

# SERVICE MANAGEMENT: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PEOPLE



DOLF VAN DER HAVEN

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# **Service Management**

*It's All About the People*

*Dolf van der Haven*

Service Management – It's All About the People

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ITSM Shop Ltd

95 Duxford Road, Whittlesford, Cambs, CB22 4NJ, UK

+44 (0) 3333 445 286

[customerservices@itsmshop.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@itsmshop.co.uk)

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*Dedicated to my Service Management Gurus: Duncan Anderson, Suzanne van Hove and Marc Taillefer.*

## **Table of Contents**

1. It's all about the people
2. ISO/IEC 20000 Summary
3. The Integral Service Management Framework and its Application
4. First Quadrant – The Individual Perspective
  - 4.1 Practice: Attitude and Leadership
5. Second Quadrant – The Behavioural Perspective
  - 5.1 Practice: Behaviour
6. Third Quadrant – The Perspectives of Culture and Communication
  - 6.1 Practice: Culture
  - 6.2 Practice: Communication
7. Fourth Quadrant - Organisation and Tools
  - 7.1 Practice: Fourth Quadrant – Organisation and Tools
8. Development and Maturity
  - 8.1 Practice: Maturity
9. Value – The Essence of Service Management
  - 9.1 Practice: Value - Service Management and the Business Results
  - 9.2 Value: Where is the Customer?
10. Integration – Putting All Quadrants Together
  - 10.1 Practice: Integration between All Quadrants
11. Literature
12. Acronyms
- Appendix A - The Integral Service Management Maturity Assessment Tool
- About the Author

# 1. It's all about the people

Are ITIL® (IT Infrastructure Library®, [1]) and ISO/IEC 20000 [2] the answers to the question of how to best implement Service Management in your organisation? Increasingly, the response from the industry seems to be “No,” with reference to the supposition that Agile, DevOps and other newer management frameworks make traditional Service Management frameworks obsolete. Neither ITIL nor ISO/IEC 20000 should be blamed for this misconception, though. Rather, the focus of Service Management in the area where it is most often used (viz. IT), has often mostly been strongly process- and (more limitedly) organisation-oriented. IT itself can be considered as the reason for this, as IT organisations and departments traditionally focussed mostly on process and organisational aspects, apart from their technical remit. What has been missing is the perspective on the role of people working those processes and their needs.

When I did a small workshop for an IT consultancy company about some people aspects of working for service provider companies and mentioned the role of emotions in the workplace, some people wondered if those had a place there at all. I answered that, given the fact that any job in IT is performed by humans (unless it has been automated), all aspects of people need to be taken into account to optimise the circumstances in which that job is done. The same applies to Service Management: even though it is traditionally implemented in an IT environment (but can be easily generalised to non-IT services), the focus should be on making the environment fit for the people who need to work in it. That includes many more aspects than just processes and organisation. With these aspects, I mean things like individual attitude, behaviour, morality and knowledge; other aspects are organisational culture, communication, structure, ethics and leadership. All these elements and the level to which they have matured in an organisation have their impact on the success of a Service Management implementation: a process only works well thanks to the people who are involved in it and the organisation supporting it.

The traditional focus of Service Management led some people to believe it is a framework of rigid processes and organisational structures to which they must adapt their way of working. ISO/IEC 20000, specifically, has the aura of being merely an exercise in documenting these processes, after which they are largely ignored and forgotten by the organisation.

Part 5 of ISO/IEC 20000, the Implementation Guide, recognises this and in fact indicates the opposite is the case:

*“One of the risks during implementation of the SMS is that the production of documents is considered more important than changing the way people work. (...) Documents and records (...) should be considered a tool that can support and facilitate the changes to organisational practices.” [6]*

In short, this says that Service Management is primarily about *people*, not about documentation or rigid application of processes. This, however, presents a challenge to all people wishing to use a Service Management framework (be it based on ISO/IEC 20000, ITIL or something else), in that they need to find a way to do this that takes into account the needs of the people, the organisation they are working in and their customers.

In this book I present a framework for Service Management, which I will call the Integral Service Management Framework (ISMF), which adds multiple perspectives to traditional Service Management that I feel have not been emphasised sufficiently elsewhere. The ISMF is based on a model the American writer Ken Wilber introduced in 1996 and called the Integral Theory, claiming that it presented a framework covering all perspectives on all phenomena in the world, or, in his words, presented a *Theory of Everything* [3]. This model eventually got applied to psychology and led to what I refer to as Integral Psychology: psychology using approaches from many different perspectives that all contain part of the truth, but only when used together permit a complete view of the person. Integral Psychology goes beyond classic psychology in that it takes into account influences outside the individual person that have an impact on his well-being. These influences include culture, communication, society, interaction with other people, etc. The power of the Integral Theory is that it permits us to look at phenomena, including Service Management, from a large number of different perspectives that otherwise easily get ignored. Especially the human aspects are well-represented in Integral Theory. I have previously successfully applied this model to psychotherapy [4] and people management [5] and thus have great confidence in its range of applicability.

In this book I am using the international Service Management standard, ISO/IEC 20000, as a basis for Service Management, rather than the ITIL framework. This is because ISO/IEC 20000 is the internationally accepted foundation that forms the baseline that any Service Management implementation should be based on. ITIL provides additional *guidance* on how to fill in parts of the Service Management implementation that ISO/IEC 20000 requires, but is not to be seen as *prescriptive*, let alone as the only way (“Best Practice”) in which you will succeed getting Service Management to work for you.

The structure of this book is as follows: after a general introduction about the ISO/IEC 20000-1 standard in Chapter 2, the overall framework for Service Management, which I call the Integral Service Management Framework (ISMF), is explained in Chapter 3. This framework consists of four main parts that are covered in chapters 4-7. Each of these chapters has a theoretical part and a practical part. The developmental aspect of the ISMF is described in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 deals with the customer's perception of the services, viz. value. Finally, Chapter 10 puts everything together and presents a case study of how the framework works in practice.

The book also contains a number of boxed texts like the following one that are more or less side-thoughts related to the main body of the text.

### **To ITSM or not to ITSM? That's no Question.**

There are recurring discussions about whether we should call the subject of this book IT Service Management (ITSM) or simply Service Management. This leads to often heated discussions that seem to miss the point of what (IT) Service Management is intended for. There are various perspectives that need to be taken into account to find an answer to this.

The *historical perspective* states that ITIL, ISO/IEC 20000 and other ITSM frameworks come strictly from the IT world and that therefore they apply only to IT services and not to other services. Being deeply involved myself in the development of ISO/IEC 20000 and having spoken to one of the authors of ITIL 2011, this perspective is only partly correct. Even though ITIL focused on IT (and not even on services) in its original versions, it has evolved a lot. The ITIL 2011 core publications have been written in such a way that they are independent of being applied to IT services or generic services (with the exception of Service Operations, which has some legacy material in it that applies to IT only). ISO/IEC 20000 has moved more strongly away from a focus on IT only and states in its current (2011) version that it applies to any services, hence calling its scope Service Management rather than IT Service Management. The term IT in fact does not feature in the standard at all. The new version (2018) of ISO/IEC 20000 will turn even more generic. The point here is that no matter what the history of the frameworks, their evolution is toward generic application rather than limiting itself to IT only.

The *practical perspective* looks at how this applies to real life services. There is a quite awkward possibility to make a distinction between IT services (service purely based on IT capabilities of the service provider) and IT Enabled Services (ITES,

services supported by IT but with a core outside of IT). Today it is practically impossible to find a service in the real world that is not dependent on IT in one way or the other. So you can say that all services are at least IT-enabled. As such, the discussion of ITSM versus SM is pointless.

The *customer perspective* tells me that we as Service Management experts can discuss this issue until the cows come home, but that the actual users of ISO/IEC 20000 and other Service Management frameworks do not care about what our intentions were. They will simply apply whatever pleases them to their particular situation in order to provide the best services under the best conditions to their customers.

It may be clear that my preference is to call things Service Management, simply to keep things generic and not limit what I deal with to a particular industry.

### **Disclaimer and Acknowledgements**

Part of the material in this book has been published by the author before, either as LinkedIn Pulse blog posts, as articles in the itSMF International magazine [26] or as part of a paper written for the EXIN Master of Service Management certification. The latter has subsequently been published by EXIN on their website [14].

My thanks go out to the dedicatees of this book: Duncan Anderson for being the greatest ITIL trainer and making me a Service Management adept; Suzanne van Hove and Marc Taillefer for being fabulous Service Management trainers and for broadening my vision to include ISO/IEC 20000 and many other Service Management frameworks.

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## About the Author

Dolf van der Haven was born in Muiderberg, The Netherlands, in 1971. Originally a Geophysicist, he has a broad background in IT, Telecommunications, Management, Psychotherapy and Service Management. He currently works as a Quality, Information Security and Service Management Consultant at Verizon Enterprise Solutions and is Co-founder and Managing Director of Powerful Answers, a Service Management consultancy based in Bulgaria, The Netherlands and the Czech Republic. He is also member of ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1, Subcommittee 40, which develops the ISO/IEC standard series 20000 (Service Management) and other standards. He is Co-editor of Part 2 of the ISO/IEC 20000 series and Editor of the ISO/IEC 20000 Handbook.

Previous publications include *The Healing Elephant* (2008 in Dutch, 2009 in English), about psychotherapy; and *The Human Face of Management* (2014) about people management.

Dolf lives in Groenekan, The Netherlands, with his partner and their 130 chickens.