

VITAL

Inspiration for the modern business

Volume 2 : Issue 3 : January / February 2009

Linking IT to the business

Where increasingly
IT service is
the business

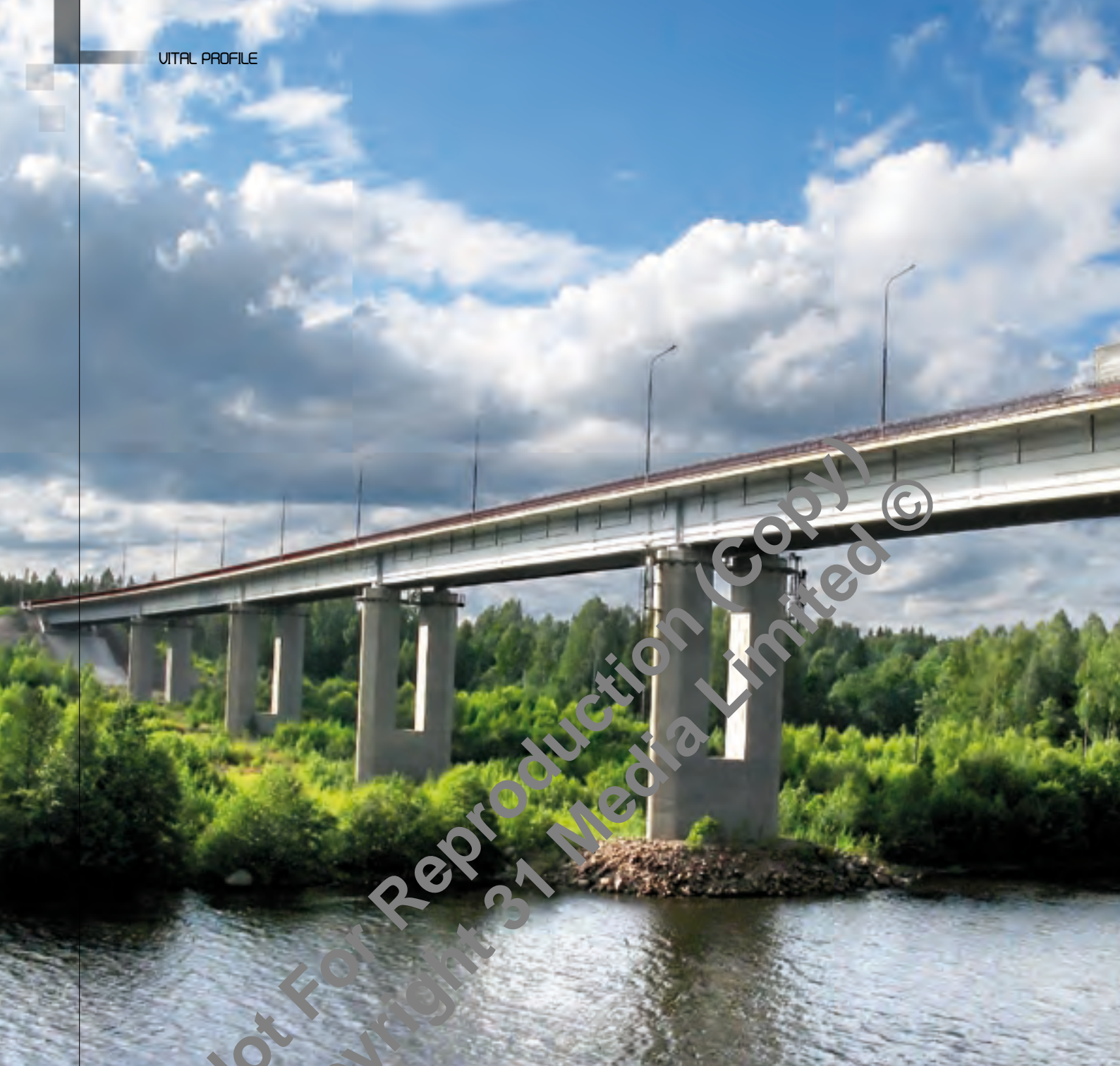
A beacon in the dark

Maximising the return on IT investment

Reuse to recycle

Putting old equipment to work

Not For Reproduction (Copy)
Copyright © 31 Media Limited ©



Real world experience

Wardown Consulting is passionate about IT service management, providing a professional, customer-focused approach to training. The company is an accredited ISEB and APMG training provider and its trainers have many years' experience working in industry so students are assured first class training based on the real world. Company director Rosemary Gurney explained the company's philosophy to *Vital*.



chain. There were lots of early starts but it was a great introduction to customer service. My family have a long history of working for BT and so after a while I was persuaded that if I wanted a career then they would be the company to join.

I started my BT career as an operator in Watford, dealing directly with the public taking operator calls to the 100 service, Directory Enquires on 192 and the 999 Emergency calls. It was during this time that BT ventured into retail and started to open shops to both sell products and allow customer services such as bill payments and connections. I left the exchange to work in the third shop to be opened and very much enjoyed the day to day interaction, with no two days being the same. However, after two years I decided I wanted a more Monday to Friday job again and following a chance conversation applied for a role in BT's Network Forecasting team.

This role was a complete change for me but I enjoyed it immensely, it involved calculating the telephone network traffic on local analogue exchanges and building the new ten year forecasts for the digital exchanges which were then being brought on line. I stayed in this role for eight years and ended up being responsible for all the teams producing network forecasts for the area of London from north of the Thames to Hertfordshire.

I left BT and moved to the Blue Arrow group as an IT business analyst with responsibility for the back office systems. When I started there were 25 people in the department, it subsequently grew to 95. After an internal reorganisation I became manager to the back office development team as well. Business analysis lead to project management, which included implementing organisation-wide systems such as HR and payroll, opening and closing branches and managing company

acquisition. After another reorganisation I moved to manage the service desk team and from there set up and managed the IT Programme Office, which included the service desk, procurement, assets, stock and providing admin support to twelve project managers.

It was during this time that I became interested in IT service management, the service desk staff were looking for professional qualifications and the company had just instigated a project to investigate the implementation of an integrated product which could assist with management reporting and automating some of the internal processes. The service desk team and I took our ITIL Foundation certificate and I went on to complete my manager's certificate. It became increasingly apparent that alternative suppliers were being considered for the management of the IT services and when I was finally offered redundancy along with many of my colleagues, I accepted and set up Wardown Consulting.

Over the last five years we have grown and we now employ permanent administrative staff, and make extensive use of a specialised pool of associate trainers. We now also have our own training suite on-site.

Vital: What is the company's specialist area or product group, if any?

RG: The company specialises in the delivery of training and consultancy in the area of ITIL IT service management and it is accredited to do so with the APMG and ISEB examination institutes. It is a delivery partner of G2G3 in the delivery of the Polestar, the IT service management business simulation game and it has also recently become an authorised training partner with SDI which enables the company to deliver training in those product areas, as well.

Vital: What are the origins of the company; how did it start and develop, how has it grown and how is it structured?

Rosemary Gurney: Wardown Consulting Ltd started in March 2003 in Bedfordshire when I decided to retrain to become an accredited ITIL trainer and use the skills, knowledge and experience that I had gained over many years working in IT service provision in both private and public sector organisations. Our objective is to assist others as they seek to implement best practice processes based on the ITIL framework into their own internal IT departments.

I left school at 18 and after deciding that university wasn't for me, I entered the retail industry where I worked for 18 months managing various branches for a newsagent



VitAL: Is that specialisation to make the best use of skills in the company or because it is the company's world view or has it simply evolved?

RG: All the trainers and consultants we use are accredited IT service management trainers who have many years of industry experience behind them which allows them to bring real life scenarios into the class room.

VitAL: Who are the company's main customers today and in the future?

RG: Our customers come in many forms, from the small organisation with limited resources wishing to make the most efficient use of what is available to them while delivering a quality service which adds value to their customers; to large, multinational corporations wishing to do the same, just on a bigger scale. The ITIL framework is just as relevant to both public and private organisations, in fact there is really no industry sector where it is not relevant in some way.

VitAL: What is the company's business model, ie, does it select a market and then design solutions to meet the needs of that market or does it specialise in particular solutions and seek markets where those solutions are needed?

RG: All customers are treated with the same degree of professional attention; there is no differentiation due to their size or industry sector. While delivering accredited training, there is a requirement to teach to a defined syllabus, our trainers and consultants make sure that they have completely understood the customer's requirements and long-term objectives which enable them to tailor the service to be delivered to their needs.

VitAL: How does the company communicate with vendors and customers?

RG: We have a website at www.wardownconsulting.co.uk where our full public schedule is available, along with details of our other services. As a company we regularly have a stand at the leading industry exhibition and conference run by the itSMF and provide speakers at both the itSMF conference and the SDI conference. Advertising is also run in various industry publications.

VitAL: What does the product range cover?

RG: The product range covers the following:
IT service management training ITIL v2

- v2 Foundation Certificate
- v2 Managers Certificate

IT service management training ITIL v3

- V3 Foundation Certificate
- V3 Foundation Bridge
- V3 Managers Bridge

Also, this month, we launched the v3 Intermediate modules as part of the new public schedule.

- Service Desk Institute
- Service Desk Analyst
- Service Desk Manager

There are also a range of awareness days which can be specifically tailored to the customer's requirements

VitAL: What is your view of the current state of IT service management and IT in business and the economy in general, the challenges and the opportunities?

RG: Sell your way out of a recession and keep your costs down - that is our approach. Solid IT service management processes are more important now than ever. Effective and efficient support services rely on the control and quality offered by ITIL-based processes. The top performing organisations are beginning to see that the lifecycle approach offered by ITIL v3 means that the whole IT department can engage in service improvement initiatives. Education is vital and how you sell the lifecycle approach is also critical to its success.

VitAL: Has the company grown organically or by acquisition?

RG: From the start we have grown steadily and organically.

VitAL: What are the future plans for the business?

RG: In future we plan to continue to offer services to our existing customers that are valuable to them, we also plan to engage with new customers either through training or consultancy and to develop more training and education programmes which can be tailored to specific requirements. We will obviously also continue to contribute and assist with the future direction of our industry. We need to ensure that we are able to assist our customers in employing individuals who are properly qualified to deliver the role that they are expected to deliver as this is crucial to the continued success and growth of our industry.

VitAL: Any other points you would like to add?

RG: All training and education programmes benefit from the added skills and experiences brought to them by the trainers and to ensure this happens, our trainers and consultants are encouraged to play a full part in leading industry bodies to both inform them with regard to the educational needs of our industry and to gain knowledge which can be passed on.

Apart from my day job, I am also chair of the itSMF UK Qualifications and Certifications Committee, the purpose of which is to provide input to the management direction and control of the IT service management certification schemes and to act as a focal point for members' input into qualification development and governance, and since March 2008 have also been chair of the itSMF International Qualifications Committee, ensuring that all member chapters have a voice on service management qualification issues

I am also a senior v3 examiner with the APM Group, the ITIL official accreditor. In this role, I lead the team of examiners who are responsible for the v3 Foundation and v3 Foundation Bridge syllabus and examinations. The recent project to review and revise these syllabus documents as part of their continual service improvement cycle was a major piece of work for this team but it will improve the quality of the training for the student in terms of their need to gain knowledge and advice on practical application of the service lifecycle. [Vital](http://www.vital.co.uk)

www.wardownconsulting.co.uk