



Is there a magic formula for ITAM and the Service Desk?

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How many times have we wanted to wave a magic wand and have everything all joined up the way *we* want it as an end user, and not to be pushed from pillar to post between departments just to be able to get back up and running?

There is a need for a joined-up approach to managing IT – this is recognised in the tools we use, and the flexibility they give us. Put quite simply it is not surprising that almost any ITSM tool worth its weight also has integrated ITAM capability – but that is just half of the story.

Let's maybe start with why it is so complicated. Projects that try (and often fail) to implement a Configuration Management Database as their ITSM corner stone often do so because they cannot wrap their heads around frequency and currency of information.

Sure it might be great that you can scan all the information as the machine hits the floor, including the colour of the underpants of the guy who installed it, but when will that information ever become useful in the managing of that asset (no, don't answer that)!

As well as information gathered but never used, there is information required but never gathered, often strategies fail to keep up with technology, different managers with different goals, SLAs, support agreements. Let's not even tackle Licence Management here, which is a law unto itself.

Perhaps one of the biggest issues we face is tackling the challenges head long without either defining the desired endpoint, and maybe getting too bogged down in the detail way ahead of time.

As an industry, we are fairly comfortable that there are a plethora of tools that exist to pull in all kinds of information to help build these end to end views of services.

Now what we need to do is break down how we start to build those blocks up, as we start to understand the WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, HOW and WHEN of getting the Service Desk involved as a key part of your ITAM strategy.

WHO

Organisations must recognise that the Service Desk, as the 'conciierge' or the face of IT, is the vital point of contact between users and IT Service Management and therefore integral to any asset management strategy. Their role is to help to resolve incidents as quickly as possible and

minimise their impact on the organisation. It is important to remember this – the Service Desk needs as good a view of the organisation’s bigger picture as the rest of the IT departments, if not more so.

WHAT

Exactly what assets will you be working with, and what information do you need to know to be able to join up these dots? And actually even more importantly, what have you got in place now – maximise what information you have first and build a solid core for additional asset information to increase its comprehensive coverage?

WHERE

This is a journey, and as with all journeys, we need to know where we want to get to. This mythical all-seeing, all knowledgeable Configuration Management Database at the core of all things – but while the information exists across departments, it is not just drawn together in a cohesive way as if some giant magnet is drawing it all in. We can all talk roadmaps until our wearable tech is giving us directions to the end of the earth, but discussions need to involve all the relevant departments – and that absolutely includes the Service Desk.

HOW

None of this can exist without even the simplest ITAM programme – define the IT services, break down what the underlying assets are, start adding to that information about installations, allocations, contracts and so on.

Understand how the Service Desk is integral to minimising disruptions and without a foundation of the information above as a minimum, how can they possibly help resolve that?

WHY

At that first point of call – when a disgruntled member of staff picks up the phone to the Service Desk because something isn’t working – it is their job to quickly assess status using (hopefully up-to-date) information to make those initial decisions.

If those fundamental building blocks are not present imagine the time wasted to try and establish model of device, what’s installed, latest versions and so on.

WHEN

A little common sense has to prevail from time to time. When pulling together your ITAM solution, just as when you put in the effort to get buy in from all departments for your ITSM solution, bring the Service Desk in to the discussion. Have them understand what is used for

discovery, what information is gathered and get their input based on their experience to help establish what is vital to help resolve incidents.

Maybe even put in a little time and effort to establish what should also be out of scope of scanning and collection – if you never look at it after the scan, then why have it?

It makes obvious commercial sense for the IT departments to understand and be bought in to the business drivers that the organisation has. ITSM vendors recognise this, and increasingly look to simplify the integration between ITAM and ITSM within one umbrella – for example an end user raises an incident or request from their device and information can be gathered for inclusion in the initial ticket.

The more information the ‘concierge’ has, the better the service. There’s no magic involved – it is just that simple.