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WHITE PAPER

Practical IT Service Management: Rapid ITIL Without Compromise

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Executive Summary

All businesses face challenges providing the services their customers need. Mid-sized organizations and departments in large enterprises face a particular challenge in leveraging limited staffing compared to large enterprise organizations that standardize on more expensive, complex solutions and can afford more generalists and specialists. At the same time, they must meet the same types of customer demands.

To succeed in the marketplace, organizations can apply the principles of Service Management to achieve critical efficiencies of scale necessary for their organizations to compete. The specialized capabilities of Service Management enable business professionals to be more competitive and IT professionals to be more responsive to business goals. In response to evolving business requirements and changing customer needs, IT service providers must position themselves to become more proactive in achieving – and planning – business goals while continuing to show value for their provided services.

The keys to success are:

- Understanding how well your IT services and processes enable your business processes and how well they are aligned to business goals
- Understanding which Service Management frameworks are available and applicable to your organization
- Selecting the processes in those frameworks that will afford you both short and long term gains with minimal risk

Unfortunately, ineffective IT Service Management projects outnumber successful implementations. These projects fail for many of the same reasons, including a lack of clear business goals for all involved, no clear linkage between projects and their support of those goals, or a lack of understanding of how new or changed services affect business processes. Often, by the time projects are implemented, the business needs that they were designed to addressed have changed.

"Partnering" and "aligning" with IT is no longer enough for organizations. In order for organizations to thrive, IT must be part of business planning and IT Services must be integrated into the business processes. Where it was once satisfactory for an IT organization to show an improvement in customer satisfaction, now the cost of the service, ability to meet changing requirements and increased customer satisfaction are the success metrics for the IT service provider. Only by becoming a more integrated component of business processes can IT meet these challenges.

Service Management requires people, processes, and technology. The service management processes reviewed in this white paper can be executed at the level of maturity appropriate for the specific business goals, thereby increasing successful implementations and improving business processes and objectives. Successful practices and frameworks are identified that can assist the organization in facilitating service management practices and demonstrate the increased value that an IT organization can provide.

IT Service Management

IT Service Management (ITSM) provides the services that a business needs to achieve its business objectives. ITSM is supporting the business vision and goals, optimizing and supporting the processes that deliver results, understanding the outcomes expected by the business and enabling these outcomes through the IT services provided. For example, a successful e-tailer web site isn't just about how fast the pages refresh, how cool the site looks, or how ergonomically correct the design is, but must be supported by competitive pricing, available inventory and on-time delivery to its customer base. Supporting ITSM takes the resources of both IT and the business units working together to provide the outcomes their customers want.

IT succeeds only if the business succeeds. Internal IT-centric metrics that manage the infrastructure and applications will always remain an integral part of any IT service unit. To enhance the successful execution of an overall business strategy, however, IT services also need to produce service metrics such as how a specific type of service adds value to the success of the business. IT must be able to review and improve not only the IT components of a process, but also broaden its perspective and make recommendations for improvement of all aspects of a process, IT and business related. ITSM encourages and facilitates the evolution of an IT organization from being only a technology-focused provider to a service-focused provider.

To accomplish this, IT organizations must reorganize themselves from isolated technology silos into more process based operations where the infrastructure and applications are viewed as utilities or commodities, where the service (and its attendant processes) becomes the ultimate focus. They need to move from a typical reactive mode of responding to (system) failures toward a more proactive role of planning, monitoring, and managing the IT services to support the overall success of the business. Organizations can then begin to assess how well the IT service provider can support the overall business process by measuring the three E's: Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy of those services.

Definition of service management

Service management is a set of specialized organizational capabilities for providing value to customers in the form of services.[1]

[1] **OGC ITIL V3**

Frameworks and Standards

In order to be successful, organizations need to understand more than one framework or standard.

Frameworks

Frameworks are a set of guidelines based on existing practices that are generally perceived to be the best manner or method to accomplish a task. Over the past several years, a number of frameworks in support of ITSM have evolved in the marketplace to address the needs of business and service organizations. The Information Technology Infrastructure Library® (ITIL®) framework is the best known and most accepted framework for ITSM today. Initially released in 1989, ITIL has evolved over the years to reflect changes in IT practices and service management. The current version of ITIL is the most comprehensive of the ITSM frameworks today, and focuses on the full life cycle of service management.

COBIT (Control Objects for Information and related Technology) www.isaca.org was introduced in 1995 as a systems audit framework and has evolved since then into an IT Management framework. COBIT principles and checklists are often used by IT and SOX auditors.

With its Microsoft® Operations Framework (MOF), Microsoft has also recognized the need for services management, and has updated its service management framework in 2007. MOF v4 is now available.

Standards

Standards differ from frameworks in that they define technical specifications and interoperability guidelines. Standards also define codes of practice, and identify the activities needed to achieve compliance with those codes.

ISO/IEC 20000 – the IT Service Management standard that is based on an integrated process approach to delivering services that meet business and customer requirements. The ISO/IEC 20000 standard and the ITIL Framework are complimentary. ITIL provides the framework and certifies individuals; ISO/IEC 20000 certifies that organizational processes and practices comply with the requirements of the IT Service Management code of practice.

Frameworks or standards alone do not ensure improved customer satisfaction, profitability or achievement of business goals. A successful business depends on integrating its standards, and frameworks with its strategic planning to achieve business goals and objectives. The consulting firm Forrester® Research, Inc. has even suggested renaming IT (Information Technology) to BT (Business Technology) to reflect this change of a focus to the business imperatives.

Business Service Management

Customers care most that the processes necessary to complete their business activities are met. The underpinnings of those processes – IT infrastructure, servers, networks or applications – are a concern for customers only when they fail to meet their needs; Network availability doesn't mean anything if servers or desktops are not available at the same time, when the business needs them. Customers only care that an end-to-end business process works – an email is sent or received, an order processed, a purchase authorized, accurate bills produced and products shipped. While different organizations require IT Services unique to their businesses, the underlying processes that support those services are similar and driven by the same business objectives. Organizations need to integrate their IT decisions with their business goals and priorities in a manner that enables them to measure the success of those decisions in terms of business outcomes. Customers, in turn, need to have confidence that an IT organization can deliver what it commits to, on schedule and on budget, in a seamless manner.

To achieve business services management (BSM), business and service providers must be in agreement with respect to each others' goals: ensuring the required service resources to achieve those goals are assigned clearly and appropriately; and confirm that all members involved understand the impact of these services. Successful BSM relies on mutual respect and trust between business and IT professionals. To build productive relationships, IT organizations can build confidence by understanding what is important to the customer or business unit and develop the relationship accordingly. IT can accomplish this in several ways:

1) **Understand what is important to the customer.** Is it stability? Different service levels during peak periods? Being informed on significant changes? For example, a key area for most organizations is Change Management. A customer may know when a change will be implemented, but may not understand the time and expense involved, the varying degrees of quality that can be provided under those constraints, or the likelihood of unanticipated business interruption associated with the change.

2) **Move beyond making decisions based on 'I think' vs. 'I know'.** A Service Knowledge Management System (SKMS) is becoming more and more critical to the success of an IT service organization, and the foundation of the SKMS is the Configuration Management System (CMS). This system, which defines all of the important services, assets and configuration items that support the business, will allow better business decisions to be made faster, with lower risk, and higher probability of success.

3) **Recognize the impact of repeat incidents to the broader business goals.** Many organizations believe that they employ formal problem management to address process failures. In reality, most address only outages – events that simultaneously impact a large number of users – while failing to calculate the business impact of the reoccurring incidents. Incidents may not impact a large number of users, but they do impact the organizations ability to conduct business daily. Repetitive incidents contribute to a decrease in employee morale and reduced confidence in the IT organization that appears unable to resolve chronic problems and eliminate them from the infrastructure.

4) **Improve communications with respect to available resources.** The business side of the relationship does not always know or understand what services are available, how to order them or what they cost. When a business better understands what is available and the costs, they can make better decisions for the business – including IT. With more shared information, IT can establish better expectations for all the services it delivers, and business customers can more effectively plan on the availability, reliability and capacity of the IT services.

ITIL V3 – Service Management Lifecycle

ITIL V3 is a systematic approach to the delivery of IT services and is the framework utilized by the majority of organizations that identifies themselves as practicing service management. As the name implies, ITIL is a library of five reference books that is based on the best practices of successful organizations today. ITIL describes how to run IT like a business: from developing a service strategy to designing the business services; planning, building, testing, validating, and evaluating changes to operations, and continuing to improve the services on an ongoing basis. It provides the tools IT needs to become a competitive advantage for an organization. By aligning IT to business objectives, controlling IT costs, improving service quality, and balancing the available resources, ITIL helps IT become a strategic asset to in the achievement of an organization's business goals.

ITIL V3 presents a lifecycle approach to managing IT Services. Each of the five volumes in ITIL V3 represents a phase in the service management lifecycle. Each phase interfaces with the other lifecycle phases, and most of the processes span multiple phases. In addition to the five volumes, ITIL V3 also provides complimentary guidance for implementation and practices in specific industries, organizations, operating models and technology infrastructure.

The five phases of the ITIL V3 Service Lifecycle are:

1) **Service Strategy –** addresses the design, development and implementation of IT Service Management into a strategic asset for the organization. The processes in Service Strategy include: Service Portfolio Management, IT Financial Management, and Demand Management.

2) **Service Design –** address the design and development of services and the related processes necessary to support those services. The processes in Service Design include: Service Catalog Management, Service Level Management, Availability Management, Capacity Management, IT Service Continuity Management, Information Security Management and Supplier Management.

3) **Service Transition –** addresses managing and coordinating the processes, systems and functions required for building, testing, and deploying new or changed services into operations. The processes in Service Transition include: Transition Planning and Support, Change Management, Service Asset and Configuration Management, Release and Deployment Management, Service Validation and Testing, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management.

4) **Service Operations –** addresses the coordination, activities, and processes required to manage the services for business users and customers within the agreed service levels. The processes in Service Operations include: Event Management, Request Fulfillment, Incident Management, Problem Management, and Access Management.

5) **Continuous Improvement –** addresses continuously improving the services so that the organization is assured that the services continue to meet the business requirements. Continuous improvement is about improving service, processes and the activities in each of the lifecycle phases.

Practicing (implementing) ITIL

There is no cookbook to tell you where to begin your ITSM program – as the needs and requirements of each organization are different. The service lifecycle phase or processes that you begin with are unique to your business needs and requirements. Organizations should begin with an assessment or gap analysis to identify their current state as compared to the desired (end) state. Conducting this assessment is quite often done as a maturity assessment. The results of this assessment will identify where to begin, which processes and lifecycle phases are most important, how to increase efficiencies, and where to improve the costs of services delivery.

The best known model for conducting maturity assessments is the Capability Maturity Model™ (CMM), which was developed at the Software Engineering Institute (SEI) at Carnegie Mellon University. Process maturity is about moving an organization from being dependent on individual heroics to an organization that has well-defined, repeatable and predictable processes and procedures that are consistently followed.

The five levels in a maturity are:

1) **Level 1 – Ad-hoc:** mostly individual heroics, firefighting, from one event to the next. No time to even plan on how to be proactive.

2) **Level 2 – Repeatable:** IT has documentation on how to deliver the services and understands what level of service is expected by the customer. This is typically at a group or team level, and not across the organization.

3) **Level 3 – Defined:** Standardizing the best practices organization wide, so everyone responsible for a process or activity understands what is expected and the organization can consistently achieve the goals of the processes.

4) **Level 4 – Managed:** Once the organization has standardized the delivery of services, it can now measure the performance, and identify areas for improvement, including the ability to understand the cost of delivering each service.

5) **Level 5 – Optimizing:** The organization can take the quantitative measurements (Level 4) and review the standards for delivery (Level 3) to improve the processes and technologies used to deliver the services.

Maturity assessments enable organizations to understand how to prioritize the changes to their services and processes. Not every process needs to be at a level 5, and it would be too expensive to have every process at a level 4 or 5. Organizations need to understand that the level of maturity needs to be aligned to the level of maturity that the service requires, which is based on the business requirements. To understand what the business needs for service maturity requires the organization to understand how aligned the services are to the business goals.

The first challenge in adopting the ITIL framework is that ITIL requires IT to manage itself like a business. Organizations need to be careful; ITIL can end up being the goal versus the means to achieve the greater goal – providing higher value to the business for the services provided. When this happens, ITIL can stray into a bureaucratic set of processes, with review boards, endless meetings, templates, etc. For certain success with the ITIL framework,

organizations need to focus on what is important to its business, and keep focused on the business outcomes.

Implementation of the ITIL framework should focus on how the framework will improve business services and increase the probability of business success.

In order to meet their goals, customers want services (systems, applications) that work with the utility (fit for use) and warranty (availability, capacity, security, continuity) that meet their needs. To achieve these goals, a set of integrated processes is required – from a Service Catalog integrated with the Request Fulfillment process to integration with a Change and Deployment process that meets the business requirements – where thorough planning, cost identification, risk assessment, and testing are all identified and documented and IT can show that it does what it says it will do. If changes are implemented correctly, IT's reputation improves with the business/customer. In turn, customers will be more confident in future endeavors, and begin to trust the advice and counsel provided by IT. This relationship is vital to aligning IT with the business. IT needs to be considered more than just a group that fixes problems, but a business that offers services to its customers.

Organizations need to remember that this is a journey, not a project, with benefits for both IT and the business realized throughout the journey.

How To Begin

Many organizations fail when trying to implement ITIL processes as they attempt to do too much at one time. Ensuring that IT goals are aligned with the business requires an investment to yield the desired results; the business must understand how ITSM will help them succeed, otherwise the changes will not achieve the anticipated return to the organization.

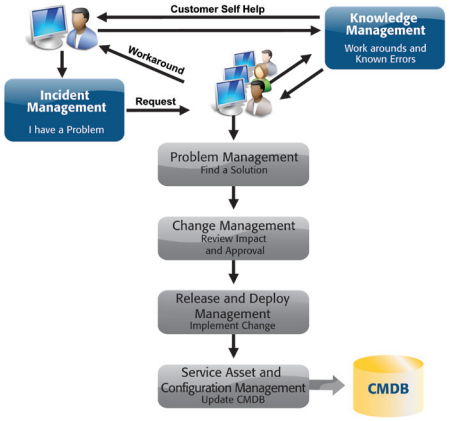
IT organizations need to take a practical approach to this journey. It should begin with identifying the key activities in new processes and changes to existing processes; that are most appropriate for achieving the business goals, and then build on these over time. This will allow the IT organization to demonstrate improvements to the organization quickly, and result in a successful ITSM implementation.

IT needs to focus on the areas that will help the business and IT achieve their objectives collectively. Leveraging process automation technology is typically an area where IT can significantly improve their effectiveness and efficiency, and is a good place to begin. Focusing on a small number of processes that show immediate results will provide a tangible return on investment. Developing a service management project plan will identify the processes and timelines, so that the IT organization can begin the transformation from being strictly reactive to a balanced approach.

Where to Begin

To think and manage strategically a sound tactical framework is required. Customers want services that are available and work when they need them. Incident, Problem, Configuration, Change, Release and Knowledge Management all are necessary to improve service availability; as they are the tactical and operational processes that can provide a quick return on investment by reducing the frequency of interruptions and decrease the response and resolution time for incidents and service requests.

Incident and Problem Management are the two Service Operations processes that can improve service availability by reducing the number of incidents, and decreasing the resolution time for known errors. Developing incident and problem models will help your service desk and level 2 support groups improve their performance and reduce down time for your customers.



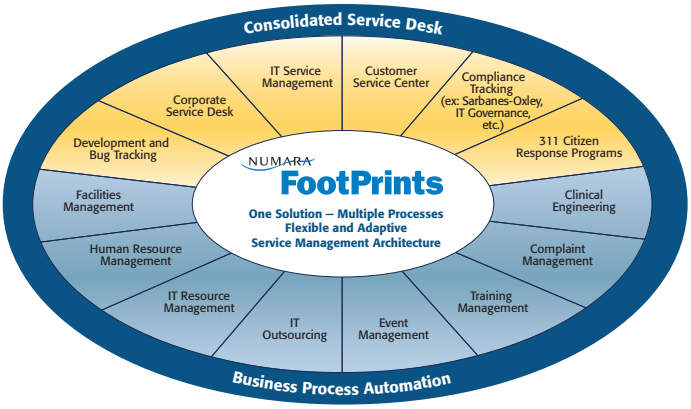
Sixty to eighty percent of failures in the IT infrastructure come from changes introduced by IT (many of which were not approved or authorized). These change related incidents and problems are typically the consequence of a lack of planning, testing or understanding of the impact that the change has on the service or organization as a whole. Change Management will assess the cost, risk, training, remediation, deployment and communication plans for each change.

Even with mature change and deployment processes, there will be failures, questions, and requests as a result of the change. Having incident and problem management processes in place will allow the organization respond quickly to any requests or questions due to the change, and assist in the measurement of the quality of the changes.

A configuration management system will improve the quality of decisions, e.g., risk assessment, test plans; for both change and release management and will also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of both the incident and problem management processes. An integrated approach to configuration and asset management augmented by auto discovery tools can significantly reduce the cost and improve the accuracy of configuration and asset management systems.

Not just for IT

Services and IT are integral to every business process. With IT leading the way on implementing a framework of best practices to improve business, it only makes sense to leverage the same best practices in other areas of the business. The ITIL framework can be applied to other service management organizations and business processes, equally as well as IT.



Evolving the entire organization to a services management mindset should be the long term goal of every organization. One way many IT organizations begin this framework is with a consolidated service desk which can be implemented successfully when a pragmatic approach is taken. This is made more plausible with the unparalleled flexibility of Numara® FootPrints®, allowing you to easily and quickly tailor multiple environments within a single solution.

Numara FootPrints: Practical and Flexible IT Management Software for the Real World

Choosing the right tool to facilitate the ITSM implementation can also contribute to your success. The tool must be flexible and easily adaptive to your environment and the value exceeds the cost of the licensing and implementation.

Numara FootPrints is uniquely positioned to offer organizations of any size a practical ITIL-compatible solution that will help ensure a rapid and successful ITSM implementation. Actively used at mid-large sized and small enterprise organizations throughout the world for more than 10 years, Numara FootPrints is a leading, 100% web-based service desk solution that has helped many IT and support managers run support as a business. This award winning service management solution empowers support professionals to effectively manage service delivery, provide customer problem resolution 24/7, improve service quality and delivery, and report on productivity in real-time.

By design, Numara FootPrints offers confirmed ease-of-use, a rapid implementation process to quickly reach productivity, an extremely compelling and low cost of ownership, and effective integrations to leverage existing investments. Unlike other costly and complex products, this highly configurable and scalable solution does not require any programming, deep technical expertise, or long consulting engagements.

The highly integrated ITIL components in Numara FootPrints enables an organization to implement ITIL processes, either one at a time, or in conjunction with each other, uniquely reducing the risk of failure of an ITSM implementation by any IT or support organization. The Numara FootPrints integration eliminates duplicate data entry, and allows a single view of the customer experience, while providing the information needed by IT to continuously improve the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the services.

Conclusions

In today's marketplace, an organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness, efficiencies, and economies of business services they provide to their customers need to apply ITIL's good practices. IT and the business units can no longer declare success independent of each other when the business does not meet its goals. By applying the specialized capabilities of Service Management, IT organizations and business units can work together in a new way.

To realize this new working relationship requires a significant amount of work, beginning with changing how IT perceives its role, and how it conducts its business. IT can and must learn from other service management organizations that have leveraged these 'good' practices, and not attempt to 'recreate the wheel'.

Implementing ITSM/ITIL is not a simple task and cannot be accomplished over night. IT must understand their strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats; and how they fit within the overall business as a service provider. Introducing processes without the proper planning and integration with other "critical" processes will result in failure. When planned and implemented correctly, short term gains can be achieved which will pave the road for continued improvements in how the business performs and an increase in customer satisfaction.

Implementing ITSM/ITIL good practices requires technology. Without the correct technology, organizations cannot maximize their investment in ITSM or the ITIL Framework. Many vendors claim to have an IT Service Management solution, but in reality only a few have a comprehensive, integrated solution appropriate for the mid-tier and departments in large enterprises.

Numara FootPrints provides an integrated solution for ITSM based on the ITIL framework that allows organizations to leverage good practices to improve the service provisioning to their organizations. Numara FootPrints takes a practical approach by focusing on the processes where most organizations need technology to achieve their objectives and providing services that meet the business needs. Numara FootPrints supports ITIL V3 processes and is a certified toolset that has been verified by Pink Elephant through its PinkVERIFY™ Program.

About the Author

John Custy, Managing Consultant JPC Group

John Custy is a recognized IT Service Management consultant, with over 30 years experience in Information Technology and Services Management. John's breadth of knowledge and experience makes him a highly sought after speaker and industry consultant. He is the founder and managing consultant for JPC Group, a professional services company focused on IT Service Management (ITSM). He holds both the ITIL Manager/Expert as well as the Practitioner/Intermediate certifications, the ITSM ISO/IEC 20000 Professional Manager/Consultant (Exin/TUV) certification, the itSMF ISO/IEC 20000 accredited Consultant, and is also a member of the Exin Professionals Group.

He is also member of the HDI Strategic Advisory Board, a member of the HDI International Certification Standards Committee, and a member of the HDI Faculty. John has been involved with industry certification programs for over 15 years and was a key participant in the development of both the HDI Support Center Certification program and the SSPA Support Center Practices program. John is a well-known and respected speaker and educator, and is a highly requested speaker for Service Management conferences globally.

NUMARA software

Who are we?

Numara Software is a leading provider of integrated IT management solutions for Desktop Management, PC Lifecycle Management, Security & Compliance, Help Desk and Service Desk. Designed to optimize IT management, Numara FootPrints and Numara Track-it! collectively support more than 50,000 customer sites and nearly 20 million IT assets worldwide.

freedom to simply **choose**
the right solution for you

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