ITIL4® Guide to Practices

Updated March 2020

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This publication has been revised by Barclay Rae to bring the content up to date with current ITIL® guidelines. Rae is an independent management consultant, analyst, and writer in the ITSM Industry, with over 20 years consultancy experience involving over 500 projects. He is a ITIL4 co-author and lead editor of the ITIL4 Create, Delivery and Support publication, co-author of the 2016 "ITIL Practitioner Programme," plus a contributor to SDI standards and certification programs. Rae has over 30 years' experience in IT and is also currently operating as the CEO of ITSMF UK.

Note to Readers

This publication highlights the key elements of the ITIL Service Design publication and includes commentary on important concepts from BMC and ITIL experts.

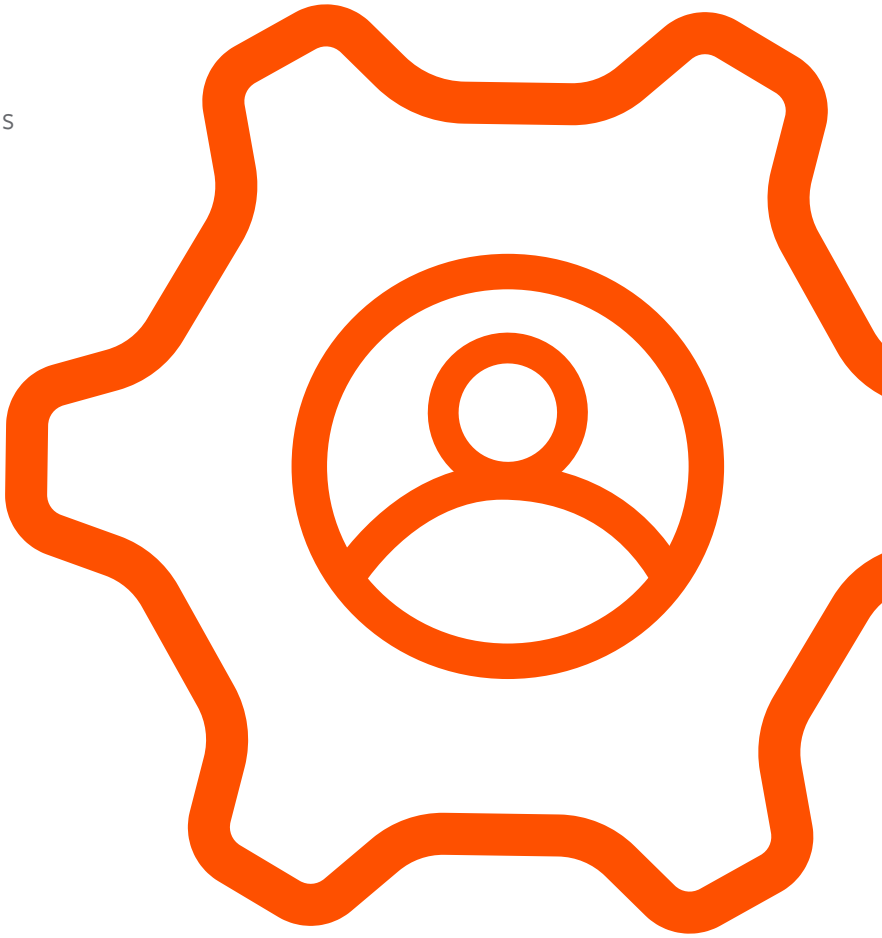
Introduction

In early 2019 Axelos released the latest version of the global best practice for IT Service Management, ITIL 4. In the version of the framework Axelos has gathered subject matter experts from around the globe to ensure greater alignment and integration with modern day working practices, methodologies and standards, including DevOps, Agile and Lean approaches.

ITIL 4 recognises the focus of modern IT organizations on digital transformation, customer experience and the drive for service excellence. The framework is designed to offer practical guidance to any organization looking to understand how to adopt and apply a best practice mindset and approach to their IT Service Management capabilities.

ITIL 4 is specifically designed to address the needs of all verticals and levels of maturity, whether an organization be high velocity in nature, steady and stable evolving through organic growth. The concepts and models defined can be used to deliver excellence and drive maturity in any approach to IT Service Management.

ITIL 4 is a significant development from previous version, although much of the detailed 'practice' content remains in a recognisable form. The context and positioning of ITIL has however developed as a strategic and unifying element across the business and technology landscape. The approach has changed to ensure that ITIL meets the needs of a modern digital based service management workforce.



Overview

One of the biggest concept areas introduced in ITIL 4 is the structure and guidance given around Practices.

Practices have existed in ITSM for many years and have been in use for any service provider working with modern technologies and solutions. Effective working practices have needed to be established to help ITSM organisations manage and deliver projects for services and products that meet the requirements of their customers.

These practices have evolved rapidly over recent years and seen the rise and adoption of new IT management practices such as DevOps. Whilst ITSM organisations have leveraged these practices to deliver and support their services in line with modern technology, organisations who are more legacy based in terms of systems and solutions will have developed practices more in line with the control and cost elements of service delivery. In today's world of digital transformation whether a service provider is involved in leading edge technology, steady state or legacy it is imperative that they address the challenges of ever-increasing business demand, expectation and technology and acceleration. This means that they have to have the right capabilities in place with the necessary requires to ensure value creation and realisation.

ITIL 4 has leveraged this focus on practices to a present a comprehensive and robust structure and guidance in line with best practice. ITIL 4 defines Service Management as "a set of specialised organisational capabilities for enabling value to customers in the form of services" – practices are key to these capabilities.

Practices are defined as:

sets of organizational resources designed for performing work or accomplishing objectives. They are in essence all capabilities and resources a service provider needs to enact processes and procedures.

Practices are more than processes – a process is a sub-set of a practice, along with people, tools, skills, competencies, documentation – all aspects of delivery

It is important to understand that practices will work across the Service Value Chain (Plan, Improve, Engage, Design & Transition, Obtain/Build, Deliver and Support) to manage and deliver the required value streams. Value streams are the required activities using practices that are enabled across the value chain. This can include e.g.: resolution of an incident, delivery of a new service, improvement to an existing service or access to an application or resource.

With Practices it is recognised that service providers have always had capabilities rather than just processes and they understand that all ITSM organizations do not have a purely linear approach to process enablement.

For example, an ITSM organization may have a number of discrete incident management processes (such as HR incidents, Facilities Incidents, IT incidents and security incidents) all of which are delivered by a set of capabilities and resources, in this case the Incident Management Practice.

ITIL 4 groups practices into 3 areas:

1. General Management Practices - These have been adopted and adapted for service management from general business domains

2. Service Management Practices - These have been developed in service management and ITSM industries

3. Technical Management Practices - These have been adapted from technology management domains for service management purposes by expanding or shifting their focus from technology solutions to IT services

These practices are described briefly in the following sections.

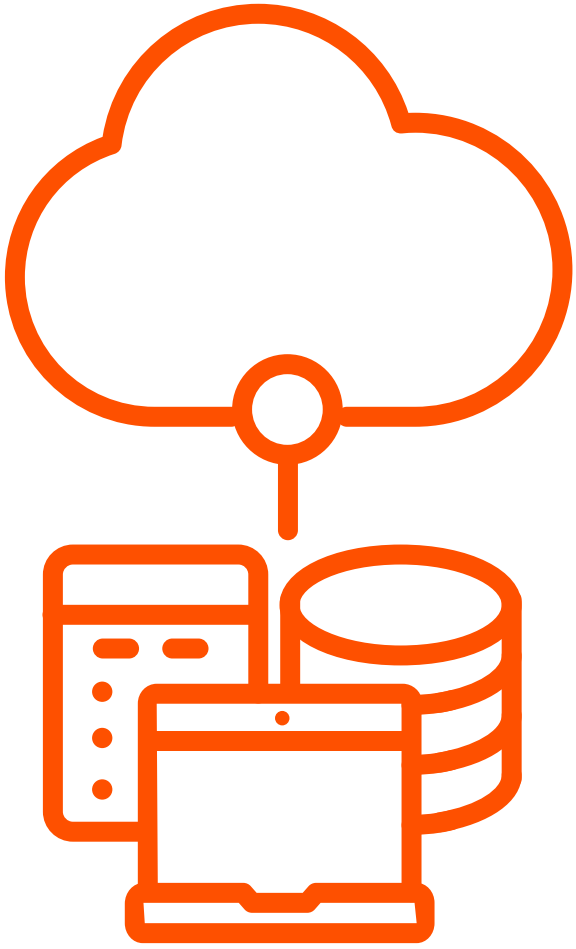
General Management Practices

Architecture Management

The purpose of the architecture management practice is to provide an understanding of all the different elements that make up an organisation and how these elements interrelate, enabling the organization to effectively achieve its current and future objectives

This practice enables organisations to address all the different architect types which must be effectively managed and delivered in line with the overall service value system. There are a number of architecture types prevalent in organisations which this practice will cover such as:

- Business architecture
- Service architecture
- Information systems architecture (including data and systems architecture)
- Technology architecture
- Environmental Architecture



Value Chain Interaction:

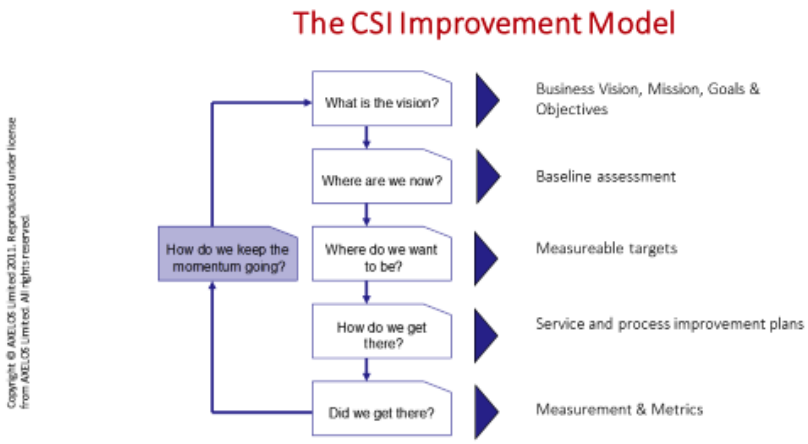
This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Design and Transition

Continual Improvement

The purpose of the continual improvement practice is to align the organizations practices and services with changing business needs through the ongoing improvement of products, services, and practices, or any element in the management of products and services.

There should be nothing that is outside the scope of continual improvement for any ITSM organization. It is recognized that a lack of continual improvement can lead to inertia and an eventual decay of service excellence - this impacts cost and the ability to build new services effectively (via technical det).

The danger of not addressing the required capabilities and resources required for continual improvement is that an organization can stand still whilst competitors evolve and gain market share. Worse still by failing to improve the customer move to another provider or company and take over service and products currently delivered. The bar is ever being raised by modern service providers, that bar sets the expectation for service quality and value.



Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/Build, Deliver and Support

Information Security Management

The purpose of the information security management practice is to protect the information needed by the organization to conduct its business

In today's digitally enabled world there has never been a greater focus on the risks and requirements for effective information security. Failure to address this area with the care, rigor and diligence required can result in a loss of revenue, market share and customers, integrity and regulatory compliance. Information security failures are often published into the public domain and can cause huge reputational damage and ongoing trust issues with an organization's stakeholders.

Customers expect their service provider to be fully compliant with relevant security and data laws (such as GDPR) and to have the necessary systems and processes in place to maintain the levels of confidentiality required.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/ Build, Deliver and Support

Knowledge Management

The purpose of the knowledge management practice is to maintain and improve the effective and convenient use of information and knowledge across the organization.

Knowledge is one of the most valuable assets of any organization but also one of the most difficult to identify and manage, this has seen the rise of the challenges around "Big Data'. Knowledge is ever evolving and shifting and as such, need's constant rigor in terms of the processes in place to ensure it is underpinning the overall capabilities of an originations.

Without effective knowledge management our ability to generate data can outweigh our ability to manage it and this provide the information needed to be efficient in effective in our provisioning of products and services and decision making.

It is important to understand the differentiation between information and knowledge. Knowledge can be seen as the use of information in a particular context. Knowledge management means the right information is provided in the right format and the right level and at the right time, always in line with access polices, processes and procedures.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Improve, Deliver and Support

Measuring and Reporting

The purpose of the measuring and reporting practice is to support good decision making and continual improvement by decreasing the levels of uncertainty. This is achieved through the collection of relevant data on various managed objects and the valid assessment of this data in an appropriate context.

Effective measurement and reporting are critical to an organizations ability to understand and demonstrate performance, identify achievements, gaps and deficiencies and to initiate the required improvements.

The goals of the business and the ITSM should be clearly understood and aligned and supported by relevant Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Typically, best practice would recommend circa 5 KPIs per CSF.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/ Build

Organizational Change Management

The purpose of the organizational change management practice is to ensure that changes in an organization are smoothly and successfully implemented, and that lasting benefits are achieved by managing the human aspects of changes.

This practice addresses one of the key reasons that organizations fail to implement change. Namely that organizational-level changes require much more care and attention around people and how change impact them. Changes can either fail completely or fail to deliver the benefits identified at the outset, simply by not addressing or understanding the human dynamics of change.

It is key that organizations can identify those affected by organizational change and work with them to help acceptance and support of the change. Organizations are now starting to understand that no matter what the nature is of a change is – e.g. to structure, technology, process or service – it is people that are critical to success. Organizational change management will contribute to every part of the service value system.

For organizational change to work it must ensure that the following are established and maintained:

- Clear and relevant objectives
- Strong and committed leadership
- Willing and prepared participants
- Sustained improvement

Whilst all of the above are vital to organizational change, however studies have shown that poor change leadership is the most common cause of failure.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Improve

Portfolio Management

The purpose of the portfolio management practice is to ensure that the organization has the right mix of programs, projects, products and services to execute the organizations strategy within its funding and resource constraints.

Portfolio management concerns itself both with a return on investment and a return on value, it ensures that the right strategic decisions are made to manage a balance between organizational change and business as usual. It understands and influences how resource are used and deployed throughout the ITSM organization and facilitates the alignment of resources and capabilities with required customer outcomes as part of the strategic execution with the service value system.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan

Project Management

The purpose of the project management practice is to ensure that all projects in the organization are successfully delivered.

Projects are how significant changes are managed and delivered to an organization and as such can have a huge impact on the performance and value creation of services and product as well as the morale and performance of staff and customers. Projects are temporary in nature and are created to ensure outputs in line with defined and agreed requirements are delivered according to the provisions of a business case.

The most common methods for project delivery are:

Waterfall – for environments where the requirements are known upfront (and unlikely to experience significant change) and where the definition of the work is more important than the speed of delivery

Agile – for where requirements are uncertain (at least at outset) and likely to evolve over time (as business needs and priorities change), and where speed of delivery is often prioritized over definition of precise requirements.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design and Transition, Obtain/Build

Relationship Management

The purpose of the relationship management practice is to establish and nurture the links between organization and its stakeholders at strategic and tactical levels.

Relationships are key to understanding opportunity and demand and utilizing the service value system to create value. Relationships need to be understood at every level be they tactical in nature (service delivery and performance orientated) or strategic (understanding business goals and objectives and strategic direction). Relationships must be built, nurtured and matured to enable value co-creation and a true partnership between consumer and provider originations, within this it is important to identify all stakeholders and manage the relationships accordingly.

For some roles within an ITSM organization, relationship management will be the principal activity (for example Service Level Managers, Account Managers), however it is the responsibility of all staff at various points in the execution of their role.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition

Risk Management

The purpose of the risk management practice is to ensure that the organization understands and effectively handles risks.

Managing risk is essential to ensuring the ongoing sustainability of an organization and creating value for its customers. Risk management is an integral part of all organizational activities and therefore central to the organization's service value system. Risk must be considered in relation to all 4 of the ITIL dimensions of service management.

Risks are prevalent in everything an organization does and must be appropriately considered in every decision it makes. Whilst risk is most commonly associated with a negative context it should also be evaluated as a potential opportunity to increase or create value for the consumer and provider.

The way each organization evaluates and manages risk is ultimately specific to that organization, however the key activities of evaluation and prioritization remain the same. High velocity organizations will have a higher acceptance and tolerance of risk than those organizations who prefer stability and steady state.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/ Build, Deliver and Support

Service Financial Management

The purpose of the service financial management practice is to support the organization's strategies and plans for service management buy ensuring that the organization's financial resources and investments are being used effectively.

Good financial management is key to an organization's success and survival, every organization has to be able to demonstrate sound financial management in line with corporate policies, processes and procedures.

To be effective, the financial management practice needs to align and integrate to the policies and practices of portfolio management, project management and relationship management.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan

Strategy Management

The purpose of the strategy management practice is to formulate the goals of the organization and adopt the courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for achieving those goals.

Every organization has to have a strategic intent backed by goals and objectives. For a service provider it is important that their strategic direction aligns with that of its customer(s). Strategy management ensure requirements and outcomes are understand and drive the direction of the organization whist enabling effective and relevant decision making at pertinent levels and at key points in time.

Strategy provides the overall direction for an organization and ultimately drives everything it does, strategy is set by senior management and governing bodies but affects every role within the organization and as such should be translated and cascaded accordingly. The key deliverable of any strategy is to enable value creation for the organization.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan

Supplier Management

The purpose of the supplier management practice is to ensure that the organization's suppliers and their performances are managed appropriately to support the seamless provision of quality products and services.

Every service provider will depend to some extent on external suppliers and for many these suppliers for a critical component in the delivery of services and the creation of value.

The relationships with every supplier involved in the value chain needs to be defined, established and managed throughout its lifecycle. Performance measures, reporting, scope and deliverables should be clearly understood and agreed by all stakeholders.

Any contract in place should underpin the level of service that the provider has committed to with its customer (Service Level Agreements) and as such it is important that supplier management works closely with the service level management practice.

As products and services become ever more capable and potentially complex in terms of design and provisioning, organizations rely on a number of suppliers in the overall service model. To address this challenge service integration is required which orchestrates and co-ordinates all suppliers involved in the development and delivery of products and services. This means there is a

requirement for a role of service integrator, this role can be performed by the organization itself or by a third-party.

The rise for the need for this level of supplier orchestration has led to the development and establishment of the Service Integration and Management (SIAM) framework.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/ Build, Deliver and Support

Workforce and Talent Management

The purpose of the workforce and talent management practice is to ensure that the organization has the right people with the appropriate skills and knowledge and in the correct roles to support its business objectives.

Workforce management allows the organization to analyse current performance and requirement data to forecast future demand for services. It ensures that the right people with the right mix of skills and competencies are in place when and where needed to ensure effective service provisioning.

An organizations people are its most crucial and valuable asset and as such should be managed and developed with due care and consideration. The workforce and talent management practice have a specific focus on the establishment of policies processes and procedures designed to direct and develop staff in line with personal and organizational objectives.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Improve

Service Management Practices

Availability Management

The purpose of the availability management practice is to ensure that services deliver agreed levels of availability to meet the needs of customers and users.

Ensuring services are available when and where agreed is at the core of service operation and one of the key metrics for any service provider. It can often shape the perception from the business as to the quality and stability of services being provided. Clarity in what availability of services and components of those services means business terms and the relevant targets should be defined and documented in all service level agreements.

Availability must also be clarified as 'service' availability and measured accordingly – i.e. the entire value stream or 'bundle' of components that go to make up the service, not simply one or more individual system components.

"Availability" – the ability of an IT service or other configuration item to perform its agreed function when required.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan

Business Analysis

The purpose of the business analysis practice is to analyse a business or some element of it, define its associated needs, and recommend solutions these needs and/or solve a business problem, which must facilitate value creation for stakeholders.

Business analysis is an important element within the design, build and delivery of products and services, to be of true value to the organization business analysis needs to incorporate processes, organizational change, technology, information, policies and strategic planning. ITSM organizations will often have a defined role for this area (typically a business analyst), however elements of the role can be found in many other practice areas (for example service level management, strategy management, change management and relationship management). It is important to consider business analysis across the service value system and not limit its scope to software development (the traditional view).

"Warranty requirements"- typically non-functional requirements captured as inputs from stakeholders and other practices.

"Utility requirements" – functional requirements which have been defined by the customer and are unique to a specific product

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Engage, Design and Transition, Obtain/Build

Capacity and Performance Management

The purpose of the capacity and performance management practice is to ensure that services achieve agreed and expected performance, satisfying current and future demand in a cost-effective way.

Without due consideration given to the capacity and performance of every component of s service, organizations run this risk of service failure and extended down time. Given this level of criticality, organizations often look to automated methods of monitoring and management performance, with related automated actions (for example load balancers in a server cluster).

As with availability management, this practice will interact with many others but should have formal polices for engagement with change management, release Management, deployment management, service validation and testing, infrastructure and platform, Software development and management, event management and configuration management.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Improve

Change Enablement

The purpose of the change enablement practice is to maximise the number of successful service and product changes by ensuring that risk have been properly assessed, authorizing changes to proceed, and managing the change schedule.

"Change" - the addition, modification, or removal of anything that could have a direct or indirect effect on services.

It is important to differentiate between organization change management and change enablement. Organizational change management has a focus on the human dynamics of change whereas change enablement has a focus on products and services.

Successful management of changes requires detailed policy, processes and procedures. Poor change management can destabilise the operational environment, cause undue cost and impact the business whilst damaging the reputation of the service provider.

Every organization will need to define the scope of their change control, but it will typically encompass every key element/component that makes up a service or product and contributes to its operation.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design and Transition, Obtain/Build, Improve

Incident Management

The purpose of the incident management practice is to minimise the negative impact of incidents by restoring normal service operation as quickly as possible.

"Incident" – an unplanned interruption to a service or reduction in quality of that service.

Incident management is a key activity of every ITSM service provider no matter of type or industry. Incidents and their management are one of the key factors in the evaluation of satisfaction by customers.

Having the right skills in the right place with access to appropriate levels of knowledge and support technologies can greatly enhance the execution of activities for this practice. Incidents cause business disruption and can cost money, regulatory compliance and reputation.

The impact and costs of incidents (and their management) is a drive behind the focus on first time fixes and the approach to both "shift left" ethos (move resolution close to the customer, usually the front line) and the technique of 'swarming", (having second line teams on hand to move in quickly and avoid lengthy escalation).

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute Engage, Deliver & Support

IT Asset Management

The purpose of the IT asset management practice is to plan and manage the fully lifecycle of all IT assets to help the organization maximize value, control costs, manage risks, support asset lifecycle decision making and meet regulatory and contractual requirements.

Asset management has long been an established practice in every organization, it includes the acquisition, operation, care and disposal of organizational assets.

The scope of asset management can include software, hardware, networking, cloud service and client devices, it may also include buildings or data level assets (dependent upon financial value). Successful IT Asset management can reduce costs and avoid regularity penalties.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design and Transition, Obtain/Build

Monitoring and Event Management

The purpose of the monitoring and event management process is to systematically observe service components, and record and report selected changes of state identified as events.

"Event" – any change of state that has significance for the management of a service or other configuration item. Events are typically recognized through notifications created by an IT service, CI or a monitoring tool.

Event management is a major factor in the achievement of the goals set out for availability and capacity and performance. Event management leverages the data and information created by performance analytics and alerting and adds a layer of service management logic such that decisions can be made (manual or automated) based upon the significance of the event to the operation of services and components.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Deliver and Support

Problem Management

The purpose of the problem management practice is to reduce the likelihood and impact of incidents by identifying actual and potential causes of incidents and managing workarounds and known errors.

"Problem" – a cause, or potential cause, of one or more incidents

"Known error" – a problem that has been analyzed but has not been resolved

"Workaround" – a solution that reduces or eliminates the impact of an incident or problem for which a full resolution is not yet available. Some workarounds reduce the likelihood of incidents

Problem management is a key practice that can elevate a service provider from a purely "break-fix" mentality and customer perception.

Ultimately problem management looks to identifying the cause of incidents and recommend a resolution (through change control) to avoid further occurrence. Until a permanent fix is found problem management can aid incident management (these 3 practices) incident, problem and change), are designed to work together as part of the service value chain) by identifying workarounds that incident management can use to help restore normal service operation (albeit on a temporary basis until the issues recurs).

There are 3 phases of problem management:

1. Problem identification
2. Problem control
3. Error control

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Deliver and Support, Improve

Release Management

The purpose of the release management practice is to make new and changed services and features available for use.

"Release" – a version of a service or other configuration item, or a collection of configuration items, that is made available for use

Releases may incorporate any elements of services and products and are they designed to ensure new or change functionality is delivered in line with business requirements and expectations.

Release management has been separated (although closely linked) with the deployment management practice to recognize that many organizations now work in an Agile/DevOps environment whilst others approach release in a more traditional/waterfall environment. Each organization can now utilize the recommendations for this practice in line with their ow methodologies and culture.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design and Transition

Service Catalogue Management

The purpose of the service catalogue management practice is to provide a single source of consistent information on all services and service offerings, and to ensure that it is available to the relevant audience.

The service catalogue is a subset of the overall service portfolio and shows all service a provider offers which are available to the consumer.
A service catalogue contains all relevant data regarding a service and may include who uses it, terms of provision, service owner, constraints and dependencies.

Service catalogue management will interact with many other practices but should have formal links with service financial management, service level management, request management and service portfolio management.

Many organizations have a focus on the user consumable elements of a service catalogue (hardware/software or access requests), this is usually presented via an interactive portal linked to an ITSM tool solution. This type of view is referred to as a request catalogue

"Request Catalogue" – a view of the service catalogue, providing details on service requests for existing and new services, which is made available for the user.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Engage

Service Configuration Management

The purpose of the service configuration management practice is to ensure that accurate and reliable information about the configuration of services, and the CIs that support them, is available when and where it is needed. This includes information on how CIs are configured and the relationships between them.

"Configuration Item" – any component that needs to be managed in order to deliver an IT service

"Configuration Management System" – a set of tools, data and information that is used to support service configuration management

Configuration management scopes, collects and manages information on all relevant components that enable the provision and operation of services and products, this can include hardware, software, networks, buildings, people, suppliers and documentation (services are also treated as CIs).

Configuration managements identifies and manages how CIs have been configured, their attributes and relationship to other CIs.

This information about CIs is recorded within one or more Configuration Management Databases (CMDBs) and managed under the umbrella of the Configuration Management System.

Understanding the relationships between CIs can lead to effective dependency mapping and enable service component criticality modelling.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design & Transition, Obtain/Build

Service Continuity Management

The purpose of the service continuity management practice is to ensure that the availability and performance of a service are maintained at sufficient levels in case of a disaster.

The core mission of service continuity management is to integrate with and underpin overall business continuity management. Service continuity management means that business can continue to function as a viable entity following a disaster or crisis. Planning, management and testing of continuity processes, procedures and scenarios builds business confidence, reduces risk and can align to applicable regulatory compliance.

A key activity for service continuity management is work with stakeholders to clearly define, record and communicate what criteria must be in place to constitute a crisis or disaster, this is traditionally done by utilising business impact analysis models and techniques.

Service continuity management focusses on those events that the business considers significant enough to be treated as a disaster. Less significant events will be dealt with as part of incident management or major incident management

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will interact with Plan, Improve, Engage, Deliver and Support, Obtain/Build, Deliver & Support, Improve

Service Design

The purpose of the service design practice is to design products and services that are fit for purpose, fit for use, and that can be delivered by the organization and its ecosystem.

Effective design of service is critical to enable business outcomes and creating value. Poor service design causes a loss of customer satisfaction, revenue (from re-work, service and product impairment and competitive impact).

Service design not only has to consider the detail of a solution from a functionality side but also has to ensure it incorporates quality and the user experience into its design thinking.

Service design need a focus on products and services that are:

- Business and customer orientated
- Cost effective
- Meet the requirements define within information security management
- Flexible and adaptable
- Able to absorb increasing volume demands and speed of change
- Meet organizational and customer demands for continuous operation
- Are managed and operated to an acceptable level of risk

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design & Transition, Obtain/Build

Service Desk

The purpose of the service desk practice is to capture demand for incident resolution and service requests. It should be the entry point and single point of contact for the service provider with all of its users.

The service desk can be considered a strategic asset for any IT service provider. It is the visible face of IT and provides a consistent and friendly interface into the service provider for the consumer.

Effective service desk operations not only concentrate on the logging, management and resolution of incidents and the fulfilment of requests but have a string focus on the quality of the user experience and interactions Service desk can support the organization for a single location (centralized), virtual (agents work from multiple geographical locations). The decision of service desk type and level operation will depend on business or contracts requirements (for example 24x7 and technical capabilities).

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Engage, Deliver and Support

Service Level Management

The purpose of the service level management practice is to set clear business-based targets for service levels, and to ensure that delivery of services is properly assessed, monitored, and managed against these targets.

"Service Level" – one or more activities that define expected or achieved service quality

"Service Level Agreement (SLA)" – a documented agreement between a service provider and a customer that identifies both services required and the expected level of service.

Service level management needs to understand the criticality and specific operational performance for services and translate these into meaningful business outcome-based targets which are communicated to all relevant practices of the provider and form the basis for measurements against key performance indicators. Every service within the service catalogue should be covered by an associated service level agreement.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Plan, Engage

Service Request Management

The purpose of the service request management practice is to support the agreed quality of a service by handling all pre-defined, user-initiated service requests in an effective and user-friendly manner.

"Service Request" – a request from a user or a user's authorized representative that initiates a service action which has been agreed as a normal part of service delivery.

Service requests may require complex or simple workflows, manual tasks where human action adds no value to the delivery chain should be automated where possible.

Service requests may require changes to services or their components, these are usually classed as standard changes (it is important to note that the definition and criteria for a standard changed is within the remit of the change management practice).

Service requests may require authorization for completion, this should be done in line with associated policies.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Engage, Deliver and Support

Service Validation and Testing

The purpose of the service validation and testing practice is to ensure that new or changed products and services meet defined requirements.

This practice ensures that the correct criteria is set for deployment and release management practices and that these criteria are subsequently verified through the required level of testing.

There are number of testing options and levels available to this practice, their use and adhere should be set as part of a testing strategy.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design & Transition, Obtain/Build

Technical Management Practices

Deployment Management Practice

The purpose of the deployment management practice is to move new or changed hardware, software, documentation, processes, or any other component to live environments.

Deployment management works under the direction and guidance of the change control and release management practices. Its key activity is to deploy into live environments as and when directed (it also includes deployment between environments such as testing to staging/pre-acceptance).

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design & Transition, Obtain/Build

Infrastructure and Platform Management

The purpose of the infrastructure and platform management practice is to oversee the infrastructure and platforms used by an organization.

The scope of the IT infrastructure includes physical and/or virtual technology resources, these include servers, storage, networks client hardware, middleware and operating systems.

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Design & Transition, Obtain/Build

Software Development and Management

The purpose of the software development and management practice is to ensure that applications meet internal and external stakeholder needs, in terms of functionality, reliability, maintainability, compliance and auditability.

Whether software applications are purchased by an organization as commercial off the shelf products (COTS) or developed with in house resources they are crucial to the creation of value for the service provider and service consumer. This practice is pivotal to ensuring applications are both fit for purpose (utility) and fit for use (warranty).

Value Chain Interaction:

This practice will most heavily contribute to Obtain/Build

Conclusion

Practices are crucial to the effective operation and value creation activities of the service value chain. They can work across all elements of the service value chain aligning to the working methods and standards adopted by the organization.

Practices should understand how they interact with each other, their dependencies and operating policies. They carry out the activities required to deliver the required value streams in line with business outcomes and value co-creation.

No part of the ITIL 4 framework operates in isolation, this is one of the key tenants of the service value system which describes the organization as all components and activities of an organization working together as a system.

Practices need to understand the needs and operation of the service value chain, they are enabled by the 4 dimensions of service management, are controlled and directed under governance, are led by guiding principles and should always adopt an ethos of continual improvement.