

# serviceTALK

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## Design thinking and customer experience



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## Securing IT information: the critical role of ISO 27001





# Welcome to ServiceTalk!

It's not easy to keep track of what's going on in the service management community. There are so many events, publications, partnerships and initiatives shaping the future direction of our industry that few of us can really say we have our finger firmly on the pulse of ITSM. As if life isn't busy enough managing your own incidents, changes and internal transformations, there's always a new source of guidance in the wings offering a different way forward.

At itSMF UK, we aim to distil these multiple trends and directions into thought-provoking content that can be easily absorbed, adopted and adapted by members back in their own organisations. Through our events, networking meet-ups and communities, we look to provide an opportunity to share good practice and experience with other practitioners.

That's the thinking behind ITSM24, which offers over 50 practical sessions, all presented by ITSM professionals on subjects as diverse as synergising DevOps, humanising IT, empowering change, and transforming to a zero-touch service desk.

It's also the reason why we encourage members to share their views through blogs and papers, some of which you can read in



this issue – covering such topics as design thinking, mental health in the workplace, building an SOC, and drawing up guidelines for practice ownership.

These are all topics that affect service management teams and the communities they serve. Whether you are able to join us at Conference this year, planning to attend some of our other events in the year ahead, or just seeking inspiration in the pages of this magazine, I hope you find some helpful content.

And if you have ideas for new articles and events, please do get in touch with the team for a chat.



**Mark Lillycrop**  
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## Member discount in the bookstore



Don't forget that itSMF UK members are entitled to 10% discount on a range of service management publications, on topics ranging from ITIL and value streams to experience management, humanising IT, design thinking and co-creating value. We regularly add new books and promote a featured title each month. **View the current range at [itsmf.co.uk](https://itsmf.co.uk) – and remember to sign in as a member to receive your discount!**

## Board changes at itSMF UK

**itSMF UK has a new chair, following a reorganisation in October.**

The new incumbent is Claire Drake, Lead Service Architect at Fujitsu UK who joined the itSMF UK Board in 2019, becoming Vice Chair in 2021. She replaces Karen Brusch, Head of Service Management & Design at Arqiva, who completes her term as Chair after three years and has led the organisation through a period of sustained growth.

Cristan Massey, Head of Service Management at Pearson who joined the Board last year, becomes Vice Chair.

In other changes, Leadership Council chair Kevin Sharp is re-appointed to his role, while Adrian Chiffi (CGI) steps down after 6 years on the Board.

Completing the Board line-up, Yogesh Patel (CereCore), Valerie Wilson (BT), Rosh Hosany (PwC), Nathan McDonald (FactSet), Vawns

Murphy (i3Works), and Keith Reeves (DHCW) continue for another year.

Claire Drake said she was delighted to be taking over as Chair at this significant time in itSMF UK's development, and thanked Karen for her inspired leadership over recent years. She also thanked Ade Chiffi for his commitment and support during his time as a Board member.



**Claire Drake and Karen Brusch.**

# Mentorship team takes shape

**We're pleased to announce that phase two of our mentorship programme pilot has started.**

The service, available to members for free, encourages mentees to identify their key goals and objectives and align them with standard industry roles. We then aim to match the mentee with a mentor who has the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to aid and drive their personal and professional development.

In keeping with the ITIL guiding principle of 'start where you are', the mentee does not have to be straight out of school or university; they might be looking to make a change in career direction or explore a new and unfamiliar area of ITSM. There are always transferable skills; however it has been proven that those with a mentor go farther, faster.

Many of the professionals that we engage with are keen to share their knowledge and experiences with peers and colleagues, and just as many are willing to learn from these relationships. Facilitating the right connections through networking activities has long been a key part of our role at itSMF UK, and mentoring is a natural next step. The pilot phase is being used to test our practices and supporting documentation, ahead of the formal mentoring programme launch during Q1 2025. You can meet the mentoring team at [itsmf.co.uk/services/mentorship](https://itsmf.co.uk/services/mentorship).

## Powered by PSMF

Underpinning the mentorship programme is PSMF – our Professional Skills Management Framework – which offers self-assessment and profiling based on the recently released SFIA 9 global competency framework.

The latest version includes a huge range of service management related roles and views, and members are invited to use the free self-assessment tool to build their own profile and development plan. Mentees can additionally use PSMF for onboarding and in due course will be able to use the platform to match themselves with potential mentors.



**Lead mentor**  
**Caroline Wyatt**

Further information about PSMF can be found at [itsmf.co.uk/PSMF](https://itsmf.co.uk/PSMF)



# Communities of Practice

**Our two Communities of Practice (CoP) have gone from strength to strength this year, with more exciting plans in the pipeline.**

The Armed Forces CoP was born out of itSMF UK's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, signed in June 2022. It has a clear mission to bridge the gap between the Armed Forces community and IT service management, helping service leavers transition into our profession and demonstrating the unique value they bring to the industry.

Its new white paper, which is freely available to download, serves as an affirmation of the untapped opportunities that military skills offer in the realm of IT service management. Based on research by CoP chair and Board member Cristan Massey in consultation with members of the group, the paper considers such areas as transactional versus transformational leadership; Mission Command; clear,

unambiguous communication; working through the fog of war; humility and curiosity; and appetite to risk. In each case it draws on the similarities and differences in approach between civilian and military practices.

The Women in ITSM CoP celebrates the invaluable contributions and unique perspectives that women bring to our industry. Launching in September with an excellent session on imposter syndrome from Anna Lempriere, The Conscious Coach, the group is planning its first in-person event at CenterParcs in March to coincide with International Women's Day. Steered by Val Wilson, member groups lead on the itSMF UK Board, the Women in ITSM CoP brings an important new perspective to our organisation.

If you're interested in joining one of our current CoPs or keen to help start a new one, check out the details at [itsmf.co.uk/members/communities-of-practice/](https://itsmf.co.uk/members/communities-of-practice/)



# itSMF UK supports digital futures

**In a move to promote digital literacy and inspire the next generation of technology enthusiasts, itSMF UK has announced a new partnership with The National Museum of Computing (TNMOC).**

This collaboration will see itSMF UK make a donation to the charity, as well as sponsor an upcoming Digital Future Day event aimed at 16-18 year olds, set to take place on 06 March 2025.

Digital Future Days are a series of educational events designed exclusively for school and home-educator groups, bridging the gap between employers and future employees in the dynamic world of technology. By supporting the museum and sponsoring an exciting Digital Future Day event, we are preserving the history of our industry and helping inspire the next

generation of tech enthusiasts and ignite their passion for digital skills.

Adding to the excitement, we are also pleased to reveal plans for an AI-themed event exclusively for our members, to be hosted at TNMOC in February 2025. This event will focus on the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on IT service management and beyond, with more details to be announced soon.

itSMF UK members can also enjoy a 25% discount on day tickets to The National Museum of Computing, located on the historic Bletchley Park Estate. This exclusive offer provides a fantastic opportunity to delve into the rich history of computing. To claim your discount, simply contact the membership team for your discount code.

Graham McDonald, itSMF UK General Manager, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership:

*“We are thrilled to partner with The National Museum of Computing. This collaboration aligns perfectly with our mission to advance the IT service management profession and support the development of future technology leaders. Their Digital Future Day initiative is an excellent platform to inspire and educate the next generation about exciting opportunities in the tech industry.”*

## itSMF UK events: dates for your diary

**itSMF UK provides a huge range of events for members (and some for non-members), from intensive masterclasses and ITSM introductions to SM forums, simulations, member meet-ups and of course our annual Conference & Awards.**

This year we’re publishing a provisional programme of signature events, many of them in-person at exclusive venues around the UK,

to help members schedule time around their preferred topics. Some of these expand on our strong relationships with organisations such as SITS, XLA Institute and Scopism; others explore important areas such as wellbeing in the workplace and AI and ITSM.

We hope to see you at some of these events next year!



<p><b>Health &amp; Wellbeing at Work</b></p> <p><b>23 Jan</b></p> <p>Online SM forum</p>	<p><b>AI in ITSM</b></p> <p><b>26 Feb</b></p> <p>The National Museum of Computing, Bletchley</p>	<p><b>Women in ITSM CoP</b></p> <p><b>6 Mar</b></p> <p>Center Parcs, Woburn</p>	<p><b>Digital Transformation Business Simulation</b></p> <p><b>27 Mar</b></p> <p>Churchill War Rooms, London</p>	<p><b>SIAM: future directions</b></p> <p><b>5 June</b></p> <p>Online SM forum</p>
<p><b>XLA25</b></p> <p><b>8 July</b></p> <p>Imperial War Museum, Duxford</p>	<p><b>Digital Transformation Business Simulation</b></p> <p><b>17 July</b></p> <p>St. James' Park, Newcastle</p>	<p><b>ITIL Case Study Day '25</b></p> <p><b>17 Sept</b></p> <p>British Motor Museum, Gaydon</p>	<p><b>Challenge Cup 2025</b></p> <p><b>October</b></p> <p>Online</p>	<p><b>ITSM 25 Conference &amp; Awards</b></p> <p><b>10-11 Nov</b></p> <p>Stadium MK, Milton Keynes</p>



# Building a SOC: just bricks and mortar, right?



Valerie Wilson explains what's required to create an effective Security Operations Centre for customers.

**About three years ago my husband and I embarked on the tough journey to build our own house. It was an experience which saw many stressful days and nights developing plans and gaining permissions, with countless phone calls to builders to push to get everything finished in time for Christmas dinner. I remember distinctly three days before Christmas I was in my living room putting up the tree, and outside it was like a scene from DIY SOS with about 12 builders' vans hastily completing everything before heading off for the break (you can see some of them in the photo).**

So the house was finished by the deadline, but what I didn't realise is that it would take longer to create a real 'home' for our family. The bricks and mortar were simply step 1... similar to the way that any good Security Operations Centre (SOC) should be created.

Cybersecurity stands as the industry's fastest-growing sector, fuelled by the global imperative for companies to safeguard their data and uphold their reputation. Without a dedicated team of cyber experts, companies can become uninsurable and face significant brand risk for them and their customers.

The solution for many organisations might well be to set up a SOC, tasked



with managing cyber-related issues and providing a focal point for related knowledge and expertise. But where do you start? I've witnessed first-hand the journey from concept to realisation and maturity, as SOC's emerge worldwide to safeguard customers everywhere.

The physical placement of a SOC is critical. Traditionally nestled high above or deep below ground to evade prying eyes, the location can depend on the data's security level. Yet regardless of the position, features like fortified walls, armoured cabling, secure access, surveillance cameras, tinted windows (if any windows at all) and top-level personnel clearance are customary within any SOC. It's evident that constructing a SOC demands substantial investment, which needs to be accounted for in any client bid, as within these walls the true magic unfolds. Step 1 is complete.

Adjacent positioning of the SOC is equally vital. Proximity to 'normal' networking or IT service desks, technical towers, and other support functions accelerates incident resolution, fosters talent development, and offers a customer showcase environment.

Professionalising the SOC is imperative. Attaining certifications such as ISO27001, ISO22301, Cyber Essentials, or ITIL maturity ensures adherence to best practices, instilling confidence in our customers.

However, the heart of any SOC lies not in its infrastructure but in its people.

Highly trained and disciplined individuals demonstrate a culture of continuous learning, armed with certifications like Network +, Security +, CISSP, CISM and ITIL Foundation. These individuals forge partnerships with customers based on trust and relationships, underscoring the human element's

irreplaceable value amidst so much talk of AI and automation.

When exploring with potential customers their needs and wants around their security offering, they consistently refer to professional expertise and the need to feel that they have a trusted partnership with their supplier. They want to have confidence in their provider and to know they have 'got their back' at all times. This must always be a two-way deal as so often the customer's culture is of critical importance in the security environment. Constant education of their staff in everyday topics like password security, fishing emails and good physical security will certainly help pave the way for solid collaboration between client and provider.

In summary, it's positioning, professionalism and, above all, trusted partnerships that will ensure the customer's protection. Bricks and mortar represent merely a fraction of the work that goes into a successful SOC, as they do with a new home.

It's what you put inside the walls that creates the right environment for staff or indeed for your family to thrive in. The day you move in is just the beginning. The real magic happens with every improvement that you make.



**Valerie Wilson**

Valerie Wilson is Service Operations Director, BT and a Board Member of itSMF UK.

# Don't think outside the box, look inside a different box!



Ian MacDonald explains the benefits for those in ITSM of the 'analogous overlap' with other industries.

**A challenge with Continual Improvement is when your ability to deliver business value from further improvement hits a mental block.**

Circumstances include:

- **'Writers block'**. You have exhausted ideas and can't think of anything else.
- **Diminishing returns**. Further effort outweighs any expected benefits.
- **Complacency**. You feel you've done more than enough.

To unlock this blockage the often-used retort is that you need to be creative and 'think outside the box' to seek new ideas.

## **Stuck 'inside the (IT) box'**

Easier said than done. Creative and innovative thinking is often difficult when siloed in the well-established ways of working across your IT organisation. Seeking new insights from IT best practice is an option for some, but if you already apply best practice what else can you do? Some hope by engaging with perceived exemplar IT organisations they'll find the 'golden nugget' but often this comparison draws a blank as service delivery approaches and challenges are typically similar.

## **Look 'inside a different box'**

Remember, no one has a monopoly on good ideas. Instead of the IT industry being your only reference point consider looking for new insights and ideas from organisations that operate in completely different industries. A growing number of companies are now

realising that, in business, comparing 'chalk with cheese' is not just an interesting endeavour but a productive one when your creative thinking hits that mental block.

## **Comparing chalk with cheese?**


Realistically, though, how can looking towards different organisations in different industries with different knowledge pools become a potential source of a step change in thinking applicable for your organisation? The answer is to find what is referred to as the '**analogous overlap**'. This is where two organisations in very different industries share some comparable common ground in terms of business-critical activities or challenges. These comparable overlaps are where the opportunity exists to glean potentially new insights, ideas, and knowledge that could be transferred into your IT organisation.




# Don't think outside the box, look inside a different box!

These examples demonstrate the benefits of this approach:

**Professional football**




**Aviation**




**Analogous overlap:**  
precision of language

The Premier League has recognised the need for more structured and formal dialogue between on-field referees and off-field Video Assistant Referees (VAR). The need for precision of language followed the release of audio when VARs attempt to overrule a wrong on-field decision failed due to the decision not being communicated in a clear and coherent manner. Aviation pilots, particularly in pressure situations, have well-established communication protocols to ensure absolute clarity. The Premier League are now engaging with British Airways pilots to develop communication protocols to be followed between game officials.

**Aerospace**




**Other industries**




**Analogous overlap:**  
maintaining large structures in challenging environments

NASA explores creative possibilities for addressing the agency's needs through prizes, challenges, and crowdsourcing opportunities. This helps advance space technology solutions by enhancing their aerospace expertise with ingenuity gained from other industries and academia. As a result of a crowdsourcing competition, NASA was able to extend the life of the space station and save hundreds of millions of dollars with many ideas coming from engineers in the petrochemical industry.

**Aviation**



**Motorsports**



**Analogous overlap:**  
refuelling at speed


Reducing refuelling times was key to budget carrier Southwest Airlines. Quite simply, the longer an aircraft is on the tarmac the higher the airport charges. Whilst their refuelling times benchmarked favourably, they wanted to reduce further. Having exhausted ideas, they reached out to an F1 racing team to gain insights from the 'pit stop' (when this included refuelling). They subsequently applied this learning to drive process and technology change that reduced refuelling time from 40 mins to 12 mins.

## Other examples


### Analogous overlaps with IT

It can work for IT too. See how an organisation 'thought differently' by not looking to ITIL but another industry to improve Problem Management (PM).

**IT**



**Aviation**



**Analogous overlap:**  
problem solving

An independent review concluded that PM was not a priority, with significant cultural indifference towards its importance. The aviation industry was recommended as an exemplar reference for 'what does good look like?' A pragmatic approach was to facilitate workshops based on observing episodes of the docudrama Air Crash Investigation to define a desired target culture state. A change programme was instigated based on key learnings from aviation. This included reward and recognition switching focus from resolving incidents to preventing incidents through problem management.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to apply different thinking from a range of non-IT industries where new insight was needed. Examples include:

Focus Area	Analogous Overlap	Industry
Continual Improvement	Culture of continual improvement	Motor
Incident Management	Supplier management/CX	Roadside assistance
Major Incident Management	Communication	Emergency Services
Automation	Cognitive skills erosion	Aviation
Service Continuity	Chaos engineering	Power

### Finding the overlap

A suggested high-level approach to finding the overlap is as follows:

1. Confirm area(s) where fresh ideas for improvement are required.
2. Identify industries where an overlap exists. A suggested approach is to facilitate an ideas gathering session with stakeholders; seek input from research organisations (if you subscribe); leverage the wider industry perspectives of key vendors/suppliers for recommendations; and exercise your personal network for suggestions.
3. From the above identify a small number of target organisations.
4. Research target organisations to confirm a good match: access company websites; read relevant journals and publications; watch relevant TV and video materials; and review any testimonials received from stakeholders, vendors etc.
5. Typically formal engagement is required. Can vendors or suppliers broker a reference site visit? Can senior executives identify a contact through their personal network? Failing that, look up 'Contact us' on their website and make a formal request.

### Reflection

No one has a monopoly on good ideas. When your creative thinking hits a blockage, don't try and think outside the box but look inside a different box! Across differing industries there are often many overlaps that can provide a different source of insight, ideas and knowledge that can unlock your potential to improve further. The light bulb moment here is to recognise that what is best practice across the IT industry is not necessarily a reference point for absolute best.

**Ian MacDonald**

Ian MacDonald is an award-winning ITSM consultant, author and trainer.

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# Seeing clearly: the lens of objectives in ITSM



**In today's ever-evolving business landscape, success is no longer measured in terms of profit alone. As organisations strive to thrive in an interconnected world, a new paradigm emerges – one that encompasses not only financial sustainability but also the well-being of people, the health of our planet, and the strength of partnerships with customers.**

Welcome to the era of the quadruple bottom line, where businesses are called upon to balance the imperatives of profit with a broader commitment to people, planet, and user experience. That all sounds very grand. But it's also abstract. How do we as IT professionals make this real?

## Looking through a different lens

Regardless of your role—whether you're in operations, project management, finance, sales, or any other field—you encounter objectives, goals, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The terminology may vary, but the essence remains the same. For instance, a finance target is often quantified in terms of cash, while an automation goal is measured by time saved. But is that the whole story?

Consider this: the benefits of achieving an objective are rarely one-dimensional. So why not contemplate the different dimensions from the outset and celebrate this diversity upon completion?

Let's begin by asking critical questions at the outset. When setting an objective, consider whether it will:

- 1. Positively impact people:** Will it enhance the well-being of individuals within your organisation?
- 2. Benefit society and the planet:** Can it contribute to broader societal or environmental goals?
- 3. Boost organisational profitability:** Is it aligned with financial success?
- 4. Enhance user experience:** Will it improve the way that end users interact with your products or services?

Chances are, more than one of these dimensions will apply. People have different drivers that motivate them. By highlighting and promoting all the benefits delivered you're likely to motivate more people to contribute.

## Broader thinking

What seems beneficial from one perspective might have unintended consequences when viewed through a different lens. If you automate your incident logging for customers it'll save money, but what effect will it have on user experience?

And let's be candid—if your intended action doesn't move the needle on any of these fronts, perhaps it's time to reconsider whether it's worth pursuing at all.

## Measure what you want to improve, and get to the point!

Enablers are often communicated as goals, which can lead to a poorly defined outcome. If you want to improve something, measure it directly.

- I want to automate 50% of incident workflows. Great. So what? That's an enabler. It enables quicker incident resolution (among other benefits). So, the objective is quicker resolution.
- I want to recycle 500 old laptops and give them to a charity to redistribute to digitally excluded people. Commendable. Fully supported. You clearly want to increase digital inclusion. So, measure digital inclusion.

You get the idea.

## Visibility matters. I mean, it REALLY matters!

When people understand how their contributions fit into the larger picture, progress becomes tangible. Without this clarity, we risk stagnation. But it's not just about knowing 'what' we do; it's equally crucial to comprehend 'why' it matters. Purpose fuels engagement, and engaged individuals propel organisations forward.

And let's acknowledge diversity. Each person brings a unique perspective. Some take pride in delighting customers—solving problems and bringing a smile to someone's face. Others find fulfilment in the collective success of the organisation—the gears turning seamlessly, the shared victories. The wider the scope of the expected benefits the more people it will resonate with.

## In conclusion, some things to try:

1. Look at objectives from different perspectives. You've likely achieved more than you think.
2. Directly measure what you want to improve. Feel free to measure the enablers to track progress but keep the actual goal front and centre.
3. Make your objectives and the different benefits visible. Different perspectives resonate with different people. If something resonates with them, they'll lean in and help.



**Sean Burkinshaw**

Sean is an ITIL Specialist at BT, an ITSMF UK Group Chair and Winner of the Ashley Hanna Contributor of the Year award 2022.

# Why do service design?

Service design is one of the most underestimated but essential stages of service management. Chevonne Hobbs explains why.

It's often the case that IT departments forget to ask the client about their business needs, or don't have the processes in place to make sure those needs are properly understood. As a result, the requirements of the customers are often forgotten during the development or evolution of services, leading to poor communication, constant escalations and fractured relationships.

What's more, the teams involved in delivering a service will often lack an end-to-end perspective of how the IT service supports the business. As problems occur, each separate function will fight their individual fires without communicating with other teams, often feeling frustrated, isolated and overwhelmed by the problems that service silos inevitably create.

Service design can eliminate these pitfalls, adding the missing end-to-end view by helping all those involved in the delivery of an IT service to understand how it underpins the respective business processes.

Service design aims to make sure services are fit for purpose, deliver value and support business objectives, as well as laying the groundwork for service improvement and future growth and innovation. Done correctly, it will also restore those critical communication channels and help IT professionals to appreciate the value of the part they are playing.

## How to capture business needs and requirements

The first stage in the design of a new service is understanding who the client is and what they do. This means meeting with the key stakeholders to understand what's important to them, what challenges they face, and what day-to-day frustrations they meet in dealing with IT.

As you build this rapport with the client, you can explore what success looks like to them, how this success is measured, and what – in IT terms – you might be able to do to improve their experience. For example, look at the capacity and availability requirements: does the potential demand for a service vary significantly from one month to the next? This information can be very useful in fine-tuning commercial agreements and SLAs. Similarly, consider the culture of the



organisation. Do they expect regular communication and detailed reporting, or do they want the IT service just to happen in the background? Does the business 'follow the sun' and rely on services being available in different parts of the world at different times; and does it have multiple suppliers globally, maybe offering duplicated services?

What are the IT touchpoints for the business, the critical services on which they depend, and how will new services impact existing SLA/XLAs? What does their data look like and what mapping will be required? What toolsets are involved (is there any duplication between tools and suppliers that can be rationalised)? And what changes, if any, does the business have planned that could affect the new service and its suitability for the planned role?

Researching the answers to these questions is vital before work actually starts on building a new service, and helps to create a clear picture of what is actually required and where the challenges are likely to occur.

## The IT service blueprint

We're now ready to start the service design, and I would recommend creating a blueprint for each of the services to be delivered to the business. The blueprint views the planned service from the perspective of the 4Ps – people, process, products and providers – and also includes relevant OLA/SLAs and external factors based on the PESTLE model (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal). Each touchpoint with the wider environment can be assessed and any trouble spots identified.

In a recent itSMF UK lunch & learn event, I worked through an example showing how the template can be applied to the new joiner

process. Members can view a recording of this event in the 'Lunch & Learn' section of the event recordings page.

## Next stages

Once the blueprint has been agreed and reviewed with all stakeholders, work can also commence on the supporting governance model, communication plan, and more detailed high-level design framework, incorporating tools, RACIs, data mapping, availability, security, S/XLAs and KPIs.

Then finally, it's time for the transition into operations – the most exciting part of the project – where the benefits of all the detailed planning and design work will hopefully pay off. A good subject for a future blog!



## Chevonne Hobbs

Chevonne Hobbs has worked in IT for 25 years with organisations as diverse as Coca Cola, Leeman Brothers, CAP Gemini and Ricoh. She is currently Senior Manager IT Consultant at Illuminet Solutions.



# The golden guidelines of ITSM practice ownership

One area of ITSM that has been ignored are guidelines in practice ownership. We have seen many practices and processes managed but not owned. Here are Barry Corless's golden guidelines for practice ownership supported by evidence he's gathered in the last 30 years.

Looking at the title of this blog, you are probably thinking "Isn't it normally golden rules?" Well, it was renowned RAF fighter pilot Sir Douglas Bader who is credited as saying "Rules are for the obedience of fools and the guidance of wise men." The context of this quote reflects Bader's approach to both his military and personal life. He had a certain disdain for rigid adherence to rules when they conflicted with common sense. In some ways I have always drawn a line through Bader's approach and the classic "adopt and adapt" long espoused as the way to use the service management framework that ITIL proposes.

One area of ITSM that I believe has been ignored are guidelines in practice (formerly process) ownership. We have seen many practices and processes managed but not owned. We are in an age where Service Integration and Management (SIAM) is becoming a widely adopted model and the need for effective practice ownership is coming into sharper focus. So with Bader's words ringing in my ears, I'm going to offer you my **golden guidelines** for practice ownership supported by evidence I've gathered in the last 30 years.

## 1. Develop and maintain the strategic roadmap for your practice.

It can be easy to think that a practice like incident management or problem management never changes so why look at it strategically? It is true that fundamentals such as recording an incident or establishing the underlying cause of a problem will be ever present. However, the environment surrounding the process – new suppliers, changed operating models, enterprise service management, the advent of AI – can and do have a fundamental impact on it. One of the most graphic examples that my company sees every day is moving from a single supplier to a disaggregated SIAM model. Major changes in your practices are more likely than not. It follows that having the strategic roadmap for their development is going to leave you ahead of the game.

## 2. Design, document, and implement ITSM practices in alignment with ITSM framework guidelines.

Implementing a practice is fundamentally different from implementing a process. Why? The key difference is breadth. People,

processes, working practices, partners, technology, training, communication – the list of considerations that should be addressed when implementing is broad and potentially deep. Am I telling you to follow the book? No, far from it. Use ITIL, SIAM and other bodies of knowledge as your guidance, but there is no need to follow them to the letter. My key advice would be to understand the best practices you are using and align with those that suit. Crucially, you will learn so much more by working through the rationale for not using the 'rules' you reject or modify.

## 3. Define roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities within your practice

Some argue that RACI matrices are unnecessary bureaucracy and inhibit collaboration if team members follow them too strictly. Pah! I say. When reviewing and assuring processes and value chains in your practice I would recommend a step-by-step walk through the RACI as a desktop exercise. It reveals all kinds of improvement opportunities. Typically, we see issues such as:

- Misunderstanding of the terms Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed
- Multiple accountabilities as opposed to a single point
- Input and outputs of responsibilities not clearly defined
- People or teams not consulted in time and others just not informed.

Added to this, the conflation of role profiles and job descriptions often causes issues. Role profiles are the concern of the practice manager who should 'own' them for their practice. They are more strategic documents that align with organisational / practice goals highlighting required competencies. Performance against the role is important for the practice manager. For example, a practice owner might conclude that, according to the KPIs, a problem analyst role seems to be working well but they do not have access to the correct knowledge articles.

Job descriptions offer a more detailed account of specific tasks and qualifications required for a job. They are essential for recruitment of individuals and performance management – for example, noting that a particular person is performing above expectations. In an IT world where organisations are demanding increasingly T-shaped people, knowing the different uses of job descriptions and role profiles is advantageous.

## 4. Conduct training sessions, workshops, and knowledge-sharing sessions to promote awareness and proficiency.

Having taught more than my share of ITIL and SIAM over the years I feel this area of practice ownership intensely. In my past life as an ITIL lecturer my job was to explain processes and practices in a way that sold them but primarily got the student through an exam. I taught best practice, and I could make the case for fully implementing any ITIL practice. If you want to follow up on the 'theory' training, though, speak to the practice owner. They should know enough about the theory but CRUCIALLY they are able to add an organisational context that I never could.

The ability to compare and contrast theory and practice is crucial in getting people bought into your unique ways of working and reduce the variability in their execution. A good practice owner should never underestimate the continual improvement opportunity from training sessions. There's real insight to be gained from attempting to describe your practice to relative novices or newcomers, and much to be learnt from their questions and responses.

## 5. Provide guidance and support to IT services teams and suppliers to ensure effective implementation and adoption of your practices.

For practice owner read consultant. One particular trait of SIAM that I find in my day job is when we bring providers together in an unfamiliar environment; there are very often differing opinions on how ubiquitous practices such as knowledge, configuration and incident management should run. Different providers have different perspectives and use different ITSM tools; the chances are, they will not be quite sure how they should interact with your ITSM practices. Consult with them, guide them.

Never assume that they understand your practices or your intent to work in a particular way. Maybe I am being a touch controversial here but the person who signed the contract and commercial terms doesn't need to make them work!

## 6. Define and implement metrics, dashboards, and reporting mechanisms to monitor the performance and effectiveness of your practice and the way you run it.

I was working with a client recently, and they expressed the view that IT services is often fearful of celebrating success or good news stories in general because something will come back and bite them soon enough. My view is that, as a practice owner, you should be thinking, *"Every traffic light is red at some time, but knowing how to change to green is crucial. It is not just about understanding the process, but also triggering the change and having the confidence that green will indeed follow."*

The metrics you use are crucial. I'd implore you to go and look at Experience Level Agreements (XLAs). The art of combining the best of customer sentiment, operational KPIs and technical data is immensely powerful. Linking the three often disparate elements is like switching on a light in a darkened room. Additionally, if you remember the basics about balanced leading and trailing metrics this approach can give you the insights that will transform your practice. Measure, measure, measure, and change will follow. As Former COO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg said, "We cannot change what we are not aware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change. Celebrate success and changes, no matter how small."

## 7. Lead continual improvement initiatives to enhance the maturity and effectiveness of your practice.

Having a continual improvement function or manager in your organisation can be both a positive and negative simultaneously. Great that you have resource dedicated to the importance of continual improvement. Bad that, too often, it is assumed that they do all the continual improvement and practice owners do not need to bother. Let continual improvement provide the model and act as co-ordination point for initiatives but YOU are the champion and driving force behind YOUR practice improving. It sounds obvious but is so easy to overlook.

## 8. Build and maintain relationships with stakeholders to solicit feedback and input that ensure alignment with business needs and expectations.

When it comes to getting feedback about ITSM practices, it is far too easy to focus on one-off surveys of performance in an individual incident or service request. Of course, the feedback of those on the

receiving end of our processes is important but this is the very operational tip of a substantial iceberg. Too many stakeholder groups are an afterthought. There are plenty of options to try:

- Regular user forums** – one university IT service management team I work with regularly meet with their student body.
- Polling your support organisation** (service desk and support teams) – if you are in a SIAM and you are not conducting process forums, why not?
- Supplier days** – another client of ours is conducting a supplier day with a laser focus on incident management.

If you choose to progress down this route, then care needs to be taken to maintain credibility. Do something with the feedback! Just a simple reporting cycle of "you said" and "we did" is immensely powerful.

The **golden guidelines of ITSM practice ownership** provides an invaluable framework for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of IT service management within your organisation. By embracing these guidelines, practice owners can ensure that their practices are strategically aligned, well-documented, and dynamically adaptable to the evolving business environment. The focus on continual improvement, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning not only elevates the maturity of ITSM practices but also drives significant operational and business value.

As you implement these guidelines, remember Douglas Bader's wisdom: rules guide us, but practical, insightful application drives true excellence. Begin your journey today, and watch your ITSM practices transform, leading to improved service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction. Embrace these golden guidelines to navigate and lead your ITSM landscape with confidence and strategic foresight.



**Barry Corless**

Barry Corless is Director Consulting Expert at CGI and a former Chair of ITSMF UK.



# The Big 5 in ITSM: addressing the mental health crisis

In the fast-paced world of service management and technology (digital services), innovation is constant, and the pressure to perform is relentless as a formidable group known as the Big 5 threatens the well-being of professionals at all levels: Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Burnout, and their cultural leader, Stigma.

As members of itSMF UK, you're at the forefront of managing services and constantly balancing the demands of people, practices and technology (in that order). This unique position places you at the intersection of several mental health challenges for your teams, organisation, staff, suppliers and customers. In the fast-paced world of service management and technology (digital services), innovation is constant, and the pressure to perform is relentless as a formidable group known as the Big 5 threatens the well-being of professionals at all levels: Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Burnout, and their cultural leader, Stigma.

## The alarming statistics of mental health in the IT industry

1. The state of mental health in tech 2023 – According to this report, 60% of tech workers have sought mental health support in the past year, with anxiety and depression being the most common issues<sup>2</sup>.
2. Tech workers and mental health: the silent struggle (2023) – This study reveals that 70% of IT employees feel their workplace does not provide adequate mental health support, leading to high levels of stress and burnout<sup>3</sup>.
3. Mental health challenges in the IT sector: a 2023 overview – This overview indicates that 45% of IT professionals have taken time off work due to mental health issues, with many citing a lack of work-life balance as a major factor<sup>4</sup>.
4. IT service management well-being data – a deeper dive (ITSM.tools) – 61% of respondents stated working in IT had adversely affected their well-being to some extent.

## The Big 5 – the gang destroying our mental health in IT!

**Anxiety:** the persistent worrier. In ITSM, anxiety often manifests as:

- Excessive perfectionism in process design or implementation
- Difficulty making decisions in incident management
- Becoming agitated as incidents keep coming at you
- Becoming nervous as your company lists AI as a significant driver for 2025.

**Stress:** the relentless pressure cooker. ITSM professionals often experience stress due to the following:

- Tight SLA or XLA targets, especially if they have no relevance to team or customer expectations
- Incident and documentation blame culture
- The constant need to learn new tools and frameworks to keep your role
- Balancing technical and business communication – the watermelon effect, what do you report?
- Decreased innovation due to fear of failure
- High turnover to find a place of safety.

**Depression:** the silent productivity killer. In my service management teams, depression looked like this:

- Disengagement from initiatives
- Decreased quality in service delivery
- Difficulty concentrating during problem-management events
- Irritation openly expressed to teams or customers
- Lack of caring about whether improvement can be achieved or not
- More sick days
- Impaired team dynamics or with managers, leaders and customers.

**Burnout:** the ultimate body blow. I knew we had burnout when I saw the following:

- Cynicism towards new frameworks or tools
- Exhaustion that time off didn't cure
- Decreased efficiency in service delivery or management
- Excessive lateness and absenteeism
- Disregard for personal reputation
- No longer keeping up with new ways of doing things.

**Stigma:** the instigator (corporate culture supreme agent). Stigma represents itself as:

- Reluctance to discuss mental health impacts of on-call rotations
- Fear of being seen as 'not cut out' for high-pressure ITSM
- Lack of understanding from leadership about mental health needs
- Lack of respect for staff or customer needs as the goal is financial.

Let me be clear: all the above reflect issues seen in IT teams that I have managed or worked with over my 53-year career. However, these issues also affected my peers and me. Worse still, we as leaders created this cultural nightmare of "if you can't hack IT, then leave IT".

We also ignored the costs imposed upon us by the Big 5, such as critical but avoidable mistakes (think of the recent news stories), social media barrages, reputational risk, lost customers due to poor service, and staff replacement.

## The 8 principles for addressing the Big 5 in ITSM

You may have noticed that I am treating Stigma, Anxiety, Stress, Depression and Burnout as people. For me, doing so means I can see when they are around (symptoms appear), and this lets me create strategies to address their impact on myself as a person, leader, or consultant, as well as my associated teams and customers. Recognising the symptoms as they appear to you, and they will be unique to you, is the first step to overcoming the Big 5.

I needed a model to represent my principles for dealing with the Big 5, which I found in a research paper by Dr Jessica Dark (Frontiers | Eight principles of neuro-inclusion; an autistic perspective on innovating inclusive research methods (frontiersin.org)). I have adapted them to our industry as per her creative license agreement. I agree that some examples under one principle may apply



to others. I encourage you to use them to establish your framework to deal with Stigma and his gang.

**Respect:** create an environment where mental health experiences are valued.

- Implement a 'no questions asked' mental health day policy
- Lead by example: be open about your mental health experiences and self-care practices
- Educate yourself about mental health manifestations in ITSM environments.
- Prioritise mental health as a critical consideration in ITSM strategy and operations
- Challenge stigma directly by addressing stigmatising behaviour or language in ITSM contexts immediately and educatively.

**Representation & inclusion:** include diverse perspectives in mental health initiatives.

- Form a mental health advisory board with employees from various ITSM roles
- Create inclusive team environments\*\*:  
foster a culture where every ITSM role feels valued and supported
- Implement resilience training.

**Continuous learning:** regularly share mental health information.

- Host monthly 'mental health in ITSM' lunch-and-learn sessions
- Ensure that KPIs include measures of employee well-being alongside service metrics
- Implement a 'quality of life' metric in your ITSM tool to track team morale
- Promote collaborative and improvement problem management.

**Barrier removal:** address elements that contribute to mental health challenges.

- Conduct 'stress audits' of ITSM processes and redesign high-stress areas
- Provide emotional intelligence training for service desk staff
- Learn to avoid additional responsibilities and establish clear work-life boundaries, which is particularly important in always-on ITSM roles (Kanban or VSM).

**Clarity of purpose:** align mental health initiatives with organisational goals.

- Include mental health objectives in your ITSM strategy and communicate their business impact
- Use agile methodologies to break large ITSM projects into manageable sprints
- Implement realistic SLA and XLA targets that consider employee well-being
- Encourage regular breaks and time off, especially after major incidents.

**Thoughtful communication:** use inclusive, non-stigmatising language.

- Develop an ITSM-specific mental health language guide
- Create a culture of openness to encourage open dialogues about mental health
- Make reading The Phoenix Project mandatory
- Share stories of ITSM leaders who have overcome mental health challenges.

**Psychological safety:** create a safe environment for expressing concerns.

- Implement a 'mental health allies' programme within your ITSM team
- Offer remote work options for roles that don't require on-site presence
- Allow flexible hours in IT roles
- Implement mental health days in addition to regular sick leave
- Teach self-care; prioritise sleep, exercise, and activities that recharge you, especially during high-stress periods like major incidents or audits.

**Proactive support:** implement support systems before crises occur.

- Use predictive analytics to identify at-risk team members and offer proactive support. Offer confidential counselling services
- Provide mental health first aid training for IT team leaders
- Implement an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) tailored to IT challenges.

## Getting started: first steps for itSMF UK members

To address mental health issues in your ITSM organisation:

1. Start the conversation: begin with a town hall meeting dedicated to mental health in your ITSM environment.
2. Assess your current state: ask your team to create KPIs that show issues by gang members (I used to have to pay £5 when I ignored Stigma).
3. Look for team members passionate about mental health to lead initiatives.
4. Review your practices through a mental health lens.
5. Leverage Your ITSM tools to track and manage mental health initiatives.
6. Use your itSMF UK network to share and learn experiences and best practices.
7. Consider bringing in mental health professionals with IT experience.

## Conclusion: evolving ITSM for mental well-being

The Big 5 mental health challenges – Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Burnout, and Stigma – represent critical challenges to the way we conceptualise and manage digital services.

As ITSM professionals, we're adept at optimising processes and improving service delivery. We must apply that same analytical rigour and innovative spirit to our organisation's mental health. The Big 5 will not be defeated by implementing a new framework or tool but by fundamentally reimagining the technology workplace.

Here are some examples of a better and safer place to work and serve:

- Incident management that blends other practices into a cohesive practice that underpins every aspect of technology delivery and support.
- SLAs that underpin XLAs to ensure that the experience of individuals across the board is fully considered, monitored and improved.
- Adding mental health challenges to Kanban or VSM boards to indicate issues

and allow discussions to occur on how to remediate their cause.

- CABs that also approve the mental health impact.
- Managers who admit their guilt in creating unsafe environments and join in activities to make safe better.

The ROI of addressing mental health in ITSM extends beyond reduced sick days or lower turnover. It's about unlocking our teams' full creative and problem-solving potential and building resilient organisations capable of navigating the increasingly complex IT landscape. It's about recognising that the most critical asset in any ITSM organisation isn't the latest AI-powered tool or the most comprehensive CMDB – it's our people's mental health and well-being.

For itSMF UK members, this presents an unprecedented opportunity to lead the initiatives. By integrating mental health considerations into every aspect of ITSM—from strategy to daily operations—we can set a new standard for the industry globally. The itSMF UK Board comprises individuals who fully support mental health as an essential aspect of organisational practice and encourage discussions in workshops, blogs, and at the Annual Conference.

As we move forward, let's commit to making mental health as integral to ITSM as ITIL or DevOps. Let's build a new paradigm where thriving, not just surviving, is the norm. The challenges are significant, but so is our collective capacity for innovation and change. The next great technological revolution starts here, prioritising our teams' mental health.

*This blog was written with the assistance of Claude.AI and Grammarly. I am not a mental health expert. I am an IT professional worried about our industry.*



**Daniel Breston**

After 50 years of being or managing every conceivable role in IT, including CIO, Daniel Breston is heading towards retirement (his way of doing things). He is now an industry ambassador for itSMF UK and a volunteer for Demelza Children Hospice.

# Securing IT information: the critical role of ISO 27001



Organisations can now create a robust framework by implementing ISO 27001 alongside ISO 20000-1, delivering efficient IT services, safeguarding the confidentiality and integrity of sensitive data, and providing good governance around cybersecurity and privacy protection. The relationship between ISO management systems has never been so well aligned. Bob Gettings of BSI explains the relationship.

With the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber threats, safeguarding sensitive data is vital for information security. The UK Government estimates that the average cost of a data breach within the UK has increased by 8.1%, resulting in a total cost of £4.56 million. By proactively managing and securing data, you are not just protecting assets but driving innovation and trust in an increasingly connected world.

IT leaders face complex challenges, from heightened cybersecurity risks and responsible AI integration to managing economic pressures that impact budgets.

Rapid technological changes demand continuous modernisation and reduction of technical debt, while innovation must drive tangible business transformations. Regulatory compliance remains critical as data protection laws evolve.

Now, more than ever, organisations must safeguard assets, mitigate risks, and build trust. BSI offers the opportunity for businesses to achieve this with compliance to information security standards. The first internationally recognised IT service management system standard, ISO 20000-1, is a widely implemented and trusted core product. It lays the groundwork for establishing effective processes and controls to deliver high-quality IT services. It emphasises the importance of meeting customer requirements, fostering business relationships and aligning IT service strategy with business objectives. But by combining ISO 20000-1 with a complementary standard, you can take your security enhancement to the next level.

Your organisation can create a robust framework by implementing ISO 27001 alongside ISO 20000-1, delivering efficient IT services, safeguarding the confidentiality and integrity of sensitive data, and providing good governance around cybersecurity and privacy protection. The relationship between ISO management systems has never been so well aligned. Both terminology and clause requirements are harmonised to allow organisations to implement integrated management systems more efficiently and effectively.

## The need for ISO/IEC 27001

Examining the standard more closely, ISO 27001 provides a systematic approach to managing sensitive company information, ensuring its confidentiality, integrity, and better stakeholder management.

ISO 27001 builds upon the foundation laid by ISO 20000-1, integrating information security seamlessly into existing IT service management practices. Since 2020, the number of global ISO 27001 certificates has risen by 24.7% in line with the rise of cyber-crime, which now impacts around one third of all businesses in the UK each year (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2023/cyber-security-breaches-survey-2023>).

Most organisations would welcome the following benefits of integrating their SMS (Service Management System) with an ISMS (Information Security Management System):

- Achieving certification for both ISO 20000-1 and ISO 27001 demonstrates an organisation's commitment to excellence in IT service management and information security, boosting confidence and professional credibility.

- Aligning governance (policies, procedures, and controls) and combining communication channels increases efficiencies and reduces costs and effort.
- ISO 27001 bolsters risk assessment and management. By conducting risk assessments alongside ISO 20000-1 processes, organisations can identify potential threats to IT services and information security. This comprehensive approach enables you to prioritise risks effectively and allocate resources where they are most needed.
- By integrating incident response mechanisms with ISO 20000-1's continual improvement process, companies can learn from security incidents and enhance both their IT services and information security posture over time.

## Complementing ISO 27001 with ISO/IEC 20000-1

While both standards address distinct aspects of organisational governance and risk, ISO 27001 offers a natural progression to ISO 20000-1. Implementing both together will help companies fortify their security posture while ensuring service management is best served.

To support a seamless transition and integration of other ISO management systems both ISO 20000-1 and ISO 27001 follow a harmonised HLS (High Level Structure) with regards to their compliance requirements. Clause headings and content terminology are aligned. Like ISO 20000-1, ISO/IEC 27001 can be used by any type and size of organisation.

ISO 20000-1 focuses on delivering quality IT services, while ISO 27001 addresses the critical aspects of information security, cybersecurity, and privacy protection. By integrating these two standards, organisations can create a unified approach to managing IT services and safeguarding sensitive data, ultimately enhancing trust, credibility, and resilience in today's digital landscape.

## Getting started

To ensure any organisation sets off correctly on their integrated management system journey, seeking to drive innovation and trust in this increasingly connected world, you must consider the following:

- The scope of the management system(s), defining the physical and logical boundaries of what the organisation seeks to certify.
- Who needs to be involved. Consideration must be given to stakeholders, other interested parties, logical, physical, and information assets, business operations, processes, and organisational support functions.
- Which elements of each management system can be integrated, and which elements are to remain separate.

## Training

Employee awareness and training play a crucial role in the success of both standard implementations. By providing comprehensive training programmes covering IT service management and information security best practices, organisations can ensure that employees understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of data while delivering IT services effectively.

To support the step from ISO 20000 to 27001, further reading is available in more depth and detail within ISO 27013:2021, entitled "Guidance on the integrated implementation of ISO/IEC 27001 and ISO/IEC 20000-1".

BSI is proud to partner with organisations like itSMF UK to drive change and accelerate progress towards a fair society and a sustainable world where everyone can thrive.

## Resources

- *Embrace the option to integrate other service-supporting management systems and certifications such as Privacy (ISO 27701) and Business Continuity (ISO 22301).*
- *Consultancy support, training and further publications are available by contacting BSI here.*
- *For a free Taster Session from the BSI Training Academy in our ISO Awareness 27001 course, click here and use code 'LEARNWITHBSI'.*
- *ISO20000-14: a standard for SIAM. View the recent itSMF UK session here.*



**Bob Gettings**

Bob Gettings is BSI UK&I Technical Delivery Manager for Digital Trust



# Design thinking and customer experience



There are many aspects to consider when designing a new service for customers, but what are the most important? The choice of technology? Lowest price? Design considerations? Or is it the quality of customer service? Rafal Czarny considers the implications of design thinking.

**Human-centred design and design thinking focus on creating solutions (products, services and processes) that meet the needs of users, on the basis that customers will respond more positively to services that are useful to them, satisfy their needs and provide a positive experience.**

Think about a new solution. What will you and your customers really value?

- A service that employs the latest technology available or one that is intuitive and fun to use?
- One that is cheap to buy but unfriendly and of questionable utility, or more expensive but fully functional?

- One that's attractive and superficially engaging or useful and practical?

I am not suggesting that technology, design and price do not matter. But I am saying that usability and a positive user experience are more important. We shouldn't aim to provide a service that our customers want but rather one that they **need**.

How then do we go about creating a solution that is really relevant to people? **Use design thinking!**

## **First: understand your users**

Find out from people what they want to achieve by using the service. What results do they want and why? What is essential to them and what is just nice to have? What do they expect from the solution and why do they want this?

The methods most often used in this step are surveys, interviews and observations. Although interviews may give us clues about the solution itself (e.g. 'I would like the shop to be open 24 hours a day'), we may need to

dig deeper to find out **why** users would want this (e.g. 'Because I want to be reassured that I will be able to get important products such as baby nappies at any time of the day or night if needed'). Satisfying this need for 'peace of mind' might be achievable in a more efficient or cost-effective way. In the example, a dedicated online service with courier-supplier products might fit the bill better than a shop open 24/7.

In other words, we need to be satisfied that we are applying the right solution to the right requirement.

## **Second: redefine the problem**

The problem the organisation wants to solve needs to be run through the 'filter' of identified user needs. If the challenge is to 'increase the number of users on our mobile network', then consider how this is to be done. If stakeholder research has shown that users find it time-consuming, difficult and unpleasant to switch operators, our focus could be to make it easier for users to port their numbers from another phone network to ours.

The more ideas,  
the more likely

a good solution  
will emerge.



projects are delivered to the market faster and users are more likely to use them than when design thinking has not been applied. This significantly increases ROI and revenue (Forrester, *The Total Economic Impact™ Of IBM's Design Thinking Practice. How IBM Drives Client Value And Measurable Outcomes With Its Design Thinking Framework*, 2018).

Want to learn more about design thinking and the DTMethod?

- Visit [dtmethod.com](http://dtmethod.com)
- Pick up a copy of *Design Thinking Basics* from the itSMF UK bookstore

### Third: stimulate creativity

Those working to solve a problem should generate as large a pool of ideas as possible that respond to the redefined problem. The more ideas, the more likely a good solution will emerge.

Testing is difficult for designers and it is never easy to receive critical feedback. It is therefore important to be as open as possible to what stakeholders have to say, to take notes of the feedback and not to get into heated debate with the testers during the feedback phase.

### Fourth: prototype

Prototyping in design thinking involves the creation of a very simple, even schematic, visualisation that show how a solution is supposed to work. The prototype is supposed to answer the question, 'how will the user use this solution?' Prototypes can, for example, be:

- a cartoon depicting the user's interaction with the solution;
- rough images of the app screens (generated in a design package or even hand drawn) outlining the key functions of the solution. It is a good idea in such a prototype to show what the start screen of the app will look like, the journey through a series of related screens, what information will be displayed, and what options the user will have;
- more detailed constructions that depict a space or a product. This type of prototyping allows an even deeper interaction between the potential user and the prototype.

Remember, in the design thinking process, if the design team receives critical feedback, it is a success for the organisation. Why? Because it seemed like something was a good solution (because, after all, the designers had prototyped it for some reason). And if it seemed good, the work could have been outsourced to the project management team. And if this had happened the organisation would have spent a lot of money on producing an unfavourable solution.

Critical feedback in the design thinking process not only protects against expense but will allow something beneficial to be designed for users, a sound base on which project teams can build.

### Sixth: iterate

During the design thinking process, the team works iteratively. Frequent communication with stakeholders helps to generate a vision of what is useful and necessary and provides a positive user experience.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that successive iterations produce a better solution. Iteration is not failure, but an opportunity to learn and produce something better.

The outcome of the design thinking process is a vision of the solution. This vision takes the form of a prototype, which indicates the most important functionalities that the solution should display. Once the vision is clear, the next step is to produce this solution, e.g. by starting a project management process.

### Applying design thinking

To apply design thinking, the DTMethod methodology can be used. DTMethod was created so that anyone, regardless of experience, can apply design thinking to their practice. DTMethod guides users through the entire design thinking process, precisely defining the roles and responsibilities of the members of the design team and the rules to be followed to increase the chances of success.

In addition, it identifies specific tools that are worth using in each phase of the process. Studies show that by using design thinking before a project, solutions developed in



The prototype is supposed  
to answer the question,  
**How will the user use  
this solution?**

### Fifth: test

Prototypes should be shown to users to get feedback. This feedback can then be used to improve the vision of the product, process or service, so that it is better suited to their needs.



### Rafal Czarny

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