BEST PRACTICE

TRIM: THE RATIONAL IT MODEL

How to use IT Service Management

Pelle Råstock

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TRIM The Rational IT Model

TRIM: the rational IT Model

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TRIM: The rational IT Model

How to use IT Service Management

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Preface

ITIL® as a framework of best practices for IT Service Management has become a de facto standard for how IT organizations throughout the world manage their delivery of IT services. It is a framework that has to be interpreted, understood and above all adapted in order to work. Many of the IT organizations that I have encountered during my years as a consultant have unfortunately found it difficult to adapt IT Service Management as a practice. Regardless the size of the organization, they experienced the same challenges.

That was where the idea emerged to try and describe IT Service Management in a way that was easier to assimilate. To start from the roles and groupings which already are in an IT organization and make a ready-made adaptation of the framework which works for most IT organizations.

My hope is that you will gain an understanding of how an IT organization can work on delivery of IT services. And if, moreover, this book can help you to create more order or become more efficient in your IT organization, then I will have achieved my goal.

Pelle Råstock, summer 2016

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1. About this book

1.1 How the book should be used

The book describes a model for how an IT organization can deliver IT services to the business. It consists of six parts. An overall section which describes the structure and the component parts of the model, along with five sections which describes the different phases in the IT service's life cycle. Each phase is then divided into a general section and a number of processes and functions.

I recommend that you start by reading the book's introductory section, which describes the structure, and then the general sections in each phase in order to gain an understanding of the whole. You can subsequently choose to engage more deeply with the processes and functions that are of most interest to you.

1.2 Concepts

Specific terms are described in the respective chapter for each function or process. Overall terms which are used throughout the book are described below:

- **The IT organization** – All units that are part of the delivery of IT to the business. Is often an IT department, but can also comprise groupings that are organizationally part of the business.
- **The business** – Used to represent the business that the IT organization supports in the delivery of IT services.

- **Customer** – The role in the business which has the authority to draft agreements and discuss economic issues with the IT organization.
- **Purchaser** – The role in the business which has the right to order IT services as part of the existing agreement with the customer.
- **User** – Person in the business who uses IT services.

2. Introduction to TRIM

The IT organization's purpose is to deliver IT services to the business. IT services are produced in the IT environment. Without a functional IT environment, no deliveries are made to the business and the value supplied by the IT organization disappears.

An example of a comparison outside the IT industry is a factory with a production line which supplies products that are sold to the customers. If the production line stops then there is nothing to sell and consequently no income. The production line is thus the most important thing that the factory has.

That is not to say that everyone who works in the factory is engaged in production. There is a research and development department which produces the next products to be manufactured. There is a department which constantly measures and follows up the production process in order to find improvements. There are sales and marketing personnel who ensure that the customers are satisfied and there is a management team which analyses the market to find the next long-term plan for the factory.

Regardless of role in the factory, all departments are engaged in ensuring that everything that emerges from the production process meets the customers' demands. In the same way, all activities within an IT organization should have the aim of creating a more effective

and qualitative IT environment, the content of which creates a value for the business.

Examples

Throughout the book, I will show examples from two different IT organizations and how they handled their journey with TRIM. The purpose is to show that different organizations have different perspectives and that all parts of this model can be used in different ways depending on your need.

Global manufacturing company – Lisa is the head IT Service Management architect for a global manufacturing company. The IT department consist of 1200 employees and covers IT operations in 16 different countries. The head office for IT is located in Amsterdam where the major part of all managers and staff is located. Every country has its own IT department with a local IT-manager who is responsible for the delivery of local IT-services.

Mid-size local government – Steve is the head of IT for the municipality in a mid-size city. The IT department consists of 47 employees and serves 1800 users with IT-services. As the head of IT, Steve reports to the director of finance.

2.1 Phases

The model described in this book is based on the IT environment, which is the IT organization's equivalent to a production line. Just as in the factory, the entire IT organization participates in the responsibility for IT services. To clarify the responsibility between the different parts of the IT organization, the services' life cycles are divided into five different phases.

Operation – The IT department's production line. The IT environment needs to be maintained in order to continuously produce IT services. Preventive maintenance activities are required, and if nevertheless errors occur, then they need to be rectified, and if problems arise then they must be investigated. All activities required to maintain functionality in the IT environment are included in Operation.

Transition – "Don't fix what's not broken" is a mantra in all technical environments, regardless of sector. Unfortunately, this doesn't work in the reality of IT organizations, as the need and demand for IT services is constantly changing. The aim of Transition is to protect the IT environment in connection with changes, and to thereby ensure that the business experiences as little disruption as possible during deployment.

Delivery Control – It is in this phase that the IT organization leads the work and decides how the IT services are to be produced. The aim is to save time and expenditure for operations. However, it can also involve activities that have the aim of improving processes, documentation or expertise.

Relations – The aim of this phase is to understand the business requirements and simultaneously create understanding in the business

for the value IT services supply. This is one of the fundamental aspects in establishing an IT department which is regarded as an asset for the business instead of a cost.

Strategy – Strategy shows how the IT organization will support the business in the work of achieving the goals set, indicating which IT services should be supplied to ensure that the goals are achieved, as well as how the services are produced in the most effective way.

2.1.1 Examples – Phases

Global manufacturing company

At the global manufacturing company there were several service management architects and a group of process managers. Lisa's challenge was to organize them in a smooth manner so that the responsibility for each one became evident.

The solution was to divide the responsibility for the architecture of IT delivery according to the five phases and create global business processes for IT. Each business process (phase) had a designated service management architect and the process managers connected to one of these.

Mid-size local government

Steve's challenge was that IT basically only conducted operations. Very little time and focus were devoted to why IT was delivered, and how the delivery was controlled.

IT services in different phases was used to illuminate all parts of the service's life cycle so that both the IT organization and the business could begin to relate the various matters to the right place. As a result of this an increased need for a holistic approach around the delivery of IT services was highlighted.

2.2 Functions

All IT organizations have groupings that are engaged in activities and take decisions at different levels. The aim of The Rational IT Model (TRIM) is not to add groupings, but instead to help to sort out and clarify the purpose of the groupings which already exist. These groups are called functions. The reason for this is so the group is not linked to a part of the organization, but rather a group of employees which takes a specific responsibility for something. A function can be an organizational unit, but is more commonly a virtual group, staffed by employees from different parts of the organization.

The functions in TRIM are:

The IT Steering Group – the highest level within the IT organization, with responsibility for drawing up an IT strategy as well as defining the IT business parameters in a service portfolio. The function is staffed with key individuals from the IT organization and can usually be placed on an equal level with the entire or parts of the IT department's management team. The IT Steering Group's primary link to the business is the management team. It functions as the highest level for issues that affect several parts within the business besides the IT organization.

Service Management Office – The function is responsible for issues concerning how the IT organization performs its work, as well as for all levels of architecture. The aim of the function is to bring together common structural questions so that all parts of the IT organization work in a similar way and according to the same architecture. If necessary, large IT organizations can divide up the function into one for service management and one for technical architecture.

The function is directly subordinate to the the IT Steering Group and is usually involved in producing data for the majority of strategic decisions. The function is also responsible for drafting the policy

documents which are ratified at strategic level and which subsequently govern work within the IT organization.

Customer Management – The function responsible for the delivery of IT services to the business. The aim of the function is to act as the business (the customer's) single point of contact for the IT organization and also to ensure that the IT services supplied correspond with the business needs. The function consists of a number of groups which are divided according to business (customer), however for smaller IT organizations one group is usually sufficient.

Delivery Management – The function that is responsible for production of IT services, that everything is documented, that procedures are in place and that processes are followed. The aim of the function is to continually improve efficiency and also to govern and prioritize everyday operations. In a small IT organization Delivery Management can consist of a single group which includes all roles with production responsibility. However, it is more common for the function to consist of several groups divided according to system or technology.

Service Desk – The function responsible for all contact with the users of IT services. The function is the only communication channel to and from the users. Those parts of the ticket management system which are automated in the form of a web portal should be viewed as a part of the function. The aim of Service Desk is to serve the users in the business through processing orders, responding to questions and solve Incidents in the IT environment. If knowledge or procedures are not present within the function, the issue must be escalated according to procedure from the Delivery Management function, however, Service Desk still owns the contact with the user.

Technical Management – Technical Management is responsible for the everyday activities in the IT infrastructure. The function must ensure that all necessary expertise to manage the existing IT infrastructure is available. Technical Management functions acts functional escalation point for issues from Service Desk and also staff projects and activities determined at tactical level.

Application Management – Application Management is responsible for all applications and systems included in the IT environment. In distinction from Technical Management, they are groupings which manage applications that are often dispersed organizationally. Moreover, it is common that this function is managed by one or several suppliers. Application Management acts as functional escalation point for issues from Service Desk, and also staff projects and activities determined at tactical level.

The boundary for responsibility between Technical Management and Application Management is different in different organizations. For example, databases and integration platforms usually belong to the Application Management function, even though they can be viewed as part of the infrastructure. It is not important where the boundary lies, as long as it is clear and well communicated.

2.2.1 Examples – Functions

Global manufacturing company

Several reorganizations and acquisitions had resulted in an unclear organizational structure within IT. Many employees who had worked for a long time was stuck in old habits, and some department heads ran their department as a separate company within the IT organization which lead to sub optimization in several cases.

Lisa's solution was to conduct a workshop with the IT steering group where they got to define which management forums (functions) would exist within IT, and their relationships to each other. The result was a complete map across the IT organization functions that all employees could relate to from their own point of view.

Mid-size local government

Users and managers within the municipality had a behavior where individuals within the IT department were contacted directly to get what they wanted as quickly as possible. This resulted in that it was very difficult to coordinate activities and to prioritize according to what brought the most value for the business.

Steve introduced functions within the IT organization and defined responsibilities for each of these. He then communicated to the business which function that were responsible for what. The result was a clearer structure for contact between IT and the business were cases could be collected and prioritized more controlled. Because of the new structure with functions, employees within the IT-organization got a less stressful environment and business managers actually got their demands processed faster.

2.3 Processes and procedures

In order to define the activities needed in the different phases, a number of processes and procedures are described in TRIM. A process is a linked chain of activities with a defined starting point (trigger) and a specific result (output). Working according to a defined process is a prerequisite for being able to measure and improve activities in an organization. Furthermore, the quality of the result is regulated by the process so that it is similar regardless of who in the organization performs the activities. Every process needs an owner with responsibility to measure, finance and improve the process, as well as regularly follow up, inform and train the organization in how the process should be used. These activities consume resources, and in a small organization the cost of administering a process might not cover the efficiency gains that the process supplies.

Even though it is not worth defining certain activities as processes, the activities nevertheless need to be described in a documented procedure so that their quality can be ensured. The same activities can thus be defined as a process for a large IT organization with a high throughput of issues or as a procedure for a small IT organization which might only perform the activities once per month.

A simple way of deciding whether it should be a process or a procedure is by considering the number of issues which will pass through the process. If it is deemed to be a large number of issues, then it is usually profitable to create a process with an associated process owner, financing, training, measurement, tool support etc.

2.3.1 Examples – Processes and procedures

Global manufacturing company

Since Lisa had defined phases as overall business processes for the IT department, she defined the relevant processes in the model as sub-

processes for each business process. She then created procedures in each sub-process that was unique for each country to hold together a global process framework but also creating opportunities for local anomalies.

Mid-size local government

Steve realized that his department was not large enough to have process control for all activity flows. The result was that the most congested flows; Incidents, requests and changes, were defined as processes. For the rest of the activity flows he settled with a documented procedure that described the steps.

2.4 Roles within the IT-organization

Tasks and responsibilities in an organization are usually described in the form of roles. A person can have different roles on different occasions and a role can be held by several different people. The role is described in a certain context with activities, responsibilities and authorities. The role can then be staffed by one or several employees. TRIM describes a number of common roles within an IT organization. These roles are then linked to one or a number of functions which are responsible for fulfilling the purpose of the respective phase.

Instead of having unique roles for each process, the roles in TRIM are based on those which are normally present in an IT organization. The idea is that there should be a clear specification of how many roles are needed as a total and which responsibilities they have in the different processes and functions.

To ensure that the model described can be used by both large and small IT organizations, the book provides suggestions for roles and responsibilities for three different sizes of an IT organization.

The total responsibility is constant regardless of size, as all parts are also needed for smaller organizations, however, the workload for each part will be smaller, which means that the IT organization can distribute the responsibility over a smaller number of roles. With smaller organizations, there will also be a smaller number of people involved, and the flow of issues will decrease in each process. This means that there is often no need to manage the flow as a process and it can then be documented as a procedure instead.

The following tables show examples of three different levels of the IT organization. The smaller the organization, the fewer roles are needed and the greater number of activities can be managed as procedures instead of full-scale processes.