

## 1 Introduction

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In recent years it has become increasingly recognised that information is the most important strategic resource that any organisation has to manage. Key to the collection, analysis, production and distribution of information within an organisation is the quality of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems and IT services provided to the business. It is essential that we recognise that ICT systems are crucial, strategic, organisational assets and therefore organisations must invest appropriate levels of resource into the support, delivery and management of these critical IT services and the ICT systems that underpin them. However, these aspects of IT are often overlooked or only superficially addressed within many organisations.

The key issues facing many of today's senior Business Managers and IT Managers are:

- IT and business strategic planning
- Integrating and aligning IT and business goals
- Acquiring and retaining the right resources and skill sets
- Implementing continuous improvement
- Measuring IT organisation effectiveness and efficiency
- Reducing costs and the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)
- Achieving and demonstrating Value For Money (VFM) and Return on Investment (ROI)
- Demonstrating the business value of IT
- Developing business and IT partnerships and relationships
- Improving project delivery success
- Outsourcing, insourcing and smart sourcing
- Using IT to gain competitive advantage
- Delivering the required, business justified IT services (i.e. delivering what is required, when required and at an agreed cost)
- Managing constant business and IT Change
- Following the sun and offshore operations
- Demonstrating appropriate IT governance.

The challenges for IT managers are to co-ordinate and work in partnership with the business to deliver high quality IT services. This has to be achieved while reducing the overall TCO and often

increasing the frequency, complexity and the volume of Change. The main method of realising this goal is the operation of effective processes and the provision of appropriate, value for money services. To achieve this, the correct processes need to be developed and implemented with in-built assessment and improvement mechanisms. IT management is all about the efficient and effective use of the four Ps, people, processes, products (tools and technology) and partners (suppliers, vendors and outsourcing organisations).



Management therefore needs to develop joint strategies and plans for all four areas within Figure 1. However, many organisations, in the past and still today, recognise the four Ps but do not use them for maximum advantage. All too often products are bought to manage areas of technology and then the processes, partners and people's roles are engineered to fit the technology and its limitations. The people and processes issues must be addressed first and this is one of the core principles of ITIL.

[Table of Contents](#) | [Next](#)

[▲ Back to top](#)

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