



# **The Seven Enablers & Constraints Of IT Service Management**

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IT Service Management (ITSM) projects have seven key enablers and critical success factors that provide the vision, direction, energy and resources to initiate, sustain and realize their promised benefits. Unfortunately, for many organizations these key enablers can also represent constraints and fatal blockages that paralyze and then terminate their ITSM initiatives prematurely before yielding any benefits. Understanding, managing and eliminating these terminal blockages is critical for a successful ITSM transformation program.

The important question is: “Why do many organizations stumble or fail in their initial attempts at implementing ITSM practices?” The anecdotal reasons given by the organizations that falter varies; but, they are related in the sense that they each represent a failure in a key enabler to achieve transformation objectives.

This paper will exam each of the seven enablers and provide insight into their relative importance and impact on ITSM projects based on Pink Elephant’s research and my personal experience as an ITIL advisor and consultant for the past ten years.

### Seven Key Enablers

1. **Leadership:** Executive and senior level support, sponsorship and active participation
2. **Resources:** Access to necessary project and ongoing process resources (time, people, funding)
3. **Knowledge & Skill:** The level of communication, information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
4. **Integrated Tools:** Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
5. **Ability to Deploy:** The political capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools across organizational silos
6. **Ability to Affect Behavioral Change:** Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
7. **ITSM Program Momentum:** Sustaining the momentum, priority and funding for the ITSM programs

<p>The Theory of Constraints (TOC) teaches us that no process can be more efficient than its most limiting constraint or bottleneck. You can either choose to proactively manage those constraints or let them manage you! Source: “The Goal” – Eli Goldratt</p>
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## 2 SEVEN KEY ENABLERS FOR ITSM

The year 2009 will mark a significant milestone for the ITIL Service Lifecycle model: twenty years since the first ITIL book, *Help Desk*, was published in the UK by Her Majesty's Stationery Office (now TSO) in 1989. Early in its history, the library reached a total of 40 books covering many aspects of IT Management. Since then, there have been several rewrites and enhancements, leading up to what is understood today as version 3 (V3) of the ITIL framework. Its industry adoption and acceptance has gone from a general disinterested ambivalence to being globally accepted as the best practice framework for ITSM and the basis for ISO 20000 – the first international standard for ITSM, published in 2005. Since 1989, Pink has had the opportunity to work with hundreds of organizations as they have progressed on their ITSM journeys.

Over the past 20 years, I would like to say that every IT group Pink Elephant has worked with has had unquestionable success and is today reaping all the benefits you read about in the ITIL travel literature; however, that would not be a true statement!

The reality is that despite best intentions, many organizations stumble or fail in their initial attempts at implementing ITSM practices. The anecdotal reasons given by these organizations vary; but, they are related in the sense that they each represent a failure in a key enabler required to be present at some level to achieve their transformation objectives.

When I consider the many conversations I have had with distraught project managers, and the battle stories of many a disillusioned ITIL champion or sponsor, seven themes consistently emerge. These seven themes represent the seven key enablers that provide the energy and lifeblood ITIL initiatives require to kick off and stay alive long enough to make a difference at an enterprise IT level.

This is not to say that targeted benefits cannot be realized without all seven being in place in sufficient quality and quantity; however, I do believe that they are all required to produce “lasting change” across the political boundaries of technology silos that represent reality for most IT groups.

While the seven key enablers can provide the energy and resources to initiate, sustain and realize their promised benefits, for many organizations these same seven enablers can quickly turn into limiting constraints that can kill ITIL programs when non-existent even at a basic level. Understanding, identifying and eliminating these terminal blockages is a critical success factor for any successful ITSM transformation program.

The following list represents these seven Critical Success Factors / Enablers:

1. **Leadership:** Executive and senior level support, sponsorship and active participation

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2. **Resources:** Access to necessary project and ongoing process resources (time, people, funding)
  3. **Knowledge & Skill:** The level of communication, information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
  4. **Integrated Tools:** Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
  5. **Ability to Deploy:** The political capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools across organizational silos
  6. **Ability to Affect Behavioral Change:** Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
  7. **ITSM Program Momentum:** Sustaining momentum, priority and funding for the ITSM programs

Consider the analogy that these seven enablers are the heart of your ITSM initiative with seven valves that pump the lifeblood through a healthy ITIL program. Each enabler needs to be healthy to run the marathon and cross the finish line; however, that being said, not every company is running a marathon and many have a much more modest ITSM goal. Even so, each value needs to have some capacity even at a limited level for success. If one or more of these valves is blocked or partially constrained, the reality of heart surgery may be required to keep the program alive.

## 2.1 Enabler – Constraint – Blockage

Before we look at each of the critical success factors in detail, it would be helpful to clearly define what is meant by an enabler or constraint. Consider that any project has certain critical elements that are required to make the goals and deliverables of the initiative achievable. We often take those factors for granted and do not give them much consideration until they run out or their lack of quality places the initiative at risk. Making the assumption that these critical factors are present in enough quality and quantity is often a fatal mistake. Understanding what these factors are and managing the risks related to their absence is key to knowing if you have sufficient means to achieve your ends.

To illustrate this concept, consider the analogy of getting to work on a Monday morning, assuming that you drove yourself to work from your home.

To get from home to the office parking lot, you require several enablers to be in place though you probably did not give them much thought as you were sipping your morning beverage.

### Enablers:

- 1) **Car:** A car or some form of transportation is the most obvious enabler; however, a car alone will not make the journey possible.



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- 2) **Fuel, Money:** The car needs fuel and you need money (more and more these days) to fill the car with fuel.
  - 3) **Directions:** A car with a full tank of gas without a vision or goal of where you are headed is not much use unless you are out for a joyride.
  - 4) **Roads:** We often assume that the road will simply be there when we start driving; however, in many countries this is not an assumption we can safely make. Even in the countries that have a mature infrastructure the occurrence of unanticipated accidents, road construction and detours can often remove the assumption of a good and quick road from our path.
  - 5) **A Driver's License:** You may think that a license is not required to drive, but consider that your driver's license represents governance, policy and rules of the road by which all drivers must adhere to, the resulting lack of which would present a chaotic and dangerous environment in which to drive.
  - 6) **Knowledge & Skill:** You need to know how to drive your car on the road system and within the context of your local rules. While you take it for granted today, there was a time where the knowledge and skill of driving your vehicle was new. If you were given a transport truck to drive in a country where the rules of the road differed from your previous context, the ability to simply jump in your vehicle and drive would not be so quickly assumed.

While most of us don't think of them on a daily basis, these enablers are critical to actually achieving our goal of getting to work on time. If even one of these critical factors is limited in quantity or quality, the likelihood of succeeding at our or mission of getting to work is at risk.

A common statement that I hear from many organizations that do not succeed in their ITSM objectives was that they were not aware of their constraint until it was too late. To be effective in achieving your goals, it is vital to understand and manage all the elements that will either allow you to be successful or diminish your ability to achieve your results.



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### 3 PINK PERSPECTIVE RESEARCH

As part of Pink Elephant’s vision for researching, documenting and promoting best practices, the company held a ten-city series of events in 2008 called the Pink Perspective Road Tour. At these events we first introduced the concept of the seven enablers and we started our morning session with the survey shown below. This research was conducted in order to understand the biggest challenges facing our clients. As stated earlier, each of the enablers – if absent or too weak – becomes a constraint; however, in the spirit of the 80 / 20 rule of maximizing benefit by focusing on the most important opportunities, we wanted to understand which of the seven enablers present the greatest challenges to our clients. The results of this research are presented in this section in order to provide an understanding of the top challenges facing most companies.

#### 3.1 Survey Demographics

The following graphs represent the results from over 300 surveys collected at the ten events presented in Southeast Asia and North America over a three-week period. The attendees at the events were of mixed roles; but, as a general comment, most were involved as active participants or leaders in ITSM improvement efforts.

The seven enablers were introduced as critical success factors for ITSM projects. The high level definition of each factor was defined as described in the survey below and each participant was asked to rank them on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents no real challenge to 5 being an extremely difficult constraint to the project.

#### 3.2 Pink Preservative Survey

The survey was designed around background questions and enabler questions, which are represented in the results show in this section.

##### Background Question 1:

Are you currently engaged in an IT Service Management project? Yes  No

##### Background Question 2:

What element of the IT Service Management Lifecycle are you currently focused on?

Please check  your top 2 focus areas for 2008:

Service Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Design	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service Transition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service Operation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continual Service Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Enabler Question:**

<b>What do you see as your major ITSM challenge in 2008?</b>		<b>Rank each challenge on a scale from 1 – 5 where 5 is the most difficult</b>					
<b>1</b>	Executive and senior level support and sponsorship	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2</b>	Access to necessary project and process resources (time, people, funding)	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3</b>	Our level of information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4</b>	Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5</b>	The organizational capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6</b>	Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<b>7</b>	Maintaining momentum and funding for the ITSM program	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

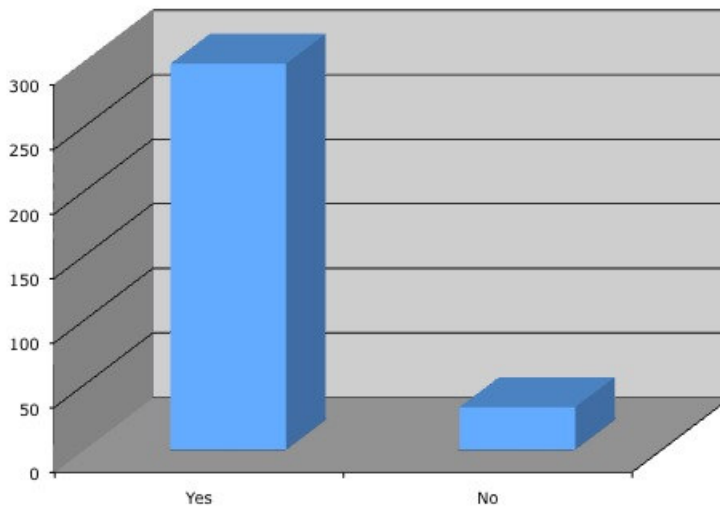
**Note:** A not applicable option was included for each line and survey participants were instructed to rank the enabler as N/A if they were unaware of how to rate the factor or if it did not apply to their situation. This was done in order to not skew the scoring of the enablers with data relative to the organization’s true challenges.



### 3.3 Survey Results

**Q1:** The first Background Question asked which participants are currently working on a formally funded ITSM Project during 2008.

## Participants with ITSM Projects



From the 300+ Participants at the Pink Perspective events it is clear that over 90% of the attendees are currently involved in an ITSM project and improvement activity

**Analysis:** The attendees who participated in the Pink Perspective events were as a majority in the middle of an ITSM initiative and would have an accurate understanding of their program's strengths and challenges.

**Q2:** The second Background Question asked was for each participant to indicate his or her top two focus areas for ITSM projects in 2008.

## Primary Focus Areas for 2008



The top two focus areas in 2008 are Service Operation and Service Transition processes. Many organizations are currently starting their Service Design Processes with the Service Catalog

**Analysis:** The majority of organizations at the Pink Perspective are working on Service Operation and Service Transition processes as part of their two top focus areas. It is revealing that in 2008, almost 20 years after the introduction of the first ITIL book, most organizations are still focusing on the operational processes of service support. Dialogue with the 17% in Service Design indicates several organizations are beginning efforts around Service Catalog and Service Level Management. While ITIL V3 now has over 24 processes, including several providing guidance for IT Service Strategy and Design, the implementation of ITIL principles still starts with the day-to-day issues of keeping the lights on and ensuring higher reliability of a constantly changing production environment.

The Enablers Question ranked the seven enablers. Each participant was asked to rank the seven enablers on a difficulty scale from 1 to 5.

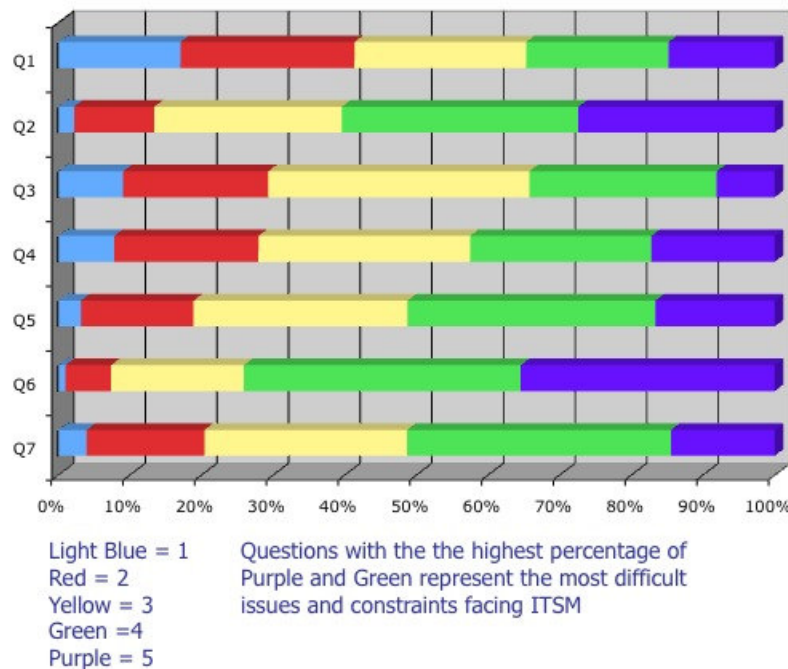
### Enablers Summary:

Results for participants with an ITSM project in 2008

1 = no real challenge, 5 = extremely difficult constraint, N/A responses excluded.

- Q1 Executive and senior level support and sponsorship
- Q2 Access to necessary project and process resources (time, people, funding)
- Q3 Our level of information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
- Q4 Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
- Q5 The organizational capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools
- Q6 Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
- Q7 Maintaining momentum and funding for the ITSM program

## Perspective Survey Results



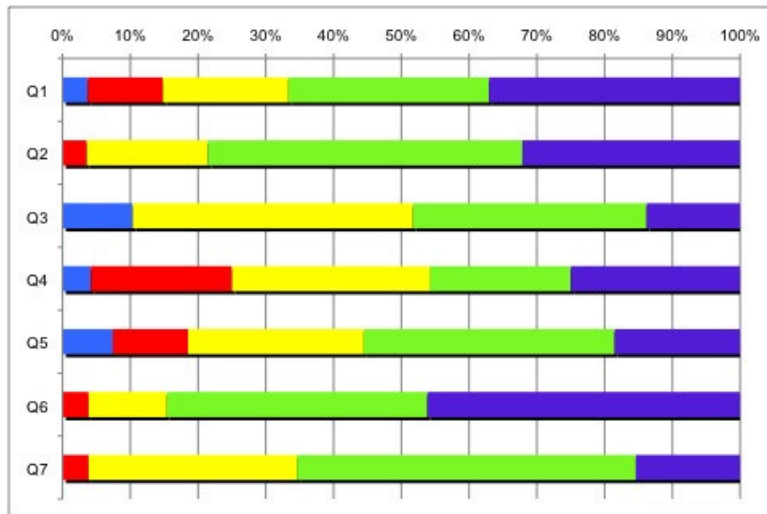
“People issues” are still the most prevalent challenge that everyone’s facing (questions 2, 5 and 6). Many organizations are struggling to maintain momentum and surprisingly, executive buy-in is the least challenging.

**Analysis:** The top constraints facing the survey participants are: 1) changing organizational behavior; 2) resource availability; and 3) ability to deploy. Interestingly, the survey results point out that leadership support is not seen as a major constraint. As an explanation of this result, one event participant shared with the audience that her

leadership understands that things need to change, but they may not necessarily understand how to go about it or achieve their expanded vision.

**Note:** The following graph represents the scoring from those participants who indicated that they currently do not have a project during 2008.

## Participants Without Projects



"Behavioral Change is still listed as the number 1 constraint with resources in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Notice that Leadership has a higher ranking as a constraint for organizations that currently do not have projects than the overall average.

Light Blue = 1  
 Red = 2  
 Yellow = 3  
 Green = 4  
 Purple = 5

Questions with the the highest percentage of Purple and Green represent the most difficult issues and constraints facing ITSM

**Analysis:** Organizational change and lack of resources still rank as the top two constraints; however, effective senior level sponsorship and participation was ranked higher as a constraint with this segment of the survey participants. This elevation of an issue with leadership seems logical, seeing that this group of attendees does not have a formally funded initiative during 2008.

**Summary:** Of all the enablers, the biggest constraints related to implementing ITSM best practices are: 1) Changing behavior; 2) lack of resources; and 3) inability to deploy the new policies and processes across the organizational structures and silos. The survey results indicate that the biggest issues were not senior management buy in or ITSM knowledge, but the inability to deploy the changes and make them stick in IT cultures entrenched in technology optimization rather than a service focus. These survey results indicate that many projects do not fail during design and testing, but at the point of deployment. This means that many projects never realize the benefits they initially set



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out to achieve, as they falter on delivery. The next section provides more detail around the seven enablers / Critical Success Factors required for a successful ITSM journey.

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## 4 THE SEVEN ENABLERS EXPANDED

It takes significant energy to overcome the inertia of the status quo and to start something new. This is certainly true of a major project with specific and defined stages that are well documented in project management best practices. Each stage represents a key milestone that delivers value in its own right in the project lifecycle; however, each stage also represents a stage gate where key decisions around scope, objectives and project risk should be re-evaluated. This stage gate review is a key element of the project methodology called PRINCE2 (Projects In Controlled Environments). These periods of go / no-go decision-making provide a prime opportunity to assess not only the status of the project, but also the state and health of the seven key enablers to ensure that no tiger traps or mine fields are waiting down the road.

### 4.1 Key Enabler vs. A Key Constraint

In a simple world, each of the seven enablers would be a standalone requirement that had little to no impact on the other factors, and they would all have equal weighting; however, we do not live in a simple world. Another critical element of knowledge is the understanding that certain enablers have an overall positive or negative impact on the others. For example, in our previous traveling analogy you can argue that you can still get to work with limited governance and policy overseeing the use of the roads. In fact, if you travel globally you know there are many countries in the world where this would definitely seem the case; however, a profound lack of direction combined with no formal means of transportation will make the other enablers pale in seeming importance. In our ITSM reality, you can equate this to having limited to no leadership without the benefit of a formally recognized and funded project. In other words, you are being asked to implement ITSM practices on the side of your desk. The lack of these key enablers makes things such as maintaining project momentum pale in comparison.

In light of this concept, consider the following definitions:

- An **Enabler** has a positive impact on the initiative and supports the achievement of the goals and objectives.
- A **Key Enabler** has a significant positive impact on the initiative and compensates to some extent for other factors that may be less positively ranked.
- A **Constraint** is a limiting factor for the initiative and restricts the ability of the initiative to realize its goals and objectives.
- A **Key Constraint** has a significant negative impact on the initiative. It has the very real potential of causing the initiative to fail and can have a negative impact on the other factors.

Next, consider that the only constant in life is change. In our world of shifting priorities, goals and objectives any one of the factors described in this paper can increase or decrease in importance based on a modification in any project attribute such as vision, scope, or the introduction of a totally new goal. Imagine that the compelling drivers for a project to be rolled out in a six month time frame no longer exist, or that the target group originally slated for a pilot is no longer part of the project scope. Building on our earlier analogy, we are no longer going to the local office but need to fly across the country to participate in a corporate meeting that is taking place tomorrow morning. The perfectly functional compact car we were planning to drive to work this morning now seems woefully inadequate for our new goal, which requires a vehicle of a totally different caliber to realize our objective. In short, it needs to fly and fly fast.

This means that enablers can become constraints and those factors, which were considered constraints, can suddenly turn into powerful assets and key enablers. This shifting landscape of ever changing project assets and risks represents the business case for the Risk Management process. Achieving ITSM objectives is always a balancing act of Value and Risk Management. Both are essential activities for the successful deployment of ITIL projects. Risk Management should not be seen as a negative practice, but one that provides assurances to project success and value realization.

Risk Management is concerned with continually monitoring the project landscape, looking for signs of hidden dangers that range from tiger traps with fatally sharp stakes at the bottom to small irregularities in the landscape that could sprain the ankle. To be effective, Risk Management must continually identify and assesses risk on a regular and frequent basis since the project landscape is capable of shifting like the sand dunes of the Sahara. If this is done effectively, an informed and watchful eye is kept on the shifting and potentially treacherous landscape. The seven enablers are key inputs into a Risk Management model that considers strategic, program, project and operational Risks.

*In this world there are four kinds of people:*

- 1. Those who make things happen*
- 2. Those who watch things happen*
- 3. Those who have things happen to them*
- 4. Those who don't know anything has happened until it is too late*

*Quote: Anonymous*

The following section provides more detail on the seven enablers to support their assessment as either assets or risks.



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## 4.2 Leadership & Vision

Many hundreds of books have been written on the subject of leadership and the role a leader plays in providing the vision, direction and the compass that a project needs to be successful. Without a leader's blessing, passion and direction, very little is accomplished that has lasting effect. This is true of all major endeavors, and it is certainly true with ITSM projects.

We live in a time when the vision of the IT Executive is changing from one traditionally focused on technology optimization and cost reduction to an evolution towards service delivery and value generation; however, many IT shops still struggle with the value of ITSM principles when they are still firmly entrenched in a purely technology mindset. For an ITSM project to truly succeed, the executive sponsor needs to understand what it means to be a service-focused organization and support the establishment of the processes that make this concept a reality.

However, many organizations are challenged with a CIO and executive IT team that have not bought into the principles of ITSM. This proves to be very challenging when you consider that ITIL is a Service Management framework that has as its primary goal the delivery of services.

*“Service Management is a set of specialized organizational capabilities for providing value to customers in the form of services.” Source: ITIL® V3*

In my experience very few organizations understand the concept of an IT service and even fewer organize themselves around the delivery of IT services.

To be effective, the leadership of an ITSM program must profoundly understand what an IT service is and wish to establish the disciplines that make the delivery of services possible.

What we often see is that the ITSM program sponsor has agreed in principle that the project represents a set of positive goals and has agreed to fund some initial efforts, but is still largely unconvinced of the exercise's strategic nature. The green light has been given, they have agreed to stand up at key meetings and say positive things, but little effort is made on ensuring that the remaining six enablers are in place and managed in a proactive manner.

It has been argued that the true skill of a leader is not just the shaping of vision and direction, but also the task of execution. Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan make a very powerful statement in their book, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*:

*“A high proportion of those who actually rise to the top of a business organization have made their mark – their personal brand as high level thinkers.*





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*They aren't interested in "how" of getting things done; that is for somebody else to think about." Source: Chapter 2 – The Execution Difference*

Rather than pointing toward the hill and saying "Make It So", true leaders must take the point and lead the ITSM charge.

### **4.3 Resources**

It was a very wise person who first said that nothing in life is free. This is of course true for ITSM projects as for anything else. Sitting down with the right people from across the organization to define new policies, processes and tools takes a significant resource investment (time, people and money). That being said, one of the most frequent statements I hear from people when I speak to them at conferences or in courses is that they are expected to implement ITSM practices without any formal investment in any of the above other than perhaps their salaries. They are expected to change organizational behavior and pull the ITIL rabbit out of the hat, so to speak, because they have ITSM somewhere in their title.

While I have aggregated time, people and money under "resources", these are in fact three separate enablers / constraints.

#### ***Time***

Several respondents in our research said that they had all the leadership and organizational will they could wish for; but, they were swamped with an IT project portfolio that was overwhelming, with half a dozen initiatives being perceived as more urgent than their ITSM projects. There is only so much time in the day and they are already running at max speed and doing their email at 10:00 pm each night after they feed the kids and put them to bed. Sadly, the urgent always takes precedence over the good and necessary. Survival always trumps strategy.

#### ***People***

If your organization is like many we have worked with, year after year of focusing on cost reduction has reduced your IT operational staff to what feels like a bare minimum to keep the lights on. What people you do have are very hesitant to commit to what appears to be the latest management fad and set of acronyms floating down from senior management. The key stakeholders that are critical for you to involve in the ITSM initiative are busy fighting the daily fires (often caused by immature processes) and are too busy to come to your process and tool design meetings.

This general lack of people is a very crucial issue for ITSM in general. After years of cost reduction and containment, there really isn't a lot of bandwidth for people to get involved in the project, let alone manage the ongoing processes once they are deployed.



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While you can hire consultants to help alleviate the resource crunch for the project, who gets to run them after the consultants leave?

### ***Money***

A lack of available funding is often a constraint that is shared by many organizations, and while money cannot buy happiness it can get things done! However, in our research we discovered that there are some organizations that have the money, but lack of time and internal people were their most serious constraints. One respondent from the Calgary Pink Perspective event stated that that the issue was not money (thanks to the oil boom in western Canada), but skilled people and affordable housing to attract talent to the region.

## **4.4 Knowledge & Skill**

Even though ITIL is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2009, it was just a few years ago when most people would tell you they had never heard of ITSM or ITIL. Today, awareness has improved and most IT people you ask will tell you they have heard of ITIL and have a simple understanding of what it is.

That being the case, the people charged with project tasks, deliverables and the ongoing management of the process need to seriously consider more advanced education and learning. The following section lists a recommended level of education by role and involvement in the ITSM project.

### **4.4.1 General ITIL Overviews**

It is highly recommended that each person within the IT organization receive a high-level overview of ITIL as part of the project communication plan and for the ongoing training of new IT employees. The level and detail of overviews can be customized in accordance with their level of participation in service management processes.

The ITIL overview is designed with the intention of providing an introduction to the ITIL framework.

### **4.4.2 Foundations ITIL Education**

It is highly recommended that anyone involved in managing or executing daily ITIL process activities attend an ITIL Foundations class. This is a prerequisite course for further ITIL study and certification, and should be made a mandatory requirement for those individuals tasked with the coordination, management, ownership or governance of your service management processes.

Key Roles:

- **Process Sponsors**

- Process Owners
- Process Managers
- Process Staff
- Project Managers
- ITSM Tool Owners / Administrators
- ITSM Consultants

#### **4.4.3 Intermediate ITIL Education**

The Intermediate level courses are intended for individuals tasked with the implementation, ongoing management and continuous improvement of a specific or collection of closely related processes. For this reason, it is highly recommended that the following roles be identified for intermediate level education and certification.

Key Roles:

- Process Owners
- Process Managers
- Program / Project Managers
- ITSM Tool Owners
- ITSM Consultants

#### **4.4.4 Advanced ITIL Education – “ITIL Expert Designation”**

The Advanced education courses such as the those that focus on Service Lifecycle books, Managing Across the Lifecycle and the attainment of the “ITIL Expert” designation are intended for those who have overall ownership of a service management improvement program and are responsible for the ongoing governance and improvement of multiple processes. This level of certification is recommended for the following key roles.

Key Roles:

- Service Managers
- ITSM Consultants

### **4.5 Integrated ITSM Tools**

It is no secret that to even get close to the process integration that ITIL suggests as good practice, it is critical to consider workflow automation and tool requirements; however, that being said, have you also considered that underpinning these processes is data? Data is passed back and forth between processes as tasks, workflow records, approvals, SLA time frames, costs and configuration item details.

Invariably, the activities, inputs and outputs of ITSM are represented in a digital form that is shared by many processes at various times and for various reasons. This digital web of information flow is ultimately represented by an ITSM tool and data architecture that supports the over all vision and strategy of an enterprise IT function, fulfilling the role of a key business partner and service provider.

Underpinning the integrated ITIL process model must be an integrated ITSM tool strategy that is supported by a shared data model.

In the ITSM community we are very comfortable talking about the IT governance and process levels of service management; however, we often fail to consider the tool and data definition that is required to make it real. In my personal experience it is always the tool element of the ITIL project that takes the longest time – not the process design!

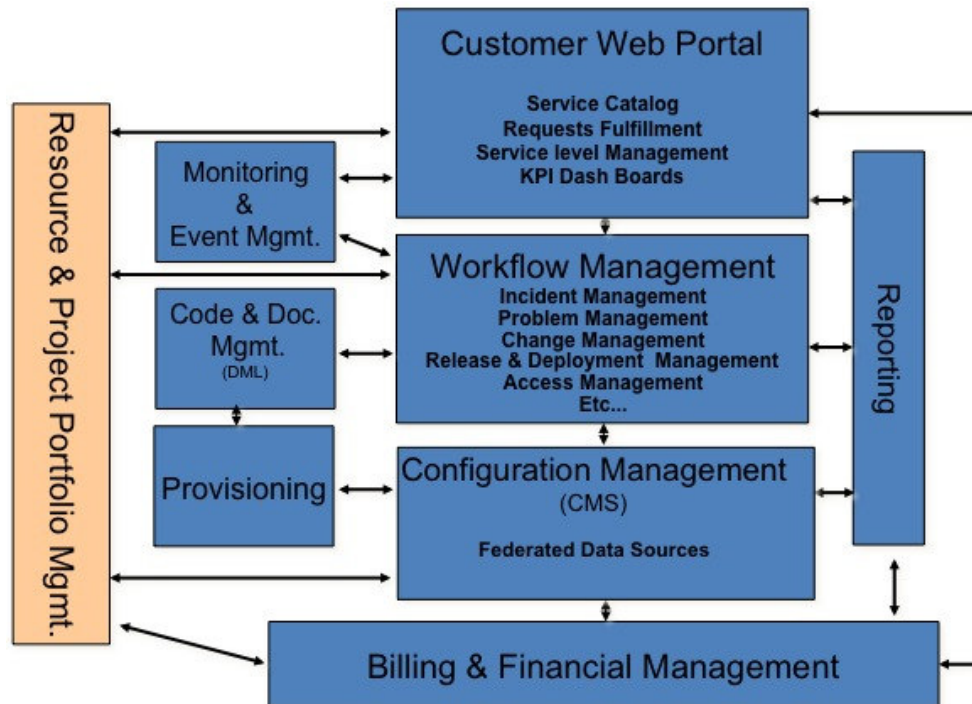
At the heart of this challenge is the silo or domain approach to how we purchase IT management tools. The fact is that one of the most significant challenges to a service management approach is the cultural and organizational focus on IT silos to the detriment of enterprise IT management issues.

To explore this concept further from a tool perspective, consider your own organization and the following questions:

1. Is there a defined enterprise IT tool strategy and architecture model?
2. Is there any function or group in your organization that has a mandate to create and govern an enterprise tool strategy?
3. Do you have a function in your organization that manages and supports IT tools that are used by the enterprise IT function?
4. Are IT management tools budgeted for and purchased at a domain / departmental level, but are required to fit within a predefined enterprise strategy?

If you are like the majority of companies I have worked with, all of these questions would most probably be answered with a no and the resulting tool landscape would be filled with multiples and duplicates of various types of tools that do not integrate. It is also very common to find tool decisions for ITSM programs being made in isolation without the consideration of integrated tool requirements.

The following picture represents the concept of an integrated tool architecture with a focus on IT operations. As you can see from the diagram, you could develop a whole new set of boxes on the development side of the IT house for the category I have listed as “Resource and Project Portfolio Management Tools”



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#### 4.6 Ability To Deploy

Up until now, the enablers we have discussed relate primarily to the design, build and test phases of the project; however, by the statement “Ability To Deploy” I am specifically referring to the political will and authority to deploy / impose a new method of working and new tools across the scope of the organization that now must comply with these new ITSM processes. In our experience and from the research documented in this paper, this is a primary point of failure for many companies (it all looked great until others were required to change the current behaviors).

While it takes significant effort to design, document and test your ITSM deliverables, it is at the point of actually rolling out changes to the functional groups and departments that many ITSM projects hit the proverbial brick wall. Whether it comes in the form of open rejection of the new process and tools or it rears its head as a delay tactic, many ITSM projects find themselves mired in the quagmire of inter-company politics and fail at the point of delivery without ever having realized any value to the organization making the investment.

Typical Scenarios:

- **The Filibuster:** One or more of the groups you are deploying to find some urgent reason to put off changing to the new way of working based on a whole

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- series of excuses (either real or imaginary) not related to the project directly, as this would appear as if they were not supportive.
- **The Never Ending Pilot:** Based on the principle of a pilot rollout to a designated group, the testing of process and tools generates dozens of critical improvement requirements that somehow did not come up during the months of design and review by the very same group.
  - **The Perfectionist Syndrome:** The primary stakeholders responsible for signing off on the design and characteristics of the process and tool requirements refuse to accept that improvement – not perfection – is the goal, and that certain improvements can come later. This scenario is very typical for an organization that has had difficulty managing changes in scope during the project lifecycle.
  - **The Tool Development Backlog:** For ITSM programs, the process automation tool/suite is often used by several processes that have already been deployed or are being so while other processes are being designed. The challenge that often arises at this point is the fact that the developers / administrators become the primary bottleneck in that they cannot cope with all of the demands for configuration and customization they are receiving from multiple process groups. This becomes even more of an issue if request for tool enhancements are not approved, prioritized and scheduled through a strict Change Management process.

#### 4.7 Ability To Affect Behavioral Change

So you have designed a great process, have invested in a slick ITSM tool and paid your consultants for the best advice you could purchase. What makes you think anyone is actually going to follow the new processes after you close up the project and take down the posters?

To change from a previous to a new set of behaviors and eventually change the culture of the organization, there are certain critical success factors that need to be considered.

##### *Focus On Behavior – Not Cultural Change*

Culture is beyond your ability or the project's ability to change and should not be the goal of the behavioral change strategy. Culture in an organization is defined as a self-reinforcing set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors and is one of the most resistant elements to change. To be successful, ITSM projects must understand and work within the boundaries of current culture in order to change these beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors effectively. That being said, culture will not change without the following ingredients.

The new behavior must be reinforced by:

- 1) IT leadership messages and actions.
- 2) Changing personal measurement and reward systems to establish personal accountability and compliance.

- 3) Establishing permanent ITSM governance and management roles.
- 4) The implementation of a continual service improvement framework of dashboards and assessments focusing on value but also compliance.

If you get all these things right and actually show that life has gotten better over the long term, you will have anchored the change into the organization, which will result in a changed culture.

#### **4.7.1 IT Leadership Messages & Actions**

Messages conveyed from senior management in the form of performance reward systems, physical symbols or company icons continually reinforce current culture for the positive or negative. These messages provide people in the organization with unspoken guidelines for the direction of acceptable behavior patterns. People quickly determine what is “good and bad behavior” or what should be accepted or rejected from the message received from the culture.

In governance terms, culture is significantly influenced but what is referred to as “The Tone From The Top” – in other words, the spoken and unspoken messages sent from the IT executive leadership, which in turn influences managerial behavior and directly influences company plans, policies, and organizational direction. In short, culture is shaped and transformed by consistent patterns of senior management action. This means that re-shaping of culture cannot be achieved in the short term.

#### **4.7.2 Changing Personal Measurement & Reward Systems**

Based on classical organizational design, the average person has a unique set of department or silo-specific tasks and activities defined within his or her job description; however, there have always been three types of work each person performs on a daily basis. But, only one type of work is typically documented in the formal HR job description. For argument’s sake, let’s call the specific set of tasks within a silo “functional work”.

**Example:** A network administrator, an application programmer, a service desk agent, and an IT security manager. In each of these examples, the individual has a job function within a traditional IT silo where they spend a certain portion of their day; however, each of these individuals can also be assigned to temporary project work. What is equally true is that each individual will spend a certain portion of their time involved in cross-functional processes they deem as time spent helping someone else’s job (e.g.: they have always been involved in fixing things that break, going to meetings about things that are changing, or moving things around based on requests). In other words, they have always been involved in Service Management processes, but because these activities are not formally defined as part of their job function, they regard time spent in those activities as time spent away from their real jobs.



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The reality is that each individual has always been involved in three types of work long before ITIL or Service Management came along. What is new is that what was before undefined and unmeasured is now being formalized. Moving to an ITSM approach and changing behavior over the long term requires the opening of job descriptions in order to adjust individual key results areas and annual performance measures for process as well as functional activities.

### **4.7.3 Establishing Permanent ITSM Governance & Management Roles**

IT services, as well as the ITSM processes that support them, inevitably span multiple organizational structures. In essence, IT services and their supporting processes can be understood as horizontal management structures, which are established and managed on top of the traditional vertical silos. As these services and processes are defined, a need becomes apparent to establish governance and ownership roles that don't seem to fit well in the traditional technical domains.

A critical success factor for permanently changing behavior is the creation of new service and process roles to support the governance, oversight and management of the ITSM processes.

#### ***The Process Owner Role***

The initial planning phase of any ITIL project must include establishing the role of Process Owner. This key role is accountable for the overall quality of the process and oversees the management of, and organizational compliance to the process flows, procedures, data models, policies and technologies associated with the IT business process.

The Process Owner performs the essential role of Process Champion, Design Lead, Advocate, Coach and Protector. Typically, a Process Owner should be a senior level manager with credibility, influence and authority across the various areas impacted by the activities of the process. The Process Owner is required to have the ability to influence and ensure compliance to the policies and procedures put in place across the cultural and departmental silos of the IT organization.

#### ***The Service Owner Role***

The Service Owner is accountable for a specific service within an organization regardless of where the technology components or professional capabilities reside which build it. Service ownership is as critical to Service Management as establishing ownership for processes, which cross multiple silos or departments.





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To ensure that a service is managed with a business focus, the definition of a single point of accountability is absolutely essential to provide the level of attention and focus required for its delivery.

Much like a Process Owner, the Service Owner is responsible for continuous improvement and the management of change affecting the services under their care. The Service Owner is a primary stakeholder in all of the IT processes, which enable or support the service they own.

#### **4.7.4 The Implementation Of A Continual Service Improvement Framework**

One of the critical success factors in achieving employee compliance and changing behavior is creating a sense of personal accountability through measurement and, yes, an audit. Another factor of human nature is that we often take the path of least resistance when under stress. The fact of the matter is that we behave better when we know we are being measured or held accountable for our actions. I am sure you have heard the quote: “What gets measured gets done!” By planning for, executing and publishing the results of your key performance indicators and the results of process assessments, you are buying insurance on the increased likelihood of deployment success, not to mention continual service improvement.

#### **4.8 ITSM Program Momentum & Sustainability**

Adopting ITSM practices is never a short-term activity. For many companies, this means an ongoing improvement program that spans multiple years in order to make any significant progress in adopting ITSM practices. The very fact of the long-term nature of these initiatives is in and of itself problematic. Combine the fact that IT folk typically don’t have patience for any project that lasts longer than six months, and the other interesting statistic that the average CIO retention rate in North America is only 18 months, and you will see that many organizations adopting ITIL have very little appetite to go beyond a few processes. Maintaining momentum over a term of just a few years is a significant challenge most companies face.

If your organization is like most of the companies I have worked with, you have begun your ITIL journey by finding the funding in an existing operational budget, and without going to your business customer for any capital funding. This reason this often occurs is due to the fact that it is difficult to ask your customers for money for what they believe you are already doing.

For most organizations, this means that they will begin their ITIL program in what I like to call stealth mode. They will typically establish modest projects to improve their support processes, such as Incident, Request and Change Management, out of existing operational funds. Other processes that are typically launched early without much fanfare are Service Catalog and the start of Service Level Management.



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However, most companies will not get much further before they realize they now need to address their ITSM tool strategy. They will certainly realize this when they tackle Service Asset and Configuration Management. At this point of the program lifecycle, it will become necessary to go public with their initiative, as capital investment will be needed to purchase a tool to support multiple integrated ITSM processes. To go public, the ITSM initiative will need a marketing strategy that capitalizes on all the wins and benefits realized by the improvement efforts during the period of ITIL by stealth mode. This next phase of your ITIL journey will be funded based on your marketing prowess.

At this point, the following elements are critical to keep the ITIL program rolling:

- 1) The recognition of the ITSM program as a top IT strategic initiative.
- 2) The submission of the ITSM program into the annual Project Portfolio process for prioritization and funding.
- 3) The execution of a stunning marketing campaign highlighting all the improvements that have been realized while during stealth mode.
- 4) The ITIL business case has to be linked to the provisioning of IT Services and their support of business value. Process improvement messages will not be sufficient.
- 5) The formal ITIL education of all key stakeholders.

In short, it is possible to start your ITIL project in a low key approach; but, to keep it alive and healthy over the long term, it has to be formally recognized as a top IT initiative in support of business goals. It has to gain a profile so important that it outlasts the key stakeholders who start it.



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## 5 CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper is to provide insight into what makes ITSM programs successful and sustainable over the long term. I am very aware that the scope of all the elements I have listed in this paper can seem overwhelming and make the journey seem difficult and the potential issues seem insurmountable; however, I assume you would prefer to be well informed rather than be unaware of the dangers that can distract you from the goal at hand. My intention here is to share with the readers Pink's years of lessons learned from projects that have gone well and others that have died an early death due to constraints that were sometimes avoidable or at other times outside the control of those who were managing them.

Remember that these enablers represent the heart and lifeblood of your initiative. As long as there is a small trickle of movement and capacity through each one, there is hope for a successful conclusion to your efforts. Even the constraints should be seen as positive, in that they provide insight into what should be the scope of your initial efforts. Working within your constraints and not over-extending on your promises and objectives can lead to successes that allow you to expand each enabler over time for greater and greater achievements.

My best wishes on your ITSM journey.

Troy DuMoulin

*"Of course we all have our limits, but how can you possibly find your boundaries unless you explore as far and as wide as you possibly can? I would rather fail in an attempt at something new and uncharted than safely succeed in a repeat of something I have done."*  
--A. E. Hotchner