IT as a Service (ITaaS) – Getting Started

Implementing ITaaS organizationally is a huge task. It changes the way IT operations run and how end users consume and access IT resources. It requires thinking of IT in an entirely different way. That sounds daunting and it is. The good news is the transition doesn’t need to be abrupt. In fact, a gradual implementation over time is generally the best approach.

Start small with identifying specific use cases. The use cases should be fairly simple. Look for repetitive tasks that can be easily automated. The 80/20 rule should be your guide. Keep in mind not everything can be automated and certainly not all at once. In this case less is probably more.

Because of the desire to see immediate impact organizations often go too far trying to incorporate everything. It is a good idea to resist these urges a bit until you have developed your processes and gotten more experience with the tools in YOUR environment. It is better to think of this transformation as a journey rather than a destination. Conceivably it’s a never-ending process.

In many cases an Agile implementation model may work better. Introducing a small number of changes in shorter intervals as opposed to a large number of changes all at once. Let users get acquainted with the new tools and processes gradually. Too much too fast will usually fail.

Start with general management and some basic services such as deploying a simple VM. Red Hat CloudForms is a great example. While it has a large number of features and capabilities, installing it and getting some valuable capabilities almost out of the box is pretty straight forward.

By connecting CloudForms to your internal and cloud providers you can get basic reporting and the Dashboard going right away. This will give you some visibility into your environments. This is a big benefit if you have multiple environments you need to track. The other advantage is identifying VM’s that are not being utilized. In many environments as many as 40% of VM’s are no longer utilized.

While you will want to take some time to build Gold Images or Templates that are more in line with CloudForms you can still use your existing templates and/or machine images to deploy simple virtual machines right away. Later you can integrate with Red Hat Ansible Tower to run playbooks to further configure your VM’s.

Once you have some time and experience with CloudForms you can start moving toward the more advanced features such as Tagging & Automation. Tagging is great for monitoring cost centers, resource access controls and defining business processes.

CloudForms can also be easily integrated into an Identity provider such as Active Directory.

Simple integration with Ansible Tower will provide additional capabilities to manage your environments particularly your VM’s. Integration is pretty straight forward and with a little effort you can start using Playbooks to do standard processes like registering VM’s, applying settings and installing common software. Again, the point is focus initially on simple, repetitive tasks.

Here are some initial use cases;

* Deploying simple VM’s with basic management using a catalog. Access to the catalog can be role based.
* Addressing VM Sprawl and retiring instances that are no longer being used
* Chargeback in the short term will make it easier to track the costs of deploying VM’s particularly in public clouds.
* Basic reporting & Utilization
* Basic Dashboard; Users can get a good view of the VM’s they have running together with metrics.
* Simple Workflows to monitor resources and compliance.

As you become more familiar with the tools you will learn where and how to standardize. You will have a better idea how to implement Policy Driven Governance (PDG) and incorporate it Starting simple and getting early wins will make it easier to expand the governance and tools overtime. Layering additional services and functionality. In this case a crawl, walk and run approach will maximize the benefits while reducing the impact of the