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It best practices

ITIL is the world's most popular IT service management (ITSM) framework. ITSM professionals can gain certification in ITIL through PeopleCert – the exam institute appointed by AXELOS, the owner of ITIL. ITIL has been the preferred ITSM framework of choice by many organizations since the late 1990s. A significant update to ITIL occurred in 2007 when ITIL v3 was launched. This was sometimes referred to as ITIL 2007. ITIL v3 was further updated in 2011. This article describes ITIL v3 certification and the ITIL v3 certification path. In 2019, AXELOS released ITIL 4. More information about ITIL 4 or ITIL 4 certification, can be found here ITIL certification levels There are 5 certification levels for ITIL v3. These are: ITIL Foundation, ITIL Practitioner, ITIL Intermediate, ITIL Expert, ITIL Master. The ITIL certification path is described in more detail below. ITIL certification path ITSM professionals can navigate all the way up to the highest Master level in the ITIL certification path by passing the appropriate ITIL examinations. 1. ITIL Foundation certification The entry-level ITIL certification is the ITIL Foundation qualification. Approximately 2 million ITIL Foundation examinations have been sat worldwide by 2019. All levels of ITIL certification begin with ITIL Foundation. ITIL Foundation certification introduces students to the ITIL framework and covers these topics: Service management as a practice. The ITIL service lifecycle. Generic concepts and definitions. Key principles and models. Selected processes, functions and roles. Technology and architecture. Competence and training. To prepare to sit their ITIL Foundation exam students can enrol in classroom or online training or can choose to self-study. ITIL Foundation certification is a prerequisite for all higher level ITIL certifications. Prerequisites: Credits: ITIL Foundation provides 2 credit points. 2. ITIL v3 Practitioner certification ITIL Practitioner certification teaches students how to apply the ITIL framework. ITIL Practitioner explains a Continual Service Improvement (CSI) approach to guide ITSM improvement initiatives and covers: Organizational change management. Measurement and metrics. Communication. Prerequisites: ITIL v3 Foundation or an ITIL 4 Foundation certificate. Credits: ITIL Practitioner provides 3 credit points 3. ITIL v3 Intermediate certifications ITIL intermediate certifications enables students holding either Foundation or Practitioner certifications to get sufficient credit points to gain Expert certification. Intermediate levels come in two sets of modules Service Lifecycle Modules: Service Strategy (SS), Service Design (SD), Service Transition (ST), Service Operation (SO), Continual Service Improvement (CSI), Service Capability modules: Operational Support and Analysis (OSA), Planning, Protection and Optimization (PPO), Release, Control and Validation (RCV), Service Offerings and Agreements (SOA). Prerequisites: Credits: Service Lifecycle Modules provides 3 credit points each. Service Capability Modules provides 4 credit points each. 4. ITIL v3 Expert certification Students can obtain ITIL Expert certification by gaining 22 credit points. One requirement is to pass the MALC (Managing Across the Lifecycle) Exam. MALC tests a student's ability to integrate ITIL knowledge in real-world settings. Passing the MALC exam provides 5 credit points. Prior to sitting the MALC exam, a student must have 17 credit points from either Lifecycle, Capability or Practitioner modules. 2 of the credit points must also come from Foundation certification. Prerequisites: ITIL Foundation and 15 credits from Intermediate and/or Practitioner modules. 5. ITIL v3 Master certification TIL Master certification proves that a student can apply ITIL within an organisation. ITIL Master candidates must select a range of personal experiences to explain to an examiner. There is no fixed syllabus for this qualification. In the exam, a student must explain and justify the following: How they would select and apply elements of the ITIL Framework to achieve desired business outcomes in one or more practical assignments: ITIL knowledge. Or, ITIL principles. Or, ITIL methods. Or, ITIL techniques. Or, Supporting management techniques. Prerequisites: ITIL Expert certificate. And Must have worked in IT service management for at least five years in a leadership, managerial, or higher management role. What's the cost of ITIL v3 certification? For the cost of ITIL v3 certification check out the price of online training. The User is solely responsible for evaluating the merits and risks associated with use of the information included as part of the content. The User agrees and covenants not to hold upGrad and its Affiliates responsible for any and all losses or damages arising from such decision made by them basis the information provided in the course and / or available on the website and/or platform. upGrad reserves the right to cancel or reschedule events in case of insufficient registrations, or if presenters cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances. You are therefore advised to consult a upGrad agent prior to making any travel arrangements for a workshop. 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What the ABC revealed is a mismatch between what IT does currently and its understanding of business priorities. IT departments are so busy looking at technology, processes and systems that they don't understand enough about the business they operate within, the services used by the business and their relative importance. Yet with the growing importance of IT for all organizations business managers want IT to take a more externally-facing role and help shape business value. This is a very exciting time for IT and IT service management (ITSM).How has this situation come about? Partly, it's the way organizations hire their people: while organizations may need IT specialists, how much emphasis do they place on identifying the candidates who appreciate the way IT skills contribute to their business value and reduce operational risk? Ask candidates "What do you know about our organization and how you think your skills would help?" This would be a good starting point to break out of such an internally-focused culture. We have to break out of the mind-set of business and IT – "I work in IT and they are the business!" You are an IT specialist within a business and must understand how your skills contribute to the overall business. This may sound utopian but it is what business leaders expect and need. Simultaneously, it's worthwhile revisiting the definition of service according to ITIL®: "A means of enabling value co-creation by facilitating outcomes that customers want to achieve, without the customer having to manage specific costs and risks." Many attendees in ITIL training do not know "why" their organization is using ITIL, or what value they hope to achieve using ITIL. Rather, ITIL becomes the goal in itself. This comes from the life in the example of a major logistics company in which every new IT person sits in a delivery truck for one day. They learn which information system tells you about which way the truck needs to be in, which packages to pick up and which delivery route to take. In essence, learning about all the critical information systems required to run the business. So, when an application goes down, IT immediately knows the business impact and can raise the priority to fix it. The importance and priority of a service to its customers – and consequently the business providing the service – is something IT organizations cannot afford to ignore. In one real-life example, a business providing lights for a football stadium incurred a huge fine when the system failed and the IT team hadn't prioritized fixing it; they didn't understand the importance of the system and the potential impact to the business if it failed. Taking another leaf out of ITIL, specifically from its Guiding Principles originated in ITIL Practitioner, IT should focus on value; ensure it understands value or – where IT falls over – what value is at risk. Another core value is "collaborate and promote visibility" as in the previous logistics company example; viewing how IT is used and how it contributes to business value.Aligning business and IT Though we might agree that an organization should understand what problem it's trying to solve and value it wants to obtain before introducing any best practice, I often see blank stares because organizations haven't defined it. They are hoping that ITIL will somehow deliver value. This problem persists today and extends right up to the governance level: it's been shown that most managers know only one out of five strategic company goals. If that's the case, what chance does the IT organization have with business managers all insisting their IT needs are critical, placing scarce IT resources under enormous strain? And because successful digital transformation requires end-to-end working between IT and the business at all levels, is it any wonder that 84% of digital transformation fails? In less mature companies, only 23% of business boards get involved in working with IT to make it happen. In more mature businesses it's more than 44%. This ensures the CEO and business line managers work with IT to prioritize IT investment decisions and balance scarce resources between "innovation and new value" and "reducing risks and removing technical debt" – risks to business agility and value. There needs to be a stronger tie between IT frameworks such as ITIL and how they fit in with the needs for governance.Balancing business protection and innovation Most IT organizations are overwhelmed with work through the large demands companies are now placing on their technology teams to deliver new IT. The ongoing challenge is how to prioritize scarce resources and achieve a balance between protecting the business by keeping existing systems operating and reliable and finding new solutions through innovation. This has resulted in many IT departments being focused on keeping things going because of the threat posed by outages and errors. Those putting problem management in place are reducing the number of outages but are then faced with the vicious circle of issues arising from faster and more numerous IT roll-outs. Effective problem management can give feedback throughout the end-to-end delivery chain, identifying where these issues and outages come from and be prevented from happening next time.Translating best practice theory into reality Rolling out new applications or releases is dependent on an organization's strategic goals and level of risk. Best practice suggests that where the risk is higher – in financial institutions for example – the actions taken should be more considered. Conversely, organizations that need to bring innovation to market more quickly demand faster roll-outs and may be prepared to accept some risks. To know how to manage these decisions in line with business strategy, IT professionals need the necessary best practice knowledge and practical skills to work more effectively end-to-end. And this means often overcoming people's resistance to changing the way they work. Achieving this is based not on installing a best practice as a goal in itself but on actually trying to solve a genuine problem and to create, rather than lose, value. Again the issue here is end-to-end throughout the complete delivery chain of business, development, operations and suppliers; each often with their own set of "pet" best practice frameworks, approaches and culture. Translating best practice into reality needs – at its core – Organizational Change Management to deal with people's inherent resistance and to convince them of the value contained in best practices; indeed, it's about engaging them in building their own best practices, creating understanding and gaining commitment to design processes and procedures. On one side answering the "why" question relating to value and, on the other side, the "what if we don't?" question and the risks this poses to the business.Getting buy-in to best practice approaches Engaging teams across an organization in how they can all work together, end-to-end, is the key to getting benefit from best practices. I see ITIL 4 – the latest evolution of the guidance – becoming a more strategic part of how IT service fits within the overall strategy of a business, along the lines of portfolio management and aligning TSM with governance. While some might see ITIL as having a purely operational role, this perception is addressed in ITIL 4. ITIL 4 will reflect other frameworks and integrate new ways of working including Agile, DevOps, Lean, IT governance and leadership. The guiding principles draw from proven ways of working and encourage a customer-centric culture of collaboration, working holistically and gathering continual feedback. ITIL 4 will provide the flexibility needed to adopt and adapt what is relevant to each business and organization while reinforcing the basics for delivering quality IT service. All of this sets ITIL and service management in a strategic context, bringing together TSM, Development, Operations, business relationships and governance in a holistic approach. In other words, a truly integrated model for digital service management. For further information about ITIL 4, visit our ITIL.Read more posts in this series SLAs of the future: service management outcomes, not IT availability Combining different IT and TSM frameworks for business benefit Business value from IT goods and services in a digital world The ITIL update in a world of digital and service transformation. ITIL is the world's most popular IT service management framework. It is used by all major corporations, governments and larger businesses across the globe. ITIL Foundation is the most popular ITIL certification for IT service management professionals. ITIL Foundation certification is the entry-level ITIL qualification and is required before you sit any of the higher ITIL certification examinations. This site provides free ITIL resources, including infographics, articles and examination tips. It also offers both ITIL Foundation online courses and ITIL Foundation courses for students studying for their ITIL Foundation certification. Accredited ITIL training Building upon Knowledge Train's well-deserved reputation for high-quality training, this site provides accredited, cost-effective ITIL Foundation training to students in both traditional classroom and online formats. All courses are accredited by PEOPLECERT, on behalf of AXELOS, the owners of ITIL. Welcome to the top 10 IT best practices to adopt right now. This simple, non-technical "listicle" (updated annually) covers some of the most valuable technology tips we can assemble into a five-minute read. Some of the recommendations are a little obvious. However, the trick is to combine each bit of evergreen advice into a unified and repeatable process. IT Best Practice #1 – Embrace Strategy A strategy is the best foundation for creating IT systems and security solutions that align with your business goals. Does your 5-year business plan inform your IT? If not, it's time to establish a Technology Planning Committee to integrate the two. And institute policies, planning, procedures, collaboration, tracking, and accountability across each functional area or department of your organization. Repeating what you've always done without a strategic blueprint and team buy-in is risky. Learn More: Missing the Strategy Piece? IT Best Practice #2 – Establish a Budget IT should be an investment similar to real estate and human resources. With the emergence of mobility solutions and work-from-home trends, technological innovations will likely reduce your dependence on real estate and increase your dependence on new cybersecurity protections. Do you have agile systems in place if you need to pivot? Are you familiar with the differences between an IT budget and a security budget? Start getting comfortable with formulas that apply to hardware, software, warranties, services, cybersecurity, and IT salaries. As a benchmark for establishing an annual technology budget, Gartner Group cites a cross-industry average of 3.3% of sales. If you can't commit right away, develop basic guidelines to inform your future aspirational state. IT Best Practice #3 – Adopt Standards Standards increase the likelihood that all moving parts of your IT environment communicate efficiently and securely. Are your servers, workstations, wireless access points, cloud applications, switches, and firewalls a mixture of business class and home/office "prosumer" class? By upgrading each piece to business class, you'll improve operations, reduce cyber risk, and enhance employee morale. Learn More: Technology Standards IT Best Practice #4 – Eliminate Single Points of Failure Two scenarios make you vulnerable to potential disruption: The first is putting one person in charge of handling IT in-house. The second is assigning an individual to oversee the relationship with your managed services provider (MSP) and running interference on every user request for technical support. Quarterbacking every last ticket is unsustainable, exhausting, and creates huge bottlenecks. Will your MSP allow each user to open tickets directly? Do you have a meaningful way of assessing the skills of your in-house IT employee? Is everything documented (in case they leave)? Unless your answer to all three questions is "yes," you have some trouble spots to address. IT Best Practice #5 – Master Cybersecurity Frameworks Are you crystal clear on the cybersecurity frameworks that are best suited to minimize your regulation and compliance exposure? The current digital landscape is a double-edged sword. Threat actors use social engineering to bypass cutting-edge security solutions to compromise your assets. Then government agencies hit you with fines if there's a breach. There is an alphabet soup list of framework options to juggle: NIST, CIS v7, ISO 27001, SEC, SOC 2 Type 2, CMMC, GDPR, HIPAA, etc. Make sure you are actively engaged and up to date. You also need to ensure your team receives ongoing cybersecurity awareness training. Learn More: Cybersecurity Frameworks IT Best Practice #6 – Optimize The Technology Lifecycle Every component in your IT stack has a useful life. Replace equipment before it fails. The following IT infrastructure examples are not exact extinction dates but approximate lifespan guidelines: Laptops – three years Workstations – three to five years Wireless Access Points – three to five years Firewalls – five to seven years Switches – seven to ten years Cabling & Wiring (Low Voltage) – seven to ten years Warranties and renewals of service and support agreements also require careful attention. Learn More: The Technology Lifecycle IT Best Practice #7 – Leverage The Cloud Every application not currently hosted in the cloud will be moving to the cloud in five to ten years. This shift is good news for companies that want an alternative to the complexity and expense of premise-based solutions. It also portends well for the proliferation of Single Sign-On solutions that allow users to reach their applications through one secure portal. The shift is inevitable as mainstream developers focus on designing solutions for web browsers and Software as a Service (SaaS), deployed from hyper-scale, public cloud providers like Amazon and Microsoft. Learn More: All Roads Lead to SaaS IT Best Practice #8 – Elevate Backup & Disaster Recovery According to IBM, "The subprocesses—"backup" and "disaster recovery"—are sometimes mistaken for each other or for the entire process. Backup is the process of making the file copies. Disaster recovery is the plan and processes for using the copies to quickly reestablish access to applications, data, and IT resources after an outage." Backup is one of your best defenses against intentional or accidental data loss. And yet, many organizations still have significant room for improvement. According to Help Net Security, "85% of organizations aren't backing up multiple times per day, 26% back up daily, 28% back up weekly, 20% back up monthly, and 10% aren't backing up at all. These lapses can lead to days, weeks, and months of lost data with a low probability of a complete recovery." Peter Krogh, a well-known photographer, popularized the concept of the 3-2-1 rule, which recommends having at least three copies of your data, storing the copies on two different media, and keeping one backup copy offsite. Learn More: Data Backup Trends and The 3-2-1 Backup Rule IT Best Practice #9 – Maximize Business Continuity Forward-thinking companies grow by maximizing business continuity and minimizing disruptions, especially avoidable ones. As Datto explains, "A business continuity plan (BCP) is an organization-wide strategy, setting out the procedures and steps to maintain the business's critical operations and keep them running during an unexpected interruption or a disaster. The process of creating this detailed plan is known as business continuity planning. The BCP is more extensive than a disaster recovery plan, which primarily focuses on the restoration of data and access to the IT infrastructure following a disaster. BCPs include contingencies for business partners, assets, processes, operations, human resources, and every other business aspect that may be affected." If your organization were to suffer a catastrophic event like a flood, data breach, or fire, would you be able to continue operations? Very few companies would be able to carry on without incident. Think about how much downtime you can bear and fill in the gaps by evaluating and strengthening your position with the other considerations on this list. IT Best Practice #10 – Prosper with a Trusted Advisor The United States is home to thousands of IT support companies. The various players include: Sole proprietors Break-fix providers Five to ten-person shops Boutiques Larger regional firms National MSPs owned by private equity firms and public conglomerates There is tremendous turmoil in the space as smaller providers struggle to keep up and larger entities make acquisitions. Can your IT provider scale with you as you grow? Is their ownership changing anytime soon? Are they listening before making recommendations or making product pitches on autopilot? Make sure you partner with a company that demonstrates discernment and can serve as an objective consultant. Learn More: 4 Different Kinds of IT Support Moving Forward with IT Best Practices I hope our recommendations will inspire you to begin making improvements within your organization right away. If some of the guidelines seem unrealistic, you're not alone. Even companies in the Fortune 500 have gaps. The goal isn't perfection. The main objective is to move forward one step at a time. Are you ready to organize a plan to assess where you stand? I suggest you consider the following first steps: Ask your in-house IT department or MSP if they have detailed documentation on each initiative: (network diagrams, IT roadmaps, service catalogs, contracts, vendor directories, etc.) If they do, make sure you employ a scoring system to rank and improve your standing in each category. Get a third-party assessment if they don't have detailed documentation and a scoring system in place. A second opinion is advisable every few years. Many MSPs will conduct a comprehensive technical assessment for a nominal fee. Please schedule a discovery session if you need assistance organizing your approach. In today's rapidly evolving information technology (IT) landscape, the foundation upon which organizations build their digital capabilities plays a critical role. The IT infrastructure is the backbone, supporting and enabling various business functions to thrive in an interconnected and dynamic environment. As businesses increasingly depend on technology to drive innovation, enhance efficiency, and maintain competitiveness, the need for robust IT infrastructure best practices becomes paramount. IT infrastructure encompasses various components, such as hardware, software, networks, data centers, and cloud services, operating harmoniously to provide seamless and dependable digital experiences. For organizations aiming to optimize performance, bolster security, and guarantee scalability, it is imperative to establish and uphold best practices in IT infrastructure. This necessitates a strategic approach to the design, implementation, and management of the IT environment to fulfill the present and forthcoming requirements of the business. Engage with our IT Support Provider in Marquette experts to implement IT infrastructure in your business. In this article, we will explore what is IT infrastructure management and IT infrastructure strategies. Understanding How to Manage IT Infrastructure For Business Managing IT infrastructure is crucial to running a successful organization in the digital age. It involves overseeing the hardware, software, networks, and data centers that support the flow of information and enable business operations. Effective IT infrastructure management requires a deep understanding of technology, security protocols, and best practices. It involves monitoring system performance, troubleshooting issues, implementing updates and patches, managing data backups, and ensuring compliance with industry regulations. By proactively managing IT infrastructure, organizations can minimize downtime, improve efficiency, enhance security, and support their overall business objectives. 8 Business IT Infrastructure Best Practices 1. Standardization and Consistency Standardization and consistency are key best practices when it comes to IT infrastructure. By establishing standardized processes, procedures, and technologies across your organization, you can ensure that all systems and applications work seamlessly together. This improves efficiency and productivity and reduces the risk of errors and downtime. Consistency is equally important, as it allows for easier IT infrastructure management and troubleshooting. By implementing, you can minimize complexity and improve overall stability through a consistent configuration, deployment, and maintenance approach. You can mention that consistency goes hand in hand when optimizing your IT infrastructure and setting the foundation for a reliable and scalable technology environment. 2. Proactive Monitoring and Maintenance Proactive monitoring and maintenance are essential best practices for ensuring IT infrastructure's optimal performance and reliability. By implementing proactive monitoring, IT teams can identify and address potential issues before they escalate into major problems. This involves regularly reviewing system logs, conducting performance tests, and utilizing monitoring tools to track key metrics such as network bandwidth, server uptime, and application response times. Regular maintenance tasks such as software updates, hardware inspections, and security patching should be performed to keep systems running smoothly. 3. Regular Backups and Disaster Recovery Planning Regular backups and disaster recovery planning are essential best practices for IT infrastructure management. Regularly backing up your data ensures that important files and information are protected in case of a system failure or data loss. This includes backing up files stored on local servers, cloud-based systems, and virtual machines. Therefore, having a comprehensive disaster recovery plan is crucial for minimizing downtime and quickly restoring operations in the event of a significant disruption. This plan should include steps for recovering data, restoring systems, and regularly testing the plan's effectiveness. If you want to safeguard business IT infrastructure and minimize the impact of potential disruptions, visit our IT Support Company in Bellevue for assistance. 4. Regular Audits and Assessments Regular audits and assessments are essential best practices for maintaining a secure and efficient IT infrastructure. These processes help organizations identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, and ensure compliance with industry regulations. By conducting regular audits, businesses can proactively identify any weaknesses or gaps in their IT systems and take appropriate action to address them. This includes reviewing security protocols, evaluating network performance, and assessing data backup and recovery processes. Regular assessments also provide valuable insights into the overall health of the IT infrastructure, enabling organizations to make informed decisions regarding technology investments and improvements. 5. Redundancy and High Availability Redundancy and high availability are critical components of a robust IT infrastructure. Redundancy refers to the duplication of essential systems and components, ensuring that there is always a backup in case of failure. This can include redundant servers, storage devices, network connections, and power supplies. High availability, however, minimizes downtime and ensures that services are always accessible to users. This can be achieved through load balancing, failover mechanisms, and proactive monitoring and maintenance. By incorporating redundancy and high availability into your IT infrastructure, you can minimize the risk of downtime and data loss, improve system performance and reliability, and ultimately provide a better user experience for your customers or employees. 6. Patch and Update Management Patch and update management is a critical aspect of IT infrastructure best practices. Regularly patching and updating software and systems helps ensure they remain secure and perform optimally. It is essential to stay up-to-date with the latest security patches and updates, as they often contain fixes for vulnerabilities that hackers could exploit. Implementing a centralized patch management system can help streamline the process of deploying patches across multiple devices or systems. However, it is essential to regularly test patches and updates in a controlled environment before deploying them to production systems, as they can sometimes introduce compatibility or functionality issues. 7. User Training and Education User training and education is a critical component of IT infrastructure best practices. To maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization's IT systems, users must be knowledgeable and skilled in their use. Comprehensive training programs, workshops, and resources can ensure that users have the knowledge and skills to utilize the IT infrastructure effectively. This includes training on properly using software applications, navigating network systems, and adhering to security protocols. Ongoing education and updates are essential to inform users about new technologies, best practices, and potential risks or threats. 8. Vendor Management Vendor management is a crucial aspect of IT infrastructure best practices. Effective vendor management involves establishing and maintaining solid vendor relationships, ensuring they meet the organization's specific requirements and expectations. This includes conducting thorough evaluations during vendor selection, negotiating contracts that clearly outline performance expectations, and monitoring vendor performance to ensure compliance. By effectively managing vendors, organizations can minimize risks, optimize costs, and ensure the smooth operation of their IT infrastructure. Organizations must establish clear communication channels, maintain transparency, and regularly review vendor relationships to align with their evolving business needs and goals. In Conclusion Efficient resource management is the foundation of a well-optimized and high-performing IT infrastructure. Organizations can significantly enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness by undertaking comprehensive assessments, adopting virtualization and cloud solutions, right-sizing resources, and integrating automation. Continuous monitoring, load balancing, stringent security measures, collaborative efforts, and ongoing reviews further bolster streamlined operations. It is essential to recognize that resource management is a continuing process that demands adaptation and responsiveness to uphold the efficiency of your IT infrastructure in alignment with your business objectives.