# IT Service Management Quick Guide

**Service Management** is the chain of activities, support and escalation that are delivered by IT and other service provider organisations. This delivers consistent, efficient and accountable services and service experiences to customers, by using repeatable processes, best practices and governance.

**IT Service Management (ITSM)** is the generic discipline in this area – **ITIL(4)** is the most prolific programme of guidelines, publications and training used for ITSM globally.

There are some key points to remember in order to succeed with ITSM:

- **This is not just about Service Desks** – although these obviously are often the focal point of these activities. Most of the processes involved require a 'Supply Chain' of collaboration and support from all teams. A good Service Desk is only as good as the teams that are working to support it.
- **Processes alone will not deliver success** – these don't happen by themselves and good management and governance are essential. It's important to be clear around how each process works, the responsibilities for each team and individual in delivering this, plus how this will be monitored.
- **'Best Practice' should always be regarded as advice and guidelines rather than slavish doctrine** – each organisation must define its own adaption and implementation of these guidelines. So whilst there may be standards and best practice guidelines that can be used for a general model, successful service improvement will result from a specific and bespoke approach.
- **A common, consistent and collaborative approach is required across teams for success** – it's all about teamwork and shared goals.

## ITSM Key Practices

**Continual Service Improvement –** the focus of all ITSM activity must be to deliver quality services in an environment of continual improvement. This is achieved by measurement as a means to drive incremental changes, applying good problem management and also using knowledge management to improve resolution times and avoid re-work.

**Incident Management** – the process of restoring services that have failed or been interrupted from normal operations, ideally done as quickly as possible and in line with business priorities.

**Problem Management** – the process to avoid, remove and minimise incidents and recurring issues, by identifying trends and taking actions to remove root causes.

**Request Management** – this is the process to accept, approve and deliver user requests for new equipment or standard services, usually provided via an online portal. The automation of this process can help to speed up delivery of requests which can often be a bottleneck for users.

**Change Management** – the process to control and manage any changes to the customer services, by assessing the risk and potential impact of downtime, avoiding carrying out changes in critical business periods and minimising any impact of unplanned changes.

**Service Level Management** – defining business services and service levels to set clear targets for delivery and using these targets through reporting as a measure of success in Service Delivery.

**Configuration Management** – this involves defining and maintain records of assets, technology, people and other organisational details in order to map and asses relative risk and interdependence, as well as just keeping good accountable records.

**Quick Glossary**

| Term | Meaning |
|---|---|
| Availability | Ability of a component or service to perform its required function at a stated instant or over a stated period of time. It is usually expressed as the availability ratio, i.e., the proportion of time that the service is actually available for use by the customers within the agreed service hours. |
| Business Function | A business unit within an organisation, e.g., a department, division, branch. |
| Business Process | A group of business activities undertaken by an organisation in pursuit of a common goal. Typical business processes include receiving orders, marketing services, selling products, delivering services, distributing products, invoicing for services, accounting for money received. |
| CAB | Change Advisory Board – a regular meeting group that discusses and approves/rejects proposed changes and assesses the risk and impact to business services |
| Incident | An incident is an interruption to a business process. It is an event which is not part of the standard operation of a service and which interrupts or impacts, the quality of that service and associated business process. |
| Incident Category | One of a set of pre-established classifications an event may be assigned to, such as "'hardware," "software," or ""network."' Categories can provide insight into the sources, types, or dispositions of incidents. Categories can also be used on closure to define root cause. Some organisations use category to define Services. |
| Practice | A capability based around specific process functions and activities – e.g. Incident management practice, problem management practice. This involves workflow, ownership of tasks, use of tools, inputs and outputs to deliver a specific outcome, such as a value stream, which would involve several practices. |
| Problem | Unknown underlying cause of one or more incidents. A condition of the IT infrastructure that is identified through incidents with similar symptoms or a significant incident that is indicative for an error of which the cause is not yet known. |
| Change | Any action resulting in a new status of one or more of the Configuration Items. The addition, modification or removal of approved supported or baselined hardware, network, software, application, environment, system, desktop build or associated documentation. |
| Configuration Item | Component of an infrastructure – or an item, such as a Request for Change, associated with an infrastructure – which is (or is to be) under the control of Configuration Management. CIs may vary widely in complexity, size and type. |
| SLA | A written agreement between the service provider and its customer(s) that documents agreed service levels and key service targets, the responsibilities of both parties and how service performance is to be measured. |
| OLA | Operational Level Agreements (OLAs) are agreements between the first level support team (e.g. the Service Desk) and all other internal support teams who are required to deliver their services to enable the successful achievement of the service. |
| Service Catalogue | Written statement of IT services, default levels and options. 3 views for different stakeholders – business, users/customers, technical providers/IT |
| CMDB/CMS | A database which contains all relevant details of each CI and details of the important relationships between CIs. |
| IT Service | A set of IT systems, roles, people and activities that enable a business process. An IT service involves co-creation of value |
| Service value system | The ITIL4 approach for end-to-end delivery of products and services. The value chain involves key stages in engage, design, build/obtain, test and run. A service value stream is an activity such as a project or incident running through the value chain. |