

ITSM is another terminology you will hear, and it stands for IT service management. ITSM is how IT teams manage the end-to-end delivery of IT services to customers. These services often include all the processes and activities to design, create, deliver, and support IT services.

The core concept of ITSM is the notion that IT is a service and should be delivered as such. A typical ITSM scenario could involve requesting new hardware like a laptop. You would submit your request through a portal, filling out a ticket with all applicable information, and automating a repeatable workflow process. Then, the ticket would land in the IT team's queue, where incoming requests are sorted and actioned according to importance.

In this day-to-day interaction with IT, people often mistake ITSM as relatively basic IT support. However, ITSM teams oversee all kinds of workplace technology, ranging from laptops, to servers, to business-critical software applications for customers.

ITSM can be structured to align with IT Infrastructure Library or ITIL practices. So what is ITIL? Keep in mind ITSM is the day-to-day execution and organisation of planning, designing, delivering, testing, configuring, and operating IT infrastructure and applications. ITIL covers five different sections of the ITSM lifecycle: service strategy, service design, service transition, service operation and continual service improvement. In comparison, the IT Infrastructure Library is a set of best practices for ITSM. While ITSM is often associated with ITIL, service management practices don't necessarily need to follow the principles laid out by ITIL. This often leads to a time-heavy management process as ITSM was confused as 'rules' based on 'guidance' for how business is conducted.

Why is this important, and how does it relate to DevOps? ITSM and DevOps are typically pitched against each other as an either/or decision, and Developers and Operation teams often say, "we are an ITSM or a DevOps house". There is also confusion about what ITSM and DevOps deliver and how they could work together. Modern, high performing teams realise that they may need to both be able to work smarter, not harder, to produce a quick but solid process and control.

Keep in mind that ITSM and ITIL, and DevOps are evolving practices. Depending on who is using or teaching these practices, they can morph together within the business context.