Ohio State University Service Operations

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1   Introduction

Bob Gribben has been with Ohio State University (OSU) since 2009 and currently holds the role of Director of Service Operations. He oversees the Service Desk, Data Center Operators, End-Point Management and the ITSM Knowledge Management System. Bob has been involved with ITIL® since 2001 and has served in different roles within the ITSM world. He has been a Trainer, Consultant and currently serves as the Process owner of Incident Management, Request Fulfilment and Problem Management for the OCIO at The Ohio State University. He is an ITIL v2 Service Manager as well as an ITIL v3 Expert and is currently working towards COBIT® 5.

Altogether, the department supports over 120,000 faculty, staff and students, utilizing phone, email, chat and walk-in areas to support their community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are spread throughout the campus in various locations.

2   Adopting ITIL

2.1 WHY ITIL?

ITIL provided a framework that made sense for us. It was easy to understand and easier to apply, because it wasn't just a 'cookie-cutter' recipe. It allowed us to choose what we required based upon the nature of our business.

2.2 HOW DID YOU COME ACROSS ITIL?

Several years before we adopted ITIL as our framework of choice, I had actually done some training and consultation for the University, introducing them to the benefits of a measurable and repeatable approach to Service Management. I was brought in to look at the current level of service being provided to the University and to address any lack of process. From my own personal experience, I recognized ITIL best practices as a way of reining in the organized chaos that rules most organizations.

2.3 WHAT BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL CHALLENGES WERE YOU AIMING TO SOLVE WITH ITIL?

Customers understandably complain about the delivery of a service or the timely resolution of their issues. The Service Desk had for years been a part of the organization that customers did not want to work with. Improving service from the functional and process level usually leads to customer satisfaction.

2.4 HOW DID YOU PLAN ITIL'S ADOPTION?

We started with our immediate pain point, the Service Desk function and the Incident Management process. From there, we were able to see the benefits of adding Request and Change Management.

The process for the adoption was a plan of inclusion and communication. We wanted to include a representative from different parts of the organization help us to build out the processes, making them champions for the process. Once finished and signed-off by the Process Owner, the next steps were to communicate and train on the change, to ease our users into the cultural change.

2.5 WHAT WENT RIGHT?

There was buy-in from the top of the organization to the bottom.

We spent time drafting out the Incident Management process, making sure to document the complete process. A cross-functional team was included for buy-in within the entire organization. Process Owners were named for every process we rolled out. Their participation on the Process Governance team was mandatory.

2.6 WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES? WHAT PUSH-BACK DID YOU GET?

Too many ideas about how things should be accomplished and done. Everybody has an opinion of what ITSM can and will do, but most of those opinions are not backed-up by enough data.

It's very hard to change the mentality of an institution that has never had documented, repeatable processes and procedures. If you communicate and show the benefits of the proposed improvements early enough before implementation, the initial dislike of the idea will begin to fade with time as they start to use it. The objective was to not make such a large disruption to the users and their ways of doing the job, all the while changing the way they do it.

2.7 WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

A smaller initial process design team. The phrase "Too many cooks in the kitchen does spoil the broth" best descibes the situation.

2.8 WHAT ACHIEVEMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Winning the Pink Elephant 2010 ITIL Project of the Year for Incident Management. Being asked to speak at several industry conferences on the subject.

3 ITIL's Continuing Use

3.1 WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES?

Maturation:

- Maturing the current processes we have and introducing newer ones that will help the organization show value to our customers
- Keeping the excitement for ITSM and still continuing to work hard to keep the lights on. We provide quarterly ITIL Foundation classes but day-to-day operations can sometimes put processes on the back burner.

3.2 HOW ARE YOU ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES?

- Maturity assessments of our current processes
- Directives coming out of the Process Council, presented to the Senior Leadership to drive decisions.

3.3 WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE?

As we discuss how to grow, we will define new processes and the metrics to measure we need their value. We are beginning to look at Demand, Event, and Availability Management.

3.4 HOW DO YOU BALANCE BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH CONTINUAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENT?

With defined SLAs and OLAs and the metrics for those services. Are we meeting the goals we have set for each service we provide? If you can't measure it, why provide it? Holding Service Owners accountable to the service they provide is important.

3.5 HOW DO YOU ALIGN THE GOALS OF THE ITSM TEAM WITH THE GOALS OF THE COMPANY?

ITSM processes should work to provide a measureable, repeatable means to deliver services to meet the goals of the organization. E.g., if you provide a service, and the support for the service user is slow, then a goal for the organization would be to improve support response times. Defined Request Fulfilment and Incident Management processes with good tools, good training and good people will help achieve the goals.

3.6 HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

Happy customers! Happy users! Through the use of transactional surveys and yearly surveys, we get an idea of what the user thinks of us.

3.7 HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU DO TO THE ORGANIZATION'S EMPLOYEES?

- Information sessions where all are invited to come, listen and ask questions. The Process Owner is encouraged to make it an engaging workshop
- Service Owner meetings are a time when Process Owners and Service Owners collaborate together. Hard metrics are reviewed
- Service Spotlights, where a Service Owner will introduce their service offerings
- We offer ITIL Foundation training to all individuals so a common language is spoken by all
- Training is also required before we allow access to the SKMS tool. This training is for the defined processes within the organization.

3.8 DO YOU USE OTHER METHODOLOGIES OR FRAMEWORKS ALONGSIDE ITIL?

- COBIT 5 - but it is in early stages.
- Lean - working smart not hard will hopefully allow us to better maximize our resources more effectively.

3.9 HAVE ITIL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION BEEN USEFUL IN ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS?

Extremely. It allows the organization to understand why we do what we do. We begin to speak a common language. The training paints a great picture of how the processes work together to deliver services.

3.10 OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING A LOT OF FEEDBACK FOR THE SELF-SERVICE PORTAL IN YOUR SKMS. WHAT WERE THE PROBLEMS THAT YOU WERE HOPING THE SELF-SERVICE PORTAL WOULD SOLVE?

Create a one-stop shop based upon whoever is logged in and their individual access and affiliations.

Example: A user with an Administrative Web Interface (AWI) account will see that option but someone without access to AWI will not. The same for University Email Service (UES) delegates and Online Account Management (OAM) account holders. Students will see a slightly different catalogue to staff.

3.11 WHAT STRATEGIC DECISIONS DID YOU MAKE?

Keep it simple. 3-click mentality, OSU-branded, built on the ServiceNow platform and fed by ServiceNow and COMIT whenever possible.

3.12 HOW DID YOU PLAN THE CREATION OF THE PORTAL?

This just developed over time using the criteria listed above and lots of user feedback. We focused on customer needs and streamlined functionality.

3.13 HOW WAS IT BUILT?

A combination of OSU-branded CSS (Cascading Style Sheet). Bootstrap 3.0, ServiceNow CMS (Content Management System) and some Apache Jelly manipulation.

3.14 HOW WAS IT PUT INTO OPERATION?

After intensive testing with internal staff and students, the Minor Change process defined by Change Management was followed to move this to production.

3.15 HOW ARE YOU ANALYSING ITS PERFORMANCE?

Google Analytics; Incidents; feedback submissions.

3.16 HOW IS IT PERFORMING?

Pretty darn well! No downtime and no complaints so far. This version (3.0) has had a 60% increase in traffic with over a million visits in the last nine months.

3.17 WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU HAD FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS?

We have had little, but the majority is very positive feedback from users. We have had a lot of positive feedback from other ServiceNow Developers.

3.18 ARE THERE IMPROVEMENTS YOU ARE HOPING TO MAKE?

Yes. The next version will be released this summer. Some of the updates are:

- Removal of Iframes
- Updating OSU Brand
- Updated Search capability
- Tour functionality
- Activity feed.

4 What are you recommended Best Practices?

4.1 TOP FIVE ITIL DO'S

- Buy-in from Senior Level Management
- Clearly define the benefits of the processes and communicate, communicate and communicate more. Include the people using the new processes and encourage them throughout the implementation. We need to change the culture of the organization
- Define each and every process with a named Process Owner who is empowered to make decisions and is accountable for it. Then build the tool towards the process
- Be tool-agnostic
- Measure and improve.

4.2 TOP FIVE ITIL DON'T DO'S

- Don't try to do everything all at once. Start with what is causing sleepless nights and improve from there
- Nothing is perfect from day one. Improvements should be expected
- Ask for help and share what you know. You cannot do it all yourself. Work smart not hard
- Do not use a big hammer to force things. No, it takes time to change a mind-set and forcing too much too fast will work against you
- Don't think you have to follow the library to the exact word. Understand your organization and its needs and address them accordingly.

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AXELOS has an ambitious programme of investment for developing innovative new solutions, and stimulating the growth of a vibrant, open international ecosystem of training, consultancy and examination organizations.

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