

What is IT Service Management and What Value Does It Bring?

The Federal Leaders Playbook - Season 1, Episode 01

Featuring:

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Tom Hamill: Alright, so we're going to talk about IT Service Management. So, what does Wikipedia say about it? What's the definition? 'IT Service Management (ITSM) refers to the entirety of activities directed by policies organized and structured in processes and supporting procedures.'

Eric Lazerson: Okay.

Tom Hamill: You got that? So, there is, well, there is more. Wait a second.

Eric Lazerson: That- that's that is quite a definition.

Tom Hamill: There's more. Then a pause and a dash - and then my screen went dark. 'That are performed by an organization to plan, design, deliver, operate and control information technology' - that's the IT part of ITSM.

Eric Lazerson: Yeah, that is beautiful. So, what I heard and a...

Tom Hamill: Wait

Kerri Posteraro: There's more.

Tom Hamill: So, come on. The services offered to customers. Alright, there it is.

Eric Lazerson: IT services offered to customer. I think that's the most important part that- that you read out of that definition. I heard a lot of things in there, I heard policy I heard process and I heard procedures.

Tom Hamill: Supporting.

Eric Lazerson: Yes, so each one of those, you could, you could spend, you could spend hours talking about each one of those; but when you pull them all together, I think at-at the core of this, it is providing IT services to the, to the end user, and it's controlling it and it's um...

Kerri Posteraro: Designing, planning.

Eric Lazerson: Designing, planning, yes.

Kerri Posteraro: Operating, sounds like everything, sounds pretty broad.

Eric Lazerson: It does sound broad. So, when we talk about what is ITSM, it is a broad, sweeping concept that in the federal space is-is difficult to articulate, but very important for organization.

Kerri Posteraro: Why do you think it's difficult in the federal space?

Eric Lazerson: I-I'll take that back. It's difficult in general. There's a lot to it. What you read in that definition Tom, it involves everyone-everyone in your IT organization has to be a part of this, has to buy into what we're doing, has to understand why they're doing it, what-what they're a part of because the end result we talked about the IT services to your customer, everybody plays a role in-in that. Your customer's satisfaction is derived directly from that. So, everything that gets to the point where I am a customer consuming one of your IT services, if someone along the way, whether it's in planning, design or the operation of that service, isn't bought in, is slowing things down, is delaying it, has an impact on the customer.

Jessica Alfaro: I think a part of the definition that I don't see there is around aligning IT to the business, and getting IT out of reactive mode into a more planned and, in alignment with business and what the business is doing, so...

Eric Lazerson: So, what you're saying is, that the business should be driving what IT services are being provided.

Jessica Alfaro: Both. I think there's-there's an alignment so not only is the business; the business knows what IT is doing but IT knows what the business is doing. It's not one pushing the other, but they're both in lockstep with each other as, so that's the part of the definition that I don't see Wikipedia but I know that when you look at what ITSM is and why it's there, it's to get IT out of this reactive, 'I'm just doing operations, I'm just doing day-to-day management.' It's 'why am I doing it and how does this fit into the larger mission of a business?'

Eric Lazerson: So, we talked about aligning those two, do you have some specific examples where you could say 'this is something I saw, this is something we did and this is how ITSM helped bridge that gap'?

Jessica Alfaro: Sure. So, Department of state provides a lot of services to American citizens. So, one example just with current work that I'm doing, work overseas, so there's a lot embassies overseas that provide specific services to customers, births abroad, funding that's needed, passports, visas all of those different services and the IT that supports a lot of that, and those processes behind that, supports the overall mission for the department. So just being able to know that this is my end result, why am I doing this, the Department of State provides these services - what's my IT infrastructure or processes that are enabling those services and then being able to bridge the gap and I think that it's not very clear. The business is always kind of siloed away from what IT operations is doing but they're- they're supposed to be in lockstep with each other.

Eric Lazerson: So, I'll go back to what Jessica was saying. I think that is that business to IT alignment. A lot of times when these business owners or, you know, federal leader that is

managing a service like that and is interfacing with foreign leaders and foreign service officers they-they forget that they are a service that's being offered and its IT that's supporting it, they look at it from an application development standpoint, right? Maybe it's just the new enhancements or new features of that but what they, what they miss is the cost of operations, so the availability of their service and you know whether it's increasing capacity – it's scaling up, scaling down – all of these things, these indicators or these costs can be reviewed, can be looked at, can be analyzed based on information that comes out of your ITSM systems. So, you're going to be able to have that virtual map of what components build up that service so you can minimize your disruptions, which increases customer satisfaction. You can, you know, minimize the architecture necessary, the capacity necessary which can reduce your overall IT cost. There's a lot of factors that ITSM brings to the table to help kind of reduce the cost and improve that customer satisfaction.

Jessica Alfaro: Yeah.

Kerri Posteraro: Right.

Jessica Alfaro: Streamlining your Service delivery.

Eric Lazerson: Absolutely.

Kerri Posteraro: Right. I think as the lines between IT and the business continue to get blurred, as I think they should, IT needs to be confident in what you have, how it's operating, going back to that definition of design, plan, operate and control. I think today's technology environments are incredibly complex. I think there's still a tremendous amount of Legacy applications that have been bolted onto new technologies, a lot of it is piecemealed together so the ability to manage it as a whole is a challenging job and service management helps those leaders think about, and be confident in, what's happening in that environment so that they can have a seat at the table with the business as a viable partner, versus a siloed organization that is just responsible for just keeping the lights on. Those days are gone. We need to talk about integration and we need to understand the business's roadmap so that those Legacy applications can be phased out, or so that that architecture plan can stay in alignment and-on current with industry trends.

Eric Lazerson: Yeah, I think one of Jessica's favorite buzz words, terms is 'situational awareness.' I think the ITSM through all of the processes, thank you Tom for reading the Wikipedia definition.

Tom Hamill: Sure.

Eric Lazerson: The processes and the procedures – that all collectively work together to bring you that situational awareness that, when you are at that table as the leader of the IT organization, when you are trying to bridge the gap with the business, when you are trying to say 'we're not just a call center, we are part of the solution, we are part of the discussion'; having that in your back pocket, knowing that you have a secure environment, that the data is safe, knowing that you're running operationally, efficiently, knowing that you have the

availability and capacity, is all the things that ITSM can bring to that federal leader that will help them be successful.

Kerri Posteraro: Yeah, I think sometimes you assume it's a given that your IT leadership already knows exactly what they have, where it is, how it's configured and you assume, and maybe I'm the only one guilty of this but I don't think so, that that's something that should be expected as a baseline, but I think in reality you discover things as they, you know, as they, as problems are encountered where, right.

Eric Lazerson: It goes back to what Jessica said –it's reactive.

Kerri Posteraro: You didn't know that that was there but now you do, so...

Kerri Posteraro: What else is out there that I'm not sure I have but I'm responsible for?

Jessica Alfaro: Yeah. I mean I-I, just going back to what you were saying with you know processes and procedures and just you know the service delivery, when you're able to look at end-to-end it took this amount of time to deliver a service to a customer and being able to figure out where all of the 'wheres', the most amount of time where-where is it falling?

Eric Lazerson: Sure, it's time and cost.

Jessica Alfaro: Right, is it, is it another tool that I'm looking at, and, which is taking more time to analyze because there's no integration or touch point? Is it, you know a group is sitting on a specific task for too long and how do you streamline that? So, looking across the life cycle of that service and finding ways to automate that, that's what look at ITSM. So, I think it's-it's-it's happening in environments and they're doing it they're just not looking at it through a lens called ITSM which is.

Kerri Posteraro: Exactly. Exactly, it's, it touches on everything an IT operational technical person and even none does it's the full life cycle, things you've been doing since the beginning of, you know, technology being available to us, but it's putting a little bit more structure around it. So, I think sometimes people look at it as a new concept. It's-it's not, it's what you've been doing always. It's just trying to get some standardization and efficiency out of it.

Tom Hamill: And also, visibility, right? So now in some things process becomes visible.

Jessica Alfaro: Right, I think it-it also gives the boots on the ground that are doing the work, a view into why what they're doing is important, and why you know making more efficient processes and you know speeding things up not sitting on things for so long, they're able to see the end goal.

Tom Hamill: Right, right. Okay, sounds good. I think we went through what ITSM is and defined it and also, I think we gave some good points to why it's important to our customers. So, thank you everyone. Thank you for that.