

# Executing integratedITSM™



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# Executing integratedITSM™

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Unlock the Power of Integration to Transform Your IT Service Management

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# Foreword

“ITSM is more than just a service desk.”

I was first introduced to ITSM by my mentor, Malcolm Fry. Malcolm is no longer with us, but his mark on ITSM is indelible.

In 1974, I began working in IT operations, and over the ensuing 12 years, I never heard anyone talk about processes, let alone ‘ITSM processes.’ Then I joined a small consulting firm and started following Malcolm around. His greater IT experience and his ability to think deeply and connect the dots introduced me to:

- The Help Desk
- Problem and Change Management
- Service Level Agreements
- Quality Control and Assurance

The above are the four titles of his seminal work, *The IT Service Culture*. The rest is history, so they say.

I have often declared that “If it wasn’t for Malcolm, we’d all be doing something different now.” That might be a bit of an exaggeration, but I know I would certainly be doing something different.

And yet, nearly 40 years later, here we are – where the world of ITSM is full of so many flavors and spin-offs that it boggles the mind. So, why another book on ITSM?

My answer to that question is simple: It had to be done. We needed to strip away the prevailing over-emphasis on strategy and clearly explain how the primarily operational processes of IT service management can be set up to work effectively and in harmony with each other. You should find this book refreshing, clear, and – above all – relevant and indispensable.

Thank you to all the Pink supporters (customers and friendly associates in our industry) and the great team at Pink who have worked so diligently on this project. You have all played a significant part – whether great or small – in making this happen.

A special thank you to the amazingly talented Troy DuMoulin, who is a thinking and writing machine. Malcolm would be so proud of you, Troy. As am I.

David Ratcliffe  
President, Pink Elephant

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# The integrated ITSM™ System

## Introduction

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The importance of an integrated and holistic approach to IT service management (ITSM) has grown in recent years due to the increased business reliance on technology and IT services to support the evolving digital strategy of the enterprise. In response to this increased urgency and dependency on IT services, it has become business-critical to take a holistic approach to improving IT management processes and reducing business risk while at the same time ensuring agility, resilience, and automation.

However, achieving these goals can be challenging due to the complexity of modern IT environments that are influenced by several internal and external factors, including:

- The rapid emergence of disruptive technologies
- An increased need for data-driven business intelligence
- Business model complexity with an increased use of third-party vendors and suppliers
- Rising business risks related to cyber threats
- Corresponding levels of regulatory and compliance requirements
- Competitive pressures to increase speed to market, agility, and resilience
- An increased urgency to resolve subject matter knowledge and skills gaps

Each of these drivers, individually and collectively, increases the pressure on IT service providers to expand their organizational collaboration related to IT service management capabilities and processes. In the context of integrating ITSM with the business requirements, integrated IT service management refers to the ability of all functional areas within an IT service provider to work collaboratively toward common goals and priorities, rather than operating as independent silo-based areas of technology competence.

“IT service management is used to ensure IT services meet the stated goals of the business. It is a set of policies, processes, and technologies for implementing, delivering, managing, and improving IT services.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on materials from Nosowitz, Dan. “What Is ITSM (IT Service Management)?” Ibm.com. Last modified February 6, 2025. Accessed September 14, 2025. <https://www.ibm.com/topics/it-service-management>

## The need for speed

At the World Economic Forum in 2018, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is quoted saying, “The pace of change has never been this fast, yet it will never be this slow again.”<sup>2</sup>

These statements accurately and succinctly describe the world of IT management today. The pace of demand for new or changed IT services continues to accelerate much faster than most IT organizations can effectively manage. This widening gap is exacerbated by the requirement to continue to maintain aging legacy systems and the inevitable growth in technical debt from delaying critical maintenance, mandatory patches, and system upgrades. In short, most organizations are facing a critical imbalance between the rate of demand for new work and the rate of supply with their existing capacity and capabilities. This downward spiral is forcing organizations to realize an unavoidable truth. Something must change! What took them this far and worked well in the past is no longer sufficient to take them further. As one executive explained simply, “What got us here, won’t get us there.”

The combination of internal and external factors listed earlier, coupled with the rising rate of customer demand, increases the pressure on IT service providers to raise their organizational velocity. Velocity = speed with direction, which, in this context, means that all the functional areas within the service provider domain must work as an integrated whole toward a common objective. The operation of independent silo-based areas of competence, which is currently the structural and cultural norm for most IT service providers today, is a recipe for dysfunction, inefficiency and, ultimately, failure. The combination of all these factors makes a strong business case to adopt and improve key IT service management processes according to best practices. The challenge then becomes: What IT framework to use?

## IT Service Management Frameworks

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Many sources exist that provide slightly different definitions of IT service management.

Common threads among them include:

- Providers and consumers
- Capabilities and processes
- Products and services
- Value

There are many IT governance policies, management frameworks, and standards that describe and define good and best practices for IT management related to the concept of IT service management.

The IT industry is not short on information or resources to use for IT management and improvement. There is no scarcity of books or reference models, yet the industry continues to struggle to find the time, energy, and focus to improve our IT management processes.

The real challenge is a lack of organizational will that is, in part, due to the tyranny of the urgent always taking precedence over the necessary and the good – and an IT culture that frequently values independent action over team collaboration, shared knowledge, integrated processes, and standardized tools.

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<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum. “Trudeau: The Pace of Change Has Never Been This Fast.” Youtube.com. Last modified January 23, 2018. Accessed September 14, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTl1YNTNb0g>

The principles of, and guidance for, IT service management are described and defined across multiple IT service management frameworks.

### Example definitions of IT service management:

- “A set of **capabilities** and **processes** to direct and control the **organization’s activities** and resources for the planning, design, transition, delivery, and improvement of services **to deliver value**” ISO 20000-2018
- “IT service management is a set of **specialized organizational capabilities** for **enabling value to customers** in the form of services.” ITIL® 4
- “IT service **management processes** aim to transform the service provider's resources into **valuable customer services**. These services are to be made available at agreed-upon levels of quality, cost, and risk.” YaSM®
- “IT service management is the **management approach** adopted by an organization **to deliver value** to consumers through quality products and services.” VeriSM™
- “IT service management is the **management of all people, processes, and technology** that cooperate **to ensure the quality** of live IT services, according to the levels of service agreed upon with the customer.” MOF
- “IT service management is the **entirety of activities performed by an IT service provider** to plan, deliver, operate, and control IT services offered to customers.” FitSM

Each of the published ITSM frameworks has similarities and unique value differentiators. Rather than selecting one and ignoring the others, experience has shown that it is far better to take an integrated approach to published frameworks and models and to use all or several of them to define an organization’s own set of practices.

### Why integratedITSM™?

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The principle of taking an integrated approach to ITSM is a critical success factor for cohesively leveraging multiple frameworks or models. This is the driving principle behind integratedITSM™. Rather than treating each framework as a separate entity, integratedITSM™ combines the strengths of different frameworks to create a unified approach. It entails identifying commonalities, eliminating redundancies, and creating a seamless flow between processes and practices. The integration allows organizations to create a comprehensive and harmonious IT operating model that leverages the best of each framework while avoiding duplication and confusion.

However, it is important to note that blindly adopting an individual framework may not support organizational goals. When applying the framework, it is inevitably necessary to tailor it to the unique context, culture, and specific needs of the enterprise. This involves modifying processes, tools, and practices to fit the organization's requirements while still adhering to the underlying principles of the framework. This adaptation ensures the successful implementation of a practical and relevant solution for the organization.

“Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static ‘snapshots.’”<sup>3</sup>

Relying heavily on the principles espoused in systems thinking, integratedITSM™ takes this more blended approach. Rather than coming up with yet another published framework, it extracts the core truths and best practices common among many IT service management models. It fills in the gaps and connects the dots by taking a holistic approach to all of them and integrating key enabling practices such as Agile project management, DevOps, organizational change management, the Lean principles of continuous improvement, and many more.

The key truth is that in the realm of integrated IT service management, no one-size-fits-all framework can cater to the diverse needs of an organization's comprehensive IT operating model. Each framework or model has its own strengths, focus areas, and specialized capabilities. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt, tailor, and integrate these frameworks in ways that align with the organization's specific goals and requirements.

The overall goal of adopting, tailoring, and integrating these frameworks is to meet the customer's value realization goals. By leveraging the strengths and principles of multiple frameworks, IT organizations can enhance their ability to deliver value to customers, improve service quality, increase operational efficiency, and drive continuous improvement. The integration of frameworks enables IT organizations to create a cohesive and comprehensive approach that addresses IT service management's diverse needs.

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<sup>3</sup> Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization (Revised and Updated)*. New York, NY: Image Books, 2006, p. 68.



## integratedITSM™ Core Concepts Overview

integratedITSM™ is an IT management system that describes **how the IT organization works to establish common IT goals and objectives that generate value by realizing business results**. It achieves this through applying an integrated and holistic approach to leadership, structure, enabling frameworks, execution processes, and balanced performance management that supports the integration of overall IT and business goals at strategic, tactical, and operational levels.

### The Three Levels of Integration

integratedITSM involves three levels of integration. While this concept may be thought of as a maturity model or a deployment approach, it is essential that **all three levels of integration occur simultaneously and congruently for an organization to achieve its business goals and objectives efficiently and cost-effectively**.

- Level 1 – Integration between ITSM processes
- Level 2 – Integration of enabling practices with ITSM
- Level 3 – Integration of ITSM with business requirements

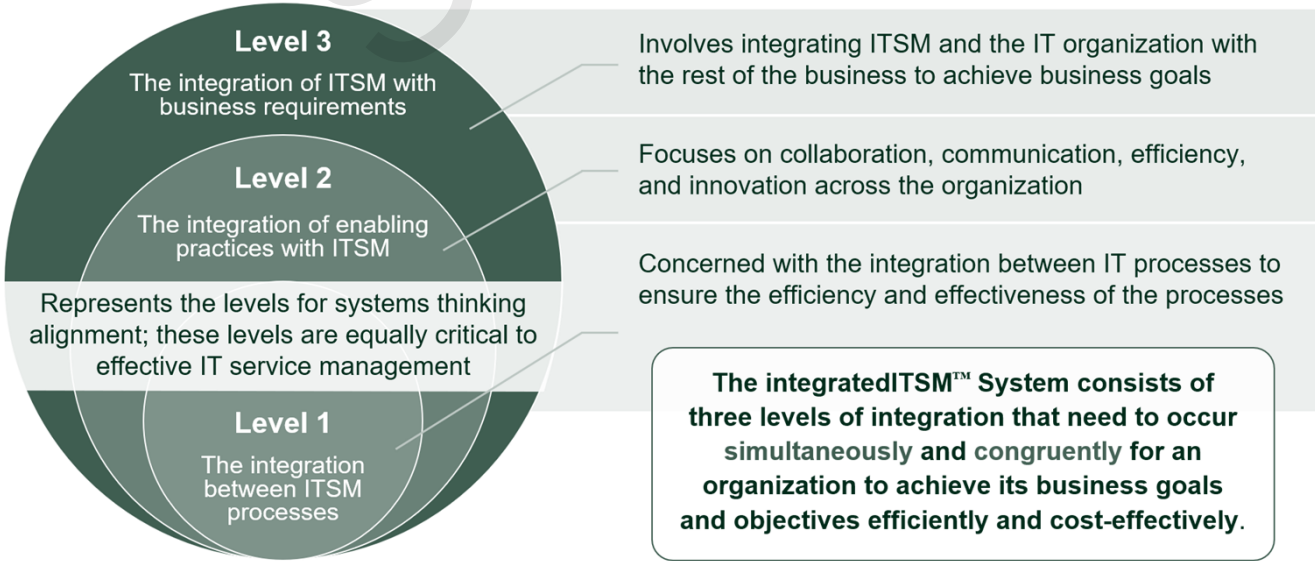


Figure 1: integratedITSM™ – the three levels of integration

**Level 1: Integration between ITSM processes**

The core or innermost level of integration involves integrating ITSM processes among themselves. At this level, incident management, problem management, change management, release and deployment management, and other ITSM processes must work together seamlessly by using shared tools to deliver IT services efficiently and effectively. The integration of these processes ensures that IT services are delivered consistently and promptly. For example, the incident management process must integrate with the problem management process to ensure recurring incidents are resolved permanently.

**Level 2: Integration of enabling practices with ITSM**

The next level of integration involves integrating ITSM processes with enabling practices such as organizational change management, Lean, Agile Scrum, and DevOps. These practices help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ITSM processes, enhance IT capabilities, and enable the IT organization to quickly respond to changing business needs. For example, integrating the change management process with Agile practices can help the IT organization to deliver changes or new features much faster within complex adaptive business systems and environments.

**Level 3: Integration of ITSM with business requirements**

The highest level of integration involves integrating the IT service organization with the rest of the business functions. Integration with the business requirements promotes a customer-centric and value-driven approach to service management ensuring that the business objectives requirements drive IT management practices and processes from strategy through to operations. At this level of integration, the business' governance, vision, values, mission, and strategy direct the IT service provider's approach to IT service management and third-party service provider integration. This level of integration ensures IT services are consistently delivered in a manner that supports the business goals and objectives. For example, if the business goal is to improve customer satisfaction or to execute its overall digital strategy, the IT organization must align its services to support this goal. However, this level of integration cannot stand alone. The adoption of an integrated approach for the first two levels is a critical success factor for the effective and efficient realization of the Level 3 goal of the effective integration of ITSM with the business requirements.

## The integratedITSM™ System

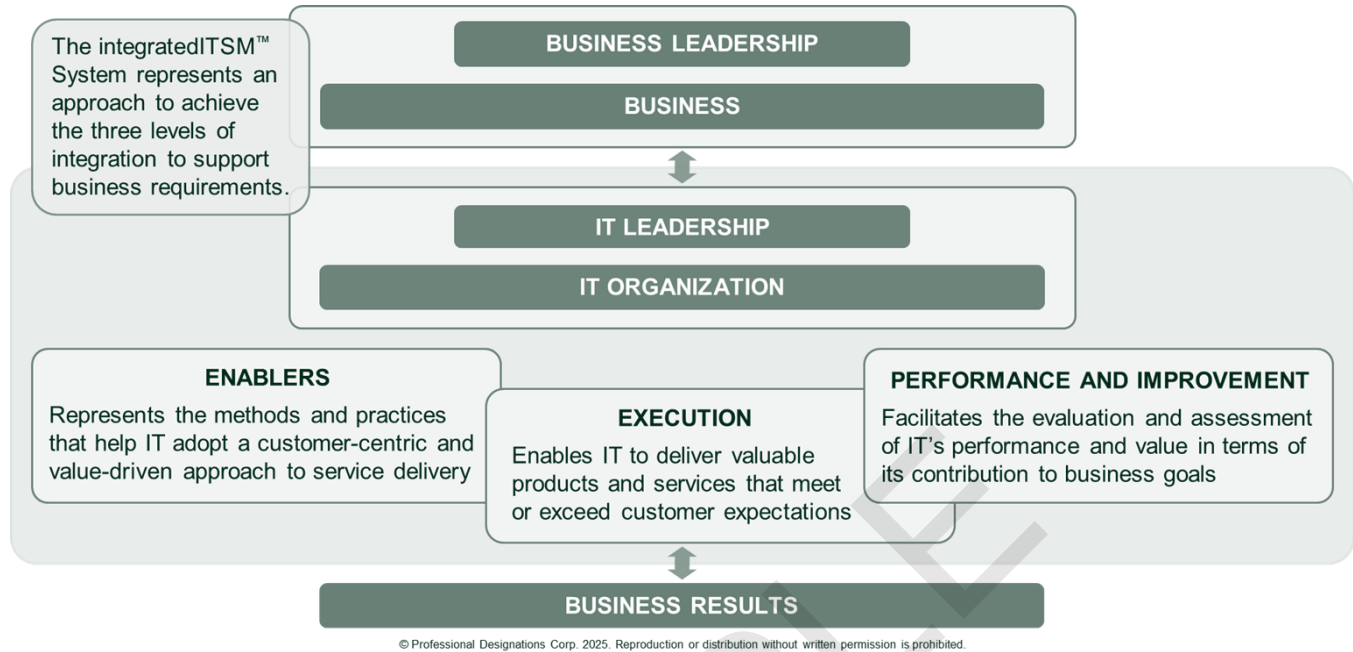


Figure 2: integratedITSM™ – High-level components

The high-level key components of integratedITSM™:

- **IT leadership:** Provides the direction, guidance, and support for the integration of ITSM to meet the ultimate goal of delivering value to the business
- **IT organization:** Provides the structure and design for IT and the required functional capabilities that support the delivery of services aligned to the delivery of business value
- **Enablers:** Represents the methods and practices that help IT adopt a customer-centric and value-driven approach to service delivery
- **Execution:** Empowers IT to deliver valuable products and services that meet or exceed customer expectations
- **Performance and improvement:** Drives continuous improvement by facilitating the ongoing evaluation of IT's performance and value delivery in terms of its contribution toward achieving the business goals and objectives