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TRANSFORMING ITIL TO FIT THE MODERN IT ORGANIZATION

Have you ever asked "why do we do it this way?" only to receive the answer "because we always have"? The inspirational posters are right, this is easily one of the most damaging phrases in the English language. So, why is it that IT service and support organizations tend to say it the most? In the past customers have gotten used to IT telling them 'No.' Slowly but surely IT became the department of no.

How did IT get into this world where the standard answer is 'no'?

THE ITIL LEGACY

Believe it or not, there once was a time when the struggle to align service expectations with reality lead to the inception of the age-old tale of long-suffering IT technicians versus their executives. In the halls of the British government, a solution was reached. Why not just create a set of guidelines? And so, ITIL (then known as Government Information Technology Infrastructure Management) was born. ITIL gave us common terms and common ground, consistent practices, repeatable processes, and scalability. ITIL has evolved into a common framework for the management of all IT activities. The framework enables companies to identify, define, communicate, and implement best practice throughout IT organizations. ITIL also helps IT organizations align themselves with the business goals of the customers they serve.

ITIL BUSINESS VALUE

ITIL and the adoption of service management have allowed IT organizations to work more efficiently. Instead of living as a largely reactive group, ITIL introduced specific management roles, responsibilities, and internal procedures enabling IT to become more than a cost center, but a value center. ITIL has enabled IT organizations to demonstrate that they can reduce IT costs, increase IT efficiency, and deliver an outstanding customer experience. But now, expectations are higher and IT is expected to understand business needs and requirements, all while adapting technology to meet customer needs.

> "...IT is expected to understand business needs and requirements..."

BRAVE NEW WORLD

For something that touted itself as the best thing to happen to IT service management, the silver bullet to all of IT woes, ITIL is no longer seen that way by many of the people who actually work in today's modern IT environment. The past several years have seen an evolution as technology has become more than a tool that assists day-to-day tasks. Business objectives rely upon digital tools, and if you're in the technology industry, your bread and butter is the software at your fingertips. While ITIL may have been useful, probably invaluable, to businesses 25 years ago when only a select few were able to understand the complexity of technology, that's all changed now.

Today, there are so many new wants and expectations on IT organizations. Some of biggest game changers include:

The cloud has changed everything, opening the door to greater collaboration without the burden of maintaining large, expensive tools. It's no longer a legacy system, stovepipe world.

Business alignment and business acumen. It's not what IT wants, but what your customers need. IT is the expert in fulfilling customer requirements, but how do they showcase this to the organization?

The pace of change. DevOps and Agile response have required IT organizations to deliver with great speed and nimbleness.

Consumerization. Customers and colleagues bring expectations of personal computing life and experiences to the workplace.

REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE, CHAOS TO CALM

Many IT organizations are still today living in a state of chaos. This chaos causes them to be largely reactive to problems, issues, and customer complaints. This “firefighting” mode is one of the greatest challenges impacting IT organizations today.

> *“Firefighting remains a deeply rooted organizational behavior for nearly 70% of respondents, even as support teams embrace knowledge management. This backsliding into older behaviors drives support costs up and reduces customer satisfaction, as team members go back to solving this one problem, albeit urgent, on their own. Even though they understand and embrace the importance of knowledge sharing, crisis situations turn team members into silos at the time when customers need—and expect—them to cooperate and find patterns, workarounds and eventual root-cause fixes.”*

Klever’s Knowledge Benchmark Report 2016

THE FUTURE OF ITIL

While some have called for the retirement of ITIL, we believe it is time to build upon the foundation ITIL created. The next generation of ITIL needs to be stripped down with new workflows and a clear vision of the 21st century IT organization. While technology may have been segmented when ITIL was first created, these days it's much more blended.

And, after all, IT is no longer chained to desks; handheld devices mean that technicians are moving around every day to find solutions. An IT team that is removed from the rest of the enterprise operations may have more success with ITIL — but that team may never extend their reach beyond break/fix issues.

THE NEXT GENERATION SUPPORT CENTER

As our customers wants and needs change, IT organizations must change with these requirements. The top four characteristics the next generation support center will need to have:

Visibility

- Knowledge sharing
- Breakdown silos
- Real-time access to information across full customer/end user lifecycle (ITIL process - problem management and customer service – ITIL and KCS)

Adaptability

- Extend to multichannel and self-service (ITIL process - incident management and customer service)
- New workflows
- New influences from DevOps and Agile (ITIL process – change management – earlier in the process and be a part of change process – e.g. user stories)

Continuous Improvement

- Benchmarks
- Smart Data, Not Big Data - metrics that matter
- Reliable data that connects to business outcomes

Automation

- Apply proven practices and processes
- Build upon tools and infrastructure in place
- Strip it down (ITIL Structure)

PUTTING ITIL TO WORK

Most organizations cannot start with a blank slate. You might already have a help desk or some sort of change management in place. Whether you have already integrated ITIL processes or not, the top things to take into consideration when you begin an ITIL implementation

- Be clear about your vision – why are you implementing ITIL?

- Communicate the vision across your entire organization. Ensure everyone understands what you are trying to accomplish and how each team member will contribute to a successful implementation.

> "…if your customers do not use what you have built, you have failed."

- Don't try to do everything at once – start small, with your service strategy or design to best understand the needs and how to properly measure successes. You have to walk before you can run. Take it one step at a time.

- Ensure adequate budget and resources are in place. Leadership and all involved personnel needs to understand the investment in both time and money are required to be successful.

- Develop a cohesive training plan. You can do everything right, but if your customers do not use what you have built, you have failed. Ensure you have a complete training plan that will involve your customers from day one.

Interested in learning more? Talk to a Samanage representative today.

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