty of sometimes being just a little bit lazy? Of sometimes too readily accepting the targets that we can easily convert into a graph or tick off a list?

All too often, answer B is dismissed as vague. It can however be an incredibly powerful objective; one that makes us ask that key question, "What is good?" It makes

us go back to basics and look at what our organisation actually should achieve, rather than what it wants to achieve. The reality is, everyone wants to make their life simple and what people want to achieve is frequently tangible and easily expressed as a bullet point so they can simply cross it off their 'to do' list. Whilst this might keep you employed, is it actually what is best?

Truly effective service management needs to look at the 'softer' information as well as the hard facts. All too often, organisations become reliant on the standards and frameworks to decide what is 'good'. We need to look at each organisation individually and actually find out from its customers what they want. We need goals that are measurable and objective but we mustn't forget to build in the subjective.

In some organisations, customers may be happy with a steady, reliable Level 3 maturity service where costs versus risks are balanced. It might not be faultless but it's what the customers need, want to pay for the service and regard as 'good'. Alternatively, if you have a loved one on a life-support machine in hospital, 'good' is entirely different. 'Good' is 100% perfect and ruthlessly efficient and costs are irrelevant. There is no balance of costs versus need/risk here – it genuinely is a matter of life or death.

We have to become more customer-centric. We have to establish what 'good' means for the end users and customers of the organisations we work for, rather than adopt a one size fits all approach. We must work with the management team to question whether the methods in place are actually the right approach and resist the urge to simply improve on existing processes. This involves challenging organisations, a process which might not be as easy for us or them... but it's how you achieve successful service management.

Take Apple – an organisation that over the past decade has spearheaded 'customer-centric' thinking and has transformed itself into one of the most successful companies in the world as a result. Apple is single-minded in its approach of putting users at the centre



of its universe. It knows exactly what it is trying to achieve and its premise is simple; to make products that customers want and make it easy to use them.

With these clear objectives in place, this ethos is able to permeate the entire organisation, from the design and packaging of the products right through to the service in the Apple stores. And that's the beauty of Apple. They have managed to achieve the ultimate – clear and definitive objectives that are easy for employees to sign up to, despite being based on the touchy-feely stuff about its customers' needs and desires.

Clearly Apple operates at the high end of the market but the same principles apply to all organisations. Expectations are key. They are, in effect, an unwritten contract between an organisation and its users. Customers in the middle ground may wish they had the money for a more upmarket product or service, but they will still be happy with the service they receive if it is what they expect and need.

If we want to achieve truly successful service management, we have to apply these principles when setting objectives. We must go back to basics and ask, 'What is good for this organisation?' We need to find out exactly what the organisation's customers want and expect before we embark on the work itself. Granted, this is not as easy as it sounds on paper but get it right and the rewards will speak for themselves.



Neil Buckley is Managing Director of Esprit Service Management

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