



Accelerating the adoption of ITIL® V3 through simulation



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At last - the long awaited third iteration of the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®) is almost here. The most popular and widely accepted best practice framework for IT Service Management has been brought into the 21st century - and the ITSM community welcomes its evolution with open arms.

ITIL Version 3 (V3) takes the common sense approach of ITIL V2 to the next level - through adopting a service-oriented life-cycle approach to ITSM, the ongoing quest for true IT and business alignment comes ever closer.

But is there a drawback? - hundreds of organizations across the world have invested heavily in V2, spending considerable amounts of time and money bringing their people, processes and technology in line with the teachings of V2. And just as we're at the point where being V2 Foundation qualified is second-hat and everyone knows their Service Support from their Service Delivery, it's time to change - significantly.

ITIL Life - but not as we know it?

ITIL V3 is not a complete change to ITIL life as we know it - the ITIL V2 processes continue to be a core element of V3 - only now they have been absorbed into the wider, all-encompassing life-cycle approach. The interface between old and new is apparently seamless, meaning organizations should not have to reinvent the wheel in order to take their service management into the realms of V3. Many involved with the production of ITIL V3 claim that a V3 implementation will be easier and therefore more natural than implementing V2 due to the fact that the life-cycle approach better reflects how service management is actually applied in day-to-day practice.

But what can't be denied is the fact that V3 is a complete paradigm shift in the way service management is thought about and approached - leaving organizations with a number of challenges. Not only do they need to understand what the impact of V3 is to them, but they also need to make the fundamental decision whether or not to take steps towards implementing it. Many may decide not to, as the V2 framework meets their needs sufficiently. Many may wait to see how other organizations progress with their implementations. For those that do decide to move into the V3 arena - how do they effectively communicate the framework and benefits of V3 across the affected areas of the organization - and fast?



A larger sphere of influence

The revised V3 framework is fundamentally more aligned with the business than its predecessor. The new V3 'Service Strategy' for example, takes a business-focused approach to the design of new services, meaning the ITIL sphere of influence has widened to incorporate more of the business and its representatives. This ultimately means that a significantly increased number of people will be touched by the ITIL V3 framework - many of whom may never have been exposed to ITIL before.

A successful V3 implementation will require commitment and understanding from everyone within this sphere of influence - from the CIO, down to the Service Desk staff - all the way through to the business representatives. This creates a significant education and awareness challenge.

Many organizations will wonder how best to bring their staff up-to-speed in order to realize the benefits this ITIL refresh will bring. Educational courses will be available for individuals, but this form of traditional training and education will be expensive and time-consuming. A wide-spread traditional V3 education program will be virtually impossible to implement quickly across the ITIL V3 organizational sphere of influence - due to budgets, people availability and other common organizational constraints. And for those new to ITIL, there is a more significant learning curve which needs to be addressed - and is it really necessary for those who fall into this category to have to go through full Foundation training?

The other main problem with such traditional education programs is the low retention rate. Research shows that on average, 40% of training content will be understood on the day, with only 2% being retained 3 months later!

Experience is the best teacher

The best way to accelerate understanding of ITIL V3 is to experience it. Simulations, or gaming solutions as they are also known, are a high-impact, energetic way to accelerate understanding and acceptance of the new features of V3 in any organization.

Simulations can cause breakthrough understanding of V3 whilst transforming learning into an engaging and highly memorable shared experience. The best simulations are set in realistic scenarios to which participants can directly relate to and have actual experience of. Unpredictability, interaction and realism draw on participants emotions and competitiveness to ultimately create high levels of engagement.

Simulations also have an impressive retention and understanding rate. On average, 89% of the content is absorbed on the day, with 63% of the content retained 3 months later. This is a significant improvement on the earlier-mentioned 3 month rate of 2% retention achieved with more traditional education methods.

Industry analysts Gartner endorse this approach. They believe gaming can transform learning into a more engaging and dynamic process, enhancing people's work performance and driving business results.

Savvy organizations will simulate to make V3 a success - using gaming solutions to bring awareness and understanding of the benefits of V3 to large numbers of their staff and fast. The beauty of this approach is that it accelerates cross-organizational understanding of the complexities and guidance of V3 - so within a day, everyone is talking the same language.

