



FREE GUIDE:

ITIL OVERVIEW

IT Service Management – An Introduction

In the complex and competitive business world of today, organisations of every type depend more and more on Information Technology to give them the means to operate effectively and, in many cases, just to survive. As they strive for new ways of conducting their business and of expanding the range of services being offered to their customers, they will inevitably look to the use of IT as way of delivering cost effective solutions exploiting the latest innovations as a means to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

At the same time, as these organisations become more and more dependent on the use of their IT services and the impact of any loss of service becomes increasingly critical. However, for many organisations this presents something of a dilemma. The constant need to change and move forward and, our seemingly total reliance on IT to achieve the desired result can often appear totally incompatible. It is most likely that this perception is based on some 'painful' experience in the past where, what seemed to be some "simple IT changes" resulted in near catastrophe.

The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) is a set of guidance which presents a Best Practice approach to assist IT organisations to manage the increasingly complex array of service offerings in line with the Business objectives. Requirements such as effective Change management, the provision of an efficient Service Desk and the establishment of realistic and achievable Service Level Agreements are nowadays seen as a prerequisite to any IT contract. ITIL provides a common sense route to implementing these and many other processes deemed critical to survival of your IT organisation and therefore your Business. Every major sector including Financial Services, Retail, Manufacturing, IT Outsourcing and government agencies around the world are looking to ITIL as the de facto standard for their IT.

It should be borne in mind however that ITIL is not a panacea! It will not in itself improve the quality of your IT Services or your IT Systems. That still requires good managers to make tough decisions; the existence of an organisational culture that encourages empowerment and participation amongst the staff; full support from the very top and perhaps most importantly, an open and trusting partnership between the IT service provider and their customers. Effective communication is a key component of ITIL and without it we will never realise the true benefits of the ITIL approach. Unfortunately, for many organisations it often overlooked and perhaps also often undervalued?

IT will change constantly. Common sense never goes out of fashion!

Background to ITSM/ITIL

In the 1980's the UK Government decided to introduce a code of 'best practice' for the delivery and support of IT Services to its major Departments and associated public organisations. This followed an extended period of increasing pressure to reduce public expenditure and strive for better value for money for the UK taxpayer. The 1980's witnessed a long list of failed Government IT projects with £M's of public money seemingly wasted on badly managed and ill thought through initiatives. The IT suppliers were also under scrutiny and a move away from proprietary methods and practices was being sought.

The 1980's were also a time of significant change in the IT industry with the introduction of UNIX platforms/applications and the first truly networkable PC's. Many Government sites operated huge mainframe environments which were becoming arguably very expensive to run and less responsive to the changing business needs. The pressure to downsize and also embrace the new technology was considerable at this time.

Previously, the Central Computing & Telecommunication Agency (CCTA later to be renamed Office of Government Commerce/OGC) had provided all Government Departments with comprehensive advice and guidance on the adoption and selection of a whole range of technology. By 1985 the CCTA were beginning to recognise the need for some formal guidelines and so commissioned the production of what became to be known as ITIL® – IT Infrastructure Library. Initially, over 400 different organisations and individuals were canvassed and asked to provide a response to a comprehensive questionnaire which focused their attention on ten core areas. Given the proprietary nature of IT in those days it was inevitable that the CCTA would have to filter these responses before it could produce truly impartial advice. In 1989 the first book in the library was produced; Service Level Management. Over the next three years the remaining volumes would be printed culminating with the final core volume Availability Management being published in 1991.

The CCTA now had a complete set of best practice guidance which it could offer to its senior managers who were then actively encouraged to implement this preferred approach. Suppliers too were targeted and many recognising the significance of this change went on to build a global capability around ITIL.

ITIL is no longer just about the UK Government and its suppliers. ITIL is recognised as a world de facto standard for IT organisations across the globe. It has evolved over time and has embraced modern business practices and technologies. It is also now part of a much wider body of complementary 'best practice' which organisations seek to adopt.

In 1999/2000 ITIL version 2 was released which provided an update to the original guidance and addressed the growing internationalisation of ITIL. Version 2 also reorganised the content into Service Support and Service Delivery volumes

emphasising the relationships between the ITIL processes, activities and functions and creating a fully integrated framework of best practice.

Throughout the life of ITIL, an accredited examination scheme has existed alongside the guidance providing organisations with a means of assessing their employees' and suppliers' understanding of best practice methods. These qualifications are some of the most sought after in the IT industry and, for many, have become pre-requisite for career progression and contract compliance.

In May 2007, the latest version of ITIL was released. Version 3 incorporates all of Version 2 and has updated the previous text where necessary. More importantly, the processes and functions of ITIL are now placed within the context of an IT Service Lifecycle. Version 3 has also forced an overhaul of the ITIL examination scheme widening the range of training/examinations on offer and mapping the qualification structure against recognised international educational standards.

ITIL has itself spawned a multi-billion dollar industry in support of best practice. Training companies, tools vendors and consultancy firms all now offer a plethora of off the shelf or bespoke solutions to satisfy any requirement or budget. ITIL however cannot be taken 'out of the box' and must be driven by a desire to provide high quality IT service consistently and cost effectively.

It is critical to the ongoing success of ITIL that the message remains consistent and non-proprietary. To this end the industry user group The IT Service Management Forum (itSMF) was formed in 1991. A second chapter was formed in The Netherlands in 1993 and since then over 40 chapters have been created across Europe, Middle East, US, Canada, South Africa and Australia. The globalisation of the IT sector has meant that there is now renewed interest in ITIL in countries such as India, China, Japan and South Korea. To meet this demand the itSMF now provides publications in over 25 languages.

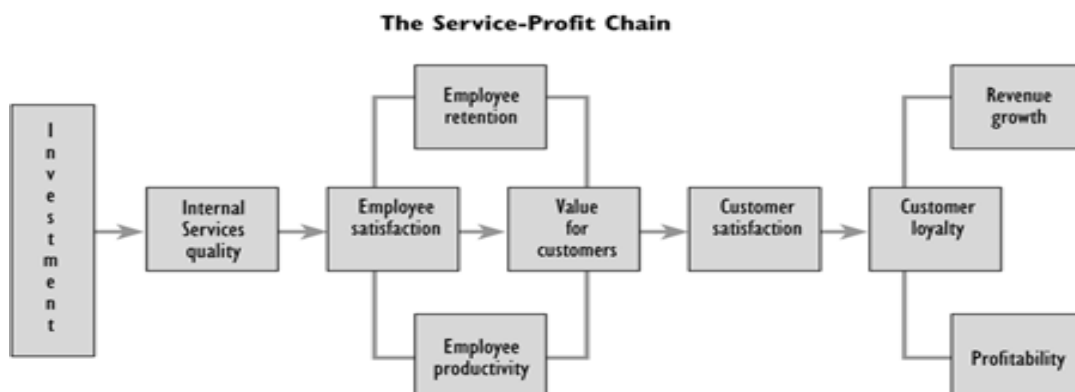
The itSMF promotes the exchange of information and experience which enable organisations to improve their services. They organise seminars and conferences about current IT Service Management issues and itSMF task forces contribute to the development of ITIL.

Adding Value

It has long been recognised that by making an investment in quality organisations will, over time, be able to deliver increased value for customers. By satisfying your customers you will in turn increase IT revenues and begin to improve overall profitability. This concept is known as the Service Value Chain. The diagram below shows the relationship between financial investment and service quality. As quality

improves and is realised by your Customers employees' satisfaction will also improve and they are more likely to be retained. Contented employees are more often far more productive and therefore provide additional value. The resulting benefits can then be measured and, can be both tangible and/ or intangible.

Investment of this type can take many forms and is not just focused on traditional technologies. Establishing new working practices which are process driven will soon begin to reap benefits for IT practitioners. Clear and objective measurement of performance will allow IT Management to direct their resources more effectively. The introduction of Service Level Agreements between IT and its Customers will help to develop better working relationship and trust. Specification and selection of appropriate tools will help IT to manage and control the increasingly complex IT infrastructure and architectures that we see in modern organisations. Staff development through formal training and professionally recognised qualifications demonstrates an organisational commitment to quality which goes beyond just collecting certificates. It tells potential customers, employees and partners what the organisation expects and offers and how it will be achieved.

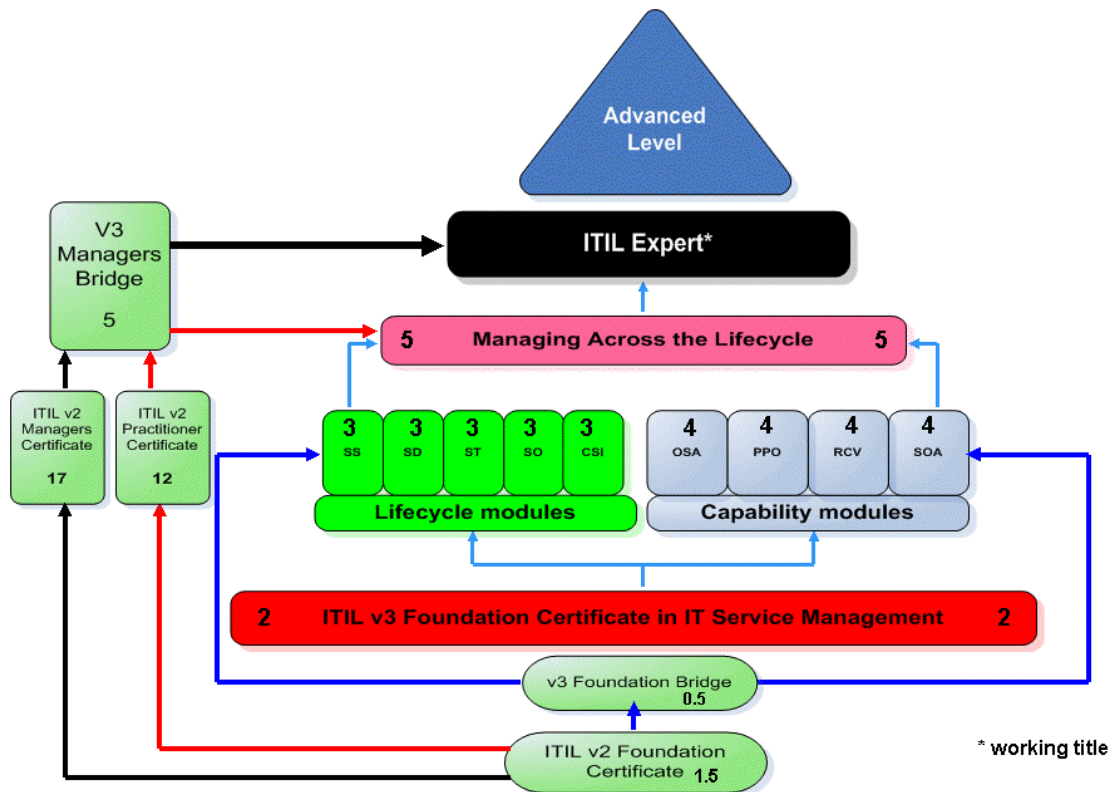


ITIL Version Qualification Scheme

In July 2007, the Version 3 qualification scheme was unveiled with the launch of the V3 Foundation Certificate. This is the entry level qualification for all candidates and provides the basis for all future study. From there candidates can then sit a combination of courses/exams in order to progress to ITIL Expert Level. The V3 Intermediate courses are grouped into two streams Service Lifecycle and Service Capability. Lifecycle courses usually run over 3 or 4 days while Capability course are always 5 days. Credits are awarded on passing the exams(s) as described in the diagram below. The exact combination of courses is controlled as there is some overlap in the syllabi and the Examining body will not award a credit if an invalid combination is used. To attain ITIL Expert status a minimum of 22 credits must be earned. A Masters Level qualification programme is currently under development

due to be launched Q4 2009. This will be available to all certified ITIL Experts and will include a combination of workplace assessment, oral interviews and written examinations.

ITIL Version 3 Qualification Scheme



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