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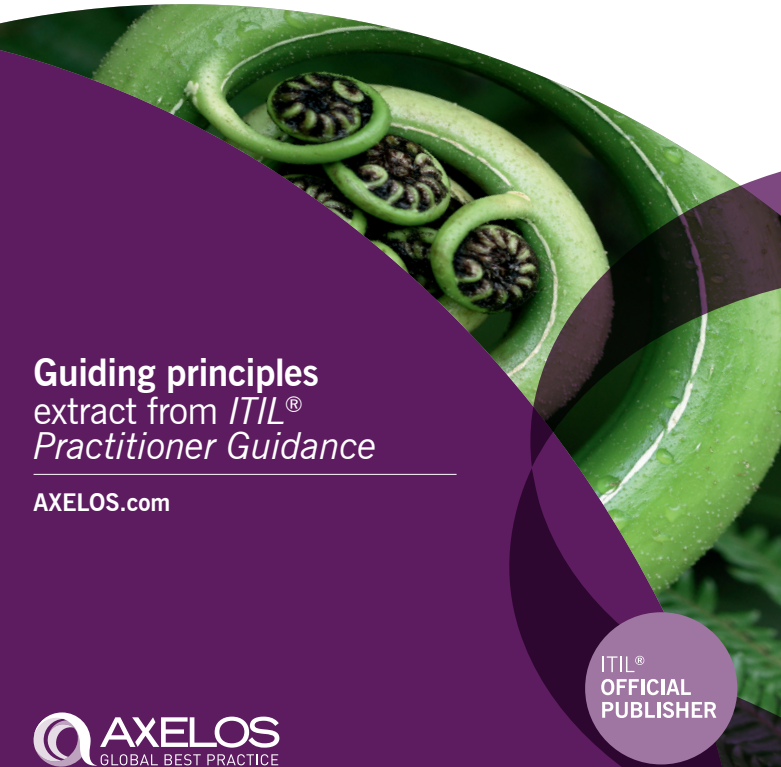

Guiding principles
extract from *ITIL®*
Practitioner Guidance

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Contents

Foreword

AXELOS has been listening and researching as part of the *From Practitioners, For Practitioners* initiative within ITIL®. As a priority in 2015, AXELOS is responding to the influx of requests to address the practical aspects of the 'adopt and adapt' nature of ITIL. The outcome of this work is the new qualification – ITIL Practitioner.

Developing a framework as comprehensive and as widely used as ITIL is not a simple task. We at AXELOS have been fortunate enough to be able to work with an international team of industry professionals in developing this new qualification, and we have had a lot of support from the community. Ideas and suggestions have been flowing in, which is very gratifying.

We started by identifying the key challenges IT Service Management (ITSM) professionals have, and the key skills needed to successfully tackle these challenges. While several key competencies were identified – the most vital competencies being Organizational Change Management, Communication, and Measurement and Metrics – we realised there is a set of principles that flow through every activity, every process, and every improvement in ITSM. These principles are fundamental and embedded in ITIL and other frameworks, methodologies and philosophies (e.g. Lean, Agile and DevOps). These principles help the practitioners navigate the stormy waters of ever-changing business requirements and correct their course as needed, while making sure the focus stays on delivering value to the customer.

This publication introduces these Guiding Principles, alongside the draft guidance that explains the nature, importance and application of the principles.

Kaimar Karu
Head of ITSM

About AXELOS

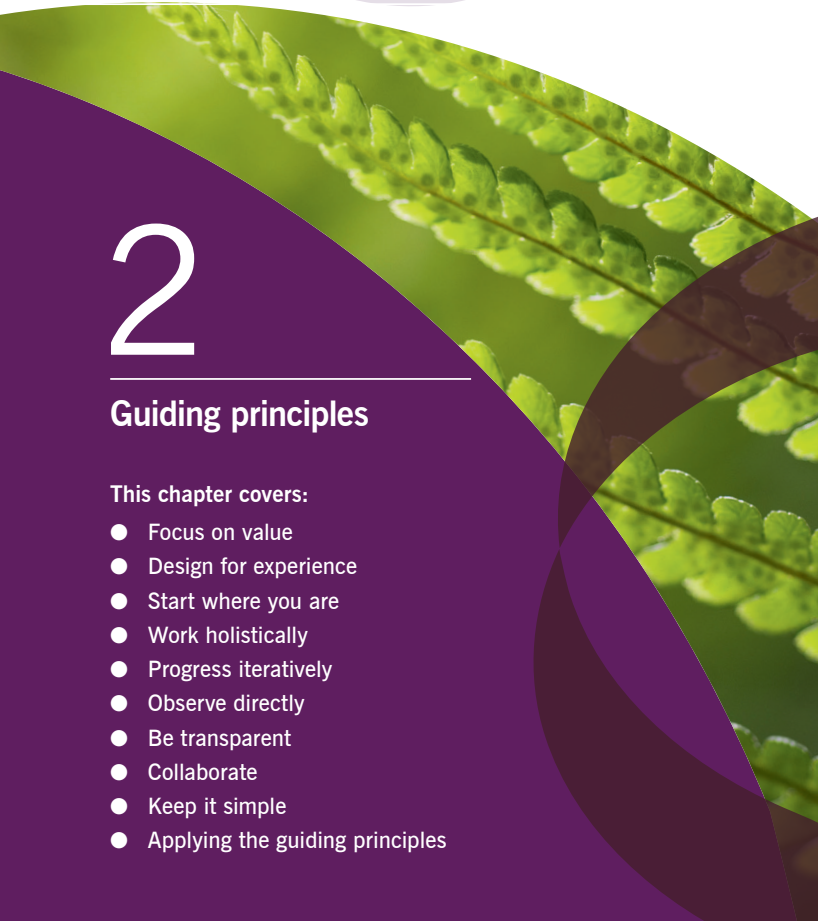
AXELOS is a joint venture company, created by the Cabinet Office on behalf of Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in the United Kingdom and Capita plc to run the Global Best Practice portfolio. It boasts an already enviable track record and an unmatched portfolio of products, including ITIL®, PRINCE2®, and RESILIA™ – the new Cyber Resilience Best Practice portfolio.

Used in the private, public and voluntary sectors in more than 180 countries worldwide, the Global Best Practice products have long been associated with achievement, heightened standards and truly measurable improved quality.

AXELOS has an ambitious programme of investment for developing innovative new solutions, and stimulating the growth of a vibrant, open international ecosystem of training, consultancy and examination organizations.

Developments to the portfolio also include the launch of PRINCE2 Agile™, the ITIL Practitioner qualification and a Professional Development programme, fully aligned to AXELOS Global Best Practice, for practitioners.

Latest news about how AXELOS is 'Making organizations more effective' and registration details to join the online community can be found on the website www.AXELOS.com. If you have specific queries, requests or would like to be added to the AXELOS mailing list please contact Ask@AXELOS.com.



2

Guiding principles

This chapter covers:

- Focus on value
- Design for experience
- Start where you are
- Work holistically
- Progress iteratively
- Observe directly
- Be transparent
- Collaborate
- Keep it simple
- Applying the guiding principles

2 Guiding principles

The journey to adopt a service-oriented approach to IT, as embodied in IT service management (ITSM), is not a matter of installing software or changing the design of the infrastructure. At the heart of ITSM is a powerful cultural shift from focusing on technology to focusing on services. This means concerning ourselves with the outcomes that technology must enable for the customer, how that will deliver value, and dedicating the service provider to continual improvement.

Successful adoption of this new mind-set will be more likely if all aspects of the effort are guided by the principles outlined here. These guiding principles distil the core messages of ITIL specifically and ITSM in general, facilitating improvement activities of all types and at all levels. They are the 'how' that can guide organizations in their work as they adopt a service management approach and adapt the guidance provided in the ITIL publications to their own specific needs and circumstances.

These guiding principles are also reflected in many of the other frameworks, methods, standards, philosophies and/or bodies of knowledge that may be used in an organization, such as Lean, agile, DevOps and others, allowing organizations to effectively integrate the use of multiple ways of working into an overall approach to providing services.

Tip

This publication makes extensive use of the word 'improvement', which might imply that these guiding principles are not intended for use when a new ITSM adoption programme is being undertaken or a new service or process is being introduced. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even a brand new ITSM adoption programme is an effort to improve not only what is being done, but also how it is being done, and these guiding principles apply. Whether working on something seen as truly new or changing something in existence, consider the work as covered by the term 'improvement'.

The guiding principles described in Table 2.1 should be referenced throughout all improvement activities, whether **strategic**, tactical or operational in nature, whether undertaken by a large group, a small team or even an individual. These guiding principles are also applicable to any type of service provider model, whether internal, external or shared services, and any type of service provider, whether IT or non-IT.

2.1 FOCUS ON VALUE

Everything the service provider does needs to map back, directly or indirectly, to value for their customer. This is one of the most fundamental principles found throughout ITIL and ITSM. The customer could be a person, a group, the whole organization or a combination, depending on what the service is and who the service provider is.

ITIL Service Strategy says that 'the value of a service comes from what it enables someone to do' and defines the characteristics of value as:

- Defined by the customer
- Affordable mix of features
- Achievement of objectives
- Changing over time and circumstances.

Value can come in many forms, such as increased productivity, reduced pain, reduced costs, the ability to pursue new markets, better competitive position etc. A service can deliver value to a customer only if it has utility (is **fit for purpose**) and warranty (is **fit for use**), all from the perspective of what matters to the customer (for more information, see *ITIL Service Strategy*, section 2.1.6 and Figure 2.2).

Table 2.1 Overview of guiding principles

Principle	Description
Focus on value	Everything the service provider does needs to map, directly or indirectly, to value for the customer and/or the organization. This is one of the most fundamental principles of ITIL and ITSM. It is the customer who determines what is of value to them, not the service provider. Continual improvement must be focused around making improvements that will result in greater value being delivered to the customer.

Table continues

Table 2.1 *continued*

Principle	Description
Design for experience	It is critical to retain the focus not only on business/customer value, but also on the experience that both customers and **user**s have when they interact with the service or service provider. This is frequently called the 'customer experience' and it must be actively managed.
Start where you are	Resist the temptation to start from scratch and build something new without considering what is already available to be leveraged. Based on the vision for the future and how that will deliver value to the customer, there is likely to be a great deal in the current services, processes, programmes, projects, people etc. that can be used to create that future.

Principle	Description
Work holistically	No service or component stands alone. The results delivered to the organization or customer will suffer unless the service provider works on the whole, not just on the parts. Results are delivered to the customer through the effective and efficient management of a complex integration of hardware, software, data, processes, architectures, metrics, tools, people and partners, all coordinated to provide a defined value.
Progress iteratively	Even huge initiatives have to be accomplished iteratively. Resist the temptation to do everything at once. By organizing work into smaller, manageable sections that can be executed and completed in a timely manner, the focus on each smaller improvement is sharper and easier to maintain. Improvement iterations can be sequential or simultaneous, based on dependencies or lack thereof. The key is for each individual improvement to be manageable and managed, to ensure that real results are returned in a timely manner and built upon to create more improvement.

Table continues

Table 2.1 *continued*

Principle	Description
Observe directly	To know what is really going on, measure and/or observe it directly. Be sure to base decisions on information that is as accurate as it can be. Going to the source allows a reduction in the use of assumptions which, if proved unfounded, can be disastrous to timelines, budgets and the **quality** of results.
Be transparent	The more that people are aware of what is happening and why it is happening, then the more that people will help and fewer people will obstruct. Make things as transparent as possible.
Collaborate	When the right people are involved in the right ways, improvements benefit from better buy-in, better relevance (because better information is available for decision-making) and better likelihood of long-term success.
Keep it simple	If a process, service, action, metric etc. provides no value or produces no useful outcome, then eliminate it. In a process or procedure, use the minimum number of steps needed to accomplish the objective(s). Although this principle may seem obvious, it is frequently ignored, resulting in overly complex work methods that rarely maximize outcomes or minimize cost.

An IT department, or any service provider for that matter, can no longer treat the rest of the organization as something separate from itself. By the same token, service providers can no longer behave as simple order-takers. A service provider must first and foremost recognize that they are not providing hardware and software; they are providing value in the form of technology-based services that make it possible for the customer to achieve their goals. This means that the service provider, to understand what is of value to the customer or customer organization, must get to know the customer at a level of intimacy that many service providers avoid.

Central to this principle is the fact that it is the customer who determines what is of value, not the service provider. The service provider must, therefore, determine who the customer is in each situation. Who receives value from what is being delivered or improved? For a service, this should already have been defined. If not, it must be determined. For a process, this can be more challenging, but the impact that the process has on the services that are being delivered is the place to start.

Continual improvement must be focused around making improvements that will result in greater value being delivered to the customer.

2.1.1 The customer for services

From the perspective of the IT department, in what ITIL calls an internal service provider model, there are **internal customer**s (other departments in the organization) who are also integral to serving the external customers (the customers of the organization itself).

Some of the services the IT department provides will be used by internal customers (e.g. a service used by the human resources department for managing information about the company's

employees), while other services may be used by external customers (e.g. an online banking service used by external clients of a retail bank).

The contribution of the services used by external customers to value creation for the business is direct. The contribution of the internal services to value creation for the business is more indirect.

Customers, services and value are discussed in section 3.2 of *ITIL Service Strategy*.

2.1.2 The customer for processes

When working with processes, the concept of who benefits from the work of the process can be useful. In a way, we are determining who the customer of the process is. Determining who needs to receive value from a process should include awareness of two perspectives:

- Every process delivers its primary results to a customer or **stakeholder** (see *ITIL Service Strategy*, section 2.2.2)
- The work of a process contributes, either directly or indirectly, to the delivery of one or more services.

Improvements to a process, therefore, should deliver better results for those who directly benefit from the process, as well as allowing the process to more successfully contribute to the related services.

Example

Consider a change management process that has good procedures for normal changes, but does not make much use of standard changes with the associated predefined controls and authorizations. Even though infrastructure standards and policies are in place, most infrastructure changes still have to follow the normal change procedures.

If the change management process is improved through the conversion of a significant number of normal infrastructure changes into standard changes (usually allowing for a significant proportion of these to be automated), the team members who manage the infrastructure will experience direct value in the form of the ability to work more rapidly and more simply. But these process improvements will also indirectly benefit the end customers in that they can make use of service improvements that depend on infrastructure changes more rapidly and with less disruption.

2.1.3 Value and improvement

Whether guiding an entire ITSM adoption programme or a single improvement by one staff member, the principle of focusing on value emphasizes the need for the improvement to result in more value for the customer. This principle is critical as a guide to achieving excellence in service provision, whatever frameworks or methodologies the organization is using. In fact, a focus on providing value to the customer is also central to many well-regarded methods, including both Lean and value chain mapping.

2.2 DESIGN FOR EXPERIENCE

As an organization adopts a service-oriented approach, it is critical to retain the focus not only on business/customer value, but also on the end-to-end experience that both customers and users have when they interact with the service provider.

Often, we talk about this in terms of customer experience (CX), which has been described as:

> '*The entirety of the interactions a customer has with a company and its products. Understanding the customer experience is an integral part of customer relationship management. The overall experience reflects how the customer feels about the company and its offerings*' (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/customer-experience).

Note, however, that in this guidance, CX will be used to refer to both the experience of what ITIL calls the 'customer' and also the experience of what ITIL calls the 'user'.

2.2.1 The two sides of the customer experience

CX is both objective and subjective. For example, when a customer orders a product and receives what they ordered at the promised price in the promised delivery time, this aspect of their experience is objectively measurable. If during the purchase journey the customer feels that the ordering website did not have a professional look, this is subjective; it is a matter of opinion on the customer's part.

Failing to attend to both aspects of CX, particularly the subjective, will likely result in loss of confidence and support by those being served, and potentially the loss of their business entirely. Addressing the subjective side is the heart of managing CX, but it must be done with a full awareness of the objective side.

Organizations seek to understand and manage CX, not out of a sense of altruism, but rather because they see this as something that provides insight into areas that can positively impact profitability and/or business **performance**.

2.2.2 Moments of truth and designing for experience

Many organizations attempt to address improvements to CX by segmenting the customer's journey into 'touchpoints' (each time a customer or potential customer comes in contact with the brand before, during or after a purchase) or 'moments of truth' (touchpoints that give the customer the opportunity to form or change an opinion about the brand). This approach, however, can be very misleading as it frequently fails to uncover the real issues. After all, a customer may be satisfied with an individual interaction with the service provider, but still have an overall negative experience.

From a conceptual standpoint, every touchpoint is potentially a moment of truth and the service provider should look at all of them to view CX holistically, to see the entire flow collectively. From a practical standpoint, however, the service provider needs to have a place to start. It is important to prioritize. The service provider should begin by identifying those touchpoints that are having the greatest negative impact on the overall CX and address those first. These are the current moments of truth. Along the way, the service provider should continually monitor CX to validate that the overall experience is improving. As time goes on, the service provider can continue to work iteratively to

address the touchpoints where the need for improvement is less obvious, gradually achieving the desired cumulative effect on the whole experience.

Only a comprehensive view of the end-to-end CX will uncover the real customer view.

2.2.3 Customer experience and process design

The principle of understanding CX is not dissimilar to the work of ITIL's **business relationship management** process, in which it is paramount to understand the business, the customer and their needs. The work of designing for CX should be a natural activity that is included not only when designing products and services, but also when designing processes. For a service provider, putting themselves in the position of the customer should become second nature, concerning themselves not only with interactions at the operational level, but also with addressing the end-to-end experience at the tactical and strategic levels.

Definition: Business relationship management

The process responsible for maintaining a positive relationship with customers. Business relationship management identifies customer needs and ensures that the service provider is able to meet these needs with an appropriate catalogue of services. This process has strong links with service level management.

2.2.4 Measuring the customer experience

CX, if measured effectively, should provide information that will have a tangible impact on the factors that the organization uses to judge success. In many organizations, the key factor used to

judge corporate success is profitability, but the contribution of CX to success also applies to other organizations, such as those in the not-for-profit sector.

When designing for experience, it is wise to build in methods to measure the experience at the point where it occurs. For example, some airports measure the experience of going through security by placing a device at the passenger exit that has an interface with an array of smiley face buttons. As they pass by, the passenger simply presses the button with the smiley face that best represents their experience. This, combined with other metrics, can provide the understanding required in order to effect positive change.

2.3 START WHERE YOU ARE

In the excitement of eliminating old, unsuccessful methods and/or services and creating something better, there can be great temptation to start from scratch – to rip out what has been done in the past and build something completely new. But that is rarely necessary or wise. The start-over approach can be extremely wasteful, not only in terms of time, but also in terms of existing services, processes, people, tools etc. that could have significant value in the improvement effort. Do not start over without considering what is already available to be leveraged.

To apply this principle successfully:

- **Look at what exists as objectively as possible** Are the elements of the current state fit for use and fit for purpose? There is likely to be a great deal in the current services, processes, projects, people etc. that can be used to create the desired future state, provided the people making this judgement can be objective. It is sometimes the case that, because the current state is perceived to be extremely painful, people have difficulty looking at the situation in an

unbiased way. Objective current-state assessment (the second step in the continual service improvement (CSI) approach) should uncover candidates for reuse.

- **When examples of successful practices or services are found in the current state, determine if and how these can be replicated or expanded upon to achieve the desired state** In many, if not most cases, leveraging what already exists will reduce the amount of work needed to transition from the current state to the desired state.
- **Apply your risk management skills** There are risks associated with reusing existing processes etc. (such as people continuing old behaviours in their entirety without being able to change at all) and risks associated with instituting something new (such as people not performing new procedures correctly). These risks should be weighed as part of the decision-making process.
- **Recognize that, very occasionally, nothing from the current state can be reused** Regardless of how desirable it may be to reuse, repurpose and recycle or even upcycle, there will be times when the only way to achieve the desired result is to start over. For example, for a sufficiently intransigent issue, it may be decided that the only way to make real change is to start with a clean slate, perhaps to make the determination to change clear to staff members in a dramatic way. Remember, however, that these situations are very, very rare.

2.3.1 Aligning with existing initiatives

If a person or team discovers an existing initiative with which their improvement work could align, it should be leveraged. It can be very wasteful to have multiple work streams that are attempting to do the same thing. Sometimes initiatives that could be complementary end up in conflict simply because they are not properly coordinated.

Successfully leveraging what already exists while still creating the desired new state will, to a great degree, be dependent on the success of the **organizational change management** (OCM) programme (for more information, see Chapter 6). The human factor is critical to change of any kind. OCM activities can help staff members to understand what is changing, how what is old is evolving and why they should embrace the new. Reinforcing what is working, improving what has potential, and eliminating only what truly does not fit with the desired new state will allow more iterative improvement, reduce resistance to change and reduce waste as the new state is achieved.

2.4 WORK HOLISTICALLY

No service, process, department or supplier stands alone. Results are delivered to the customer and/or business via the effective and efficient management of a complex integration of hardware, software, data, processes, architectures, metrics, tools, people and partners, all coordinated to provide a defined value.

The results delivered to the customer will suffer unless the service provider works on the whole, not just on the parts. In a complex system, the alteration of one element will impact others and these impacts need to be identified where possible, understood and factored into the **plan**.

Examples of this abound. In a restaurant, a change in the availability of a single ingredient may cause changes to menus, cooking processes, which dishes and kitchen equipment are used, the systems waiters use to enter orders from the dining room, etc. There may be negative impacts on the waiters' enthusiasm for selling the available menu and on the overall experience of the diners.

2.4.1 Specialization versus coordination

When dealing with services, whether an element is technical or non-technical, each part of the service and its impact on the overall results delivered must be considered. Achieving this holistic approach requires a balance between specialization and coordination. Because no one person or even one team can know everything about every subject or perform every required task, we need specialists who develop deep expertise in a specific area. Specialization is usually reflected in the organization of people with similar skills and responsibilities into teams or groups (known as 'functions' in ITIL).

But specialists must collaborate across boundaries and their work must be effectively and efficiently coordinated to allow the required overall results to be delivered. This coordination and collaboration is facilitated by shared processes. In this way, we see that working holistically is dependent on other guiding principles such as Collaborate.

The specialization provided by functions and the coordination enabled by shared processes are both essential in the lifecycle approach. Shared processes mitigate the risk of functions becoming isolated and disconnected from broader customer-focused outcomes. Mature functions provide critical competencies needed for process success.

2.4.2 Other reflections on working holistically

Figure 2.1 shows 'the four Ps' – people, processes, products, partners – which contribute to comprehensive and integrated service design. This is an expression in ITIL of the principle of working holistically. Addressing only one or two of the four Ps will not produce a service that is both fit for purpose and fit for use.

Another approach that can be helpful when working holistically is using what is known as the 'theory of constraints' (Goldratt and Cox, 1992) to identify bottlenecks in the end-to-end process. Looking at a service (or even the **service lifecycle** itself) from multiple perspectives is to recognize it as a group of interacting and interdependent elements forming a unified whole. This holistic approach is sometimes called 'systems thinking'. By seeking to understand the system's structure, interdependencies and how changes in any area might affect the other parts and the whole system over time, organizations can create a sustainable long-term approach to service management. When systems can organically adapt to changes as they occur, the systems will be able to evolve in a way that is appropriate to the need.

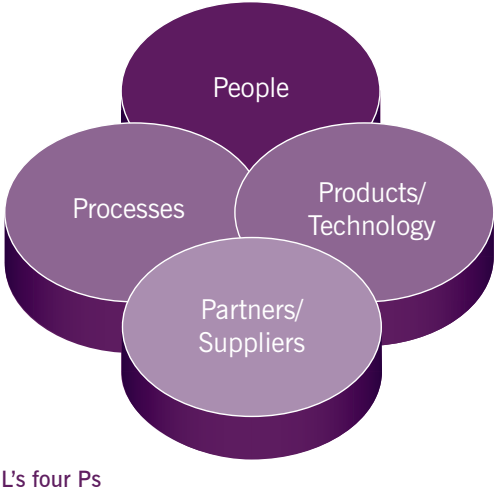


Figure 2.1 ITIL's four Ps

2.5 PROGRESS ITERATIVELY

Each improvement undertaken should have a focused objective and scope that will allow it to be effectively and efficiently completed. An individual improvement may stand on its own but, most often, initiatives have to be accomplished iteratively. By organizing work into smaller, manageable sections that can be executed and completed in a timely manner, the focus on each smaller improvement is sharper and easier to maintain.

2.5.1 Timing improvement iterations

Improvement iterations can be sequential or simultaneous, based on dependencies or lack thereof. To effectively manage the work, a major improvement initiative or programme may be organized into several significant improvement initiatives, and each of these significant improvement initiatives may, in turn, have smaller improvement efforts within them. All of the initiatives, whatever the scope, will follow the same high-level steps.

For example, if the steps being followed are based on the Deming Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, then Figure 2.2 demonstrates how smaller improvements may follow the same flow as those of which they are a part, while other improvements may be ongoing at the same time.

The key is for each individual improvement to be manageable in scope, managed to ensure that real results are returned in a timely manner, and built upon to create more improvement. The completion of each individual improvement allows progress to be shown, increasing confidence in the overall effort and allowing participants to feel a sense of accomplishment, even when the long-term goals may seem very far away.

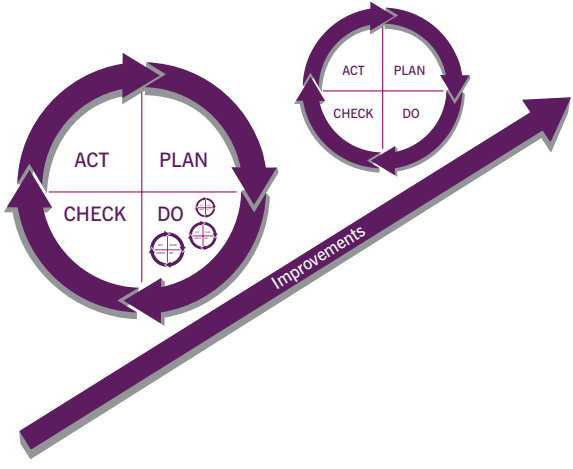


Figure 2.2 Related and independent improvement iterations

2.5.2 Scoping improvement iterations

How should each of the smallest improvement iterations be scoped? The easiest and most practical way of looking at this is to remember that the purpose of iteration is to accomplish something that is of value. It may be practical to follow the spirit of the concept known as minimum viable product (MVP), a term coined by Frank Robinson and often associated with Lean (see also Blank, 2010). In the context of software development or improvement, this can be understood as the smallest thing you can build that will still deliver value to the customer. The MVP must include everything necessary for the customer to receive that value, including testing, training, associated communication etc.

In the context of improvements like changes to a process, MVP can be understood as the smallest increment of improvement that delivers a **SMART** (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) objective (see *ITIL Service Strategy*, section 4.1.5.6). Just as with software or service MVPs, the scope of process improvements must include all the elements that will make the process improvement work, such as documentation and training staff members on the new approach. It is important to remember that the MVP needs to support learning from experience, so that the next iteration can be more successful.

In order for each improvement iteration to be successfully accomplished, it is important that the number of iterations in progress at any one time should be kept to a practical level – only start the quantity of things that can actually be finished. This principle, frequently described as 'limiting work in progress', is central to Kanban.

2.5.3 Other reflections on progressing iteratively

A commitment to an iterative approach is not only important when using the guidance in ITIL, it is also central to the agile methodology and the use of Scrum techniques, as well as being important to DevOps and PRINCE2 Agile. In all of these cases, the method or technique in question advocates working in small, manageable increments, each time producing some new state that is of value to the customer.

2.6 OBSERVE DIRECTLY

To know what is really going on, measure and/or observe it directly. Be sure that decisions are based on information that is as accurate as it can be. Observing directly (going to the source or the 'Gemba' as it is described in Lean) means actually going to the place where value-creating activity is occurring in the

organization and seeing what really happens. What happens when a user calls the service desk? What happens in the store when a potential buyer comes in?

2.6.1 The role of measurement

Measurement can be included in this principle, but it should support the analysis of what was observed rather than replace it. Although it is true that some things can only be understood through observing and measuring their effect (for example, natural phenomena such as the wind), direct observation is the first and preferred option. Too often people go straight to the data without even considering direct personal investigation.

For using measurement and metrics with this principle, remember these important provisos:

- **Data is not a substitute for direct observation** Observe first whenever possible.
- **Extrapolated data can lie** Any data used to support observation should come from direct measurement of the activity being studied, not estimated or extrapolated from other information.
- **Do not just measure, analyse** With the experience of direct observation, analyse the processed data and apply critical judgement to understand its meaning.

When making direct observations of the value-creating activity, observers should not be afraid of asking stupid questions. In fact, it can sometimes be quite illuminating for a person with little or no prior knowledge of the process to be part of the observation, as they will come to the task with no preconceptions and may find it easier to keep their focus on what the activity is supposed to actually produce.

2.6.2 Asking questions during observation

Performing observations includes asking questions, particularly the 'why' question. At first, a particular behaviour may seem odd or inappropriate but, once the reason is understood, that perception may change. To be effective, questions should be carefully phrased to take into consideration how the structure of the question may change how it is answered. For example, consider how the answers to these two questions might be different:

- Version 1: Which of the steps in the process is the most annoying to perform?
- Version 2: Which steps in the process, if any, do you think could be simplified?

Both questions might be valid, but the one that should be used will depend on what the questioner is trying to learn. Asking open questions that allow the person answering to formulate their own response can work very well.

It is important to be respectful of the people being observed. This will engender trust and facilitate better understanding of the activities being performed, eliciting greater cooperation from all involved. Observing directly allows a reduction in the use of assumptions, as assumptions if proved unfounded can be disastrous to timelines, budgets and the quality of results.

2.7 BE TRANSPARENT

Bring the work of the service provider out of the darkness and make it as transparent as possible. If more people are aware of what is happening, how it is happening and why it is happening, more people will help and fewer people will obstruct.

When improvement activity occurs in relative silence, or with only a small group being aware of the details, assumptions and rumours can run rampant. Resistance to change will rise, as staff

members speculate about what will be changing and how it will impact them. For example, if staff members believe that a move to create efficiency is really intended as an excuse for cutting jobs, obstructionist behaviour will emerge.

2.7.1 Increasing urgency through transparency

When there is poor visibility for improvement activities, there is a risk of creating the impression that the work is of low-priority. When an initiative is communicated to a team, department or company and then is never, or rarely, mentioned again, the perception is that the change is not important. When staff members attempt to prioritize improvement work versus other tasks that have daily **urgency**, improvement work may seem like a low-priority activity unless its importance has been made transparent. Improvement work can be seen as optional, something to attend to only if you can find the time, which is not the case.

2.7.2 Methods for ensuring transparency

The degree of transparency, the level of detail provided, the method used etc. are based on what is useful to the audience in question. For example, when communicating with the business as a whole, the use of existing corporate communications channels to share key high-level accomplishments may be most successful, while inside the IT department, the use of a medium like a Kanban board may be more effective in sharing progress details.

It is important to address the needs of staff members and leaders at all levels. Leaders at various levels should also provide appropriate information relating to the improvement work in their own communications to others. Together, these actions will serve to reinforce what is being done, why it is being undertaken, and how it relates to the stated vision, mission, goals and objectives

of the organization. Determining the type, method and frequency of such messaging is one of the central activities related to the critical competency of communication.

Using **CSI register**s to support transparency can be valuable, allowing people to be involved by entering their own improvement suggestions, and leaving registers available and visible to all to keep them apprised of progress towards improvement goals. Encourage managers to communicate to the staff how the content in the CSI registers will be used in the short, medium and long term. In this way staff members see that entering something in a register results in something actually being done.

2.7.3 Keys to success

Another aspect of transparency is ensuring that accomplishments are communicated and celebrated. This will emphasize the importance and value of the effort and instil a sense of pride in those participating. All staff should understand the need to contribute to the improvement activities, which can be reinforced through performance reviews, bonuses and other reward programmes.

2.8 COLLABORATE

When the right people are involved in the right ways, ongoing service provision is more efficient and effective, and improvements benefit from better buy-in, better relevance (because better information is available for decision-making) and better likelihood of long-term success.

Creative solutions, energetic contributions and important perspectives can be obtained from unexpected sources, so inclusion is a better **policy** than exclusion. Cooperation and collaboration are better than the isolated activity frequently referred to as ‘silo behaviour’. Recognition of the need for genuine

collaboration was one of the driving factors in the evolution of what is now known as DevOps, and without efficient collaboration, neither agile nor Lean techniques will work.

2.8.1 Who to collaborate with

Identifying and managing all types of stakeholders is important. The people and perspectives necessary for successful collaboration can be sourced within the stakeholder groups. In the true sense of the word, a stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in the work of service provisioning, including the providers (internal contributors and external suppliers/partners), the customers and/or the rest of the organization.

A good example is the first and most obvious stakeholder group – the customers. The whole point of being a service provider is to deliver value to them, so they certainly have a stake in ITSM work, but some organizations do a poor job of involving customers. The service provider may feel that it is too difficult to get time from the customer and that the resulting delays are a waste of time. Customers may feel that, after they have defined their requirements, the service provider should just go ahead and deliver the service and, when it comes to process improvement, they may not see any need to be involved at all. In the end, however, the right level of collaboration with the customer throughout the service lifecycle will save time and money and will produce a result that better suits the customer's needs.

2.8.2 Communication for collaboration

For each stakeholder group, their contribution to improvement at each level should be understood and the most effective methods for engaging with them need to be defined. Some contributors may need to be involved at a very detailed level, while others can be involved as reviewers or approvers.

Early in an improvement effort, when goals and objectives are defined, and at critical decision points throughout the process, broad collaboration is critical, particularly in a real-time group context. Everyone needs to be 'in the room' at the same time. While this may be very challenging logistically, it typically saves an enormous amount of work in the long run. Broad support from stakeholders for both the 'what' and the 'how' will also come out of this collaboration, making the initiative much more likely to succeed.

Once the right voices have been heard during key decision-making and clear directions have been agreed, then individuals and teams can work confidently and more independently on their parts of the effort. Building in appropriate collaboration checkpoints and coordination activities ensures continued alignment as the work proceeds.

2.8.3 Scope of collaboration

It should be recognized that the scope of collaboration will vary, based on the scope of impact of the change in question. For example, if an individual team is working on a change to an internal process that has little or no impact on any other team, then minimal collaboration outside the team will be required. It must simply be verified that there are no unaddressed upstream or downstream impacts before proceeding. The organization should decide the amount of autonomy that individuals and teams can have to make their own improvement decisions.

2.8.4 Keys to success

Many methods can be used for effective collaboration, but all require that contributors adopt a respectful attitude towards each other and commit themselves to focusing on what will be best for the company, the customers, suppliers and service provider, not on what would be best for one person or one team.

Contributors must feel that they are in an environment in which it is safe for them to express their points of view, and each person must make every attempt to truly understand the points of view of the other contributors so that judgements can be made as objectively as possible.

Having staff members with good facilitation skills is another important success factor, as a good facilitator will be able to set and maintain the appropriate tone and ensure that work does not get bogged down. The group must not endlessly rework the same ground, but must eventually move forward towards actionable conclusions.

When decisions have been made, whether they are about what to do or how to accomplish it, the principle of being transparent should be applied, the decisions should be communicated clearly and appropriately, and the actions to be undertaken explained.

2.9 KEEP IT SIMPLE

If a process, service, action, metric, etc. provides no value or produces no useful outcome, then eliminate it. In a process or procedure, use the minimum number of steps needed to accomplish the objective(s). This may seem obvious, but experience has shown that instances of the principle being applied in the real world are much less common than they should be. The benefits of doing so, however, are many. Overly complex work methods rarely maximize outcomes or minimize cost. When in doubt, look for the simplest, most straightforward method of accomplishing the desired end.

2.9.1 Judging what to keep

When analysing a process, service, metric or other improvement target, always ask the following question: 'Does this create value?' The question is important not only in ITIL, but it is also

central to the Lean method. Another way of asking this is to consider, 'Is this fit for purpose and fit for use?' It is better to start simply and carefully add controls, activities or metrics when it is seen that they are truly needed, than to over-complicate or build excessive bureaucracy in the early stages and then try to back off from it later.

Critical to keeping it simple is understanding exactly how something contributes to value. For example, a particular step in a process may be perceived by the staff involved to add no value. To them it may be seen as a waste of time. However, from a corporate perspective, the step may be important to ensuring regulatory compliance and therefore it adds value in an indirect, but nevertheless important, way. Compliance, security, data collection and other concerns may add to the requirements for a process or service and result in more complexity than strictly desirable.

2.9.2 Conflicting objectives

When determining what is truly needed, be mindful of conflicting objectives. For example, management may want to collect a large amount of data for reporting on a process, whereas the people who have to do the record-keeping may want the process to be simpler and not require so much data entry. Through application of the guiding principles (Focus on value; Design for experience; Collaborate; Keep it simple), the group should agree on a balance between the competing objectives. This could mean that only data that will truly provide value will be collected, fields will be automatically populated whenever possible, and the record entry procedures will be simplified to maximize user-friendliness.

2.9.3 Keys to success

We are challenged, in the end, to streamline at every possible point. Creative and collaborative thinking will be required. Challenging old assumptions is necessary. To be successful, be mindful of the human tendency to resist changing old methods, even when the old methods are painful. Just as in managing the customer experience, it is necessary to look at each focus area for improvement in a holistic way, considering in its entirety the flow through people, departments, systems etc. to the desired end. Without a complete view, opportunities for simplification may be overlooked.

2.10 APPLYING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.10.1 Universal applicability

Time and again organizations have sought ways to improve. Some have tried to do this on their own without the guidance of others, making the same mistakes themselves that hundreds of thousands have made before them. Others try to benefit from the experience of those who have gone before by drawing on the myriad of frameworks, models, methodologies, bodies of knowledge and philosophies that dot the horizon, each one seeming to promise a quick trip to some blissful state in which their current problems have disappeared.

But each new source of assistance often repeats the same recommendations as its predecessors, couching many of the same principles, techniques and guidance in new terminology. But, if giving the same ideas a new twist allows an organization to benefit from them when they would not have done so had the ideas been in their old familiar guise, then so be it.

The principles discussed in this guidance are not specific to ITIL or even to ITSM. They are not useful exclusively in an environment leveraging the guidance in ITIL, nor were they developed uniquely in the writing of ITIL. This is evidenced by the fact that, over and over, we see these underlying principles articulated at the heart of other well-known frameworks, models, methodologies, bodies of knowledge and philosophies. This is not a coincidence. Following these principles works! Many long years of practical experience in organization after organization have proven it. And, conversely, many long years of experience have shown that ignoring these principles frequently leads to failure.

These guiding principles will help service providers to be successful in leveraging the specific practices espoused in any philosophy, framework or methodology, be it ITIL, Lean, DevOps etc.

2.10.2 Multi-framework environments

So what does this mean to an individual working in an organization that is using more than one source of guidance to help with improvements? What if there are proponents of ITIL in the operations team and proponents of agile in the application development group, and proponents of DevOps in the CIO's office? The answer is to focus more on understanding expectations and delivering practical solutions, and less on the purity of any given model or language. Consider:

- Why are we looking for guidance in the first place?
- What are we trying to create or improve?
- What was it about ITIL, agile, DevOps, etc. that made someone think it could be helpful?

When more than one framework is used within an organization, it is not always necessary – or even advisable – to settle on one and eliminate its rivals. For example, a carpenter may have many

chisels, each fit for a different task. When used appropriately with a vision of the desired end result, a fine and beautiful piece of furniture can be produced.

In the end, it is not about this framework or that best practice; it is about delivering a better result to the customer. The key is to work together towards the same end. Regardless of the methods or frameworks in use, following them without applying critical thought and adapting the guidance to the specific needs of the organization will not be successful.

These guiding principles should support the organization in achieving its desired goals, using any or all of the available guidance.

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