



Information Technology Service Management

ITSM Work Sessions – *lessons learned* by Richard A. Lannon, BraveWorld Inc.

Over the last few years I have facilitated several Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) work sessions within the oil and gas and utility industries. The challenge was to build consensus through identifying what is important, making recommendations and decisions and establish direction that would enable the IT organization to improve processes and services offered to their customers. The following article briefly outlines a number of lessons learned that came from our experiences.

An ITSM Work Session should provide the foundation for your organization to create the blueprint to propel IT services and business value forward. In establishing an ITSM initiative the following key groups must be involved:

Strategic: CIO and Directors to establish strategic intent, vision and enterprise objectives

Tactical: Directors and Managers to establish improvement objectives, priorities and program charter

Operational: Managers and Key Stakeholders to establish solution, roadmap, business case and project charters.

Fundamental to any ITSM session when engaging these groups is to develop a clear problem definition, defined and approved by the executives or senior steering committee. This is an area which IT often falls short. The lack of a clear problem definition negatively impacts the tactical and operational levels of the organization and limits the ability to move forward.

When working with your teams, build an understanding of all the work that is taking place in the IT department right now and how it fits within the ITSM support and delivery relationship models. Discussion, training and clarity will be required to ensure your people understand the ITSM relationship and delivery model. By engaging people in a defined work exercise, your teams can map out and see how their work aligns with your ITSM program requirements. This is effective in establishing leadership and team buy-in.

Establish a clear understanding of your points of pain (PoPs) and the IT maturity. PoPs can be established through focused brainstorming sessions. Once collected, your PoPs should be looked at from an organizational and process maturity perspective. This is often missed as IT has a habit of looking only at processes and tools to solve problems. Align your PoPs with the industry maturity model standards (non-existence, chaos, reactive, proactive, service, value). It is important that the content be translated into a service management maturity grid and aligned with the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) process categories. Work to obtain various IT teams, customers and business representatives' perspective on the ITSM organizational and process maturity levels. This builds some reality into the PoPs and maturity levels thinking by dislodging IT from a position of working in isolation.

Build a business case and program plan that can be activated by your people. At this point you are seeking clear recommendations and improvement objectives (what), benefit realization (why), tactical needs (how) and time frame (when) for which to move your organization forward with your ITSM program. This is the foundation for your ITSM program business case and charter that will be divided into project and operational requirements. You will need a solid approved business case and charter to enable you to navigate the challenges that will unfold on your journey and to clearly articulate the streams of work to be completed. There needs to be an executive team or steering committee assigned to provide clear strategic guidance. When forming and using a steering committee, their mandate must be strategic and clear. Tactical task-based reporting can be left to the project management teams and their need for task-based results and status meetings.

Recognize that ITSM is not an IT tool solution. From a business perspective, IT needs to stop chasing tool solutions, and "flavor-of-the-month quick fixes." Ultimately, the ITSM program is a business organizational change program that seeks to align IT with the business objectives and requirements,

improve processes and change culture in an effort to control or decrease costs, increase productivity and contribute to the bottom-line. ITSM programs need to be effectively operationalized. Therefore change management and communication must be at the forefront.

"Be prepared to have a long FUDs list."

Work with your teams to have them answer "WIIFM" and "WIIFT" questions (what is in it for me and what is in it for them). Ensure you established the fears, uncertainties and doubts (FUDs). Be prepared to have a long FUDs list. These will need to be acknowledged and managed within the context of the ITSM program and the change management and communications plan. Use your teams and people to establish a communication plan that takes into consideration your target audience and communication needs. Every organization has an approach to communications that may or may not align with their corporate culture. Prepare a clear communications strategy and follow it.

The information in this article is based on feedback obtained during facilitated ITSM work sessions and the work of dedicated IT professionals. Efforts focused on consideration for the strategic, tactical and operational requirements. Ultimately the goal was to improve IT. *It can be done.* Good luck.

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