



Attitude, Behavior
and Culture of ICT

ABC of ICT

An Introduction

Paul Wilkinson and Jan Schilt





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Paul Wilkinson and Jan Schilt

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Foreword

IT is becoming increasingly important to just about every company on the planet. Most of us in the developed world use computers to find information or order and purchase products. IT must work. As such, IT must be managed as a strategic asset. Because if it doesn't work the consequences can be extremely costly, highly embarrassing and even disastrous. Frameworks such as ITIL are becoming increasingly popular and increasingly important, but why is this the case? These are seen as a solution, as a way of bringing IT under control. However we still have problems adopting frameworks such as ITIL and making them work. Why do we keep failing? And what must we do to finally ensure that ITSM becomes a strategic capability? This book hopes to address these questions. Why are we writing this book now? The time is ripe; failure is no longer an option. We can no longer afford to do with ITIL V3 what we did with ITIL V2.

In the last 10 years we, the authors, have been travelling the world extensively. We have been giving 'worst practice' speeches at international IT service management conferences. This has given us the chance to talk with hundreds of IT professionals that recognize and agree with our 'worst practice' observations and findings. We have also had the opportunity to deliver hundreds of ITSM simulation workshops which have brought us into contact with literally thousands of customers implementing, or struggling to implement, ITSM practices. During these workshops we have been able to discuss key issues that people recognize in relation to ITSM success and fail factors. We have discussed these issues with IT operational employees, team managers, line managers, process managers, project managers, even CIOs and, occasionally, business people from the boards of directors, as well as end users. We have also had a chance to discuss our findings with those of our 100 or so international GamingWorks partners who help and advise their customers to adopt and deploy ITSM best practices. So, all in all, we feel we are able to say what we have found represents truly global 'worst practices'.....but, more importantly, what we have found represents truly global 'best practice' approaches to dealing with the issues that just about every organization adopting ITIL is faced with.

Fortunately many people recognize and understand that the ITSM frameworks and procedures are just an instrumental part of the solution. To be brutally direct, any idiot can design an ITIL process flow and a book of procedures. Participating in our presentations and our workshops, people recognize and agree that the single most critical success factor, or fail factor, is the way in which the frameworks are applied. The way in which the 'Attitude', the 'Behavior' and the 'Culture' within the world of ICT and all of its stakeholders, are taken into account and consciously addressed. In other words 'The ABC of ICT'. It is addressing this ABC of ICT that will ensure a real, lasting, sustainable success when adopting and applying ITSM best practices; by success we mean ensuring that ITSM delivers, and continues to deliver, recognized and demonstrable value to both the business and the IT organizations.

What we have also discovered is that, although managers, consultants, trainers and those responsible for deploying ITSM recognize these issues, they do not know, and have not been taught how to tackle them, and existing ITIL best practice literature or ITIL training and certification schemes currently do not help them. This is a very worrying situation and indeed a symptom of why, in the last 10 years, too little success has been realized using ITSM frameworks,

We have also noticed with concern that in the numerous conferences we have attended less than 5% of the sessions and presentations address these ABC issues, whilst more than 90% of the attendees recognize and agree with the issues and the need to resolve them.

The worst practice presentations we give at the conferences often receive the highest scores, the cartoons and examples we use are instantly recognizable. People laugh at the cartoons but afterwards they say 'how true'. How true are the examples of Attitude, Behavior and Culture that need changing.

What is equally worrying is not the fact that ITIL training and certification fails to currently address the ABC issues adequately, but the fact that some experts say that ABC has got nothing to do with ITSM and, as such, it shouldn't even be given special attention! ABC is something relevant to ALL organizations and all branches and is, therefore, something that managers should already be doing. Therefore, we should already know how to address these issues! Therefore, if we ignore them they will go away by themselves....just like they have in the last 10 years? We are afraid that ignoring it and hoping it will go away, and assuming that these are management capabilities that all companies should have is simply not helpful. People need help and guidance in solving these issues, and the people and organizations that should be helping solve them haven't done a good job so far. We include ourselves in this as ex-ITIL consultants and ex-ITIL authors.

Furthermore, with the increasing importance of IT we can no longer afford not to bring IT under control. ITIL and ITSM frameworks and best practices must work. In the words of Gene Kranz, Flight Director of Apollo 13, "Failure is not an Option...". IT organizations that fail to successfully adopt and deploy ITSM practices place businesses at risk.

These were reasons enough for us to write this book.

This book will challenge and confront you, and hopefully make you think. We strongly advise you to think carefully about the cases presented and seriously reflect upon these in relation to your own organization. Simply assuming that this doesn't apply to you or your organization is an attitude we see all too often. Helping you change your attitude, to look at things differently, may be the first and most important learning point from this book.

This book is also a handbook to help you to become the most important instrument of change within your organization. After reading this book and attempting the exercises using the ABC of ICT cards you will be better able to recognize and hopefully tackle the ABC issues most relevant to your organization.

Whether you are a manager, consultant, trainer or process manager, this book is equally applicable and will give you an insight into how you can, from within your role, become an agent of change.

In the 'worst practice' presentations we give, we usually finish with three simple best practice tips. The first one is this: we ask "What is the most important instrument for making ITIL work?". People call out "Tools", "Assessments", "Maturity framework". We then say "YOU". You are the single most important instrument for change. You, the people listening to these presentations, or in this case reading this book.

One thing is fairly certain, you will probably be one of the few people in your company reading this book. The line managers, the operators, system managers, application people, the CIO... none of these will be reading this book. None of these will have been confronted with the ABC issues, none of these will see the need to change. As such, none of them will change by themselves. You are the only one who has been confronted, you are the only one that can make a difference. You must change your attitude and behavior if the cultural issues, and the attitude and behavior issues of others, are to change. If you don't do anything then we can guarantee that we will be back in 10 years giving the same worst case presentations and having people nodding their heads in recognition at the conferences. The choice is yours.

We would like to share our vision and our solutions, together with those of our colleagues who have contributed, and we hope that their insights and practical tips may help you in your ITSM journey. Who are these people we have invited to contribute? They are individuals who have demonstrated a track record in helping organizations improve through the use of ITIL and other best practice frameworks. They are also representatives of some of the leading delivery companies, who we are giving a chance to express their views and experiences. They are also people responsible for deploying ITIL, and customers who have used ITIL and have tried addressing the ABC issues. We tried to involve people from different countries and a cross section of the industry. If a leading player or individual is not here it is not because we found them unworthy, more because we do not know everybody and some didn't have the time to contribute. If you are looking for a guru, an expert, somebody who can help you ensure your ITSM initiatives do succeed and will address the ABC issues, then our advice is to ask them for the credentials, ask them for their demonstrable ability to realize effective change. After all, it is experience, not just credentials and qualifications that count.

We thought it would also be a good idea to allow some of those who are currently responsible for the new ITIL and the deployment of ITSM best practices to express their views on ABC in this short introduction. The first is that of **Richard Pharro** from the APMG: "My personal view is that ABC is essential. Success with ITIL or any other similar framework is all about people. People need to have the right attitude, skills and knowledge channelled towards the right behavior, otherwise you will achieve nothing. In this book you call it the ABC, we call it professionalism. ITIL will give you the knowledge. But knowledge alone is not a guarantee for success."

Also **Sharon Taylor**, the chief architect for ITIL V3 and now chief examiner. In response to the question about the relevance of ABC, Sharon responded "...Likely more important than any system, tool, framework or method. The best practices in the world don't work if people are not committed to them and do not espouse the ABCs that are needed to bring frameworks, tools and systems to life."

We also wish to add that the contributors to this book actually made their contributions without having read any part of the book, so it cannot be assumed that they agree with everything else in the book. One thing is for certain, what they have contributed represents their belief and view on the ABC of ICT.

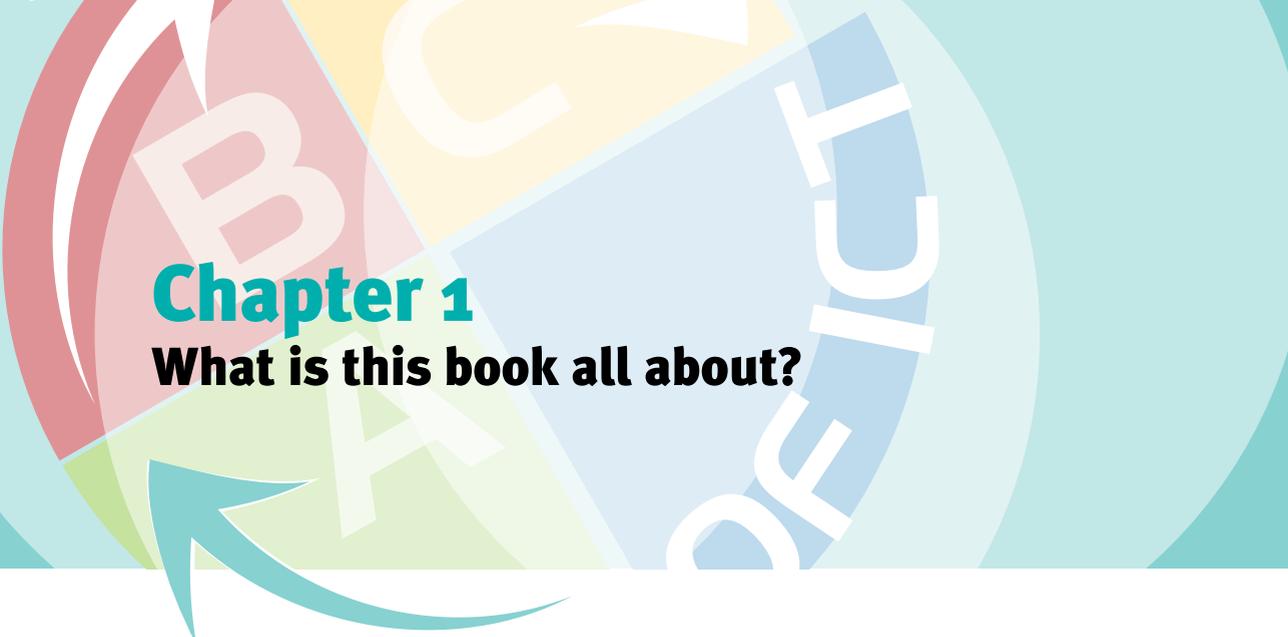
Paul Wilkinson and Jan Schilt

Contributors

The following people contributed case studies to this book. None of the contributors saw the rest of the book, so it cannot be assumed that they agree with everything we wrote in the book. This list identifies the author, the company and the country to which the individual case study applies.

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Chapter 1

What is this book all about?

This book is about the Attitude, Behavior and the Culture in ICT organizations. We call it the 'ABC of ICT'. There is now a growing recognition in the ITSM community that the ABC factor is important in ensuring ITSM improvement initiatives work. However we have also noticed that ITSM professionals have difficulty addressing these issues. Why is this? Because it is inadequately addressed in the best practice books, there are currently, at the time of publication, no training courses available as part of ITSM certification, and little attention is given to it in IT conferences as a subject. Yet if we present these issues at conferences in our 'Worst practice' ABC presentations, we are surrounded by people saying 'how true', and 'we recognize this...you are so right'. So if we all recognize it and all know it needs changing, why haven't we done anything about it? Maybe we are hoping that if we ignore it, it will go away. Well it hasn't gone away in the last 10 years and we really don't think it will in the next 10 years unless something changes.

So what exactly is it we are talking about?

'Attitude'

This is what people think and feel. It is their demeanour and how they react to the world about them. How they react to a change initiative, a colleague, or a customer. An example of attitude is somebody thinking "The users are ALWAYS complaining...just ignore them, they will soon go away!"

'Behavior'

This is what people do. Behavior is influenced by attitude and by the culture of the organization. An example of behavior is 'saying you will follow the ITIL procedures but not doing so', Behavior can be 'not registering a resolution, or not transferring knowledge to a first line employee even though you know it would help, and even though you know you should be doing it'.

'Culture'

This can be described as the accepted ways of working within an organization, the values and standards that people find as normal. An example of culture is 'knowledge is power', or the 'hero culture'. In this type of culture people believe that sharing knowledge diminishes their own value, therefore they

want to be the only ones with the expertise and knowledge, they are the heroes. This type of culture can negatively influence attitudes and behavior.

In fact you could say that ‘attitude’ is individual and comes as a result of personal beliefs and experiences which influence ‘behavior’. Culture is often difficult to grasp but could be described as the corporate attitude. Often employees in an organization are unaware of the culture and how this influences their personal attitude and behavior. This is why culture is one of the most difficult things to change. It is ‘soft’, you can’t see it, you can’t touch it, you know it’s there, you can get bogged down in it and unable to move, it can stop a change program in its tracks. It is something to be taken seriously if you want your change program to succeed.....it would seem that the most common approach is to ignore it and hope that it will go away or change by itself.

“ABC is like an iceberg, much of it hidden beneath the surface and yet capable of inflicting enormous damage”.

This book will help you develop the most important instrument for realizing a successful ITSM improvement initiative. That instrument is YOU. You are the most important instrument for changing the attitude, behavior and culture in your organization; however it may be that before you can become that effective instrument, you may need to change your own attitude and behavior.

This book will give you a theoretical background to the most important aspects that you will need to be aware of so that you can develop and become an effective ‘instrument for change’. This theoretical background is important so that you can understand ABC and what influences it. But more importantly this book will help you to identify and develop your own ‘interventions’ to help change ABC.

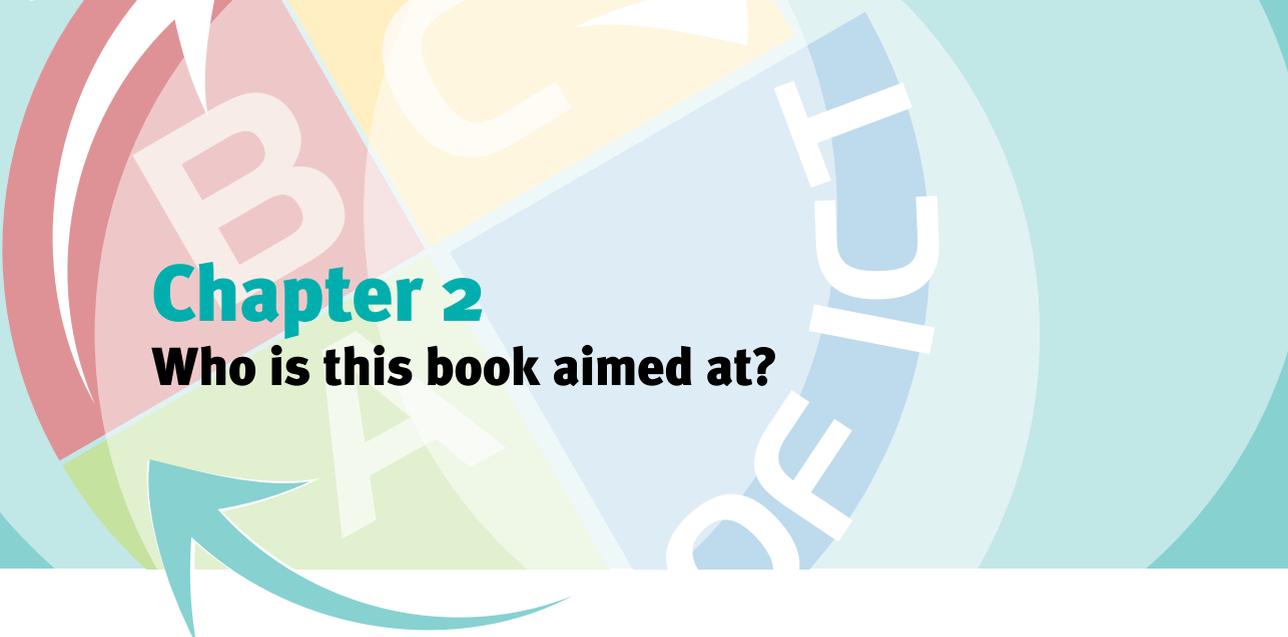
This book also contains practical examples from your peer colleagues and other experts who have experienced the ABC issues and have successfully done something about them. Armed with the theoretical building blocks and practical examples we hope that the reader will be better placed to make conscious interventions in their own organization, interventions that may finally solve some of the ABC worst practices that have been preventing us from realizing real, lasting results using ITSM frameworks and best practices.

We will also go into detailed descriptions of some of the ‘worst practice’ examples of attitude, behavior and culture. Why? So that you can recognize them, so that you can identify whether they exist in your own organization. We will show you how these worst practices negatively impact the performance of the IT organization and, more importantly, the results that ITSM needs to realize for the business. ITIL V3 stresses something new, namely ‘risk management’. We strongly suggest you add ABC to your list of risks, as being one of the most potentially serious. The advice in this book will help reduce the risk that ABC will damage your organization and enable you to ensure that ITSM capabilities really do become ‘a strategic asset’ as described in ITIL V3.

In order to help you, and others in your organization to be able to effectively recognize and deal with ABC issues we have developed a card game. These cards, and the ‘worst practice’ cartoons

they contain, are based upon the most common worst practices people tell us about, and worst practices we see in our travels around the world of IT organizations. The cards can be used in your own team or department to make the ABC issues visible, to bring them into the open and discuss them. Discuss them and the consequences that they bring for your organization. Once they are recognized, agreed and the consequences known, you have a basis for the next step, agreeing how to tackle them. There are a number of exercises you can perform with various stakeholder groups, using these cards. They are, in effect, an awareness and assessment instrument.

In order to help you apply what you discover reading this book, we have added one or two practical exercise you can apply directly in your own working environment.



Chapter 2

Who is this book aimed at?

As we have already mentioned. Our worst practice presentations get a lot of people nodding their heads in recognition and agreement. Many people come up to us afterwards and ask us 'How can I address these issues?' 'What should I do?' This is what prompted us to write the book, and these are the people we are writing it for. This book should be valuable to the following people:

1. ITSM professionals who agree that ABC is one of the most critical success or fail factors for ITSM improvement initiatives.

They will learn how to recognize and address the ABC 'worst practices' or potential fail factors. They will learn how to become one of the critical success factors, 'an effective instrument for change' and what type of interventions they can initiate to change ABC.

2. ITSM professionals who think the ABC issues are nonsense, or something that managers should already know and do, and therefore there is no need to give them any 'special treatment'.

For this target group we hope that their eyes will be opened, that they will realize how misplaced their 'attitude' and 'belief' is. We gave our 'worst practice' presentations 10 years ago. 10 years later we gave almost exactly the same presentations. The presentations STILL received wide recognition and high scores. Since then we have had ITIL V2 and now ITIL V3. The problems persist and are becoming even more important to resolve as IT becomes increasingly important. We can no longer afford to ignore them and hope that they will go away. These people may see and read the worst practice examples in this book and, by using and discussing the cards, may learn how these ABC aspects are equally relevant in their own organization. Indeed they may see that these ABC aspects are preventing their own ITSM improvement initiatives from realizing real, lasting results. For this type of person we'd like to point you to the case example of using the ABC cards, described by the card the 'Queen of clubs'.

3. For anybody interested in ABC aspects in ITSM or organizations in general.

This book is written for anybody and everybody who has anything to do with ITSM. We are adding this because it makes our publisher happy and increases his potential sales audience!

No, but really it is written for anybody that needs to play a role in making ITSM initiatives a success. CIO's, IT managers, process managers, service managers, operational managers, project managers, team leaders, human resource managers, trainers, advisors, consultants, suppliers.....and indeed even those who are often the victims of misguided, poorly applied ITSM initiatives, the people who have to use the books of procedures that are produced on their behalf. The operational level staff....of course let's not forget end users and customers of ITSM. Let them have a laugh and see what kind of strange world we live in and what kind of issues we are faced with. Also let's not forget that end-users, customers and business executives also have a role to play in making ITSM a success.

Hopefully everybody can find something in this book they recognize that is standing in their way, and recognize something that they themselves can do to change 'attitude' and 'behavior'. Many people, such as operational staff feel 'victims' of these ITSM initiatives, they feel dumped upon from a great height by everybody. They just want to do their work and get on with managing (or mismanaging) IT. This book should also give these people an insight into 'interventions' they can make. Take control of their own role in ITSM improvement initiatives. If you don't take ownership and initiate some kind of action then quite frankly, sorry to put it this way, but you deserve to get dumped on.

Don't believe us? Thinking to yourself "That's easy for you to say..."? Well here is an example.

A small case:

We have chosen this case as a result of a recent poll we conducted on the itSMF website in the Netherlands. It was in response to the following worst practice card:

Specialist talking to Help Desk employee: "If I told you how to do that, then you'd know as much as ME....That will NEVER do" (knowledge is power).

The poll was 'We are not very good in IT at sharing knowledge' – 86% agreed. A significant number. How can you change this?

A Help Desk manager, and Help Desk staff were the butt of all internal IT jokes. Poor quality, lousy service, user complaints, complaints from support staff. Senior managers didn't see value in the Help Desk, little money was spent on improving it. ITIL was being adopted and the Help Desk manager was told to UTILIZE her domain. **Management commitment** was sadly lacking. In what way? The Help Desk manager needed a new Help Desk management system, she needed more authority to ensure she could get better, faster support from the specialists. The specialists generally put the Help Desk work that came their way at the bottom of the list of things to do.....and let's not forget the poor, long suffering end-user that everybody seems to have forgotten about.

The Help Desk manager felt sorry for herself, the Help Desk staff felt demotivated, depressed, powerless and, to make matters worse, they were given a book of ITIL procedures that they now owned.....written by some consultants that had never even seen a Help Desk, let alone an end-user. ("What is that?" asked the consultant.)

What did the Help Desk manager do to become empowered? To change things?

She asked us if we could help change the **attitude** of senior management towards the Help Desk, try to get managers to **change their behavior** toward the Help Desk.

We suggested some interventions:

1. Get the IT manager to visit an effective Help Desk and let the Help Desk manager explain how success was realized and describe the role played by IT management in making it happen.
2. Play a simulation with the IT management team to let them see, feel and experience the impact of a poor quality Help Desk, and see, feel and experience the success when the Help Desk works effectively.

Fortunately the IT managers wanted to organize a getaway, a brain storming event to help focus attention on process working. It was decided to play the Apollo 13 business simulation with the IT management team and the heads of all of the specialist departments. We put the IT manager on 'Capcom' (Capsule communications), which is the Help Desk. As the simulation progressed the IT manager was getting more and more stressed. His face went red, he started sweating as the Astronauts (users) demanded status updates, 'where is my incident?', 'when will you resolve this, it is important!?' He was receiving fragmented, incomplete and late information from the second and third level specialists in the simulation. 'It is just like reality!' was the general observation, and the general feeling.

We helped the team scope some improvements. A better registration and tracking capability, more authority placed with the Help Desk (Incident manager) for ensuring incidents were solved on time, increased responsibility by the second line for up-to-date information and knowledge transfer to the Help Desk staff, better registration and availability of common work-arounds. After the improvements were made we played the next game round. Suddenly everything went smoothly, the Astronauts (users) were happy. Availability improved, costs went down, resolution times increased. The IT manager was relaxed and smiling and feeling proud to be on 'CapCom'. We then reflected on what the success factors were and, more importantly, what were the impact of the changes made during the game to real life.

The IT manager sat at the back of the class, deep in thought and nodding to himself. Finally he declared there would be more funding to adequately 'tool' the Help Desk, there would be more authority and, even more importantly, the second line managers were given the 'task' to ensure their staff spent time doing 'knowledge transfer'. The Help Desk manager sat with her mouth open as she heard the IT manager **commit** to the changes that she had been proposing for a long time. Why this sudden turn around? We asked the IT manager and his response was: "In the simulation you are confronted with the impact of poor behavior on end-users. You are confronted with the pain and frustration of end-users not being able to do what they NEED to do....you are also confronted with the dependency of end-users on the Help Desk and how the Help Desk NEEDS to be a calling card for IT quality and service....I realized we NEEDED to make our Help Desk equally as effective as the simulation. Then it was a no-brainer!"

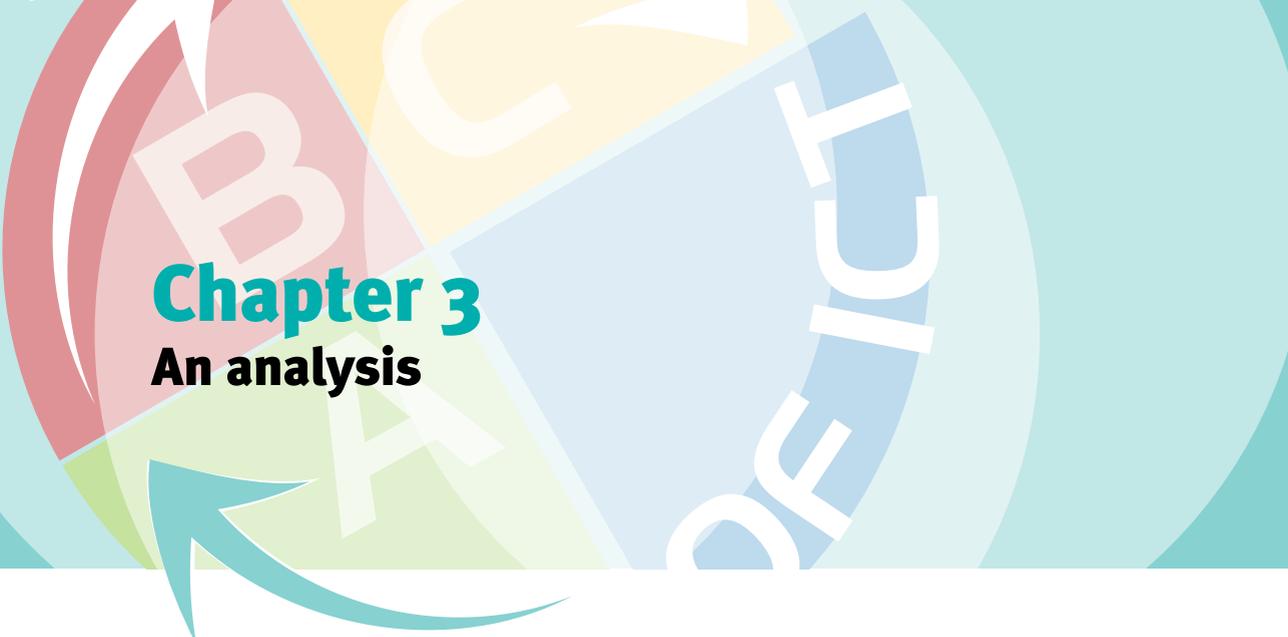
The Help Desk manager said that, ironically, the IT manager had recently read an article from CIO.com in which the following key success factors for the Help Desk were mentioned:

“Make sure your online knowledge base is simple and easy to use by focusing on the 10% of problems that account for 40% of the calls...”

“Put together a sample group of affected users, Help Desk technicians and project team members to brainstorm a sizable list of FAQs, and post the results on the Help Desk website...”

“Make sure you’ve got very clear metrics around average handle time and average speed-to-answer, and train your team to use these metrics effectively”

However, it wasn't until he was confronted with the actual situation that he changed his behavior.



Chapter 3

An analysis

Where are we now?

For the last 20 years or so we have been busy trying to adopt and deploy, no, sorry adopt and 'implement' ITIL. We use the words 'trying to' deliberately because the majority have not succeeded in realizing the 'hoped for' gains and benefits promised by ITIL. Often ITIL gets the blame for being too bureaucratic. In response we have produced ITIL V2 and now ITIL V3 to fix things and make ITIL work. However ITIL is not the problem. Indeed we can go on and make ITIL V4 or ITIL V5 but until we address the real reasons why ITIL 'implementations' fail, we will continue to disappoint ourselves and, more importantly, the business.

We have decided to include a small extract of the 'worst practice' article Paul wrote for the itSMF best practice year book to describe 'where we are now'.

When I began my career in computing 25 years ago as a system manager, otherwise known as 'technoid', I was informed in the computer publications of the time that IT'ers would need a new focus if they were to survive:

- I would need to communicate in terms the business could understand, and deliver services to customers and users as IT was becoming more and more important10 years later I was a manager of a team of system and network managers, a herd of 'technoids', the industry was preaching to us ITIL and how we techies would need a new focus if we were to survive;
- **W**e would need to communicate in terms the business could understand, and deliver services to customers and users as IT was becoming more important.

In 1996 we first produced our worst practice book. We included an extract of an article written by Lew Young, editor in chief of the Business Week publication, in which the state of IT was clearly described from a business manager's point of view. "*Probably the most important management fundamental that is being ignored today is staying close to the customer to satisfy his (or her) needs. In too many companies the customer has become a bloody nuisance*"

whose unpredictable behavior damages carefully made strategic plans, whose activities mess up computer operations, and who stubbornly insists that purchased products should work.”
 We certainly agreed that the customer was a bloody nuisance.

Now we are in 2008 and, of course, things have obviously changed. Because, after all, we have had all that best practice to help us. In which case can somebody please explain to me why the latest survey of the itSMF in the Netherlands shows the number one strategic priority of IT organizations is ‘to improve the quality of services and products’. This reminds me of that film ‘Groundhog Day’ every day you wake up and relive the same day.

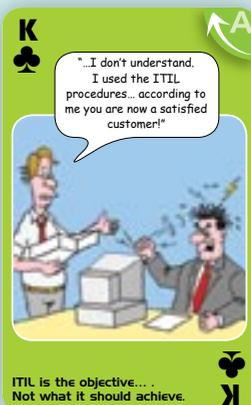
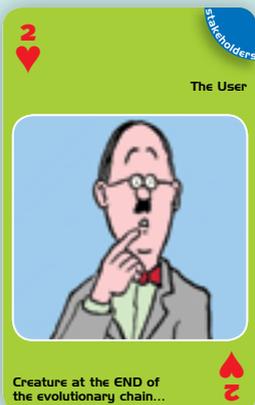


A technoid is somebody who grunts in technobabble and doesn't know what a customer or user is, apart from some annoying creature that interrupts his (or her, not to be sexist) work and breaks the IT.

This cartoon is accurate in one respect. ‘People’ are indeed the worst practice that is standing in the way of realizing the benefits of IT, people that can turn a best practice into your worst nightmare. The technology itself is no longer an issue. It is the way that it is used (abused) and managed (mismanaged).

SO WHY HAS SO LITTLE CHANGED?

Darwin proposed a theory of ‘survival of the fittest’. A species would evolve from generation to generation, adapting to the demands of its environment in order to survive. Based upon his premise you would logically conclude that from generation to generation the technoids would evolve and adapt to changing business demands... apparently not. It would appear the theory doesn't apply to technoids. Or perhaps the technoids are like the great white shark, perfectly adapted to their environment, they haven't changed in millions of years. **Perhaps the technoid is a perfectly evolved and adapted species? Grunting in technobabble and annoying the business is what it was designed to do.**



However, a species can succumb to some sudden external influence that can make it extinct within no time, look at the dinosaurs. For the technoid (the modern day equivalent of the dinosaur), this sudden external factor is 'sourcing' (out and offshore), threatening the survival of the in-house IT'ers unless they adapt.... and fast. 'Survival of the most adaptable?' A somewhat more topical and controversial solution is at hand and offers another new perspective. Gene manipulation.

Perhaps the only solution is to genetically modify the technoids. Research has already shown that lazy monkeys who only work when rewarded can be made to work hard at all times when they have undergone simple gene manipulation. If you see copies of 'New Scientist' on the desk of your P&O manager then it's time to start worrying..... But of course, this doesn't concern you.

So that explains where we are now. We still needed to change. If you want to assess where you stand now, then you can use our ABC cards to perform an assessment, or review Chapter 5 which describes the cards, the symptoms and some example cases.

Importance of IT for business growth

So after all these years, and having thrown ITIL V2 (and now V3) into the equation, we are still poor at improving the quality of IT service to the business. Why do we need to? Let's just carry on doing it the way we do. It keeps us busy, keeps the consultants in business, everybody happy, the cycle of life goes on. Only, let us take a look at IT today. IT is becoming more and more mission-critical. IT is a way of life. The cyber-consumer forces the adoption and deployment of IT in just about every industry. IT organizations face the need to demonstrate control and compliance. Bring IT under control and prevent risks and protect business continuity. On the other hand they face the need to demonstrate performance and added value. Demonstrate how IT contributes to business success and value. These are the driving demands in fact for IT governance, and indeed what ITIL V3 stresses in its Service Strategies book.

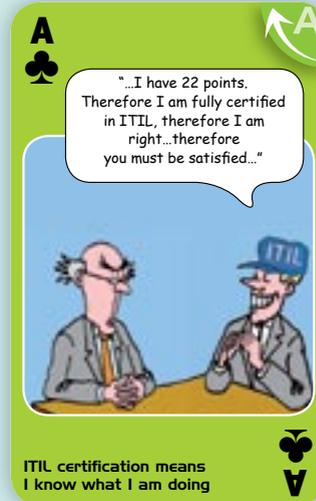
This drive for governance is one of the reasons why many CIOs are adopting ITIL. ITIL is exploding. A survey of 197 CIO's in March 2006 by the CIO magazine revealed that 95% of CIOs will adopt ITIL to address business goals. The success of ITIL is no longer a 'nice-to-have' but a 'need-to-have'. Failing to get it right THIS time could mean the red card for many IT organizations. So the status quo is no longer acceptable. We must change. The sense of urgency is clear to many. But is the sense of urgency felt by all.

This has prompted the authors of ITIL V3 to declare ITSM capabilities as a strategic asset. The need to use ITIL to achieve a strategic alignment between business and IT. Or, as many of those involved in the creation of ITIL V3 have declared, it will finally enable business and IT integration! This is one of the reasons I have written this article. The alarm bells are ringing. WE may have CONvinced ourselves we are a strategic asset, but go and tell that to a business manager and when he stops laughing and wipes the tears away from his (or her) eyes you can ask. "Why are you laughing?" This article tries to explain why.

Another reason for writing this article is that we do not see anything in the ITIL V3 certification schemes at present to address the ABC issues.

As a result we will send tens of thousands of people through ITIL V3 certification training, arming them with 22 points. We will then let them loose as 'strategic assets' to reap havoc with ITIL process flows and books of procedures within their own organizations.

It has been promised that things will change. But until such time.....



So basically governance is one of the biggest drivers demanding the need to bring IT under control. Minimise risk, demonstrate value. If we look at a definition of *Weil and Ross* ('IT Governance', Harvard Press) describing governance we will see where our first worst practice stems from:

'Specifying the decision rights and accountability frameworks to encourage the desirable behavior in the use of IT'.

Why have I used this definition from Weill and Ross? Because their book is based upon proven best practice taken from numerous case examples. Why have I split the definition above into three lines like this? Because one of our primary worst practices is that we focus so much on the first line (adopting the frameworks such as ITIL that will define some responsibility and accountabilities) that we forget and do not adequately address the second part **'encourage the desirable behavior in the use of IT'**. Which is what IT governance is all about - 'doing the right thing to responsibly manage the IT assets in an organization such that it poses no risk to business continuity, and such that the investments we make deliver value'. One example of this worst practice is the books of process flows and procedures we produce and 'hand over' to the organization assuming they will then follow them. Believe me this is still a reality.

We in IT adopt our own 'process' framework to bring IT under control. Process working is adopted and organizations realize they don't always deliver the expected and needed results. Process managers are created and installed into organizational structures. Books of process flows are enthusiastically produced, often with the help of expensive, 'expert' consulting companies. But the results are often sadly lacking.



Simply handing over a set of new ITIL procedures and hoping this will suddenly change peoples attitude (to become more customer focused) and behavior (Following the procedures) is like expecting all of the countries in the world to suddenly stop CO2 emissions because of Al Gore's film.

Why is this the case?

- (1) Line managers are often not prepared to change their role and accept process managers, whilst process managers often have little authority as far as claiming resources goes and are continually battling, and losing, against line management.
- (2) Employees don't accept the role of process managers, especially when they see how line managers behave.
- (3) Senior managers do not assume responsibility for enforcing new ways of behaving, and also fail to walk-the-talk. If they say process-based working is important and must be done, then they should be the first to show how serious it is.
- (4) There is often no relationship between the strategic goals of the business or IT and the key performance targets to be realized by processes; processes are often not monitored or actively steered.
- (5) Process working implies crossing organizational boundaries; too often SILOs and SILO thinking remain in place and the end-to-end process chain breaks down. A chain is only as strong as the weakest link.

This focus on 'frameworks' is also a worst practice that I still see evident at just about every ITSM conference I attend. What do I mean by that? Take a look yourself. The next conference you attend, look at the program and the titles of the sessions. 95% will focus on some framework or method or approach or specific process, very few will focus on addressing attitude, behavior and culture, telling you how to embed the solution in the organization, what sort of resistance you will encounter and how you overcome this. This leaves many organizations, new to adopting frameworks, with the naïve belief that they can simply be 'implemented'.



This is the first of our worst practices – we rush to adopt and deploy the formal frameworks and process models, and fail to address the bit about ‘desirable behavior’.

ITSM as a strategic asset

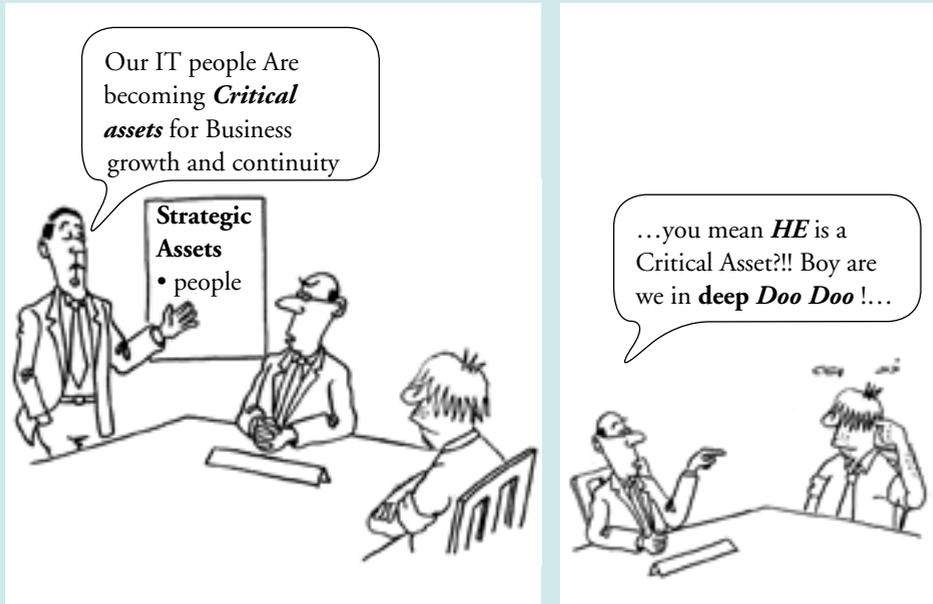
Once again I have decided to use an extract of my worst practice article to highlight one of the reasons this book is needed, and one of the reasons this book has been developed.

“The achievement of strategic goals or objectives requires the use of strategic assets. This guidance shows how to transform service management into a strategic asset.” (ITIL V3)

This is brilliant, and is my favourite bit of ITIL V3. It is something that sums up our culture and our attitude. I’ll explain what I mean. Strategic assets are:

Resources	Capabilities		
Financial capital	Management		
Infrastructure	Organization		Processes
Application	Process	Embedded in	Systems
Information	Knowledge		Technology
People	People		People

When I saw this, I asked myself, "Am I the only one to see this?" Because obviously the ITIL refresh authors, boards, reviewers and QA didn't, otherwise surely they would have said something about it?about what? PEOPLE. What is revealed here? PEOPLE are resources, capabilities and one of the elements of PPT. So PEOPLE are a crucial strategic asset??? Oh no!!!



If people are such a strategic asset then why isn't enough energy and attention given to the ABC in ITIL V3 to explain how to transform the 'technoid' into this strategic asset? Also, if people are such a strategic asset, how come the new ITIL certification scheme doesn't address this? Ensuring they have the necessary skills and competencies to become strategic assets? Ensuring that they have the necessary skills and competencies to change ABC? And if people are so important, why do we not see this reflected in all the itSMF conferences, presentations and workshops to help address this? I thought perhaps it is just me and my view and doesn't reflect Industry expertise. I looked on the internet and found these two items:

- **Bit Planet article** Survey shows continuing adoption of ITIL but persistent challenges. 'Number 2 on the list of challenges strikes a chord, in its recommendation of the need to ingrain process into the culture...'
- **Tech Republic** 10 things you should know about being a great IT manager.
#1 Spend time (and money) developing your PEOPLE.

So, here's another reason why the time was right to produce some practical guidance on addressing the ABC of ICT to enable us to become a strategic asset.

Failure is no longer an option – ITSM improvement initiatives must work

We have seen that failure is no longer an option. This time our efforts to deploy ITSM must work. If we want the business to truly see us as a strategic asset we must demonstrate we can bring IT under control. So what are some of the key reasons for all these failures in applying ITSM successfully? The following list is by no means complete but sums up the essential elements:

1. Inadequate link to the business value or performance outcomes to be achieved using ITSM.
2. Too much focus on ITIL as a goal in itself, and not on the desired behavior that ITIL is trying to achieve and the results that ITIL must realize.
3. Not enough alignment and dialogue with the users and customers to ensure they are involved and committed to the initiatives, the expected results, and their role in making it a success.
4. Not enough ownership or commitment from senior management to ensure that the desired behavior change is embedded at all levels and within all departments in the organization.
5. Not enough buy-in and commitment at operational level to the need for adopting ITIL, or the results to be achieved.
6. Getting an ITIL certificate is more important than proving you can do something with ITIL. The certification and training does not focus enough on developing capabilities, it focuses more on getting a certificate.
7. An unrealistic planning and approach to deploying ITIL. Thinking that ITIL is something that can be 'implemented'.
8. Inability to measure and demonstrate the impact of ITIL on results. What has it actually done for us?
9. Lack of involvement from operational staff in designing and developing THEIR own new ways of working. Books of procedures are produced and thrown over the wall.
10. A TOOL will solve all problems. Thinking an expensive ITIL tool is the answer to the problem. 'A fool with a tool is still a fool'.
11. Failing to embed the results into the line organization and ensure 'continual improvement' is part of the culture.

Where do we need to be?

Apart from the obvious fact that where we need to be is where we should have been 20 years ago, let's just quickly summarize for those of you that may have skipped the last chapter. 'We need to ensure that ITSM initiatives deliver the value we promised the business that ITSM would deliver, if the business agreed to let us invest in ITSM.'

- We really do need ITSM to be a strategic asset. An asset that reduces business risk, guarantees business continuity and delivers added value for the IT investments made.
- We must ENSURE that ITSM initiatives work. Failure is not an option.

- ‘Failure is not an option’ must be an attitude that is accepted by all involved.
- ITSM improvement initiatives must be managed as a strategic project. ITIL V3 will help describe the approaches. ITSM improvement initiatives must also be seen as a ‘management of change’ initiative. The ABC issues (Attitude, Behavior and Culture) must be consciously addressed.
- We need to ensure that we create and embed ‘desirable behavior’ in the organization, at ALL levels, as a result of our ITSM initiatives.
- We need to ensure that ‘continual improvement’ is embedded in the culture, that everybody’s attitude is they are personally responsible and accountable for ensuring ITSM delivers value and they behave accordingly. This is a tough challenge and requires all managers to behave in a way that ensures and enables this.
- We need to engage and collaborate with the business to ensure both the business and IT accepts each other’s role, and both start displaying ‘desirable behavior’. Once again this is a tough challenge and means that IT management must play a leading role in breaking down the ‘victim’ role that many IT organizations adopt.
- Pigs really will one day fly.
- Making a wish in a wishing well really works.
- Father Christmas does exist.

See we can make a list of bullet points as well. These are easy throw away lines. Quickly read and equally as quickly forgotten. Where we need to be is this:

‘Make change happen’.

How do we approach things now?

ITIL V2 and ITIL V3

We have an instrumental approach to applying ITSM best practices. We focus very much on the process frameworks and procedures, deployed as part of a project and program initiative. The results get thrown over the wall, the project is disbanded, things go fairly well for a while and then slowly things start to break down, people revert to old behavior and attitude, there is not enough authority or commitment to keep things on track. Because of the project approach to implementation, continual improvement is not embedded in the attitude or the behavior or the culture. Processes fail to align with new projects, and IT solutions or new IT projects fail to align with processes, whilst processes are out of date. Because we never really specified the value that was to be delivered, we never set the correct measurement indicators to demonstrate success. And because we are unable to demonstrate success and everybody had different expectations, very few, if any, stakeholders declare ITIL to be a success. Those who were skeptical at the start, now voice their dissent, and more and more people believe processes don’t work. We blame process managers, we blame line managers, we blame senior management, we blame the operational staff, we blame ITIL....see we told you it was no good. Then we look around and see that ITIL V3 has come and everybody who felt they were being blamed suddenly shouts, there see! A new ITIL, it wasn’t our fault. So we all go towards the new instrumental approach. Buy a new framework, a new tool and try to ‘install’ or ‘implement’ the new one.

The good thing about a new way of adopting and deploying ITIL is that a lot of people now 'recognize' and 'understand' the need for a holistic approach. We like using holistic because it is used by everybody in ITIL V3. It is this decade's 'buzzword'; the 1990's buzzword was 'leverage', so if we 'leverage' a 'holistic' approach then it must be a double whammy and our bullshit bingo card is probably filled up. Unfortunately we recognized the need for a holistic approach (People, Process and Product) in ITIL V2, but now ITIL V3 has enhanced this with the fourth 'P' – Partner. However the effort allocated to each 'P' is unbalanced and is usually related to the maturity of the organization adopting ITIL.

What do we mean by that? An organization with high technical expertise and the 'hero' culture towards the IT and the IT experts looks for the 'Product' focus. A tool solves all problems..... a fool with a tool is still a fool. They look to purchase an expensive all singing, all dancing ITIL compliant tool; thinking that 80% of ITIL can be solved with a tool. The tool suppliers, who predominantly still struggle with the concept of processes are eager to oblige and sell their tools, many come with ready made process models. We have literally heard this statement "...but the process flow in your tool doesn't meet our organization's!","....."That is because your organization is all wrong" declared the smiling, confident tool consultant.

Process way of working

Another level of maturity, equally dangerous is the 'Process' focused level. The organization has seen the light and has been converted to the need for ITIL. Not necessarily 'process based working' but more ITIL. ITIL is the silver bullet. In this type of organization the books are followed to the letter, processes may not deviate from the 'word' as recorded in ITIL, a slightly less mature version of this is the 'me too' level of maturity, everybody else is doing ITIL so we should as well. "What are they all doing?" asks an IT director... "They're all implementing ITIL processes" is the answer, so the focus is on process.

Both of the organizations above recognize that they need to have some people trained up on this 'ITIL stuff'. So they send some managers and process owners on ITIL training. The idea seems to be that once you have had ITIL training and you have passed an ITIL certificate then you are ready and able to 'implement' or 'install ITIL'.

Very often the people charged with installing ITIL do not have access to customers, users or the senior managers who knew why ITIL had been chosen and what it was they were all 'HOPING' that ITIL would deliver. As such, ITIL processes are designed and implemented without ensuring they are designed to realize specific outcomes (we believe ITIL V3 calls this value?). So the general approach is ITIL for the sake of ITIL.

If you don't believe us, then go into your organization and ask any process manager: "When is your process a success? When is it delivering VALUE to the business? Has that value been agreed with the business?". Let us ask it another way ...if we went to the business and asked them "When is this process adding value to your business?", what would they say? We would love to know the answers to these questions. However we don't think we will be surprised. Why not? Once again we will use the example of our simulation, Apollo 13. Why this example all the time? Because we have played it with thousands of IT specialists from all levels in the organization, in

most countries in the world and it gives us an incredible insight into common behavior models. And we want to share these common behavior models to help prevent you from falling into the same trap.

The teams in Apollo 13, including CIO's and senior IT managers, all make the same mistakes. They all design their processes without any direct relationship to the targets given to them by the business. When we confront them during the improvement round and ask them: "So you are spending 250.000 dollars in fact to improve your ITSM workflow tool, to improve your processes, to embed process ownership in the organization...what will I, as a business manager, see differently?". In more than 85% of the cases the answer is "Eh?". When we reflect on their own real life situations, the answer is usually the same. Little link between the processes as designed and executed, and the desired, agreed value that needed to be realized.

The 5th P of Performance

ITIL V3 has added a great new model - the design principles of the 4 P's: People, Process, Product, Partner. However they missed a P. It was there in V2 but seemed to have disappeared. The whole of the Service Strategy book talks about nothing but, so it ought to be the 5th P. What is that? Value or PERFORMANCE.

However the People side in the 4 P's approach is not given enough emphasis. Indeed in most ITIL implementations the people side is focused on technology and process training. The focus is on certification not on demonstrable capabilities to apply ITIL. Not enough attention is paid to how to create buy-in, how to motivate people, how to get people to own ITIL, how to get people to improve their own work, how to ensure desirable behavior. There are a lot of generalistic comments about how important it is, and then the books quickly skip onto the next set of bullet points. In a study we did with more than 1000 students the most important key learning point and success factor in Apollo is 'People'.

We buy a tool, we write procedures and we HOPE that people will use them and follow them and do the right thing. There is a very large gap between hoping and realizing.

A skeptical view...

A book that takes a slanted look at the world of IT would not be complete without some kind of statement, comment or observation from Rob England, the IT Skeptic.

We asked Rob if he would care to add his insights and vision on the ABC.

"Ten years ago, the ITIL community spoke of 'people, process, technology' as an important mantra. Some ITIL sources add a fourth dimension: partners (An Introductory Overview of ITIL, Colin Rudd, itSMF 2004). An even more complex model includes 'vision and strategy, steering, processes, people, technology and culture' (Planning to Implement Service Management, Vernon Lloyd, The Stationary Office, 2002). Personally I like 'people, process, things', and I like to add "...in that order". But the people, process, technology model is the most commonly used form. Ten years later it is as commonly spoken of and as seldom applied. . .

As Paul and Jan say in this book, little has changed. IT organizations still charge into the fun stuff, technology, with lip service to process and a nod or nothing for the people who will live with it. So I commend this book to you for its focus on what should be our first priority, people. (Known as ‘wetware’ to the geeks.)

I like the idea of breaking down the people aspect into Attitude Behavior and Culture. Not only is ABC catchy (people like their frameworks natively packaged and easily digestible), but it is a useful and accurate analysis of real cultural change. Good people and culture can cope with bad processes, and good processes can deal with bad technology, but it doesn't work the other way. Fix the people or your other efforts are doomed. Fix the ABC.”

Rob England (‘the IT Skeptic’).

But, there is also good news!

The good news is that in ITIL V3 people are strategic assets. Not directly though. ITSM is a strategic asset which includes people, processes and technology, implying that people are therefore a strategic asset. The CIO or business manager reading the Strategy book will be confronted with the following description:

“The value of people assets is the capacity for creativity, analysis, perception, learning, judgement, leadership, communication, coordination, empathy and trust.”

What about the bit about the risk side of people assets. They are busy with ad hoc firefighting, lack of customer focus, don't stick to agreements or follow procedures, account for 70% of IT outages through mistakes, communicate in technobabble, have no empathy with the business of business processes, demonstrate a lack of testing.....your mission critical IT is in their hands. Do you trust these people with your critical strategic information technology? Where is the lifeboat?

The ITIL V3 Strategy book gives us some sound, solid, advice of course about culture:

“Culture is transmitted to staff through socialization, training programs, stories, ceremonies and language and example.”

That is it. Well. That's really going to help me shape and change culture then!?

And then the Service Transition book, tells you not to worry because:

“The Service Transition Team will soon become familiar with the need to change attitudes and the operation of converting culture for them it is a routine task, holding no threat!!!!”

If this is so, then please tell us which ITIL training and certification made this a routine task holding no threat? Another reason for producing this book to show people the THREATS of the ABC issues.

What is the effect of all this?

The effect of this superficial naming of culture, of implying that it is nothing of real concern and of paying lip-service to addressing it is this:

- Resistance to change, lack of belief, buy-in and commitment;
- Value not being realized, with people not understanding their role and contribution to delivering value;
- Wasted money;
- A bad name for ITIL - 'too bureaucratic', 'it's all about procedures';
- A belief that ITIL V3 will solve all our problems.

And now, what should we do?

We need to change the current way we approach ITSM adoption and deployment. The approaches we describe in this book are based upon our own experiences and the feedback from the thousand of participants in our simulations who describe their approaches that worked. Check your role below in order to see what YOU must do in the next few months or years.

IT management:

1. Must show 'leadership' as desirable behavior in ENSURING that ITSM initiatives do not fail, and that they realize demonstrable results.
2. Must reward desirable behavior and make an example of undesirable behavior.
3. Must 'walk-the-talk' if they expect others to change their attitude and behavior.
4. Must understand the 'value' that ITSM should realize for the business. If this is not known and not communicated to all, if this is not translated into process designs and flows, if this is not embedded in accountabilities and responsibilities, then the old saying will still apply: 'If you aim at nothing, nothing is what you will hit!'
5. Must have patience and accept that changing attitude, behavior and culture takes time and effort.
6. Must engage with the business and gain credibility and trust.
7. Must ensure that 'continual improvement' is embedded in the organization.
8. Must apply suitable 'leadership styles' until true ownership and personal accountability is realized.
9. Must create an environment and commit time, energy and resources to ensure that change can and will happen.
10. Must 'empower' people to change by allocating resources, time, energy and by removing barriers and obstacles that stand in the way.
11. Must ensure that all IT staff are aware of how they contribute to business value and results.

Line manager:

1. Must visibly show commitment to processes and process management.
2. Must continually communicate the importance of process working in both words and deeds to their staff.
3. Must be prepared to reward desirable behavior and make examples of staff displaying undesirable behavior.
4. Must commit resources to process activities.
5. Must support their employees with prioritizing line work versus process work.
6. Must facilitate operational staff in realizing their change in ABC.

Process managers:

1. Must be able to assess their capability of being an 'agent for change'.
2. Must develop skills and competencies for addressing ABC issues.
3. Must ensure that all are aware of their tasks, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in the process.
4. Must ensure that the process activities are embedded in behavior.
5. Must learn to focus and manage the end-to-end chain.
6. Must learn to engage with line managers and resolve resourcing conflicts.
7. Must learn to engage with the business users and customers and ensure the business is engaged in, and committed to, the processes and their outcomes.
8. Must help convince people to follow process working.
9. Must focus on embedding processes as the normal way of working.
10. Must continually analyze and improve processes.
11. Must learn to ensure process design and process delivery are aimed at realizing demonstrable results.
12. Must devote a large part of their time to motivating and winning over people.
13. Must facilitate operational staff in realizing their change in ABC.

Operational staff:

1. Must accept the need to change ways of working.
2. Must understand how their roles and activities contribute to overall success.
3. Must show personal ownership and accountability for process working.
4. Must accept responsibility for giving feedback and improvement suggestions in relation to processes.
5. Must learn to give feedback to colleagues when procedures are not being followed.
6. Must learn to find ways of quantifying and qualifying their concerns and making these known.
7. Must be shown how to work using new processes and procedures.
8. Need to change their attitude and behavior to become more customer focused. There is a difference between saying and thinking we are customer focused and acting customer focused.

Consultants:

- Must identify who the problem owner is and who is empowered to say that an ITSM improvement initiative is successful.
- Must learn to help customers recognize and agree the problem to be resolved.
- Must learn to position ITIL in relation to the agreed problem that is to be resolved and not sell ITIL as a product or solution.
- Must learn to think in terms of Attitude, Behavior and Culture and learn to recognize the shift in ABC needed to get ITSM frameworks to work.
- Must be creative in designing interventions required to make ABC issues visible and to openly discuss and address them.
- Must change their approach from developing processes and procedures to ensuring that the people using the processes and procedures are involved in and own the procedures.
- Must ensure adequate communication and training to gain buy-in and to understand and tackle resistance to new ways of working.
- Must help process and line managers to understand what 'process management' is.
- Must focus on embedding processes as the normal way of working.

Trainers:

1. Must ensure customers understand the ABC issues involved with adopting and deploying ITSM best practices.
2. Must relate the ITSM theory to the customer's situation and needs.
3. Must ensure that customers understand the holistic approach to deploying best practices.
4. Must help staff to identify ABC issues and discuss solution approaches to dealing with them.
5. Must help students transfer what they have learnt into their own daily situation.

Business managers:

1. Must have an attitude that reflects the statement that 'IT is a strategic asset within their organization'.
2. Must show 'desirable behavior' in managing IT as a strategic asset if this is the case.
3. Must ensure that the 'culture' within the business at all levels is focused on realizing the benefits of IT as a strategic asset and for ensuring that the risks associated with poor IT decision making and 'undesirable business behavior' are well managed.
4. Must take their role seriously in relation to defining requirements for new IT solutions and services.
5. Must be seriously involved during IT projects and for testing IT solutions.
6. Must ensure all business users are well aware of agreements relating to IT services and their role in interfacing to IT services.
7. Must ensure that end-users are well trained in the use of information systems.
8. Must responsibly manage the demand and prioritising of all requests for on-going and new IT in support of the business.