

WHY THE SHIFT TO ITIL® 4?





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Let me start by saying that whilst on the surface ITIL 4 may appear to be more complex compared with ITIL 3 in reality ITIL 4 offers a more practical approach to landscaping service management than ITIL 3 did. Whilst ITIL 3 served a purpose it was far too rigid. The ITIL 3 lifecycle stages suggested that everything lived in a specific place, e.g., strategy, design, transition, operation, and CSI, and with the exception of CSI in that order!

Many organisations struggled to integrate ITIL 3 strategic processes/activities with design, and transition activities etc. Organisations struggled to achieve transparent interaction with ITIL 3 from both within the IT organisation and externally with other organisations. Albeit we ended up with a range of extremely credible ITSM guides/publications covering a host of processes however, the only evidence truly visible in the workplace (i.e., the end-result) was incident management and change management. In fact, the ITIL 3 change management concept generally failed to meet the pace of change that the business wants. I should also include service level management too, this in some organisations is probably the weakest of the three, simply because in some organisations this process ended up being more cosmetic than anything.

In the world of ITIL 3 I heard service managers say, “we have introduced incident management and change management as the first implementation and we will be implementing a number of other processes in due course”, but they never did! The reason was because these processes as they stood in the guidebook were too rigid and no one knew what to do with them, so at the very best we ended up with cosmetic documents sat on the shelf doing nothing. Well, that’s not fair, what we ended up with was a bunch of policies but not processes which was the real intention.

ITIL 4 has transformed what we referred to as processes to what we now know as practices. Practices refer to the resources required to achieve an objective in the wider sense, processes however, focus more specially on the interrelated activities that transform inputs into outputs, and not mention, with the introduction of value streams simply puts the icing on the cake. This really does hit the spot as to speak, because this breaks down silos and introduces far more flexibility and less rigidity. For example, change management or to be more precise what we now know as change enablement, promotes various processes, value streams along with various change authorities operating under the practice of change enablement.

Without going into the detail, whilst the ITIL 3 lifecycle stages have disappeared both in name and look and feel, these lifecycle stages in crude terms are just about recognisable but in the context of ITIL 4 interface with each other in any combination to meet demand accordingly. Also, whilst ITIL 3 promoted creating value it didn't really provide any guidance on how we create value, and furthermore, did not really focus on the consumer to the levels required, whereas ITIL 4 is very much about the relationship between service provision and service consumption.

As I previously highlighted, ITIL 3 did serve a purpose, particularly by getting closer to the business than ITIL 2 did however, ITIL 3 inspired as opposed to offering a practical approach, this has clearly changed with the flexible structure of ITIL 4. ITIL 4 is modular, it breaks down silos, its leaner, its more agile, it recognises the various channels of how providers and consumers interact through service offerings and better understands the definition of value.

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