

Is your IT department run by the right people?

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Information technology (IT) is integral to and at the heart of any business, underpinning every department and function within the organisation. As such, IT service management (ITSM) forms a fundamental part of the success of an organisation's processes and is a key ingredient in continually revitalising any business.



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However, many organisations that do not have the right people with the appropriate skills and experience in place to run their ITSM, suffer from poor service delivery which can negatively impact the health of the entire company.

It is important to consider what an IT professional is, in today's terms. IT professionals and chief information officers (CIOs) have been considered technically minded individuals, whose focus is traditionally on the management and implementation of technical systems and components. An ITSM head who has completed an ITIL Foundation course and who has a basic grasp of service delivery has been sufficient.

However, when contemplating IT in a digital world, organisations need to focus on more than that – they need to ensure their ITSM head has not only an in-depth knowledge of ITIL, but is also in possession of a number of skills that will ensure that ITSM delivers its intended value to the business.

The role of ITSM versus function

Before considering the skills and traits that comprise an effective IT professional, it is critical to know the difference between the role and the function being carried out. The role of ITSM within an organisation is to ensure the proper quality delivery of IT services in such a way as to add value and reduce costs. There are multiple functions contained within this role. Possessing the necessary skills to complete the required functions of ITSM as well as its role within the business makes the ITSM head more effective.

If the ITSM head understands the organisation's goals and the strategies in place to achieve those goals, they can align this with ITSM and successfully manage this function within the organisation. The ability to identify and implement the best ways to support the business is key. It is important that the individual be able to adapt to changes, both within the business and within the market, to address these influences in a timely manner.

Is a basic understanding of ITIL sufficient?

The individual who heads up ITSM ought to have more than a foundation course in ITIL. In order to ensure ITSM is not only delivering on its promise but is continually improving to the benefit of the organisation, a comprehensive understanding of the best practices and frameworks outlined by ITIL is vital. Understanding the impact of governance and processes, and how having a suitable governance and compliance strategy in place can help the ITSM head to ensure the business processes flow properly.

One of the key skills that today's IT professional needs is the ability to communicate properly and work well within a team. ITSM heads who possess a thorough knowledge of ITIL, ITSM, and all things technical are unlikely to be successful if they lack communication and teamwork skills. Communication is key to virtually every component of ITSM, from being able to market a new solution so that the organisation buys in, to being able to deliver clear and concise instructions to personnel, to having the ability to liaise effectively with customers, both satisfied and not. An ITSM head who cannot communicate is unlikely to be effective and may do more damage than good to the business.

Ensuring the appropriately skilled and experienced resources with the right profile are in place within an organisation's ITSM department requires a change in mindset. They need to understand that IT no longer impacts only a small part of the business, but that it is entrenched within every component of an organisation, from its financial and accounting system, to its CRM system, to its production process and the way it interacts with the world. Being attuned to all facets of a business and involved in business decisions is an important element for ITSM heads.

Having an ITSM head with the proper skills and qualities that IT demands, in a climate that is constantly evolving and innovating, is a constant challenge. One that can be addressed either by employing the right individuals, or making use of an outsource partner who can match the perfect ITSM solution and people to your business.

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