

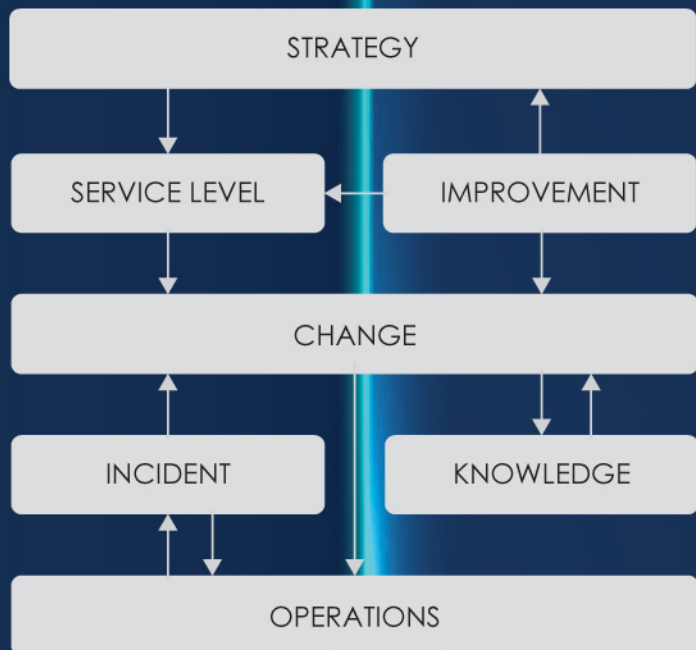


# THE ISM METHOD

VERSION 5

The road to customer value driven by practical modern IT Service Management

Wim Hoving



## The ISM method version 5

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**Wim Hoving**



# Colophon

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# Introduction

The ISM method helps IT organizations to grow towards creating excellent service, by integrating practical IT service management with, among other things, elements from existing frameworks and methods such as ITIL 4, DevOps, Agile, XLA and OBM in one compact, manageable and gradually implementable way of working.

Modern IT organizations are collaborations of IT departments, customers and suppliers; together they support the business with integrated IT services, leading to customer value.

Realizing customer value is a struggle for many IT organizations. A switch from technology-oriented to service-oriented ("behind every call there is a user who is waiting"), from supplier to partner and thinking along about how the latest techniques and ways of working can be used to support the business objectives. There is constant pressure to innovate flexibly and at the same time to guarantee continuity and safety.

The solution to this dilemma lies in the compact and holistic organization of the IT organization's way of working, which is what the ISM method offers. Rather than the physical information system, it is the IT organization's way of working that lays the foundation for success. Professionals who apply this way of working to create the services and information systems that fulfil the customer organization's needs. Leaders who facilitate the professionals by setting up and directing the way of working.

By integrating the latest insights and especially by continuously innovating and implementing solutions in collaboration with many IT organizations, the ISM method (ISM) has grown since 2002 from a process method to a single compact ITSM way of working for the entire IT organization.

An ISM application is result-oriented and only successful when the customers and users assess the service positively, and when the basis for continuous improvement has been laid.

This book is mainly intended for those IT leaders and IT professionals who want to better serve the customer organizations that use their IT services. They understand that insight into the way of working of the entire IT organization is necessary to improve internal collaboration. They recognize the added value of frameworks and methods such as ITIL 4, DevOps, XLA, OBM, and Agile and want to apply this in their own environment.

So, this book is also intended for those customers and users of IT services who understand that collaboration is a precondition and that they themselves contribute significantly to the quality of the IT services they require.

This book is therefore also important for those IT suppliers who want to align with their customers' ways of working in order to complete the chain towards customer value.

In short, this book focuses primarily on those people who do the work.

**In ISM, our own innovations are linked to insights from methods and developments in the world of ITSM, such as ITIL 4, DevOps, Agile, OBM, XLA, IT4IT, SIAM, Obeya, etc. It is emphatically not the intention to discuss these methods and trends in depth, and nor to integrate them as is in ISM. Those who want to study detailed and up-to-date information about these beautiful methods are referred to the available literature and the many specialists. In ISM, we strive for one easy-to-apply integrated holistic way of working for the IT organization.**

In addition, this book is intended for those advisors and consultants who help IT organizations by co-creating solutions that work, not by introducing the latest methods, but by helping IT organizations grow from their current situation.

Finally, the book is also intended for experts and enthusiasts who fully master, propagate and promote the latest methods and techniques. ISM helps them recognize how these methods can be integrated into a single solution.

Those who do not have their basics in order, are building on quicksand, have more calamities, and spend their energy reactively. With ISM, IT organizations reinforce the foundations of their way of working, a foundation on which professionals can practice their skills, which offers stability for growth, and is valuable for the customer.

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# 0.

## GOAL OF THIS BOOK AND HOW TO READ IT

The quality of IT services is crucial for almost every organization. Good, flexible and stable IT services are not only the backbone, but also a differentiating factor. Nowadays, almost every organization is an IT organization with a specialism.

This places great demands on the qualities of IT services. In order to provide maximum support to the organizational objective, an almost impossible combination of speed, continuity and flexibility is expected. And there is an increasing focus on customer experience and customer value.

Meanwhile, the societal importance of good IT services has become so large that the failure or malfunction of IT services directly leads to harm for the organization, the economy, or large groups in society.

That is why governments are increasingly setting requirements (compliance) not only for the quality of IT services (output and outcome), but also for the way in which the services are created (the throughput). Here, security, privacy and continuity are key concepts and therefore strongly influence IT organizations' way of working. This is confirmed by increasingly serious ransomware attacks, hacks and data leaks.

Despite the great importance attached to IT services, not every organization's IT services have the same quality or value. That difference is not caused by access to new IT products, services and techniques. Access to these is equal for everyone. The difference is in the ability to produce products and services properly and flexibly and to make them available to users. And that is the field of IT service management:

*“IT service management organizes the way of working of the IT organization, providing the customer with valuable IT services.”*

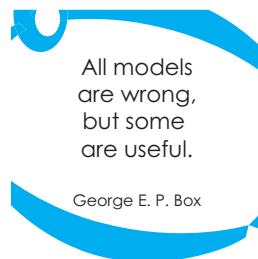
The IT service management (ITSM) discipline organizes the way of working. In ISM, organizing means setting up and applying the way of working through which the IT services are created and further developed. ITSM ensures that the best management

techniques are made available to IT management. ITSM is therefore about the way people collaborate. Together with the customer, they use the way of working to determine the quality of the IT services. Their information systems are only the result of this effort.

In recent years, DevOps, Agile and ITIL 4 have added important ideas and new insights to the existing ITSM methodologies and ideas. However, many IT organizations can no longer see the wood for the trees and are in danger of floundering due to the enormous complexity. ISM offers an effective helping hand for this situation. ISM is, in essence, a practical and compact ITSM implementation that holistically describes and supports the set up and application of the way of working for the entire IT organization.

ISM therefore goes further than both the classic and modern ITIL. ISM focuses on the people who create and use the services. This requires a holistic approach focused on customer value, in which all parts of the service organization, at strategic, tactical and operational levels are aligned. Moreover, it is a way of working that integrates the recent learnings from, among others, ITIL 4, DevOps, VeriSM, Lean, Agile, and Organizational Behavior Management (OBM).

The ISM method offers a practical IT service management (ITSM) approach. An approach that reduces the many complex best practices, Agile methods, and reference models available in the market into one single, integral, compact, holistic and easily applicable way of working to create IT services.



This book describes the ISM method version 5, resulting in a compact and holistic description of the way of working for an IT organization. However, the ISM method is also a simplification of reality and is, therefore, not perfect. The aim of the ISM method is therefore not to provide a perfect method, but due its compactness, the most applicable and valuable method.

In Lean terms, a True North that every organization can work towards at their own pace.

## ■ 0.1 HUMAN BEINGS IN THE CENTER

The goal of ISM is the effective, efficient and ensured creation of customer value (outcome) by organizing the IT services – and this is done by people.

It is striking that precisely in the better-functioning IT organizations the focus of the management, the leadership, is on leading the people. Servant leadership is put into practice: facilitating the professionals, enabling them to create the services.

In ISM, the emphasis is therefore on the person, the professional, the craftsman, who performs the actions that lead to the creation of valuable services and on the leader who supports the professionals.

In addition to the professional and the leader, there are also the (end) users who use the services, and the customers who determine which services they want, who have a major impact on the quality of service.

The professional, the leader, the user, and the customer determine together the quality of service; in short:

*“Service is people work.”*

Improving services is therefore mainly about supporting and improving the behavior of people, professionals, by supporting them with processes and value streams and products that help professionals and leaders to work more effectively in their respective roles. These people then design, create and maintain information systems and services through their way of working.

*“People determine the technology, fallible systems and services are man-made, as are successful services.”*

If the service fails, there is almost always a human error behind it, and the cause is more often the management system than the technology. Improving the service therefore starts with professionalizing the way people work. This concerns both setting up and managing, and applying the way of working. ISM is therefore mainly about organizational change management, with much emphasis on the behavior of people, managers and professionals, and how to influence this.

## ■ 0.2 PREMISES

This book's intent is to contribute to the realization of customer value by optimizing the way of working for creating IT services. It describes the main elements that are

integrated in ISM. And it can be used as a basis to relate the different traditional and modern concepts and insights and to apply them in one's own environment.

The first premise is that service management is about people. People collaborate, set up systems and create services.

The second principle is that a well-functioning solution should be as simple as possible. Complex solutions can be perfectly correct in terms of design but are often difficult to manage and to apply in practice.

A third starting point is the need for a holistic approach. Many good partial solutions, methods and models together fail to provide a single working whole. It is precisely in IT, in which all parts must be linked to each other in order for IT services to function properly, that the many parts of management form a whole. This concerns both the creation of services, as well as the management of the creation.

A holistic approach therefore includes all involved: the IT department, the customer and an increasing number of suppliers.

Another aspect of the holistic approach is the emphasis on managing service. Despite the presence of well-designed teams, processes and tools, many organizations fail due to inadequate management. The leaders often see insufficient opportunity to properly manage the well-designed execution. The result is poor contacts with the customer, an overloaded team, lack of security and compliance, and lack of customer value.

A fourth premise is standardization of the way of working. Although many do not like to hear it, all IT organizations have the same goal, namely to create customer value through good IT services, and can therefore apply the same methods. ISM offers a standardized elaboration of these ways of working. Where the standard way of working needs to be expanded, ISM's way of working still provides the foundation for additional situational choices.

## ■ 0.3 ISM BACKGROUND

The ISM method was developed by Servitect and has been made publicly available as a process-application model since 2003. In the beginning, the domain was the field of IT management and the emphasis was on applying a compact ITIL-derived process model with only six processes. The process model has withstood the test of time and is still growing in popularity. This turned out to be just the prelude to the ISM relationship model, developed into an integration with standardized service management tooling, and with the introduction of the process management matrix for a clear division of roles between process and line management.

In 2006, the development of FSM (Functional Service Management) started in collaboration with Univé insurance, the Netherlands. This is the application of ISM in the field of functionality management.

In 2010, the first version of the ISM book was published with a set of clear premises and definitions, and with attention to translating theory into practice through the description of implementation methods. The chapters about the service management lifecycle already introduced co-creation, the concept of the joint creation of services by the business and IT.

In 2014, under the title Enterprise Service Management (ESM), there was an initiative for the universal application of service management principles in fields such as facility services, medical technology and HRM. The publication of ESM showed that the principles of ISM are universally applicable to all forms of services.

Since then, new insights into change management, Agile ways of working, service integration, behavioral change and service creation have been consistently added, which have led to a single compact holistic ISM method, in which the fields of business, functionality and IT management are organized in one way of working. This is in line with how IT service management is regarded in 2024. The compact ISM method enables IT organizations with both a large and smaller staff to achieve a high level of maturity quickly and with relatively little effort.

This book describes version 5 of ISM. Just like the previous versions, this new version can also be used by anyone as a reference model to create their own ITSM solution, but the ISM choices can also be applied as is. This enables a far-reaching standardized, simple and compact elaboration and application.

## ■ 0.4 BOOK STRUCTURE

This book is about IT service management, the field that organizes the way of working that leads to the delivery of valuable IT services, and has the following structure:

- Chapter 1 describes what an IT service and its creation are. And also, the position of the SLA and the increasing focus on experience management. And finally, it also answers the question of why the IT organization is much larger than the IT department.
- Chapter 2 describes the role of IT service management (ITSM), what ISM is, and the many developments going on in the field.
- Chapter 3 describes how an IT service is determined. And also, the activities and processes that always take place to create IT services, and why good collaboration with all parties in the chain is needed.

- Chapter 4 describes the different roles played by people in creating services, and the importance of the behavior of professionals and leaders.
- Chapter 5 describes how to manage the creation of IT services by setting up and managing the way of working.
- Chapters 6 through 12 describe how the seven ISM processes can be applied in a practical way.

Appendix A is a comprehensive glossary explaining the many terms used in the world of ITSM and ISM.

## ■ 0.5 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been created thanks to the many developments, publications and experiences of recent years and by bringing them together in one all-encompassing compact solution. As part of this many new ideas and insights have been added.

Many have contributed to the creation of this book, with critiques, additions, and discussions:

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- Robbert-Jan van Lippevelde
- Rolf Smit
- Martijn Wiedijk

The team is led by Wim Hoving, lead developer of the ISM method. Everyone who wants to contribute to the further improvement and future development is cordially invited to make their contribution.

ISM is an application model that can be used freely, provided that the source is clearly referenced. This also applies to the ISM process model and the glossary in appendix A. These are available for everyone to apply as is in their own organization, or to adapt them to their own situation if desired.