Introduction to

Real ITSM

(A preview)

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This document is a selection of extracts from the book
Introduction to Real ITSM

Available at http://www.realitsm.com

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Contents

1
Introduction

IT operational theory is all very well for those who have the luxury of time and money.

But what do you do if systems are in flames, users are openly hostile, budgets are falling, staff morale is a mess, and the CIO role is career death?

You apply Real ITSM. This is the only operational framework that recognises how IT is delivered in the real world and then adapts itself to minimise the impact on that environment while maximising the value to those who have to deliver it.

Low cost, low impact, easy and quick – Real ITSM is the preferred framework for most of today's IT departments, making IT Real.

Get Real.

What is Real ITSM?

Real ITSM is a Body of Knowledge. This means Real ITSM collects together all the ideas, good and bad, new and old, as a compendium of knowledge for ITSM practitioners.

Real ITSM is a framework for implementation, which means it represents proven and generally accepted Real ITSM practices.

Real ITSM represents the leading edge in Real ITSM thinking, providing thought leadership to the industry and ensuring that it will remain fresh for years to come.

The fact that there is a fundamental contradiction between these three statements has not escaped us, but it doesn't seem to trouble ITIL so we won't let it distract us either.

These are early days for Real ITSM.   What you hold is Real ITSM 1.0 but we are confident that Real ITSM will grow to be a BOK more hyped than ITIL, more rigorous than COBIT, more useful than MOF, more boring than PMBOK, and more misunderstood than CMMI.

Unlike all these other BOKs, Real ITSM does not represent best practice or good practice or generally accepted practice or even worst practice.

Real ITSM represents Real Practice: ITSM as it is done in the real world[1].

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[1] Real Practice has some similarities with Core Practice, a.k.a. CoPr, another bright idea of the author's. Core Practice is the minimum necessary to get the job done without raising risk above some threshold. See www.corepractice.org Real ITSM has no connection, affiliation or similarity with the legal product Real Practice™ at www.realpractice.com. Real ITSM has nothing to do with the law and prefers to keep it that way.

Principles of Real ITSM

Anyone who has experienced the contented tranquillity of a mature and stable IT organisation will long for such a work environment.

Such a pleasant place to work is achievable with some commitment and the rigorous application of Real ITSM principles, known as Realitsm and pronounced **ree**-uh-litz-m, near enough to "realism".

The main threats to IT stability are change, accountability and reduced spending. Realitsm is about eliminating these threats from the IT environment, in the best interests of all in IT. A harmonious IT environment requires adherence to the following Realitsm principles:

Figure 1-1   Realitsm

- Ensure a stable operating environment

- Maximise adaptability to change

- Promote involvement through collectivist decision-making

- Maintain morale through reduced group accountability

- Maximise revenue and funding for the IT department

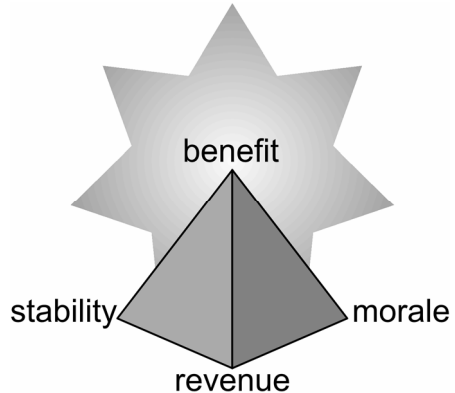- Maximise benefit and value for the IT staff

Real ITSM model

Real ITSM consists of

- a Deathcycle which follows a service from misconception to abandonment

- a set of Activities performed

- related Roles to be put on wetware's business cards and otherwise ignored

- Metrics used to distort behaviours

- Complimentary Guidance

Unlike ITIL, which uses the word "process" with a cavalier disregard for any generally accepted definition of the word, Real ITSM prefers to refer to "activities". We do this partly because it is a better-suited word and partly to keep the OGC lawyers at bay. This does mean that the "four Ps" doesn't work any more (People Processes Products Partners), so Real ITSM uses the alternate model of Wetware Activities Stuff and Parasites which is just as mnemonic: WASP.

Figure 1-2 Real ITSM model

Real ITSM activities are carried on in all Deathcycle phases independent of services. The Deathcycle is, like, just a model, you know. Real activities carry on regardless.
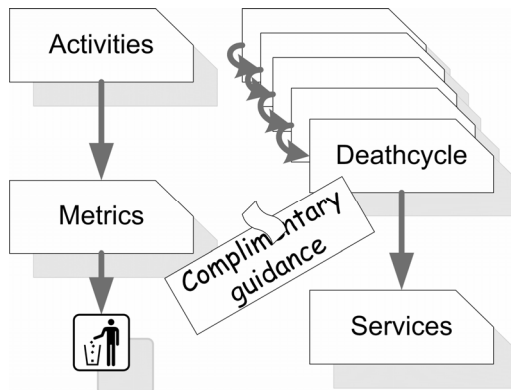
Deathcycle

Real ITSM services go through a Deathcycle from misconception to a usually messy end. Navigating the ITSM Deathcycle can be thought of as akin to navigating the Great Barrier Reef. The intent of Real ITSM is to minimise the number of services that actually go live, while maximising the time and education of staff along the way.

In the event that a service does reach the users, the opposite focus prevails: it should be kept alive for as long as possible so as to maximise revenue and job assurance. The intent however is the same – minimisation of change.

The Deathcycle is made up of five areas or domains or sections or stages or phases:

Service Reaction	Planning and strategy is forbidden. All Real ITSM acts in reaction to business pressures.
Service Demand	Services are created only in concession to the demands of the customers.
Service Taming	Services arrive unexpected and unannounced. First priority is to get some control over them.
Service Nursing	Once stuck with a service, the focus is on keeping it alive as long as possible to maximise revenue.
Continual Service Assessment	Management, consultants and staff are kept happily occupied measuring and assessing the services.

Organisation

Real ITSM is represented by the Real IT Service Institute, or RITSI. The Institute is incorporated in London[2]. Membership is inclusive: open to all vendors, consultants, trainers, examiners and publishers without exception (unless we don't like you).

The RITSI Board of Directors is elected by the RITSI Board of Directors. Nominations are open to anyone who we tell. In order to serve its international constituency, the Board meets in resorts worldwide.

RITSI and its agents do derive revenues from Real ITSM, but this income is used solely to fund the cost of operations, the ongoing enhancement and promotion of Real Practice, and the financial viability of the various organisations.

RITSI operates a number of programs for the benefit of the Real ITSM community[3].

BAPITSM

Business And Professional ITSM is a registration program for Real ITSM practitioners. For a small fee, Real ITSM professionals can become full accredited members of the RITSI.

Membership is subject to review and approval of the Institute, and is restricted to only those who have paid the fee.

Ongoing accreditation is maintained by demonstrating experience in Real ITSM and a regular program of professional development, such as attending Real ITSM webcasts, courses and meetings.

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[2] London, Tanzania not London, England
[3] The Real ITSM community is of course the vendors, consultants, trainers, examiners and publishers.

2
Service
Reaction

The modern world is entirely too dynamic for any sort of medium or long term planning to be worthwhile.

Governments, laws, executives, competitors, technologies, recessions and fads come and go like the weather. As the old military saying goes "No plan survives the first encounter". Strategic planning is as futile as an umbrella in a cyclone. Real ITSM understands this and prohibits all strategic planning as an irresponsible waste of resources. Better to sail the unpredictable winds of change, as flexible and unencumbered as possible.

Valuing a service

In the design stages, value of a service is predicted on two parameters: Futility and Variability.

Futility

The more futile a user requirement is, the more resources can be expended and the more staff occupied without any likelihood of the service actually having to be delivered. So long as nobody is foolish enough to point out this Futility in the early stages of a service's deathcycle, the ultimate failure of the implementation can be blamed squarely on unrealistic user expectations. The business may suspect but they will never be able to pin anything.
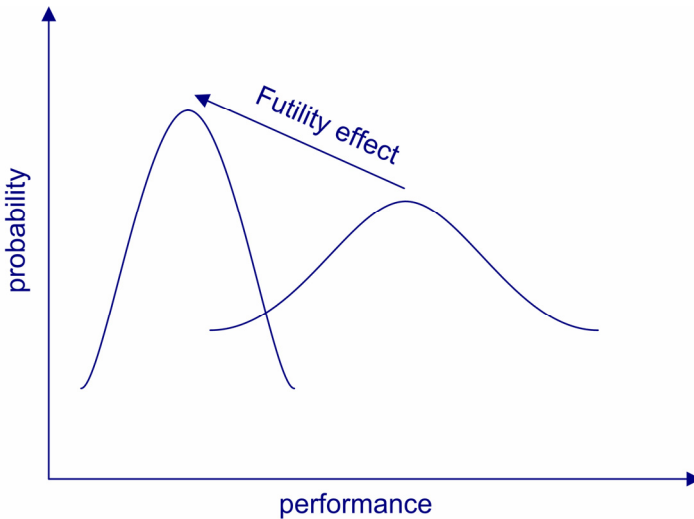

Figure 2-1   Futility decreases the performance

Assess your organisation against *Service Reaction* key practices. Score 3 for each compliance and 1 for each Bonus. Heck, score anything you like: it is **your** assessment.

Practice	score
Limit all Real financial planning to a MPFP of one year or less	
Bonus: Use MS-Excel	
Under-utilise all key resources - maintain emergency capacity	
Prohibit all optimisation, efficiency or consolidation activities	
Document only a very few procedures and enforce none of them	
Bonus: Use MS-Excel	
All reports and metrics provide only enough information to support the allocation of blame, and contain sufficient time-lag to prevent runaway feedback loops	
Bonus: Use MS-Excel	
Staff know just enough about core systems	
No replication of last remaining person who understands a legacy system	
Stamp out grass-roots initiatives	
Create initiatives only in response to an executive directive and invest the minimum necessary to prevent punishment	
Prohibit continual improvement	
Either push decisions up to somebody who is sufficiently high in the organisation to neither care nor understand, or make a collective decision by committee	
Treat services as assets and value them by the funding and revenues these services bring to the IT organisation	
Bonus: Use MS-Excel	
All services provide sufficient value to the implementing staff	
Define a suitably narrow criterion for permissible services	
Have a Service Cataract that lists the available services in terms of their dependencies	
Bonus: Use MS-Excel	
Maximise futility and variability of services	
Total	

Availability

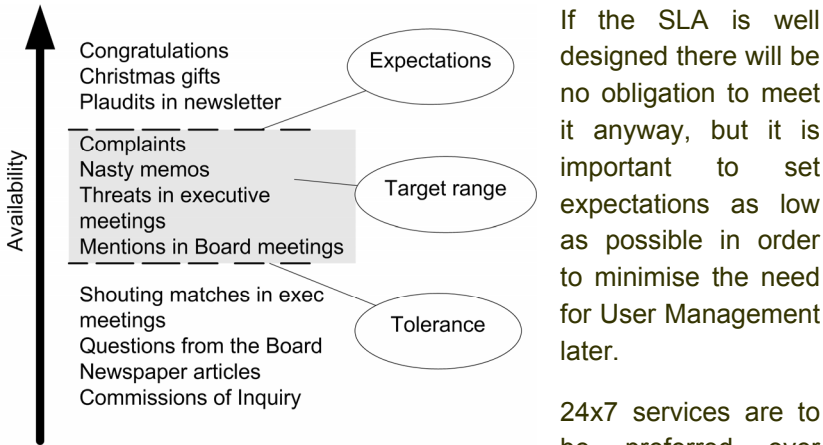Design for the lowest availability level that will be tolerated by the customer.

Figure 2-2   Availability levels

If the SLA is well designed there will be no obligation to meet it anyway, but it is important to set expectations as low as possible in order to minimise the need for User Management later.

24x7 services are to be preferred over more limited hours. 24x7 design means that overtime hours and allowances are designed in to the operational budget, while scheduled outage windows can more credibly be scheduled for say Tuesday lunchtime. Infrastructure must be more robust, meaning better technologies on the resume, longer implementation times, more support, and happier vendors leading to more conference invitations.

Closely related to availability is capacity. Capacity ceilings are usually blown by some unforeseeable random event anyway, so capacity planning and monitoring are pointless. In addition, blowing capacity-limits precipitates a crisis, which makes obtaining funding for new infrastructure simpler and quicker.

See also *Crisis Manager*, page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

Incident priority

Some organisations give high importance to how long IT is going to take to resolve incidents, and they write this into SLAs as a key metric. Usually high priority incidents are to be resolved quickly while lower priority incidents can take progressively longer.

This is akin to firemen promising to extinguish three-alarm fires within ten minutes but a backyard grassfire may take until tomorrow. It is absurd on three levels: extinguishing the fire takes as long as it takes, bigger fires take longer, and that little yard fire won't be so small tomorrow.

While we are on the topic of firemen, it should be noted that firemen spend an awful lot of time polishing the fire engine, rolling and unrolling hoses, and playing cards. Any manager who expects Service Desk and Level One Support people to be always busy ("fully utilised") does not understand what they do. Real Level One Support has plenty of spare capacity.

Real ITSM SLAs don't define response times. Based on priority, they define how many people will be assigned to an incident; how many hours a day it will be worked on; and what gets overruled to work on it. .

Because Real Priority (also known as Care Factor) is measured by the number of metaphorical fans that are being hit by effluent, it starts at zero and goes up.

This is much more logical than other systems where 1 is highest. Just when you thought you had seen the worst thing that can go wrong, something comes along that makes all past priority 1 incidents look mild. How can you communicate this? With Real ITSM, you simply assign it a priority that is one higher than any previous incident.

Vendor Management

Vendors generally manage IT departments well, and little intervention is required from IT.

The greatest difficulties arise when staff squabble over who is to be a vendor's contact, since the role appeals to those who like desktop toys, or quality golf shirts or wind-cheaters, and those who like to travel. Often a rotating roster can be established, or if this proves too cumbersome then senior management should simply usurp the roles.

In order to optimise being managed by vendors, it is worth seeking to be a reference site. Being a reference site will bring benefits:
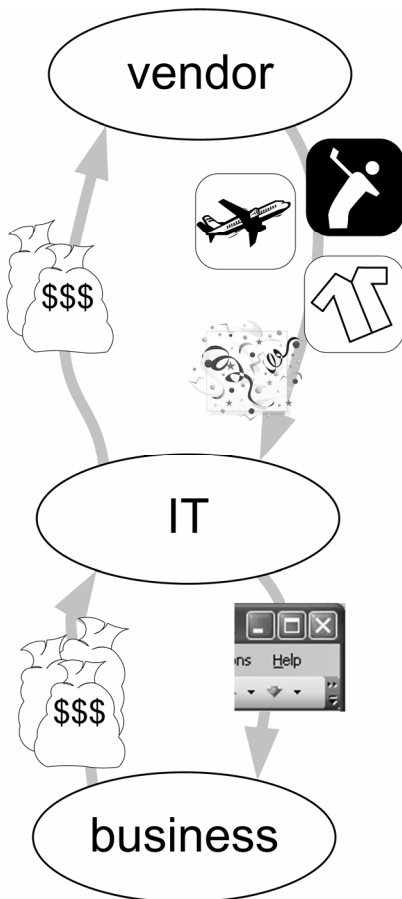
Love and attention. This requires far more vendor resource than could ever be sustained in more than a few clients, so be one of them.

Glory. Vendors will make you look a hero, in glossy brochures, advertisements, articles and best of all conference presentations. They will put your CIO's face on full page ads in magazines where their peers will see and then give them a poster-size framed version of the ad for their office wall.

Conferences. Research on the number of reference sites whose CIO went to the vendor's world conference at the vendor's expense as a speaker or regularly appeared on speaking tours to warm sunny countries would yield interesting results.

RATS

The Real Assessment Total Self-assessed or RATS is measured using the assessment spreadsheet from www.realitsm.com or the tables in this book.

Success of Real ITSM implementation is measured in terms of the number of Real ITSM activities and functions implemented, where successful implementation is defined as compliance assessed against Real ITSM.

That is, assess the compliance against the Real ITSM model before implementing Real ITSM, then assess it again after implementing Real ITSM (and again and again). If implementing Real ITSM has increased the RATS, then the Real ITSM project must have been successful.

On no account should any metrics from an organisational perspective (nor any metrics not defined in terms of Real ITSM) be allowed to creep into the post implementation review: these only distort the results.

And if auditors or management ask about the status of Real ITSM in your organisation, you can give a RATS.