PINK

# The Seven Enablers & Constraints
# Of IT Service Management

# Research Update 2011

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**Version** : 1

# 1    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All IT Service Management (ITSM) projects have seven common key enablers and critical success factors that provide the vision, direction, energy and resources to initiate, sustain and realize their promised benefits.  Unfortunately, for many organizations these key enablers can also represent constraints and fatal blockages that paralyze and then terminate their ITSM initiatives prematurely before yielding the expected benefits.  Understanding, managing and eliminating these terminal blockages is critical for a successful ITSM transformation program.

The important question is: "*Why do many organizations stumble or fail in their initial attempts at implementing ITSM practices?*"  The anecdotal reasons given by the organizations that falter varies; but they are related in the sense that they each represent a failure around a key enabler / critical success factor required to achieve transformation objectives.

This paper represents an update to research into the critical success factors for ITSM projects Pink Elephant undertook in 2008. Since the findings of 2008 many economic and business drivers have changed and it is important to see how the enablers and constraints have shifted during this three-year period. The findings of this paper examines each of the seven enablers and provides insight into their relative importance and impact on ITSM projects based on Pink Elephant's research and our experience over the past 14 years.

## Seven Key Enablers

1. **Leadership:**  Executive and senior level support, sponsorship and active participation
2. **Resources:**  Access to necessary project and ongoing process resources (time, people, funding)
3. **Knowledge & Skill:**  The level of communication, information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
4. **Integrated Tools:**  Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
5. **Ability to Deploy:**  The political capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools across organizational silos
6. **Ability to Affect Behavioral Change:**  Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
7. **ITSM Program Momentum:**  Sustaining the momentum, priority and funding for the ITSM programs

> The Theory of Constraints (TOC) teaches us that no value system can be more efficient than its most limiting constraint or bottleneck. You can either choose to proactively manage those constraints or let them manage you! Source: "The Goal" – Eli Goldratt

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## Table Of Contents

## 2    SEVEN KEY ENABLERS FOR ITSM

At its core, an IT Service Management program is a multi-faceted series of transformation projects that touch on several key aspects of IT service delivery related to People, Process, Product and Partners. For an IT organization to shift from a technology domain focus, towards a service oriented management approach requires a significant shift of current Attitude, Behavior and Culture.

It is Pink Elephant's observation that many organizations that start programs to improve IT Service Management processes and service delivery capabilities are frustrated by a general lack of results or an overall failure to achieve their ambitious goals.

Much of that frustration can be directly attributed to a single, pervading factor:

> *"Contrary to popular belief and practice ITSM projects are not <u>primarily</u> about documenting processes or buying and configuring an IT Service Management tool!"*

Certainly these two elements are necessary and even critical but they are still only enablers - not the goal itself.

- Documenting processes is a necessary step due to a quirk of human nature that believes that unless a practice is written down and enforced it remains un-defined and open to argument and interpretation.
- The Service Management tool certainly contributes to the goal by lifting the process from paper and making it tangible, visible, measureable and hopefully more efficient. (Though not always the case)

But neither of these significant accomplishments is guaranteed to change people's behavior!

The goal of a Service Management initiative is to establish a common and efficient approach for the various functions and groups within the internal and external IT value chain to deliver stable and reliable IT Services to the business customer. Process documentation and the underlying IT tools are simply a means to the end and not the end in and of themselves.

The primary risk to an ITSM improvement program's success is the issue of "People Change." Our experience and the research presented in this document points to the key issue as being: The political and cultural ability to deploy the new approaches, working methods, policies and tools across the non-aligned, separately managed, IT towers and technology silos that make up a typical IT organization. In short the key message of ITIL is not focused on processes and best practices for their own sake, but rather on establishing a consistent and fit for purpose management system focused on serving customer priorities and value. For most organizations this requires a major change to

existing **Attitudes**, **Behaviors** and **Cultural** norms (ABC) currently focused on technology optimization as opposed to managing business outcomes. Without the ability, will or focus on transforming and influencing these three critical elements across the IT organization the investment in education, process definition, tools and consulting returns very little in the way of sustained and tangible value. Unfortunately, at the point in the program when this becomes apparent, most organizations blame the failure on external elements such as consultants, the service management tool or ITIL itself rather than addressing the primary issues of ABC - and the current root problems remain.

Attention to definitions:

For the purpose of this paper it is important to clearly define a few key terms:

- **ITSM Initiative / Program:** A series of approved and integrated improvement tasks, or formal projects that are focused on transforming organizational ABCs towards a best practice approach in support of delivering value to IT's customers
- **ITSM Project:** A specific set of connected tasks within the context of an ITSM Program designed to achieve a specific outcome usually focused on one or more ITIL processes
- **ITSM Goals:** Are long-term desired outcomes and are typically qualitative in nature (The IT culture will move from a technical to a service orientation)
- **ITSM Objectives:** Are short-term desired outcomes and are typically quantitatively measureable (Incident volume will be reduced by 10 % in 1 year through Problem Management)

**The 7 Enablers:**

When we consider the many conversations we have had with distraught project managers, and the battle stories of many a disillusioned ITSM champion or sponsor, seven themes consistently emerge. These seven themes represent the seven key enablers that provide the energy and lifeblood ITSM initiatives require to kick off and stay alive long enough to make a difference at an enterprise IT level.

This is not to say that targeted benefits cannot be realized without all seven being in place in sufficient quality and quantity; however, we believe that they are all required to produce "lasting change" across the political boundaries of technology silos that represent reality for most IT groups.

While the seven key enablers provide the energy and resources to initiate, sustain and realize their promised benefits, for many organizations these same seven enablers can quickly turn into terminal constraints that can kill ITSM programs dead. Understanding, identifying and eliminating these terminal blockages is a critical success factor for any successful ITSM transformation program.

The following list represents these seven Critical Success Factors / Enablers:

1. **Leadership:** Executive and senior level support, sponsorship and active participation
2. **Resources:** Access to necessary project and ongoing process resources (time, people, funding)
3. **Knowledge & Skill:** The level of communication, information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
4. **Integrated Tools:** Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
5. **Ability to Deploy:** The political capability to deploy new policies, processes and tools across organizational silos
6. **Ability to Affect Behavioral Change:** Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
7. **ITSM Program Momentum:** Sustaining momentum, priority and funding for the ITSM programs

Consider the analogy that these seven enablers are the heart of your ITSM initiative with seven valves that pump the lifeblood through a healthy ITIL program. Each enabler needs to be healthy to run the marathon and cross the finish line; however, that being said, not every company is running a marathon and many have a much more modest ITSM goal. Even so, each value needs to have some capacity even at a limited level for success. If one or more of these valves is blocked or partially constrained, the reality of heart surgery may be required to keep the program alive.

## 2.1   Enabler – Constraint – Blockage

Before we look at each of the critical success factors in detail, it would be helpful to clearly define what is meant by an enabler or constraint. Consider that any improvement initiative has certain critical success factors that are required to make the goals and deliverables of the initiative achievable. We often take those factors for granted and do not give them much consideration until they run out or their lack of quality places the initiative at risk. Making the naive assumption that these critical factors are present in enough quality and quantity is often a fatal mistake. Understanding what these factors are and managing the risks related to their absence is key to knowing if you have sufficient means to achieve your ends.

To illustrate this concept, consider the analogy of getting to work on a Monday morning, assuming that you commute to work in your own mode of transportation.

To get from home to the office parking lot, you require several enablers to be in place though you probably did not give them much thought as you were sipping your morning beverage.

**Enablers:**

1) **Car:** A car or some form of transportation is the most obvious enabler; however, a car alone will not make the journey possible. (ITSM Project Equivalent: An approved project, IT Management Tool)

2) **Fuel, Money:** The car needs fuel and you need money (more and more these days) to fill the car with fuel. (ITSM Project Equivalent: Resources: The very real People, Time and Budget required for the project)

3) **Directions:** A car with a full tank of gas without a vision or goal of where you are headed is not much use unless you are out for a joyride. (ITSM Project Equivalent: A clear vision, strategy and roadmap plan over a realistic time frame)

4) **Roads:** We often assume that the road will simply be there when we start driving; however, in many countries this is not an assumption we can safely make. Even in the countries that have a mature infrastructure the occurrence of unanticipated accidents, road construction and detours can often remove the assumption of a good and quick road from our path. (ITSM Project Equivalent: Agreed and documented, process, policies, metrics and ongoing governance structures)

5) **A Driver's License:** You may think that a license is not required to drive, but consider that your driver's license represents governance, policy and rules of the road by which all drivers must adhere to, the resulting lack of which would present a chaotic and dangerous environment in which to drive. (ITSM Project Equivalent: ITIL Certification as some element of proof that your team or the consultant you hired has based a minimum level of education in order to understand the problem if not the answer)

6) **Knowledge & Skill:** You need to know how to drive your car! You gain knowledge from time spent in a driver's education class and even some guided road trials. But real experience and "skill" comes from having driven your car in all types of weather in different climates and geographic regions. (ITSM Project Equivalent: Contrary to some people's opinions certification and fancy lapel pins are not enough! You need people you can rely on for answers that have been in the trenches and have the ITSM lessons learned battle scars to prove it)

While most of us don't think of them on a daily basis, these enablers are critical to actually achieving our goal of getting to work on time. If even one of these critical factors is limited in quantity or quality, the likelihood of succeeding at our or mission of getting to work is at risk.

## 3    PINK ELEPHANT RESEARCH

As part of Pink Elephant's vision for researching, documenting and promoting best practices, the company held a ten-city series of events in 2008 called the Pink Perspective Road Tour.  At these events we first introduced the concept of the seven enablers and we started our morning session with the survey shown below.  This research was conducted in order to understand the biggest challenges facing our clients.

Three years later (2011) at our annual ITSM conference we used the same survey to see what has changed following the significant global economic challenges of the last two years. Thankfully the global economy is improving and our observations are that many organizations are once again starting up major improvement and transformation programs based on IT Service Management principles. However, we wanted to know what has changes in regards to the 7 Enablers.

The following section will look at the research from both 2008 and 2011 and compare / contrast the findings.

As stated earlier, each of the enablers – if absent or too weak – becomes a terminal constraint; however, in the spirit of the 80 / 20 rule of maximizing benefit by focusing on the most important opportunities, we wanted to understand which of the seven enablers present the greatest challenges to our clients.  The results of this research are presented in this section in order to provide an understanding of the top challenges facing most companies.

### 3.1 Survey Demographics

The participants in the 2011 Research came from multiple business verticals as represented in the following graph. This data point is unique to the 2011 research so it is not possible to compare against the previous survey.
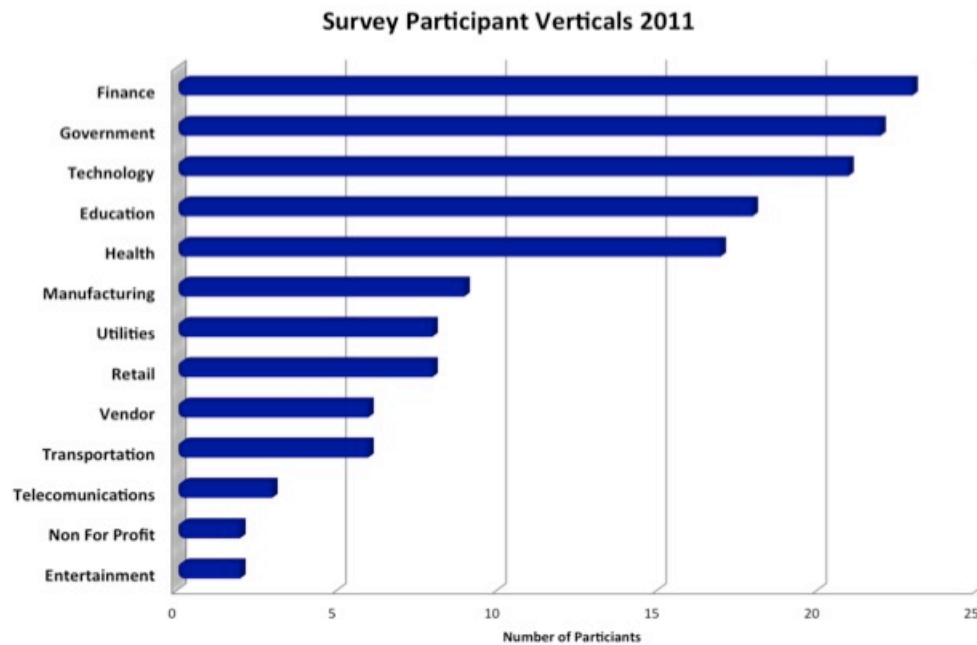


2011 Survey: Based on our general experience the one surprise presented by the 2011 survey demographic was the observation that Higher Education (Colleges & Universities) are now in the top 5 verticals adopting ITSM practices. Our general observation's prior to 2011 was that the Education vertical was typically a later adopter of ITSM practices.

An assumption can perhaps be drawn that efforts to promote the ITIL framework within the Academic community is bearing fruit in the significant increase in colleges and universities adopting IT Service Management Best Practices.

## 3.2 Pink Preservative Survey

For both the 2008 and 2011 research the participants in the survey attended Pink Elephant events and had the advantage of live introduction and explanation of the context and the scoring model. The seven enablers were introduced as critical success factors for ITSM projects. The high level definition of each factor was defined as described in the survey below and each participant was asked to rank them on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents no real challenge to 5 being an extremely difficult constraint to the project.

In addition to the 7 Enablers the survey included 2 context questions, which provided some additional filters to the survey responses.

**Background Question 1:**

Are you currently engaged in an IT Service Management project?     Yes ☐     No ☐

**Background Question 2:**

What element of the IT Service Management Lifecycle are you currently focused on?

Please check √ your top 2 focus areas for 2008:

| Service Strategy | | Service Design | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Service Transition | | Service Operation | |
| Continual Service Improvement | | | |

**Enabler Question:**

| | What do you see as your major ITSM challenge in 2011? | Rank each challenge on a scale from 1 – 5 where 5 is the most difficult | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Executive and senior level support and sponsorship | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | Access to necessary project and process resources (time, people, funding) | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Our level of information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5** | The organizational capability to deploy new polices, processes and tools | **N/A** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **6** | Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term | **N/A** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **7** | Maintaining momentum and funding for the ITSM program | **N/A** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |

**Note:** A not applicable option was included for each line and survey participants were instructed to rank the enabler as N/A if they were unaware of how to rate the factor or if it did not apply to their situation.  This was done in order to not skew the scoring of the enablers with data relative to the organization's true challenges.
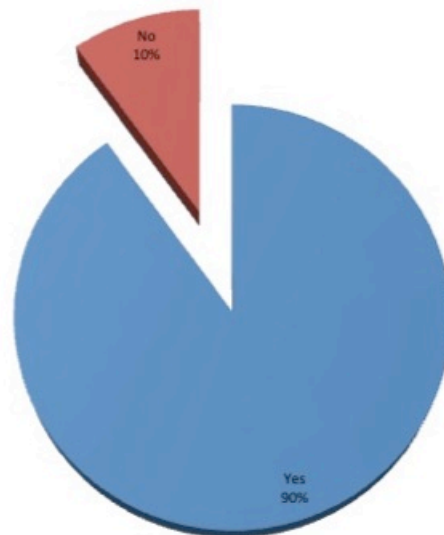
## 4    2008 – 2011 SURVEY RESULTS

### 4.1    Background and Context Questions

**Q1:** The first Background Question asked which participants are currently working on a formally funded ITSM Project during 2008 & 2011.



**Data:** The 2008 Survey results show that of the total respondents 90% of the participants had a current ITSM project in progress and 10% did not.

## Survey Participants Projects 2011

**ITSM Projects In 2011**



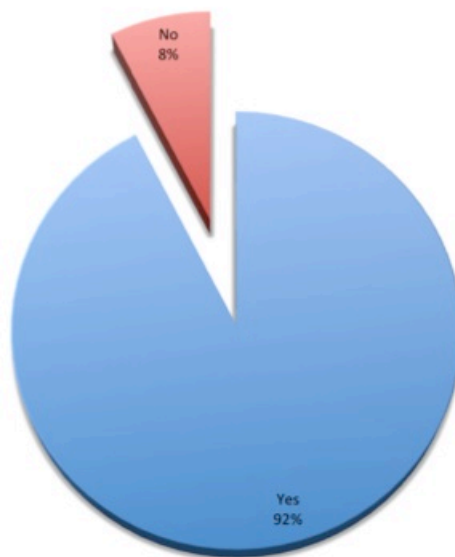7 Enablers & Constraints of ITSM

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**Data:** The 2011 Survey results show that of the total respondents 92% of the participants had a current ITSM project in progress and 8% did not.

**Analysis:** The majority of attendees who participated in the Pink events are in the process of an ITSM project or improvement initiative. The numbers between the two surveys are very similar and appear to indicate that organizations in 2011 are as active if not slightly more so than they were prior to the economic downturn. It is assumed that the high percentage of Yes responses to the survey question is indicative of the fact that organizations which are engaged in ITSM projects would be more likely to send their people to an event or conference. However, our registration data shows that the majority of companies who participated in the 2011 survey were not part of the 2008 survey and represent new data points. This analysis is also in line with our general observations of the resurgence in ITSM improvement programs based on the number of inquires we are receiving for consulting and education support.

**Q2:** The second Background Question asked for each participant to indicate his or her top two focus areas for ITSM projects in 2008 & 2011.

## Service Lifecycle Distribution

### ITSM Project Areas 2008



7 Enablers & Constraints of ITSM          © Pink Elephant, All Rights Reserved.
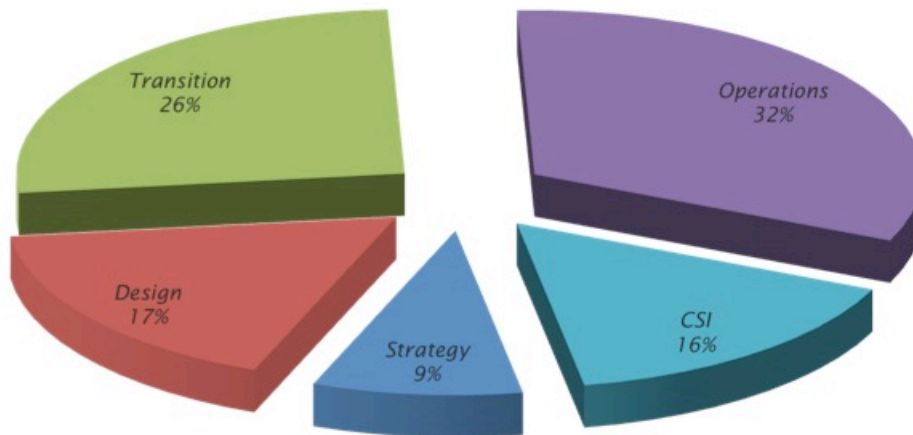
2008 ITSM Project Areas: 1 year following the release of the ITIL Service Lifecycle Model the two top areas of ITSM improvement practices resulted in the following breakdown:

#1: Service Operations at 32% of survey responses
#2: Service Transition at 26% of survey responses
#3: Service Design at 17% of survey responses
#4: Continual Service Improvement at 16% of survey responses
#5: Service Strategy at 9% of survey responses

## Service Lifecycle Distribution

**ITSM Project Areas 2011**



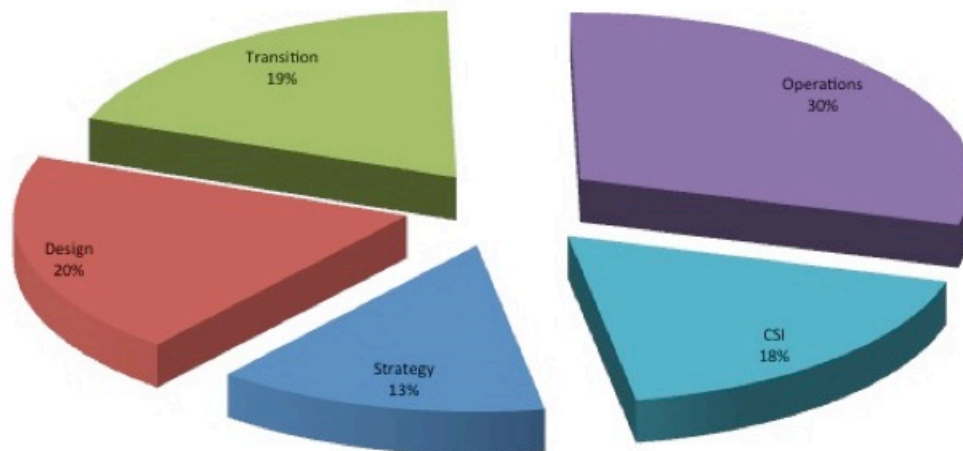7 Enablers & Constraints of ITSM          © Pink Elephant, All Rights Reserved.

2011 ITSM Project Areas: 4 years following the release of the ITIL Service Lifecycle Model the two top areas of ITSM improvement practices resulted in the following breakdown:

#1: Service Operations at 30% of survey responses
#2: Service Design at 20% of survey responses
#3: Service Transition at 19% of survey responses
#4: Continual Service Improvement at 18% of survey responses
#5: Service Strategy at 13% of survey responses

**Analysis:**  In 2008 well over 50% of the ITSM improvement projects were focused on the Service Operation and Service Transition lifecycle stages. Pink's observation being that most ITIL projects related to improvements in the areas of Service Desk, Incident Management, Change Management and Service Asset and Configuration Management. There was early interest in developing a user or Request Fulfillment focused Service Catalog and a growing focus on measurement, key performance indicators and Management Dashboards.

In 2011 Service Operations remains the top of the list by a healthy 10% however Service Design has moved into the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot over Service Transition. Pink's observation is that many organizations have continued to focus their support improvements on Service Operation / Request Fulfillment as and have also ramped up their focus on Service Catalog moving from the initial focus on User Services to Business Customer Services in support of Service Strategy objectives.

Service Transition continues to be a primary focus point in 2011 but many organizations having made improvements in their Change Management process have moved on to improving the quality and production assurance of releases by focusing on Release and Deployment Management.

## 4.2   7 Enablers Results:

This section of the report will look at a comparison between both survey years and will also filter the results based on respondents, which currently have a project and those that do not.

The Enablers Question ranked the seven enablers. Each participant was asked to rank the seven enablers on a difficulty scale from 1 to 5.

**7 Enablers Summary:**

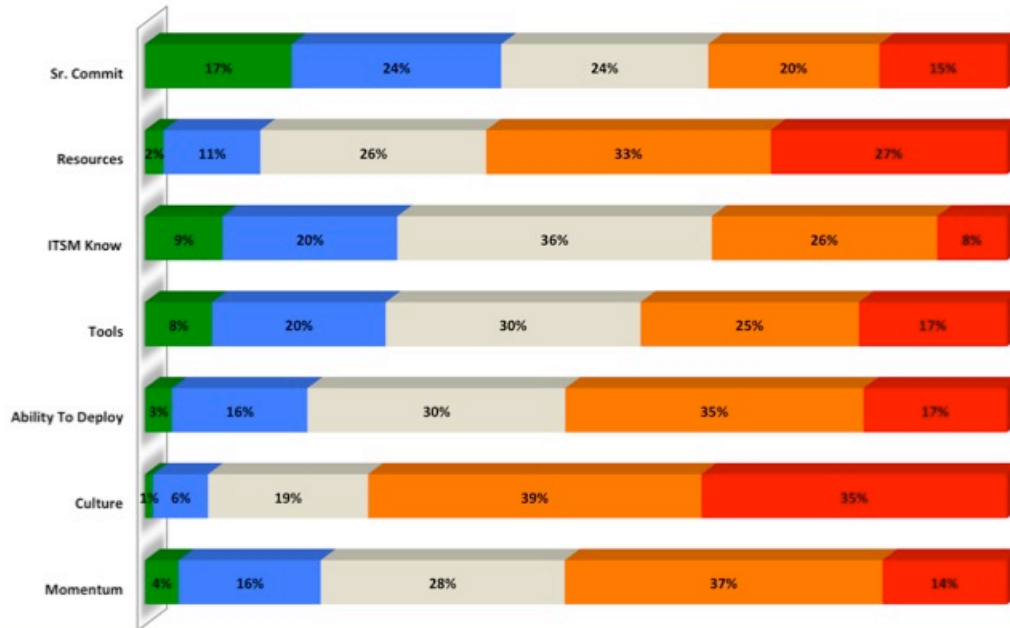<u>1 = no real challenge (green), 5 = extremely difficult constraint (red), N/A responses excluded.</u>

Q1   Executive and senior level support and sponsorship
Q2   Access to necessary project and process resources (time, people, funding)
Q3   Our level of information, knowledge and skill related to ITSM
Q4   Availability of integrated ITSM tools to support process workflow and automation
Q5   The organizational capability to deploy new polices, processes and tools
Q6   Changing organizational behavior/culture and ensuring compliance to new practices over the long term
Q7   Maintaining momentum and funding for the ITSM program

**4.2.1 Survey Results For Organizations With Current ITSM Projects**

## 2008 Surveys With Current Projects

### 7 Enablers & Constraints With Projects 2008

| Category | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sr. Commit | 17% | 24% | 24% | 20% | 15% |
| Resources | 2% | 11% | 26% | 33% | 27% |
| ITSM Know | 9% | 20% | 36% | 26% | 8% |
| Tools | 8% | 20% | 30% | 25% | 17% |
| Ability To Deploy | 3% | 16% | 30% | 35% | 17% |
| Culture | 1% 6% | 19% | 39% | 35% | |
| Momentum | 4% | 16% | 28% | 37% | 14% |

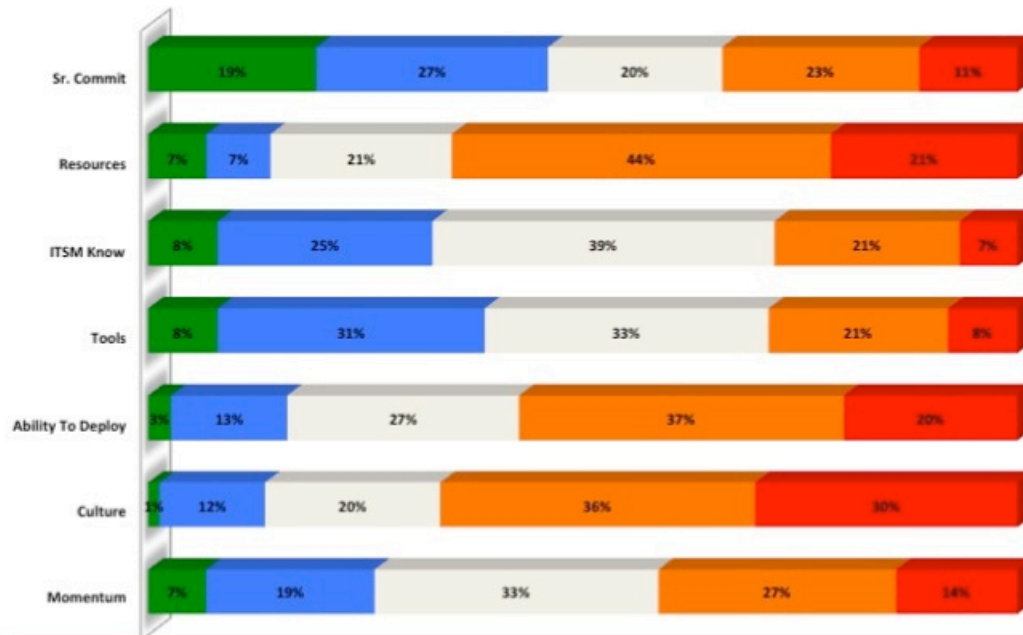7 Enablers & Constraints of ITSM          © Pink Elephant, All Rights Reserved.

Top 3 Constraints 2008 – With Projects

#1 – Organizational Culture 74% of respondents
#2 – Availability of Resources 60% (Time, People, Money)
#3 – Organizational Ability To Deploy 52% of respondents

## 2011 Surveys With Current Projects

### 7 Enablers & Constraints With Projects 2011

| Category | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sr. Commit | 19% | 27% | 20% | 23% | 11% |
| Resources | 7% | 7% | 21% | 44% | 21% |
| ITSM Know | 8% | 25% | 39% | 21% | 7% |
| Tools | 8% | 31% | 33% | 21% | 8% |
| Ability To Deploy | 3% | 13% | 27% | 37% | 20% |
| Culture | 1% | 12% | 20% | 36% | 30% |
| Momentum | 7% | 19% | 33% | 27% | 14% |

7 Enablers & Constraints of ITSM                    © Pink Elephant, All Rights Reserved.

Top 3 Constraints 2011 – With Projects

#1 – Organizational Culture 66% of respondents
#2 – Availability of Resources 65% (Time, People, Money) of respondents
#3 – Organizational Ability To Deploy 57% of respondents

**Analysis:** The 3 top constraint categories are consistent for both survey years. Two out of the three primary constraints are related to organizational culture and the ability to deploy changes across organizational silos. Hand written comments on several of the 2011 surveys indicate that the primary resource constraint is the people resources required to support the effort. This agrees with our general observations that a major challenge technology focused organizations have is the lack of roles and resources to manage and govern enterprise processes. Silo based and task specialization focused organizational design has typically not valued or placed emphasis on this type of role. For organizations to move towards Service Management objectives new roles related to both process and service ownership will be required and funded.

Both survey's confirm that the number one challenge for ITSM project success are people focused and not ITSM knowledge, or the availability of IT Management tools.

However, Pink's experience is that the majority of funding and effort is directed at two of the enablers least likely to be a constraint to success. Likewise, both survey years indicate that Senior Leadership commitment for organizations currently with a project is not a key concern.

The primary change in the key constraint areas between the two survey years is the expected rise in percentage around the availability of resources. Limited or constrained resources are an expected result of the flat or negative growth years of 2008-2010 and the subsequent staff reductions the IT industry has experienced. However, 2011 is starting to see the renewal of ITSM improvement efforts and was also demonstrated by increased attendance at Pink's 2011 February conference.

### 4.2.2   Survey Results For Organizations Without Current ITSM Projects

The following survey results are reflective of participants who attended the Pink Elephant events but stated that they currently do not have an ITSM project in progress.  Several respondents indicated in hand written comments that they were in attendance at the event to learn how to best undertake or start an ITSM improvement projects.
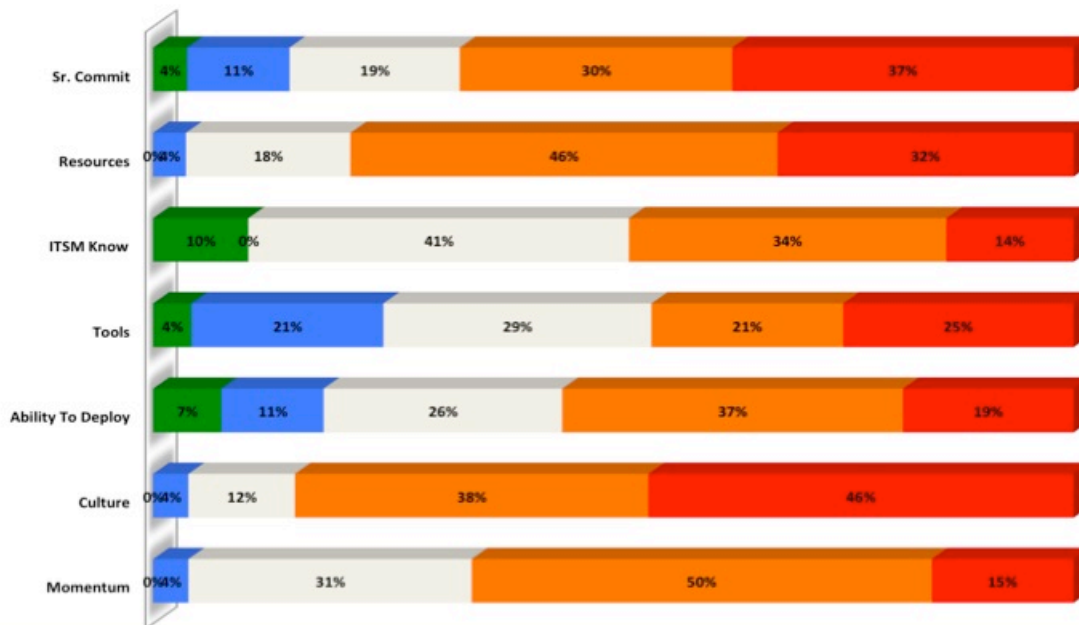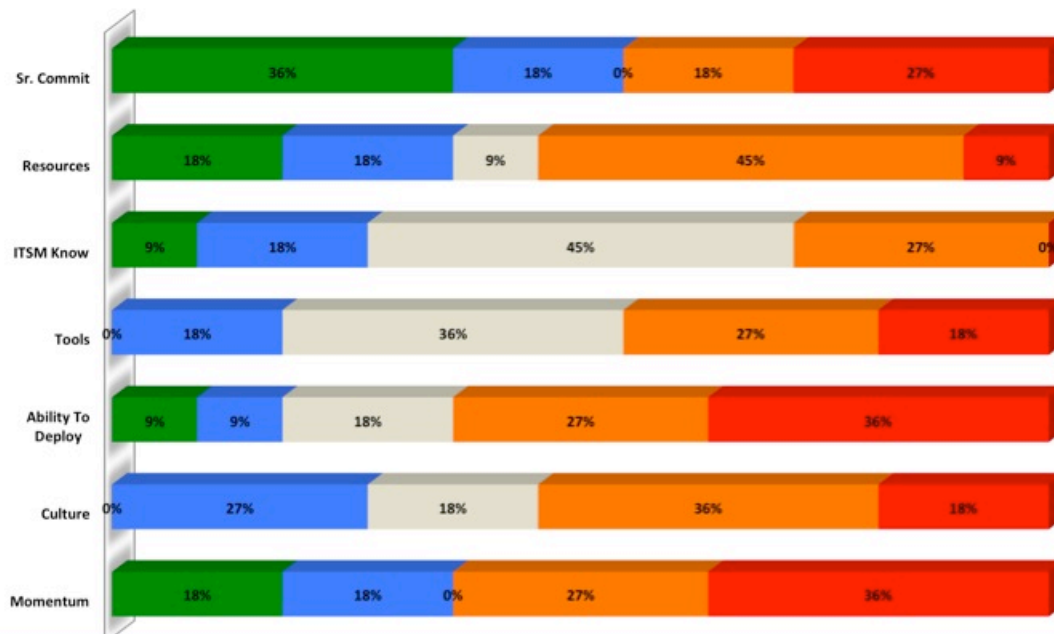
Top 3 Constraints 2008 – Without Projects

#1 – Organizational Culture 84% of respondents
#2 – Availability of Resources 78% (Time, People, Money)
#3 – Organizational Ability To Deploy 67% of respondents
#3 – Maintaining Momentum & Funding for ITSM Programs 67% of respondents



Top 3 Constraints 2011 – Without Projects

#1 – Ability To Deploy 63% of respondents
#1 – Maintaining Momentum & Funding for ITSM Programs 63% of respondents
#2 – Availability of Resources 54% (Time, People, Money)
#3 – Organizational Culture 54% of respondents

**Analysis:**  An interesting general observation between the 2008 and 2011 surveys for organizations without a project is that while the percentage of respondents on both surveys is almost the same the overall percentage of negative responses are significantly higher in 2008. The observation that can be made from these data points is that there

appears to be an improved acceptance and optimism about ITSM projects in general for the 2011 group of respondents. Looking at Sr. Commitment as a stand-alone indicator, this critical enabler while not part of the top 3 shows a marked improvement over the 2008 data. The assumption that can be made from this observation is that IT Service Management and Service Orientation are becoming increasingly a strategic focus as senior IT executives focus on business value as well as technology optimization.

Another significant observation across the two survey years shows that Culture and Ability To Deploy are still both in the top 3 constraints. The 2011 survey data elevates Ability to Deploy as a tie with Momentum and Sustained Funding. An observation that can be made based on these results is that organizational structures have become more entrenched over the last two years and that ITSM projects are struggling to gain and maintain funding when having to compete with other functional or technology based improvement projects.

For the 2011 survey group Organizational Culture and Availability of Resources are tied for the third spot. Both remain potential terminal constraints to achieving project success.


**Overall Research Summary:** The primary observation of this research is that while the availability of resources is consistently seen as a key constraint, two out of the top three areas of concern in both survey years are focused on people issues. The ability to translate knowledge into results is highly dependent on how an organization recognizes and deals with the organizational issues related to Attitude, Behavior and Culture.

As IT professionals we prefer to focus on the tangible project elements such the tools and process documentation, which are often considered the primary deliverables of an ITSM improvement project. However, as is demonstrated by this research these are simply enablers to the goal, not the goal itself. While they are important and necessary, they are a means for ensuring that all participants in the IT value chain (internal and external) work together in a common manner to consistently deliver value to the business.

By focusing on the organizational enablers of Culture, Ability to Deploy, and adequate Resources, the ITSM improvement project is much more likely to deliver the expected benefits.

## 5   CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper is to provide insight into what makes ITSM programs successful and sustainable over the long term.  At Pink Elephant we are very aware that the scope of all the elements listed in this paper can seem overwhelming and make the journey seem difficult. However, we assume that you would prefer to be well informed rather than be unaware of the dangers that can distract you from the goal.  Our objective with this research is to share Pink's decades of lessons learned from projects that have gone well and others that have died an early death due to the terminal constraints that were potentially avoidable or at other times outside the control of those who were managing them.

Remember that these enablers represent the heart and lifeblood of your initiative.  As long as there is a small trickle of movement and capacity through each one, there is hope for a successful conclusion to your efforts.  Even the constraints should be seen as positive, in that they provide insight into the manageable scope of your initial ITSM efforts.  Working within your constraints and not over-extending on your promises and objectives can lead to successes that allow you to expand each enabler over time for greater and greater achievements.

Our best wishes on your ITSM journey.

Troy DuMoulin & George Spalding

*"Of course we all have our limits, but how can you possibly find your boundaries unless you explore as far and as wide as you possibly can? I would rather fail in an attempt at something new and uncharted than safely succeed in a repeat of something I have done."*
*--A. E. Hotchner*

## 6 APPENDIX - THE SEVEN ENABLERS EXPANDED

It takes significant energy to overcome the inertia of the status quo and to start something new. This is certainly true of major ITSM projects. The following appendix provides a more detailed explanation of the 7 Enablers referenced in this research paper.

### 6.1 Key Enabler vs. A Key Constraint

In a simple world, each of the seven enablers would be a standalone requirement that had little to no impact on the other factors, and they would all have equal weighting; however, we do not live in a simple world. Another critical element of knowledge is the understanding that certain enablers have an overall positive or negative impact on the others. For example, in the traveling analogy of section 2.1 you can argue that you can still get to work with limited governance overseeing the use of the roads (agreed processes). In fact, if you travel globally you know there are many countries in the world where this would definitely seem the case; however, a profound lack of direction combined with no formal means of transportation will make the other enablers pale in seeming importance. In our ITSM reality, you can equate this to having limited to no leadership, having limited to no funding and a severe lack of process automation. In other words, you are being asked to implement ITSM practices on the side of your desk while you do your "Day Job". The lack of these key enablers make things such as maintaining project momentum pale in comparison.

In light of this concept, consider the following definitions:

- An **Enabler** has a positive impact on the initiative and supports the achievement of the goals and objectives

- A **Key Enabler** has a significant positive impact on the initiative and compensates to some extent for other factors that may be less positively ranked

- A **Constraint** is a limiting factor for the initiative and restricts the ability of the initiative to realize its goals and objectives

- A **Key Constraint** has a significant negative impact on the initiative. It has the very real potential of causing the initiative to fail and can have a negative impact on the other factors

Next, consider that the only constant in life is change. In our world of shifting priorities, goals and objectives any one of the factors described in this paper can increase or decrease in importance based on a modification in any project attribute such as vision, scope, or the introduction of a totally new goal. Imagine that the compelling drivers for a project to be rolled out in a six month time frame no longer exist, or that the target group originally slated for a pilot is no longer part of the project scope. Building on our earlier analogy, we are no longer going to the local office but need to fly across the country to

participate in a corporate meeting that is taking place tomorrow morning. The perfectly functional compact car we were planning to drive to work this morning now seems woefully inadequate for our new goal, which requires a vehicle of a totally different caliber to realize our objectives. In short, it needs to fly and fly fast.

This means that enablers can become constraints and those factors, which were considered constraints, can suddenly turn into powerful assets and key enablers. This shifting landscape of ever changing project assets and risks represents the business case for the Risk Management process. Achieving ITSM objectives is always a balancing act of Value and Risk Management. Both are essential activities for the successful deployment of ITIL projects. Risk Management should not be seen as a negative practice, but one that provides assurances to project success and value realization.

Risk Management is concerned with continually monitoring the project landscape, looking for signs of hidden dangers that range from tiger traps with fatally sharp stakes at the bottom to small irregularities in the landscape that could sprain the ankle. To be effective, Risk Management must continually identify and assesses risk on a regular and frequent basis since the project landscape is capable of shifting like the sand dunes of the Sahara. If this is done effectively, an informed and watchful eye is kept on the shifting and potentially treacherous landscape. The seven enablers are key inputs into a Risk Management model that considers strategic, program, project and operational Risks.

*In this world there are four kinds of people:*

1. *Those who make things happen*
2. *Those who watch things happen*
3. *Those who have things happen to them*
4. *Those who don't know anything has happened until it is too late*

*Quote: Anonymous*

The following section provides more detail on the seven enablers to support their assessment as either assets or risks.

## 6.2 Leadership & Vision

Many hundreds of books have been written on the subject of leadership and the role a leader plays in providing the vision, direction and the compass that a project needs to be successful. Without a leader's blessing, passion and direction, very little is accomplished that has lasting effect. This is true of all major endeavors, and it is certainly true with ITSM projects.

We live in a time when the vision of the IT Executive is changing from one traditionally focused on technology optimization and cost reduction to an evolution towards service delivery and value generation; however, many IT shops still struggle with the value of

ITSM principles when they are still firmly entrenched in a purely technology mindset. For an ITSM project to truly succeed, the executive sponsor needs to understand what it means to be a service-focused organization and support the establishment of the processes that make this concept a reality.

However, many organizations are challenged with a CIO and executive IT team that have not bought into the principles of ITSM. This proves to be very challenging when you consider that ITIL is a Service Management framework that has as its primary goal the delivery of services.

> *"Service Management is a set of specialized organizational capabilities for providing value to customers in the form of services." Source: ITIL® V3*

In Pink's experience, very few organizations understand the concept of an IT service and even fewer organize themselves around the delivery of IT services.

To be effective, the leadership of an ITSM program must profoundly understand what an IT service is and wish to establish the disciplines that make the delivery of services possible.

What we often see is that the ITSM program sponsor has agreed in principle that the project represents a set of positive goals and has agreed to fund some initial efforts, but is still largely unconvinced of the exercise's strategic nature. The green light has been given, they have agreed to stand up at key meetings and say positive things, but little effort is made on ensuring that the remaining six enablers are in place and managed in a proactive manner.

It has been argued that the true skill of a leader is not just the shaping of vision and direction, but also the task of execution. Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan make a very powerful statement in their book, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*:

> *"A high proportion of those who actually rise to the top of a business organization have made their mark – their personal brand as high level thinkers. They aren't interested in "how" of getting things done; that is for somebody else to think about." Source: Chapter 2 – The Execution Difference*

Rather that pointing toward the hill and saying "Make It So", true leaders must take the point and lead the ITSM charge.

## 6.3    Resources

It was a very wise person who first said that nothing in life is free. This is of course true for ITSM projects as for anything else. Sitting down with the right people from across the organization to define new policies, processes and tools takes a significant resource investment (time, people and money). That being said, one of the most frequent

statements I hear from people when I speak to them at conferences or in courses is that they are expected to implement ITSM practices without any formal investment in any of the above other than perhaps their salaries.  They are expected to change organizational behavior and pull the ITIL rabbit out of the hat, so to speak, because they have ITSM somewhere in their title.

While time, people and money are aggregated under "resources", these are in fact three separate enablers / constraints.

### *Time*

Several respondents in our research said that they had all the leadership and organizational will they could wish for; but, they were swamped with an IT project portfolio that was overwhelming, with half a dozen initiatives being perceived as more urgent than their ITSM projects.  There is only so much time in the day and they are already running at max speed and doing their email at 10:00 pm each night after they feed the kids and put them to bed.  Sadly, the urgent always takes precedence over the good and necessary.  Survival always trumps strategy.

### *People*

If your organization is like many we have worked with, year after year of focusing on cost reduction has reduced your IT operational staff to what feels like a bare minimum to keep the lights on.  What people you do have are very hesitant to commit to what appears to be the latest management fad and set of acronyms floating down from senior management.  The key stakeholders that are critical for you to involve in the ITSM initiative are busy fighting the daily fires (often caused by immature processes) and are too busy to come to your process and tool design meetings.

This general lack of people is a very crucial issue for ITSM in general.  After years of cost reduction and containment, there really isn't a lot of bandwidth for people to get involved in the project, let alone manage the ongoing processes once they are deployed.  While you can hire consultants to help alleviate the resource crunch for the project, who gets to run them after the consultants leave?

### *Money*

A lack of available funding is often a constraint that is shared by many organizations, and while money cannot buy happiness it can get things done!  However, in our research we discovered that there are some organizations that have the money, but lack of time and internal people were their most serious constraints.  One respondent from the Calgary Pink Perspective event stated that that the issue was not money (thanks to the oil boom in western Canada), but skilled people and affordable housing to attract talent to the region.

## 6.4    Knowledge & Skill

Even though ITIL has been around for well over 20 years, it was just a few years ago when most people would tell you they had never heard of ITSM or ITIL.  Today, awareness has improved and most IT people you ask will tell you they have heard of ITIL and have a simple understanding of what it is.

That being the case, the people charged with project tasks, deliverables and the ongoing management of the process need to seriously consider more advanced education and learning.

**Foundation & Overview Knowledge:** Consider how much time your organization spends arguing about the value, goal and simple semantics of the ITIL processes you are working on. For your team to achieve its goals and objectives it is critical that you share at the very least a common understanding and "Knowledge" of what needs to be achieved and have a common language to support your objectives.  Pink recommends that anyone who is either working directly with the project or will be a recipient of the changes have at least the level of knowledge in order to support the acceptance of the change.

**Intermediate & Advanced Knowledge:** Intermediate and Advanced education is designed to present the subject matter at a more in-depth level and to provide the attendee with the critical thinking processes required to translate the knowledge they have learned into a fit for purpose solution for their own organization. Pink recommends this level of knowledge for those people in your organization who will play a part in the process design or the ongoing process ownership and governance.

**Skills Based Learning:**  The primary difference between knowledge and skill is that the relevance of the learning to your day-to-day job. Increased knowledge provides you the thinking processes and tools to apply what you learn to your project and or daily activities. However, you need to act as the filter and make choices on how and when you will use what you have learned.

Skills' based training on the other hand teaches you a new skill to use directly in relationship to a task that you have been or will be assigned.  For example: If you attend a How To Workshop on how to create a CMDB model you will come away from the learning experience with work output to be used in your specific environment. Another example of skills based training sessions are the deployment workshops you will develop as part of your process improvement projects. Each employee who will need to use the new process will need to go through a training session where they are taught the new process but more importantly are involved in use case, or scenario based exercises using the ITSM tool in a lab environment in preparation on how to use the process in their specific work environment.

**Education & Skills Based Training Plan:** An enabler as critical as Knowledge and Skill should not be left un-managed or to chance. The development of a managed plan

addressing both aspects of this enabler is a critical success factor for your ITSM program. Carefully consider each of your stakeholder groups and develop a plan considering time and the fit for purpose knowledge and skills required for your organization to effectively achieve your objectives and goals.

## 6.5    Integrated ITSM Tools

It is no secret that to even get close to the process integration that ITIL suggests as good practice, it is critical to consider workflow automation and tool requirements; however, that being said, have you also considered that underpinning these processes is data?  Data is passed back and forth between processes as tasks, workflow records, approvals, SLA time frames, costs and configuration item details.

Invariably, the activities, inputs and outputs of ITSM are represented in a digital form that is shared by many processes at various times and for various reasons.  This digital web of information flow is ultimately represented by an ITSM tool and data architecture that supports the over all vision and strategy of an enterprise IT function, fulfilling the role of a key business partner and service provider.

Underpinning the integrated ITIL process model must be an integrated ITSM tool strategy that is supported by a shared data model.

In the ITSM community we are very comfortable talking about the IT governance and process levels of service management; however, we often fail to consider the tool and data definition that is required to make it real.  In Pink's experience it is always the tool element of the ITIL project that takes the longest time – not the process design!

At the heart of this challenge is the silo or domain approach to how we purchase IT management tools.  The fact is that one of the most significant challenges to a service management approach is the cultural and organizational focus on IT silos to the detriment of enterprise IT management issues.

To explore this concept further from a tool perspective, consider your own organization and the following questions:

1.  Is there a defined enterprise IT tool strategy and architecture model?
2.  Is there any function or group in your organization that has a mandate to create and govern an enterprise tool strategy?
3.  Do you have a function in your organization that manages and supports IT tools that are used by the enterprise IT function?
4.  Are IT management tools budgeted for and purchased at a domain / departmental level, but are required to fit within a predefined enterprise strategy?

If you are like the majority of companies Pink has worked with, all of these questions would most probably be answered with a no and the resulting tool landscape would be

filled with multiples and duplicates of various types of tools that do not integrate. It is also very common to find tool decisions for ITSM programs being made in isolation without the consideration of integrated tool requirements.

The following picture represents the concept of an integrated tool architecture with a focus on IT operations. As you can see from the diagram, you could develop a whole new set of boxes on the development side of the IT house for the category listed as "Resource and Project Portfolio Management Tools"
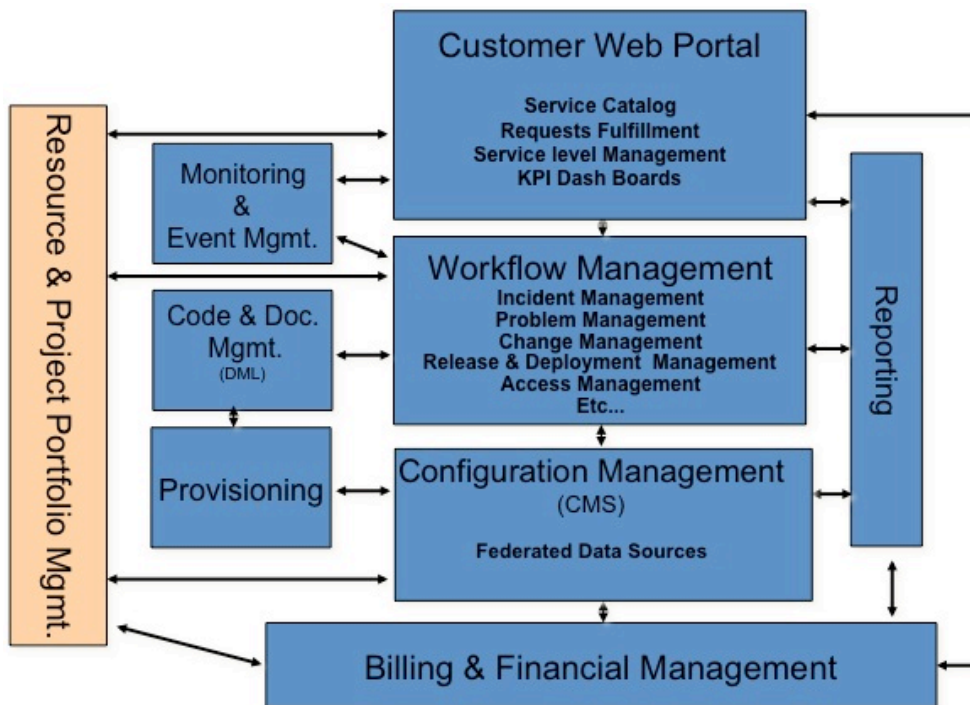


## 6.6 Ability To Deploy

Up until now, the enablers we have discussed relate primarily to the design, build and test phases of the project; however, by the statement "Ability To Deploy" we are specifically referring to the political will and authority to deploy / impose a new method of working and new tools across the scope of the organization that now must comply with these new ITSM processes. In our experience and from the research documented in this paper, this is a primary point of failure for many companies (it all looked great until others were required to change the current behaviors).

While it takes significant effort to design, document and test your ITSM deliverables, it is at the point of actually rolling out changes to the functional groups and departments that many ITSM projects hit the proverbial brick wall. Whether it comes in the form of open

rejection of the new process and tools or it rears its head as a delay tactic, many ITSM projects find themselves mired in the quagmire of inter-company politics and fail at the point of delivery without ever having realized any value to the organization making the investment.

Typical Scenarios:

- **The Filibuster:**  One or more of the groups you are deploying to find some urgent reason to put off changing to the new way of working based on a whole series of excuses (either real or imaginary) not related to the project directly, as this would appear as if they were not supportive.
- **The Never Ending Pilot:**  Based on the principle of a pilot rollout to a designated group, the testing of process and tools generates dozens of critical improvement requirements that somehow did not come up during the months of design and review by the very same group.
- **The Perfectionist Syndrome:**  The primary stakeholders responsible for signing off on the design and characteristics of the process and tool requirements refuse to accept that improvement – not perfection – is the goal, and that certain improvements can come later.  This scenario is very typical for an organization that has had difficulty managing changes in scope during the project lifecycle.
- **The Tool Development Backlog:**  For ITSM programs, the process automation tool/suite is often used by several processes that have already been deployed or are being so while other processes are being designed.  The challenge that often arises at this point is the fact that the developers / administrators become the primary bottleneck in that they cannot cope with all of the demands for configuration and customization they are receiving from multiple process groups.  This becomes even more of an issue if request for tool enhancements are not approved, prioritized and scheduled through a strict Change Management process.

## 6.7    Ability To Affect Behavioral Change

So you have designed a great process, have invested in a slick ITSM tool and paid your consultants for the best advice you could purchase.  What makes you think anyone is actually going to follow the new processes after you close up the project and take down the posters?

To change from a previous to a new set of behaviors and eventually change the culture of the organization, there are certain critical success factors that need to be considered.

### *Focus On Behavior – Not Cultural Change*

Culture is beyond your ability or the project's ability to change and should not be the goal of the behavioral change strategy.  Culture in an organization is defined as a self-reinforcing set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors and is one of the most resistant elements

to change.  To be successful, ITSM projects must understand and work within the boundaries of current culture in order to change these beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors effectively.  That being said, culture will not change without the following ingredients.

The new behavior must be reinforced by:

1) IT leadership messages and actions.
2) Changing personal measurement and reward systems to establish personal accountability and compliance.
3) Establishing permanent ITSM governance and management roles.
4) The implementation of a continual service improvement framework of dashboards and assessments focusing on value but also compliance.

If you get all these things right and actually show that life has gotten better over the long term, you will have anchored the change into the organization, which will result in a changed culture.

### 6.7.1   IT Leadership Messages & Actions

Messages conveyed from senior management in the form of performance reward systems, physical symbols or company icons continually reinforce current culture for the positive or negative.  These messages provide people in the organization with unspoken guidelines for the direction of acceptable behavior patters.  People quickly determine what is "good and bad behavior" or what should be accepted or rejected from the message received from the culture.

In governance terms, culture is significantly influenced but what is referred to as "The Tone From The Top" – in other words, the spoken and unspoken messages sent from the IT executive leadership, which in turn influences managerial behavior and directly influences company plans, policies, and organizational direction.  In short, culture is shaped and transformed by consistent patterns of senior management action.  This means that re-shaping of culture cannot be achieved in the short term.

### 6.7.2   Changing Personal Measurement & Reward Systems

Based on classical organizational design, the average person has a unique set of department or silo-specific tasks and activities defined within his or her job description; however, there have always been three types of work each person performs on a daily basis.  But, only one type of work is typically documented in the formal HR job description.  For argument's sake, let's call the specific set of tasks within a silo "functional work".

> **Example:**  A network administrator, an application programmer, a service desk agent, and an IT security manager.  In each of these examples, the individual has a job function within a traditional IT silo where they spend a certain portion of their

day; however, each of these individuals can also be assigned to temporary project work. What is equally true is that each individual will spend a certain portion of their time involved in cross-functional processes they deem as time spent helping someone else's job (e.g.: they have always been involved in fixing things that break, going to meetings about things that are changing, or moving things around based on requests). In other words, they have always been involved in Service Management processes, but because these activities are not formally defined as part of their job function, they regard time spent in those activities as time spent away from their real jobs.

The reality is that each individual has always been involved in three types of work long before ITIL or Service Management came along. What is new is that what was before undefined and unmeasured is now being formalized. Moving to an ITSM approach and changing behavior over the long term requires the opening of job descriptions in order to adjust individual key results areas and annual performance measures for process as well as functional activities.

### 6.7.3    Establishing Permanent ITSM Governance & Management Roles

IT services, as well as the ITSM processes that support them, inevitably span multiple organizational structures. In essence, IT services and their supporting processes can be understood as horizontal management structures, which are established and managed on top of the traditional vertical silos. As these services and processes are defined, a need becomes apparent to establish governance and ownership roles that don't seem to fit well in the traditional technical domains.

A critical success factor for permanently changing behavior is the creation of new service and process roles to support the governance, oversight and management of the ITSM processes.

### *The Process Owner Role*

The initial planning phase of any ITIL project must include establishing the role of Process Owner. This key role is accountable for the overall quality of the process and oversees the management of, and organizational compliance to the process flows, procedures, data models, policies and technologies associated with the IT business process.

The Process Owner performs the essential role of Process Champion, Design Lead, Advocate, Coach and Protector. Typically, a Process Owner should be a senior level manager with credibility, influence and authority across the various areas impacted by the activities of the process. The Process Owner is required to have the ability to influence and ensure compliance to the policies and procedures put in place across the cultural and departmental silos of the IT organization.

*The Service Owner Role*

The Service Owner is accountable for a specific service within an organization regardless of where the technology components or professional capabilities reside which build it. Service ownership is as critical to Service Management as establishing ownership for processes, which cross multiple silos or departments.

To ensure that a service is managed with a business focus, the definition of a single point of accountability is absolutely essential to provide the level of attention and focus required for its delivery.

Much like a Process Owner, the Service Owner is responsible for continuous improvement and the management of change affecting the services under their care. The Service Owner is a primary stakeholder in all of the IT processes, which enable or support the service they own.

### 6.7.4   The Implementation Of A Continual Service Improvement Framework

One of the critical success factors in achieving employee compliance and changing behavior is creating a sense of personal accountability through measurement and, yes, an audit. Another factor of human nature is that we often take the path of least resistance when under stress. The fact of the matter is that we behave better when we know we are being measured or held accountable for our actions. You are likely to have heard the quote: "What gets measured gets done!" By planning for, executing and publishing the results of your key performance indicators and the results of process assessments, you are buying insurance on the increased likelihood of deployment success, not to mention continual service improvement.

### 6.8   ITSM Program Momentum & Sustainability

Adopting ITSM practices is never a short-term activity. For many companies, this means an ongoing improvement program that spans multiple years in order to make any significant progress in adopting ITSM practices. The very fact of the long-term or at least phased nature of these initiatives is in and of itself problematic. Combine the fact that the IT culture typically does not have patience for any project that lasts longer than six months, and the other interesting statistic that the average CIO retention rate in North America is only 18 months, and you will see that many organizations adopting ITIL have very little appetite to go beyond a few processes. Maintaining momentum over a term of just a few years is a significant challenge most companies face.

In another context, the deployment of a process is simply one of the first steps of Continual Service Improvement. It is naïve to believe that a process will be static from year to year. Establishing a culture of CSI requires an organization to sustain momentum over the long run.

If your organization is like most of the companies Pink has worked with, you have begun your ITIL journey by finding the funding in an existing operational budget, and without going to your business customer for any capital funding. This reason this often occurs is due to the fact that it is difficult to ask your customers for money for what they believe you are already doing.

For most organizations, this means that they will begin their ITIL program in what I like to call stealth mode. They will typically establish modest projects to improve their support processes, such as Incident, Request and Change Management, out of existing operational funds. Other processes that are typically launched early without much fanfare are Service Catalog and the start of Service Level Management.

However, most companies will not get much further before they realize they now need to address their ITSM tool strategy. They will certainly realize this when they tackle Service Asset and Configuration Management. At this point of the program lifecycle, it will become necessary to go public with their initiative, as capital investment will be needed to purchase a tool to support multiple integrated ITSM processes. To go public, the ITSM initiative will need a marketing strategy that capitalizes on all the wins and benefits realized by the improvement efforts during the period of ITIL by stealth mode. This next phase of your ITIL journey will be funded based on your marketing prowess.

At this point, the following elements are critical to keep the ITIL program rolling:

1) The recognition of the ITSM program as a top IT strategic initiative.
2) The submission of the ITSM program into the annual Project Portfolio process for prioritization and funding.
3) The execution of a stunning marketing campaign highlighting all the improvements that have been realized while during stealth mode.
4) The ITIL business case has to be linked to the provisioning of IT Services and their support of business value. Process improvement messages will not be sufficient.
5) The formal ITIL education of all key stakeholders.

In short, it is possible to start your ITIL project in a low key approach; but, to keep it alive and healthy over the long term, it has to be formally recognized as a top IT initiative in support of business goals. It has to gain a profile so important that it outlasts the key stakeholders who start it.