

IT Services Management Service Brief

Problem and Incident Management

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Introduction

A primary focus of IT Service Management (ITSM) is the application of IT best practices (founded in ITIL) to enable IT to be a more effective service provider across the enterprise to satisfy the organization's business requirements.

Although managing the IT infrastructure itself is a necessary component of most ITSM solutions, it is not the primary focus. Instead ITSM addresses the need to align the delivery of IT services closely with the needs of the business. This involves a transformation of the traditional *Business - IT paradigm* into one that is process-oriented, proactive, and enterprise wide. This service provider paradigm encompasses IT best practices using the perspectives of people, process, technology, organization, and integration.

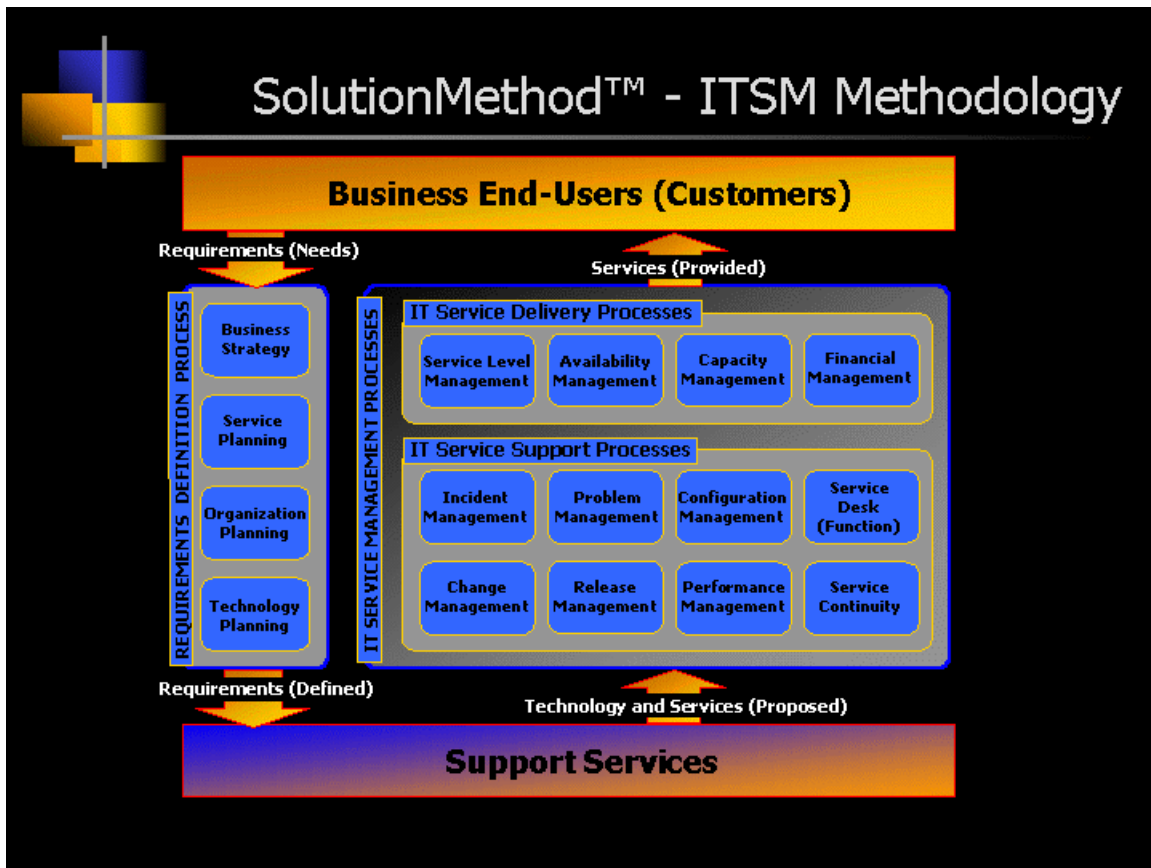
Within this ITSM service provider paradigm there are several focus areas such as business objectives, service level objectives, and technology infrastructure that along with other areas play critical roles in the ITSM methods and best practices.

Incident management is the day-to-day process that restores normal acceptable service with a minimal impact on business. Problem management is the diagnosis of the root causes of incidents in an effort to proactively eliminate and manage them. Incident and Problem management are part of the **SolutionMethod™** IT Service Support Processes.

SolutionMethod™ - A Roadmap to ITSM

SolutionMethod™ describes a service methodology framework for ITSM that is based on ITIL best practices. The focus of **SolutionMethod™** is to enable service, its delivery and management. It is an iterative methodology that has multiple entry points but most typically begins with business end-users/Customer requirements and concludes with a qualification and quantification of services provided to satisfy those requirements both tactically and strategically.

This evolutionary approach enables organizations the ability to adaptively integrate best practices based on their specific maturity level and priorities. **SolutionMethod™** employs a phased approach to ITSM that consists of assessment, architecture and design, planning, implementation, and support. With each phase 5 perspectives of people, process, technology, organization, and integration are evaluated.



The high level goal for ITSM *structure* encompasses the following:

- 1) Determine the current, existing IT infrastructure, processes, and services
- 2) Develop a desired future state of IT and the services it needs to provide
- 3) Architect a "roadmap" that depicts how to get to the desired state from the current state
- 4) Determine the steps needed to execute the "roadmap"

The **SolutionMethod™** ITSM *framework* for each of the ITIL Service Delivery and Service Management areas is a 5 phase model:

- **Assessment** - determine the current state and begin to collect and understand the metrics for the future desired state
- **Architect and Design** - develop a mature design for the future state
- **Planning** - develop those plans necessary to achieve the future desired state in a phased evolutionary fashion
- **Implementation** - implement and deploy the plans within IT and across the enterprise to achieve the future desired state
- **Support** - manage, maintain, and improve the future desired state being able to adaptively integrate enhancements as needed or required

Within this *framework*, **SolutionMethod™** effectively enables managing IT, as an enterprise wide, service oriented entity comprised of 5 separate and distinct *perspectives*:

- **People** - quantity and quality of expertise and knowledge
- **Process** - IT and organization specific practices, procedures, guidelines, etc. and the level of complexity and sophistication of them
- **Technology** - total logical and physical technology infrastructure that consists of hardware, software, communication networks, applications, DBMS, etc.
- **Organization** - internal and external business factors that affect IT, how IT and the organization interface, what is the organizations "corporate culture", what are the organization's direction and how does that affect IT
- **Integration** - how is IT integrated within the business model, what services does IT provide, how are the services provided, and how are best practices employed within IT

Scope and Objectives

The overall goal of this service is to assess and plan for tactical and strategic technology infrastructure in the ITSM Problem and Incident management areas within the 5 perspectives.

The specific service goals are to create a customer focused, process orientated client service center that provides decreased response time, quicker problem resolution, and identifies and eliminates common problems. The service objectives are to:

- Design and develop an auditing process to provide for continuous improvement and increased customer satisfaction.
- Design and develop a problem management methodology to identify root cause problems to decrease both the number of incident calls and the length of time to resolution.
- Identify the effectiveness of the incident management process and resource expertise in this area through evaluation of skill level requirements. This includes any Service (Help) Desk facilities.
- Identify the efficiency of the incident and problem management processes by workflow analysis of moving information through the different levels of expertise and shifts.
- Develop process models for incident and problem management and the associated linkages to facilitate communications and understanding between functional groups within the data center and business end-users.

The focus of the incident management portion is to develop an understanding of the current incident management process and its effectiveness. This understanding is gained through documentation provided by the customer, interviewing of appropriate customer personnel, and observations of the Support area (through all shifts), if applicable. Particular attention is paid to the synergies across shifts and the flow of incidents through the different levels of support. Effectiveness is evaluated through interviews with appropriate customer staff and business end users at the beginning of the engagement.

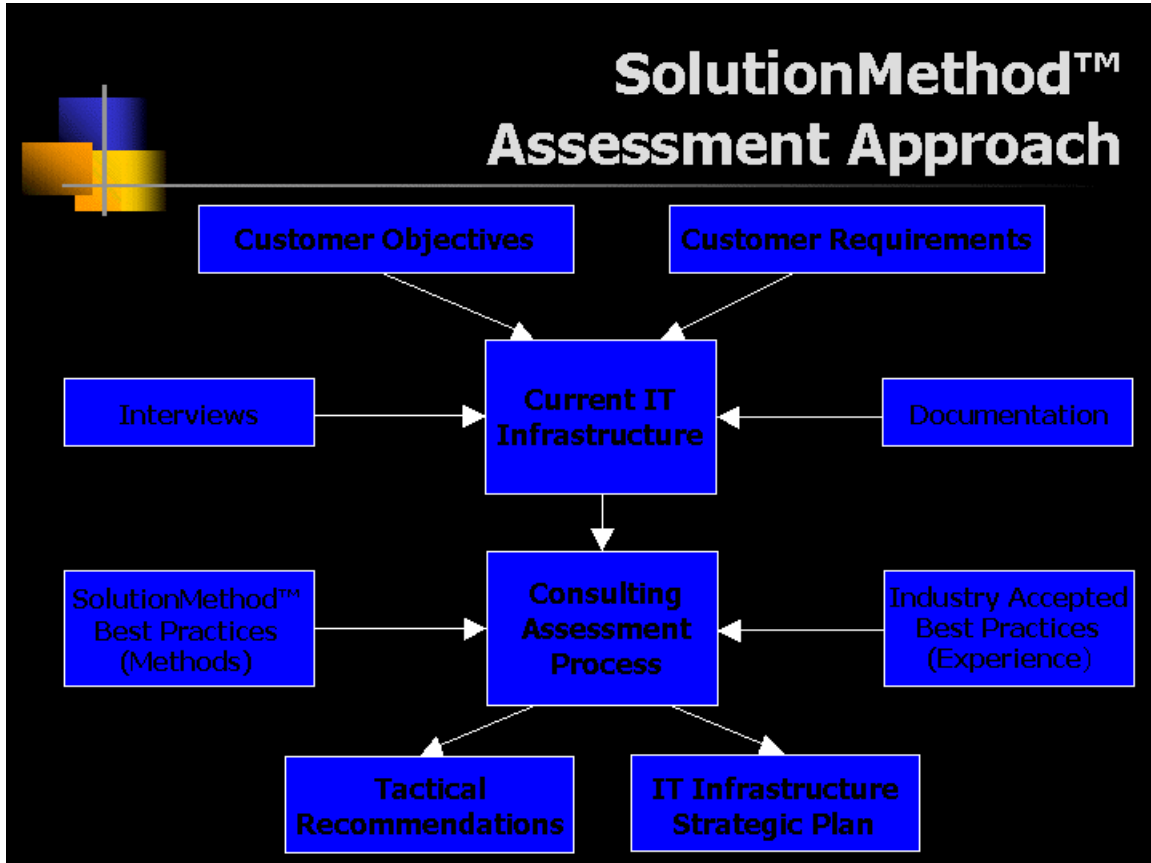
To evaluate the maturity and completeness of the current process, a joint team of the customer and a trained ITSM subject matter expert consultant will develop and document an auditing process. Together they will look at the present metrics in place, if available, and benchmark these metrics against industry standards. If no metrics are in place, this service will create them based on end users requirements, IT requirements, and jointly agreed to best practices, Finally a work-in-progress document will be prepared that will capture the customer's current incident management process and map it against a best practices incident management process that will highlight areas of improvements.

The focus of the problem management portion is to develop a common understanding of what a problem management process is and how it is tactically and strategically integrated with the incident management process. As part of this service, an optional workshop is available to help define a customer specific problem management process and develop joint understanding between all levels of staff of what is needed to produce an actual implementation of the problem management flow.

The final outcome of this service is to assess and plan a customer unique set of best practices for incident and problem management processes that includes the appropriate synergy between them. This includes the dependencies and linkages of incident and problem management to other processes like availability, service level management, change management, configuration management, and Service Desk. This will provide the customer with a model to be used for developing a tactical and strategic position and direction for ITSM best practices.

Approach

The SolutionMethod™ approach depicted below is used for this Incident and Problem Management service.



The following is a high-level list of tasks for this service:

- 1) Assemble a project team that includes the appropriate skill sets necessary to complete a successful project engagement
- 2) Conduct a project kick-off meeting between the consulting team and a comparable organization team. At this meeting an initial project plan will be developed and refined. This plan will be used to document, plan, and track the activities and results of the engagement.
- 3) Gather and assemble all appropriate information about the customer's current incident and problem management processes, their inter-relationship and dependencies. This includes the environment, the objectives, requirements, and expectations for a desired future state. This information is supplied from existing documentation, interviews with the required organization personnel, and observation.

- 4) Analyze the information gathered as it relates to findings in the areas of IT service management and the processes that support it. This analysis will focus on organization's people, processes, technology, organization, and integration perspectives both in a tactical and strategic perspective. It will specifically focus on satisfying tactical requirements and strategic positioning to include full ITSM positioning.
- 5) Analyze the current Incident Management process that includes but is not limited to:
 - The procedures that define the steps used in incident management
 - The objectives of what incident management needs to accomplish
 - How the Service (Help) Desk interfaces with IT and end users
 - What procedures does the Service (Help) Desk follow when incidents occur
 - How incidents are initiated, monitored, tracked, and reported
 - How incidents are historically logged
 - The identification of ownership that includes the appropriate support personnel that are assigned to an incident until a satisfactory resolution is met, regardless of where the incident resolution has been routed
- 6) Analyze the current Problem Management process that includes but is not limited to:
 - The procedures that define the steps used in proactive problem management and root cause problem analysis
 - The objectives of what problem management needs to accomplish
 - How the Service (Help) Desk interfaces with IT and handles incidents and the inter-relationship perspective of problems
 - How problems are initiated, monitored, tracked, and reported
 - How problems are historically logged
 - The identification of ownership that includes the appropriate support personnel that are assigned to a problem until a satisfactory resolution is met, regardless of where the problem and incident resolution has been routed
- 7) Develop a list that includes prioritized tactical recommendations for incident and problem management in areas of IT Infrastructure and the processes that support it.
- 8) Develop a solution model that focuses on strategic IT infrastructure and processes based on an alignment with tactical recommendations, ITSM requirements, and strategic organizational goals.

- 9) Assess the organization training requirements for incident and problem management areas.
- 10) Develop a training plan for the organization team.
- 11) Develop an analysis report and associated customer management presentation that includes prioritized tactical recommendations for technology infrastructure and the ITSM processes that support it. These processes will be customer unique best practices for incident and problem management.
- 12) Develop an outline for recommended strategic IT infrastructure plan that includes “next steps” to meet the organization’s full ITSM requirements. This includes a size and scope for the effort and anticipated deliverables.

Deliverables

- 1) A report documenting the incident and problem management analysis findings within the customer’s IT Infrastructure at an appropriately high level that includes:
 - The organization’s current incident and problem management
 - The organization’s requirements and expectations for a desired future state
 - A gap analysis of the current state and the desired future state
 - The alternatives for achieving the desired state
 - A list of tactical recommendations, in customer specified priority order, for the steps to position the current state of the IT infrastructure to meet strategic ITSM requirements. This will encompass the perspectives of people, process, technology, organization, and integration
- 2) An initial IT infrastructure strategic plan for incident and problem management to achieve the desired state that encompasses the perspectives of people, process, technology, organization, and integration
- 3) A senior management level presentation summarizing findings, expectations, recommendations, and future ITSM direction.