IT Service Management

A Business Based Assessment Approach to ITIL® Maturity

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An IT Service Provider Paradigm

A primary focus of IT Service Management (ITSM) is the application of the ITIL® best practices framework to enable IT to be a more effective service provider across the enterprise. This leveraging of a best practice framework is meant to be one that is, by its very nature, operating within a Continuous Service Improvement Program (CSIP).

ITSM addresses the need to align the delivery of IT services closely with the needs of the business. This requires a transformation of the *Business - IT paradigm* such that the requirements of the business drive the needs of the IT processes to support them with the necessary people expertise, in accordance with organizational culture being applied enterprise wide, and managed by a set of measurements and metrics that are reported on a regular basis. An effective CSIP will help enable that over time IT will continue to provide and improve service quality to the business.

At present, the majority of ITIL and ITSM Maturity Assessment methods focus on people, process, technology/tools, organization and information factors and typically use a derivative of the IT Service Capability Maturity Model (CMM) with maturity phases such as Initial, Repeatable, Defined, Managed and Optimizing.

Consider however the major focus of these Maturity Assessments. Typically, they are done introspectively within IT. That is, evaluating internal IT people, processes, technology/tools, and information factors with organizational considerations being considered as they relate internally to IT and IT infrastructure. One can make a convincing case that such assessment methods do not fully and directly maximize the congruence of the primary focus of ITIL® to enable it to operate as effectively as possible in accordance with the basic nature of IT Service Management. This is based on an assumption that a primary requirement of IT as a service provider is to achieve its goal of aligning the delivery of IT to meet *business requirements as defined and driven by the business.*

An Alternative ITSM Maturity Assessment Approach

Given the primary requirement stated above, let us consider an alternative or supplemental approach to the typical Maturity Assessment methods. The measurements and metrics perceived by the business as providing value must be a primary focus objective for IT since it is the Customer, and not the IT Service Provider that determines the actual value of IT Services to the business. Therefore adherence to this focus should be used in whole or in part for any baseline that is part of any Maturity Assessment in addition to those typical Assessment methods employed.

Presented below is a basic list of those measurement metric questions that relate to direct and indirect, tangible and intangible business benefits that can be realized. This list is not exhaustive but is rather a starter set that could be used as part of the

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qualification method for assessing CMM Maturity quantifications for how well IT is performing as a service provider *from a business perspective*.

Service Level Management
- Is the quantity and quality of IT services required being managed?
- Is service as previously agreed being delivered?
- Are services being provided at affordable costs?
- Is the interface with the business and users being managed?

Availability Management
- Is availability and reliability of IT service being managed effectively?
- Are the business needs for access to IT services being satisfied?
- Is the availability of IT infrastructure, as documented in SLAs, being provided at optimum costs?

Capacity Management
- Are business forecasts more accurate?
- Is there an increased knowledge of current and future technologies?
- Is there an increased ability to demonstrate cost effectiveness?
- Is there an increased ability to plan and implement the appropriate IT capacity to match business need?

Financial Management for IT Services
- Is there effective stewardship of the IT finances?
- Does the business believe the financial management process is effective?
- Are customers satisfied with costs and charges of services?

IT Service Continuity Management
- Can IT Services be delivered and can they be recovered to meet business objectives?
- Is there awareness throughout the organization of the Business and IT Continuity Plans?

Incident Management
- Are incidents resolved quickly with minimal impact to the business?
- Is IT service quality maintained?
- Is IT and Business productivity improving?
- Is user satisfaction being maintained?

Problem Management
- Has service quality improved?
- Has the impact of Problems been minimized?
- Has the cost to Users of Problems been reduced?

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Change Management
- Is there a repeatable process for making Changes?
- Are Changes made quickly and accurately and driven by business need?
- Is there a provision for protecting services when making Changes?
- Does the process deliver efficiency and effectiveness benefits?

Release Management
- Has there been a better quality of software and hardware
- Is there a repeatable process for rolling out software and hardware Releases?
- Are Releases implemented swiftly and accurately based on business driven requirements and needs
- Are releases cost effective?

Configuration Management
- Is there better control of IT assets?
- Is there better support of the delivery of quality IT services?
- Has economic service provisioning been enhanced?
- Is there support, integration and interfacing to all other ITSM processes?

Conclusion

Given that it is not the IT Service Provider that determines the actual value of IT Services to the business but rather the value is one of the perception by the business, the primary requirement is to enable IT as a service provider to achieve its goal of aligning IT service delivery to meet *business requirements as defined and driven by the business.*

An alternative or supplemental approach to the typical Maturity Assessment methods needs to adhere to an approach where measurements and metrics perceived by the business as providing value must be a primary focus objective for IT. This would include as part of the qualification method for assessing CMM Maturity quantifications, how well IT is performing as a service provider *from the business perspective*.

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