

The Future IT Service Management Professional



About AXELOS

AXELOS is a joint venture company, created in 2013 by the Cabinet Office on behalf of Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in the United Kingdom and Capita plc, to manage, develop and grow the Global Best Practice portfolio.

AXELOS is responsible for developing, enhancing and promoting a number of best practice methodologies used globally by professionals working primarily in project, programme and portfolio management, IT service management and cyber resilience.

The methodologies, including ITIL®, PRINCE2®, PRINCE2 AGILE®, MSP® and the new collection of cyber resilience best practice products, RESILIA™, are adopted by private, public and voluntary sectors in more than 150 countries to improve employees' skills, knowledge and competence in order to make both individuals and organizations work more effectively.

AXELOS is committed to nurturing best practice communities on a global scale. In addition to globally recognized qualifications, AXELOS equips professionals with a wide range of content, templates, toolkits and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through our membership programme and online community of practitioners and experts.

2 | Executive summary

IT service management (ITSM) has successfully supported organizations to align their IT services to their business needs. As businesses invest more in technical capabilities and automation, the remit for ITSM practitioners is starting to expand beyond the IT function. This report identifies how the ITSM profession is evolving, and the technical and interpersonal skills that ITSM professionals will need in the future.

Organizations are relying on technological innovations to remain competitive in the future. With this comes an increased expectation about the services that customers receive, both internally and externally. ITSM professionals can apply their knowledge beyond the IT function to help the business determine how to manage these services so that they achieve an organization's goals, how to filter new innovations into work practices, and ultimately increase the value they deliver to customers.

Having a holistic view of the services an organization provides will elevate ITSM to a strategic level. As the technical requirements of integration become absorbed by more sophisticated solutions, ITSM professionals can extend their contribution to input in the organization's strategic direction. By understanding how to adapt services to meet the needs of customers, allowing for cultural and operational differences, ITSM professionals will increase the value that they deliver to the business.

Innovations in artificial intelligence can provide opportunities for ITSM professionals, freeing them from the mundane tasks to focus on adding strategic value. They will need to be able to demonstrate their ability to apply critical thinking and strategic analysis to improve services across the organization, ensuring that evolutions in machine intelligence meet the goals of the business.

Technological advancements will also bring an increased level of risk. Data driven innovations will have to be managed to ensure the right processes are in place to keep data safe. As such ITSM professionals will need to apply risk management techniques as part of on-going service management to protect their organizations.

As service management becomes integral to every aspect of business, ITSM professionals will need to demonstrate a proactive and visionary approach across the enterprise to drive positive business change.

3 | The service organization

Technology is becoming increasingly ubiquitous. From the home to the biggest organization, there is little we do that is not touched by technology. As a consequence, our expectations of services, in terms of reliability and the features offered, has grown. These expectations are driving innovation, which in turn is making technology and the services it supports ever more integral to the business. Ensuring these services meet the needs of business users will require an organization wide approach to service management.

This provides IT service management (ITSM) professionals with the opportunity to apply their expertise outside the traditional IT function. They will be required to work closely with the business to determine how services can be managed to achieve the organization's goals, how innovation can be filtered into work practices, and, ultimately how value can be delivered to customers.

“**Technology will be embedded in everything, so nobody needs to be taught how to use it.**”

We need to ask bigger questions of our clients. Our biggest automotive client asked us to set up 1,000 servers. We said no, you need to ask us to get more cars off the production line – that's ultimately what this brief is really about.

Do you need the word IT if everything is IT?

Innovation creates the new normal – look how Netflix killed DVDs, and Spotify killed CDs.

Those who won't change are the ones who will fall behind.

You already see other parts of the business running IT.

81%
of ITSM professionals see other departments moving to a service-based approach.

77%
believe IT teams will be organized around services or applications.

77%
believe non-technical business units will get more involved in service governance, service strategy, and service design.



4 | Strategic collaborators

ITSM professionals will be expected to take a holistic view of the services provided by their organization as well as the software solutions that support them. This will require them to extend the range of their contribution, from simply technical expertise focused on software solutions, to input into the organization's service roadmap and strategic direction. As software providers start to offer service solutions that can be easily integrated, there will be less emphasis on ITSM practitioners to stitch these together. The onus will be on guiding the business on how to adapt services to the needs of the customer, accounting for cultural and business variations while taking advantage of the streamlined workflow that comes with increased integration.

The structure of contracts is changing. It's not about separate contracts for networking, infrastructure, application management, and maintenance. It's about uniting all of those in the best way to service a geography, or a region, or a business unit, or a function.

Cultural differences are one barrier to full global integration. Roles and responsibilities are seen differently in different cultures. Fundamental things like 'individual' versus 'collective' responsibility can vary hugely by culture, so systems still need sensitivity.



5 | Enhancing the value of ITSM with artificial intelligence (AI)

ITSM professionals see artificial intelligence and automation as beneficial to their work practices, freeing them up to focus on more strategic tasks. While acknowledging that AI will impact negatively on some roles, there is a belief that there will be a significant upside as the automation of mundane tasks allows ITSM professionals the opportunity to embrace value-added activities that improve services across the organization. Critical thinking and strategic analysis skills will be required to ensure machine intelligence benefits the customer and the organization.

“ Our AI product is walking off the shelves. It tracks business changes in real time. ”

Real time decisions move us away from linear routes, and allow us to be more responsive.

AI is going to take away some of the mundane work, which frees people from some of the routines. Which, in turn, means they need other skillsets to stand out and make a difference.

AI in real time means that supplier costs can be tracked – in the morning you could be buying from Supplier A, then in the afternoon, switch seamlessly to Supplier B. Calendar-based reporting is redundant.

Humans will still play a role in problem solving, as AI can't make creative human leaps of faith by itself.

Machines can't innovate past big data – people who can do that will always have a job.

ITSM personnel need to become brokers and facilitators, devising the best solution for the business need, rather than delivering a technical answer on a platform.

91%
of ITSM professionals believe there will be more creativity and flexibility in ITSM.

89%
think automation will take over the repetitive tasks of ITSM.

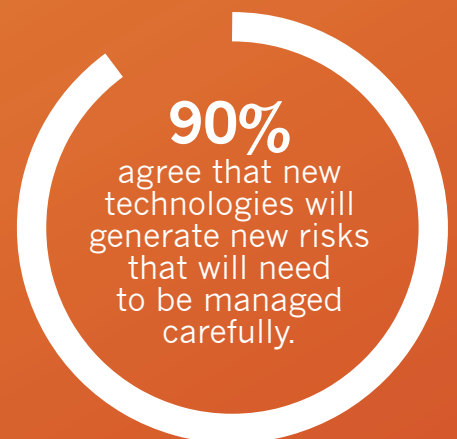
77%
believe artificial intelligence and machine learning will have a profound impact on the ITSM workforce.

6 | An increased focus on risk management

The pace of technological change over the coming years presents both an opportunity and a challenge for ITSM professionals. Organizations want to harness new innovations to enhance the success of their operations, but there is a growing recognition that these advancements bring an increased level of risk, as exemplified by the vulnerability of online data.

Data drives innovation but processes have to be in place to keep the data safe from malignant forces. Despite the number of high profile cyber-attacks, most organizations have yet to find a way to balance cyber-risk and innovation. There is an opportunity for ITSM professionals to guide the business in implementing risk management techniques as part of on-going service management.

“ Information security management will be an essential skill for ITSM professionals in the future. ”



7 | Business leaders of tomorrow

As service management becomes integral to every aspect of the business, ITSM professionals are in a position to guide the business through this change. This will require them to embrace the soft skills of communication, organizational change management, problem solving, collaboration, creativity, and relationship building, among others. These skills will be put to use managing services that the customer, and therefore the organization, find of value. ITSM professionals of the future will be expected to drive positive business change; in order to do so, they will need to be visionary and proactive.

“ As ITSM becomes more embedded in the business, then the traditional ‘technical’ IT role no longer exists. ”

There are more managerial and people skills needed than there used to be.

You can get away with knowing ‘enough’ technically, but you can’t get away with not being able to work well with other people.

IT is way more than just tech now – it is a much broader skillset.



8 | Conclusions

This report demonstrates that the strategic reach and influence of ITSM professionals will continue to grow in the future. As businesses are relying on technological innovations to deliver their services, for both internal and external customers, they will look to ITSM professionals to manage and direct this process.

The wider adoption of service management across the enterprise is an opportunity for ITSM professionals to demonstrate their capabilities beyond the traditional IT function. To be successful ITSM professionals will need to focus on business skills such as communication, negotiation, relationship and change management. The parts of the business that are adopting these processes will not be familiar with the IT history and as such any adoption needs a tailored approach for the specific business function to ensure it is successful.

ITSM professionals are also going to have to take more ownership for risk management. There is no doubt that new technologies bring increased information security concerns. Even though wider parts of the business will get more involved in these technologies, ITSM professionals will have to demonstrate that they are a 'safe pair of hands' and apply the necessary risk management and cyber resilience practices to ensure the enterprise and its data are protected.

These future trends will have a direct impact on the success of an organization and will need strong leadership to see it through. ITSM professionals will have to be proactive and visionary to support the enterprise through this change. They will need to combine different methods and techniques to achieve results as no one solution will give them everything they need. Continual learning is essential to support continual improvement of services, especially in an environment of constant change. Service management is never 'done' – there will always be opportunities or requirements to improve.

Methodology

Quantitative Methodology:

AXELOS conducted a quantitative survey amongst a cross section of its current database members. This provided a robust sample of professionals, the majority who have been in the industry a long time. All answered a 20-minute online survey, with fieldwork conducted during August and September 2016. Questions were developed with the AXELOS teams, drawing on hypotheses, past research, and observed industry trends.

Full responses were received from 330 ITSM professionals.

Qualitative methodology:

After analysis of the quantitative research, AXELOS ran roundtable discussions with ITSM professionals, to ask more probing questions, and to shed light on some of the numbers. This helped add context and richness to the quantitative work, and both sets of findings are woven together in this report. Eight ITSM professionals attended the roundtable discussions. Telephone interviews were also conducted with five ITSM professionals.

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