

Drive Radical Business Value with a High-Speed IT Organization

Reinvent your approach to IT service management to elevate IT business impact



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Businesses need more from IT. Faced with intensifying competition and constant market disruption, companies must achieve unprecedented agility to succeed. Their success depends, in part, on their ability to rapidly leverage new technologies and to bring new digital services online faster than ever before. They also depend on higher performance, better reliability, and greater efficiency to accomplish more, faster.

IT organizations can't meet these demands through tinkering and incremental improvements. To enable the value and competitive differentiation their businesses need, IT leaders must reinvent their approach to IT service management (ITSM) based on the foundation of a high-speed IT organization.

This paper explores the essential capabilities of a high-speed IT organization, including faster time to value (Ttv), a more intuitive user experience, mobile and social ways of working, and seamless information flow throughout the IT estate. IT leaders will learn how they can deliver the speed, efficiency, and performance their businesses need, and elevate IT to a more strategic role in the enterprise.

THE CHALLENGE FOR IT: ACHIEVE A TRANSFORMATIVE BUSINESS IMPACT

IT professionals sometimes wonder whether they're truly helping their businesses compete, or merely checking boxes and keeping the lights on. It's a fair question; all too often, the demands of day-to-day ITSM leave little time or mindshare for innovation. But the digital workspace of the modern enterprise demands a new mission and mindset for IT. With employee expectations and business requirements evolving at a breathtaking rate, IT must become faster, more productive, and more efficient to enable radical improvements in the way the business operates. A high-speed IT organization can improve both competitiveness for the business and professional satisfaction for IT—after all, no one goes into the field just to fight fires and tweak settings.

To enable a high-speed IT organization, you need to leverage innovation not just for the sake of the business, but within IT itself as well. Quantum improvements in productivity and efficiency depend on your ability to provide a more streamlined and intuitive experience for IT users, with clear insight into the information that matters, closer connections to colleagues and collaborators, and more mobile and social ways of working. On a fundamental level, IT needs technology to do more of what technology is capable of, so people can focus on the higher-level work that only human expertise can perform. In particular, IT must harness technology to accelerate time to value, enhance individual productivity, connect people and systems in new ways, and ensure seamless information flow throughout the environment.

In the following sections, we'll explore the requirements for a high-speed IT organization.

FAST TIME TO VALUE

In dynamic and disruptive market conditions, businesses need IT to deliver projects in days or weeks, not months or years. Fast time to value doesn't just matter for the business; it also affects the perception of IT in the organization. If it takes 60 days or longer for a project to show first value, people will continue to see IT as slow and unresponsive—a cost center, not a strategic asset. Conversely, IT organizations that are capable of operating within business timescales will draw the right kind of notice and prove that they can play a more strategic role in driving differentiation and competitiveness.

There are several ways IT can think about accelerating time to value:

Phased initiatives: Traditionally, large initiatives could take months or years to complete without negative ramifications for IT. In the modern IT organization, projects like these should be broken into smaller phases to ensure a rapid initial impact, with subsequent phases rolled out for additional value over time.

Configuration, not customization: You can't afford to spend weeks or months coding and customizing to make a process fit your requirements; the technology should do that work for you. As a starting point, adopt out-of-the-box (OOTB), industry-defined best practices that have been proven in production. Choose tools that offer the flexibility to adapt these practices to your processes without the need to start from scratch.

Portability: After creating a process in a development and test environment, you should be able to move it easily into other environments, such as production, without having to recode or reconfigure it. Similarly, you should be able to efficiently extend and adapt complex processes and automation to other parts of your business without having to recreate them. This flexibility should be a key requirement for the tools you use; if the technology forces you to perform repetitive work, it's not fulfilling its role.

INTUITIVE WAYS OF WORKING

The delivery of a project is only the beginning. Business requirements evolve constantly, requiring new configurations and integrations, and no technology is fully self-maintaining. To empower IT staff to efficiently maintain and optimize your environment, you need to provide a personalized experience based on their own unique preferences and priorities. Everyone works in a different way—especially talented IT professionals who've developed their own personal best practices for the challenges they face. Instead of forcing individuals into standard approaches, technology should empower them to work their own ways to drive maximum value.

This includes:

Personalization: Customized dashboards and views should present all the information an IT user needs in a single place, easily filtered and refiltered according to their priorities for the day or week, for their team's current focus, for the project at hand, and so on.

Fewer Clicks: The more easily people can access the most relevant information for their needs, the more time they can spend on value-added work. People should have the ability to review and navigate their full array of ever-changing work items, including service requests, incidents, change requests, problems, and releases—all from one page.

Business Alignment: IT professionals should also have easy visibility into all the pieces of infrastructure they're supporting and their roles in the business. By gathering IT data and presenting it in a business context, the technology can help IT have more informed conversations with business partners to ensure that they're focusing their efforts for optimal impact and value.

MOBILE AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Business mobility and social collaboration have transformed the enterprise—and IT needs to evolve in the same way. Wherever and however people work, IT needs to meet them on their own terms and interact with users through their preferred platforms. Freed from deskbound work practices and empowered with seamless communication throughout the service experience, IT can solve problems and respond to requests more quickly and efficiently to keep the business running at its best. Easy access to information anywhere and anytime can improve productivity and effectiveness for IT and the business alike.

To fully empower your high-speed IT organization, make sure that every aspect of your approach to service management is:

Mobile: Real-time business and user needs can't afford to wait for IT staff members to get back to their desks. Wherever they are, they need to be able to manage tasks, monitor service levels, and identify issues in critical infrastructure.

As incidents and problems arise, they should have a way to respond quickly, follow up, escalate issues to the appropriate people, and provide the full array of IT services on any device, anywhere, as easily as they could at their desktop computers.

Social: Many businesses are already using social collaboration platforms like Chatter™ to help their employees connect and work together. IT should do the same—not just for the inherent productivity and efficiency these channels offer, but also to engage with users through the same tools they're already familiar with.

Intelligent: It's not enough simply to conduct a chat or instant messaging (IM) session. In the high-speed IT organization, the user who initiates the session should be routed automatically to the staff member with the right competency to ensure first-call resolution. Instead of navigating phone trees or being passed from one staffer to the next, the employee can get the right service from the right person on the first try for a more prompt and satisfying service experience.

By attaching these interactions on social channels to the service record, you can also spare people the need to retype or rehash the whole story from scratch if the incident recurs.

SEAMLESS INFORMATION FLOW

As enterprise IT estates become more diverse and distributed, information relevant to IT's work resides in more places than ever. To achieve a high-speed IT organization, you need to be able to bring all that information together in a seamless way, presented in a unified and coherent manner, to avoid delays and errors in service management processes.

The information environment within which IT works should be:

Integrated: Robust platform technology can help simplify IT's work, improve information flow, and enable close integration across tools. When customer support, ITSM, and other IT service and support functions all use the same platform, staff members gain critical visibility into each other's work. For example, the support team can see what network operations is doing so they can better understand its potential impact on the delivery of specific services and provide an informed response to customers who call in with issues or questions.

Business-centric: The ability to see how critical business services are supported by specific elements of infrastructure helps IT make the right decisions more quickly based on actual business priorities. This insight is essential for IT to be able to play a more strategic role in the business, tying individual tasks and investments directly to business impact.

Actionable: Beyond helping IT respond to and support user requests more effectively, seamless information flow empowers IT to lean forward and work proactively. Monitoring makes it possible for IT to identify and solve emerging problems before they impact users. Holistic information on service quality, performance, reliability, and usage across the enterprise inform the development of roadmaps and initiatives to continually improve service delivery and user experience. As new requirements and tasks emerge, staff members should be able to take action efficiently within the same environment, without having to switch technologies.

SUMMARY

The high-speed IT organization isn't a vision for the next generation; it's the current expectation. To deliver a radical business impact, IT has to work more quickly and efficiently with clear insight into the information that matters, with social, mobile, and automation capabilities to streamline daily work. By harnessing technology to do more of the work, IT can free valuable human mindshare and expertise—empowered with business-aligned insight—to deliver proactive, high-value projects that drive differentiation. Going far beyond incremental improvements, the high-speed IT organization can play a truly strategic role in the business.

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