

# ADAPTING ITIL®

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT



## Adapting ITIL® - Knowledge Management

As an ITIL® trainer, when teaching the upper-level ITIL 4 modules we often come across terms in the syllabus such as “complex adaptive systems”.

This is defined in the ITIL glossary as Systems that adapt in, and co-evolve with, a changing environment result in:

- 1) behaviour that is not predicted by the behaviour of parts of the system
- 2) the inability to examine the system in isolation from the other systems in its environment

Now there is a point to this so please bear with me.

So, I always try where possible to use analogies to reinforce student understanding across the classroom, not in parts. For example, in this case, as a crude analogy I often explain this as:

The human body is a system, i.e., the human body is made up of a number of constituent parts such as the heart, the brain, arms and legs etc., When the human body goes out into an environment that is freezing cold, one of its constituent parts being the blood rushes to the skin in an attempt to keep the body warm. However, as a result the skin responds by displaying goose bumps which could not have been predicted. Furthermore, it is not possible to replicate this unless the human body is able to interact with another system, in this case freezing cold weather. In other words, one system can become a repellent or an attractor to other systems. In these cases, predefined processes based on defined rules and defined outputs (such as robotic processing) is not always the best approach to managing such systems. In these situations, a more heuristic approach is required where new creative solutions can emerge, and where the scope of control is wider on the ground, and equally where failure should be deemed as an opportunity for improvement not blame, especially in today's modern world where systems operate in unpredictable environments. We don't need Captain hindsight in these situations!

So, my point is,

Why are we not promoting this culture in the workplace?

Why do we not have an in-house branded glossary not just with definitions but with full explanations and/or analogies?

Why are we not taking tacit knowledge and transforming this into explicit knowledge?

We have the expertise in the workplace so let us start sharing it! Let us go one step further, let's make this a company guiding principle. I know this is not an ITIL guiding principle, but ITIL is a public framework to be adopted, this does not mean copying and pasting ITIL as it stands into the organisation. We should be adapting ITIL to the relevancy and context of our organisation.

We say that we promote collaborative working – do we really?

Finally, lets not just restrict learning to the job in question, let people learn new things outside of their role. The ability to learn new things helps deal with a market that is volatile and uncertain - e.g., where things are constantly changing and moving.

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