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TRANSFORMING IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE WITH ITIL® PRACTITIONER

A GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS & ORGANISATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senior IT professionals increasingly need a broad skills base so that they can operate effectively across a range of key business capabilities, including project, programme and IT service management. In a highly competitive global market, organisations cannot stand still and continual service improvement is key.

For many years ITIL® has provided a non-proprietary Best Practice framework for IT professionals to use to tackle IT service management. ITIL, from the AXELOS® stable, combines the experiences of a wide range of IT professionals and experts. It is widely used and recognised so its terms and methods are understood by most organisations. In fact, ITIL has been adopted by organisations across the globe including HSBC, NASA and IBM.

ITIL is changing in 2016. In this whitepaper we set out the latest developments in the ITIL Best Practice guidelines and qualifications and explore how they will boost IT service delivery.

CLOSER ALIGNMENT OF IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT TO THE BUSINESS GOALS

In the most successful businesses, IT facilitates transformation and growth. It is not simply a means of underpinning existing business processes, although this too must be handled efficiently.

Changing business requirements has meant that IT services must be closely aligned to the needs of the business and support its ability to identify and deliver improvement initiatives in the workplace. Organisations have recognised this and many have attempted to adopt Best Practice in their approach to IT service management (ITSM).

However, too often training and development initiatives aimed at boosting IT service management capabilities have not translated into improvements in practice. There is a pressing need for handson guidance that is relevant to the problems practitioners must solve in their daily workflow. Feedback from case studies from ITSM practitioners worldwide demonstrating how ITIL's guidance has helped organisations to succeed has highlighted several key challenges for a successful improvement journey. As Best Practice evolves, the need for more practical guidance has increased significantly.

ITIL covers the whole service lifecycle from the identification of business and IT requirements, from designing and embedding a solution, to maintaining the new service through continuous review and improvement.

GETTING UNDER THE BONNET OF ITIL

ITIL provides a framework for identifying, planning, delivering and supporting IT services that can be applied to most organisations. It is a globally adopted service management framework used by thousands of organisations worldwide, with over two million certifications awarded. ITIL covers the whole service lifecycle from the identification of business and IT requirements, to designing and embedding a solution, to maintaining the new service through continuous review and improvement.

It can help maintain a stable service environment to support business change. By adopting ITIL Best Practice, organisations improve services by better managing business risk and service disruption or failure threats. Underpinning cost-effective systems for managing demand for IT services, ITIL-based Best Practice in service management enhances customer relationships by delivering efficient services that meet their needs. The ITIL qualification scheme provides a modular approach to the ITIL framework and comprises a series of qualifications: Foundation Level, Practitioner Level, Intermediate Level, Expert Level and Master Level.

Practitioner Level, introduced February 2016, represents an evolution to the ITIL framework that provides greater practical support. It is complementary to the existing framework and does not change the core ITIL offering.

PRACTITIONER LEVEL

ITIL Foundation focuses on the 'what' and the 'why' of IT service management – at this introductory level users do not necessarily have the confidence or skills to put this knowledge into practice. Although the Foundation level of the Best Practice framework effectively imparts the terminology and basic principles of ITSM, many IT managers want to build on that training when returning to the workplace, with practical tools to solve the individual issues their organisation faces.

The new ITIL Practitioner certification level, designed by a leading team of six industry professionals from international backgrounds in areas such as DevOps, gamification and the traditional ITSM space, aims to do just that.

While the ITIL Foundation qualification confirms a good understanding of what service management is and introduces all the relevant ITIL concepts and terminology, it addresses the question of how to apply this in practice only very briefly. ITIL Practitioner comprises key skills for how to start adopting and adapting ITIL within the organisation. When AXELOS surveyed ITSM professionals from around the world, the most pressing requirement was for ITSM to be treated as a profession. Having this additional qualification level within the ITIL framework is an important step towards that goal. The aim is to improve the capability of individuals throughout the business to adopt and adapt ITIL in their day-to-day roles for maximum business benefits. They will be empowered to implement cuttingedge technological capabilities such as automation, real-time reporting and cloud computing to improve the quality of service design and the efficiency of service delivery.

ITIL Practitioner inspires professionals to incorporate a wide range of philosophies, frameworks, Best Practice and methodologies including Lean, DevOps, Agile and SIAM to enhance the value of ITSM.

The ITIL Practitioner guidance follows 9 Guiding Principles:
1. Focus on value
2. Design for experience
3. Start where you are
4. Work holistically
5. Progress iteratively
6. Observe directly
7. Be transparent
8. Collaborate
9. Keep it simple

WHAT DOES THE COURSE COVER?

ITIL Practitioner sits alongside the existing qualification levels of Foundation, Intermediate, Expert and Master. ITIL Practitioner focuses on the Continual Service Improvement (CSI) approach as the way to structure any improvement initiatives responding to specific business needs. ITIL Practitioner puts the emphasis on providing practical guidance as to how individuals can leverage CSI, a fundamental lifecycle stage in ITIL, to maximise the benefits of its adoption and adaption.

While the ITIL Practitioner level has synergies with the CSI module, the two are designed to be complementary and there is minimal overlap. As well as the CSI approach, ITIL Practitioner draws on concepts from the rest of ITIL, all the time focussing on practical guidance. Practitioner level also draws on Best Practice from other methodologies, frameworks and philosophies, although these are not covered specifically. It teaches individuals nine guiding principles covering three key areas crucial for the success of any improvement initiatives: organisational change management; communication; and measurement and metrics. Individuals will gain the tools and lifelong skills they need to develop the knowledge, understanding and confidence to deliver improvement initiatives within their organisation.

ITIL Practitioner is a follow-on qualification from Foundation level that counts as three credits towards qualification at Expert level. Candidates must hold ITIL Foundation qualification before they can progress to ITIL Practitioner. However, ITIL Practitioner is not a pre-requisite for the higher level ITIL certifications – anyone planning to achieve the ITIL Expert or Master levels does not have to attain the ITIL Practitioner qualification first. ITIL Practitioner supplies a unique toolkit that guides IT professionals when they are tasked with driving organisational change management. It covers topics including managing stakeholders and sponsors, managing resistance to change and applying organisational change management principles to planning and implementing improvements. Covering topics such as critical success factors and key performance indicators – and how to analyse both in the context of your organisation – ITIL Practitioner enables IT professionals to measure success metrics and communicate them. Recognising the importance of good communications to effective organisational transformation, ITIL Practitioner covers topics such as the purpose and value of communication and communication tools and techniques.

IS ITIL THE RIGHT ROUTE FOR ME?

ITIL Practitioner is aimed at all IT service management professionals who are committed to personal and organisational development. ITIL professionals who do not currently hold any ITIL certification will find ITIL Foundation level and ITIL Practitioner go hand in hand. First, IT service management professionals acquire theoretical understanding and knowledge and then they discover how to put it into practice. By studying both qualifications in succession, individuals will be ready to hit the ground running when returning to the workplace. Individuals who are already ITIL Foundation certified will find ITIL Practitioner is the perfect next step. IT service management professionals who have core ITIL knowledge, but need to develop their experience and the know-how to put it into practice will benefit from ITIL Practitioner.

The synergy between Foundation, Practitioner and Intermediate qualifications means that professionals considering ITIL for the first time can choose the route through modules that suits them. They might take ITIL Foundation and ITIL Practitioner in combination and then choose the most appropriate Intermediate route for them, or they can start off by taking Practitioner together with the most appropriate Intermediate qualification. ITIL Intermediate qualification holders and ITIL Experts, the levels above ITIL Practitioner level, can also benefit from the new syllabus. Practitioner offers three credits towards Expert level and as there is minimal overlap with existing modules and a fresh approach to incorporating Best Practice from other methodologies, frameworks and philosophies, even Experts may benefit from studying for the ITIL Practitioner qualification.

ITIL PRACTITIONER BOOSTS BEST PRACTICE

ITIL Practitioner provides a useful practical toolkit for implementing a Best Practice approach to IT service management. It recognises that ITIL is most effective in the context of a good understanding of alternative and related approaches and in no way promotes the idea of becoming an 'ITIL shop'. It is tempting to lock into an authoritative single source of Best Practice guidance but IT professionals and organisations who approach IT service management from the starting point of the needs of their own organisation rather than slavishly following one set of guidance or another will be the most successful.

ITIL Practitioner boosts the IT service management profession by transforming knowledge into practice to meet business goals. Service users will benefit as IT professionals become more confident and deliver better service. Millions of IT professionals hold ITIL Foundation qualifications – the two-day ITIL Practitioner training translates this into a practical approach to continual service improvement that will deliver real value for their organisations.

ABOUT PEOPLECERT

PEOPLECERT

PEOPLECERT is a global leader in assessment and certification of professional skills, partnering with multi-national organisations and government bodies for the development & delivery of standardised exams. Delivering exams across 150 countries and in 24 languages over its state-of-the-art assessment technology, PEOPLECERT enables professionals to boost their careers and realise their life ambitions.

For further information please email accreditations@peoplecert.org or visit www.peoplecert.org

ABOUT ILX GROUP (ILX)

ILX Group is a global all-in-one provider of Best Practice Learning Solutions. ILX delivers Portfolio Programme & Project Management, IT Service Management, Risk Management and Business Financial Literacy learning solutions. The Best Practice courses are delivered through a blend of classroom, workshops, e-Learning and mobile platforms.

ILX is a market leader in PRINCE2 training and has provided Best Practice learning to more than 250,000 people across 5,000 organisations in over 100 countries. ILX works closely with its clients to deliver industry standard qualifications and helps organisations to deliver continuous workforce improvement. The company and its multi-lingual trainers can support customers around the world with local offices also in the UK, Middle East, India, Australia and New Zealand.

For further information visit www.ilxgroup.com or follow ILX on Twitter@ILXGroup, or Facebook www.facebook.com/ILXGroup.

REFERENCES

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