



Business Service Management - the ITIL Way



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ITIL's First Steps

In 1989 the first elements of what was to be known as the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) were published. Since then, ITIL has developed into the most powerful and widely accepted set of guidelines for achieving Best Practice in IT Service Management. Comprised of a comprehensive framework of approaches for achieving business success, ITIL helps organizations improve service delivery and reduce the cost of IT operations.

The ethos behind the development of ITIL is the recognition that organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on IT in order to satisfy their corporate aims and meet their business needs. This leads to an increased requirement for high quality IT services. Axios Systems was the first Help Desk & IT Service Management software vendor to recognize the importance of ITIL, and by adopting the ITIL framework, pioneered assyst as the original ITIL solution.

ITIL has long been accepted as the de-facto standard for organizations in the UK - its country of origin - and having conquered Europe with a growing influence in The Netherlands, Germany and France, it's now being rapidly adopted as the definitive set of guidelines for IT Service Management in North America and Asia-Pacific.

The Key to ITIL's Success

So what is the fundamental key to ITIL's success? Through the introduction of a consistent set of processes, ITIL helps organizations highlight potential weaknesses in the previous operations and encourages pro-active improvements. Shortened resolution times, better management control, more reliable IT services and the implementation of permanent solutions to formally acknowledged problems - just some of the many ways ITIL can benefit your IT services.

By applying ITIL Best Practice to IT operations, organizations can take advantage of many ways of better cost control and cost reduction. A lower Total Cost of IT Ownership (TCO) can be achieved through increased efficiency and productivity, lower incident volumes, faster incident resolution and less business disruption because of service failures.

Above all, to many organizations, ITIL has brought a clearer understanding of IT's critical importance to the business operation. It is no longer enough to simply maintain the IT infrastructure by adjusting and upgrading it after the need has arisen - today's IT managers are expected to support the success of the entire business by planning ahead and pro-actively shaping the business IT environment.

Alignment of IT to Business Goals

It is this increasing pressure to align IT with Business that has driven many organizations to better understand the availability and performance of underlying IT Services, and the business impact that any potential service interruption may cause.

Business Service Management (BSM) software not only provides organizations with this holistic view of their IT & Business Services, it aids effective prioritization of support resources to the areas of the business that need it most when IT Services fail.



Over the past few years, the industry has seen conventional methods of performing BSM develop via convoluted hard-coded Network and Systems Management maps. Typically, this approach requires substantial configuration efforts at initial implementation, coupled with significant maintenance on an on-going basis, to provide the organization with timely and accurate Service performance and availability information - a huge resource overhead for any organization.

Further Evolution

This was a fairly common scenario in organizations - until now. A revolutionary best practice process-driven approach to BSM is being adopted by a rapidly growing number of enterprises, harnessing the key processes and disciplines of ITIL. The innovative approach, which is being pioneered by two global software organizations - Axios Systems and Interlink Software, utilizes both organizations best-of-breed software solutions to create the world's first ITIL-based process-driven solution for Business Service Management.

The fundamental difference in this new approach to BSM is that there is a real-time link to the underlying Configuration Management Database (CMDB) driving the IT Service Management solution, following ITIL's guidelines for effective Asset and Configuration Management - the foundation of best practice IT Service Management.

Unlike conventional Business Service Management approaches, the 'Service Views' that are generated have no hard-coded technology components. Instead, they refer to selections of objects defined in the CMDB, which underpin and drive the Business Service from an IT perspective. In this way, if Change Management procedures are followed, and the CMDB is kept up-to-date, these 'Service Views' do not require any maintenance when technology components are added, changed or removed from a Service. Thus, the end-user views and event processing are updated automatically with affecting Incidents, Problems and Changes from the central CMDB - following ITIL best practice guidelines to provide a holistic view of IT's impact on the Business.

Of critical importance to any organization utilizing BSM is the capability to model Business Services all the way from business functions down to composite technology components. In this manner, Service Level criteria can be attached to the models, with services automatically tracked against these defined Service Levels. Early warnings are issued to support staff, or business users when Service Level thresholds are in danger of being breached, with alerts issued and downtime tracked automatically when thresholds are exceeded - providing a real-time and proactive approach to managing the Business Services.



By offering sophisticated event management, root cause correlation, and thresholding, organizations are able to implement Availability Management for logical and physical objects throughout the enterprise, from entire Business Services such as Internet Banking, to individual printers or servers. By providing real-time Service Views monitoring Availability Management across the enterprise, organizations can minimize the risk and Business Impact of any IT outage, even before it actually happens, providing the business with tangible cost benefits, e.g. reduction in the Mean-Time-To-Repair faults (MTTR) due to a move away from managing separate technology silos within the enterprise, to end-to-end Service Views.

Ultimately, the benefits of ITIL have been well documented, with more and more organizations across the globe embracing ITIL as a guiding light for their own IT Service Management excellence. Thus, it's only a natural and logical progression that these same organizations are looking to leverage the investment already made in ITIL, including IT Service Management software, training and necessary resources, by adopting Business Service Management - The ITIL Way.

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Neil manages the relationships with Technology Solutions Vendors, ensuring Axios Systems offers a comprehensive and integrated suite of best-of-breed software solutions to complement its ITIL-based IT Service Management solution - assyst. Neil has over 10 years experience in the IT industry, during which time he has held a variety of positions focusing on market trends and analysis, product marketing and partner relations.



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