

Vital

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FEATURE FOCUS: AVOIDING THE PITFALLS OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT. 28-31

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Avoiding the pitfalls of service management (or learning from the mistakes of others)



All service management projects are unique, but all will face similar challenges. **MARTIJN ADAMS**, business development and marketing manager at InfraVision, looks at the common pitfalls that stop projects from succeeding and details what makes for a successful service management deployment.

SO WHAT are these pitfalls? Anything that stops you having a successful service management adoption, these include, but are not, as they say, limited to: apathy; lack of a plan; lack of management support; no dialogue with the business; no understanding of processes; and getting too hung up on ITIL. When you understand what some of the pitfalls are, you can begin to avoid them.

The must-haves of service management

1. Vision and sponsorship. Leadership from the very top of both IT and the business will help to ensure the success of developing true Service Management
2. Have a plan. Have one which includes why you are doing this and what the benefits will be. The plan is the journey, understand what the destination looks like, or how will you know when you have made it? Seventy five percent of implementation consultants would never have started a project if they had known the outcome at the start. Ten percent of organisations surveyed said they identified real objectives before the project. Only one percent checked attainment.

Once you have identified the services the business wants, work out which elements of your infrastructure – some physical, some logical – are needed to deliver those services, and how they are interdependent. These elements will be the beginning of your Configuration Management Database (CMDB).

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3. Understand what services you provide, they must be the services the business wants. Move away from a break-fix culture to a service-based culture – not easy the one, you are asking people to leave their comfort zones. Like it or not, IT's role is to support the business in its day-to-day work, nothing more. This is achieved by delivering consistent services that the business needs to function; email, Internet access, an HR system, storage etc and this next part may come as a shock; they really don't care how you do it, as long as you deliver the service and they can do their job. They don't care if you use HP or CA, Unix or Microsoft and they definitely do not care how many routers, switches etc you need to provide the service. In fact, it's weird isn't it!?

4. ITIL SchmitIL. Support of the business is achieved through properly aligned IT processes. Most people immediately chant 'ITIL' at this point. ITIL is not a dogma, it is part of the journey and helps you recognise what you should be doing through best practice, not dictating how you should be doing it. ITIL sets the high level guidelines and leaves it to you to make it fit in your organisation – don't get hung-up on ITIL. Do get hung-up on delivering the required services to

the business consistently and as efficiently as possible.

5. Know your infrastructure. Once you have identified the services the business wants, work out which elements of your infrastructure – some physical, some logical – are needed to deliver those services, and how they are interdependent. These elements will be the beginning of your Configuration Management Database (CMDB). While we are on the subject of CMDB, let's get something clear, a CMDB:

- is not the holy grail;
- does not have to have all its data in one location, it could be spread across several locations and sites;
- is not simply a list of all the hardware and software you think you have – that is an asset register which may be a subset of the CMDB;
- can start out with just your VITAL elements and their inter-relationships, let it grow over time. Managing your CMDB should not be an onerous task. If it is, check you aren't trying to keep track of too many items- track the beach, not the grains of sand it is made up of;
- should be managed through change management and not just populated by an inventory tool (although such a tool is

great to validate your CMDB and show you information where you are not interested in its history).

6. Clarity and simplicity of processes, procedures and work instructions. Ensure that the processes you create are logical, straightforward and serve a genuine purpose, or they will not be used. Each process should break down into its component procedure, which in turn should break down into individual, clear and concise work instructions so that at any point, the user knows exactly what should be done next, by whom and by when.

Processes are the root of all evil if you get them wrong but they can be the route to success when they are right – the toolset just becomes a vehicle for following your processes.

The easiest way of defining processes is to take one of the process models readily available in the market such as the Alignability Process Model (APM) from BMC Software. APM contains proven ITIL-aligned processes and procedures that have been honed through years of experience in well over 200 organisations globally. Most organisations find at least an 80 percent fit between the processes, procedures and work instructions



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within APM and what they need to do as a business. It is far quicker to identify and amend the remaining 20 percent than starting drawing up your own on a blank canvas. Result – reduced risk and massive time and money savings in development and deployment.

Danone is one of the companies that implemented the Alignability Process Model and SDE and managed to do this in 66 percent of their planned time and budget. Michael Kollig, the IT Director of North East and Central Europe for Danone was really appreciative of the time savings, the reduction of risk and the method of roll out of the project.

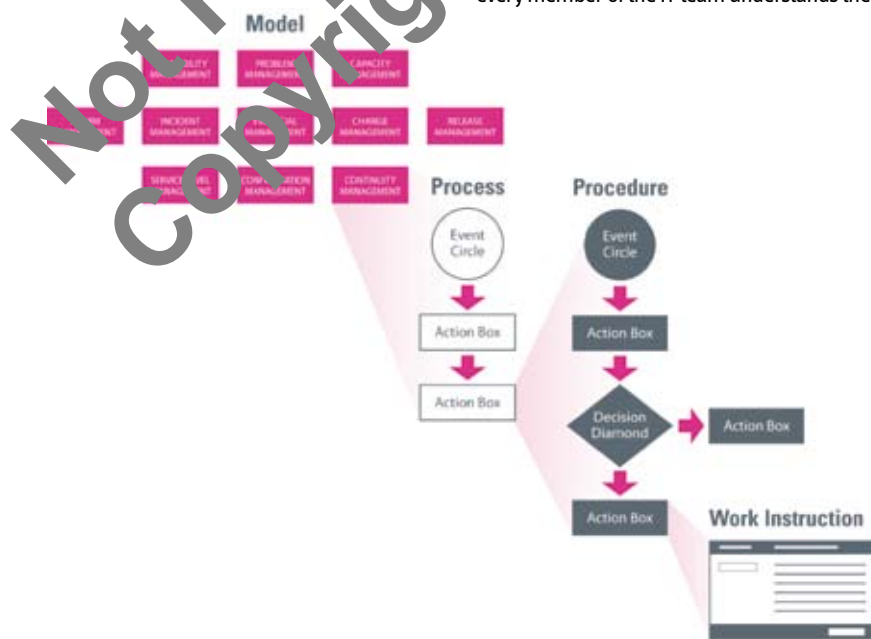
roles and often roles, they have to play, what is expected of them and, importantly, what is not expected of them. Workshops and training will go a long way to providing this, as long as it is in an environment of openness. Few people respond well to change and the whole project can blow up if this is not handled well. Allow people to voice concerns, many based on rumour and fear, then clearly dispel rumour and allay fears.

Do you know that the majority of time in service management implementations is spent in customising the tool again and again? It should be spent training and raising awareness.

7. Clarify roles and responsibilities. Ensure every member of the IT team understands the

8. Standards of delivery. Now you know the services the business wants, you know the items critical to the delivery of those services, now you can start thinking of the level of availability of each service to the business, based on how critical to the business the service is. This will ultimately lead to a service level agreement (SLA) between IT and the business. Initially, only run the SLA internally – ie, don't tell the business how well (or not) you are going to perform. It is wise to have some visibility of IT's capabilities before setting expectations with the business, under-promise and over-deliver.

9. Communicate the adoption of a service culture to your customers. Some customers have achieved a sense of anticipation by anonymously pinning countdown notices to display boards in the office, without saying what they are counting down to. In the last few days they added the name of the project, an email on launch day to the customers relates



Structure of the Alignability Process Model (APM) processes broken into procedures which contain Work Instructions



it is imperative that the project goals and milestones were established as part of the plan. Then you can reflect on the project itself, and the results of the completion of the project.

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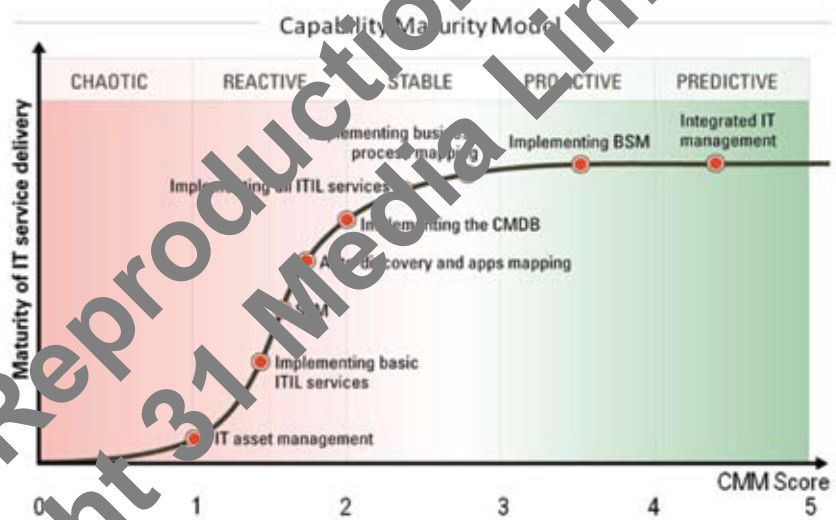
what has arrived, and what it will mean to the business. But do not forget; at the end of the day our customers want the highest quality of service for a reasonable price.

10. Ensure reporting requirements are fully met. This is best achieved by addressing reporting requirements right at the start of the project. Understand what the KPIs are, and establish a method of monitoring them. At least one of these should offer an insight to costs. Your service management tool should have at least a number of the KPI reports available out of the box, for every process.

11. Review the adoption of service management three months after go-live. To do this, it is imperative that the project goals and milestones were established as part of the plan. Then you can reflect on the project itself, and the results of the completion of the project. Eighty percent of service desk implementations do not realise the ROI expected.

Many times organisations simply forget to measure performance before the project, making it really difficult to know what has been achieved.

Jean-Marie van Cutsem, service manager of Allianz, Belgium had the foresight to have an independent capability maturity model (See diagram 2) measurement done before and after the project. Within 14 weeks they managed to move from a level between zero and one to between three and four. Their meteoric rise was due to careful implementation of the APM and Service Desk Express. They enjoy well



Source: Forrester Research, Inc., "IT Asset Management, ITIL, And The CMDB: Paving The Way For BSM", R. J. Niall and T. Mendel, Ph.D., October 2005
The capability maturity model, showing how adoption of various best practices and thereby increasing your CMM score, moves organisations from chaos towards a predictive service management environment.

managed processes and awareness across the team of how everything fits together from the first detection of an issue, through resolution to reporting.

Implementing your service management tool set should take you to a CMM score of at least level 1.5, adding process mapping and CMDB takes you way beyond three and the results will be a smoother running business, many fewer unplanned outages and a view of where issues arise from and what needs to be improved to prevent them – what would you pay for that level of insight?

Other points to ponder

Self service reduces interaction with service staff and significantly lowers the cost of interactions when compared to direct contact, but bizarrely self service increases customer

satisfaction – go figure. But there may be a cultural point, some customers insist on personal service, eg lawyers, private bankers – for them it is all about relationships and their favourite member of IT- this requires a mindset change, efficiency and getting back to performing business at best speed and cost is a far better agenda.

The amalgamation of similar activities makes a service management investment much more cost effective – consider bringing facilities management, HR and customer service into the service management fold. You will be amazed how many similarities there are, and how many benefits can be had through consistent approach to service, and there may be some interesting insights given through trend analysis. www.infravision.com