

Creating an Actionable ITSM Roadmap

By Robert Simmons, Forsythe

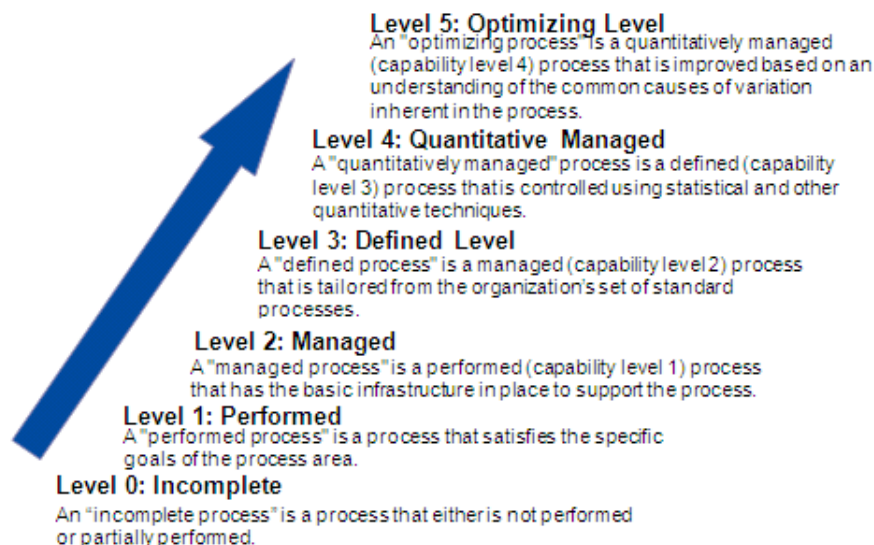
When creating an actionable ITSM roadmap, the most common questions relating to the implementation of ITIL-based IT service management initiatives tend to be: *“Where do we start? Where would we like to be? How do we get there? and How do we know when we've arrived?”* This is understandable, especially considering that the ITIL V3 library now contains 20+ processes spanning the five phases of the service lifecycle.

Organizations can quickly become overwhelmed by the task of coming to an understanding of ITIL concepts and how to implement them, let alone having the best and most efficient approach toward planning and managing a successful IT Service Management program. All too often, well-intended ITIL initiatives fall short of expectations due to skipping over the initial assessment of the current organization's services, processes, people and tools. Basically, someone forgot to ask the all-important question, “Where are we now?” Only through such an assessment can critical gaps be identified and a roadmap be developed to address those gaps in a logical and tactical manner.

“Where are we now?”

This is where every ITIL endeavor should begin. After all, when you plan a road trip with a particular destination in mind, not knowing your current location presents a bit of a challenge. So the first step is to choose those areas upon which you wish to improve and then perform a thorough assessment of your current organization's capabilities within those areas. At a minimum, the assessment should evaluate your Incident, Problem, Change, Release and Configuration Management processes as these are the most critical service transition and service operation disciplines. Ideally, the assessment should also evaluate Service Level, Availability, Capacity, IT Service Continuity and Financial Management processes to have a more complete picture of the organization's overall level of maturity.

In order to perform the assessment internally, you will need the resources and skill-sets for conducting a thorough assessment. Forsythe resources are impartial and use a proven assessment methodology. Based on ITIL guidelines, industry standards and Forsythe best practices, your ITSM Maturity Assessment is precisely targeted to your company's unique operating environment and critical business services. Assessment and development of the roadmap will typically take 6-8 weeks depending on the size of the organization and the scope of the evaluation. Numerous interviews with key IT personnel, as well as a review of all pertinent documentation and toolsets, are vital in order to gather and assimilate key findings. The evaluation includes a set of predetermined questions aimed at assessing specific aspects of the organization's services, processes, people and tools. A maturity scale, such as CMMI® (Capability Maturity Model Integration) depicted in Figure 1, shows how maturity levels are employed to help answer and rate the questions objectively.



CMMI is a Registered Trademark by the Software Engineering Institute/Carnegie Mellon University

Figure 1. Capability Maturity Model Integration

The final results, including both the averaged assessment area ratings and the key findings, begin to identify where gaps between current practice and best practice exist. Prior to implementing ITIL or similar disciplines, most organizations will rank anywhere from CMMI maturity level 0 (Incomplete) to maturity level 2 (Managed). Incident and Change Management tend to be the most mature. It is not uncommon for Configuration Management and Service Level Management to be non-existent.

“Where do we start?”

Based upon the gaps highlighted by the assessment, Forsythe recommends diving deeper into those areas causing the most pain in terms of quality, efficiency, cost and customer satisfaction. In many cases, there will be cultural, procedural and/or technological implications that, if not considered, can impede any effort to mitigate gaps. With all of the supporting detail, Forsythe thoroughly documents the gaps as well as what the impacts to the organization and business will be if the gaps are not addressed. Forsythe also determines the criticality of each gap to help prioritize which ones should be addressed first.

While documenting the gaps and impacts, it is helpful to also record observations and recommendations along the way as shown in Figure 2. At the end of an assessment, which can span several weeks, these observations and recommendations are instrumental in establishing a well-thought-out and integrated set of solutions.

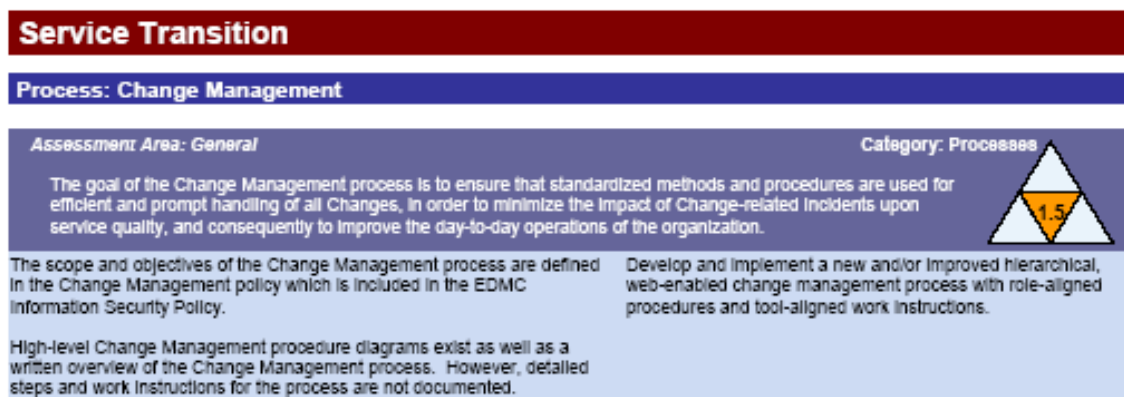


Figure 2. Observations and Recommendations

With each recommended solution, Forsythe relates the gaps that will be addressed by the solution as illustrated in Figure 3. This will not only facilitate the business justification for the solution, but will also ensure that, in total, the combined solutions will address all the gaps.

Proj #	Project Name	Project Description	Addressed Gaps
1	ITSM Cultural Transformation and Training Program	Implement an ITSM cultural transformation and training program through which IT resources and beneficiaries are provided the appropriate levels of ITSM and ITIL awareness and training. Develop custom course content and hands-on scenarios aimed at minimizing learning curves while maximizing process effectiveness.	43, 44, 45, 50, 75, 76, 81
2	Service Catalog Refinement	Refine the current baseline catalog of services provided by IT. The catalog should contain the service names and descriptions and business importance levels. The Service Catalog is authored by IT with the participation of key business representatives. The Service Catalog will serve as a foundation for aligning IT components and support groups in a service oriented posture.	98

Figure 3. Recommended Solutions

To summarize, Forsythe's ITSM Maturity Assessment leads to the identification of gaps and impacts, and our observations and recommendations will guide the formation of recommended solutions.

“Where would we like to be?”

Through the assessment, prioritization of gaps and eventual determination of recommended solutions, you have successfully answered the questions, “Where are we now?” and “Where do we start?” At this point, you will want to determine the desired state and a timeframe by which to achieve that state. As an example, if the assessment shows that your Problem Management process is currently at a maturity level of 1.5 (between

Performed and Managed), then you should set your desired state to be 3.0 (Defined). Level 3.0 is actually the sweet spot where most organizations like to be. At this level, the process is well documented and being practiced consistently throughout the entire organization.

Typically, it takes about a year to progress from one maturity level to the next. So, if you want to go from 1.0 to 4.0, it will take about three years. For most organizations, achieving a level 4.0 (Quantitatively Managed) or 5.0 (Optimized), is not necessary. Achieving these levels will cost exponentially more to implement and maintain and will only provide incremental benefits over a level 3.0. Organizations that need to operate at these levels are usually regulated or governmental, such as the aerospace industry or armed forces.

“How do we get there?”

Before you go anywhere, you’ll need senior leadership commitment and the funding to carry out ITSM initiatives and sustain an ongoing ITSM program. Without these prerequisites, your efforts—although well-intended—will be futile. Having solid evidence of your organization’s shortcomings, via the assessment, should certainly get management’s attention.

Having a strategy on how to overcome those shortcomings will be critical in gaining their support and getting the funding you will need. This strategy can be presented as a roadmap of related projects. Each project addresses specific gaps, all aimed at the following accomplishments: increasing organizational understanding and acceptance of ITSM, implementing and integrating highly effective infrastructure processes, enabling processes and increasing efficiency through automation, and increasing overall customer satisfaction through the delivery of high-quality and cost-effective services. Each project on the roadmap has well-defined scope, objectives, benefits, activities and dependencies, as well as projected duration, resource requirements and cost as shown in Figure 4.

Project	3. Service Level Management - Process Development	Gaps	97, 98
Duration	2-3 Months	Difficulty	Medium complexity, Medium cultural impact, Medium effort
Description			
Develop and Implement an ITIL-aligned Service Level Management process for authoring, negotiating, activating, maintaining and reporting on service levels.			
Major Tasks		Benefits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop ITIL-aligned SLM process - Train SLM resources - Implement SLM process - Plan the service level structure (Catalog item Template) - Prioritize services in order to create the roadmap for development of service levels - Conduct meetings with customers to negotiate service level requirements - Review OLAs and underpinning contracts for support of services - Document external and internal specifications - Draft service level documentation - Publish service level requirements - Collaborate with metrics and reporting team to determine and implement metrics and reporting requirements - Collaborate with communication and training team to determine and fulfill communication and training requirements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishes the foundation for developing and reviewing service levels for the business - Documents service levels in a standard format - Facilitates IT to be viewed as a service provider rather than a cost center - Provides the basis through which IT can account for and recover costs on service investments 	
Resource Requirements			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLM Team - SLM Consultants 	
Key Dependencies		Resource Costs	Non-Resource Costs
- Customer buy-in of SLM process		\$170,000 - \$255,000	Tool Configuration

Figure 4. Project Description

The roadmap as depicted in Figure 5, which can span several months or even years, clearly illustrates prerequisite projects that must be completed before others can begin.

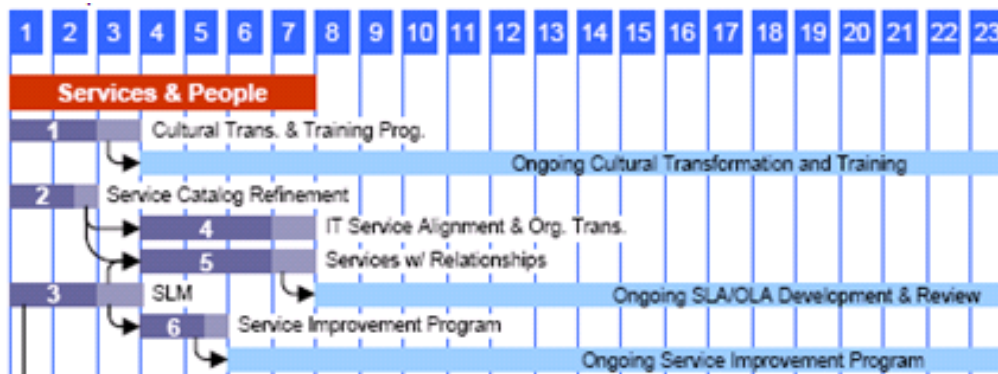


Figure 5. Roadmap

To illustrate, if Change Management and Release Management projects are both depicted in the roadmap, the Change Management project should precede the Release Management project as Release builds off of and requires an effective Change Management process. There are many such logical progressions, so it is imperative that the roadmap is developed by resources such as Forsythe ITSM consultants who have the knowledge and practical experience of implementing ITSM and ITIL.

One thing to keep in mind while scoping each project is to avoid trying to do too much, too quickly. A large project should be broken into phases wherein critical gaps and quick wins are addressed first. Later phases can then expand upon the successes of earlier phases. As time progresses, continue to review and evolve the roadmap based upon the current conditions, priorities and information at hand.

Implementing ITSM and ITIL and maturing the overall effectiveness of your organization is no easy task and will require significant personnel resources and funding. Be prepared for the long haul, but at the same time, ensure that incremental advances are made and publicized to keep the momentum. As long as there are recognized value and benefits, especially in light of ongoing successes, there should be little resistance to continued ITSM and ITIL investments.

“How do we know when we’ve arrived?”

A better question might be, “How do we know our ITSM and ITIL investments are working?” You will need a way of measuring your actual effectiveness and comparing that to anticipated results. If possible, establish some baseline measurements in order to capture the before snapshot of the organization’s performance prior to any ITSM or ITIL engagement. Then, after implementing new processes or improvements, trend and compare the new (after) results to the before results to see how performance has improved. Don’t be disillusioned if the delta is not as large as you would have anticipated. It will take time for the organization to become proficient with the new processes and improvements; over time, the results should follow suit. Remember, you can't expect what you don't inspect.

When deciding upon the appropriate metrics to measure your organization’s progress, categorize metrics into the following groups: quality, performance and compliance. Quality metrics measure the degree to which products, services, deliverables and supporting documentation meet predetermined standards of excellence. Performance metrics measure how efficiently and cost-effectively products and services can be provided or targets can be met without sacrificing quality. Compliance metrics measure the organization’s ability to abide by established regulatory, organizational and process policies and requirements. Having metrics in all these areas, and taking action when metrics trend adversely, will ensure that your ITSM and ITIL program remain strong and healthy.

Don’t stop now.

Even when you’ve successfully attained and maintained your desired state, always look for new opportunities to improve and streamline your operations. Don’t know where to go from here? Maybe it’s time for your next actionable ITSM roadmap.

Let Forsythe help you develop and execute an actionable ITSM roadmap tailored specifically to your organization. It all begins with a conversation. Call Forsythe today.

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