

ITIL for the CIO: answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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This article answers frequently asked questions about ITIL, as an aid to CIOs considering implementing ITIL in their organizations.

ITIL is a Service Management framework. What is Service Management?

The ITIL publication, "[Planning to Implement Service Management](#)" defines IT Service Management (ITSM) as "management of services to meet the customer's requirement", where services are "the deliverables of the IT services organization as perceived by the Customers; the services do not consist merely of making computer resources available for customers to use".

I have found it useful to define ITSM as follows: "Managing IT as a services business, where resources are deployed and managed to a discrete set of defined services, and where the quality of those services as perceived by the customer is the #1 driving and aligning force in the organization, with quality being defined as 'matched to user and business needs as they evolve'".

In a nutshell, ITSM is about organizing and managing the IT function around services with discrete value propositions, rather than just technology or customers/business units.

What is the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)?

ITIL is a [set of publications](#) providing descriptive (what to do and why) guidance on IT service management. Created in the late 1980s by a UK government agency and later expanded for use in all organizations, ITIL has become the international de facto standard for service management. Four features make ITIL unique:

- Vendor-neutral, best practice guidance. ITIL is a synthesis of ideas drawn from international IT practitioners—not academic theory of how things should be or a vendor's view of how to operate their products.
- Non-proprietary. While the ITIL publications aren't free, anyone can apply ITIL concepts freely in their organization.
- Comprehensive and consistent. Rather than providing isolated advice, ITIL attempts to describe every key process in IT service management and to use consistent, common sense definitions and distinctions across each process.
- Widely adopted, encouraging industry alignment and making it a defensible choice for how to organize the business of IT.

The core ITIL publications, [Service Support](#) and [Service Delivery](#), provide descriptive guidance on the ten fundamental processes and one function within IT operations, as shown in the table below.

Service Support	Service Delivery
Service Desk <u>Function</u>	Availability Management
Incident Management	Capacity Management
Problem Management	Financial Management

Change Management Configuration Management Release Management	Service Level Management IT Service Continuity Management
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- Anyone implementing ITIL should have these books, along with the [Security Management](#) publication, as *Service Delivery* refers to but does not include this content.
- Although *Service Support* and *Service Delivery* receive the majority of attention, there are additional ITIL publications, including:
 - [The Business Perspective](#): Business Continuity Management, Partnerships and Outsourcing, Surviving Change and Business Transformation
 - [ICT Infrastructure Management](#): Network Service, Operations, Systems, and Local Processor Management, and Computer Installation and Acceptance
 - [Applications Management](#): Software Development Lifecycle
 - [Planning to Implement Service Management](#): ITIL benefits, how to achieve them
- The [itSMF ITIL Pocket Guide](#) presents the *Service Support* and *Service Delivery* content in capsule form and is a popular reference in the ITIL community.
- [IT Service Management, an Introduction](#) is a handy reference as well, as it summarizes all current ITIL titles.

What can I gain by adopting ITIL in my organization? What will ITIL do for me? What can I accomplish with ITIL?

Benefits derived from ITIL implementation include increased:

- Competitive advantage through cost reduction and by enabling growth and agility by the flexibility and scalability inherent in standardized processes and service organization
- Business efficiency through streamlining of IT processes and better alignment between vital business functions and IT services
- IT value through business and IT operational and goal alignment
- Improved internal customer and user satisfaction
- Speed and completeness of compliance with regulatory authorities, through a defensible standard model on which control objectives can be built

Chief among these benefits is alignment. Imagine if all of your suppliers, partners and internal staff had a common sense of purpose, processes and terminology. You'd then have a fighting chance of aligning all those moving parts. That's the promise of IT service management—alignment—and with the increasing worldwide adoption of IT service management, that alignment promises to extend outside your organization to your entire value chain, including your customers, users, suppliers, tool vendors, outsource providers, and prospective employees.

You can expect to derive the benefits listed above by properly implementing ITIL. The operative term is “properly”; while ITIL may be common sense, many find making it common practice in an organization difficult.

What are other organizations doing with ITIL? What tangible results and benefits have these adopters realized?

Over 10,000 organizations worldwide have adopted ITIL. Organizations that have published case studies claiming significant benefits from ITIL include Proctor & Gamble, Capital One, Boeing, British Petroleum, the US Army, US Navy, and the IRS.

According to a 2003 itSMF survey* and a 2002 survey by DMR**, organizations implementing ITIL saw the following benefits:

- Improved customer satisfaction*
- Motivated staff and increased productivity*
- More consistently implemented changes**
- Reduced amount of time spent “firefighting”**
- Reduced repetitive problems**
- Produced more business-focused metrics**

According to the 2002 study conducted by the itSMF [ServiceTalk, The Journal of the itSMF, Issue No. 53—February 2002], 97 percent of organizations using ITIL said they had derived benefits from ITIL with 69 percent claiming tangible and measurable results. Procter & Gamble claims a 6 percent reduction in operating costs in one department as a result of an ITIL initiative and expects similar savings as adoption spreads throughout the company.

How can I learn more?

- Visit the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) official ITIL site at <http://www.ital.co.uk>.
- Visit www.itsmf.com, the website of the ITIL user’s group, the itSMF (IT Service Management Forum). The itSMF was formed in 1991 as an independent forum for ITIL users exchanging information and experiences. There are chapters in countries throughout the world, and Local Interests Groups (LIGs) throughout the U.S.
- Visit www.toolselector.com to learn about tools that support ITIL.
- Visit <http://www.itilexams.com> for a list of ITIL training providers. Many offer certification exams in conjunction with their courses, returning results in about a week or two. You can also take a computerized ITIL Foundation exam with instant results at any of more than 5,000 Prometric Testing Centers (www.prometric.com.)
- Attend an ITIL Service Management Awareness session, which provides an overview of ITIL, or an ITIL Essentials course, which provides a foundation-level understanding of ITIL.