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BrightOak Consultancy is an IT Service Management Consultancy. We are specialists in deriving business benefits by applying best practice techniques to your IT Operations.

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From ISO/IEC20000 to Continual Service Improvement; we have the experience to guide you to meet your ambitions.

• **I.T. Consultancy Services.**

Business improvement activities to program & project management - we are flexible and skilled

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Resources

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Topic: Practical Service Management

BrightOak Consultancy Resources

At BrightOak Consultancy we are committed to supporting the wider I.T. Service Management community. To this end we are heavily involved with the industry bodies; regularly present at conferences and events; author white papers, books and articles; and we produce these resources which are freely available through our website.

Topic: Practical Service Management

Resources in this series cover tips and real experience of service management issues.

Other topics include:

- Service Management Theory
- Governance
- Benefits Realisation Management

Conservation of Momentum

This piece is a useful reminder for those working towards Service Management certification. It looks at some of the potential pitfalls to realising the full benefits of the programme and is an adaptation of an article originally written for ITSM Portal by Adam Poppleton of BrightOak Consultancy.

Service Management isn't a product; it's a business transformation. It's a culture change that shifts the focus of IT from just managing technology to delivering business benefits.

If an organisation sets out with an end goal of 'implementing' service management then it hasn't understood it's fundamental nature. There will be a tendency to believe that it is an addition to the existing department activities rather than a new way of working. Once 'achieved' the focus will fade, the benefits of service management will diminish and the success of the whole initiative will be eroded.

So what can be done to avoid to avoid (or recover from) this?

In order to answer this, we need to look at some of the issues:

- In order to effect business change, organisations require a method to control it. In most cases, this is defined and budgeted as a program or project with documented objectives and end point.
- The emphasis on 'implementing' service management means that it is naturally viewed as a project with the assumption that it will just transition into 'business-as-usual' on completion.
- A project approach can also heighten the feeling that either this is another fad initiative which will change nothing or that it will deliver a panacea without the need for anyone to change their ways or their attitudes.
- Many implementations begin with good intentions but poor preparation. "We know that there is a problem here that service management will fix but working out how big the problem is will just slow us down ... so, off we go!" Therefore determining good, objective and realistic metrics which will show continued benefit to the business, staff and management

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'Baselining'

Confirming a full understanding of the initial situation is essential in any change programme.

Setting a series of metrics to be measured before changes are made enables; the creation of the business case, the setting of suitable goals, allows an effective assessment of progress and thus for any deviations from the intended direction to be identified and corrected early. It also allows comparison against end results to determine the degree of success.

It is not uncommon to be in a situation, at the outset, of not having sufficient data to determine the baseline (maybe because certain processes don't yet exist in a meaningful form). In such cases it is best to set establishment metrics which track that the process is yielding results (as opposed to performance metrics which show how well the process is performing).

As ever the focus must be on delivering value to the business so, in addition to process metrics, the baseline should include metrics which show the contribution to the business.



"If you are in the lucky position to be reading this before setting forth on your implementation, heed the advice: You must, must, must spend time to understand the 'as now' picture before you start."

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is impossible.

➔ Senior management are rightly focused on the operational, financial and legal governance of the organization. Service Management is not of interest to them if it is only seen as being about IT and isn't seen to address the business aims.

So, what can be done? Well, if the 'project is completed' then it isn't possible to go back and do it differently, but you can move forward. There are some fairly simple things that can be done to re-invigorate things. If you are in the lucky position to be reading this before setting forth on your implementation, heed the advice: You must, must, must spend time to understand the 'as now' picture before you start.

➔ In order to keep ITSM focused on the business strategy, ascertain what management want or expect. It is essential that service management is and remains relevant, that it flexes with the business needs and that it gives value to the business.

➔ Examine the current situation, from as many perspectives as possible, and identify pain points that can be targeted. Set the benchmark and move forward. Analyse and improve ... that's the whole point of continual improvement.

➔ If it does not work, fix it or throw it away. There will be things that were dreamt up during the implementation that simply do not work. Equally, the priorities of the business may have changed, meaning there will be parts of service management which no longer deliver what the business needs. Do not be afraid to confront them; either fix them or replace them.

➔ Set really clear goals. During the project it was easy; everyone knew what the objectives were: they were documented in the PID. Once areas for improvement and how these relate to business objectives have been identified, document it all, publicise it all. It is easier to justify and obtain continued support for something that everyone can see directly addresses a weakness in the organisation's ability to meet its business objectives.

➔ Change the culture, not just the procedures. There is a plethora of information about winning hearts and minds. People really need to understand and fully believe that this is the right way to do things. People need to understand that service management is not a set of procedures practiced by a small central team; it is the ethos that the IT department works to.

"... keep ITSM focused on the business strategy ..."

"..the ethos the IT department works to"

➔ Educate everyone. It sounds like over-kill but if everyone is expected to conform and contribute then they need to understand how and, most importantly, why. You know what service management is and does, make sure everyone else does too.

➔ Make sure that everyone in the organisation knows what has been achieved, how they have contributed to it and what is still happening. Make sure that the customers know how it works, and the benefits it is bringing to the whole organisation.

So, the basic principle for reviving an ailing service management setup is:

- ➔ **Analyse for weaknesses**
- ➔ **Baseline 'as now'**
- ➔ **Educate everyone**
- ➔ **Make improvements**
- ➔ **Communicate successes**
- ➔ **Begin again (and don't stop)**

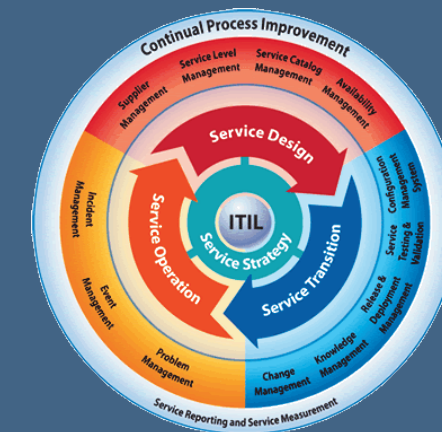
Sounds like a **continuous improvement cycle**? It is.

View the entire operation as a way of improving the business through better, more efficient and effective activities, and it will open up everyone's eyes to the possibilities.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle

Popularized by Deming in the 1950's, the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' methodology has been much refined in recent years.

The concept of formally planning an action based on current knowledge, then taking action, monitoring the results and identifying the outcomes, comes from scientific method. Most importantly it requires a rigorous understanding of what is happening and what the goal is. That is it - the key to the process.



Standards such as ITIL®, Six Sigma and COBIT are all based on this approach, as is the Lean philosophy.

ITIL® expands upon the principle, in the Continual Service Improvement model, which seeks to ensure alignment with the business vision across all phases of the improvement cycle.