

Teamwork and BSM: Knowledge of Goals and Metrics is Critical

At a vendor-sponsored event earlier this year, I spent some time with IT and business managers that had participated in a simulation workshop. The object was to help managers and operation staffs become familiar with a private Cloud operating environment, ITIL v3 best practices and a new set of integrated management solutions. It was an interesting and informative experience in and of itself. Reviewing the lessons learned during the workshop, it occurred to me that there were some too often overlooked insights that apply to organizations and enterprises pursuing a BSM operational environment.

In any simulations involving multiple different groups, one of more effective lessons learned is about gaining new perspectives. This workshop took place in a room-sized environment that meant all of the participants could witness how different groups in the “company” were affected by different events, as well as where each group focused their attentions. In this case, IT operations staff were ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’ with service desk staff, business and IT managers. Unlike the ‘real world’, the efforts, interaction, inefficiencies and the impact of decisions made by each group were visible to all parties very quickly. When a newly introduced service failed, the disruption was compounded by the fact that no one had told the Service Desk that the new service existed. Both business and IT management knew about the new service, and IT operations implemented it. But no one thought to notify the Service Desk. The importance of a communications process was immediately apparent.

Each round brought new insight into the interdependencies, interactions and need for well-defined processes to make sure things were done that needed to be done and that communications between the group was open, effective and complete. Business managers gain insight into just what IT does along with a better understanding of their fundamental value and contribution to business performance. IT staff gain an understanding of how their business counterparts’ focus on revenue, cost and profitability is central to the operation and success of the business.

It becomes clear that realizing the potential to positively impact business performance requires IT managers to understand and focus on business priorities, in order to make the right decisions for the business. Both functions need a better understanding and appreciation of their colleagues’ perspectives and the metrics by which their colleagues are measured if they are to successfully work together to maximize business performance.

A major tenant of BSM it facilitate and accelerate a shift in IT focus from simply providing access to and maintaining the infrastructure (essentially ‘fixing things when they break and managing to operational performance goals’) to an environment where IT promotes and orchestrates the application of the infrastructure in support of business (whatever the business is – education, retail, government, etc.) goals. The shift is from monitoring to assure things are up and running to creatively managing and applying IT infrastructure to assure that business goals are met.

If IT is to focus solving the problems and delivering services that advance and facilitate business success they must understand the metrics for success. They have to know what it takes for their business user/client to be successful – then focus on providing the IT and technology services that contribute to that success.

Another lesson learned, that applies to BSM, is the need for well-defined processes. Operational efficiency and effectiveness result from following and taking action based on well-defined processes and having defined and documented those processes a head of time makes all the difference when operating under pressure. However, don't let consistency become a trap – review and update to eliminate what's not needed. During one session, a manual process introduced during an earlier round – almost sunk the revenue stream because it interfered with a newly defined automated process. Review, evaluate, communicate – all applicable in implementing any BSM program.

In short, if BSM is to pay off, it is important that IT and business works as teams. Today, emerging technologies in IT are more likely to penetrate the consumer space before they hit the enterprise (think iPads, Smart phones, etc.) As this consumerization of IT continues, business staff will demand more from IT operations. IT needs to be pro-active in identifying where and how they can contribute to business success. In commercial enterprises, this requires being knowledgeable about how, when, why of how revenue (or the major success metric) is earned. Be and act as a part of a team that includes both business and IT personal. Know and understand the relationship, interaction and interdependencies between IT and business operations, that is the path to successful Business Service Management.

Publication Date: July 29, 2011

This document is subject to copyright. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any method whatsoever without the prior written consent of Ptak Noel & Associates LLC.

To obtain reprint rights contact associates@ptaknoel.com

All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

While every care has been taken during the preparation of this document to ensure accurate information, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Hyperlinks included in this paper were available at publication time.

About Ptak, Noel & Associates LLC

We help IT organizations become “solution initiators” in using IT management technology to business problems. We do that by translating vendor strategy & deliverables into a business context that is communicable and actionable by the IT manager, and by helping our clients understand how other IT organizations are effectively implementing solutions with their business counterparts. Our customers recognize the meaningful breadth and objectivity of our research in IT management technology and process.

www.ptaknoel.com