

Service Management 2020: Optimize, Integrate and Automate

The IT landscape is in a constant state of flux, and IT managers must always be on the lookout for organization-wide solutions—for automating and streamlining processes, for keeping the IT landscape manageable, and for meeting the needs of the business.

How can these needs be met in practice? Successful organizations within the changing IT landscape are those that abandon the idea of maintaining separate management tools, and opt instead for a centralized Service Management platform to automate their service processes. Major benefits of these systems include improved interdepartmental collaboration, reduced inefficiencies from manual steps, and more productive and satisfied end-users.

But important questions remain, such as: How can Service Management be made to work for the organization? And do you choose a service-management platform for IT processes only (ITSM), or should it support other departments' processes from the outset, such as Human Resources (HR) or facilities processes, commonly referred to as Enterprise Service Management (ESM)? This white paper covers the main trends and pitfalls to be aware of.

1. Maximum integration

Many organizations have traditionally used a variety of separate applications to support not only IT service delivery, but also other departments such as HR and Facilities Management. All of these applications are configured separately, and work from their own source files. When using different applications like this, it's likely that your IT team is overburdened with their maintenance

and management. And that's not even their most important job! Now that employees are increasingly working offsite—in their own time and on a variety of devices—the pressure is on the rise for IT departments to provide fitting support and effective services.

One step towards simplifying service delivery is to increase the self-service capabilities of applications in use, and maximize the workflow integration between them. An Enterprise Service Management (ESM) platform offers such a solution. These platforms improve employee ease of use throughout the organization by running requests through a single portal and enabling the various applications to communicate with each other. IT management costs are also reduced, since there is only one ESM platform requiring maintenance, and employee satisfaction is increased with more satisfying and engaging service-delivery experiences.

Another area to investigate is the linkage between Service Management (ITSM) and IT Asset Management (ITAM), historically seen as separate disciplines but each providing significant value.

ITSM ensures timely delivery of essential services and support for the enterprise, while ITAM discovers and tracks the hardware and software assets for those services and optimizes the overall value, costs, and compliance for all IT assets. Stated another way, ITSM deals with the service and support processes and delivery experience, while ITAM deals with the complete lifecycle management and optimization of the underlying assets.

When ITSM and ITAM work together and are closely aligned and integrated, many activities and processes become more automated, efficient, and responsive, with

fewer things ‘falling through the cracks.’ IT teams gain more insight and are better positioned to move from reactive activities to more proactive practices, delivering higher service levels and efficiency at lower cost and effort.

2. Optimum integration is about more than just IT

Workflow integration and self-service can be seen as the initial steps in streamlining your organization. Although it's possible to just focus on linking IT workflows through Service Management, the benefits multiply when ESM is extended beyond the IT department.

IT has long ceased to be limited to IT departments. It is increasingly an organization-wide concern, and whether you decide on ITSM or ESM, achieving large-scale adoption will require an interdepartmental approach. For example: now that the GDPR is in force, getting your compliance officer involved in the implementation of Service Management is a wise move in handling personal data.

There are also some processes that simply involve many different departments. ITSM can be used to inform and streamline the process for requesting a laptop for a new employee, for example. And if that is part of a more general onboarding procedure, it might be a good idea to coordinate the whole process through the Service Management system, incorporating other procedures such as applying for an employee access card. Since these processes require input from departments such as HR and Facilities, greater coordination is required during the configuration phase. But the results for the organization are palpable: a single, efficient portal where managers can submit requests means everything happens automatically, with insight into current status of specific workflows. This is already a step towards realizing ESM. Even issuances and authorizations are recorded clearly, making it easy to cancel and retrieve everything when employees leave the organization. So you'll not only be efficient, you'll be compliant, too.

3. Addressing inefficiency in current processes

When introducing ITSM or ESM, people often fall into the trap of taking existing applications and functionality as a starting point, rather than looking at the underlying problem to be solved, or where the organization sees itself in two years' time. Switching to an ESM approach presents the ideal opportunity to reassess processes, and to identify areas where efficiency can be improved.

Many organizations mistakenly believe that change is best managed by mapping the new situation onto the old as much as possible. However, this ignores the fact that the old situation is precisely what needs improvement. Truly optimizing a Service Management process means going back to basics, and looking at better ways to structure workflows and processes from the ground up. Only afterwards should the necessary applications be considered. That may mean continuing to use some or all of the current applications, just integrated more efficiently within the Service Management platform. This eliminates the need to invest in new tools, while still allowing the process workflows to be optimized.

4. Added value and visibility

The efficient application of Service Management enables several “quick wins” that serve to demonstrate the added value of the IT department to the rest of the organization. Implementation should be both growth-focused and pragmatic. Start by addressing, optimizing, and automating the five most common requests. By offering and fulfilling these five through self-service, many employees will see the immediate benefits of your chosen Service Management approach. Be sure to avoid IT jargon and to speak the language of the users; this will aid rapid adoption throughout the organization.

Further expansion can be considered once the top five requests have been dealt with, and may involve looking at different request types (from IT, to HR and Facilities) or the optimization of underlying applications and flows. This way the organization can evolve organically alongside the opportunities of ESM, and the transition will not be too abrupt.

Another advantage offered by Service Management is access to real-time workplace data for requests and processes, enabling fast action when necessary. Not only will administration become more efficient, but reporting will also show just how much your department has to offer the organization.

5. Automation enables more innovation

Many demands are placed on your IT department, including multi-channel availability and efficient management using a range of software and hardware solutions. But in addition to these day-to-day demands, IT is also expected to lead the charge when breaking new ground and launching innovations. Does your department have the capacity to meet these expectations?

A Service Management platform provides a solid basis for organizing and streamlining your day-to-day processes more efficiently. A single portal for submitting and, where possible, automatically handling requests provides major time savings—time that can be redirected toward innovation initiatives. Besides saving time, automation also improves service levels. Automating processes according to best practices will not only ensure that solutions work, but also that they are tried-and-tested and don't all require individual, manual actions. That's the road to faster, better, and more reliable service.

Innovation and automation often go hand in hand. Take artificial intelligence for example: although it may still sound futuristic, there are already many simple ways to incorporate AI technology into your process flows. Chatbots are already in widespread use, which combine a conversational user interface with an artificial user

interface. Employees can ask questions to the chatbot, which uses pre-programmed interrogatives to give responses that are useful to users in nearly 100% of cases. Ensuring that the initial request is processed automatically will also save considerable amounts of time and increase user satisfaction.

Let Service Management work for your organization

It's no longer a question of whether Service Management would be useful to your organization, but simply one of when and how to start the process. The yields are significant for both the IT department and the organization as a whole, and there is an approach to suit any set of circumstances or objectives. Start small with just the IT department, or get the entire organization involved from the outset. Choose an on-premise solution or go for Software as a Service (SaaS), depending on how your organization is structured. If anything should change, your Service Management solution can change with you.

For any questions about how Ivanti can help you achieve your objectives, please contact us.

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