



White Paper

Give me questions, not answers

This paper contains 90 questions that 27 world leaders in IT believe that people in IT Service Management should be asking themselves.

Ignore more than 600 years of wisdom at your peril!

Mark Smalley, 10 April 2013



Introduction

An invitation to contribute to a BrightTALK panel discussion webcast 'ITSM in 2013 and Beyond: Everything You Need to Know in 55 Minutes' with Stephen Mann, Chris Dancy and James Finister got me wondering what kind of questions the movers and shakers in my network would like to pose. Within a week I was delighted to receive insightful responses from 24 prominent players from 16 countries on 5 continents, including 4 professors and 4 chairmen of itSMF Chapters. A high-level summary of their topics is listed below (in order of receipt) and I whole-heartedly recommend that you take a good look at their detailed responses on the next pages. My fellow panel members have also contributed their questions.

Theo Thiadens	Roles & resp; Standardization & sourcing; Supplier certification
Brian Johnson	Effective use of frameworks
Maarten Looijen	Ethics
Charles Betz	DevOps; IT Dept; Analytics; Frameworks
Rob England	Managing multi-party value chains; Anti-fragility
Troy DuMoulin	Managing multi-party value chains
Aale Roos	Quality of IT service
Hank Marquis	Business responsibilities; Roles and career paths
Paul Wilkinson	Training & certification; Customer focus; BITA
Steven de Smet	IT Dept
Peter Lijnse	IT Dept
Ivor Macfarlane	DevOps (vs specialization); IT Dept
Robert Falkowitz	Humans vs machines
Mark Toomey	IT-savvy business leaders
Rama Prasad Mamidi [...]	Offshore; Talent (customer expectations, scarcity)
Egon Berghout	Career paths/knowledge/job rotation; IS trade-offs
Michiel de Boer	Lean and Agile
Suwat Laicharoensup	Technological standardization; ITSM for SME's
Frank Chen	Competences for knowledge workers
Milan Zivkovic	Consolidation; Complexity reduction; Performance; BITA
Mauricio Corona	Effect offshore ITSM for Professionals in 'mature' regions
AN Rao	Multi-party value chains; ITSM & cloud, Mobile, SDN's, SDDC's
Daniel Billing	Talking to the business
James Finister	Multi-party value chains; Serv. desk; Serv. quality; Complexity
Chris Dancy	Tech enabled, data driven consumer experiences
Stephen Mann	Demonstrating business value; Guidance; Customer service



The Expert's Questions

Theo Thiadens, Emeritus Professor at Avans and Fontys Universities of Applied Science & Functions at various levels in public and private Organisations, Netherlands

- How can I enable that everybody plays his own part and doesn't get bypassed (answer TT: clarify roles and responsibilities and which boundaries apply)

Specifically for IT customers:

- How can I make IT as easy as possible? (answer TT: standardize as much as possible and outsource IT operations)
- How can I avoid problems with external service providers (answer TT: demand certification)

Brian Johnson, VP and ITIL practice leader at CA Technologies, USA

- Why do many follow the trend in ITSM to imagine that a Foundation course in ITIL® is any more than a basic understanding?
- Why is the ITSM market using Management of Strategic Programmes (MSP) guidance for service strategy?
- Why hasn't the ITSM market positioned other relevant, non-proprietary standards and frameworks such as ISO/IEC 20000, ISO/IEC 27001, ASL, BiSL, PRINCE2, P30/P3M3?

Maarten Looijen, Emeritus Professor at Delft University of Technology & Rector Osei Tutu II Institute for Advanced ICT Studies Ghana (2002-2012), Netherlands

- Which frameworks and standards give guidance regarding ethics?



Ian Clayton, Outside-In Pioneer, Lean & Universal Service Management Consultant, Author Service Management Body of Knowledge, Speaker, USA

- Why do I need an IT department? (question for CFO type persons with small IT organization 25-50 persons)
- If we drop the IT from ITSM should we drop the IT from IT - what do we replace it with?
- Is ITSM really a case of 'implementing' something, or is it more a cultural shift and management philosophy?
- If you accept that an IT organization's primary purpose is to serve the enterprise, like a service provider(?), why should an ITSM approach need cost justification? Doesn't it represent the commitment the business is asking for, and then an appropriate approach?
- What is the single most important element missing from traditional ITSM theory, and why?
- Why is it that traditional IT service management thinking seems to have largely ignored its roots in the business, and how best can we retrace these and re-integrate the customer centric origins?

Charles Betz, Enterprise Architect at AT&T, USA

- How will DevOps and ITSM interact in the upcoming year? Major enterprises in the US are hiring director-level 'DevOps leads'. Where will this go?
- How will the governance structures associated with large scale, business-oriented computation evolve? Will IT as a professional practice area retain a long term cohesive identity (like Human Resources or Corporate Finance), or will it slowly dissolve and decentralize, as did early 20th-century 'Departments of Electricity'? The answer to this is not at all obvious: there are forces pulling hard in both directions.
- Will IT as a practice succeed in applying state of the art analytics to its own activities?
- Will anything new emerge to supplement or challenge the ITIL/COBIT/CMMI triumvirate?



Rob England, IT Skeptic, Owner & Managing Director at Two Hills Ltd, New Zealand

- How to better manage multi-party value chains? Especially cloud environments and XaaS providers
- How to embrace anti-fragility? (of which DevOps is the flag-bearer)

Troy DuMoulin, Vice President Professional Services at Pink Elephant, USA

- Consider the premise that today's Enterprise IT functions are made up of a mixed group of diverse suppliers (internal and external) and becoming even more diversified and complex as we integrate cloud and online services - How in the world will an organization keep all these moving parts synchronized in order to play their designated part in the larger value service system or even get them moving in the same direction?
- How can all players in the IT value system achieve shared values, priorities and practices in order to deliver service in a harmonious fashion?
- How can you create a shared IT Operating Model that outlines the key elements of the value stream comprising Demand, Plan, Build and Run?
- Which Enterprise IT Governance Roles are needed to 'conduct' all the various parties participating in the Service Orchestra?

Aale Roos, ITSM consultant, founder of Pohjoisviitta Oy, Finland

- Why IT service quality is so bad? (commentary AR: It's easy to find examples from the news how IT fails. It was also #1 in my survey of ITSM pain points. Technology is getting better but still services fail)

Hank Marquis, Practice Director, Cloud Solutions at Global Knowledge Training, USA

- What do you think the business responsibility is when it comes to getting and using IT services?
- What role do you see IT playing in human resources, in particular in the area of job descriptions and career paths?



Paul Wilkinson, Director and Owner of GamingWorks.nl, Director ABC@Work and Chief Cartoonist at at Egor Productions, Netherlands

- We have spent millions on gaining ITIL certificates and yet still we do not get the value and still the business complains – Why are all the certificates not helping? What do we need to change in ITIL® training and certification?
- We keep saying we will change and improve, for more than 10 years we have struggled to make the necessary transformation in IT – What capabilities do middle managers and team leaders need to develop to ensure that the change programs and transformations succeed?
- Since the beginning of ITIL we have adopted the frameworks to become more customer and service focused, still ABC surveys show that 89% say we are not customer focused enough and top scoring ABC cards are 'IT is too internally focused' and 'IT has too little understanding of business impact an priority' - Why do we struggle to be customer focused? What do we need to do to increase our customer focus?
- Business IT Alignment has been an issue for more than 10 years and is becoming increasingly important. Business says we don't get it and we blame the business – Why do we consistently fail? What do we need to do to get this to work? Do frameworks have a role to play in this? Or is it something else?

Steven de Smet, President itSMF Belgium & Manager at Capgemini Belgium

- Trends and recent rumours predict that IT as a department will disappear, the business will control IT themselves with a maximum of XaaS, cloud and mobility solutions. The purchasing department will manage these contracts. What will be the future for ITSM?

Peter Lijnse, Managing Partner at Service Management Art, Canada

- How long will I have my IT job? (with the fusion on IT and the business it will be more difficult to distinguish between the two)
- If IT is just corporate IT in your organization (email, finance etc., without which the primary production processes continue to function) how can you get involved with the business to support their key processes?



Ivor Macfarlane, Tivoli Marketing at IBM, UK

'Best practice' questions

- Can we get the benefits of initiatives like DevOps that seek to break down barriers, without losing the benefits that the barriers actually gave us in the past – like specialization, deep knowledge, tightly focused teams?
- What really are the consequences of the big issues – cloud, big data etc? The big suppliers see the major consequence as shift in their major customers from IT departments to managed service providers. So where should you be looking to get/deliver your services from now on?
- What really is the attitude to work, communication and culture of the next generation of workers, and how do I deliver to them?

Fundamental questions

- What value do we get from IT? (or any other supplier for that matter)
- If I don't understand the services my customers think they get me from me, how I can manage them and deliver them, let alone improve them?
- Am I in IT? Am I delivering services? Who should I talk to, who are my customers? Who are my suppliers, why don't I really know?

The key question

- What exactly is my job? What do they pay me for?

Robert Falkowitz, General Manager at Concentric Circle Consulting, Switzerland

- What can I do more accurately, faster or more cheaply than a machine, and how is that of any value to the customers of my services?



Mark Toomey, Project Editor for ISO/IEC 38500 and Owner at Infonomics, Australia

- Do you operate with old world philosophies where IT specialists lead the agenda and the business follows, or in the new era where IT-savvy business leaders set the agenda with active support from the IT specialists?
- Do your business leaders have the necessary IT savvy and support from their IT specialists to set a business agenda that recognises how IT is now being used to change and create markets, and where much of the agenda for use of IT is imposed by customers, suppliers and regulators?

Rama Prasad Mamidi, President itSMF Singapore

For IT customers

- How can I get more value out of IT?
- How can I ensure a more seamless transition/transformation of products or services?
- How can I reduce spending year-on-year by leveraging the maturity of the service provider's staff?
- How can I get more control (governance) of IT services?
- [Banking] How can I achieve a very high level of security and adherence to local regulations?

For IT Managers/Practitioners

- Which tools will ease my mundane job?
- Which case studies, templates, off-the-shelf tools/processes will help me manage customer expectations?
- How do I fulfil the role of delegated manager of offshore service providers in low-cost areas?
- How do I find and retain personnel who know to managing customer expectations
- How do I find and retain talent in a market that is highly dependent on foreign talent while are regulatory restrictions on bringing in foreign talent?



Egon Berghout, Professor at the University of Groningen, Netherlands

- How can we improve the contribution of IT to organizations by improving how we organize human resource management?
- Should we invest more in business domain knowledge so that we can provide better applications or should we invest more in IT knowledge so that we can build more reliable systems and a more coherent system landscape?
- Which IT career paths should we have?
- What is the minimum knowledge for each role?
- How can we use job-rotation to break down the barriers between development and IT management?

Michiel de Boer, Director Consulting Asia at Quint, Malaysia

- What are the implications of a 'Lean & Agile' approach to ITSM and how does the business and service management profit from this approach? (think about a scenario that really addresses the whole end-to-end effects of IT services (from business to technology) and addresses a proper approach that looks at the value and dynamics (including functionality) to the customer and specifies the 'bare minimum' of controls required in IT)

Suwat Laicharoensup, Chairman itSMF Thailand

- How will technological developments such as cloud computing, virtualization etc. impact on ITSM and how should I respond?
- How should Small and Medium Enterprises implement ITSM?

Frank Chen, Professor at Hangzhou Institute of Service Engineering, China

- How do organizations with (IT) knowledge workers differ from traditional industries in terms of service profit models, human resource management and service marketing?



Milan Zivkovic, Chairman itSMF Serbia

- [for both IT customers and IT service providers] How can I use IT service management methodologies, standards and best practices to achieve operational benefits and demonstrated cost savings by means of consolidation, reduction of operational complexity, performance management and aligning IT with business objectives
- What would be the Five Critical Success Factors for ITSM?

Mauricio Corona, Professor and researcher at La Salle University, Mexico City, and Associate Director at BP Gurus

- Countries such México already provide more and more global clients with high quality IT services at low cost. How will this trend affect the role of ITSM professionals in 'mature' regions?
- How can ITSM effectively contribute to IT/Business alignment? And how can we align all of the IT professionals within the same IT organization to the ITSM initiatives?
- What's the role of IT in Businesses that does not have clear organizational goals nor strategies?

AN Rao, Senior Vice President at Cognizant Technology Solutions, India

- As deals get unbundled and go into multi-vendor sourcing and as the traditional on-premises moves into a hybrid environment, how are CIOs planning to construct their service integration and multi-vendor service management arrangements and contracts ? How would they measure the success of such an arrangement in supporting the business?
- How will operations best practices, standards and instrumentation (by ITSM tool vendors) change as main stream adoption of cloud, mobility, SDN's and SDDC's affect core ITIL processes such as configuration management and SLM?

Daniel Billing, Solution Manager ITSM at Symfoni, Sweden

- How are IT People going to move out of their comfort zone and dare to take risks outside IT by talking to business people?



James Finister, EMEA Competency Lead for IT Governance, Service Integration & Service Management Excellence at Tata Consultancy Services, UK

- How do we provide the business with long term flexibility to support new markets, mergers and de-mergers, especially as they face up to the challenges that the end of the recession will bring?
- Both IT departments and the business have a track record of failing to leverage benefit from large suppliers. How then will they manage the shift to multiple supplier ecosystems - and should they?
- Regardless of the multi supplier ecosystem question, how do we get the business to effectively engage in the governance of IT, and how do we prevent IT departments labelling every management activity they do 'governance'?
- The users of corporate IT have a multitude of IT interactions outside of their workplace. How will this raise the bar for internal IT departments, and what can we learn from consumer experience?
- Automation is seeing the volume of traditional service desk activity radically altered, with between 60% to 80% being handled by a portal. What impact will that have on the future of the service desk?
- That residue of calls the service desk will be left to handle will almost by definition not be suitable for a predictable workflow driven process based solution as beloved by the red badge ITIL expert. What type of approach will work instead?
- After 20 years of focus on delivering quality of service, it is clear that achieving SLA targets doesn't equate to having satisfied IT users and customers. How do we achieve the shift to Quality of Experience?
- When will we accept that the IT value network is inherently disconnected and heterogeneous in nature and that frameworks like OBASHI are doomed to failure because IT systems are both complex and complicated? How do we manage that complexity, complication, and fragility?



Chris Dancy, Visionary service management practitioner, industry expert, content platform producer and founder of ITSM weekly podcast and TFT global virtual conference, USA

- What purpose and value do centralized service desk and asset systems serve in three to five years?
- Is it time to consider a decentralized support desk. With the advent of bring your own services, data and devices, and the increase in demand of innovation and value, is it possible to safely deploy multiple "Service Desk" 2.0 systems of feedback/engagement/request and break-fix?
- What purpose and value do centralized service desk and asset systems serve in three to five years?
- Do IT professionals have a role to play in the emerging tech of other departments? For example HR deploying systems like work.com or health care monitoring systems for employees?
- How are IT professionals addressing the vast amounts of data being collected inside the enterprise by our peers, outside the enterprise by the organizations consumers? Is it time to consider an information configuration management database?
- Should IT professionals be considering biometric devices and feedback systems (IOT) in their innovation strategy, support and value propositions?
- Many organizations are now removing support options such as email and phone. Can we safely abandon self-service?
- What metrics, best practices or KPI's can we develop based on quantified customer experiences outside of surveys/focus groups by examining or collecting behavior and or biofeedback?



Stephen Mann, Senior analyst, Forrester Research, UK

- What will it take to get people working in IT to stop thinking just about what they do and to start thinking about what they (or the business) achieve through what they do?
- In addition to this, how do we move IT success being measured at the point of IT creation to success measurement at the point of IT (service) consumption?
- Who is best positioned to push, pull, or entice IT organizations forward towards where they need to be in terms of IT service delivery good/best practice in 2013 and beyond? The OGC/new ITIL "owners", lone-wolf thought leaders, consultants/advisers, trainers, publishers, ITSM tool vendors, exemplar IT organizations, or any combination of these?
- From an IT support perspective, how do we change the mind-set that supports technology to one that supports people (dependent on technology)? Should customer service be part of IT support (or is that part of a holistic approach to "people/employee support")?
- How do we get successful IT organizations to share their good or best practices? IMO presentations (and case studies) that highlight achievements aren't enough. Where are the "Hows"?
- Who (i.e. which organizations) is prepared to invest resources into helping IT organizations to be better able to demonstrate business value? Or do we need to knock this idea on the head in that HR, Finance, etc. don't seem to be doing it? Maybe it's because IT continues to cost more as demand grows coupled with the perception that IT has never cared enough about cost to manage costs well?



Author and acknowledgements

Mark Smalley is Ambassador-in-chief at the not-for-profit, vendor-independent ASL BiSL Foundation and is a self-employed IT Management Consultant at Smalley.IT. He is specialized in Application Lifecycle Management and IT Governance. Mark is a regular speaker at international conferences, where he has reached out to thousands of IT professionals.



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For the record, my own question (how does a fragile IT house divided respond to diversified and dynamic demand, while repelling two-pronged disruption from demand and supply?) reflects the experts' concerns about the vulnerable organization and positioning of traditional IT departments, complex multi-party value networks, internally-focused competences of ITSM professionals, and increasing business involvement as a response to the increasing potential value of IT. I'm in good company and am very grateful for their generosity in sharing their thoughts with the community.