serviceTALK
EXPRESS

Building a CMDB:
Some secrets shared

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Welcome to the latest issue of ServiceTalk!

This is the first edition that we've produced in a while, and it draws together some of our more popular blogs from recent months. We also have plenty of news to share with members, with changes to the Board, information about our ITSM2021 conference and awards, a makeover for PSMF, new book titles, and much more.

There's content to suit all tastes in this edition. Whether you are looking to redesign your CMDB, fine-tuning your IT service continuity management strategy, assessing the value of XLAs, or taking a more lean approach to service management, you will find something to whet your appetite.

ServiceTalk reflects everything that we do as a Forum, and we plan to start publishing it more regularly again going forward. Please feel free to share this issue with colleagues within your organisation. And if you feel tempted to share your views and experiences with other members, by submitting an article, speaking at an event, or by becoming more involved in one of our member groups, we would very much like to hear from you.

Mark Lillycrop

mark.lillycrop@itsmf.co.uk

Ramblings of an outgoing Chair

I write this in the week when I will be chairing my last Board meeting for itSMF UK. I have been continuously involved in this organisation for the past 14 years and in that time I have been variously a Special Interest Group Chair, Events Committee member, Conference Committee Chair, Director responsible to large organisations, Finance Director, Vice Chair and now Chair. I have loved (almost) every minute of my time and have made some lasting friends in the process. It is time now, however, to take a step back from active involvement partly just to have a rest, but mainly to give the Board and the new Chair the space they need to change anything (no one wants their ex hanging around).

Back in 2007, itSMF UK was quite a large organisation with a full office and a complex committee structure. We have changed a lot over the years and, mirroring the change in IT to being more lean and agile, we have a smaller office and much more active Board. It is this essential business agility that has seen us through a crash in the economy and, last year, a full-blown pandemic. Many membership organisations have folded in the past ten years, but we have kept going both through the dedication of our office and Board, and thanks to the commitment of our members who see value in what we do.

The future is never certain, but we continue to serve our members and provide you with support, content and ideas to make your working lives that much easier. When I first joined the Events Committee ten years ago, I said that our events were the best value management consultancy that money could buy. I still stand by that comment – in any session we provide there will be someone in the room who has experienced the same challenges and can help you to find a solution. What we offer more than anything else as a Forum is the essential link that connects people together, and of that I couldn't be prouder.

I have just two final messages as Chair. Firstly, Service Management is a broad discipline and not just about ITIL – we need to embrace all of it from security to customer service in order to remain relevant. Secondly, if you want to do something and it is not in any book, do it anyway if it works for you. You could be blazing a trail and it could become part of a book later on. We need to progress and we can only do that by innovating and adapting to our changing world.

Finally, when I sat down at the committee table at my first itSMF meeting fourteen years ago I found myself opposite Karen Brusch. We bonded instantly over

our passion for the subject and our willingness to be awkward and challenge the perceived wisdom of the day. We have supported each other ever since and can bicker in a way that only people who truly respect each other can. As I pass the keys to the office to her on 1st October, I can think of no one better to take this wonderful organisation to the next level.

Martin Neville

Chair, itSMF UK

New faces on the Board

itSMF UK's Board of Directors plays an essential role in setting the agenda for the Forum and representing the membership in all of our activities. Following the recent round of elections and appointments, we're pleased to announce some important changes to the Board line-up as from 1st October.

Martin Neville of TCS steps down as Chair after two busy years, handing the reins to **Karen Brusch**, Service Design Consultant at Nationwide Building Society. Karen has been an active member of the Forum for many years, and as chair of the SLM SIG she led the publication of our highly successful SLM Practitioner's Guide. She joined the Board in 2018 and became Vice Chair last year. **Claire Drake**, Lead Service Architect at Fujitsu Services, steps up to the Vice Chair role, having joined the Board in 2019.

Three new members have been elected to the new Board. We're pleased to welcome:

- **Valerie Wilson**, Head of Transition and Control, Enterprise Managed Service at BT, who takes over the Member Groups portfolio from Claire Burn. Valerie is responsible for a team of 350 service management professionals, driving strategy in BT Enterprise to ensure maturity and best practice in ITSM.
- **Daniel Breston**, IT coach, author, and highly popular presenter at itSMF masterclasses and events, who takes over from Dave Walker as the representative of Individual members. Dan is a true veteran of the industry who says he has held or managed nearly every role in IT.
- **Natalie Law**, Head of IT Service Strategy at Network Rail, who has been involved with itSMF UK since 2009 and is currently an active member of our Leadership Council. Natalie will represent Enterprise 5 &10 and SME members on the new Board.

A big thank you to Martin, Claire and Dave, who have contributed so much to the organisation during their time as directors. Thanks too to **Rosemary Gurney**, who leaves the UK board after many years to take up a new role as Chair of itSMF International.

Other members of the Board will continue in their present roles: **Adrian Chiffi**, Vice President, Consulting at CGI, who oversees our PSMF competency management offering; itSMF UK Conference Chair and Deloitte Service Management Lead **Nathan McDonald**; Corporate representative and Leadership Council chair **Tristan Thorpe** of DWP Digital; and **Rosh Hosany**, CIO Risk Assurance and ITSM Practice Lead at PwC, our PSMA awards lead. **Yogesh Patel** of Dataquest retains his role as finance director; while **Richard Horton**, Service Portfolio Manager at NIHR CRNCC, continues as governance lead.

Commenting on the appointments, Karen Brusch expressed her sincere thanks to Martin and the outgoing directors for their hard work and commitment, and said she was really looking forward to the new role and to welcoming Valerie, Natalie and Daniel to the Board.

New membership video

itSMF UK offers a huge range of membership benefits and events to suit every need. From our annual conference and awards, webinars, forums and masterclasses to our revised PSMF competency management service, Leadership Council and new communities of practice, we offer guidance and support for seasoned professionals and industry newcomers alike.

To help summarise these member benefits, we've released a **new two-minute promotional video**, specially designed to share with your service management team and other interested parties. Why not check it out and bring your colleagues up to speed with the value of itSMF membership?

PSMF gets a makeover

Since we launched PSMF back in 2016, we've been talking to members regularly about their skills management needs and building a clearer picture of the support that they require. In particular, we know that organisations need to understand how their role profiles compare with industry standard roles; how to manage skills development within their teams and identify significant gaps; how to map development needs against available training providers; and how to draw up individual action plans for team members.

With these requirements in mind, we are now repositioning PSMF. itSMF UK has recently forged a partnership with SkillsTX, a third-party platform which offers extensive experience in role definition, gap analysis and candidate matching, skills self-assessment, and interaction between IT management, HR and training providers. SkillsTX is based on the popular SFIA framework, the most mature model available within the industry for describing skills and competencies, but it also supports mapping against other models such as the DDaT framework favoured within the public sector.

As part of the new offering, our Professional Skills Management Framework will offer a dedicated service management front-end, allowing all members to make use of the self-assessment and profile building tools, with more advanced levels for organisations seeking a corporate-wide view of their competency provision and development needs.

Look out for more information about the new PSMF in the weeks ahead!

New reference guides for ITIL 4

AXELOS and TSO have released a series of reference and study guides to accompany the ITIL 4 Managing Professional titles - Create, Deliver and Support; Drive Stakeholder Value; High-velocity IT; Direct, Plan and Improve; and Digital and IT Strategy. Reviewed and endorsed by itSMF UK, the new books offer a more succinct view of the advanced content, ideal for those in need of a handy summary or tackling the various qualifications.

Retailing at £22.99, the books are available to members at 15% discount through **the itSMF UK bookstore**. Initially they will only be available in PDF format, though the print version is available on special order (in larger quantities). Contact the itSMF UK office for details.

It's all about the member events at itSMF UK!

Even the pandemic couldn't stop itSMF UK refreshing its member events programme. Claire Burn outlines the progress of our new Communities of Progress and online Member Meet-ups.

When I stood for election as itSMF UK Director for Member Events in 2019, I made a bold statement in my application: *"Events should lead the way forward for the Community, and be led by the Community, supporting the member focussed ethos of itSMF"*. I am delighted to say that over my two years in post, I and the 8 Member Group Chairs have embraced this attitude and made some real changes to the events on offer. The small matter of a global pandemic didn't stand in our way and we have reviewed, refreshed and transformed.

Thanks to Covid, traditional face-to-face member meet ups (always a favourite of mine!) had to be replaced by shorter online events. This has worked really well and the member community continues to join events and support itSMF by offering to share their experiences. In the past 12 months we have delivered 21 online meet-ups covering topics such as the response to COVID, enterprise service management and knowledge management. We're hoping to be able to return to a blended delivery model later in 2021, retaining the best of online and face-to-face approaches, to maintain the high level of community interest. **Read more about our forthcoming events on the website.**

Back in 2019 I also wrote, *"In order to remain relevant and modern, the member community should be involved in topic selection... and bring together like-minded professionals who endeavour to deliver modern, service management"*. Feedback is key to the continued evolution and improvement of our member services and when I looked at the events with the team, the feedback showed that our previously successful Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were end-of-life and needed a refresh. In response, the itSMF UK Communities of Practice (CoPs)

were launched in November 2020 at our Conference and have delivered workshops, presentations, blogs and papers ever since. There are three Communities - Strategy & Planning, Design & Transition and Management of Service - and itSMF UK members can attend virtual sessions and take part in information exchange, discuss service management frameworks and, importantly, ask the Community members for advice or guidance. If you're wondering how to go about designing or implementing a service management process or technology, then these are the groups for you.

Maybe you'd like to see what each Community is about before joining an event or posing a question, and you can do that by **registering to follow the Communities** in the dedicated member area. Once registered you will be able to view the chat forums and look at published outputs, and you'll be notified of forthcoming events that you can attend.

It's important that the three CoPs don't operate as silos if they are to offer our member community a rounded view of IT Service Management. The group chairs are therefore keen to encourage participation across all Communities, and members are encouraged to join more than one. We're also planning a cross-community event in October 2021, where all three practices can come together. Restrictions allowing, itSMF UK are aiming to make this our first blended event, with a face-to-face meet up supported by remote attendance, to reach as many members as possible. More details to follow soon!

Reflecting back, the pandemic has forced all of us to consider what we do, how we do it and why – just like an ITIL 7-step

Continual Service Improvement process! itSMF UK have reviewed our member events and I think we've come out stronger than we were before Covid. The volunteer member group chairs have done a great job continuing to host events throughout, and the itSMF UK staff team also deserve a mention, working tirelessly to arrange masterclasses and webinars and help my team and me to deliver the best events we can.

Do we use our events to *"lead the way forward for the community"*? Do we *"bring together like-minded professionals?"* Are we *"relevant and modern"*? With the help of our member community, I absolutely think we are all of these things and more.

Claire Burn

Claire is Assistant Director of IT Service Delivery at Northumbria University and Director responsible for member events on the itSMF UK Board.

Webinars, masterclasses and forums

itSMF UK has always sought to provide the right information and guidance to members to help them excel in their service management roles, and to this end we've developed a range of webinars, masterclasses and forums to fit event need. Our events are currently running online (although look out for some virtual meetings in the Autumn!) and make use of a number of different tools to provide the best platform for event delivery.

Our webinars – all free to members – offer a great opportunity to join one of our subject matter experts for a focused hour of content and Q&A. And after the event, a recording can be found in the member area of the website. Recent webinars have included topics such as FitSM, Value Stream Mapping, and blended frameworks, case studies from organisations such as CERN and HMRC, and a focus on each of the ITIL 4 Managing Professional titles.

Our in-depth masterclasses take a fresh approach to the challenges faced by today's ITSM practitioners. They are presented by experienced facilitators from within the industry, providing real-world guidance and practical advice – with the objective of developing new skills and sharing experiences with other members.

Finally, our Service Management Forums offer a chance to explore different perspectives of a subject such as Cloud, Agile, or automation, with multiple speakers and round-table discussions. Unlike other events, SM Forums are open to both members and non-members.

We hope you can join us for one of our virtual events in the near future. The list continues to expand, so please keep an eye on the website – **www.itsmf.co.uk** – for the latest news. The website also contains our blog spot where many of our facilitators share their thoughts and insights ahead of the events.

itSMF UK event schedule 2021

	PRICE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MASTERCLASSES													
Change & Release Management	£295			12 (O)						10 (O)	15 (O)		
Cloud Centre of Excellence	£295					13 (O)						17 (O)	
Customer Care Skills for the Service Desk	£195						23 (O)						
Designing Your Operating Model using the Operating Model Canvas	£295				20-21 (O)								
DevOps Simulation	FREE					15 (O)				21 (O)			
Digital Transformation Simulation	FREE		26 (O)			21 (O)	16 (O)						
Essence of Experience (XLA)	£295		22 (O)							23 (O)			
ITIL 4 in Action Simulation	FREE		18 (O)				17 (O)			30 (O)			
IT Service Continuity Management	£295										13-14 (O)		
Kanban Method	£295		04 (O)								07 (O)		
Knowledge Management (KCS)	£295				20-21 (O)						19-20 (O)		
Lean IT	£295					20 (O)						11 (O)	
Major Incident Management	£295			11-12 (O)				15-16 (O)					09-10 (O)
People Management Skills	£195						24 (O)						
Post Incident Review	£295						03-04 (O)						
Pragmatic Continual Improvement	£295					17+21 (O)					21 (O)		
Problem Management	£295		11-12 (O)							16-17 (O)			
Service Catalogue	£295							05 (O)					
Value Stream Mapping	£295		25 (O)		27 (O)					14 (O)			
MEMBER MEET-UPS													
Online Member Meet-up	FREE			30 (O)			22 (O)	22 (O)		24 (O)			
COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE													
Communities of Practice	FREE	25 (O)		02, 05 & 24 (O)	16 (O)	18, 19 & 21 (O)	18, 25 & 29 (O)	15 & 23 (O)	17 & 23 (O)	13, 16 & 29 (O)			
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL													
Council Meetings	FREE			24 (O)		12 (O)		06 (O)	03 (O)		12 (O)		
FORUMS AND WEBINARS													
Service Management Forums	FREE		24 (O)	10 (O)			09 (O)	13 (O)			05 (H)		
Webinars	FREE	Scheduled monthly, please visit the **Events Calendar** for latest information											
ANNUAL CONFERENCE													
ITSM2021 Conference & Awards	SEE WEB											15-16 (O)	

Key: (Be) Belfast, (G) Glasgow, (Le) Leeds, (L) London, (M) Manchester, (O) Online, (H) Hybrid. For the exact location, or where location is not listed, please visit the website for latest details.

For more information on any of our events visit - www.itsmf.co.uk/events

PSMA2021: extraordinary achievements in an extraordinary year

itSMF UK's Professional Service Management Awards (PSMA) offer a brief insight into the service management world's successes and innovations, leading lights and unsung heroes. Each year we invite our members to nominate the teams, individuals and partners who have pushed the boundaries with ground-breaking projects and innovative use of industry best practice.

The PSMA2021 call for nominations is now closed, the submissions are in, and our judges are starting to review this year's entries. Every year brings different challenges, but none has demanded more ingenuity and commitment than the

Pandemic, which has provided an inevitable backdrop to many of this year's stories. Our member organisations have responded to the additional pressures of the COVID lockdown with unparalleled professionalism, and we look forward to hearing more about their experiences during this year's presentation.

As last year, the award winners will be announced in a dedicated session during our virtual conference on 16th November, and the finalists' videos will be available throughout the event for delegates to view. But although the DJs and champagne will be on hold again, our awards ceremony will offer all the usual elements of glamour, excitement and anticipation.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE MANAGEMENT
AWARDS

Why not book your Conference place and join us on the 16th to celebrate with our finalists and winners?

LAST YEAR'S WINNERS

ITSM Team of the Year

WINNER
- DWP Working Age Service Management Team

FINALISTS
- BT Enterprise Service Transition and Control Team
- SCC Strategic Service Management Team
- Openreach Business Customer Service Team
- Trust Systems Service Desk Team

Paul Rappaport Lifetime Achievement Award

WINNER:
- Kevin Holland

Young ITSM Professional

WINNER
- David Thomas, CGI

FINALISTS
- Catrina Hooper, BT
- Stephen Payne, SCC

Service Innovation of the Year

WINNER
- Phoenix Group IT

FINALISTS
- BT Enterprise Third Line Network Support Team
- Halo Service Solutions

Thought Leadership Award

WINNER
- Ian Macdonald, Edenfield Consulting

FINALISTS
- Nicci Postlethwaite, BT
- Roman Jouravlev, AXELOS

Ashley Hanna Contributor of the Year

WINNER
- Cristan Massey, Content + Cloud

FINALISTS
- Paul Wilkinson, GamingWorks
- Andrew Vermes, Kepner-Trego

"Winning was incredible. This recognition has given the entire team a huge boost in confidence and belief in our direction."
Rob Thompson, former PSMA team award winner

ITSM2021: re-imagining the conference experience

Last year's annual Conference posed a few challenges for the itSMF UK Team as we searched for a way to deliver the main event in our calendar online. For 30 years the Forum has been in existence to encourage interaction between our members, mainly through physical events. The prospect of coming up with a virtual equivalent to the tried and trusted Conference & Exhibition gave us a few sleepless nights.

Luckily we discovered the vFairs digital events platform – and so successful was the transition of ITSM2020 from physical to virtual that we decided to run ITSM2021 in the same way.

vFairs provides all the key elements of the essential Conference experience – multiple tracks of educational content, opportunities for networking, sophisticated graphics and signposting between virtual rooms, and an excellent online exhibition area which supports text, video, download of collateral, and even allows delegates to book 'one-to-ones' with exhibitors.

Once again the Conference will play host to our PSMA awards ceremony (more information in this issue) capturing at least some of the glitz of our traditional gala dinner in a special 30th anniversary celebration. Delegates will be able to view the videos that our finalists put forward as part of their nomination entry, and gain a real understanding of the achievements behind the award.

We'll also be adding a few new features to make the Conference experience even more enjoyable – look out for the photo booth and scavenger hunt! – while our two-track programme has grown to three streams of content, offering a choice of 50 sessions (a mixture of live and pre-recorded presentations). And if you miss an important session, the content will be available to delegates for a month after the event. We're even including access to 37 presentations from last year's Conference.

All in all, we feel that our virtual Conference formula has definitely hit the mark, and we look forward to building on our experience from ITSM2020 to make this year's event particularly memorable.

As one delegate commented last year, "Although it was a virtual event, nothing was lost at all other than the face-to-face contact." Another stated, "This was slick, interactive and a great advert for the profession; a brilliant response to the challenges of [COVID distancing] and probably an indication of how we transform conference delivery models for the future."

We look forward to seeing you there. Check out the full agenda overleaf and book your place at **www.itsmf.co.uk**!

ITSM2021
CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION | 15 - 16TH NOVEMBER
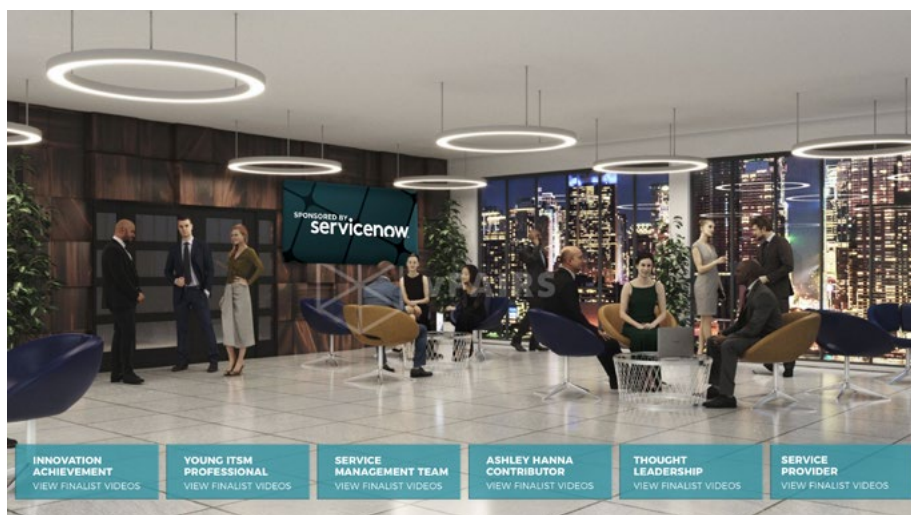
MONDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2021

	TRACK 1	TRACK 2	TRACK 3
08:30 – 09:25	Conference Live		
09:25 – 09:35	**LIVE Welcome:** Karen Brusch, Vice Chair, itSMF UK		
09:40 - 10:20	**Adopting ITIL 4 in five awkward questions** Sean Burkinshaw, BT	**LIVE Continual Improvement - No excuses, it's now JFDI** Ian MacDonald, Edenfield Consulting	**Diversity and inclusion in the IT industry** Bidemi Johnson, Independent
10:25 - 11:05	**How to create a seamless customer experience** Adam Haylock, ServiceNow	**50 years in IT - oh the changes in people, process & technology** Daniel Breston, Independent	**LIVE Are you (self) aware of your impact as a leader?** Sara Wilkes, SCC Plc
11:10 - 11:25	Coffee, Exhibition and Networking		
11:30 - 12:10	**LIVE Building a first-class service management team during the Pandemic** Frieda Morton-Evans & Alistair Philpott, CGI	**KTSL** Expo session	**Implementing service management standards through mergers and acquisitions** Ben Feenan, Atlanta Group
12:15 - 12:55	**The value of sustainable service governance** Peter Brooks, Phmb Consulting	**LIVE SIAM in an agile world** Martin Goble & James Finister, TCS	**Servitization and the rise of the Chief Service Officer** Johann Diaz, End to End Service
13:00 - 13:30	Lunch, Exhibition and Networking		
13:35 - 14:15	**Human factors in major incident management** Kevin Holland, Independent	**The critical role of ITSM in mergers & acquisitions** Richard Jerome, Perspectium	**The all-encompassing service catalogue and service portal** Gyorgy Balazs, CERN
14:20 - 15:00	**LIVE A journey to proactive IT Service Management or "the pill that can cure everything"** David Maskell, Computacenter	**How Vocalink are evolving their Service Management capability in line with digital transformation** Clare McAleese, Vocalink (a Mastercard Company)	**Simplify, Unify, Clarify - How Citizen's Advice brought together 5 core departments with a single SM tool** Simon Sheridan, Citizen's Advice & Simon Johnson, Freshworks
15:00 - 15:15	Coffee, Exhibition and Networking		
15:20 - 16:00	**Communities of practice** Design & Transition	**Evolving ITSM for high-velocity teams** Simon Bradford & David Marlow, Atlassian	**LIVE What is the expiration date of the hierarchical organisation structure?** Signe-Marie Hernes Bjerke, Teambyggerne AS
16:05 - 16:45	**Make ITSM Exciting for Senior Management** Cor Winkler Prins, 4me	**LIVE 10 steps to successful digital transformation with VeriSM™** Suzanne Galletly, David Barrow & Valence Howden, EXIN	**Nationwide Building Society – our journey to federated IT Service Management** Andrew Woolford, Nationwide Building Society
16:50 - 17:30	**LIVE Panel discussion** Hosted by Nathan McDonald	**8 tips for bridging IT Asset Management and ITSM** Jan Øberg, ITAMOrg	**Expo session**
17:35 - 18:00	**LIVE Reflections on Day 1 from a Leadership Council perspective:** Tristan Thorpe, LC Chair, itSMF UK		

AGENDA

TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2021

	TRACK 1	TRACK 2	TRACK 3
08:30 – 08:55	Conference Live		
09:00 - 09:05	LIVE Welcome & Day 1 recap: Nathan McDonald, Conference Chair, itSMF UK		
09:10 - 09:50	Destination: AI-powered Service Operations Tim Coughlin, ServiceNow UK&I	LIVE Continuing ITIL® 4 development Akshay Anand, Axelos	Disaster recovery during a Pandemic – is a new approach to DR required? Claire Burn, Northumbria University
09:55 - 10:35	LIVE Show me your Value Streams! Rob Akershoek, The Open Group/Fruition Partners	Service Management in transition Rebecca Howell & Sarah Cornelius, BJSS	Expo session
10:35 - 10:50	Coffee, Exhibition and Networking		
10:55 - 11:35	Manage knowledge like a pro Paula Määttänen, TietoEVRY Finland. itSMF Finland	Expo session	LIVE Productivity 101 Cristan Massey, Content + Cloud
11:40 - 12:20	Better relationships, greater value – a post-COVID business model Sej Naul, Digital Craftsmen	LIVE The reinvention of Service Management Alvin Deen & Nick Waring, Deloitte	Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) from a practical perspective Neville Hughes & Mark Bewick, Independent
12:25 - 13:25	LIVE PSMA2021 AWARDS HOSTED BY ROSH HOSANY		
13:25 - 13:55	Lunch, Exhibition and Networking		
14:00 - 14:40	Expo session	LIVE Lifelong learning as a mindset Simone Moore, Claire Agutter, Deborah Burton & Suzanne Galletly	Embedding automation through DevOps Lewis Hardy, BT
14:45 - 15:25	LIVE Management of Service CoP: implementing agile ITSM Richard Oliver, itSMF UK	Expo session	Fail fast: turning failure into positive outcomes Daniela Mitova, HPE
15:30 - 15:45	Coffee, Exhibition and Networking		
15:50 - 16:30	An effective data model to go beyond IT and drive business success Craig Alexander & Jacob Elfving, Danske Bank	Strengthening communication competencies to excel in your tech career Liz Beavers, SolarWinds	How to start and accelerate your journey to become an experience-centric organization Yannick De Backer, ING & Sami Kallio, HappySignals
16:35 - 17:15	Strategy & Planning CoP: working with frameworks Mark Burgess, itSMF UK	Mental Health during the pandemic and returning to the office Rosemary Gurney, Global Knowledge & Claire Drake, Fujitsu	LIVE ITIL4 – the next generation. Value! Paul Wilkinson, GamingWorks
17:20 - 17:30	Conference close: Karen Brusch, Vice Chair, itSMF UK		

Main Sponsors

itSMF UK

Successful SIAM in an agile world

Service Integration and Management (SIAM) has generally relied on formal governance and detailed support processes to deliver a consistent service to the organisation. Martin Goble argues that this approach needs to change if SIAM is to meet the expectations of an agile world.

Service Integration and Management (SIAM) is an approach to managing multiple service suppliers and integrating them to provide a single business-facing IT organisation. SIAM frameworks have been implemented in many organisations, often as part a of multi-supplier outsourcing initiative.

SIAM tends to involve two main activities: governance of the end-to-end service and operational support of multi-supplier services. In this article I will discuss how SIAM needs to change in order to maintain its effectiveness in an agile organisation (rather than SIAM operating in an agile way).

To adapt to an agile world SIAM (and associated service management activity) needs to undergo a mindset change, from 'managing service' to 'enabling value'.

Traditional SIAM models often rely on individual process owners and service managers operating and governing individual processes. In an agile/DevOps environment these processes and governance need to be embedded throughout the organisation. The SIAM function itself will focus on coaching and enabling, not compliance and workflow. This will be achieved by having real-time data driving decisions to ensure service, rather than using retrospective reports to apply service credits.

The example operating model shown below describes how SIAM may function in an agile organisation.

This model uses a SIAM Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support and enable processes and governance within the organisation. Each (product) team is responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient activity in each process to achieve the outcomes (and value) required and sufficient oversight to deliver effective governance. This minimises both knowledge debt and the production of 'shelfware' process documentation.

Implementation is likely to be iterative, based on minimal viable processes, and these are driven from both the SIAM CoE (to ensure governance and service delivery) and the business itself, the key being to ensure the right level of process and control to deliver the outcome required. A minimum core set of day-to-day process and governance activities will take place within the product teams. There are always going to be some hard rules and policies (change control for moving into production, logging incidents, knowledge management, etc) in place as a baseline, with discretion and flexibility over using the rest of the processes. This means that the level of process and control will vary from one product team to the next; a legacy-
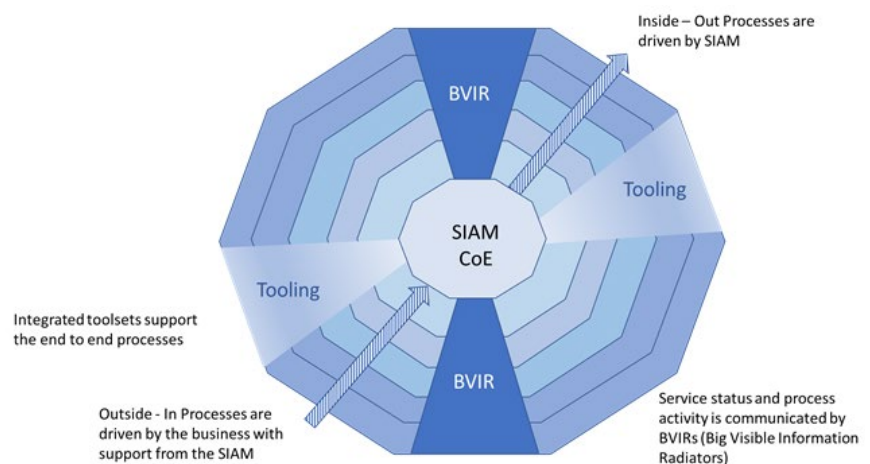

Figure 1: An indicative value-driven SIAM model for an agile DevOps organisation

based product may require a significant level of process (and support from the SIAM CoE) whereas a fully automated digital application with a dedicated infrastructure may need little, or no, SIAM support. SIAM drives value creation by proactively identifying areas for improvement.

Critical to the success of this model is the availability of an integrated reporting solution that enables near real-time visibility of performance across the whole agile/DevOps lifecycle. This provides the SIAM CoE with the information it needs to proactively manage and govern the service across suppliers. SIAM will continue to drive collaboration between suppliers, but also needs to be able manage and report on the contractual obligations of individual suppliers. While this situation is not unique to an agile organisation, it may be emphasised where teams are self-defining. This can create tensions between setting (and achieving) objectives and KPIs and focussing on a value-driven delivery. Careful construction of supplier contracts to reward collaboration through gain share or shared penalties can address this.

The SIAM CoE itself will be a flexible organisation. Team size will increase during times of transformation (where more coaching is required) and decrease during steady state (as teams are empowered). Furthermore the precise structure of the CoE will depend on the nature (and maturity) of the individual product teams (whether they are legacy, agile

or agile DevOps), and will evolve with time, gradually moving from a traditional, process-centric model, to a business-driven, value focussed solution.

So how does my organisation begin this journey and continue to ensure maximum value from the investment I have made in my SIAM team? Here are some pointers.

1. Look at the skill set of your team. Consider the new skills that will be required for this new way of working:
- Good communicator and enabler
- Good agile/DevOps understanding
- Service management expert
- Good facilitator with influencing skills
- Flexibility and pragmatism
- Sound business knowledge

2. Prepare your integrated reporting toolset – this has to cover more than traditional service management activities, giving visibility to development and operational activities, and focussing on reporting value outcomes, not process compliance.

3. Develop your SIAM target operating model, working with the rest of your organisation and your suppliers to understand how services will be delivered in the future. Consider complexity; multi-vendor teams can bring benefits, but they also bring challenges, for example how do you link contracts to these models (a subject that could provide one or more further blogs).

As always in SIAM, one size does not fit all, and SIAM will need to evolve and adapt as organisations mature. After all, in a perfect world and a perfect organisation, SIAM would no-longer be necessary, but we do not live in a perfect world.

Martin Goble

Martin Goble is Lead Partner at Tata Consultancy Services and a popular author and speaker on ITSM and SIAM-related topics.

The Inside Story of a popular security management blog

Faced with the task of keeping his colleagues up to date with information security management, Richard Horton introduced a monthly blog that soon had everyone talking. Here he explains how the project evolved and achieved its aims.

We talk a lot about communication and how important it is, but for many it remains a big challenge. Externally we employ PR and marketing specialists to make sure we get the message right every time, but internally we often struggle to share the right information in the right way. Everyone has a packed email in-box with items vying for attention, while social media options continue to proliferate. How do we engage our colleagues long enough to make sure they're aware of a key piece of information that, on the face of it, looks pretty dull?

This was the issue facing itSMF UK board member Richard Horton four years ago, when he was given the task of implementing an Information Security Management System (ISMS) at the NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (CRNCC). Information Security isn't top on most people's agenda and yet an ISMS depends on people throughout the organisation being aware of how it impacts them. Some of this was already in place, but Richard needed more,

" We had generic mandatory security training that we carried out on a regular basis," he said, "but we were missing a level of detail that said, this is how it applies to us in our day-to-day roles."

Richard suggested to senior manager that a regular communication was needed, highlighting the essential elements of the ISMS strategy, but they were concerned that its reach wouldn't be wide enough. Next he got together with the organisation's workforce learning team and concluded that a monthly blog might be the answer.

" I was quite lucky in the timing. Wannacry hit the news in the next few days and gave me an information security subject that everyone could see was relevant. Then there was Not Petya. I chose five topics, and tied them in with our organisational learning focus."

The response was positive but success took a little while to achieve.

" A key moment came with the fourth blog. I called it 'The Big Yawn – what we are doing to keep information security boring' and compared our approach to security management with road signs and the MOT. People appreciated the light-hearted analogies. I had senior people with a low technology tolerance threshold telling me how much they enjoyed it and how helpful it was."


Building on this encouraging feedback, Richard has continued to produce a monthly issue of the Inside Story blog. Characters as diverse as George III, Gloria Hunniford and Jonny Bairstow have dovetailed with more personal anecdotes from holidays and hobbies, the contents of supermarket shelves and something intriguingly called Biro Jenga.

" I try to keep it light, and also include some practical advice when we spot things that regularly catch people out. If there's one thing I'm particularly pleased about it's that such a broad range of colleagues, from Exec members to administrators, tell me they look forward to reading my blogs."

Has it proved difficult to find enough content to blog each month?

" At first it seemed a bit daunting, but I quickly realised there was no shortage of subjects to address, and once I was into the routine it became a lot more straightforward. Over the months I have occasionally joined forces with co-authors who had a favourite topic to share. I'm also a keen photographer, and I add photos where I can to help with the message – including a logo I've developed from the Game of Risk, which I thought represented the ISMS quite effectively."
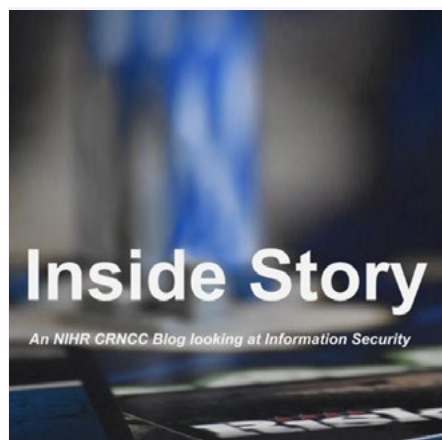
And the positive feedback keeps on coming from colleagues who appreciate the entertaining delivery style.

" I wouldn't say I get a large volume, but it's a constant thread. What really encourages me is that it comes from people who have found it useful in getting their head around a complex subject. One I particularly liked on our ISO27001 certification work commented that the blogs "even made the process enjoyable along the way". Anyone who has been through an ISO27001 audit will know it's not exactly a bundle of laughs, so I was really pleased that people had survived the ordeal and come out smiling. The blogs are just one piece of the jigsaw, but I think they helped to get people on-side, which has made such a difference."

The excerpt below from one issue of Inside Story illustrates the value of a lighthearted intro to an uninviting topic...
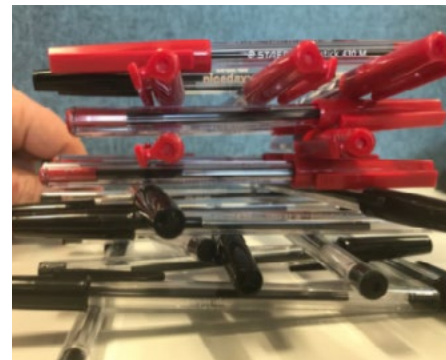
What is a Pen Test?

- Biros at dawn : first person to draw an X on their opponents forehead wins
- Pen Compliance : does your biro comply with ISO12756 (yes, there is an international standard for biros)
- Pen Jenga : who will make the pen tower collapse
- Pen Style : who has the coolest pen
- Pen Exam : retro exams where you have to write for 3 hours rather than do multiple choice questions

You won't be surprised to find out that it is none of these. Pen Test is the colloquial description of a Penetration Test. Not the most imaginative description but a lot friendly than the likes of ISMS and SLSP. So what is a Penetration Test when it is at home? ...

Richard Horton

IT Service Portfolio Manager at the NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (CRNCC)

The CRN supports patients, the public and health and care organisations across England to participate in high-quality research, advancing knowledge and improving care; and the Coordinating Centre provides national leadership and coordination.

Lean: what the heck is that?

Lean started in the manufacturing world and gradually blended with every significant technology practice; but what is it really all about? Daniel Breston shares his findings.

I finally became a consultant and trainer after years of being a CIO or IT Director. I had always been in IT and held many of the typical roles: Service Desk Manager, Enterprise Architect, Data Centre Director, and more. I had helped organisations use the principles and practices of ITSM to encourage collaboration across IT and the rest of the business. One Friday, a recruiter called asking if I would join a team in Belgium introducing Lean into a bank. Naturally, with the benefit of over 30 years of experience, I asked…

"What the heck is Lean?"

Lean. Think of this word. What does it mean to you? How does it make you feel? Slim, decreasing waistline, ability to move quickly or improve yourself or your business repeatedly? If these are your thoughts, then you appreciate why Daniel Jones and Jim Womack chose this word in the 1990s to describe what they had learned from the works of Demming, Goldratt, and Toyota. They had no idea that Lean would become today's pervasive movement, with thousands of organisations benefiting from the value, practices, and principles. Nor did they consider that Lean would also mean you're being fired and replaced by automation or a vendor (through SaaS).

As members of itSMF UK, we practise mainly ITIL but also COBIT, various Agile practices and DevOps. When I asked the community about Lean, they all pointed to manufacturing. We knew that Lean and IT would never mix. So I went to Belgium via a Paris conference that introduced me to the significant lean leaders: Daniel Jones, Stephen Bell, Mike Orzen and others. In his opening address, Daniel stated: "I have been in Lean for over 20 years, and I can tell you now that Lean has no place in IT." Five years later, he began his keynote with an apology. Lean had blended with every significant technology practice with ease, especially DevOps.

Why? How?

I believe the secret of blending practices such as DevOps and Lean is to understand that they rely on the same basic values and principles:

- Lead at every level by coaching and helping
- Visualise work to help improve it
- Put metrics in place that matter and align work to the organisation's customers

- Obtain feedback as often as possible
- Fix first, deliver often
- And more.

Leaders say go do (fill in the blank) by X date. Lean says, go be lean and along the way you will make mistakes, so benefit from a coach to guide your efforts. This coach will turn you into a leader (guide) in supporting your teams as they find better ways to work. A no-blame culture is key to the success of the Lean approach, as trying is the best way to learn and improve the process under review.

Fix first, then deploy

How many releases are actually 'tested' in production? Rarely do test environments match production, even though it is relatively simple to create a testbed in the Cloud. So your first real test is when it goes live. Lean suggests that you never let an issue go past without addressing it. Fix first.

How often do we create detailed (and sometimes physically separate) incident, problem, change and release processes or teams? Lean suggests you look at the issue in hand from the customer's viewpoint. They want their request fulfilled or they want their problem resolved. Do this, and they are satisfied. Don't do this, and you risk losing a customer. This is what Lean (or ITIL 4) means by allowing the customer to pull from your services and ensure that your value is clearly recognised by the end user involved no matter what the request or issue. Value Stream Mapping provides an excellent technique to view the process and identify possible improvements towards achieving a customer-centric culture.

A big change in attitude and behaviour

The philosophy behind the technology we use should focus on the following key elements:

- Whatever initiative or approach we are applying needs to be of value to someone else and not just us. If it is not, stop doing it.

- Leaders have to model this philosophy daily.
- People need to be able to visualise their flow of value which encourages them to contribute to improvements via experimentation of new ways.
- Leaders must spot obstacles and act as guides. They do not necessarily have all of the solutions or a treasure trove of best practices; therefore collaboration across the value stream is required at all times.
- Automation is an enabler towards freeing people up to further improvement tasks.
- Metrics that matter are real-time driven and agreed at all levels.

Way back in 2019, to do something new meant preparing a business case, setting up a team and doing all sorts of things which would take time and energy. Then the pandemic hit in 2020 and, within a short space of time, our organisations completely changed the way we used and benefited from technology. Did we put all the controls in place that our 2019 practices prescribed, or did we just use a set of guard-rails and a lot of judgement? Would you go back to pre-2020 methods?

Or do you now prefer a leaner approach?

Daniel Breston

Daniel is a 'mostly retired' ITSM and agile consultant, speaker and writer and a member of the itSMF UK Board. He has a wide range of experience in service management, infrastructure, cloud computing, application management, service desk, and development.

Building a CMDB:
Some secrets shared

I have worked with many organisations who set out on the journey of building the perfect Configuration Management Database (CMDB): a single entity that contains everything they could ever want to know about their business, services, IT equipment, statuses, finances, projects. It can seem like a daunting experience and whilst the ambition can seem admirable, the sheer scale of the task often puts off many from the investment and effort needed to achieve such a mammoth task.

Having been working in this area for many years now, I wanted to share some of my key principles and starting points for building a functional and useful CMDB that can mature through standard business practices and Continual Service Improvement.

Understand your scope

The downfall of many when starting to take control of their Configuration Items (CIs) is ending up confused and clouded by data overload. By looking to take control of all the data available in one swoop it is easy to become daunted or overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the challenge. This is where defining a very specific (and ideally limited) scope early on is important. Closely managing the implementation can help ensure the CMDB starts from a position of accuracy and confidence, ultimately allowing others to see the vision and benefits which reliable data can bring and encouraging them to invest in helping achieve the common vision.

I would recommend initially focussing on things that can easily be validated. Discovery tools such as SCCM or Solarwinds are of huge benefit as they can identify devices that are connecting regularly to your network and offer a large number of attributes and characteristics of a CI quickly and efficiently. Alternatively, by tracking what is connecting to the network regularly, you can highlight devices in your CMDB that may have stopped auto-discovering, proactively identifying potential issues within the network or even highlighting uncontrolled change. Discovery tools can also detect relationships between CIs, which will come in very handy as the CMDB evolves and you start to think about service mapping.

Make use of the CMS

Do not forget the ITIL principle of the Configuration Management System (CMS). ITIL describes the CMS as a set of tools and databases that are used to support service assets and manage the IT service provider's configuration data. This means we do not necessarily need to bring in data to our CMDB that is part of the CMS, especially if the data is going to be more accurate or real time if held within its original data source. Information about available memory or IP address in a dynamic environment might actually be reducing your confidence in the accuracy of data within your CMDB if it disagrees with other elements of your CMS.

Keep it simple

The CMDB should be a utility to your organisation that helps describe your technical environment in a relatively straightforward way. This is why it is key to make sure it uses simple and easy-to-understand terms and reference points. Helping your organisation achieve a common language is a key goal of the

Having worked in configuration management for many years, Chris shares some of his key principles and starting points for building a functional and useful CMDB that can mature through standard business practices and Continual Service Improvement.

CMDB, making the available information accessible to technical and non-technical users alike. This is another reason to start small and increase visibility and scope over time.

Think of the inputs and outputs

One of the final considerations with working out how to build and what to put in your CMDB is to think about what you want out of it. If capturing a particular value does not provide any benefit, and you are only doing so for vanity, why do it? By working with the key stakeholders of the CMDB you can focus on actively pursuing the CI Types and Attributes relevant to your business, and this will ensure that no effort or bandwidth is wasted on gathering data which won't be actively used.

Focusing on the outputs can also help bring you back to the question of inputs. If our stakeholders request a certain output from our CMDB, as part of our impact assessment we can ask the questions "how will we capture this?" and "how will this be

maintained?" It may be that the request is unreasonable or unrealistic, and by involving our stakeholders on our CMDB journey and the decision-making process, it will align the business to a common goal in terms of its data and configuration management.

Next steps for the CMDB

The recommendations above provide a good starting point for your CMDB project. Once the initial scope of the data has been defined, the CMDB/CMS relationship understood, appropriate inputs and outputs selected, and some thought given to language and communication across the organisation, you will be in a good position to start work on the implementation itself.

The next stages might well include getting the right stakeholders in place, positioning the CMDB within the practices and processes of the broader IT and business environment, and identifying the potential obstacles during transition. The subject, no doubt, of another blog on this very important and challenging topic.

Chris Kingsbury

Chris is a Service Advisory Consultant at CGI and a regional chair at itSMF UK.

An ITIL qualified Service Control professional with a sound customer service background plus the ability to liaise and communicate at all levels. Delivering ITSM Advisory Services specialising in Configuration Management but able to work around all Service Management functions. For 8 years the UK business lead and budget controller for my Configuration Management for the whole of the UK at a global Service Management company.

Service Continuity Management (ITSCM): the road to success

The road to a successful IT Service Continuity Management (ITSCM) implementation is fraught with challenges. Paul Love offers a step-by-step approach to building an ITSCM process that offers focus, resilience, and a good return on investment.

Recoverability of an organisation was once considered a luxury. After all, why would a company spend any time let alone any money in ensuring IT services are available in the event of a crisis? Thankfully this viewpoint has become far less common that it used to be. Yet still companies struggle to adequately prepare and plan for events that are now becoming more and more common.

The road to a successful IT Service Continuity Management (ITSCM) implementation is fraught with challenges from identifying what services to focus on to where the investment should be best placed to support those services. So often are recovery planning investment efforts distracted by technical desires which cause investment to be diverted to the new shiny technology of the hour instead of the foundational recovery requirements that will support continuity of IT services.

Small steps

The first step is to identify the services that are critical to your business. This sounds like a simple exercise, and many have misunderstood how to go about it effectively. To protect what is critical, an organisation needs to have a frank and open discussion with itself around what determines a critical service and or process. This is usually carried out via a formal Business Impact Assessment (BIA). The BIA process allows for an assessment to be carried out to determine the impact of loss of a service to an organisation. Once this is completed the portfolio of services can be organised by criticality and then subsequent recovery planning can commence based on the chosen criteria.

Some organisations may choose only to protect the critical services, whereas another may choose critical and high-

impact services. There is often a balance to be found between the current risk profile and investment available to ensure these identified services are covered.
The benefits of a detailed analysis are often underestimated and the value of doing this correctly will bring many more benefits than just within the ITSCM area. Clear and accurate identification of an organisation's services can also be used in other areas such as Application Portfolio Management (APM) to assist in health checks and potential application rationalisation.

Single source of truth

Ensuring that the work completed at the BIA stage is not wasted, it is good practice to retain this information within the CMDB. This ensures a single source of truth for this initial ITSCM data. This can then be leveraged to ensure the BIA remains current and will ensure accurate information is fed into the broader ITSCM process.

Why complicate something that's already complex?

When it comes to the next stage of an effect ITSCM implementation it is important to keep it simple and effective. So often, organisations make the recovery planning process more complicated than it needs to be. A review of the identified services can now be done to see which services have existing recovery plans in place, and which require the initial plans to be drafted.

The journey continues with a review of existing plans and creation of those service plans that are not catered for. Depending on the resources available, a two-pronged approach can be deployed, with a technical walkthrough alongside the review. It's at this technical review stage that many

organisations realise their existing plans are now outdated and or of little currency in terms of effectiveness.

The more proactive organisations may now feel that their portfolio of services is in fairly good shape, and once the portfolio is understood and plans are in place, the next step in the journey begins.

A time and a place for everything

Organisation and scheduling keep our lives on track, and the same can said for our approach to an effective ITSCM implementation. Having an agreed testing schedule within the organisation is imperative to remaining on top of the recovery capability. This can either be in the form of independent component testing or a complete end-to-end recovery test of central and dependent supporting services.

A key point to note here is that, when something is tested and fails, the organisation should remediate and retest as soon as possible. Often this step is missed; the failed test is recorded or noted, and the remediation is not addressed immediately. Such an oversight can heavily impact on organisational recoverability. This is one of the key purposes of the testing and scheduling step in the ITSCM process.

The journey continues

Implementing an effective ITSCM process is a journey and one that needs close attention to detail throughout. The industry has at times seen recoverability of services as a chore; however its importance is

finally getting more airtime. Products are becoming more and more effective at supporting the once time-consuming action of recovery. Having a product that facilitates this is a great first step, but equally essential is an effective ITSCM process that ensures consistent recoverability no matter what the scenario or type of recovery required.

Paul Love

Paul is an experienced IT Service Continuity Management SME with over 20 years' experience in the IT industry.

Bringing service, quality and information security management standards together

With an increasing number of organisations embracing standards across ITSM and security management, how can we adopt an integrated approach to implementation? Lynda Cooper offers some guidance.

Firstly, some brief definitions. ISO/IEC 20000-1 is a standard which focuses on the delivery of services to meet service requirements using a service management system (SMS). ISO 9001 is a standard which focuses on the quality of products and services to meet customer requirements using a quality management system (QMS). ISO/IEC 27001 is a standard which focuses on the security of information using an information security management system (ISMS).

What all of these standards have in common is a management system. Management systems share many common features which enable them to be integrated together. Some of these features include:

- The use of a common high-level structure with common terms and requirements supplemented by discipline specific terms and requirements
- Top management commitment including the setting of policies and objectives relevant to the standard
- Requirements for context of the organization, leadership, planning, support, operation performance evaluation and continual improvement.

In ISO/IEC 20000-1, an SMS is defined as a: 'Management system to direct and control the service management activities of the organisation.' This can include policies, objectives, plans, processes, documented information and resources required for the planning, design, transition, delivery and improvement of services to meet business requirements.

ISO/IEC 20000-1 is a management system standard and not a product or service standard. The SMS, including the service management processes, is the subject of the audit. By ensuring that the SMS meets the requirements of the standard, the services should be of a high quality. An organisation that wishes to be certified must therefore implement a suitable high-quality set of integrated processes to deliver managed services.

The relationship between ISO/IEC 20000, ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 27001

Many organisations use ISO/IEC 20000-1, ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 27001 together, and one of the great challenges is integrating the function and effect of the three standards. ISO/IEC 20000 part 7 provides some much-needed guidance in this area.

ISO 9001 Quality Management

There is often a discussion about why ISO/IEC 20000-1 is needed if an organisation is certified to ISO 9001 since it covers quality management for both products and services. Although there are some cross-over points in both standards, ISO 9001 does not cover service management, its service life cycle and the relevant requirements and processes. ISO 9001 is instead very generic for any type of products or services with a focus on quality.

Many organisations achieve certification to both ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 20000-1 and it is possible to develop an integrated management system for both standards. ISO/IEC 20000-1 can use relevant processes and techniques from ISO 9001 where a QMS already exists (e.g. internal audit, documentation management and resource management). Not all of the ISO 9001 requirements are relevant to ISO/IEC 20000-1 and equally, not all ISO/IC 20000-1 requirements are relevant to ISO 9001.

ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management

Many organisations achieve certification to both ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 20000-1, and again it is possible to develop an integrated management system for both standards. ISO/IEC 20000-1 can use relevant processes and techniques from ISO/IEC 27001 where an ISMS already exists (e.g. information security controls, approach to risk management for information security).

It is important to note that the information security process in ISO/IEC 20000-1 is a subset of ISO/IEC 27001. It also contains some requirements that are not in ISO/IEC 27001. Organisations that are certified to ISO/IEC 27001 with a scope that includes service management cannot assume that they meet all of the requirements of the information security management process in ISO/IEC 20000-1.

ISO/IEC 27013 covers the integration of ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 20000-1 from an ISO/IEC 27001 perspective.

Alignment and differences between the ISO/IEC 27001 information security management process and ISO/IEC 27001

There are some key similarities and differences between the requirements of the information security management process in ISO/IEC 20000-1 and ISO/IEC 27001 that are explained below.

The definition of information security and information security incident are the same in both ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 20000-1.

Information security controls

In ISO/IEC 20000-1, there is a need for information security controls to be implemented to support the information security policy and any identified information security risks. There is no requirement to use ISO/IEC 27001 or for a statement of applicability, but if this has been produced for ISO/IEC 27001, it can be used to support the requirements in ISO/IEC 20000-1.

ISO/IEC 20000-1 has specific requirements to protect the organisation's information and services when they are accessed by external organisations. This is not a specific requirement in ISO/IEC 27001, but can be mapped to some of the controls in ISO/IEC 27001, Annex A.

Information security incidents

In ISO/IEC 20000-1, an information security incident is specifically about something that threatens information security whereas other incidents in ISO/IEC 20000-1 have no specific reference to information security. An information security incident in ISO/IEC 20000-1 might first be reported as an incident. ISO/IEC 20000-1 requires that information security incidents are recorded, classified, prioritised taking into consideration the information security risk, escalated if needed, resolved and closed. There are also further requirements to analyse information security incidents by type, volume and impact, report and review them to identify opportunities for improvement. The ISO/IEC 27001 requirements are less specific about handling the incident than ISO/IEC 20000-1.

Additional requirements in ISO/IEC 20000-1 for handling requests for change

ISO/IEC 20000-1 has specific requirements to ensure that requests for change are assessed to look at their potential impact on information security.

Next steps

This is just a starting point for considering some of the areas of similarity and difference between the respective ISO standards. For more detailed information, it is recommended to consult the full standard documents which are all available through BSI or other suppliers.

This blog is based on an excerpt from the pocket guide 'Planning and Achieving ISO/IEC 20000 Certification 2019 Edition' by Lynda Cooper of Service 20000 Ltd, which can be downloaded from the resources section of the itSMF UK website.

Lynda Cooper

Management Consultant/Director at Service20000

Lynda is an independent consultant and trainer, and 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.

SLA to XLA: focusing on quality of experience

Many IT teams are working 'flat out' just to keep the infrastructure running and, even with a state-of-the-art ITSM implementation, still can't get beyond the basic processes of incident, request, problem, and change management. A lack of ownership, discipline, understanding, or 'care' means IT service can still seem pretty poor for the customers.

Research shows that many unsatisfactory breaks in productivity are not even reported for resolution. If the impression of IT or the Service Desk is that they are incompetent and unresponsive, the chances are the users will perform their own reboot and fix the issue themselves – whilst IT remains none the wiser of the issue.

Isn't that why we have SLAs?

For many years the Service Level Agreement has played a key role in ensuring that IT delivers the expected level of service. According to ITIL, an SLA is:

"An agreement between an IT service provider and a customer. The SLA describes the IT service, documents service level targets, and specifies the responsibilities of the IT service provider and the customer. A single SLA may cover multiple IT services or multiple customers".

Essentially, an SLA is an understanding between the IT service provider and the customer regarding the performance targets associated with a service, and there are various ways of managing and measuring this performance. According to the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, an SLA can be characterised on the basis of:

1. A certain set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of a service. The average values of these KPIs are estimated over a period of time or on the basis of dependability metrics such as the Mean Time To Fix (MTTF) or the Mean Time To Repair (MTTR).
2. A method of measuring these KPIs, from the perspective of the customer, the provider, or both.
3. The penalties that can result if any violations of the SLA occur on either side, for example service refunds or fines.

A significant shift is currently underway as the IT service industry becomes more user-centric. This means that, while delivering a service to the customer remains the most important task of an IT service provider, it has become equally important to look after the customer's experience while they receive this service in order to maintain loyalty and growth.

The Experience Level Agreement (XLA)

An XLA is a specially designed SLA which also factors in the *quality* of experience the customer will be guaranteed while using the provider's services. The parameters of these quality expectations must be clearly determined, measurable, and relatable to the customer.

A customer expects reliability and proper execution of service when they pay for it. IT service providers tend to overlook these two aspects that determine the quality of the service. As a result, the customer's experience can be inconsistent at best.

XLAs are therefore ideal for conveying the kind of experience a customer can look forward to while using the services of the provider. Other benefits of this type of agreement include:

1. **Competitive edge:** Service providers who drop their prices below the market average would admit to unprofitability in the long run. Instead, providing an experience guarantee can offer added benefit over your competition. Similarly, as research has shown (International Conference on Network and Service Management, 2013), customers are more likely to pay a higher amount for a service provided the quality of experience is high.
2. **Measuring important aspects of your business:** XLAs can help provide a whole range of additional metrics and measures, such as wasted salaries, success factors for migration projects, lifespan and performance of certain types of hardware, and even the number of employees who have disabled their anti-virus or malware software, creating a breach of policy and security risk for the organisation.

3. **Increased customer loyalty:** The logic is simple. If you keep a customer happy (by delivering great service as well as great experience), they are bound to stay loyal. They would return for more business in the future. Alternatively, it takes just one bad experience for the customer to lose faith. As a result, they will move to your competition.

Time to move from SLA To XLA

What if you could see things differently? How about finding a way of collecting information from every connected endpoint on the network? Or sending real-time performance information to an engine that feeds a dashboard showing the real health of the IT estate? What if you had a tool that could overlay all the process functionality in your chosen ITSM tool? Imagine collating real-time, leading indicators and analytics about the performance of IT and the customer's 'real' experience?

Surely this would be a step forward for service maturity, giving better indicators than monthly management reports. This is the start of the next big thing, where Experience Level Agreements (XLAs) are given priority over Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

Neil Keating

Neil Keating is Co-Founder and Chief Experience Officer at Bright Horse, helping organisations gain improved productivity, profits and customer loyalty through improving their employee and customer experience of IT services.

For many years the Service Level Agreement has played a key role in ensuring that IT delivers the expected level of service. Neil Keating argues that a different approach is now needed.

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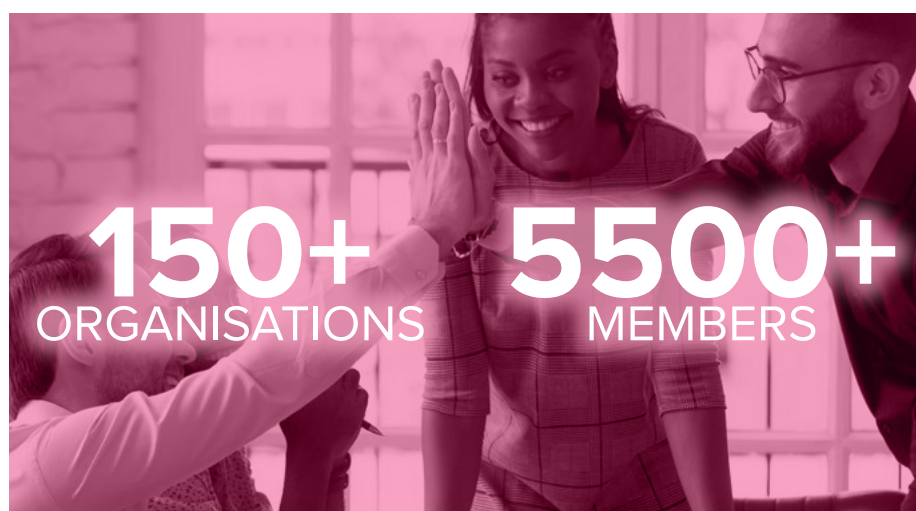
150+ ORGANISATIONS

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PSMF

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