

Lean ITSM: All the muscle, without the fat

Neil Petford,
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The adoption of an ITIL framework as a means of improving IT service management has long been about identifying, planning, delivering and supporting IT services to the business. The ITIL framework is designed to comprehensively provide a basis on which to develop such a service orientation. However, ensuring that the entire organisation uses a common language and is fully invested in the process sometimes makes a by-the-book ITIL implementation a massive undertaking.

Neil Petford, Regional Director at IT service management specialist consultant company Pink Elephant, says that the perceived bureaucracy of such an implementation can run against the efficiencies and swifter value to the end user that many businesses and CIOs are seeking.

“As a result, we decided on an approach that provides these organisations with a leaner, more cost-effective and efficient way of disseminating ITIL principles within the business: driving IT service management from the inside out so to speak, using the company’s service desk as a resource,” he says.

“After all, the perception of the business of your IT organisation is created largely by how effective your service desk is. By ring-fencing the service desk with ITIL principles and ensuring that the people working there adhere to them, the company is able to drive the principles of IT service management outwards into the organisation at large starting with the typical point of departure, operations”

Right mindset, Learnt skillset

Using the service desk for this purpose means

ensuring that it is staffed by people who have the right attitude, says Petford. This is something that cannot easily be taught, he adds.

Apart from attitude, Petford says that Pink Elephant believes that service desk agents should be versed in multiple frameworks and be extremely customer- and service-oriented, enabling them to more effectively determine process control at the service desk level.

“In the past, organisations budgeted for an ITIL framework implementation – generally an 18-month project – which involved a host of training and implementation activity. With the economy as it is today, budgets are tighter, but the need for IT service management remains, now with a higher expectation of speed to value. For this reason, we believe that the service desk is the ideal place to drive forward a service management agenda, since it is an existing company expense, which is also ideally placed to have influence on service management at a customer and business level.

“Our people are selected for their attitude, from a pool of graduates, and are then provided with a range of certifications, including ITIL and Service Desk Institute best practice alongside A+ and N+. Once inducted, we have a highly effective team of people that we can swiftly introduce into an organisation, headed by a manager who fully understands the practical implementation of ITIL principles and backed up by our team of ITIL Expert consultants”

Onward and upward

Petford says that this team is employed

by Pink Elephant, rather than the client business, and that by offering them an accelerated growth and career path in this manner, in exchange for customer service excellence, Pink Elephant is able to keep their motivation levels high.

“Of course, customers are still encouraged to take on and promote our service desk people to more senior positions within their company, while we backfill the service desk position with a new, enthusiastic individual. In this way, not only does the agent’s career, and motivation, receive a boost, but it will also help to entrench ITIL principles deeper within the client organisation,” he adds.

“By starting at the most basic level – the service desk – and ensuring the right people are employed, companies can gain an invaluable leg up when it comes to driving IT service management within the business; after all, these are the people at the coal face of dealing with the customer. Pink Elephant believes that this approach is ideally suited to the new economic environment, and leaner position we find ourselves in, as it gives businesses the muscle of the ITIL framework, while leaving all the fat behind,” concludes Petford.

