The People Factor – Delivering the ITSM Vision

IT Service Management (ITSM) is a business strategy that enables the IT department to deliver a better 'customer experience'. The goal: to transform their organisation from a tactical technology-provider to a strategic, business-oriented service operation. Service Management however, is not simply about IT systems, process and operational procedures – it is acutely reliant on people – the people who will implement, deliver and sustain the improvements necessary to provide customers and the business with the highest quality of service.

Aimed at senior business executives and any manager directly responsible for the development and delivery of IT services, this white paper outlines the effect of people on ITSM. It also explains how to approach ITSM implementation, leverage industry-accepted best practices based on ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library). Furthermore, it considers why attitudinal and cultural aspects of change management are fundamental to a successful transformation.

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Executive Summary

Change initiatives are an ongoing part of commercial life. In order to achieve success, any change demands the commitment of everyone involved, without that commitment they simply diminish and disappear. In order to avoid this scenario, it is vital that organisations adopt a working methodology that maximises the commitment of their people to changes that those people may not initially want or don't see the need for.

As every large business is facing significant changes to its working environments and practices, due in the main to increased competition, globalisation, the multinational marketplace, information-based organisations and flatter structures, the IT department is now also required to adopt a new business-centric approach to service and technology delivery. This in turn means change and the management of this change – transforming IT towards service management.

ITSM focuses on delivering and supporting IT services that are aligned to the business requirements of the organisation. IT efficiency and quality improvement are the new mandates for IT departments. Although these present significant challenges across the enterprise, they are key to supporting long-term business growth, competitive edge and, naturally, people and skills development.

In order to achieve rapid and sustained success from ITSM, organisations need to consider the real impact not just on their technology infrastructure and existing processes but also on people – 'the people factor'.

All stakeholders within the business need to understand the required changes, anticipated goals, impact and, of course, the benefits. The change process will involve new roles, responsibilities and, naturally, new job descriptions. These will need to be developed, articulated and communicated to the organisation. As existing processes are adjusted and new processes introduced, IT employees will have to update and acquire new and appropriate skills to enhance performance and productivity, and to increase the return on investment. The people expected to run these processes effectively will also have to accept 'the changes'. This requires sophisticated management of change activities, which would usually involve a structured communication programme explaining the purpose of the change to achieve positive buy-in and early commitment.

With ITSM helping the IT organisation to become more customer-focused it is imperative that the IT department defines its priorities based on business impact. For many IT departments this is a totally new approach, calling for a different attitude and broader thinking. In the ITSM environment, a service-desk employee is no longer measured simply on call handling but on how customer satisfaction is actually being managed. This will require the development and setting of new performance measures for IT employees. The 'change managers' will also need to communicate internally beyond simply training staff to use new tools to stimulate a new level of interest in understanding the IT organisation and its goals, as well as to build a new culture of communication and collaboration.

Starting with the basics – why people are key

Think about starting a small business; you have an idea, a product – an opportunity. Before you open your doors, you will have given due consideration to the individuals you want by your side. Once you have carefully selected your team, everyone will have been subjected to your

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'business plan' and 'vision'. They will have decided whether the reward is worth the risk, and from day one everyone involved is effectively committed, motivated and ready to give 110%. There is a basic focus – the customer and generating revenue with profit. As your business grows and the workloads increase, additional 'heads' will be brought in to undertake new and specific roles. Departments will be formed to support a particular function or deliver an additional business service. At this point, have you invested enough thought, time and effort in ensuring the original stakeholders (employees) not only understand their new roles and what's now expected of them but that they are properly equipped and trained to carry out those roles?

Many change initiatives and indeed businesses fail because of the resulting 'skills gap'. The business goals and objectives have changed, but the people inside are ill-equipped, leaving them isolated and de-motivated. Without due consideration to this, the danger is that individuals are now left to work to different, misperceived or multiple agendas. The spirit of 'working together' to reach a single goal is also lost; people feel removed from the heart of the business, attrition rates increase, motivation plummets and the business loses direction and structure – resulting in, at best, reduced profit margins, falling revenues or loss of market share. This is a simplistic view but a typical scenario in the evolution of a small business, which perfectly highlights the fact that the bigger the business, the harder it is to keep everyone aligned. The more people you have, the bigger the challenge, and no matter how technologically advanced or operationally efficient the business, it's people who will dictate whether it succeeds or fails.

To expand on this even further, just think about opening an office in another country or acquiring a competitor or complementary business: the people- challenges you face in your original business multiply four-fold.

The issues highlighted here should not be perceived as complicated ones, nor should the tasks be under-estimated. No matter what the size of the business or the complexity of the improvement programme, the same people-factors apply.

Many of today's biggest businesses have acquired or have merged with other entities at some point along the way. They have faced tough challenges and have chosen to take significant risk in an attempt to gain market share and beat the competition. Of these, the most successful would lay claim to being operationally and culturally aligned. How they got there makes interesting reading, but all of them understood that a phased approach to organisational improvement was key to their success and rewards.

Part of this approach is attitudinal and cultural unity. You can't simply throw people together and expect them to get on. As human beings, we are complex. Emotions play a major part in our attitudes, moods, how we react to certain situations, how we feel and behave. In the developed world, we are creatures of habit and we form routines. We don't like changes unless we are the ones making them. Then we come to role and responsibility changes and the challenge of helping people do things differently; enhance, broaden or realign their skill sets.

It might seem pessimistic to think that these 'obvious' factors aren't always taken into consideration, but there are many, many cases where they are simply overlooked or even discounted, becoming overshadowed by the technology being implemented. Change is always initiated by a physical need or an anticipated opportunity or threat. An agenda and time plan are formed and the easiest thing to do is acquire and implement new infrastructure and technologies, as ultimately these are 'products' provided to us.

What do we mean by this? As an example, a large business replaced its desktop PCs with the latest wireless-enabled notebooks. The business case for this was that even though the cost to acquire the notebooks was significantly more than the latest desktops, the notebooks would deliver greater productivity benefits through facilitating flexible and remote working. Six months after installation, an internal survey was conducted and it was found that over 70% of the notebooks had never left the office.

Viewing IT as a business, rather than running IT within a business and re-engineering processes to make best use of the technology employed, will result in the provision of a better service at a lower cost.

The ITSM mandate is to enable the IT organisation to deliver IT solutions with increased speed, agility and quality with minimal risk and at a lower cost. The IT organisation that can effectively handle growing demands driven from the business, delivers business value, drives innovation, provides excellent customer service, and grows in stature and strategic importance.

Implementing ITSM will provide an IT organisation with the service delivery capabilities that are stable and cost- effective but equally agile and flexible. ITSM also provides a mechanism by which to measure IT service quality and improvement, delivering greater value to the business. Adhering to industry best practices will be key to the entire process.

IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)-based best practices promote business effectiveness and efficiency. ITIL is the world's most comprehensive and respected source of information about IT processes. It has been adopted by many organisations around the world, and leading consulting and educational bodies, including HP, offer ITIL training and certification programmes for IT professionals. ITSM takes this one step further, taking industry best practice and deploying it through a business-driven approach to enable IT organisations to design, build, manage and develop quality IT services. The 'People Factor', however, dictates the success or failure of any ITSM initiative. This more often than not depends on the enthusiasm, commitment and drive of those involved – both directly and indirectly. Real-life experiences and actual case histories underline the fact that implementing Service Management is more than just implementing ITIL.

Applying ITIL guidelines is no easy task. It demands extensive changes that predominantly affect and involve people. Businesses considering IT transformation initiatives require a clear reference model to work to in order to evaluate whether the goals initially set are likely to be achieved. This doesn't mean that managers directly responsible to their business partners for the development and delivery of IT services have to adhere to rigid or intensive sets of processes. Successful projects are typically conducted in a less structured way. The key to success is down to the fact that bureaucracy and formally documenting everything before implementation is kept to a minimum. Rather than getting bogged down with paperwork, the aim is to produce 'quick hits' to assist in motivation and direction-forming within the project. This focuses the majority of effort onto the project instead of merely producing piles of documents.

The users were still using them as if they were desktop PCs. Not only were the calculated productivity increases not met, the company had to initiate a retraining programme at a time when the business should have been concentrating on driving end-of-quarter revenues. This not only impacted productivity levels, it added to the overall cost of the change. If the business had done its homework and accurately assessed the size of the 'shift', it would have saved valuable time and cost. If the company had taken the simple steps to inform the users of the decision to move to notebooks from desktops and shared the 'vision', the benefits could have been realised much sooner. This could easily have been achieved through the development of an appropriate internal communications programme, whether a multistage email campaign, series of workshops, a feature article in the company newsletter, an internal awareness campaign or simply a clearly-communicated mission statement.

Again, this is a simplistic example and not directly related to IT Service Management, but it illustrates that the more complex the change, the higher the potential risk and cost. Major changes involving the IT function can have far-reaching effects on the rest of the business. Cost of change can outstrip the benefits of delivery and ultimately defeat the object of the exercise.

Follow IT best practices

The new IT function should be viewed and run as a business, not simply run as a function within a business. Re-engineering processes to make best use of the technology employed, and aligning your people to it, will result in the provision of a higher-quality service at a lower cost.

ITSM facilitating business success

As with the adoption of most business strategies, ITSM facilitates change affecting three core factors: people, process and technology. How a business implements ITSM will naturally impact the end result.

To increase the likelihood of success, equal credence needs to be given to each factor. As an enabler of change, the technology 'bit' usually gets top billing on the agenda and an appropriate budget to make it happen. Although businesses no longer have the luxury of engaging in lengthy product evaluations, there is still a high degree of technology due-diligence to ensure the right set of tools is adopted.

Adopting and implementing the best technology is not the single answer to IT service delivery problems. Implementing comprehensive process management will ultimately result in key changes in job responsibilities and daily activities for the majority of employees. Staff will need to develop new skills and use new technologies, which require skill assessments and strategic education investments. New and improved IT processes are often designed without due consideration of the impact on the organisational structure and the people involved.

Businesses need to take into consideration the effect change has on skill sets, attitudes and the new roles and responsibilities, as staff opinion may be driven against any new initiative. The impact on people whilst transforming IT towards service management must be fully understood and appreciated. In order to manage change successfully, the following need to be addressed:

- Increase people's ownership of and commitment to change

- Empower people rather than manipulate or coerce them

- Focus on strategic rather than tactical change

- Move away from a culture of carrying out 'quick fixes' to achieving 'quick hits' and long-term improvement

- Acknowledge and work with the implications for organisational culture on change initiatives

- Recognise the need for people to be different rather than just doing things differently

- Develop a solutions-based approach to facilitate skills assessments, new job descriptions, process-mapping to business goals, curriculum development, training roll-out and performance assessment

ITSM projects that re-engineer processes and implement new tools must also provide the necessary resources and platforms to improve people's skills and enable the appropriate mindset. Staff must receive the right amount of information and training so that they can quickly and successfully perform new or modified tasks. However, correct performance of new skills alone does not necessarily result in successful IT transformation. Attitudes must also be transformed so that the entire IT department becomes more customer-centric, service-oriented and aligned with the business goals of the organisation.

The resulting attitude change will help the IT organisation to:

- View the users of their services as customers

- Move from a traditional inward-looking perspective to an outward-looking one

- Expand its focus on technology to include a focus on service solutions

- Move from isolated, ad hoc processes to business-justified, streamlined IT processes

- Balance in-house solution development with outsourcing

- Develop and implement integrated, end-to-end IT processes, avoiding process silos
- Utilise new process improvements to support a proactive approach
- Define and develop service-oriented organisational structures, roles and responsibilities
- Enhance traditional IT system skills with customer-focused skills

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Projects that address the 'people' component of an ITSM initiative should fully equip IT professionals and management with the relevant knowledge, skills and understanding to enhance ITSM processes and leverage the new technologies adopted. Typically, a comprehensive assessment is conducted to establish the current skill sets, to understand the organisation's actual training need and define ongoing ITSM training requirements.

ITSM Education

Education is key in helping to motivate teams and individuals and establishing and sustaining a positive mindset throughout the enterprise. In simple terms, it's letting people know what you're doing, when you're doing it, how you're doing it and the benefits these changes will bring. It's also about creating a structured communications programme, one that will facilitate the supply of succinct and relevant information, enable constructive dialogue and provide an appropriate support mechanism to overcome fears and objections. It is also vital that the end goals are clearly articulated and that the short-, mid- and long-term benefits are properly outlined and explained.

ITSM education will play a key part in helping to maximise the return on ITSM initiatives. ITSM education solutions benefit not only the organisation but individual employees. Each member of staff should receive a personalised education plan based on their current ITSM knowledge, roles and responsibilities, to ensure that the right training is given to the relevant individual and to save time and money.

Fuelling the 'People Factor' – five components to consider

- Adopt a consultative approach – the right level of consultation is essential if you are to define the ITSM competencies your organisation needs, allowing the development of an education solution that is specifically tailored to meet them

- Practice ITSM Simulation – business simulations are ideal exercises to help management and staff quickly understand the challenges of the existing IT environment and processes, as well as gain a full appreciation of the benefits of ITSM

- Facilitate Blended learning – blended training solutions combine both classroom and online training to accelerate and improve learning using the most appropriate, timely and cost-effective means

- Utilise ITIL-based curriculum and certification exams – widely accepted as the best approach to ITSM, ITIL provides a comprehensive and consistent set of best practices. ITIL-based curriculum and certification exams ensure that staff are exposed to industry's best practices, and that they are suitably qualified and competent

- Global delivery – in today's diverse and global marketplace, global delivery capabilities are essential to ensure timely, consistent and simultaneous training programmes to facilitate competitive advantage and rapid ROI

What have we learned so far?

To summarise, a key contributor to IT transformation success is strong visible and effective sponsorship. The key obstacle to successful change is employee resistance at all levels: front-line, middle managers and senior managers. Employees need and want to hear about change. This could be from two key sources: the CEO or the employees' immediate supervisor. One thing to remember here is that the two messages will be significantly different; the 'world view' and the 'departmental view'. The main reasons for people's resistance are a lack of awareness about the change, comfort with the way things are and, naturally, fear of the unknown. ITSM is a journey over time, calling for substantially different objectives, organisational structures, roles/responsibilities and attitudes within the IT function. It also requires an ongoing and structured programme – a solutions-based approach that is able to encompass skills assessments, job roles, the mapping of these to specific ITSM processes, the development of a sustainable training curriculum path, cost-effective training roll-out and ongoing evaluation.

ITSM training from HP education services

As a proactive board member of the IT Service Management Foundation, HP has made considerable investment in providing customers with valuable benefits from implementing ITSM. Such investment is endorsed by the development of an ITSM model that can be used as an enterprise reference for IT organisations. Based on ITIL best practices and almost ten years of dedicated HP experience, the HP ITSM Reference Model is a high-level, fully integrated IT process relationship map. This model, combined with HP's unrivalled ITSM education resources and global capabilities, helps companies around the world to better understand their people challenges.

HP provides a complete portfolio of ITSM education solutions to equip staff with the knowledge and skills to effectively utilise ITSM processes and technologies. Customer workshops and training are delivered to help create new service lifecycle relationships, or, in operational mode, to assist the consulting department with the setting up of improved support processes and procedures. With the convenience of dealing with a single vendor and almost ten years of ITSM experience, HP is the ideal ITSM partner to help your business align its IT service delivery to business priorities.

HP offers a comprehensive range of ITSM courses. The HP ITSM curriculum offers a depth of content based on real-world experience and knowledge. HP custom learning solutions address the unique training requirements for any ITSM-related project or initiative. HP ITSM solutions encompass consulting, outsourcing, support, service-desk solutions and training.

HP ITSM consultants work with businesses to design a unique, customised solution that will improve IT processes and infrastructure, increase the efficiency of ITSM and align IT service delivery with the actual needs of the business. Using proven methods focused on time-to-market and knowledge transfer, HP customers can rapidly become self-sufficient in the new disciplines. With more than 80 education centres worldwide and e-learning on the award-winning IT Resource Centre, HP delivers best-in-class Service Management training to thousands all over the world. For maximum flexibility, HP tailors its classes to each particular customer's need and can provide training either on site or online for convenient 24x7 access.

For more information

To provide IT organisations with a deeper understanding of ITSM processes and how ITSM from HP can help them plan for their own IT transformation, HP has developed a number of white papers. To view these papers, as well as get more information, please visit the HP learning solutions website at www.hp.com/learn or www.hp.com/hps/itsm. Alternatively, email us at learning.solutions@hp.com

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