IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY

PROPOSED L&D STRATEGY FOR ITSM

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Introduction

With learning and develoment (L&D) for IT service management (ITSM) in mind, this document proposal focuses on **improving service quality.**

Firstly,

- Service quality is paramount to the success and survival of every business organisation therefore, becomes a key component of every business organisation's strategy.
- L&D cannot have a strategy that stands on its own when it is part of business strategy therefore, business strategy flows into L&D strategy.
- ITSM is the fibre of every service today, therefore L&D strategy must flow into ITSM strategy.

Secondly, with service quality in mind, this document attempts to help L&D by the way of:

- Improving awareness and appreciation of ITSM concepts.
- Offering approaches to how L&D can help an organisaton implement ITIL® best practice principles without reverting back to old working ways.
- Providing L&D with suggestions to how an organisation can optimise an organisation's resources.

Thirdly, This document proposes credible business solutions based on aspects such as:

- ITIL certification training
- Servant leaders
- Introducing a service management office (SMO)
- Adopting an internal certification scheme
- Managing resistence to such cultural change

This document also incorporates financial details therefore, if this document is to be considered as an actual proposal, it should be acknowledged that the contents of this document may need degrees of customisation and refinement to meet specific requirements, and may be subject to pricing updates.

The solutions proposed within this document have not been taken from the ITIL textbook, albeit many principles and defintions are indeed ITIL based however, this document has been composed by Trevor Wilson of ITSM Assist Limited (an Axelos®/PropleCert® accredited ITIL trainer, and an experienced IT service manager in the workplace). Those who would like further information or clarification about the contents of this document can contact Trevor directly at: twilson@itsmassist.com

Finally, this document has been divided into sections for ease of reference and understanding.

Vision/Goals

Vision: Promote a culture of collaborative working organisation-wide with a view of improving service efficiency, and in turn customer and user experience.

Goals: To Improve service quality
To adopt a service mindset organisation-wide
To ensure the consumer has total trust in everything we do
To make ITSM more open to audit and measurement

Service quality

Services are end-to-end' and quality' is defined as consistency.

Achieving high levels of service quality requires a culture of likeminded employees working in collaboration. This means that teams and/or individuals must apply their respective specialisms in collaboration with other teams/individuals (specialisms), not in parts (i.e., with a siloed mindset).

Specialisms represent the various components that make-up a service (i.e., the customer journey end-to-end), such as:

- programming
- database design and creation
- networks and infrastructure management
- technical design and restoration
- business analysis
- project management
- risk management
- security management
- and more

Everyone regardless of their specialism should adopt an end-to-end service mindset.

If we are to focus on service flow in terms of efficiency, transparency, integration, modification, improvement, and speed and direction then All specialisms must operate in collaboration as part of the same value stream.

Service mindset

A service mindset is defined as a component of the organisational culture that defines an organisation's behaviour in service relationships. A service mindset includes the shared values and guiding principles adopted and followed by an organisation.

Trust

Gaining trust requires commitment, capability, and consistency (collectively).

Audit and measurement

Both audit and measurement are dependent on visibility and definition**.** Decisions can only be made on visible data, if we cannot define something then we cannot control it, and if we cannot control something then we cannot measure it!

Where are we now?

Situation analysis

(Goal) **To improve service quality:** Whilst there is evidence of degrees of consistency through cooperation within teams, there is no strong evidence of collaboration between these teams.

(Goal) **Adopt a service mindset organisation-wide:** There is no evidence of a culture that promotes shared service values organisation-wide therefore, resulting in disproportionate behaviors, disproportionate understanding, and disproportionate awareness and appreciation.

For example,

- An overall awareness and understanding of the various components and stages making-up each service (end-to-end) is inconsistent within the organisation.

- Various teams are using their preferred best practice methodologies such as PRINCE2, Scrum, DevOps and Agile etc., as competing alternatives, when in fact these are not competing alternatives. The most relevant aspects that are meaningful to the organisation should be integrated as part of the organisation's own internal branded ITSM framework.

- In fact, there is no evidence of a defined ITSM framework in-house. Various teams are simply mimicking the textbook from their preferred methodology, some which provide service efficiency and others not. In fact, some methodologies adopted within one team would benefit other teams,' but these other teams are unaware of these methodologies. For example, without such a defined framework we see one team using 'Kanban boards' when other teams would equally benefit from the use of Kanban boards. Furthermore, some teams share dependencies therefore, sharing the same Kanban board would be extremely advantageous, such as making visible waiting times, bottlenecks, work in progress (WIP), waste, and where excess or insufficient capacity exists etc.

- There are no guiding principles to help teams/individuals benefit from expert knowledge that exists within the organisation to support a consistent approach towards managing initiatives, particularly those initiatives which occur infrequently.

(Goal) **To ensure the consumer has total trust in everything we do:** This is also disproportionate throughout the organisation. Recent consumer interviews and feedback demonstrated that trust and peace of mind is secured purely on the specific individual executing the activity?

For example,

- The same activity can be executed by one individual in a completely different manner and approach to another individual. Therefore, customer experience (CX) and user experience (UX) vary across the organisation. In some cases, this can vary so significantly the business can become compromised resulting in lost revenue opportunities.

(Goal) **To make ITSM more open to audit and measurement:** There is no evidence to suggest that workflow and work in progress (WIP) is made sufficiently visible. In addition, there is equally no evidence of regular internal audit for maturity assessment, or measurements that align with strategy and identify opportunities for improvement. Most improvements are implemented due to reacting to failures (e.g., applying corrective resolutions).

Where do we want to be?

Situation analysis

Whilst an environment of cultural diversity is encouraged and supported, i.e., appreciating that society is made up different groups of people who have different interests, skills, and competencies, etc., one cultural component that must be calibrated organisation wide is a 'service mindset'.

In addition, it is equally important that such a culture focuses on consistency, capability, and commitment, thus promoting services that our consumers trust. This means the manner in the way our services are constructed and executed should be open to audit and measurement, and subject to continual improvement. It is vital that the organisation does not revert-back to old working ways therefore, the proposed culture must be firmly embedded into the organisation. For these reasons, the following success factors have been identified.

Success factor 1: ITIL® 4 Certification Training

Establishing a service mindset. The most cost-efficient approach is for all personnel to undertake ITIL® 4 foundation level certification training as a minimum. This will quickly and effectively introduce a consistent approach to the terminology adopted across the organisation, and an appreciation of ITSM best practice principles to support a service mindset organisation-wide.

Success factor 2: Introduction of Servant leaders

Establishing strong ITSM advocators recognised as 'servant leaders' (not managers). Following the aforementioned Foundation program, it is recommended to identify individuals to assume the role of servant leader (see key attributes below). It is also recommended to introduce servant leaders in numbers proportionate to the organisation. This approach will quickly gain traction and popularity and in turn overcome any resistance to such a cultural change.

Key points/attributes of servant leaders:

- Servant leaders become the glue' which bond collaborative thinking and working. Typically, a servant leader is not a full-time role however, when in a servant leader role, servant leaders think and act organisation wide, not just in the interest of the team which they represent.

- Servant leaders become the central point of contact regarding a particular ITSM topic area and by default, are dedicated, committed, and passionate about their topic area. Servant leaders educate and facilitate, and above all servant leaders promote the qualities that people bond with and comfortable expressing themselves. Servant leaders in comparison are like members of parliament.

- Servant leaders are not managers, albeit a manager can also be a servant leader however, these are clearly two separate roles. Servant leaders are not police officers or inspectors, unlike managers, servant leaders do not promote hierarchical power. In simple terms, in a servant leader role, when a manager walks into a room, they should leave their manager title/status outside the room.

- Servant leaders will use the textbook as guidance but transform such explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge that is in context and meaning to the business.

Success factor 3: Service management office (SMO)

Establishing a custodianship of ITSM principles, methodologies, and practices. The most effective and sustainable solution is to introduce a SMO to become the custodian of ITSM on behalf of the organisation, like a parliament for ITSM. Typically, the SMO is a virtual office made up of ITSM servant leaders.

Two key benefits of the SMO:

Those various techniques, methodologies, principles, and practices adopted by specific teams within the organisation which at present appear to be exclusive to these teams will be:

1. Captured by the SMO and where relevant, replicated to many teams within the organisation, and where appropriate shared accordingly.

2. The property of the organisation and not the sole property of teams/individuals.

Success factor 4: In-house certification scheme

Establishing clear communication channels and development paths. In simple terms, the reason students take an ITIL® exam is to communicate back to the examination institute (EI) that they have understood the topic. Upon satisfying the EI that such topics have been understood, the EI acknowledges this by the way of issuing certifications recognised world-wide. So, by introducing an internal (in-house) branded certification scheme customised to be meaningful, with direct context and relevancy to the business organisation, will communicate back to management that those practitioners (ITSM workers) understand their role in the context of expectation, and the required outputs and expected outcomes.

ITIL®

ITIL will become one of the primary methodologies that underpin the SMO, simply because ITIL represents the one aspect that is common to everyone regardless of their specialisms, this being a representation of **services end-to-end**. This does not mean the SMO will only have a presence of ITIL, far from it, however ITIL is the one common thread between all teams and individuals, representing the reason an organisation exists, which is to co-create value, and in turn directly and/or indirectly generate commercial revenue, or manage public based funding accordingly.

ITIL is a world-wide de-facto standard in IT service management (ITSM), there is no other comparable. ITIL focuses on services end-end' and embraces various specialist techniques and methodologies such as Agile, Lean and DevOps etc., So, to promote a service mindset the adoption and adaptation of ITIL principles should be one of core fibers of every organisation, team and individual.

How do we get there?

Phase-1: ITIL 4 Foundation Certification

It is proposed to get as many personnel as possible to reach ITIL® 4 Foundation certification. This will provide such personnel with a basic knowledge about the ITIL framework and how it can be executed to enhance service quality and not to mention, introduce a terminology that is consistent across the enterprise. This approach will also contribute significantly to establishing a preparedness to support this strategy.

Phase-2: ITIL 4 Managing Professional Designate (For Servant Leaders)

It is proposed to identify certain individuals to assume the role of a servant leader and in turn, further progress these individuals through the ITIL certification scheme accordingly. This approach will quickly gain traction and popularity across the organisation, and more so promote further development of teams and individuals with the support of servant leaders.

Phase-3: Form A Service Management Office (SMO)

The introduction of a SMO will represent custodianship and visibility of the organisation's ITSM principles, methodologies, and practices etc., The SMO will act on behalf of the organisation's governing body and capture lessons learned, new techniques and improvement initiatives and retain these as properties of the organisation. Servant leaders will report to the SMO which will be a cross-functional office representing cross-functional activities. The SMO will operate transparently with the project management office (PMO) ensuring a seamless approach to projects with minimal, if not zero duplication (see the organogram below). The PMO may also incorporate one or more related-servant leaders such as scrum masters, however the importance of ensuring a transparent relationship cannot be emphasized enough.
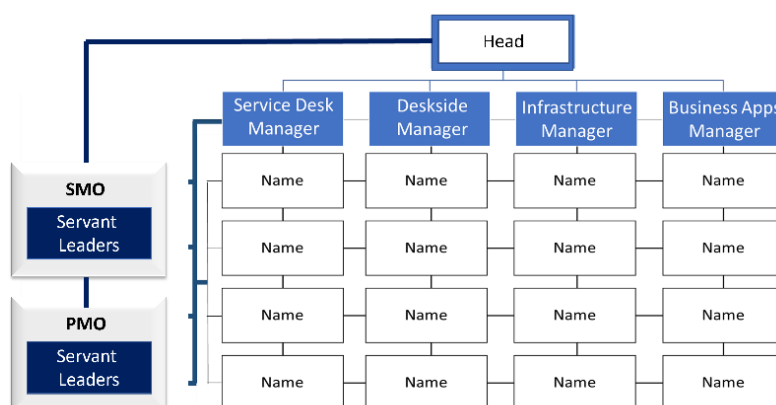
The introduction of the SMO will:

- Provide a custodian of ITSM best practice principles, methodologies, and practices etc.,
- Provide visibility of the organisation's culture of a service mindset.
- Provide visible representation of the organisation's ITSM maturity

Phase-4: Introduce an In-house ITSM Certification Scheme

Once the SMO has been established it is then proposed for to form its own internal framework and brand. Therefore, it is proposed to introduce an in-house ITSM certification scheme. This will provide an excellent communication channel between practitioners and management. This communication channel will help practitioners verify and reinforce their understanding of definitions used, overall expectations including policies, procedures, outputs, and outcomes relevant to practitioner's specific job/role. In addition, practitioners will receive recognition following successful verification by the way of receiving an in-house branded certificate. This will contribute towards:

- Classification regarding internal career development
- Measuring improvement
- Appraisals
- Investment in people

Certification Course Delivery?

ITIL Courses

It is proposed to deliver all course modules as online live (virtual classroom) courses.

For clarification, ITSM Assist Limited is an Axelos/PeopleCert accredited training organisation (ATO). Axelos are the owners of ITIL and PeopleCert are the official and exclusive Axelos examination institute (EI).

Courses include as standard:

- The official Axelos/PeopleCert online exam
- Free exam resit (retake)
- 30-days access to:
    - Copy of the course slide deck (PDF) - viewable and/or downloadable
    - Glossary (PDF) - viewable and/or downloadable
    - Official Mock Exam Papers (PDF) - viewable and/or downloadable
    - Key Points Summary (PDF) - viewable and/or downloadable
    - Key Points Summary (MP3-audio) – not downloadable
    - *ITIL Foundation only – access to MP4-video eLearning for the purpose of revision in-between online class and taking the exam.

Making Courses Exclusive

If five or more students attend the same course date, then such courses can be made exclusive. This means only the company's personnel or authorised representatives of the company can attend. This also means that dates and course start times can be customised to suit, including customising time zones including outside of the UK.

Online Exams

Students will be issued an online exam voucher directly from PeopleCert. All online exam vouchers are valid for 12-months from the date of issue and resits (retakes) are valid for 6-months following the first exam. Resits: in the unfortunate event of exam failure PeopleCert will automatically issue another exam voucher accordingly.

Unused Exam vouchers are transferable within the validity period at no extra charge. Whist resits however are also transferable, these cannot be transferred independently of the main exam voucher, e.g., these must be transferred with the main exam voucher accordingly.

Students can take exams from any location at a time of their choosing, e.g., from home, including evenings/weekends.

Exams can be booked/scheduled in advance of course commencement which is recommended with a view of taking the exam within a day or two following course completion. Some students take their exam on the evening of the last course day. It is therefore, recommended to introduce a policy, rule, guide, or expectation that students take their exam within a reasonable timescale following course completion and must book/schedule their exam in advance of course commencement to ensure this.

For clarification, ITSM Assist are notified by PeopleCert of student bookings, therefore, can highlight events where failure to comply to such a rule occurs.

Please note: When taking online exams, students will require a PC device (e.g., laptop) with webcam facility and of course internet connection to take their exam online. If students are using a corporate PC/network when taking their exam they should consult their systems admin in advance, with a view of seeking permission to remove certain restrictions to allow the download of a temporary application known as "Exam Shield." Exam Shield prevents students from accessing other resources during the exam. However, students using their own personal device/network will have no issues.

The below shows the ITIL 4 course modules which make up the Managing Professional (MP) certification scheme. ITIL Foundation is a prerequisite to progress accordingly.
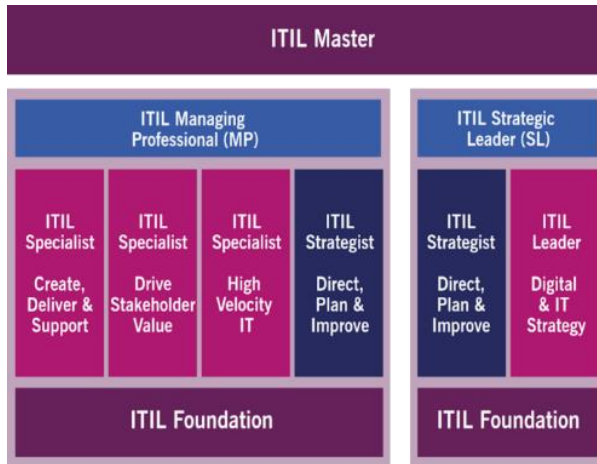
Financial Details

ITSM Assist are running an incentive focusing on progressing people beyond ITIL 4 Foundation, with the intention to run this incentive long-term. This incentive issues half price credits with every Foundation course booking, to be redeemed against any higher level Managing Professional (MP) Designate course, e.g., Create deliver and support **(CDS)**, Direct plan and improve **(DPI)**, Drive stakeholder value **(DSV)** and High-velocity IT **(HVIT)**.

The purpose of this incentive is to support the strategic solution presented focusing the introduction of servant leaders with a view of implementing and embedding ITIL principles within the organisation.

Course	Solutions	Pricing
ITIL® 4 Foundation (FND)	**Daytime** online and/or **Evening** online <u>Duration</u> Daytime: 2-consecutive days Evening: 6 x 3hr weekly classes.	£412.50 plus VAT, per student (inclusive of exam plus resit) **Note:** for every student assigned to these courses ITSM Assist will issue a half price credit accordingly. ***See half price credits below
ITIL® 4 Create, Deliver and Support (CDS)	**Daytime** online and/or **Evening** online Daytime: 3-consecutive days Evening: 6 x 3hr weekly classes	£287.50 plus VAT per student with half price credit (inclusive of exam plus exam resit) **Normal Price:** £575 plus VAT per student (inclusive of exam plus exam resit)
ITIL® 4 Direct, Plan and Improve (DPI)	**Daytime** online and/or **Evening** online Daytime: 3-consecutive days Evening: 6 x 3hr weekly classes	£287.50 plus VAT per student with half price credit (inclusive of exam plus exam resit) **Normal Price:** £575 plus VAT per student (inclusive of exam plus exam resit)
ITIL® 4 Drive Stakeholder Value (DSV)	**Daytime** online and/or **Evening** online Daytime: 3-consecutive days Evening: 6 x 3hr weekly classes	£287.50 plus VAT per student with half price credit (inclusive of exam plus exam resit) **Normal Price:** £575 plus VAT per student (inclusive of exam plus exam resit)
ITIL® 4 High-velocity IT (HVIT)	**Daytime** online and/or **Evening** online Daytime: 3-consecutive days Evening: 6 x 3hr weekly classes	£287.50 plus VAT per student with half price credit (inclusive of exam plus exam resit) **Normal Price:** £575 plus VAT per student (inclusive of exam plus exam resit)

Payment Terms/Cancelations

Payment terms:
Invoiced upon course completion with payment due on or before 30-days from the invoice date.

Cancelation:

- Cancelations more than 14-days prior to course commencement will not incur any charges.
- Cancelations less than 14-days prior to course commencement will incur a 50% charge or alternatively, rescheduling to another course without incurring any charge.

Replacing students:
Students can be replaced with another student any time prior to the date of course commencement without incurring any cancelation charges on the basis however, issued exam vouchers remain unused (e.g., issued exam vouchers will be transferred accordingly).

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q: When will this incentive expire?
A: ITSM Assist are not sure just yet but hoping that this will become a long-term initiative. However, those "half price credits" once issued will never expire. If ITSM Assist do elect to withdraw this incentive (e.g., stop issuing "half price credits") they will provide 3-months advance notice to those participating company organisations accordingly.

Q: Are half price credits only redeemable with those employees attending an ITIL 4 Foundation course?
A: No, half price credits once issued can be redeemed against any employee, or authorised representative of the company organisation accordingly. ITSM Assist send regular statements publishing half price credits available to be redeemed.

Q: Will the prices increase?
A: Whilst it is unlikely the prices will increase during 2021, it is possible that prices may increase during the incentive period however, such increases will only be marginal through events such as Axelos®/PeopleCert® enforcing examination price increases, or other unforeseen influencing factors beyond the control of ITSM Assist.

ITSM Assist direct links

Online Daytime ITIL® 4 Certification Courses	
Foundation (FND)	https://www.itsmassist.com/fnd-online-live
Direct, Plan and Improve (DPI)	https://www.itsmassist.com/direct-plan-improve
Create, Deliver and Support (CDS)	https://www.itsmassist.com/cds-online-live
Drive Stakeholder Value (DSV)	https://www.itsmassist.com/drive-stakeholder-value
High-velocity IT (HVIT)	https://www.itsmassist.com/high-velocity-it
Managing Professional Transition (Bridge)	https://www.itsmassist.com/mpt-online-live
Online Evening Class ITIL® 4 Certification Courses	
Foundation (FND)	https://www.itsmassist.com/itil-4-fnd-evening-class
Direct, Plan and Improve (DPI)	https://www.itsmassist.com/itil-4-dpi-evening-classes
Create, Deliver and Support (CDS)	https://www.itsmassist.com/itil-4-create-deliver-support-evenings
Drive Stakeholder Value (DSV)	https://www.itsmassist.com/copy-of-itil-4-dpi-evening-classes
High-velocity IT (HVIT)	https://www.itsmassist.com/itil-4-hvit-evening-classes
eLearning (self-paced) ITIL® 4 Certification Courses	
Foundation (FND)	https://www.itsmassist.com/product-page/itil-4-foundation-e-course-online-exam
Promotional Offers	
For companies	https://www.itsmassist.com/promo-offers-for-companies
For individuals	https://www.itsmassist.com/promo-offers-for-individuals
Other	
L&D Solutions	https://www.itsmassist.com/learning-and-development
Free MP4-video learning downloads	https://www.itsmassist.com/video-downloads
Team Courses	https://www.itsmassist.com/team-course
Become An Affiliate	https://www.itsmassist.com/become-an-affiliate
Frequently Asked Questions	https://www.itsmassist.com/frequently-asked-questions
Articles	https://www.itsmassist.com/articles-itsm