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Latest news on ITIL 4
and ISO/IEC 20000

Complex systems break

Mentoring for success

Are you Cloud ready?



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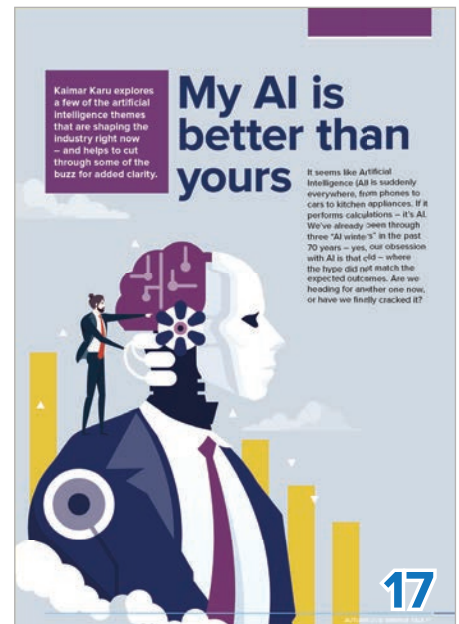
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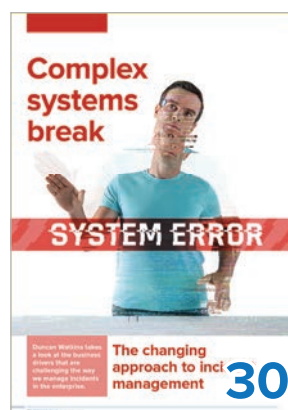
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Communication is key



Recently I was kindly invited to attend an event run by one of our large corporate members. The scene was familiar: tables strewn with collateral and screens leaping into life with information and demonstrations. At first sight it looked much like so many industry exhibitions I've attended, but the big difference was that all the 'exhibitors' were from one organization, each department sharing their work and explaining what they do to colleagues in other groups.

One of the organizers of this gathering commented that this was the first event of its kind, and it had been very well received by the service management teams involved. It certainly seemed that they had all embraced the opportunity to get their message across to their colleagues from other areas, and there were animated conversations taking place at every stand.

Communication is a familiar problem, particularly for large enterprises split across multiple locations, and increasingly so for those working with integration partners and struggling to maintain consistent standards between all stakeholders. We have so many ways of communicating, from numerous social media channels through email, skype and snail mail to face-to-face events. But more choice doesn't necessarily mean increased efficiency: different channels work better for different types of information, and unless you can quickly engage your audience - your whole audience - the moment is lost. Physical meetings like the one above can be

expensive and difficult to manage, but the benefits of sharing ideas and insights face to face are immeasurable.

Regular updates are so vital to keeping everyone 'in the loop' and feeling valued, but so often they are neglected. One itSMF UK member I was talking to recently has been distributing cyber security and GDPR updates to his colleagues with great success for months, not because this was his specific responsibility but because he realized nobody else was doing it. He knew the consequences of staff being poorly informed about corporate vulnerabilities, and decided to share his knowledge on the subject - generating a huge amount of interest and feedback in the process. (More about this in the next issue of ServiceTalk.)

Communications are at the centre of everything we do in service management, but once an incident has been reported or a problem identified, it's essential that all the affected parties receive regular feedback. In his article on page 20, Chris Markiewicz suggests that the effects of service disruption in any line of business can be alleviated by regular progress updates - from the delayed train to the suspended banking service. "Having run a significant number of customer service programmes over three decades," he comments, "I have identified customers' single biggest demand: **"Please tell me what's going on!"**"

As is so often the case, it comes down to putting the right people skills in place and making sure those with the important knowledge are aware of the need to share it with those who are left waiting.

At the itSMF UK office, we are often asked "what's going on?" in the industry. What's happening with ITIL 4? How does the new ISO/IEC 20,000 differ from the previous version of the standard? Sometimes we know the answers (and we have articles on both of those topics in this issue), but often it's a case a digging deeper and finding the right people to help. If you need further information about developments in our industry, please do let us know.



Mark Lillycrop
Professional Services Manager, itSMF UK
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Are we still relevant to you?

As part of the founding itSMF group, I attended the first UK Conference in Stratford 27 years ago as Managing Director of the UK start-up Pink Elephant. Very exciting times! I have attended many itSMF conferences since and continue to be impressed with the support that the organisation receives within the service management community.

itSMF was very innovative in 1991, and I certainly couldn't list many products and services that have enjoyed the same longevity over this period; but there is no doubt that change is needed. Of course, we all know that ITIL is the main body of knowledge that has underpinned itSMF's success, and ITIL continues to be the backbone of service management in so many organizations; but equally, there has not been a full refresh since before the first iPhone was made available. However, as most readers will be aware, the long-awaited ITIL 4 is due to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2019, and AXELOS will be providing a full update at Conference.

In June I was asked to assume the role of interim General Manager for itSMF UK which I accepted on the premise that this year's Conference must be a catalyst for change in the months ahead. You see, I am part of the problem – one of the Old Boys' Club that continues to exert a large degree of influence across the industry. This is exactly why I accepted the challenge and certainly wish to "pass the ball" to the next generation.

In my view, service management has never been so big and so important. Service management is the "noun" and all of the other great initiatives such as DevOps, IT4IT, and VeriSM are the "adjectives". If you were to ask a CEO if they understood IT service management they would give a good description and an opinion on the quality of service management in their organization; however would they know about the other initiatives mentioned above? I doubt it, and they certainly could not give an opinion on how effective they were individually.

We now must work hard to ensure that the itSMF remains relevant. We have to up our game and that starts now. Service

Management is a profession and we need to demonstrate this fact to all those who are choosing to build a career path in this sector. With this in mind we have developed an outstanding competence resource, namely the Professional Service Management Framework, which offers both the individual and the organization guidelines on growing the necessary service management competencies. It also provides a digital scorecard on which to capture important achievements and record areas of strength and scope for future professional development.

Not a bad idea to help cultivate the most expensive line item in any service management budget – the people. As the only asset that really appreciates in value, why wouldn't we want to measure it, enhance it, and maintain it?

We also have a significant programme of masterclasses to roll out in the next few months on a range of new topics – events that help us live up to our *raison d'être* as an industry forum, bringing together those members with leading-edge knowledge and expertise to facilitate events and networking opportunities for other members. We'll also be introducing a new range of industry focused events, covering new solutions and products from our vendor members that address new business requirements. Watch this space for further information!

A Conference for the future

Right now, my focus is on our upcoming Annual Conference, and this year's speaker programme is a powerful reminder of the abundance of new initiatives that are being embraced within the membership. Topics such as Experience Level Agreements, Digital Customer Experience, AI and Machine Humanity are all being explored and exploited as service management teams help to transform their businesses and meet the demands of the millennial generation.

It's also refreshing to see how practices that are fundamental to service management are being deployed outside IT. Our opening

keynote speaker Roy Wilsher, Chairman of the National Fire Chief Council, will be discussing how major incident management is addressed by professional fire fighters. When I first spoke to Roy, it was quite humbling to hear him describe the UK's part in the incredible international team effort at the Japanese Tsunami, and I am looking forward to hearing the full story. As I explained that in IT our response to major incidents relied on great people, great process and great technology, Roy said that it was the same in the Fire Service, but with an emphasis on great communication, don't miss that one!

Roy also touched on the need to manage the personal aftermath of major incidents with his staff, which leads nicely into our second keynote this year. Thomas Jordan from SANE will be discussing mental health in the workplace and provide what promises to be a very thought-provoking session on supporting one another as individuals within an increasingly stressful working environment.

So, in conclusion, this is going to be a pivotal Conference, where we'll be openly discussing our relevance within the industry, setting the agenda for the future of itSMF, and considering – as always – how to deliver greater value to our members. I hope to see you there!



Ken Wilson
General Manager



A new line-up for 2019

itSMF UK will be rolling out a range of new events during 2019. Here's a quick guide to some of the topics and forums that will be available.



Masterclasses – learning from the experts

Our masterclasses take a fresh approach to the challenges faced by today's ITSM practitioners. They are created and facilitated by experienced facilitators from within the industry, providing real-world guidance and practical advice.

**NEW LOW
PRICE FOR
MEMBERS!**

During 2019 we'll be supplementing our core masterclass programme (service catalogue, major incident management, problem management, change and release, and CSI) with a host of new subjects to reflect the changing ITSM landscape. These include AI, intelligent swarming, knowledge-centred service, lean IT and cloud service management. Of course, we will also be providing in-depth workshops on ITIL 4 as more practical information becomes available. Check out the website for the full list of topics and dates.

Member Meet-ups

**FREE TO
MEMBERS!**

One of the big features of itSMF UK membership is the chance to attend our member networking events, which take place throughout the regions – London and South East, South West and Wales, Midlands, North, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These events provide a great opportunity to link up with other professionals to discuss burning service management issues in a relaxed environment, and all Member Meet-ups are open to ALL members, wherever you are based. Meet-ups generally include presentations from guest presenters and from our special interest groups, plus time for discussion and feedback on the themes of the day. They're also a great way for new speakers to share their views and experiences; if you would be interested in presenting at a member event, please contact the itSMF UK office or one of the regional chairs listed on the website.



Service Management Technology Forums: Find the perfect partner

ITSM tools and technologies are developing at a relentless pace, and keeping track of each product and service is no mean feat. We have the solution. SMtech Forums provide the information, contacts, and insight you need, all under one roof. Each bi-monthly event will focus on a particular area of service optimization and development – such as AI, self-service, or tool integration.

The day will start with presentations from the top SM technology companies, outlining their key offerings and the benefits they provide. Then it's over to you – ask the difficult questions, debate the key issues with other attendees, watch the demos at the vendors' stands.

It's the SM software equivalent of speed dating – we'll help you find the ideal partner to solve your business needs, and without the awkward conversations and endless hours of online research.



A date for your diary...



ITSM tools and technologies are developing at a relentless pace, and Our first SMtech Forum, in London on 29th January 2019, is “Service management solutions - I still haven't found what I'm looking for”.

Just like U2, service managers struggle to find the precise solution to their problems. This event takes a broad view of tool selection: the hidden issues you need to consider in choosing your tech partner, how to distinguish fact from hype, and the things to remember in any contract negotiation.

And if you still haven't found what you're looking for after that, there will be five further SMtech Forums throughout the year to help you fine-tune your thinking. Further details available shortly.

ITSM19: The best value ITSM consultancy you can't buy

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Last but not least, our Annual Conference & Exhibition will be back in London on 18-19 November 2019 - featuring inspiring keynotes, four streams of educational breakouts, and interactive workshops.

ITSM19 is our flagship event for the service management community, and this year it will be re-combined with the Professional Service Management Awards – one big celebration of industry expertise and achievement, highlighting the ITSM experiences of our leading-edge member organizations and the commitment and inspiration of our teams and individuals.



Celebrating success with the Professional SM Awards

Our Professional Service Management Awards, which were staged at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on 5th June in London this year, highlight the achievements of teams and individuals working across the spectrum of service management, from small businesses to large enterprises and product vendors to consultancies.

What all award nominees have in common is a focus on professionalism and service improvement, a total commitment to the work they do and a determination to do it better.

In January, we'll be opening the Call for Nominations for 2019. This is the perfect opportunity to share your achievements with the wider community. Once all submissions have been considered by the judges, the short-listed candidates will be invited to a special Finalists' Day in April. The winners will be announced at our Annual Gala Dinner, which next year will return to its original slot on the Monday evening of Conference in November.

Take a look at the categories below, and the photos opposite of last year's winners, and give some thought to the real success stories within your organization. We will send out a link for the Call for Nominations in the New Year. Good luck!

DIGITAL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

Awarded to the organization that, in the judges' view, has completed the most successful digital transformation project in

the last year, improving customer experience by effectively exploiting online tools and technologies in areas such as cloud, cyber, big data, IoT and agile working to significantly transform the service management environment within the organization.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Awarded to the members of a team that have supported their customers in providing inspirational service delivery and significant business benefit. They will have successfully built upon these relationships to become the beacon of service management within their organization.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Presented to the author, special interest group or industry body that has made the most significant contribution to thought leadership within the service management community over the last year.

YOUNG ITSM PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Presented to an individual under the age of 30 who has demonstrated an outstanding level of achievement, ability, team support, rapid progress or business impact in the early years of their ITSM career, and who also promises great potential for future success.

ITIL EXPERIENCE AWARD

The ITIL Experience Award: Collaborating for Success recognizes collaborative excellence that has enabled outstanding ITIL service management for customers. It is open both to individuals and to teams, and entrants should demonstrate success in the

use of at least three of ITIL's nine guiding principles, while providing examples of effective collaboration between individuals or multiple teams

ASHLEY HANNA CONTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Presented to the individual who, in the judges' view, has made the most outstanding contribution to the itSMF UK organization as a volunteer in the last year.

SPECIAL INNOVATION AWARDS

The Special Innovation Awards highlight the achievements of organisations who are exploring new territory, often around the periphery of traditional ITSM in areas such as DevOps, agile or BRM, or who have found innovative solutions to well-known problems.

"Winning was incredible. This recognition has given the entire team a huge boost in confidence and belief in our direction."

Rob Thompson,
Head of UK Customer Service
Management (IS), National Grid Ventures
and PSMA award winner

AND THE WINNER IS...

Digital Transformation Project of the Year

(sponsored by SITS18)



WINNER... Central Bank of Ireland
HIGHLY COMMENDED... Network Rail
FINALISTS:

- Agilisys
- Computacenter

Service Management Team of the Year

(sponsored by PeopleCert)

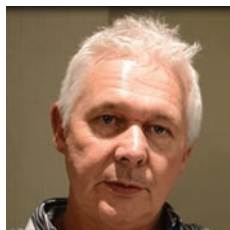


WINNER... Department for Work and Pensions
HIGHLY COMMENDED... Computacenter
FINALISTS:

- Thebes
- Barnardo's
- BJSS
- Agilisys
- Infinity Group

Thought Leadership Award

(sponsored by Thebes)



WINNER... Mean Time Between Fiascos – Ian MacDonald, Edenfield IT Consulting
FINALIST:

- DevOps and the Three Ways of Transition
- Producing a SIAM Business Case
- What processes should be in a SIAM model?

Special Innovation Award DevOps

(sponsored by EssentialSM)



WINNER... The Co-operative Group

Special Innovation Award - SIAM

(sponsored by PSMF)



WINNER... Wipro/RSA Insurance Group

Paul Rappaport Award for Outstanding Contribution to ITSM



WINNER... James Finister, TCS

Young ITSM Professional of the Year (sponsored by SDI)



WINNER... Holly Palmer, Littlefish
HIGHLY COMMENDED... Aimee Norton, Orange Bus

FINALISTS:

- Shoaib Qureshi
- BJSS; Gary Hobbs
- Thebes; Jonathan Robison
- Agilisys

The ITIL Experience Award: Collaborating for Success (sponsored by AXELOS)



WINNER... Grupo Bimbo

FINALISTS:

- Agilisys
- Network Rail
- IQVIA

Ashley Hanna Contributor of the Year (sponsored by itSMF UK)



WINNER... Karen Brusch, Nationwide Building Society

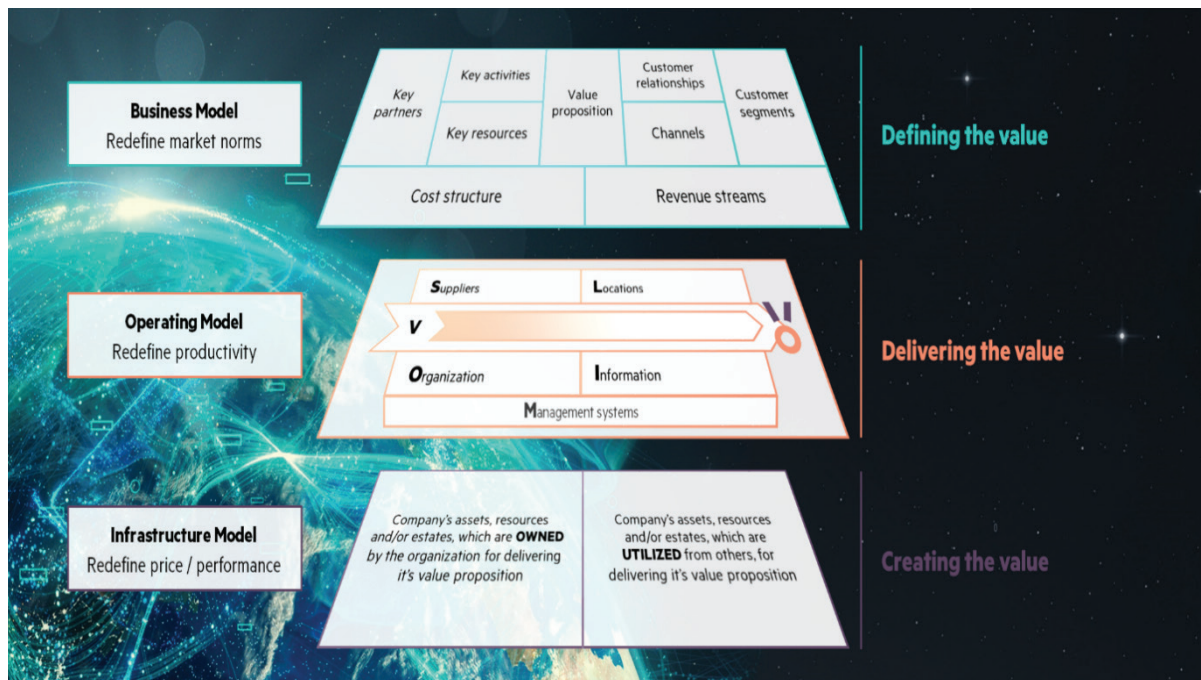
FINALISTS:

- Andy Turner, Fujitsu
- Jon Morley, Independent
- Mark Temple, University of Glasgow
- Matt Hoey, Grant Thornton



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- Contributed to the creation and use of IT4IT™
- Experienced in DevOps, Security and Service Management Transformations

A new face on the itSMF UK Board



Congratulations to Karen Bruschi, who had recently joined the itSMF UK Board.

Karen, a service design consultant at Nationwide Building Society, has been a very active member in various roles over the years. As chair of the Service Level Management SIG, she was instrumental in the publication of our ground-breaking SLM Practitioner's Guide. She was also closely involved in the launch of the Service Design and SIAM SIGs. One of the lead authors of the PSMF content, she was awarded the itSMF UK Contributor of the Year award in 2014.

Board Chair Rosemary Gurney commented, "We are delighted to welcome Karen to the Board. She brings a wealth of experience in service management but also a desire to see us grow and prosper as an organization."

Looking for publications?

Membership of itSMF UK gives you access to a huge range of service management content, including papers, blogs, and back-issues of ServiceTalk magazine. But did you know that we can also provide publications at discount rates of 15% or more? If you're looking for the latest update on ITIL, VeriSM, or other sources of industry guidance, why not check whether we can give you the best deal? We're currently creating a new book sales portal on the website, but in the meantime please contact us at publications@itsmf.co.uk with any book queries.

Getting the best out of PSMF



Our Professional Service Management Framework (PSMF) continues to grow, with a number of members now building their professional development strategy around the core framework content and PSMF Global scorecard platform.

We're delighted to announce that we are working on version 2 of PSMF Global, streamlining the profile registration process, enhancing the digital badging, and providing improved usability and navigation for those

leaving endorsements and credits. If you haven't yet created your PSMF profile, why not check out psmf.global today? It's the ideal place to start building a plan of your personal service management competencies and the areas you wish to develop for the future. The profile and access to the framework content (competency descriptors and supporting L&D guidance) are freely available to all members.

Take a look, too, at the PSMF Verified Partner Programme – a short and simple assessment and endorsement, which enables organizations to demonstrate their commitment and maturity in approaching ITSM professionalism. This assessment involves an informal review of your current organizational processes based on the PSMF framework. Once assessed and accredited your business will be able to provide PSMF-based credits to your staff (leading to digital badges) as part of your own employee development programme.

If you'd like more information on PSMF Verified Partnership or the PSMF Global scorecard, please contact the itSMF UK office on **0118 918 6500** or visit www.itsmf.co.uk/services/psmf.





It's been a long time COMING but ITIL 4 is almost here

It's been more than ten years since the last major re-write of ITIL and in that time our world and the worlds of IT and service management have changed massively. The ITIL 4 update is eagerly awaited and anticipated, and definitely due, says Barclay Rae.

Personally I'm honoured to be an active member of the Lead Author Team, as I was also with the ITIL Practitioner programme in 2015 (more of that later...) The author team has been the tip of the iceberg in terms of contribution and collaboration, as AXELOS (the owners and authors of ITIL) have worked hard to get as many practitioners and industry contributors as possible to provide input, ideas and feedback to the new version – over 2000 people in total. Working with the core team – which is diverse and multi-national – has been a great experience and I feel we all have learned much from this, as well as providing new ideas and thinking to the existing framework.

ITIL is the most widely adopted IT best practice with over 5 million certified

practitioners globally. The project to update is similarly a big exercise – basically a product management programme – which needs to take into account multi-language capabilities, trusted exam systems and of course the need to work with an established industry of trainers and training providers around the globe. The approach to releasing information about the content of ITIL 4 has been mindful of the need to maintain continuity and consistency with the many existing training programmes, as well as providing a straightforward transition to the new scheme.

To date the announcements made have been around the new certification scheme – with the new Foundation publication, training and certification being released in Q1 2019. I am confident that this will

be a major improvement on the existing Foundation module, particularly with focus on the key areas required for initial understanding of service management. We are also currently working on the second phase of books, training and exams for ITIL Managing Professional, which will be realised in the second half of 2019. There is a clear and simple progression from the current scheme and I'm pleased to say that the ITIL 4 framework will be updated to meet contemporary and future needs.

So, what's in the content? What's different in ITIL 4?

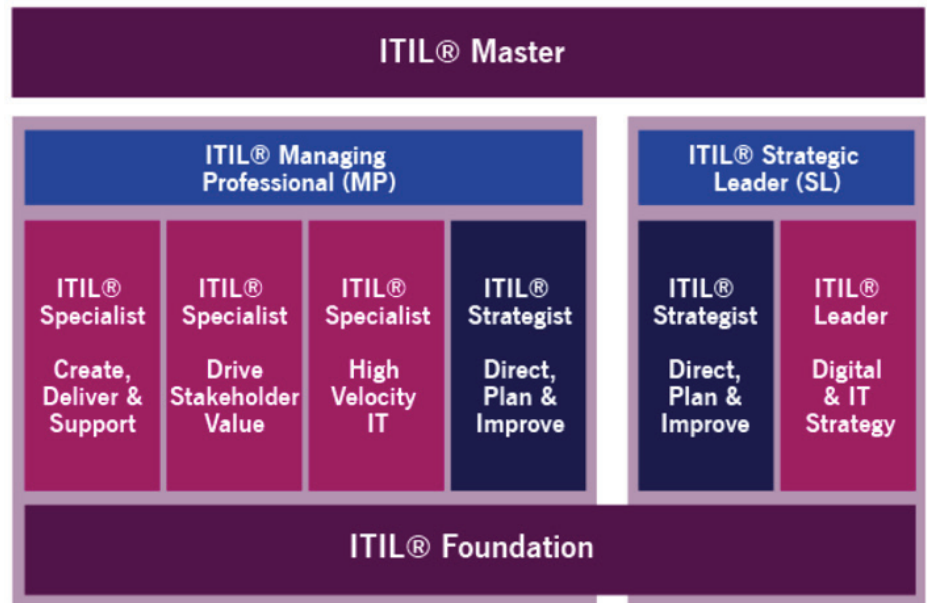
Full details will be released at launch, but I can give you a few hints and glimpses of what to expect. I'm delighted that ITIL 4 Foundation – and beyond – will include some of the highly rated content and ideas from ITIL Practitioner, most notably the ITIL Guiding Principles. These were conceived as a modern, agile and practical way to apply common sense and real-life context on how organizations and practitioners should approach ITIL – in essence how to 'adopt and adapt' in a fresh and memorable format.



Also, what you may know and love as ITIL 'processes' – incident, problem, change, knowledge, service desk etc, plus many more – are still there and have been refreshed

“We have been careful to maintain the value and importance of these various practices, whilst at the same time providing simple and clear definitions of them.”

and re-fashioned in the wider content as 'practices', including roles, skills, people and resources. We have been careful to maintain the value and importance of these various practices, whilst at the same time providing simple and clear definitions of them. Each of these practices spans a number of areas of



delivery in the cycles of work, from demand to value, so these are not defined or limited as being part of one specific phase or context. From the ITIL v3 experience, there will not be the one-dimensional challenge of trying to fit every practice into a specific lifecycle! The knowledge acquired from ITIL v3 Intermediate modules will then help to integrate key concepts existing in both versions, understand how they interact, what remains core, and what has evolved.

Whilst the practices will maintain consistency and continuity within the current framework, the biggest and most exciting change in approach is the overall business and delivery context. The systems thinking approach shows how to run various products and services as value streams, from demand to value. ITIL and ITIL practices are set within an eco-system of interlinked products and services, all of which are run through the build, test and run cycles, and feedback loops that we know and love. This sets ITIL and service management in a strategic context, bringing together ITSM, development, operations, business relationships and governance in a holistic approach. This is a truly integrated model for digital service management.

What will be the real value of ITIL 4?

Whilst ITIL will provide familiarity and comfort in many areas of existing service management, the real value is in how this is now integrated with new ways of working and emerging practices. This provides current ITSM practitioners with a clear pathway to develop new skills and practices that are part of the DevOps and agile working world.

ITIL 4 takes the whole IT industry forward into digital transformation, DevOps, product management, cloud, AI, automation and more in a welcoming and familiar landscape. For a new generation of digital

professionals, ITIL 4 is also a holistic framework on which to build a broad and inclusive skill-set fit for the contemporary world.

In initial feedback and testing there has been excellent feedback on ITIL 4, as it is seen to meet a number of market needs, spanning various communities and stakeholders.

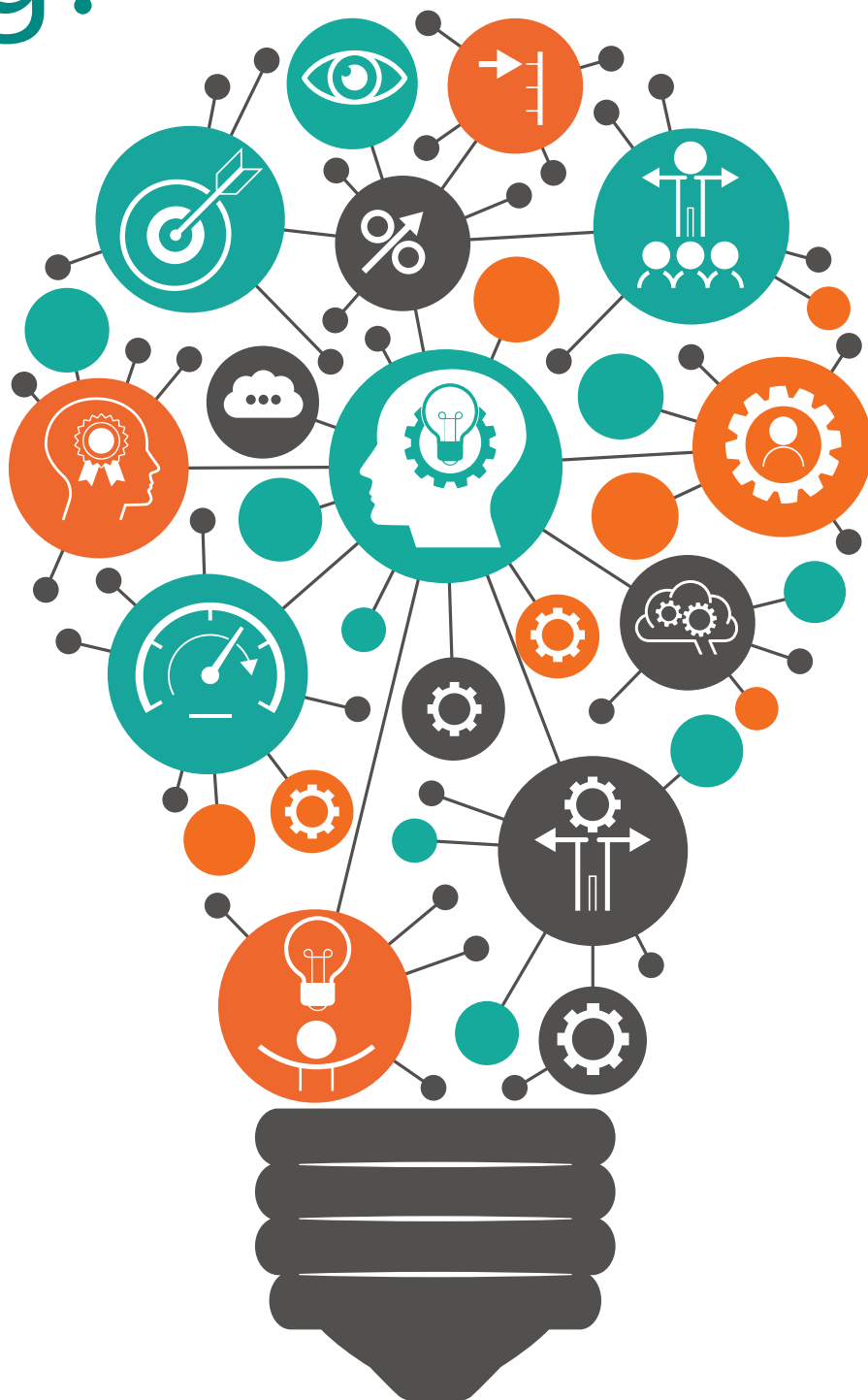
ITIL 4 is definitely worth the wait – I hope you enjoy embracing it and getting great value from it.



Barclay Rae is a service management consultant and part of the Lead Author Team for ITIL 4. He is also a director and former CEO of itSMF UK.

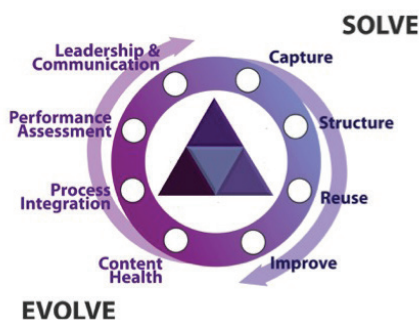
**Laura Yeomans and
Michelle Stumpf**

For those who are new to it, the KCS methodology is based upon the idea of putting knowledge in the hands of those who use it the most; viewing knowledge from a customer's point of view; and using double-loop learning to set you up for long-term success. But at the core of KCS is actually just good old-fashioned logic. It's not about following every step in a prescribed way or making rigid plans and processes. KCS is about learning, sharing, and viewing the system as a whole. So, when we're asked if it has to be all or nothing, the answer is definitely not.





KCS Double Loop Process



That said, there are some elements that, in our experience, just aren't negotiable if you're going to make KCS work:

- **Agents owning the knowledge.** This is critical for two reasons. Firstly, agents are the ones to use the knowledge, so they know what they need when it comes to how to find and use knowledge. Secondly, they're the ones talking to your customers most, so understand not only what customers need, but how they describe it, and therefore how they will search for answers.
- Recognize contributions of **learning and sharing** over simply knowing. We're talking here about knowledge hoarders – we all know one, you might even be one yourself at times. Those who will help by doing, rather than helping others to understand how to do it themselves. Think about it, if you work within a system where you're rewarded for what you know, then where's the incentive to share that knowledge?

If, however, you work in a system where you're rewarded for what you share and learn, knowledge hoarding can be a thing of the past.

- **Trust.** Trust is surprisingly rare when it comes to knowledge! We trust agents to talk to customers, to tell them answers, give them fixes, sell to them, and yet somehow the moment we talk about having them write about that in a knowledge article, panic ensues. A desire to create complex approval workflows creeps in and, before you know it, you've got an approval cycle that takes weeks and even months instead of minutes, and 99% of the time it adds zero value to agents or customers. In our extensive experience,

putting your trust in your agents pays dividends, not only in knowledge management but in overall engagement and effectiveness of your teams.

In our time with KCS we've worked with organizations who don't use the KCS model for roles, some who don't have a content standard, or a strategic framework, and they're all still very successful with KCS. The key thing to note for each of these organizations was that these were conscious choices. They knew the methodology and what it recommended, but based on their unique situations decided to take a different approach, adopting the elements of KCS that best suited their own business objectives and knowledge management requirements.



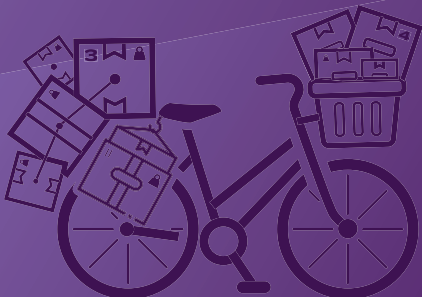
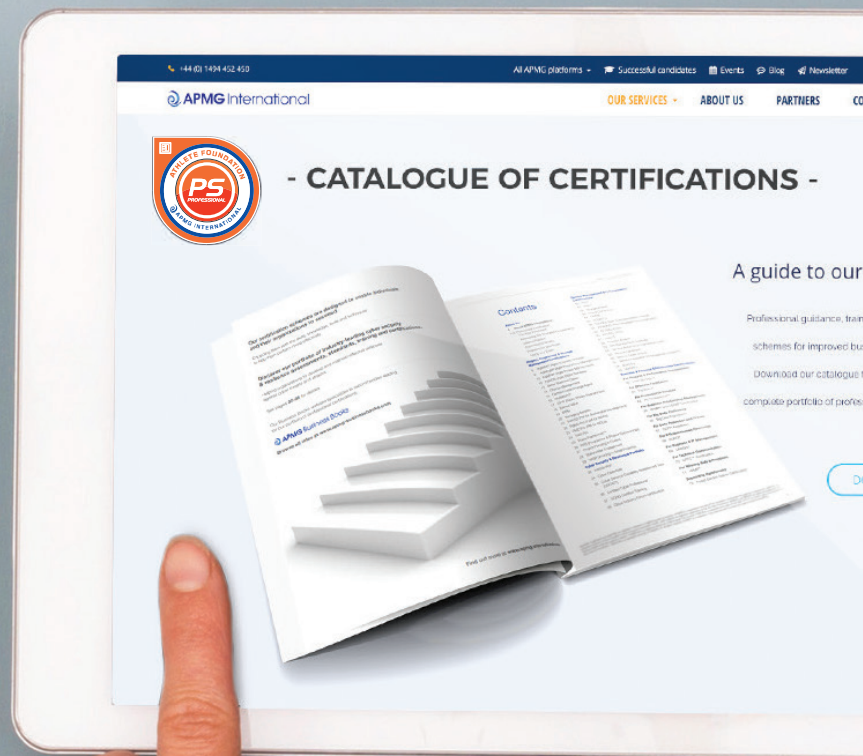
Laura Yeomans (left), Customer Success Manager and Michelle Stumpf (right), KCS Certified Trainer - Content & Knowledge Management Strategist at Upland Software are qualified KCS trainers and have many years' experience in running their own knowledge practices, as well as training and coaching others in knowledge management and KCS. Upland Software is a leading provider of cloud-based Enterprise Work Management software.

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Kaimar Karu explores a few of the artificial intelligence themes that are shaping the industry right now – and helps to cut through some of the buzz for added clarity.

My AI is better than yours

It seems like Artificial Intelligence (AI) is suddenly everywhere, from phones to cars to kitchen appliances. If it performs calculations – it's AI. We've already been through three "AI winters" in the past 70 years – yes, our obsession with AI is that old – where the hype did not match the expected outcomes. Are we heading for another one now, or have we finally cracked it?



What does it mean to be artificially intelligent?

Let's start off with some categorization. When we talk about AI, we usually talk about the capability to imitate human behaviour. This is a rather broad definition, and indeed, almost everything that does something for us could thus be called AI. Like a robot dog that fetches our slippers. Or dances. Or opens doors. But what about real dogs who have been trained to do the same? Probably not, because we seem to assume that artificial also means mechanical, and this in turn to be seemingly uninfluenced by the mind or emotions. Anthropomorphized pets do not fit that category, but learning machines do.

The capability for machines to "get smarter" is called Machine Learning (ML) and it can be either supervised (working with labelled data) or unsupervised (working with unlabelled data), taking advantage of existing data, feedback loops, and reinforcement learning. Unsupervised learning often benefits from what is called Deep Learning (DL), and in many systems, the algorithms used for DL are inspired by biological nervous systems – we try to mimic the way (we think) our brain works. There are challenges with and limitations to this approach, but this is beyond the scope for this article.

Most of today's real-world AI can be described as Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), where the application of the acquired knowledge and skills is limited to a single domain or task type (e.g. face recognition or natural language

processing). The goal – or perhaps the dream – is to move towards Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), where the machine could mix and match its skills and perform at the same level as any human being. Despite the buzz, we're not even close to reaching AGI – some say we might get there by 2040, some say the year 2100 is much more likely, and some say it will never happen. There are, of course, people who claim this will happen any moment now, or has already happened...

Utopia and dystopia

An interesting, and perhaps the scariest, question is what will happen once we do get to AGI. What will an artificial mind that has reached the human level of "reasoning" decide to do next? That is – how long will it take before AGI becomes smarter than humans, before it becomes Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) with an exponentially scaling skillset? Are we talking about decades, or mere minutes?

There are two main camps of thought when it comes to ASI. The first one believes in utopia – that we will be able to constrain and leverage ASI for maximum benefit for humankind. We'll be able to find cures for diseases, solutions to the planet's problems, and eventually probably reach immortality, in whatever form we end up taking (hint: this might not be humanoid).

The second camp is more inclined to see the result of ASI as a dystopia, and believes it will end with our extinction. Several high-profile scientists (e.g. Stephen Hawking) and businessmen (e.g. Elon Musk) are in this camp, and consider AI (in the form of ASI) to be our biggest existential threat.

There is a lot more to be said about the possible futures when it comes to ASI, and I will pick this discussion up in my ITSM18 presentation. In the hopes that the potential extinction is not immediate, I'll now move on to the topic of ITSM, and what benefits (and challenges) AI brings here.

"The industry has started to catch up, though, and automation has been becoming an increasingly important topic in ITSM."

Is it time for the I in ITSM to stand for intelligent?

One of the pains in ITSM, as well as a frequently mentioned criticism towards it, is the amount of manual work that needs to be done. Tickets and requests and approvals and delays... which is also one of the reasons behind the popularity of the DevOps movement, where a lot of focus has been put on automation. It's not like automation is a foreign concept for ITSM professionals, but the technological capabilities to fully leverage this in 2008 were just a tiny bit different from what we can do in 2018. The industry has started to catch up, though, and automation has been becoming an increasingly important topic in ITSM.

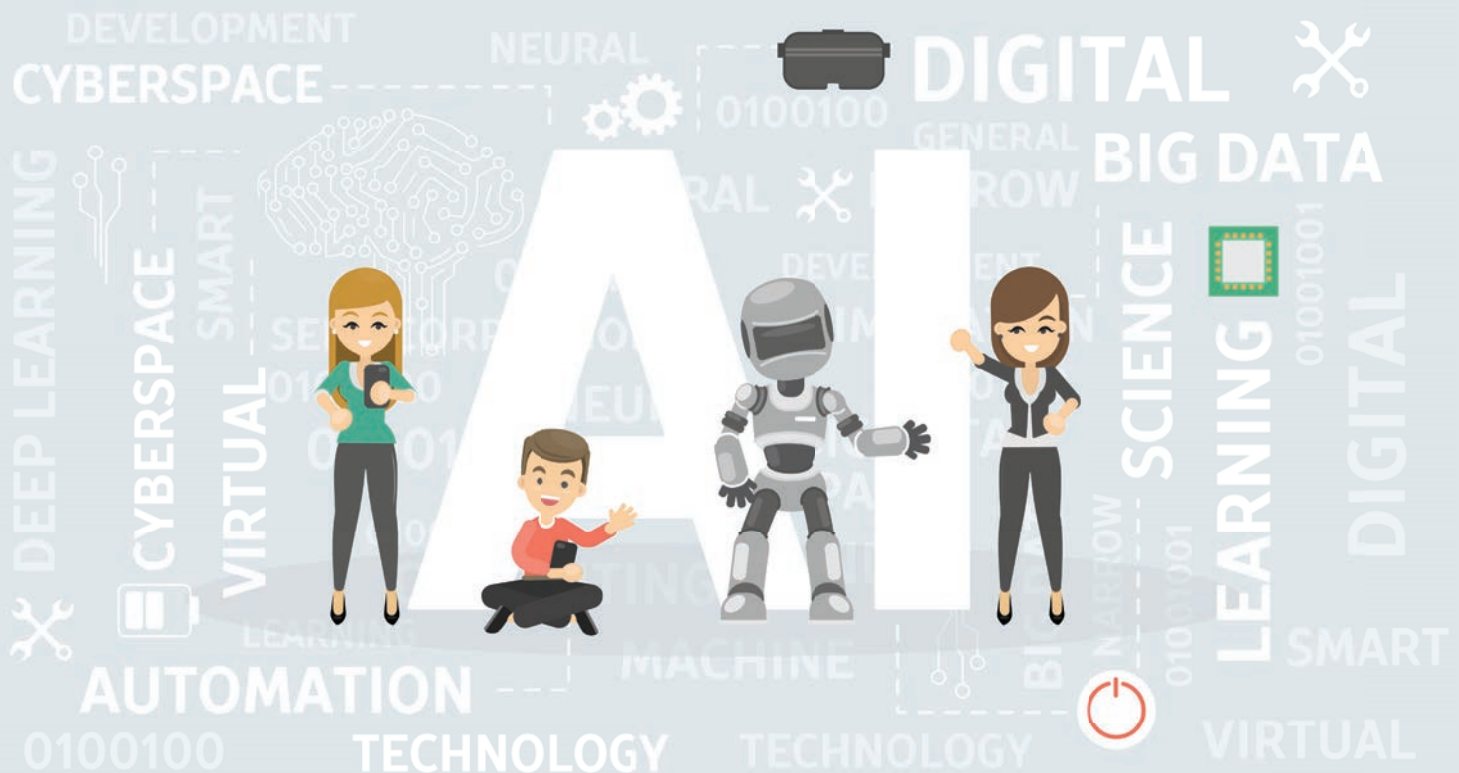
In fact, most of the AI-labelled discussions in ITSM today are about automation (and chatbots; oh so much talk about chatbots). The promoted solutions wouldn't really be able to pass the Turing Test, and "AI-powered" doesn't mean "exhibiting AGI-like behaviours", far from it. Although these developments do make our lives easier, it's all AI in the broadest (and least useful) sense of the phrase. Productivity gains are important, yes, but when it comes to e.g. Customer Experience (CX) then how do we know that replacing a human with a chatbot improves CX, rather than just allows us to play with new toys and spend company funds for questionable results?

Following strict predefined scripts for automation can be useful to not waste time on repetitive (but still important) work, but these tasks give us little insight to how to improve the value created with the services. The intelligence comes from learning, not from following; and for learning, we need data.

Then "T" should stand for "Transparent"

ML algorithms need training data to be able to provide us with new information – either by analysing well-structured and labelled data and answering specific (trends-related) questions, or by working with unlabelled and potentially highly unstructured data and looking for an answer to a "Tell me something interesting" question. That is to say that finding detailed answers to specific questions requires a well-structured dataset, and to find meaningful answers requires well thought-out questions. What is it that





we really want to know? This is a bit like formulating search queries in the early days of Google search, before the algorithms were improved for natural language processing.

It's the data where some of the challenges lie as well. There have been quite a few examples of an AI-powered system behaving in a way we consider biased and wrong – most recently, in the case of Amazon's hiring tools. This is often referred to as algorithmic bias, but I believe this term obfuscates the challenge and makes it more difficult to find solutions. The result of using an algorithm to comb through the available data and come up with recommendations can be described as biased, but it's not the algorithm that is at fault – it's the data, and behind data, it's us.

The utility of the AI solution we design will be as high (or as low) as the quality of the training data we provide. An easy-sounding solution to this would be to add compensating measures to the algorithm to

balance the results, or perhaps even tweak the data, but this is a slippery slope. How do we know what to tweak and how much? And if we believe we know what the ideal desired outcome looks like, then why do we need AI at all? Couldn't we just make our own decisions?

We also need to keep in mind that data is historical and non-judgmental. It reflects what happened before, without any moral or financial evaluation. It is us who add this dimension to the output of the algorithm, and it is us who decide what feels right and what feels wrong. Even recent history has shown that there can be surprisingly little consensus on some of these matters among the 7.5 billion people living on this planet, and that's a challenge we can't ignore.

Working with what we have

I believe that one of the huge benefits of AI is the ability to shed light on how we have made our decisions in the past. It helps to highlight our biases, and provide us with an opportunity to assess these in the context of our specific frame of reference – be it political, financial, or moral. Biases are part of the mechanism we use to explore and make sense of the world, and it's impossible for humans to avoid bias – but it is possible to become aware of some of the biases strongly affecting our lives.

This approach also applies to the context of ITSM. To use AI to make better decisions and to improve the quality and value of the services we provide, we need to be transparent about the data we use to find insights and make decisions. If the results

of running an algorithm on live data seem disappointing, we need to take a look at the training data to better understand how and why we ended up with these results. We shouldn't introduce biases with unknown effects into the algorithm – we should aim at providing it with better data.

So, there's an important aspect to keep in mind when having discussions with your current or potential ITSM tool provider. Cut through the hype of "AI powered" and find out what are their plans for leveraging machine learning. Find out how they can help you to learn from your data.

“...if we believe we know what the ideal desired outcome looks like, then why do we need AI at all?”

Couldn't we just make our own decisions?”



Kaimar Karu is Managing Director of Mindbridge and former head of Product Strategy and Development at AXELOS

What's going on?

People skills and the IT service desk

A few years ago, I was running a training course in London for a group of service desk representatives from a large telecoms company. One of the delegates arrived late for the first day of the course. He apologised and explained that he'd been stuck on an

underground train on the Central Line for 40 minutes.

Curiously, he then went on to say that it had been a really good experience. There followed sideward glances around the room,

along with yours truly at the front feeling baffled as to how to take this – did I have some kind of joker on my hands?

What could I do, but ask him to explain..

“Within seconds of the train grinding to a halt, the driver offered us an explanation over the on-board PA system as to the reason for the delay. He had a particularly warm, reassuring, friendly tone. As time passed and the train remained stuck, he regularly checked in over the PA to reassure passengers that all would be well, despite the delay. Through his manner, we all started talking to each other.

Within 15 minutes or so, there were conversations going on all round. In fact, bar the wine and nibbles it was turning into a bit of a party! By the time the train finally got moving again, some people were getting lumps in their throat, shedding a tear as they realised the impromptu party was coming to an end. There was even talk of organising a reunion at a later date on the Piccadilly Line...”



Yes, I admit to some over-egging of this little story, **yet there is a serious point:**

What if the driver had said nothing for those 40 minutes? What if he had, like so many others can, remained silent?

This incident made for a really powerful learning point on that very course I was running: it was actually a customer care programme. The story seemed to sum up what is required of a good, successful IT service desk – people skills. Whilst the technical fix is the priority and of paramount importance, it's not always a simple affair and there will likely be hitches along the way. Meanwhile, during the process, the service user needs to be handled in such a way that they feel as **comfortable as they possibly can in the circumstances.**

There is no denying that a technical issue is at the very least an inconvenience, and at times an absolute disaster. The first line support person, just like that train driver, won't likely be in a position to repair whatever fault had caused the problem, but through their ability to engage can create a more acceptable, comfortable environment for any service user.

The IT service desk is in a unique position, dealing with just about everyone in the organisation at some time or another, from the most junior right through to the CEO. And, despite all being users of IT and related technologies, peoples' technical nous will also vary widely. One moment you could be speaking to a relatively junior employee with good understanding of IT, and the next to a senior VP with little or no knowledge. In each individual case, their problem is considered by them to be the most pressing, the most important. Handling such varied situations and demands requires people skills of the highest order.

Whether you are working in first, second or third line support, you will be coming into contact with those weird and varied things called people – arguably more challenging to deal with than the technology!

Having run a significant number of customer service programmes over nearly three decades, I have identified what is probably the single biggest demand that customers have, over and above getting the job done. And that is:

“PLEASE tell me what's going on!”

This, along with specifying time frames (even if only for an update) will help appease the customer as best one can in the circumstances and stop the phone from ringing with anxious or angry demands for updates and information. A call from the service desk that says simply, “I'm just calling to reassure you that we haven't forgotten about you...” followed by an update, can be like balm for the troubled soul.

Ultimately, great customer care is all about how people feel. The circumstances can be identical, yet it's how each individual is treated and communicated with that makes all the difference.

Think about the IT department in your own organisation. What kind of reputation does it have? All too often IT can have a less than perfect reputation – this can be for technical reasons, but I'd suggest more often than not, it's about those people skills.

This is what that train driver seemed to have in spades – demonstrated by simply by keeping people informed. Had he not done so, I can only imagine there would have been a very different atmosphere in that train carriage.



Chris Markiewicz will be leading an itSMF UK masterclass on people management skills on 6th February. Check out the website for further details.



ISO/IEC 20000-1: the service management standard gets a makeover

Lynda Cooper describes the recent update of ISO/IEC 20000 part 1, and highlights to things you need to know about the revision.



ISO/IEC 20000 is the only international standard for service management. It can be used by organisations big and small, public and private, for IT and non-IT services. ISO/IEC 20000-1 is the seventh most certified management system standard in the world (see ISO Survey 2017).

It started as BS15000 in 2000 and quickly grew in popularity around the world. It evolved into an international standard, ISO/IEC 20000, in 2005. A second edition followed in 2011 and now the third edition has been published in September 2018.

Standards are updated using feedback and research. We all know that the service management environment is rapidly changing with new methods, innovative frameworks, ever changing technologies and higher customer demands. IT has become the business in many cases, with start-ups only existing because of the technology they can exploit. It is harder than ever to separate IT from the business. The revised edition takes this all into account while not losing its key purpose, that of providing the requirements for a service management system (SMS) that is operated to deliver services to fulfil agreed service requirements and deliver value.

Strictly speaking ISO/IEC 20000 is a family of standards. Part 1 defines the requirements for an SMS: it sits at the heart of the family and can be assessed and certified. Part 10 contains concepts and vocabulary. Both of these parts were updated and published in September 2018. Other parts of the series are being updated in line with part 1.

This does look quite different from the 2011 edition SMS framework. The revised edition now uses the common high-level structure (HLS) used for all management system standards. This dictates the top-level clauses with some common requirements and terms.

These are then supplemented with the service management specific requirements.

All of the service management processes that were in the 2011 edition are still there. Some have been separated out, which makes it look like there are more processes (for instance, Incident and Service Request Management have been separated). There are some new clauses such as Plan the Services, Knowledge and Organization and its Context. Some processes have been renamed, such as Governance of Processes Operated by other Parties which is renamed and updated as Control of Parties Involved in the Service Lifecycle. Some processes have been moved from other areas, such as Asset Management which is now a very short clause following the move.

If you are already certified or starting to implement ISO/IEC 20000, do not worry: there will be a two-year transition period following the revision of part 1.

Benefits of the revised standard

The standard has been updated to ensure that it concentrates on what to do and not how to do it, allowing organizations to choose how to implement the requirements using whatever method, framework and technology is suited to their environment and services.

The HLS allows easier integration of management systems when an organization is certified to more than 1 standard such as ISO/IEC 20000-1 with ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO/IEC 27001 (information security management). A new part 7 is being written and will be published in mid-2019 to provide guidance on such an integration.

One very positive change is that the number of requirements has been reduced from 256 to 216, which will please all users!

The major benefit is that the HLS common requirements, starting with context of the organization, ensures the design of the SMS is aligned with the organization's purpose, intended outcomes of the SMS and strategic direction. This is a much more top-down approach than previous editions and will result in an SMS that is fully suited to the organization, with SMS processes that are embedded into the business processes to ensure maximum benefits are achieved.

Finding out more

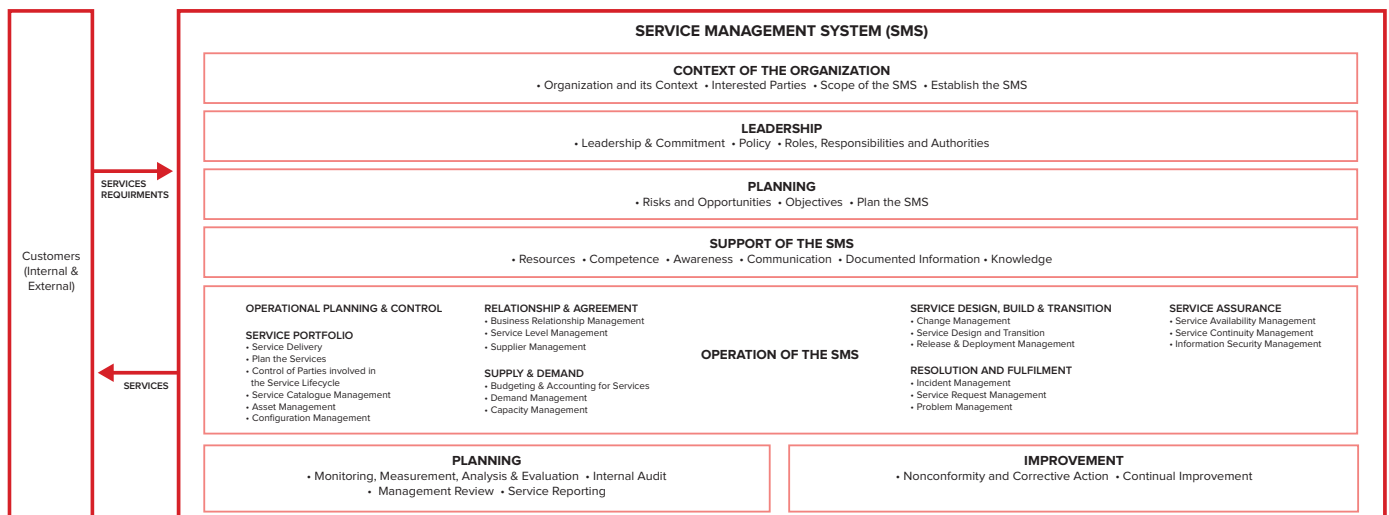
The author will be speaking about the revised ISO/IEC 20000-1 at the ITSM18 conference in London on 19th November. She is also running a workshop on the revised standard in London on 13th December. Further details at www.itsmf.co.uk.



Lynda Cooper, an independent consultant and trainer, is the project editor for ISO/IEC 20000-1. She chairs the BSI committee for service management and sits on various ISO/IEC committees representing the UK. Lynda was one of the first people in the world to hold the ITIL Master qualification. She can be reached at lynda.cooper@service20000.com

What has changed?

The SMS framework has been revised as follows:



Mentoring for success

Kat Turner describes the many benefits of launching a mentoring programme in your organization, and suggests how to make the case for mentors.

You're probably aware that to produce a succession of motivated, driven, forward-facing employees every organization needs some form of career development programme. Leaving career development to managers is cheaper in terms of time value, but is often ineffective, as they lack the ability to recognise a 'high flyer' or may be reluctant to lose them.



Mentoring enhances the abilities of both the mentor and mentee and enables the organization to gain increased efficiency. There are many intangible benefits to be had, including better morale, greater career satisfaction, and staff getting up to speed more quickly.

So, you've decided you want to start a mentoring programme but fear you'll face resistance from management and your team. So, what can you do?

Convincing management

There are lots of benefits to implementing a mentoring programme but some of the ones that may sway your management could be:

- **It makes recruitment and induction easier**

Having a mentor as a new employee helps them find their feet in a new environment. Promoting your mentoring programme is a good way to make your organization appear more attractive to new employees, especially if it leads to fast tracking to higher management roles.

- **It becomes a tool for motivation**

The mentee feels they're being listened to, and someone is taking an active interest in their career, whilst they're also gaining the tools to progress. The mentor gets to embrace new challenges and enhance their role by acquiring new skills to support the mentee as well as their own progression. This motivational tool can be extended as part of organizational change management, where aspects of corporate culture can be explored by the mentor and mentee, identifying those that are fixed and those that are open for dialogue, or can be challenged.

- **It can help with staff retention**

Working out why employees might be dissatisfied is a key benefit of the mentoring process and, if their issues can be resolved, retained talent will feel more positive about their organization. Employees who feel that they have 'buy-in' are more willing to share ideas and can be a catalyst for instigating organizational change.

- **Mentoring improves succession planning**

Particularly if there's a widely established mentoring programme in an organization. This might involve shorter mentoring relationships so that senior managers are familiar with the strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations of a large cross section of staff, and so can use this to their advantage going forward.

- **It Improves Communication**

This is a key benefit, as mentoring breaks down hierarchies and so builds communication networks that can improve productivity and efficiency, leading to innovation and a quicker response to changing business needs. This improved communication increases the flow of ideas and information, whilst facilitating collaboration between teams.

But is your organization ready?

Prepare your organization for mentoring by carrying out an evaluation of their readiness. This might involve an examination of the cultural and developmental climate, management commitment, and the history of previous self-development or mentoring initiatives; for example, were they successful or just a short-lived trend? It's also important to gauge whether there are other initiatives that might compete for resources.

- **You may also need to convince your HR department**

Don't assume HR will be initially supportive of a mentoring scheme! They may resist it, especially if they're already under pressure, or they may view it as another way to give them more responsibility. The solution here is to engage with the HR community early on, ideally in the planning stage, and continue to keep them informed, discussing how each mentoring initiative will support their priorities. You could create a mentoring programme within HR itself to help them to appreciate it.

- **Convincing your team**

If management are supportive then the next step is to convince your team. You can start to do this by promoting mentoring as a positive experience by:

- Inviting popular mentors to speak in your organization
- Promoting mentoring as a positive experience through staff development sessions
- Addressing concerns and fears using a no-blame approach by introducing an anonymous feedback tool
- Setting up a small coaching workshop session
- Promoting positive mentoring success stories, either in your organization or your industry, through corporate news feeds
- Clarifying the programme for those who are not involved, so that if only a small number of participants take part initially others can be involved as it progresses
- Providing case studies of successful mentoring programmes, such as the one at Caterpillar:

"Mentors at Caterpillar provide guidance on almost every aspect of in-house practice such as career exploration, corporate culture, 'soft skills' development, organizational understanding, internal enterprise awareness, work-life balance and community knowledge."

Jamie Meyers, Corporate Counsel, Caterpillar.

Making a case for virtual mentoring

An objection to mentoring can often be the time it takes out of your busy schedule, but online mentoring is flexible and can enable much more rapid responses than the traditional meeting scheduled approach. You may find this approach works well if you're

employed by a national or multi-national enterprise or want to open up a world of potential mentors from a global pool. A virtual mentor is a great way to target respected industry experts. Through using a virtual mentor, the mentee has the chance to enter into a longer-term relationship with their mentor. The mentee could begin by having a conference call to discuss their training, career, and how they might use their skills, building an agenda around what is useful and relevant to them. Find out more about virtual mentors at ITSM Zone at itsm.zone/about-us/training-plus-mentors/

So, you've convinced management and your team, what's next?

Once you've created some interest, and gained some buy-in from staff, the next step could be choosing what type of mentoring programme you want to start. The main issue can be getting it off the ground initially, but once established, mentees generate mentors and help to embed the initiative and reap the rewards.

Mentoring should be embedded from the ground level of the organization up and needs to become part of the culture or exponential problems can arise. Being a mentor and implementing a mentoring scheme is an efficient way to gain a more engaged workforce, increase job satisfaction, and show you care!



Kat Turner is an Education Portfolio Manager at ITSM Zone. She has twelve years' experience as a manager in the education, digital and new media sector. During her career she has been a developmental mentor and coach to both new and experienced staff, introducing successful mentoring programmes into the workplace. Her current role is focused upon course production, online marketing, content creation and sharing ideas.

Bastian Nominacher takes a fresh look at ticket resolution and offers some simple ways of accelerating the process.

Accelerated ticket resolution:

Focus on where your help desk needs most...

HELP!



Service desks succeed by resolving as many tickets as quickly as possible. IT service management (ITSM) and customer service management (CSM) team leaders understand and accept this reality, but while the concept is simple, there's another reality to take into consideration: tickets don't stop pouring in, ever. It's easy for management to hand down ticket reduction initiatives, but it's easier said than done when you're buried under an avalanche of service tickets and the SLA clocks are ticking.

Teams are facing increased pressure to perform on limited resources while managing the day-to-day, and the extra productivity has to come from somewhere. The solution stems from complete transparency into ticket resolution processes. Once service

managers can actually see where processes are encountering bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and non-compliance, they can drive change within their organizations and improve KPIs. The good news for service desks is that there are intelligent solutions to achieve exactly that type of transparency.

Imagine if, in the scenarios below, you had technology that attaches to all the event logs in your call centre or service tech system, such as ServiceNow. By visualizing the processes in your system you can see where things are actually getting held up for how long, and how often in aggregate. This approach allows you to target process change and optimize productivity in your organization, rather than using siloed data that does not tell the whole story.

In working with global Fortune 500 companies to improve their IT and customer service initiatives we found these three situations to be the ones that are most often pinpointed for improvement:

High average ticket resolution cost

Imagine a company wants to cut the total customer interactions that result in service tickets from 3% to 2%. Hypothetically, if the average cost to resolve a certain category of ticket via the CSM team is \$7, but the average cost to simply refund a customer is \$5, then the company could actually remove the need to service that category and still save money, all while improving customer satisfaction.

The term “shift left” means empowering people to solve problems earlier in the resolution process, and it’s not limited to service desk team members. If the financial cost of resolving high-priority tickets is too high, it could mean that a shift left is in order. In addition to self-service options, lower level teams could be trained up to handle more complex problems if certain categories of ticket turn out to be common. The key is to identify areas best suited for a shift left and make the requisite process changes intelligently instead of haphazardly.

Multi-hop tickets

The dreaded multi-hop ticket is the top culprit that slows down ticket resolution time. If a ticket gets assigned to a team that is unable or unwilling to solve the issue, it ends up assigned to another team (or teams). The problem starts to become more expensive when tickets are escalated from low-cost units to high-cost units, as throughput times and financial costs rise with each ticket reassignment. An overabundance of multi-hop tickets signals the need for deeper investigation, and knowing where to look can be tricky.

In most cases, the solution to multi-hops tends to be additional training and education, but the difficulty is knowing which teams need training on which issues. Pinpointing the use cases that make the hops happen is the best way to boost productivity with a more frictionless path.

High manual effort

If a service team is averaging 30 minutes to resolve a ticket, but repetitive manual tasks like data entry are taking up 10 of those minutes, there’s a clear case for reducing the workload with automation to speed up ticket resolution. An initial warning sign of high manual effort could be a surplus of multi-hop tickets, or an abnormally high average ticket resolution time.

Implementing automation to cut down on manual effort means that human workers can focus on more complex tasks that require creativity or strategic thinking. By being able to see where to best focus, companies can identify areas of high manual work that are ripe for automation.



The catalyst for change

ITSM and CSM teams are discovering that the fastest and easiest approach to service desk improvement comes from a category of intelligent business systems that creates total transparency into how service desk processes are functioning. The underlying technology that powers these systems is called process mining, which uses the event-logs that exist within all IT systems to visually recreate and analyse how processes really running. Using this technology, some of the world’s most respected businesses are leading the way toward efficient and effective ticket resolution, boosting productivity and transforming their organizations.

If your help desk needs help, there’s no need to file a ticket - but it may be time to turn to a digital solution to drive meaningful change within your organization.



Bastian Nominacher is co-founder and co-CEO of process mining company Celonis.

Are you Cloud ready?

Mark O'Loughlin reviews the key competencies required to roll out a Cloud-centred solution in the large enterprise.

A recent report from Gartner Group forecasts that by 2022 almost a third of key enterprise spending on IT will be Cloud-based. This represents a significant change affecting both the organization and their IT professionals. This also represents a significant opportunity for IT service management professionals at all levels to move both themselves and their IT function up the corporate value chain.

However, ongoing research from the Cloud Credential Council (CCC) continues to highlight a substantial problem for both organizations and IT professionals using and adopting Cloud. In simple terms, far too many businesses do not have a clear understanding of what cloud actually is and how it can be exploited to bring real benefit to the enterprise. They are lacking even a basic understanding of the fundamentals of cloud. Worse still they do not understand the context behind cloud even after adopting and using Cloud services.

If the ITSM community want to remain relevant in today's new IT landscape, they need to fully understand what cloud is and become leaders and trusted advisors in all matters relating to cloud. This is the first step. Then they will also need to become multi-skilled in closely related domains such as DevOps, Lean and Agile.

The IT model has significantly changed. Consequently, ITSM professionals need to change, upskill and rethink how they will succeed in this new world of Cloud-based digital transformation.

RU digital ready?

Developing the right competencies is fundamental to making full use of new digital platforms such as Cloud; the broader range of skills identified in frameworks such as PSMF clearly indicate a shift towards 'people' skills and away from the process-centric approach of the past. For many organizations this remains a yawning gap and a significant inhibitor to technological progress. Being 'digital ready' is all about putting the right competencies in place.



Upskilling service management professionals for Cloud

As a recommended first step by the CCC, Service Managers should look at taking the Professional Cloud Service Manager (PCSM) certification. The PCSM certification plays a significant role in Cloud-enabling IT service managers to lead and manage their organizations' Cloud initiatives. PCSM upskills IT managers and service managers, providing them with knowledge and information to deal with the following from a Cloud perspective:

- Basic understanding of Cloud
- Hybrid Cloud and hybrid IT scenarios
- Service level agreements in a Cloud centric world
- Contracts and terms and conditions
- Integration challenges
- Consumer and end-user requirements
- Data privacy and legislation requirements
- Governance for Cloud
- Showing the value of Cloud
- Cloud strategy development.

Find out more about this key topic at ITSM18, or join the author for a dedicated three-day masterclass focusing on the Professional Cloud Service Manager in February. More information at www.itsmf.co.uk.



Mark O'Loughlin is the Managing Director of the Cloud Credential Council (CCC). The CCC is a global community driven organization that empowers companies in their digital transformation journey by offering vendor-neutral certification for IT professionals including Cloud, Big Data, and IoT.

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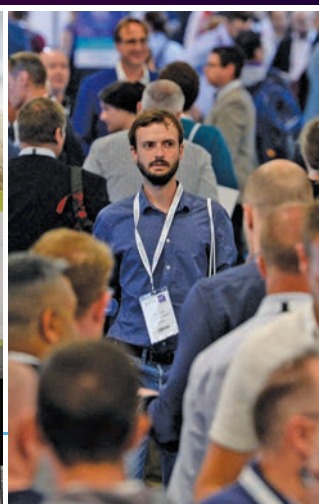
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Complex systems break



SYSTEM ERROR

Duncan Watkins takes a look at the business drivers that are challenging the way we manage incidents in the enterprise.

The changing approach to incident management



The technology world is changing rapidly. If you stop and think about it for a moment, the level of technology we now hold in our hands through smartphones is incredible. If we go back to when my IT career started, computing power like that took 12 to 14 weeks to be delivered and needed a dedicated room to house it.

But what has also changed is the simplicity with which we interface with such technologies. Apps are a convenient and easy way to package a range of actions we require for news, games, transport etc and the user experience is key to apps being successful.

However, as IT professionals we're all aware of the inverse complexity that lies behind this simplified and intuitive interface. We understand that delivery consists of many complex systems working together. And we know there are often generations of legacy systems that support some aspect or other.

How are approaches changing and what are the drivers?

Traditional approaches to IT service management (ITSM) often, if not overtly, allude to a nirvana of zero outage systems. For years vendors sold hardware with an increasing number of 9s, whilst service management looked to problem management as a holy grail. The idea that the aim was to be more efficient rather than do more was often a prevailing mantra.

However, in recent times there has been an acceptance that there are forces that affect incident management that are outside of ITSM's control. Business agility is critical for successful companies and this has led to solutions and services becoming more complex; and this greater complexity has led to a change in approach for many organizations.

Instead of focusing attention on simply reducing downtime through greater investment, smarter organizations are looking at faster responses to incidents. They start from a position that accepts outages will happen and that swift resolution of issues

"The new mantra of speed rather than perfection and the principle of 'fail fast' all point towards a new approach."

is what's needed. As a result, they aim to avoid suffering significant downtime and unwelcome press coverage.

I've managed to get this far without mentioning digital transformation, but it's critical to this. The demands placed upon IT systems to cope with rapid business changes mean that aspiring to never fail is an unrealistic goal. Agile and DevOps practices mean that smaller, more iterative changes are constantly happening. These changes start to drive the conversation from never break to fix fast. The new mantra of speed rather than perfection and the principle of 'fail fast' all point towards a new approach. But how does this new approach work and what does it look like?

What should you do?

1) Figure out what's important

Traditional approaches to incident management call for across-the-board consistency in capturing everything as a ticket. However, many businesses are seeing this as excessive with little in the way of true analytics being used on the majority of tickets. Some now only ticket major incidents, with all other incidents being managed through other channels, as many other parts of the organization have been doing for years. Similarly, make sure that when you're dealing with major issues you communicate effectively and distinctly to ensure that participants understand the importance. You have to work out what's critical for your business and work from there.

2) Look at new tools and techniques

As teams are increasingly global there is a need to connect them using tools. This

is no more important than when dealing with incidents. Increasingly, digital incident responders use tools like HipChat and Slack, enhanced with direct operational integration via ChatOps plug-ins like Hubot. This allows for the simple raising and updating of tickets via chat commands, saving the toil of manual updates. But it's not just tools that are innovative. Incident management techniques like swarming are improving response times and quality. Rather than relying on tiered responses to incidents, swarming allows self-forming teams of various backgrounds to work on tickets immediately. The Consortium for Service Innovation (www.serviceinnovation.org/intelligent-swarming/) has a number of case studies highlighting the increased resolution time and multiple teamwork benefits of using this approach.

3) Use post-mortems properly

Post-mortems are the most effective way to understand what happens with incidents. However, to make them truly effective they have to be blameless and avoid holding someone accountable. Experts in human factors and safety like Sidney Dekker in his book *The Field Guide to Understanding Human Error* emphasize the need to examine the system that leads to a given individual's actions. Human error has little or no place in safety science thinking, which focuses on the context giving rise to the error. You need to think about what made an engineer think something was the right thing to do at that time. There is also little point in looking for a single root cause as, in complex systems failures, there are invariably multiple causal factors.

Increasing complexity has led to a realization that existing approaches to incident management need to be improved. Although avoidance of incidents is still key (containerization, infrastructure as code, DevOps all contribute to this), better response to incidents is increasingly important. However, without understanding the human factor and avoiding the blame game, your progress will be limited at best.



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