

Is Your ITSM Vendor Asking You to Do All the Work?

Service Management Application or Toolkit?

There are two types of ITSM systems, one that harkens back to a time when IT meant strictly “IT equipment”, and a new, fresh approach that streamlines ITSM and provides big gains for the business in terms of speedy, ITIL-compliant services.

Read about the difference and a product that can revolutionise your Service Management processes.

The Old

Most ITSM systems are toolkits (also “toolboxes”), which can be defined as a set of triggers, settings, pre-defined common fields, interface frameworks and data structures, the purpose of which is to outline the basic functionality of an ITSM system. The system is intended to be customised with new fields, modification of existing interface arrangements, etc. The system is not ready to use as soon as it is installed. A toolbox is used to build a system. It is not the system itself.

Building blocks make it easy to make interfaces. Toolboxes provide a useful set of field types to create forms for data entry. But that’s only interface. Building blocks only go so far. When the strong suit of a toolbox is form design, sooner or later you’ll find yourself struggling to make the system work to deliver a particular business need. What happens once the form is saved? How does the data relate to any other data? This tends to create islands of data, like a purchasing system that can’t send data to and can’t receive input from another system. The data in the purchasing system stands alone and while it’s useful for generating printed POs, its isolation from other systems that need its data, such as an accounting package, render its value pointless as it would take manual work to transfer the data.

All systems will hit a limitation at some point. Maybe an exotic database needs to be consulted by the service desk. Perhaps purchasing data needs to be sent to a different system on a scheduled basis. The need to interface with other systems is a real one. Traditional toolboxes tend to hail from the old school of design and offer little in the way of connectors other than incoming and outgoing email, ODBC and perhaps custom code to connect to a specific service. Their approach is in coding to specific needs. This is a severe limitation.

A fallacy is to think that because a toolbox system is ITIL certified, then it can be used out of the box. ITIL certification means that it conforms to ITIL processes, but this is not guaranteed in its “raw” state. It doesn’t mean that it’s configured. Also, older toolboxes tend to have had ITIL support “bolted on” as it became popular, not designed as an integral part of the system.

It is expected that a toolkit system will take a long time to fully configure and implement. If it has to be done by consultants, it's a costly proposition.

A number of these legacy toolboxes have not made the leap to the cloud, so an additional drain on resources is maintaining equipment in house.

The New

In stark contrast to toolboxes, an *application* is a fresh, modern way of thinking about ITSM with an emphasis on ITIL and how it serves the needs of the business. The focus is now on business goals. The service catalogue defines what can be asked of the IT Department, and all those services have been designed to achieve a business goal. For example, a phone is offered through the catalogue. The phone would provide a user with the means of calling customers for various purposes, such as sales. The phone, in good working order and the user trained to use it, is used effectively to achieve sales. Thus is the business goal of sales achieved. ITIL becomes a means of melding IT and business operations.

An application has been preconfigured with just the fields, interface and data structure you need. There is no configuration in the traditional sense. It's designed to be used as soon as it's provisioned. An application will have a thoughtfully designed interface that obviates the need to modify it by providing a streamlined workspace that includes only the necessary functionality. All the right fields and number of fields appear on any given page, negating the need to create additional custom fields. Custom fields are a common source of clutter in an ITSM system, as different managers will demand different fields, many of which will be abandoned some time after implementation, leaving input pages that contain an overwhelming number of fields, leading to friction.

Friction is a figurative use of the word and can be defined as *a reduction in speed, activity or willingness caused by the presence of an operation, element, activity or requirement, considered to be unnecessary*. For example, a page full of fields that requires half a minute to fill out will not be used willingly by a busy technician. This will lead to not logging incidents or not completing the form. It makes it difficult to train new staff to ignore what is not used.

An application reduces friction by removing unnecessary elements and actions and prevents their addition to the system. Cloud-based systems don't have to be installed locally, eliminating the need for hardware and any complications arising from maintaining it. The latest version of the software is always available. No customisation means instant usability.

An application focuses solely on the relationships between data, such as a technician belonging to a team that exclusively handles the service *Personal Computing*. All these relationships are established when the system is populated with technicians, users, locations, services, workflows, etc. All the data is interrelated and allows for automation such as not assigning technicians from Country X to requests from Country Y in an international company. The real power of an application stems from the interconnectedness of all types of data.

Our Solution: ITRP

ITRP (“IT Resource Planning”) is a full-featured IT service-management application for the support of the core ITIL processes like Incident, Change, Configuration, Service Catalogue and Service Level Management. It places an emphasis on services and their value in achieving business objectives.

ITRP has been built to improve productivity. Its interface has been optimised for rapid data entry through efficient design. The result is a dramatic reduction in administrative overhead within the IT organisation. Once you have populated your ITRP account with your data, it is ready for use. And as soon as you start using it, ITRP starts tracking your service levels. No customisation required.

ITRP is at the cutting edge of new IT operations such as *Orchestration*, the seamless presentation of services from multiple providers as if IT provides all of them. It is the only ITSM solution that tracks both end-to-end SLAs within the organisation and the SLAs with external service providers. If a provider violates an SLA, the IT department will know about it. The issue can be resolved with the external provider or they can be replaced. No other vendor offers this unique feature.

If you’ve ever been frustrated in configuring Change Management, struggled with a “bolted-on” interface or didn’t understand how to implement it in a legacy toolbox, you’ll get relief with ITRP’s implementation featuring clean workflows, easy-to-read status labels and easy-to-set-up templates. The templates define the workflows and take all the guesswork out of this important ITIL process.

ITRP is a secure pay-as-you-go cloud service that can be accessed from anywhere. We take care of the servers, software licensing and patching. You’re always using the latest version.

We would be glad to show you a demonstration, provide more information and pricing or provision your own trial in minutes. Please email sales@pacen.com.au or call +61 2 9955 3595.

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Pacen Corp is an IT solutions and services company that is emerging as Australia’s pre-eminent supplier of service-desk, asset, deploy and patch-management, infrastructure, PC power-utilisation, remote-access and secure portable device solutions throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Rim region.

Pacen Corp distributes its products directly to corporate, government, education and health-care customers. We offer a complete range of services in these sectors. We carry out first-level support on all our software solutions.

Pacen Corp also features qualified Practitioners in ITIL processes such as Change Management, Incident Management and Service Desk.