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# 2019 IT Service Management Trends

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### Introduction

Well, another year is fast coming to a close and it feels like it went by much faster than the last one! Or perhaps 2018 seems to have flown by on a rocket-propelled hoverboard because so many things are changing.

As has been my habit over the past few years, I like to sit down and write my reflections about the past year as well as project what I believe will be the focus in 2019.

I predict the following five trends will impact our industry in a major but positive way in the coming year:

1. The rise of IT multilingualism
2. The leadership imperative to create alignment and generative cultures
3. ITIL<sup>®</sup> 4 – channelling systems thinking
4. Agile learning organizations
5. The DevOps full stack of culture, practices, and automation

Join me as I take you through my experiences and observations that have led me to shortlist these five trends as the ones to take note of over the next 12 months (and beyond!)

### The Rise of IT Multilingualism – the Integrated Story

It will come as no surprise to our friends and fellow IT professionals in regions such as Europe and Asia that being able to speak more than one language fluently is a positive thing for your career. Speaking two languages myself (English and French), I have always held this belief; but this year this belief struck me even more as I engaged with clients and other IT professionals. Inevitably, I find myself using ITIL, Agile, Lean, and DevOps terms all in the same discussions, and everyone in the room knows or pretends to know what they mean. For today's IT professional to remain relevant, it is no longer satisfactory to know one or two main management practices and specialize in a specific domain.

In 2019, IT professionals should look to add to their lexicon both the comprehension and application of the major concepts, terms, and definitions from at least the four major management frameworks currently redefining the scope of IT Service Management (ITSM). To illustrate my meaning, consider the following conversational abstract:

Troy: "So what would you describe as your primary management objectives for next year?"

Client: "We have to change the way we are dealing with increased demand with a flat budget, so we are focused on the following major continual improvement initiatives.

"To support the business objectives of faster speed-to-market driven by the challenges of digital transformation, our organization is working on a number of high-profile improvement initiatives:

1. "We are optimizing and value stream mapping our release, deployment, and change processes to increase flow while reducing red tape and waste as well as still managing risk.
2. "We are implementing DevOps continuous delivery practices and automation to increase standardization, improve security, and automate compliance requirements, while at the same time providing deployment speed and resilience.
3. "We are addressing cultural issues related to silo thinking through the adoption of product-focused cross-functional and self-managed teams.

4. “We are improving our ability to be agile by creating transparency, learning, and adaptation through the use of visual management tools such as *kanban* boards, product backlogs, and burndown charts.”

Welcome to the world of Integrated Service Management and IT multilingualism! In 2019, it is imperative that you are able to speak with integrity about everything I just described.

### **The Leadership Imperative to Create Alignment and Generative Cultures**

Many organizations are realizing that their true constraints to achieving higher velocity, better quality, and improved collaboration are not tools or a lack of written knowledge about how to get work done. As an industry, we have more books written on management practices and tools than we know what to do with! Yet, we struggle to find the organizational will, desire, and personal accountability to use them the way they were designed.

Our fundamental challenges lie in the areas of culture, leadership, collaboration, and alignment. This past year, we have seen a major increase of interest in topics related to organizational change and transformational leadership. It is becoming painfully clear that many of the challenges being faced are presenting major roadblocks to strategic initiatives. These challenges include silo mentality and blame cultures, a lack of organizational and personal accountability, and a general lack of importance placed on process control and process discipline.

During 2018, many organizations started major transformation projects that depended on leadership and cultural changes to be successful. I see this trend continuing in 2019 and, personally, see it as a critical success factor to address strategic objectives related to digital transformation. At Pink Elephant, we see observable patterns related to this trend due to the increased enrollment in our courses around Lean leadership, DevOps leadership, and Organizational Change Management as well as our annual leadership conference.

### ITIL 4 – Channeling Systems Thinking

**Systems Thinking:** A holistic approach to analysis that focuses on the way that a system's constituent parts work, interrelate, and interact over time as well as within the context of other systems.

In 2018 I was honored and very excited to have been part of the ITIL 4 Lead Architecture team. As an IT professional who has worked closely with the ITIL framework for more than 20 years, I am very excited to see where ITIL is going with this new release. Not only have we had the opportunity to update the ITIL processes to integrate and address the emerging concepts of Agile, Lean, and DevOps, but it has also given us the opportunity to develop and describe a systemic approach to ITSM. This approach integrates the main activities related to value creation, which is inclusive of the frameworks and models, leadership approaches, and cultural challenges that I have described so far in this article.

I delivered a pre-launch ITIL 4 Train the Trainer session in the fall of 2018. At that time, I described how throughout the last 20 years each ITIL iteration has provided the following value to the industry:

- It aggregates (pulls together) the practices currently in focus in our industry.
- It integrates them in a way that provides the connections needed to make them more effective.
- It codifies them as formally documented practices to support the growth and maturity of our industry.

ITIL 4 continues to offer this gift by providing an integrated, or systemic, view of how the various frameworks support an overall Service Value System. I am very confident that during 2019, as well as over the next few years, the focus on ITIL 4 will continue.

### **Agile Learning Organizations**

Building on the themes of the previous trends, a key element of Lean as well as systems thinking is a focus on creating frequent opportunities, or short feedback loops, that support learning and adjustment based on changing industry and organizational dynamics. The Agile software development practices of the 1990s and early 2000s adapted the Lean concept of breaking larger work packages into smaller batches. This allows for a quicker discovery of issues with quality to support the goals related to improving quality, speed, and cost.

Rapidly changing and dynamic environments perfectly describe the IT worlds of 2018 and 2019. All emerging frameworks now talk about short feedback loops, and how to become a learning organization that fails fast at the same time as capturing knowledge and wisdom.

My observation is that being and working on being Agile, which is really based on Lean concepts, are key themes for all organizations I speak and work with. The industry has realized that the principles adopted by our development teams in the '90s apply to any team or organization that manages planned and unplanned work. Expect 2019 to be a year when organizations are focused on becoming an Agile learning organization for both development as well as operations teams.

### **The DevOps Full Stack of Culture, Practices and Automation**

At Pink Elephant, we have always focused on the fact that a holistic understanding of improvement needs to focus on people, process, and technology. However, culturally, the IT industry continues to move straight to automation without paying attention to the other primary factors for success. This is done, of course, at an organization's own peril. Largely, the organization is unable to achieve the results it wants since it continues to believe in the Hollywood myth of "build it and they will come" made popular in the film *Field of Dreams*. Not wanting to deal with the intangible challenges of culture, leadership, and process accountability, organizations continue to implement tools somehow believing that, this time around, the tools will be the magic panacea for its organizational woes.

What is encouraging is that I believe we are finally seeing that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results (Einstein's definition of insanity), is just not going to take us where we need to go. Based on the trends seen in the DevOps movement towards a focus on leadership and practices, organizations are finally acknowledging that a focus on the full stack of "culture, practices, and automation" is critical. I predict that 2019 will continue to focus on a more holistic set of attributes that will lead towards a more successful transformation to DevOps.

### **Looking Forward to an Exciting 2019!**

These five areas summarize what I believe we will be looking at for a full and prosperous new year in the IT Service Management industry. But don't stop here...stay tuned to our [blog](#) for the latest insights from our Pink Elephant experts as the year unfolds.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year ahead!

Troy DuMoulin

### Want to Learn More?

- Register for some of today's hottest certification courses in [Lean](#), [DevOps](#), [Integrated Service Management](#), [Agile](#) and [Organizational Change Management](#).
- [Register](#) now for one of Pink's ITIL 4 courses and be one of the first IT professionals on the planet to be ITIL 4 educated and certified. Visit our website to see our [ITIL 4 Foundation course schedule!](#)
- Attend [Pink19](#) – the world's #1 ITSM conference. The 120+ track event covers today's – *and tomorrow's* – most relevant and meaningful subjects with practitioner case studies and expert insights.

### About Pink Elephant

We Lead The Way!

A premier global training, consulting, and conference service provider, Pink Elephant has an undisputed reputation for leading the way. We're proud of our pioneering and innovative spirit, which has enabled us to introduce and spearhead many revolutionary concepts and programs since our inception more than forty years ago.

### About the Author

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Troy is considered by many to be one of the world's foremost ITIL and ITSM experts and is a lead architect of the brand-new ITIL 4 certification scheme. A passionate and experienced executive consultant, Troy is always willing to use his rich and extensive background to share what he knows and is always on the hunt for more knowledge. Troy always has his finger on the industry's pulse – if there are any questions about what the latest trends in ITSM, Lean, Business Relationship Management or Organizational Change Management are, he has the answer! Troy is a frequent speaker at ITSM events, is an ITIL 4 contributing author, has contributed to several books based on ITSM and Lean IT concepts, and maintains a blog that is one of the industry's most popular and informative.

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