

# The Movement to Implement ITIL



**Jim Metzler**  
Ashton, Metzler & Associates  
jim@ashtonmetzler.com



## Introduction

The last IT Impact Brief looked at the movement on the part of the vast majority of companies to redesign their business processes. That brief concluded that the vast majority of companies were making a significant change to one or more business processes and that for a number of companies business process redesign is a way of life. That brief also concluded that in at least some cases, companies that are redesigning their business processes are also redesigning their IT processes.

This IT Impact Brief will detail the movement on the part of many IT organizations to use ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) to assist with the redesign of key IT processes. Like the last two briefs, this brief will incorporate the results of the August survey that was taken by over three hundred members of the NetScout community.

## Background on ITIL

The Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency of the UK government originally defined ITIL in the late 1980s. The goal of ITIL is to provide detailed, vendor-neutral process definitions with the intention that these process definitions can be adapted by any IT organization to enable it to deliver effective and efficient IT services.

It is worth emphasizing that companies that are redesigning their IT processes need more than just ITIL. What ITIL provides is a relatively complete set of process definitions as well as some high-level guidance on how to implement the processes and what data should be maintained for each process. However, ITIL does not address critical implementation issues such as the choice of technologies or the organizational changes that are necessary to enable the processes.

In spite of those limitations, or perhaps because of those limitations, i.e., implementation flexibility, ITIL is gaining in popularity. For example, the Information Technology Service Management Forum (itSMF) is an international, independent user group that has become a major influence on the best practices of IT Service Management. itSMF has embraced ITIL for Service Management and has become an active contributor to ITIL's process definitions.

The main body of ITIL focuses on two groupings of processes - Service Delivery and Service Support. Figure 1 shows a taxonomy of the processes that comprise those groupings.

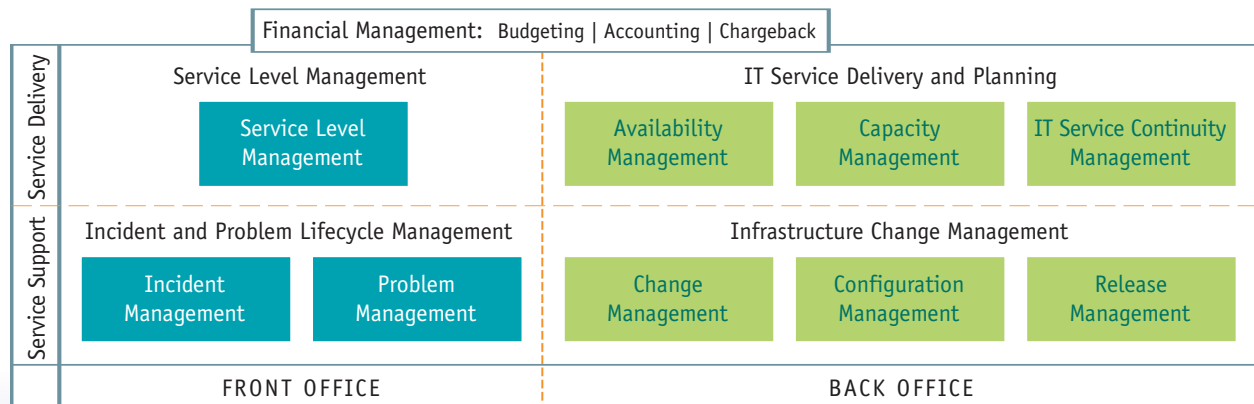


Figure 1: Taxonomy of ITIL Processes

ITIL defines processes in terms of their:

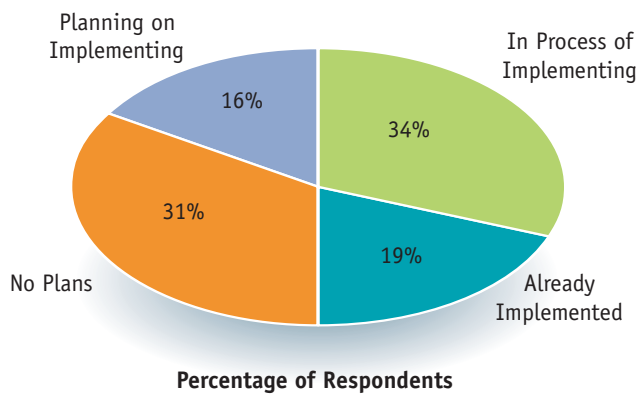
- Flows
- Inter-process relationships
- Process components
- Benefits
- Cost components
- Potential pitfalls

To store the data that is associated with each process, ITIL recommends the use of a CMDB (Configuration Management Database). ITIL defines a CMDB to be “A database that contains all the relevant details of each configuration item and details of the important relationships between configuration items.”

### The Survey Results

We asked the survey respondents if their enterprise or IT organization was moving to an ITIL-oriented approach to IT services. Their responses are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: The use of ITIL**



The data in Table 1 indicates that companies are performing re-engineering on a wide range of functional areas and business processes. The data also shows that there is a particularly strong emphasis on re-engineering processes that touch the customer.

In order to get more insight than is possible in a survey, I also interviewed five of the survey respondents. Table 2 depicts the title of each of the interviewees, the type of industry that they work in, as well as how they will be referred to in this brief.

**Table 1: Focus on Service Delivery Processes**

	Adopted	In Process	Within 18 Months	No Plans	Don't Know
Service Level Management	33%	29%	21%	1%	16%
Availability Management	26%	30%	21%	4%	20%
Capacity Management	17%	32%	22%	7%	22%
IT Service Continuity Management	18%	29%	24%	5%	25%

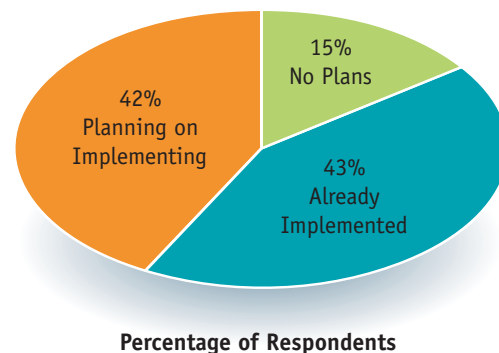
**Table 2: Focus on Service Support Processes**

	Adopted	In Process	Within 18 Months	No Plans	Don't Know
Incident Management	43%	24%	16%	4%	13%
Problem Management	40%	26%	21%	1%	12%
Change Management	49%	21%	15%	3%	12%
Configuration Management	29%	30%	21%	5%	15%
Release Management	19%	26%	18%	12%	25%

One clear conclusion that can be drawn from the data in tables 2 and 3 is that there is significant interest in each of the service delivery and service support processes. However, it is also clear that the primary interest is in service support, most notably incident management, problem management, and change management.

It appears as if the survey respondents listened to the ITIL recommendation to use a CMDB to store the data associated with each of the processes seems. In particular, we asked the survey respondents if they had implemented or planned to implement a CMDB as part of their ITIL process. Their answers are depicted in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Implementation of CMDB**



### Input from the Interviewees

In order to get more insight than is possible in a survey, I also interviewed some IT professionals whose companies either had already implemented or were currently in the process of implementing ITIL. One of the professionals that I interviewed is a technical advisor for network performance for a financial services firm. He was quoted in the last IT Impact Brief as stating that his company had recently gone through a major merger and that more mergers and acquisitions are expected. The Technical Advisor commented that after a merger, they come up with “the best of the best of a billion different processes” and that they continually look at streamlining all of their business processes.

In my interview with him he commented that driven by the need to become more efficient, the IT organization was beginning to

use ITIL to improve some of their IT processes. Their initial efforts are focused around improving their work-flow. In particular, his organization is looking to do a better job of document storage management in order to move away from an approach that he characterized as “Hey, you need to update this spreadsheet.”

I interviewed the CIO of a different financial services company. He stated that he has a mandate from “the top of the house” to implement usage-sensitive chargeback for all of IT. While he has not yet chosen a framework for the software development side of IT, he believes that ITIL is “spot on” for the network operations side in general and for application service level management in particular. One of his goals is to use ITIL to identify a unit pricing for IT that can be used in dialogue with the business leaders. The example he gave was that he wants to be in the position to say “If you need more MIPS, here is the cost.”

The third interviewee is a project manager for an agency of the US federal government that employs a large number of contractors. He stated that his organization is looking at ITIL to help structure how the agency communicates with contractors. In particular, the agency wants to implement a codified approach that will provide a consistent security risk for the agency as it works with any contractor and which will also allow a contractor to work with other contractors. Over the next 18 months, the agency intends to focus its efforts on applying ITIL to improve its approach to incident management, problem management, change management and configuration management.

## Summary

As mentioned in the last IT Impact Brief, the vast majority of companies were making a significant change to one or more business processes. However, IT organizations historically have tended to be very conservative relative to making large scale changes to IT processes. Most, if not all, of this conservatism is driven by the justifiable fear that a change in IT can lead to outages which would have a bad, and possibly disastrous, affect on the business.

As shown in this IT Impact Brief, IT organizations are becoming a bit less conservative. In particular, over half the IT organizations surveyed are implementing process change through an ITIL-oriented approach to delivering IT services. And, while the primary interest of these IT organizations is in service support, most notably incident management, problem management, and change management, there is broad interest across all IT service processes.

It is too early to tell how successful this movement to an ITIL-oriented approach to delivering IT services will be. We will stay on top of this and report back to the NetScout community on what lessons are being learned by the early adopters of this approach.

For more information on this topic and others like it

**CLICK HERE**

or visit [www.netscout.com](http://www.netscout.com)



NetScout Systems, through its *nGenius*® Performance Management System, offers large organizations cohesive views into application services delivered over today's complex, global networks, helping IT professionals optimize network and application performance and prevent misuse of critical enterprise resources. Based on granular, flow-based

performance information gathered across the enterprise, the *nGenius* System delivers key performance management functions, including application and network monitoring, capacity planning, troubleshooting, and user experience assurance, in a single integrated solution.

**For more information visit [www.netscout.com](http://www.netscout.com).**