A FORSYTHE WHITEPAPER

Developing Actionable ITIL Processes

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Effective adoption of ITIL requires not only the application of ITIL best practices, but also a sound process development framework. Coupled with a campaign of cultural transformation and consistent measurement and results tracking, solid process development techniques will yield repeatable, integrated and actionable processes for managing services and operations across the IT organization.

The Pitfalls of Haphazardness

Haphazard processes can perpetuate inefficiencies, if not chaos, in an IT organization. For example, the complete set of knowledge of an IT organization's activities is usually spread among its many employees. This applies to process documentation, which is too often located in disparate repositories—such as hard drives, shared drives, email folders and people's memories—and is typically stored in many formats such as Word, Visio, PowerPoint, or not documented at all.

Thus, critical process intelligence can be lost or get out of sync when staff members leave, or when the organization grows, restructures or merges.

The result is haphazard process development, as illustrated in Figure 1. Haphazard processes may have no clear entry or exit point, too much (or too little) detail, crossing lines, wordy or ambiguous procedure names, undefined roles and ownership, and a lack of clearly defined inputs and outputs to and from other processes.

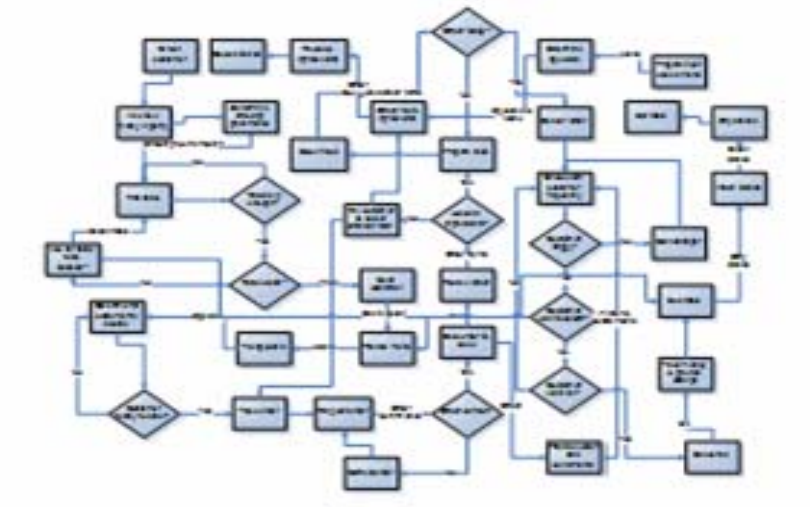

Figure 1. Haphazard process development

Instituting a Sound Process Development Framework

A sound framework to support development of actionable ITIL V3 processes brings many benefits: centralized knowledge capture, repeatable results, reduced defects, increased collaboration, and a shared process language across the organization. It facilitates continual process improvement and provides a consistent baseline for measurements, results tracking and change control.

Forsythe's ITIL V3 process development framework is known as the Service Transformation Enablement Process Framework, or STEP®. STEP® comprises an online tool built around a multi-layered process model. As depicted in Figure 2, each layer of the model parses the process into progressively lower levels of detail, leading the end user in an intuitive fashion to the specific actions required for thorough ITIL process implementation.

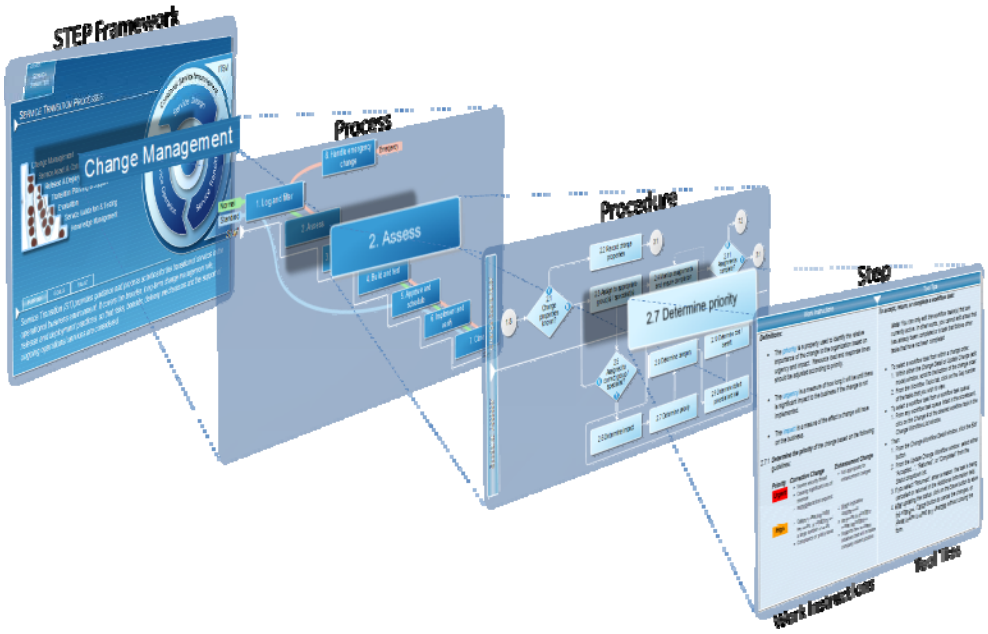

Figure 2. Multi-layered STEP® Framework

The four layers of the STEP® Framework are:

1. Process
2. Procedures
3. Steps
4. Work Instructions and Tool Tips

Processes, procedures, steps and work instructions, are housed within the online STEP® tool. The highest and lowest layers, policies and work flows, physically reside outside of the online tool, but are still an integral part of an actionable process model.

Each layer of an actionable process model is described in detail below.

Policies

A policy is a high-level overall plan that covers general objectives and expectations. For example, a common policy for Incident Management is to use the service desk as a single point of contact for all incidents, while common policies for Change Management are to establish a Change Advisory Board (CAB) and to define rules for executing different types of changes such as Emergency, Standard, Normal, etc.

Policy development is a responsibility and activity of management. It occurs outside of the STEP® framework and provides the goalposts toward which all process development is aimed.

Processes

Processes are high-level activities required to meet the policies and objectives of the organization during various phases of the IT service management lifecycle.

The major activities for each process can be derived from the various books in the ITIL V3 Service Lifecycle. This is where it all starts and where ITIL paves the way.

Procedures

Each process should also outline the *procedures* that establish the set of steps required to complete the process activities. For example, the Incident Management process would have a set of procedures to *Identify and Log*; *Categorize and Prioritize*; *Investigate and Diagnose*; *Resolve and Recover*; *Monitor, Track and Communicate*; and *Close* the incident. Procedures are repeatable and static regardless of the particular incident or change request involved.

A procedure is an action—its name always begins with a verb. Every procedure is triggered by a specific event or input, and results in a specific output.

Steps
Each procedure comprises a set of *steps,* arranged in flowchart fashion, that are followed to complete the procedure. For example, Incident Management contains a procedure to *Categorize and Prioritize* the incident. To complete this procedure, you would complete the following steps: *Determine the Request Type*, *Record the Incident Details*, *Identify the Impacted Configuration Item*, and *Determine the Priority of the Incident*.

Work Instructions
Each step contains *work instructions* which document repeatable, role-based instructions for completing the step. Work instructions are where the processes and procedures meet the IT service management tool, as they explain how to utilize the tool to execute the step, when applicable.

To continue our example above, the work instruction for the step *Determine the Priority of the Incident* would contain specific information about impact and urgency levels and criteria and would describe how to indicate the incident's priority within the tool.

Work Flows
The lowest level of detail is the *work flow*. Work flows are repeatable, role-based instructions for executing a change, fixing a problem, or producing a work product. Work flows are dynamic, consisting of the details tailored for each task that IT performs for the business. Documented work flows often reside in the IT service management tool in a pre-populated model or template, and are also referred to as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

An example of a work flow is an *Incident Resolution Template*, an automated Service Desk template that pre-populates an Incident Record with appropriate instructions for resolving a recurring incident. Other examples of work flows are: *Standard Change*, a prescribed set of instructions for building, testing and implementing a repeatable change such as a password reset or a new employee setup, and a *Test Script*, a specific test scenario for confirming automated functionality.

Fostering Actionable ITIL Processes through Cultural Transformation and Results Tracking

Ensuring that ITIL processes are actionable is a challenge that goes beyond process development and documentation. The organization must recognize that a cultural transformation is required to foster acceptance of ITIL and to anchor new behaviors. In addition, a measurement strategy must be employed to track results of the ITIL implementation, to determine levels of adoption, and to promote continual improvement.

A foundation for successful change
An ITIL initiative, like any change initiative, can potentially fall victim to the "dead salmon" syndrome: Salmon swim upstream—against the flow—and ultimately end up dead in the water. An ITIL initiative that is constantly swimming upstream against the cultural flow will likely meet a similar fate.

In his book *Leading Change,* John Kotter discusses an "eight stage process of creating major change" to effectively lead an organization through cultural transformation. The eight stages are:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering broad-based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

According to Kotter, stages 1 through 4 of the transformation process help break the status quo, stages 5 to 7 introduce new practices, and stage 8 grounds the changes in the culture to help them stick.

However, the pressure to produce quick results often leads to a desire to skip stages or to execute them out of order. But, don't be a dead salmon. It is important that all eight stages are followed sequentially. To curtail the desire of individuals to work against the impending change, and to actually nurture enthusiastic support, follow best practices for creating successful change *before* going down the road of ITIL implementation. Establish a Steering Committee, form a good foundation of management support and communicate the vision *before* proceeding to introduce process and procedural change to the organization.

Reinforcing change through measurement
An essential part of any ITIL implementation is to monitor technical and business results—such as process performance, quality, customer satisfaction and levels of compliance—utilizing rationalized metrics, reports and auditing. Determine and baseline a set of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) with supporting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Operating Metrics (OMs). Determine a reporting strategy and schedule. These will be utilized by the steering committee, process owners and managers to measure process conformance, quality and performance.

Keep in mind that it is not reasonable to expect that process will be followed without proper inspection for conformance and performance. You can't expect what you don't inspect.

Monitoring cultural adoption
Just as important is to measure cultural adoption of ITIL by surveying and interviewing IT staff to learn their attitudes. Are they realizing practical benefits as a result of the ITIL initiative, and does it seem worth the effort so far? Do they have an idea to contribute, or do they want clarification of an issue? This is crucial to making processes actionable and to ensure continual process improvement.

Summary

A sound framework for process development coupled with cultural transformation and results tracking are essential for success in implementing ITIL processes. Forsythe has used the field-proven STEP® methodology to help organizations move to ITIL V3 quickly and effectively relative to traditional ITIL implementations.

Additionally, cultural transformation is a key element of every ITIL adoption, and Forsythe is working with strategic partners to integrate reporting tools to support seamless execution of measurement and results tracking.

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

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