

Top 10 things IT managers should know about implementing ITIL

By Pink Elephant Inc.

01 Dec 2007 |



Here are some important considerations for IT managers who are implementing the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) -- based on knowledge and expertise from IT Service Management consulting firm Pink Elephant Inc.

10. ITIL implementations need to be managed as formal projects.

To be successful, a deliberate, well-planned project management approach should be taken when implementing ITIL. It is best not to engage in ad hoc unconnected activities. Some key considerations include:

- Create an overall vision and strategy.
- Assign a program or project manager.
- Create a project team.
- Assign executive sponsors, program sponsors, process owners and other key roles.
- Develop a project plan and manage it effectively.
- Assign accountability for desired outcomes.

9. It takes resources, including time and money.

Implementing an ITIL Service Desk and all 10 support and delivery processes takes years, not weeks or months. Consider the following:

- There must be sufficient time for planning and selling the benefits of ITIL.
- Implementing a single process to a desired level of maturity requires a great deal of management attention.
- There are many costs associated with implementation: education costs, project costs, purchase of new or upgraded tools and systems, and possibly even the use of external consultants.
- There will be IT staff required for development and implementation of the processes, which means new roles have to be created.

8. It will require education and training.

Because everyone has to "speak the same language", a thorough, well-organized education

plan should be developed and executed.

- ITIL implementation involves all IT employees -- from the very top on down, and all across the board. It's important to include everyone, and to customize education to suit individual roles and responsibilities.
- Numerous courses are available on the market to educate (and certify) employees.
- Training has to go beyond just the ITIL IT Service Management model. An education plan should also include organizational design, organizational change, leading change, process maturity, quality and continuous improvement and overcoming resistance to change.

7. More than ITIL processes will change.

Implementing ITIL means that attention has to be given to many areas of the organization, not just ITIL processes. These include:

- Human resources management: Compensation, org structures and reward and recognition have to support new roles and responsibilities.
- People: New roles, job descriptions, beliefs, values and disciplines have to be firmly planted.
- Technology has to support new processes.
- Interrelationships with other business processes have to be considered.

6. A strong communication plan will need to be executed.

In order to ensure successful outcomes, a strong communication strategy and plan are must-haves.

- The communication strategy should provide direction.
- The communication plan should lay out what needs to happen, when, who will be involved and what needs to be communicated.
- The execution of the plan is ongoing, and accountability should be assigned for desired outcomes.
- Senior management plays a key role throughout the entire program, not just at kickoff.
- Communicate often, and on an ongoing basis, using many different mediums.

5. It takes management commitment and participation.

It all starts at the top. Senior management must show visible commitment often, and on an ongoing basis.

Follow the following eight-step model and advice for leading change:

- Create a sense of urgency.
- Develop a guiding coalition team.
- Get the vision right.
- Communicate for buy-in.
- Empower action.
- Create short-term wins.

- Don't let up.
- Make change stick.

4. The organizational culture will need to change.

In order for change to stick, cultural issues have to be addressed. Examine the following aspects of your culture closely:

- The personality of the organization -- behaviors, beliefs, systems, written and unwritten policies and procedures, and values.
- Leadership and management styles and corporate climate.
- Are you promoting a culture of service and continuous improvement?

3. There will be resistance.

Be prepared. Resistance to change is inevitable, and everyone experiences it to some degree. Leaders must be prepared to manage this aspect of change effectively in order to help the organization move quickly from resistance and denial to acceptance.

- Resistance patterns are predictable and can be managed, provided a plan has been developed.
- Most people resist change because of perceived or real threats. If these are identified, communication efforts can address these head on.
- An effective communication plan helps to overcome resistance to change -- this is the secret weapon for overcoming resistance to change.

2. It takes everyone's involvement.

One way to overcome resistance to change is employee involvement.

- Everyone has good ideas to contribute -- give employees the opportunity.
- A cross representation of IT is the best solution to building a single process. Don't focus on just one group or department; get everyone's input. All stakeholders can make a valuable contribution.
- Getting as many people involved as possible creates a sense of ownership.

And the No. 1 thing that every manager should know about implementing ITIL is: It's worth doing!

Implementing best practices according to ITIL will:

- Provide improved business results.
- Move you from a reactive to a proactive organization.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of IT processes, which often leads to reduced IT costs.
- Improve service delivery.

In Conclusion

There is no silver bullet. Best practice process development and implementation take a strong

commitment from the organization. And remember, it is not necessary to implement ITIL as-is, rather use it as a guideline and ensure it is fit for purpose.

This article originally appeared on the [Pink Elephant site](#). Pink Elephant is a leader in IT management best practices, offering conference, education and consulting services to public and private businesses globally, and many listed in the Fortune 500. The company specializes in improving the quality of IT services through the application of recognized best practice frameworks, including the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL®).